

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1999 - 2004

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER:

This Sitting is resumed.

Mr. D. CARTER:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to join this debate and give my views on the Resolution before the House. Over the years I always had to start first. In my formative years, you know, I was a footballer and I had to start the proceedings and this morning it will appear that I have to start the proceedings.

Last night when this debate concluded, it was very hot and I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, probably at his best, and I have to congratulate him on the way he spoke and the way he represented us here on this side.

The Budget is getting better and better every year and I do not know how far the Prime Minister can go in relation to the production of a Budget. Six years ago when we started here in 1994, I saw a scholarly young man presenting his first Budget and as I said, in the ensuing years he seems to be getting better. I am worried that those who have to follow him in years to come, I do not know how they will present their Budget.

Mr. Speaker, before I get into the meat of business, I think it is proper that I should extend my sympathy on behalf of Christ Church East Central to the family of that young man who lost his life at Newton. And certainly, I should also express my sympathy to the Greenidge family of Vauxhall, where I was born, for that gentleman who lost his life in Canada. It is funny that both men lost their lives because of fires.

Yesterday, I was here sitting and waiting to hear an alternative to the presentation of the Budget which was done two days ago and to my surprise the Honourable Member for St. John spoke for two hours and fifty minutes and his preamble was two hours and forty-five minutes. He did admit that he is not very good at the finer points of economics and he probably is incapable of answering these proposals. I also realise that he had his speech written long before the presentation was made on the first day of the Budget so whatever the Prime Minister had to say, he was going to say what he wanted to say.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking about having an alternative but I am happy that the Barbados Labour Party and this administration will continue to do the good work they are doing and as it appears to me, the alternative is not there. I can only say to the Honourable Prime Minister and to the Honourable

Members on this side to keep working hard, keep doing the right things and keep the people of Barbados smiling.

I can tell you this, do not mind the little show the Leader of the Opposition put on yesterday, the people in Barbados are satisfied that this administration is doing a good job and certainly will continue to do a good job.

Now, you must repeat things over and over again. I know the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, a trained Economist spoke at length about the economy but I want the ordinary people in Christ Church East Central and certainly the ordinary people of this country to know that the foreign reserves have reached over \$1 billion for the first time in the history of Barbados and that must be said.

Unemployment is below 10 per cent, that must be said and we will keep saying it. I know it hurts the other side but we must keep saying it and all in all the economy seems to be on a good course and will continue to be on a good course with the skillful management of our able Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Owen Arthur.

A few weeks ago, I had to make a visit to my constituency and the reason why I addressed the constituency matters quite early is that the Prime Minister in his presentation made \$40 million available for rural development and as you know, I represent a rural area. It is important that I explain to the people, how that money must be spent over the next three years.

Asides.

Mr. D. CARTER:

It is urban and rural.

A quick calculation suggests that if there are 28 constituencies and \$40 million is presented on the table, if you divide \$40 million by 28, I believe each constituency would have \$1.3 million to utilise and to spend on their constituency but common sense says that each constituency will never get \$1.3 million.

I am asking the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, who is supposed to be the Chairman of that Board and who will dispense the \$40 million, to please give Christ Church East Central at least \$1 million. I do not want \$1.3 million, give me \$1 million and I will be happy.

I made some visits to my constituency six weeks ago and I started in St. Patricks. We have a situation there where people who live about 60 metres away from a church and from the normal shopping centre, when it rains heavily, they have to walk a quarter mile up to the top of the hill and then revert another quarter mile in order to do normal things. All it needs is a road to be cut at one section, like the base of a triangle, and that would alleviate all the problems for the people living in St. Patricks. When I took measurements, along with the technical staff of the Rural Development Commission, I realised that it is only about 50 metres of road.

I heard that the possibility is there where you now have concrete roads rather than asphalt roads. It does not matter to me what type of roads you use, all that matters to the people of St. Patricks is that you have the facility where people could traverse easily without any problems when it rains.

I had a shocking experience when I went to Lodge Road B. where three people had made application to the Town and Country Planning for building their homes and their applications were turned down because there were no roads. It surprised me but I can say that stretch of land could accommodate about 100 metres of road. And looking at the amount of land around the area, there is no doubt in my mind that the housing stock would develop by twelve-fold or fourteen-fold in the Lodge Road area. What is so embarrassing about the whole situation is that three of the people have got their blocks ready for building but cannot get off the ground, basically because the Town and Country Planning have them on hold.

I appeal to the Honourable Minister to take this as a priority and make sure that the people of Lodge Road B. and the surrounding areas could have just 100 metres of road so that they could have their homes in that area.

Now, this may sound like a joke to you but further in my constituency, in the Church Hill area, a lady won a competition about three years ago. She showed the press the worse road we had in the Christ Church area and it is on record. It happened about three years ago and the people of Church Hill are still struggling to have a good road there and I appeal to the Honourable Minister again, to grant me that little favour of helping the people of Church Hill and the surrounding areas to get a better road in that area.

They are very church conscious and it is embarrassing that if it rains before 8 o'clock on a Sunday morning, the people who are trying to get to Christ Church Parish Church and to other churches cannot walk. And it is even more embarrassing where the people who have cars are complaining about the wear and tear on their cars.

Lastly, in Vauxhall where I was born and where I still live, there is a need for a road to the southern side of the Vauxhall main road. During the last three years, the economy in this country was going so good that ordinary people in that area have bought new cars. It surprises me that within the last two years about 12 new cars were bought in that area but they do not have a proper road to get to their homes.

As Representative for Christ Church East Central, I am asking the Minister to make that road a priority which is about 75 metres of road. I am not a millionaire but I believe that \$1 million could do the trick. I will wait patiently and make sure that the people get their needs.

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Continuation of Mr. D. CARTER:

While I am still on the Rural Development Commission, there is a little problem we have in Gall Hill where we just built a beautiful building there and the people feel that it is actually life. I do not intend to wash our linen in the open, but the Minister was kind enough to say that in two weeks time, he will grant us the people of Gall Hill certainly my constituency of Christ Church East Central a meeting whereby we would have a better understanding about the people of that area and what really that building represents.

During the election campaign two years ago, I preached day in and day out that when the Gall Hill centre is built, we will revert it to the days of the fifties and sixties but up to now it has not happened. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development is a good man and I am quite sure he will listen to the concerns of the people there, and certainly we all will be more happy when that meeting takes place.

Now, I am in the Gall Hill area, I must make a point in relation to the Bayer Pride of Gall Hill Football team. Over the last several years, they were without a playing field. I must congratulate and thank the Headmaster and the Board of Management of The Foundation School for allowing them to utilise The Foundation School pasture but the season is upon us, which starts probably in January, and they have no way to go and a situation has arisen where the players of Gall Hill have got to drive, walk or ride to Graeme Hall which is about two miles away to practise on evenings. I think that whole problem is a real problem for young athletes and when this Government is promoting sports in this country we cannot have that any longer.

Now, in 1994, when the Election was called, the Prime Minister and the Attorney General was at my side promoting and telling the people of Gall Hill that they will make sure that the Bayer Pride of Gall Hill Football team would have adequate facilities for their footballers. Now, we have started the first phase whereby we purchased some land and that first phase is completed but unfortunately the price for the second set of land is horrendous and we seem to be marking time. I now call on the Minister of Housing and Lands to make sure that that little impasse is settled quickly because if you are promoting sports in this country, you have got to make sure that the people there and those in the surrounding areas have a proper playing area. We even touted at the National Sports Council that we would use that area as a mini-stadium.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has made sure that he has made money available in the productive sectors, certainly in agriculture, tourism and manufacturing. He has propped them up to the best of his ability and I believe that those productive sectors will continue to do the things which would help Barbados to improve in the long run.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to be the Chairman of the National Sports Council and the Government's policy on sports is very straight and very uplifting. The Minister has tried his best certainly over the last six

years to make sure that the sporting entities in Barbados would be well protected. This year, the year 2000, has been a good year for sports in Barbados and all Barbadians clapped their hands and patted their backs and say well done to the sports persons of this country.

The National Sports Council played its part in a very significant way and I am glad to see that the Prime Minister has made it possible where some \$10 million would be taken from the various games for the involvement of sports in this country. I know that the Leader of the Opposition was a little worried yesterday as to how the money would be collected but I believe that systems could be put in place where we could be sure that the money would be taken periodically from the two areas where the money would be made available.

At the National Sports Council, we did our part and we did our part in the technical area and certainly in the financial area. Now, over the last six years I had a very difficult time trying to dispense \$250 000 among the 50 associations in Barbados. If you divide \$250 000 by 50 associations, you will realise the problem there is in trying to allocate that money. So I am really happy that this \$10 million is now made available to us but that does not mean that the respective associations must not still work hard and try to raise their own money. I know that the private sector always help and I believe that they will follow suit to Government in making money available. I must congratulate the Barbados Olympic Association for making millions of dollars available to help the sporting entities here in Barbados over the years.

I have got about 11 associations which excelled this year and I think that it is only fitting that I should mention the names and the associations which did so well. The National Sports Council started a programme with the Under 13 Cricket team some two years ago and I must say that it has done so well that quite recently they had a tour to St. Kitts and they were victorious.

Let me now praise the parents and guardians of those children who made themselves available on Saturdays and Sundays and at every available opportunity to make sure that the young ones were well looked after and were well protected.

We at the National Sports Council did our best with financial help and certainly with technical help. I must also congratulate the members of the National Sports Council who guided them along the lines where they seem to be able to reach the highest point in our sporting activity.

Now, I am aware of the fact that that same Under-13 Cricket team is planning a tour to Great Britain in the very near future. The same way that we made the money available when they made this small tour and the same way the parents work and try to raise money to make it a possibility, certainly, with \$10 million around I am quite sure we will be able to impact greatly on such tours because at this point in our sporting activity we have now got to look at those 13 years olds if we are talking even about West Indian cricket. I believe those who are playing now are just marking time and we have now got to promote the young ones and in five years time the possibility is there where we may have some young superstars.

In going through the list quickly, I would say that we must thank the Swimming Association for winning the CARIFTA Games and the Squash Association for being victorious in the Junior Caribbean Championships.

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Continuation of Mr. D. CARTER:

In basketball, we also were victorious. I must make mention of volley ball. Over a period of time the Government of Barbados, and certainly the BVO, made it possible to have a coach to look after the ladies' and men's volley ball and they did very well. The point I am making is that it would appear that we need some external forces to propel us in our sporting activities and I believe that the Minister of Sports is thinking seriously about the possibility of getting more technocrats here to help our local coaches.

Body-building also did well. Darts did well as did boxing. It is important that Mr. Shuan Terry Cox is the only boxer from the English speaking Caribbean who made it to the Sidney Olympics. That is an achievement for boxing. In cycling, Mr. Barry Forde was a gold medalist in the Pan-American championships.

Quite recently, football has done very well and the team made us proud and they have reached the second round in the world football competition. I know that money is made available to the Football Association from that entity and I believe that Government now was able to match them for the infrastructure in getting a field. They say they are at a disadvantage when they play on the big field and I believe the time is right where we should start our programme in getting the facilities ready for them to have a football pitch which is to the international standard.

I hope that Barbadians would come out in their numbers to support the Barbados Football team playing against the USA. I am quite sure that if the crowd and supporters turn out in their numbers we

will be able to give them that impetus and hope that they would do well enough for us to be proud of them.

Mr. Speaker, last of all, in relation to sporting activities, I believe that yesterday the Leader of the Opposition made a point to the effect that money given to the Cricket Association was probably not a wise thing. I do not remember exactly what he said but I want this Honourable House to know that cricket always plays a very important part in the economy of Barbados.

Some speakers in here will quote Shakespeare and other outstanding people but I remember three years ago when the English team was here I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, long before money was talked about, say that this English tour could raise some \$20 million to \$25 million for the economy of Barbados. Since cricket is bringing in this sort of money probably every four years when the English team is here, I think it is fitting that Government should make money available whereby they can improve on their infrastructure.

I would like to say that as Chairman of the Sports Council we are helping to promote the youth here in this country in cricket and have made \$10 000 on three separate occasions available for the youth programme at the BCA. My main reason for saying that is that if they could bring in \$20 million to \$25 million to this country I think it is only fair that we, the Government of Barbados, should make some money available to the youth programme in that area.

Mr. Speaker, I am indebted to the people of Christ Church East Central for giving me the opportunity to stand here and give my two-cents worth to this Budget. As I said, I do not know what heights the present Prime Minister will reach in relation to the production of budgets but I am happy to be a part of his administration and I can only say that I will continue to work hard under the leadership of the Prime Minister and his Cabinet and my colleagues to make sure that the people of this country continue to have a better life here in Barbados.

Last Saturday, I attended a function of the University of the West Indies at the Sir Garfield Sobers Complex and the lady who spoke on behalf of the students made a very important point. She said the other West Indian nations and certain third world countries should watch Barbados and try to emulate Barbados in the way that they are running their governments and the way the people of Barbados seem to be progressing over difficult times.

I have one worry in relation to how things are going now, and that is with trade liberalisation. I am not a prophet. I cannot look into the future but my hands are in the hand of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet how we will get through the muddy waters in the next three or four years. I am quite sure that with his leadership there is no doubt in my mind that we will pass all the odds.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to the people of Christ Church East Central for giving me this opportunity and I pledge to them that I will continue to work hard and seriously for the people of Christ Church East Central and certainly by extension for the people of Barbados. Thank you.

Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY:

Mr. Speaker, thank you for acknowledging my desire to make an input from this seat to the debate over the Resolution before the Honourable Chamber. Much time has been given to the use of cricketing

analogies and perhaps as a former cricketer of some repute you would have some appreciation for that. Indeed, I remember as a boy, and in those days when we used to play serious cricket in this country, having watched you myself.

Mr. SPEAKER:

You are referring to the Speaker?

Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY:

Yes. Although I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that my recollection of your involvement in those days referred much more to your grace in movement than to your actual success next to us on the field. As a former cricketer, I am sure you would appreciate the analogies which have been used in reference to cricket thus far, and speaking at this time of day in this context certainly seems to suggest that another cricketing analogy might be useful at this point. One gets a sense that we are on the third morning of play and the team which is batting second has been unchallenging in its performance. The outcome of the match is evident at this early stage, as a result of which, spectators are few but the Press is represented by a merely lethargic and very small presence and even the unchallenging opposition seems unsure as to whether or not it wants to participate. One still has to bat in such circumstances and I will endeavour to do so at least for the next short while.

I would want, Mr. Speaker, to give support to the Resolution before the House. I think indeed it is very much in place and I would want to support it for obvious reasons because it speaks to the record of the administration in Government at this time. It speaks to the record of the performance of the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs in this country and it is clear to everybody, who has eyes to see and ears to hear, that record speaks to continued growth in the Barbados economy.

If one would want to take issue with continued growth in the Barbados economy then that is one's prerogative, but I support the Resolution because it is premised on the fact that there has been that continued growth. It is premised on the fact that there is enlarging job opportunity in the Barbados economy at this time and I think that we would also want to be supportive and appreciative of the efforts of Government in creating the type of employment levels in this country which have been previously unheard of until now.

The Resolution, of course, is also premised on the fact that there has been growth.

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

The Resolution, of course, is also premised on a record which speaks to fiscal prudence in the management of the financial and economic affairs of this country for which the Prime Minister obviously must take credit. If the record were suggestive of the fact that things were in a negative profile of posture, then, of course, he would take the criticism. He, therefore, is in my view, deserving of the credit and the Government by extension as well. On those bases I would want to support this Resolution.

The presentation of the Minister of Finance spoke of the objective of repositioning the economy of Barbados to find its proper place, in the economic context of today, in the globalised and liberalised environment which has become a reality for us, that, of course, is a necessary and well-advised objective. The Honourable Minister of Finance last year in his presentation of the Budget, also made reference to the desire to reposition the Barbados economy to take its proper place in this globalised and liberalised environment.

There is another matter of substance, which in my view, underpins the presentation of the Honourable Minister of Finance and that has to do with an understanding of the critical importance of enhancing technological capacity and skill in this country at this time, both at the institutional and at the community level, and by extension the private and individual level. One has to have an understanding of its importance, if one is to realise that we can only take our place, and permanently so, as developing states in this new global environment, if we have the kind of capacity which is appropriate in today's market terms. The increase and improvement of technological skills and capacity both at the institutional as well as the community level, I think are important philosophical underpinnings and are actual, real substantive points in the presentation of the Honourable Minister of Finance. I noted that the level of appreciation on the part of the official Opposition has ranged from disappointment to confusion. The two chief spokesmen on financial and economic affairs for the Opposition Democratic Labour Party have both confessed disappointment and confusion over the presentation made by the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

With reference to the Leader of the Opposition, his disappointment perhaps might explain his failure during his two hours and fifty minutes presentation to actually address the presentation to any significant degree and perhaps failure to address the presentation comes out of that sense of disappointment.

By my figuring, the Honourable Member for St. John took half of an hour before making the statement that he was coming to the presentation of the Honourable Minister of Finance. Having said that, he went on for another fifteen minutes before actually making a passing reference to page 83 in the presentation which dealt with the issue of crime. Of course, his offering was the stale and recited record with reference to crime and violence to which we have become accustomed over the past few years.

He used some cricketing analogies. He talked about the imagery of flight and spin and by so doing implied that there was some attempt to deceive the Barbadian public over the status of things in Barbados with respect to where things are economically in the country at this time. Flight and spin were the images which he used to suggest that the Ministry of Finance was endeavouring to hoodwink the good people of Barbados who so resoundingly supported the programmes and proposed policies of the Barbados Labour Party Administration at the beginning of 1999.

As he spoke, it conjured up certain other images to myself and I saw not flight nor spin but I saw bowling which was obviously short of the required length and which was either wide of leg stump or wide of off stump. Perhaps that is not to be surprising because it seems to me that what he did was to maintain the sad pattern with which we have become familiar in recent times.

The other principal spokesman confessed a certain degree of confusion as to why those who are actually involved in the economy of this country are very complimentary in their remarks and assessment with reference to the Budget. Why those who are experts in the field of business, industry and commerce are very complimentary in their analysis of the presentation of the Honourable Minister. Why his voice is the singular voice which does not seem able to echo an appreciation of the good performance of the Honourable Minister of Finance. The Honourable Member from the Other Place is confused as to why everybody else lauded the performance of the Minister and his voice is singular in its lack of appreciation for that performance.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the Prime Minister has not delivered. He has not delivered in his presentation and by extension he has not delivered in terms of the performance of the Government over time. He said that nothing in the presentation speaks to the demise of small shops in this country. Mr. Speaker, as I look around, I am sure you will agree with me that what we see is not a declining number of small shops in this country. At least what I see, is a growing number of small shops. I see a change perhaps in the character and culture of business with respect to that sector and I see small shops now becoming what I call mini-marts. I do not find that small shops are reflecting demise in this country at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am just about old enough to remember the performance and record of a Minister of Trade who represented the other side when they formed the Administration of this country. I seem to remember a record of 400 small shops which were closed in this country in the early 1970s. They were closed after the first wave of post-war economic pressure.

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

The Government of Barbados, at this, found itself unable to cope with management of the Barbadian economy in that very turbulent period.

The result was that the Barbadian electorate turned to the Barbados Labour Party in 1976 and brought it to Government and that administration rescued this country from a very perilous state and placed the economy on a fairly solid footing between 1976 and 1986.

I think that is instructive and perhaps the appreciation of Barbadian people for what happened back then explains the lack of confidence or the evidence of confidence with respect to the two Parties as they now exist across the divide in this Honourable Chamber.

Certainly, confidence is placed in this administration; record levels, massive defeat, overwhelming support for the policies of a Government led by the Honourable Member for St. Peter. An obvious lack of confidence in the offering of the other sides. Offerings which were recited and reechoed yesterday to a great extent.

Those who felt the pains and experience the wounds of the early 1970s under the Democratic Labour Party and their Minister of Trade duly turned to the Barbados Labour Party. It has only been in the last few years, in early 1999 that their descendents exacted justice on that Honourable Gentleman who was then the Minister of Trade and the results in the Election of St. Michael West, 1999, is a story of the descendents of those who bore the wounds in the 1970s exacting their due justice on the perpetrator of these transgressions in the early 1970s.

If you want proof of delivery, we can point to proof of delivery and it has already been recited in here. An average rate of growth of 3.6% over the last five years, unemployment levels now at around 10%-these are record unemployment levels in this country; record international reserves of \$1 billion - 24 weeks of foreign exchange reserves, over two months of supplies available to this country of ours. One would recall, not too long ago, when we were down to 11 weeks of foreign reserves available and the country was poised in a very perilous situation at that time.

Added to those statistics is the fact of expanding incomes in Barbados and fact of social services being embellished in Barbados. I see improved transportation. I hear not only grandiose plans for enhancement of our education institutions' capacity but I hear real substantive and concrete plans for the advancement of education in this country and the other social services to which we can point. We have problems in one or two areas but these are problems which can be and must be fixed with time.

I would like to point to the business sectors which represent non traditional businesses. One can speak with reference to the Micro Enterprise Development Fund, commonly known as FUNDACCESS, established to fill a void with reference to finance for micro enterprises. Fund access is affording the development of enterprises through credit enterprise, trading, technical assistance, so that Barbadians who traditionally did not have access to capital to get businesses going or to improve or expand their businesses can do that. It is taking place at this time.

The record speaks for itself. Since that entity has been established, the record suggests that there have been about 300 loans which have been approved for the purposes of new and expanding businesses in this country. \$3.6 million advances to the Micro Enterprise Development Sector in this country. It means that small people are benefitting from the opportunity of getting into business or expanding their businesses - hair dressers, barbers, vendors, janitorial services, small manufacturers. All of this is taking place in this country at this time. This speaks to proof of delivery.

I do not know how one can honestly stand to question the record of performance under this Government. Already, mention has been made to real growth of performance in this country over the last several years. Continuing incidences of real growth in this country - 2.9% in 1995; 3.8%, 4.4%, 2.8% all of this is contained in the 1999 Social and Economic Report. Our performance is there for anybody to see.

Mr. Speaker, we can compare this to the trend in those years to which I referred of negative indicators. Mention was made by the Honourable Member for St. John about performance of the non trading sectors as opposed to the trading sectors. One can point to some minor decline in the performance of tourism but that must be analysed in the context of an average growth rate of 4%, as I understand it, over five years up to 1998.

Sugar production: After years of steady decline, I remember a hey day of 115 000 tonnes of sugar produced in this country. I remember also sad declines to levels to about 35 000 tonnes. These are indicators of poor performance and these things have been reversed.

We speak in 1999 of the growth in sugar production - 10.9%; non sugar agriculture - fishing grew by 4.3% and, of course, unemployment, we cannot forget that, down to levels of 10%, down to 7.5% among men in this country, significantly, among women, declining-levels from 16% to 13.3% according to the Social Economic Report for 1999.

In the last quarter of 1999, a record achievement of an unemployment rate of 9.85%. These things speak to the death of the spectre of jobless growth in this country. The reversal of the syndrome of income erosion in this country of recent years. They speak to the reduced threat to our social security mechanism. They speak to the rescue of an economy from an admitted drift by the other side. This is proof of delivery.

I want to turn quickly to the business of crime. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition made reference to the matter of crime. The Honourable Member mildly derided the use of police records and statistics as a measure of crime. I want to advance the position that the police records are in fact an internationally accepted measure of criminal activity performance in a country and I want to make

reference to some specific figures.

Perhaps, this might enlighten some of us who do not pay close enough attention to the situation. I believe the Honourable Attorney General will address the matter of crime, substantially, in his presentation, perhaps, tonight and also over the weekend for the general understanding of the public. I would not want to steal his thunder but I would want to make reference to some figures.

Let us look at homicides - I am using a five-years. In one instance between 1995 and 1999 and a second instance between 1989 and 1993. I use these two periods of time because it is the last five years of the former administration and also the last five years of the current administration.

If you look at homicides and go back 1995 to 1999 you get numbers such as 23,20,12,15 and 14 a total of 84 homicides in this country between 1995 and 1999 under the Barbados Labour Party administration. If you look at the period 1990 to 1993 you have numbers like 20, 19,30,18,20 a total of 107 in the last five years under the administration represented by the Members on the other side and the last five years under this administration - 84 as opposed to 107, that is an increase in the number of persons who lost their lives through violent criminal death.

Another important phenomenon is the matter of rape. If you examine the same period of time with reference to rape, you will see numbers of 68, 98,71,76 and 74 . Those are yearly figures a total of 387. When the Barbados Labour Party has been administering Governments in this country, a corresponding period under the Democratic Labour Party, their last five years,

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

Again, the difference is obvious. Under the other side there is the increase of homicide, under the other side there is an increase of rape, in spite of a tendency, we acknowledge, for people now to more

readily report instances of rape than they previously used to do.

If you talk about robberies: Robberies peaked in Barbados between 1991 and 1993 with an average of 841 per year. Since 1994 the average occurrence of robberies has been 403, and again, the difference is telling and instructive.

The Attorney General has advanced, and publicly so, a ten-point plan which forms a course strategy around which a policy with reference to an attack on crimes in Barbados is ongoing and will continue, and I am sure that he will speak again to that himself. It is a multi-disciplinary approach to a multi-faceted problem. It involves multi-agency participation; not only agencies like the National Council of Substance Abuse, but certainly the home and family which is an important agency or institution, the church and other non-partisan agencies and other institutions are involved because it must be that type of approach because it is a multi-faceted problem.

We are, right now, at a stage where the Courts of Barbados have the facility of imposing non-custodial sentences on young, non-violent, first-time offenders for certain offences because of the Penal System Reform Act, 1998, again brought by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the Attorney-General.

This gives a second chance to young boys and to young girls. I do not want, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure you do not want for St. Michael Central, I do not want to see young boys from Richmond Gap, young boys from Alkins, young boys from Goodland, from Westbury Road, and these kinds of places having to be brought before the courts and sent to Glendairy Prison if alternative sentencing options could be made available.

I think to stand and to say that the Attorney General has done nothing positive, has done nothing proactive in terms of addressing the problem of criminal activity in this country is both unjust and registers a lack of appreciation for the progressive approach to countering the phenomenon of crime in this country when you simply dismiss things like the Penal System Reform Act.

We are raising the age of responsibility in criminal accountability from seven to eleven. We do not want to see children criminalise at an early age and have a stigma attached to them. There are agencies which can deal with that. I think to lightly dismiss the efforts of the National Council of Substance Abuse shows a blatant lack of appreciation for people who are out there in the forefront trying to fight this bitter scourge next to AIDS that we face in this country - the problem of illegal drug use. There has been a response at the level of the police. There has been a response at the level of the courts. We are appreciative of all those who are involved in activities which afford counselling to people who get caught up in drug use.

I, personally, would want to advance that we need to do a bit more on the medical side, on the clinical side. I know the Honourable Member for the City has been one of those in the forefront of seeing Barbados develop to a stage where health care is so available through a multiplicity of Polyclinics all over this country. But I personally, am of the view that we need to have a dedicated facility, and I do not see why one of these Polyclinics could not be used. We have one here at Jemmotts' Lane, right next to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We have one up at Wildey, we have one just in Black Rock, we have one up at Warrens, all within an arms length of the other. I believe this country has the capacity at this stage, to make a more systematic, better structural, clinical, medical response to the question of Drug Abuse in

this country and I would want to advance that.

The Honourable Member has made mention in this debate again, to situation at Glendairy Prison. He has made that reference in public forum outside the halls of this Honourable Chamber. It is something with which I strenuously disagree, Mr. Speaker.

When you go and publicize to Barbados and to the rest of the world that we have a situation at Glendairy which does not lend itself to proper security, I believe you are inviting trouble. I believe if you have a concern it can be voiced in the appropriate ear, but I think to voice it publicly and to repeatedly do so is both irresponsible and ill-advised.

Threats to the prison do not only arise from within the walls of the prison. Threats to the prison are also real from without the walls of the prison and I think to bandy about the view that the prison is so short of staff that they cannot guarantee security at Glendairy in that kind of irresponsible way, is very unbecoming of those who seek to lead in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member has two minutes to wind up, please.

Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY:

Mr. Speaker, just touching on this business of some of the initiative which the Honourable Minister of Finance raised. I cannot understand how any legitimacy can be given to a reply to the presentation by the Prime Minister if that reply does not give significant address to the matter of liberalisation in the area of telecommunications.

The Prime Minister made very significant reference to that over a phrased period of time; first with cell-phones, then domestic services, then the international service market. This is very important, this will impact on the cost of doing business in Barbados. It will mean cost reduction, savings to consumers, private homes, poor people. This speaks to the opening up of further opportunities in this country and I cannot see how you can say that have legitimately replied to a presentation which addresses an important matter like that, and you do not give any attention to it.

The dismantling of monopolies in this day and age. Not only with reference to utilities, but to other monopolies as well, is a very important thing.

If one may continue with use of imagery one can refer to 'The Renting of the Veil' - that long prohibited access to the most privileged place. That is an image drawn out of a Biblical context, which I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you will readily - at least, I hope, you would readily recognise.

The dismantling of monopolies, especially in this context is like "The Falling of the Walls" in other parts of the world which have inhibited free advance and excursion into a world of better opportunities. That is what is happening in large sections of Europe, that is what is happening in important areas of Asia.

We are doing that now in Barbados, in a world which is characterised by revolution in communication and in technology.

The Minister of Finance spoke with reference to a regulatory framework for e-commerce in Barbados, that is going to be absolutely critical in this globalised, liberalised environment, and not much mention was given to this in the response from the Honourable Member from the other side.

This would create new business opportunities. It would enhance traditional businesses. It would keep up the cost of businesses. It will expand small business opportunity in this country as people are able to operate from their homes in very effective ways, and get businesses off the ground.

Investment opportunities to Barbados National Bank, Insurance Corporation of Barbados - we are talking about the democratising of investment.

I read recently a book by Friedman - I think that is the pronounciation, called "The Lexus and the Olive Tree", where he talks about the democratization of investment, democratization of technology and it seems to me that these are the kinds of perspectives which have informed and influenced the presentation of the Honourable Minister of Finance this year, and in the past couple of years.

I totally support the presentation and I fully feel at ease, Mr. Speaker, in giving my voice in reference to the Resolution before the House.

I am indebted to you, thank you.

11:00 a.m.

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS:

Mr. Speaker, it is with pride that I rise to make my contribution to the Financial Statement as laid by the Honourable Prime Minister and the Parliamentary Representative of St. Peter on Tuesday afternoon. I do so, Sir, with the comfort of the many constituents of the constituency of St. Michael North West who have elected me to be their voice in this Honourable Chamber.

I must also draw to this Chamber's attention, and it is quite uncomfortable but I am still happy, the fact that I remember the Leader of the Opposition making a statement soon after I won the election that he will wait the day to hear me reply to a Budget. I am quite surprised that he is not in the Chamber at this time because as far as I am concerned that is a clear indication of what you call intellectual snobbery.

This morning, I am extremely happy that I could stand here and support the Financial Statement of the Honourable Prime Minister and to talk about the fact that Barbados is not the same Barbados it was

some fifteen years ago.

Sir, we have witnessed that Barbados is now becoming such an advanced nation that it is also becoming a country of people who complain because they are perfectionists and they want the very best. When we talk about this country of ours and the Leader of the Opposition, can make the statements that he has made concerning the Financial Statement that it is cold soup warmed up, I would like to let the Leader of the Opposition know that some way along the line, cold soup warmed up is a belly full and it is better than nothing at all. So at some point he does not understand what cold soup is for us who have been poor and had to resort to cold soup or he does not understand what pap is. He cannot drink it. Everybody cannot drink cold soup or warm soup so unfortunately I am going to take my time out to enjoy the cold soup as laid here by my Prime Minister and Parliamentary Representative of St. Peter and also to establish the good things that will come out of that Financial Statement.

Sir, let us deal with the position of the \$40 million that has been set aside for road improvement in this country. We know for a fact that all of us who are parliamentary representatives have problems in our constituency with various roads. We know that MTW cannot do all. We know they are doing a wonderful job. We know for a fact that as far as we are concerned, we are hounded by our constituents for better roads.

We were given the assurance only on Tuesday that the \$40 million that is set aside between the Arawak Cement Plant will enable us as parliamentary representatives to give our constituents better roads but it does not end there. We know that there are very few road developers in Barbados. We know there are two major road developers in Barbados. We know that this situation, Mr. Speaker, will also enable small developers to get on stream and be able to assist in building roads in this country in the vein of concrete roads. So this is also a direction to give the small developer an opportunity to register his business, to be part of the development of Barbados, Sir, and to be able to provide the constituents across Barbados with much better roads as required by them. That is one thing we must compliment the Honourable Prime Minister and Representative of St. Peter for allowing the improvement of roads in Barbados.

Sir, I will look at sports. I heard a caller on the call-in programme a couple of evenings back criticising the Prime Minister for dealing with the sports aspect and finding money for the sports people of Barbados. It was said that as far as he is concerned, that money could be used to improve the prison. Now, let us get this straight. We do not want to have a nation of prisoners. We do not want to have a nation where every minute someone has to be sent to Glendairy or be sent to some prison. We want to have a nation like what we had a couple of months ago where the entire world, glued to their televisions was able to hear and read and know about Barbados. We want to be proud of Barbados. We want to be able to say that this small country of ours has projected us, Mr. Speaker, not only at a regional level but at an international level.

When \$10 million can be set aside out of what we consider to be the providers of the tax reduction in the area of the 'Lotto' and 'Mega 6', it does not only provide a situation, Mr. Speaker, for sports people of Barbados to succeed but it also provides a situation where several complaints have been laid that Barbados is in need of coaches. Barbados' coaches need to be better paid. It goes to show you that this money, Sir, could assist in developing sports in Barbados so that the coaches in Barbados could be better paid so that the coaches could go into the field and pull out the untapped talent and project that untapped

talent to the point of becoming at the local, regional and international level.

Sir, that is what it is all about, it is not a case of \$10 million going to the present Olympic Association or to the present athletes in Barbados. It is \$10 million that will develop sports in Barbados over a period of time. One must understand this clearly and I have heard this in this Honourable Chamber only a couple hours ago.

Sir, Barbados has excelled in sports within the last five years to the point where Barbados has become a reckoning force. In the area of basketball, volleyball body-building, in the area of football, one must compliment the Sports Department, the Minister of Sports and the coaches for what they have done as far as Barbados is concerned.

When the Leader of the Opposition talks about cold soup, he must understand again that cold soup is appetising, if it is well cooked.

Aside.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS:

Mr. Speaker, I come to the point where one must understand that you must be fair if you are a parliamentary representative. You cannot use time to put your case and forget what you might have done or what you might have said some three or four years ago. One must understand clearly that you must be honest to your constituents and not only your constituents, but you must be honest to yourself and to God.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition talked a couple days ago about the Bridgetown development. He talked that this Government is a government of big six and that this Government is a government that provides what we consider the wealthy with a way of living.

Mr. Speaker, this is far from the truth. One must understand clearly that in 1992 the then Government, with BARTEL, when they set out, as far as BARTEL was concerned, to sell the shares and then they tied us, from 1992 to the year 2012, for Cable and Wireless to monopolise and to control this country in terms of the phone system.

Only a couple of days ago we were proud in this Chamber to hear that the Honourable Prime Minister has made it easy and for a lot of people who have to depend on that service or that type of assistance, let me tell you what it means. It also means, Sir, that the cost of carrying cricket lived on television can be reduced because some of you may not be aware that the fee for those things has to come from Cable and Wireless and if the cost is extremely high, then the cost to the adviser must be extremely high and it means, Sir, that you, the viewer, you the listener would want to accuse the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation for having high prices but in truth and in fact it starts at the supplier.

I am extremely proud at this point, Mr. Speaker, to be here in this Chamber to hear that there will be changes in terms of Cable and Wireless monopolising the situation with our communication in this country. Further to the truth, Sir, under the Bridgetown development, this Government has been accused of providing concessions for the 'big six'.

Mr. Speaker, in the month of July 1994, the then Minister of Finance between himself, not the Government of the day, Sir, between himself and the Ministry of Finance, granted concessions to Sandy Lane Golf Course. Let them deny this.

11:10 a.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS:

I will refer to it. I am going to make this a document of the House:

“4th July 1994

The General Manager

Sandy Lane Hotel

St. James.

Dear Sir:

Concessions to Golf Courses

I refer to your letter of May 10, 1994.

I wish to inform you that the following concessions are granted for the construction and development of golf courses and ancillary facilities:

Waiver of any Property Transfer Tax payable by any non-resident purchaser of resort houses/villas and for all lands to be purchased for the development of the golf project.”

Now, bear this in mind, he said resort houses and villas and for all lands to be purchased for the development of the golf course project.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy on more than one occasion talking about the Sandy Lane project but he does not seem to understand that it started with them, in July of 1994.

“(ii)Waiver of withholding tax on interest on non-resident shareholders loans.”

Which means that a foreign shareholder of Sandy Lane does not have to pay tax. It is here.

“(iii)Waiver of all imports in respect of all materials, furniture, fixtures, equipment and vehicles for use in the development and operation of the golf courses and ancillary facilities.”

Mr. Speaker, this same Leader of the Opposition and the representative for the constituency of St. Lucy are accusing this Government of playing up to ‘Big Sixes’ when in truth and in fact, the document is here, dated July 1994. The Government changed in September of 1994. Let them deny it.

The Minister of Finance at the time was the Honourable Representative for the constituency of St. John and they are telling us in this Chamber that we are ...

When we talked about the Bridgetown Development, we are talking about improving our country, we are talking about providing people with work and we are talking about providing young entrepreneurs with an opportunity to develop.

Further to that, they talked about politics of inclusion but politics of inclusion started with the Democratic Labour Party. Some of my parliamentary colleagues may be too young to know this, but it started inside the Democratic Labour Party. You will remember a former Speaker, Kenneth R. Husbands, and who was the Government of the day? So let us bring it down to show you that the representation of people is beyond the politics of inclusion; when they are saying that people can be brought, they have a price.

The Parliamentary Representative for St. Michael West Central served this country and he is serving this country. He is not politics of inclusion. I, the Parliamentary Representative for the constituency of St. Michael North West, can say that I was a former member of the Democratic Labour Party but I tore up my membership card and I am now representing St. Michael North West as a member of the Barbados Labour Party. You know why, Sir, you must be honest and if you cannot be honest to say the truth to yourself and God, then you cannot be honest to represent people.

I am saying that politics of inclusion started with the Democratic Labour Party. I am saying that any person who means well in serving this country does not have to worry about the statements made by the Democratic Labour Party because they were the ones who did it, from Owen T. Alder to L. B. Brathwaite. They did not tell you that the first Caribbean member of the Democratic Labour Party in this country, 0001, was a white man named Douglas Lynch. Let them deny this, Mr. Speaker. Let the Democratic Labour Party deny this.

These youngsters in here, Sir, my parliamentarians colleagues, do not know this. I am going to tell them. They are accusing this Government as a Government of 'Big Sixes' when it all started at them. They are talking about politics of inclusion; a Government that means well. Barbados Shipping and Trading Co. Ltd...

Asides

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS:

That is it.

Asides

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS:

Mr. Speaker, one must understand clearly, that I am extremely happy to be in this Chamber today. I believe it is the work of the Almighty that I am in this Chamber. I believe God is providing this opportunity for me at this time of my life to be able to show Barbadians that poorness is not a crime neither does it prevents you from succeeding if you want to succeed.

As I stand here, the Leader of the Opposition is being critical of the development of this Government and critical of the leadership of this Government. He is talking about where Barbados is going. If he wants to know where Barbados is going, he must stop being driven on mornings coming from St. John and drive and he will see where Barbados is going. It takes at least 40 to 45 minutes to get from the top of Collymore Rock to the bottom. It takes about another 45 minutes to get from the Bussa Roundabout over to the Frank Worrell Roundabout, that shows you a country that is developing.

If he wants to know where Barbados is going, tell him to drive through certain places in this country, not St. John, tell him to drive through the Heights and the Terraces and see the construction that has gone up. There are homes valued at more than \$350 000 in St. John and the Prime Minister has gone further. What he has done, Sir, is assisted those people in this Financial Statement by a reduction of the properties over a certain amount of value.

They are over there saying that this Government is doing nothing. They are talking about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital buying Dialysis machines. Why do they not tell this country that the hospital has been corrupted because of the Democratic Labour Party from the very beginning? The staff selected by the hospital ... One must understand that the problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital today are not problems of this Government, they are problems of management. You have people who were sent in there by former Democratic Labour Party Ministers of Health, who have also given our former Minister of Health, licks. There are people working in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital who no Minister of this present Government can get across to because they have been placed in there as 'yard fowls'. Let the Democratic Labour Party deny it. Former Ministers of Health right up to the last Minister who, by rights, we heard a few words coming from. They have got people in there. I am certain that when the former Minister of Health stands up she could confirm this. The problem with the hospital is not the Government, it is the sabotage.

11:20 a.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS:

Mr. Speaker, do you remember the negotiations in 1986 and who was then the General Secretary of the NUPW? They were at that time making demands on this Government of the day for 12 per cent on top and eight per cent to the bottom. They were lambasting... Nigel Harper, I am going to call names. They were squeezing this Government in that period of time with wage negotiations. The Democratic Labour Party came into power and they settled for 2%.

This Government of the Barbados Labour Party under the leadership of the Right Honourable Owen Arthur cannot have it easy, Sir, when a former Prime Minister of this country talked about depressurizing. Do you remember those statements, Mr. Speaker? People seem not to understand the role of the Democratic Labour Party in this country - to destroy is the deal, to destroy to gain power. They are critical of the lifestyle of Barbadians.

I am proud to stand here for three reasons. St. Michael North West in the area of the Deacons Farm was considered to be a crime prone area. I am proud to say that the Attorney General and the police statistics have shown that there has been a vast improvement in the area of Deacons Farm. You do not hear anything concerning crime in Deacons Farm. I am extremely proud of that.

Mr. Speaker, I am also proud that in St. Michael North West I do not have the problem of unemployment like some because, personally, I have been able to get to understand the moods, the attitudes and the concerns of some of those people and I can tell you that there is a percentage of people...

Only this morning I wanted to find a porter to send to one of the hotels in Barbados and I could not find one. The reason for this, Sir, is that you have to go on the block and talk to the gentlemen and ladies on the block. You have to understand the problems they face, not coming into a Chamber and criticising and talking about crime when you cannot go on a block and you have your car glass and your jeep glass tinted. That is cold soup warmed up. This is my cold soup that I am warming up and I am getting warmer too.

Mr. Speaker, we sat in this Chamber on Tuesday and the Prime Minister showed us the removal of import duty from security equipment. Do you know what that means, Sir, that means that people who

have built homes and want to be able to secure their homes but the cost was extremely high now have the opportunity to have those homes secured at a reduced price. It is here.

Under community development, we have a situation where every area in Barbados should have sporting facilities and the Honourable Minister of Social Transformation and the representative for St. Michael East can tell you, as grassroots people, that some of the requirements for people in those communities are sports. They have to depend on sports because they see it as a channel of mobility to move up. You have to provide them with that chance because if they go into sports they may go into weight-lifting, body-building or into road tennis or several other areas of sports. The intention is to use that as a vehicle to succeed, and we must provide those folks with that vehicle.

Mr. Speaker, when one considers the role of the Right Honourable Prime Minister and leader one must understand that when you look at employment in this country today - I hear people talk about employment 10 per cent but I do not look at it like that. I am seeing the spin-off of the employment situation in this country. Do you know what is the spin-off? The young fellow and the young girl now do not come and ask for a 'spread'. They are working.

Do you know what parliamentarians are faced with, Mr. Speaker? I do not know whether other parliamentarians are faced with it but I am faced with it and it is something that I am going to say that the Government has to start looking at now because as long as you move people into a certain direction then there is another direction you have to look at. It is in the area of housing.

There is a demand for young people between the ages of 19 to 28 for housing. Do you know why? The demand is there because those folks are now working. They want the independence. They want to feel a source of comfort. They do not want to live under their parents' roofs anymore. That is what this Government has done, moved them from off the block, given them an opportunity to work, given them an opportunity not only to work but to think in terms of owning something. Yet the other side tells us we are not doing anything.

The other side talks about propaganda and I notice that they brought out something called Rice. They have somebody called Rice making statements about the hospital and they talk about propaganda. Who spreads more propaganda? Who uses the media more than the Democratic Labour Party? They have their hands in every doorway of the media of this country and they accuse the Barbados Labour Party of spreading propaganda. Check the media carefully and see who is really spreading propaganda!

Aside.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS:

It is not even burnt rice.

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS:

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that I do not have more time because there is a lot can tell my junior members here, not in terms of sittings, but in terms of experience and associating with the political life

of this country for a long time about the Democratic Labour Party, some of the evil things that they have done to this country.

“Grey Jesus”. Does anybody know about “Grey Jesus”? Four thousand people were sent home in 1994 because “Grey Jesus” had a list and those that went in last went out. Do you know who were those who went in last? People that were sent in by the Barbados Labour Party to get jobs. They know who is “Grey Jesus”. Wicked! Sometimes two and three people in the same house were sent home.

Further to that, they talk about our destroying the middle class. They destroyed the middle class. It is only now the middle class is starting to pick up. The eight per cent - people went out and bought their motor cars, took out a mortgage, and what happened, they were threatened either for the car to be repossessed or the property to be sold, all because of the Democratic Labour Party, the Government of the day. And they are telling people that this Government is not a progressive government that it is not a government that is working in the interest of the masses of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am closing on this point. I am going to say to the Leader of the Opposition, the representative for the constituency of St. John. You won a by-election with a development plan for St. John. You were to take a city into St. John. I still want the city. I gone.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

Mr. Speaker, first of all permit me at an opportunity like this to give special thanks to the people who are responsible for my being here in this Honourable Chamber. Probably ten years or so ago I would not have even dreamt of standing in this position as a representative of the people of St. Michael East. Sir, I am indeed grateful not only to be here and to feel and enjoy the prestige and honour of being a representative but being here because I believe that the support which I received from the people of St. Michael East, against all the prophecies of failure by the Democratic Labour Party and the journalists of Barbados and some of the political pundits in this country, that the people of St. Michael East demonstrated their wisdom by vesting the authority in me to represent their interests.

11:30 a.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

I want to give a special thanks to the brothers and sisters in particular of 42nd Street in the Ivy. I want to give special thanks to the brothers of Licorish Village, Howells Cross Road, Tichbourne, Flint Hall, St. Barnabas, Two Mile Hill, Bird Hill and all the surrounding areas which make up the St. Michael East constituency. I am saying thanks not only to personalities in that constituency but also to the institutions which were responsible for shaping me and making me what I am.

I have to say a special thanks to Belmont Primary School, to St. Giles School and to the church of St. Barnabas that actually inculcated those special qualities in me, those quality of trustworthiness and

reliability that have given me the kind of credibility that has enabled the people of St. Michael East to make an evaluation of my character and conclude that I am a worthy representative to look after their interest. They know that whatever I do is in their interests, because their interests come before mine, before any political party or any other interests in the society because I am the people's representative. I understand that I must apologise when I do wrong, that I must explain when things appear to be ambiguous and that I must set their minds at ease when they are not too clear with what is happening within the body politic of Barbados.

Two days ago, we witnessed in here a very interesting contrast of leadership, one that can be properly classified as good governance coming from the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Honourable Prime Minister, Owen Seymour Arthur and the other coming from the Leader of the Opposition who had an opportunity to demonstrate to this country his capability of leadership.

Mr. Speaker, it was not I but the electorate of Barbados who passed judgement on his capability. If anybody is wrong, stupid or ignorant about his worthiness and capability then the people of Barbados would have to plea ignorance because they were given the opportunity to put an X in a ballot to determine if that regime of the Democratic Labour Party had performed to the standards that they expected of them. They vested the authority in the leader of the Barbados Labour Party who is the Honourable Prime Minister of Barbados. This is why I am saying that the contrast is there and what you witnessed in here two days ago is an exhibition and a clear explanation of the manner in which the economy was managed, a demonstration of prudence.

It does not only allow us to look at the two leaders in that context, it also gives us an opportunity to look at the intrinsic self of an individual to determine if he has the type of character that when he speaks one can consider his words of being called true. I know that the perception of the general public is very clear. They understand genuine leadership, genuine conviction and commitment and the theatrical approach which we witnessed yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, a person can speak passionately about the masses of people, poverty, destitution or religion as we heard years ago when people were hailing Jimmy Swaggart because they thought Jimmy Swaggart was a religious man speaking the truth and his words were divine guidance until he came back to the people later and said he was sorry. All along we were witnessing an actor pretending that he was pure. It is that kind of personality that we witnessed yesterday responding from the Opposition side.

Sir, it is very clear to me and to all wise people in the society that what we were faced with over the last ten years in small welfare states was the putting in place of counter mechanisms in order to face the challenges of the sinister inflictions of globalisation.

We have had characters like Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher engineering programmes to undermine welfare states. It is not that people do not know that because they were victims in the early 1990s of the programmes of globalisation. It is given that noble title for acceptance but it is a criminal infliction on the Third World people causing disruption to the social life of people and destroying state control. It is against the state playing a meaningful role in the social programme of the life of people. Anybody who clearly understands that, must also understand the importance of the Prime Minister's role two days ago when he broke away from the traditional approach, what I call ritualism, in the presentation of Budgets and gave us a long discourse about the dynamics of the country in general. He

introduced different policies and programmes to realign ourselves in such a position that we can counter the harmful impositions of globalisation.

Sir, in the early 1990s when the Democratic Labour Party was in office, the country suffered at the hands of the IMF. They had to wrestle with the World Bank even when they were about to allocate and give contracts to people. The World Bank and the IMF were dictating how small sovereignties had to run the affairs of the state. They should not be confused about what this particular Minister of Finance is doing at this juncture of the history of Barbados.

11:40 a.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000,

Continuation of Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

It is a necessity that we reposition ourselves in order to deal with globalisation at the parochial level. The Democratic Labour Party, although claiming to be closely associated with the Trade Union Movement, found itself in the 1990s witnessing the erosion of the strength of the Trade Union Movement as a consequence of the imposition of globalisation and in some cases maladministration. What did they do - 30 000 workers marched the streets of Barbados opposing the stand taken by the leadership of the Democratic Labour Party,; then we had the imposition of the eight per cent reduction of the salaries of the people of Barbados.

Strangely enough, the method that was used to give legitimacy to the decision taken by the DLP then was not as transparent as we would like it to be but they claimed that they had the majority support and the public of Barbados went along with it.

There were struggles in the law court. All of this came as a consequence of the changes in the international arena in trade, financial maneuvering, and small states like Barbados, even when the Leader of the Opposition was there, could not handle this imposition of what is called neo-colonialism.

I am surprised to hear the Leader of the Opposition, who experienced all this, attempting to dismiss the manner in which we are now repositioning ourselves. We are able to sustain the high quality of the social policies of this state. Nothing has changed in terms of a decline in the quality of service. What we have witnessed is an improvement in the quality of life and more innovative and progressive programmes put in place and properly administered not only by the central Government but by the Ministry of Social Transformation in particular. The Honourable Member wants to discredit the same department and lay claims. He wants to lay claim to a man, the new Messiah who come to rescue the masses of Barbados.

Never before we have ever seen any signs or demonstrations of these qualities, that is why I am talking

about theatrical behaviour. It was under the same DLP when the Leader of the Opposition was a Minister, that the vendors of whom he now talks about, saying that the Barbados Labour Party disrupted the market where the vendors traded. It was that same institution that formed itself into a trade union movement called The Wayside Vendors Association in order to counter the manner in which the Democratic Labour Party was facilitating and treating the vendors of the day.

People marched through Broad Street in black shirts and came here on the outside of Parliament. They had to be protected by the Barbados Police Force because of the contempt and the bitterness that they saw coming from the administration of the Democratic Labour Party.

Fishermen and fish vendors were displaced for big businessmen to establish businesses. I do not know what type of Messiah he can be. It is a question of credibility when the evidence is provided, the show is exposed and the actor is seen for what he is. I do not quite understand what he is trying to do. It is very unfortunate.

Speaking of land and land in Barbados, he wants to make us believe that he has never granted tax concessions and all types of concessions to expatriate businessmen who are trying to 'hog-up' lands around this country. Over 500 acres of land were sold under his leadership as Minister of Finance to expatriates at Westmoreland with special exclusive rights, that black people sometimes cannot venture within the walls. It is a conclave, very much like what occurred in the Wittswaterrand at Johannesburg in South Africa, where you cannot enter beyond the wall without being given a special pass to visit residents inside those walls.

I visited Westmoreland and could not go through the gate. If I had to tell you the things that they asked for as qualification for entering is unbelievable.

Asides

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

You do understand what is happening. Do not try to impress us that you have any special interest in poor people in this country.

Sir, I do not want to spend all the time on matters of that kind because it is very important that I get back to some of the provisions that were offered the day before yesterday in the innovative presentation by the Honourable Prime Minister.

Sir, I believe that the Leader of the Opposition would have been respected better at the public level if he had spoken about inequities within the system. I heard

from the Honourable Prime Minister, and have no reason to doubt him, that as a consequence of his capability and his prudence we were able to reduce unemployment within the last 10 years from 23% to 10%. Sir, I am very happy to hear that. Although I do not have the scientific evidence to prove what I am saying, I believe that by observation in my constituency, that I have not had the benefit of the distribution of jobs across the nation and I believe that other members would be able to say that too.

When I pass through the Ivy, and this has nothing to do with party politics, I am the people's

representative, and I look across 42nd Street and look to the corner of Medford Gap and look under the tree at Licorish Village, by Clarke in My Lord's Hill, I am seeing pockets of able bodied men with natural ability asking for work. All the Ministers in here and I find it difficult to get them jobs.

11.50 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

I believe that other Members will be able to say that too, because when I come through the Ivy - and this has nothing to do with the partisan politics - I am the people's representative, and I look across 42nd Street, and I look to the corner of Richman's Gap, and Licorish Village under the tree by Clarke at My Lords' Hill, I am seeing pockets of able-bodied men with natural ability asking for work. All of these Ministers in here and I find it difficult to get a job. So I am not into partisan rubbish. These people must be represented and what we need is equity in the distribution of jobs, or not everybody will soon say "do not come through the Ivy, there are criminals, there are people that exhibit deviant behaviour." That has to change.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

You have a very poor understanding of the English language. What I am saying is that if we do not do what is necessary to change the social and economic conditions of the people who I represent then these charges would be made unjustly against these people.

I am asking that a more equitable approach must be used that I, too, can boast that I am the beneficiary

of the reduction of 10 percent on employment. I would like to be able to share that glory but I cannot, so I am asking for a change. I have to go back to these people again.

In addition to that, I have some serious problems which must be addressed within the constituency and any representative that worth his salt or his position ought to speak objectively about these things. Because of the Zone one area, I am still waiting on the long drawn out process of the bureaucracy in order to find a solution to the social and economic problems of the people of Licorish Village, My Lords Hill, Flint Hall and all of those areas. They have problems with sewage, they want to build proper houses, they want to enjoy the benefit from the Urban Development Commission, but the Water Works- because of the Stanley Report, even when the Urban Development Commission builds a house, the Water Works do not even want to give the people water. They want an affidavit to prove that the person was there sixteen years.

So, you have many people not enjoying the value that other people enjoy, not out of their own making but because of the State's long delay in finding a solution to these problems in Zone One.

The Prime Minister has put at the disposal of the Urban Development Commission, \$100 000 and has given instructions to a Committee to move expeditiously to get the problems resolved.

Like most other countries, there is not only a Central Government that we have to deal with in this country, we have to deal with another layer of Government that does not have the sanction of the people or the appointment of a Prime Minister, these are self-proclaimed people's representatives who are agents of all different types of forces and they have not responded, and in many cases, do not respond to Members of Parliament.

Do you know what it is to be going to a department over and over again asking an officer ...and hearing clarion calls about plans to help, and you are going on so for two years, and the representative is alongside of you and there is no proper delivery of service.

So if you wish to hear me talk about this type of Government. It happened to Kwame Nkrumah, it happened in Trinidad, it has happened in Barbados where these people undermined the intention of good government and something has to be done to expedite the delivery of service to the people in St. Michael East. That is my call.

Sir, there is \$40 million also that was made available to the Urban Development and the Rural Development Commissions. I would expect that I would not hear that St. Michael East enjoy the benefits of road prior to 1990, and that I need no more roads. I expect that the people in Barker's Road, Haggatts Hall, Flint Hall, and parts of Licorish Village, and the areas around there would be given an opportunity to walk on barber-green roads and concrete roads like any other person in this country with a sense of dignity, not with ten pairs of shoes in a bag. I want that change to be put in place, so I also expect to see some equity in relation to that distribution.

There is one million dollars, Sir, which will be made, as a consequence to the levies on taxes on the lottery. I would expect that money will be spent in such a way that we could improve the conditions of our Community Centers. I welcome the conversion to Resource Centers and that they install the require computers, so that the people in my constituency can also enjoy what sociologists call economies of

energy, economies of wisdom, just like economists talk about economies of scale when you combine the wisdom of the people in a constituency and their energy, you not only stabilize the lives of the people in the community, you not only uplift their spirit and their pride but you contribute collectively to the improvement of the national spirit of that community itself, and it is translated into production. So when one believes that these things mean nothing to people they are absolutely wrong.

Blemings Playing Field - there is adequate facilities there for a centre of excellence. We do not want a raw pasture, we can have some nice facilities around there too. But when you make positive and progressive proposals to that layer of Government they obstruct the flow, but I need to see an improvement in the surroundings in that area as well Sir.

So I am looking forward to enjoy the benefits - I am very sorry that the Minister of Lands is not here, because I also want him to move in delivering some service to St. Michael East. I need some land, I need assistance in a housing estate, proper constructing modern houses like those in the City. Do not let St. Michael East be sacrificed for the benefit of St. George or Christ Church, St. Peter or St. John. I welcome the improvement of every constituency, but let me have a share of the cake.

So I am looking forward to that Sir. I am sure that when I see you nodding your head, Sir, you concur in a very positive way, but because of the circumstances you are unable to say anything to these things that I am saying.

12:00 noon

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

Mr. SPEAKER:

Are you speaking to St. Michael Central?

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

I am speaking for St. Michael Central and all the people of Barbados who are in a disadvantage position, all the poor people of Barbados, including St. Michael East and Christ Church East but my major and primary interest is in the good people of St. Michael East.

I want to thank you for listening so patiently and I hope that I have been explicit enough for all people of good will with ears to hear. I hope they heard me well and I hope that they would not take the words as carillon sounds of comfort but they would translate the language and call into action. I need delivery of services for the people of St. Michael East.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Hon. R. StC. TOPPIN:

Mr. Speaker, I want to begin this afternoon by adding my voice, not only to the voices of the Honourable Members in here but also to the voices of the several persons who called between Tuesday evening and this morning to compliment the Right Honourable Prime Minister for a job very, very well done on Tuesday afternoon.

His presentation was a very statesmanlike presentation and one which contrasted very sharply with the quarrelling and the harangue that punctuated the attempted presentation of the Honourable Member for St. John yesterday evening. The Honourable Member for St. John came out in this usual and characteristic assassination style, spraying the bullets across here wildly, as he usually does, well knowing that if the rapid response unit on this side were to respond in the same way it responded the last time he did it in March this year during the Estimates, he himself is going to, once again, shrink in his seat and then as he did last night, run out of the Chamber, when the rapid response unit starts to inflect, in response to the blows about his body that he well deserves.

I do not propose this morning, Mr. Speaker, to spend a lot of time on him, I have some important matters which I want to get to but he made a glancing reference, once again in the area of the Fair Trading Commission. He was quick to exonerate me to say that the delay, his word, he knows it is not my fault but I am not satisfied even with the use of the word, delay because I have been at pains in here on more than one occasion, primarily for the benefit of the Honourable Member, to explain the process we are using to establish all three aspects of the Fair Trading Commission.

I have done that at length. I have explained the magnitude of the task. I have explained the number of the pieces of legislation that not only have to be enacted but also have to be examined as we go about the enactment of the pieces of legislation to establish the Fair Trading Commission. I have done all of that.

Even the Honourable Member himself talks about the need to ensure that the legislation, particularly the Fair Competition legislation is in harmony with the legislation of the Caribbean Community in the Protocols. So he should, of necessity, based on his own comments, recognise the magnitude of the task.

Mr. Speaker, if his little mind cannot comprehend what is involved here, I really cannot weave knowledge into his little mind and I do not have the time to continue to try to do it. What I think he was trying to mask yesterday was his attitude towards his participation in the Joint Select Committee in relation to the Fair Trading Commission. He very quickly said that he no longer bothers to attend because it is a waste of time.

Now, there is no question of, 'no longer bothering to attend,' the public of Barbados must understand that he has not attended one single meeting of that Joint Select Committee and not only has he not attended but not one single member of the Democratic Labour Party has attended one single meeting of the Joint Select Committee in relation to the Fair Trading Commission.

In June this year, I brought two pieces of legislation to this Chamber. Let me say now, boldly, that I

was in favour then, as I am now, of those pieces of legislation enacted at that very time because I recognise that no piece of legislation is going to be perfect at its inception, if ever at all it would be perfect. But it was Parliament's decision that it should go to a Joint Select Committee and the Leader of the Opposition was consulted fully on that planned process by the then acting Leader of the House. He concurred fully that there should be a Joint Select Committee to examine the provisions of the Bill and he nominated a Member of his Party from the Senate to that Joint Select Committee. We have met four times so far but at least one occasion the Member from the Senate who is on that Committee was seen roaming around the Parliament yard and did not bother to come in to participate in what is going to be one of the most far-reaching pieces of legislation ever to be implemented in this country.

The Honourable Member must not just gloss over the fact that he has failed to attend. It is insulting to the people of Barbados for a member of Parliament who is a member of a Committee, not only never to attend but not even to send an excuse as to why he is not attending. If he has such strong concerns about the work of it, there was an initial meeting we had to discuss all the concerns we had, how we should proceed and all that. He did not even attend that very first meeting and it is an insult to the people of Barbados for a member of Parliament who is put here by the people of Barbados, not to attend one single meeting of a sub-committee of Parliament which is the voice of the people. That is the very first point, Mr. Speaker, and the only point really which I want to make in relation to that particular comment.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want not to spend all my time on the Honourable Member for St. John, as I can, but to speak a bit about an area which the Prime Minister touched on in his presentation on Tuesday, the area of electronic commerce.

My voice is not the best, Mr. Speaker, so you have to forgive me from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, the area of electronic commerce which the Prime Minister mentioned is very important and people must understand the importance of electronic commerce. They must understand what it can do perhaps for every single person in this country and across the globe.

Electronic commerce, Mr. Speaker, is usually said to refer to the buying and selling of goods and services by use of electronic means but it really encompasses more than just the buying and selling of goods. It really refers to much more than just the buying and selling of goods electronically. Broadly defined really, it encompasses the delivery of information, product, services or payment by telephone, computer or other automated media. So that it includes all kinds of electronic transactions that are transacted by electronic means and will include things such as electronic banking, electronic purchasing and restocking systems, electronic payment systems, all forms of trade and digitised goods and services and all commercial transactions conducted by Internet, telephone, fax, et cetera.

Mr. Speaker, whether you take the shortened version or the more extended version, any definition you want to use of electronic commerce, one thing that is clear is that it is very rapidly becoming the principal means of conducting trade in today's world. It is completely changing the face of trade, Sir, as we have known it through the years.

It is important, therefore, to understand that electronic commerce, as a means of conducting trade, is really engulfing the entire world and it is doing so at a very, very rapid rate. Statistics show, which the

Prime Minister pointed out, that for 1999, global electronic commerce was estimated at \$33 billion and it is expected to grow to reach US\$6.9 trillion by the year 2004. Business to business transactions will reach, is estimated, some US\$3 trillion by the same 2004. This expansion, Mr. Speaker, is being attributed in large measure to the number of Internet users that are expected to increase from the current number of 171 million users at present to some 345 million over the same period.

Now, this increase in Internet usage is phenomenal when compared really with the rate at which other technological developments took place over the years and were absorbed into the day to day use by members of our society.

If you look for example, with radio, it took radio some 38 years to reach 50 million households. It took television 13 years to reach 50 million households and in contrast, it took the Internet a mere four years to reach 50 million households.

12:10 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

Given this rapid expansion in internet usage, it is imperative that Barbados gets on board as fully as possible in the shortest possible time.

In terms of the benefits to be derived, everyone stands to benefit, consumers, businesses - especially small and medium size enterprises, - Government and the economy as a whole. In terms of consumers benefits, the electronic commerce will allow consumers instant access to products, manufacturers and suppliers. Purchases can be made by consumers on the one hand and organisations on the other hand

who are respectively placed at opposite ends of the globe. The transaction cost will be significantly less than if it were made in the traditional way that we normally do it.

Businesses will also stand to benefit. It transforms the old antiquated way of doing business to a newer, far more efficient and dynamic manner of doing business. Businesses will benefit because in a market where there are no borders or barriers that restrict entry and allow consumers unlimited and instant access, all businesses will now be able to compete against each other far more effectively than they did before and each can now stake a claim to a piece of the market. So that small businesses can now compete far more effectively against larger companies whose market share small businesses were previously excluded from accessing.

It will also allow businesses, big or small, a relatively inexpensive advertising opportunity, to tap into a number of clients that they would never previously have been able to access. This is important for small countries like Barbados where small businesses have been traditionally hampered by limited information, limited market entry and even sometimes by just being what is referred to as 'distance from the market'.

Another significant benefit; business can now be conducted 24 hours a day, seven days a week, without the need for any member of staff actually at any time to be on hand to answer queries or to process orders. It will be done electronically directly between the consumer on one end and the business enterprise at the other end. This is very important, of course, for the retail sector.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, it is important given the benefits that can accrue to businesses, particularly small businesses, that at the earliest opportunity Barbados seeks to get on board. Governments; again electronic commerce is going to provide an opportunity for the Government of Barbados to discharge all of its civic obligations and responsibilities more efficiently.

At present, many governmental publications are first printed and then distributed. Take, for example, the Official Gazette, first printed, then distributed, when in fact an on-line approach would be faster and much cheaper, if Government were to engage in that type of procedure.

The benefits to be derived from electronic commerce are clear. My vision really in relation to the development of electronic commerce in Barbados, is for Government to facilitate the development of Barbados as a leading global centre for electronic commerce. Some other countries, for example, Bermuda have tried it and I would like to see Barbados fully developed as a leading global centre for electronic commerce.

I have been recently assigned - my Ministry I better say - the responsibility for electronic commerce and it is my intention, therefore, to move as quickly as possible to tackle all of the challenges and obstacles which the electronic commerce sector faces. It is not an easy task, in fact, arguably, nothing in politics is easy. Electronic commerce is really a global phenomenon and arguably, therefore, full resolutions of the problems that face electronic commerce will require a global consensus which is being undertaken. Barbados will, therefore, have to continue to participate in the international fora to ensure that it keeps abreast of developments and also to make its input.

Apart from that, Mr. Speaker, Barbados also has to do a number of things as well to ensure that the

electronic commerce sector in Barbados really takes off and fly. It is not a simple matter. There is one commentator who has already said that given the advances in technology, all you need really is a computer and a telephone line to become rich overnight. It is far from being that simple.

Therefore, the Ministry of Commerce, which has responsibility for electronic commerce, has come up with an action plan to ensure that Barbados does not become irrelevant in this rapidly, developing, technological age. The action plan, of course, takes into account all of the challenges which the sector is now facing.

The first and perhaps the most glaring deficiency in relation to the development of electronic commerce in Barbados has to do with the fact that at present there is no legislative or financial framework relating to the development of electronic commerce in Barbados. This is a multi-dimensional issue and the point has to be made that there is no one single piece of legislation that can be drafted and brought into existence that will cure all the problems in relation to the effect of the legislative framework.

There is at present a piece of legislation under the Electronic Transactions Bill which is being prepared by the Attorney-General's Chambers which should be laid in this Chamber pretty shortly. It is being drafted in response to certain concerns raised by the international business sector. The Ministry of International Business and the Ministry of Commerce worked together in coordinating the Cabinet paper and so on. That Bill will obviously deal with a number of problems and will concentrate on areas such as the legal recognition of electronic records, the validity of electronic contracts, the certification and verification of electronic signatures, data protection, protection of privacy and the like.

So, it will, therefore, in its provisions seek to deal with some of the problems that now challenge and confront electronic commerce in Barbados. But certainly other pieces of legislation will have to be drafted to deal with the hackers and so on who go into the computer systems, separate legislation has to be drafted for that.

Also, while the new Bill is going to feature the use of the paperless medium as an alternative for conducting and transacting business and will provide the same legal recognition to the paperless transaction, as for the type of transaction currently used - the paper-based transaction - the fact is that throughout our legislation in Barbados, there are so many pieces of legislation that can be found which require documents to be in writing and to be signed and witnessed, that a very comprehensive and thorough examination and study and assessment has to be done on whether or not those commercial pieces of legislation can in fact be just automatically adjusted to accommodate the needs of the electronic marketplace. There has to be a very thorough assessment and every single piece of legislation that is found to be effective in that regard will have to be amended individually.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the financial framework, the banking sector has to take the lead here. Electronic commerce is an area that is largely private sector led and driven. Government can only facilitate electronic commerce. Therefore, the banking world, will have to take the initiative to ensure that safe, hassle-free, fast and reliable payment systems are available to both consumers and businesses when they transact their business. Just providing credit cards and so on to people now really is not enough. Commercial banks really have to allow the use of other types of electronic payment systems. Digital cash, SmartCards, electronic cheques and the like will also have to feature prominently in the

financial framework.

The second challenge, Mr. Speaker, relates to the availability of the internet. There has to be widespread availability of the internet and access to modern telecommunications systems which must be reliable and affordable.

12:20 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

I make no apology for saying that Barbados has been done a great injustice by the existence of the current 20-year monopoly that was awarded to Cable & Wireless in 1991 for the provision of telecommunication services in Barbados. While some complimentary mention could be made of the fact that Cable & Wireless did invest on the telecommunications network in Barbados and, therefore, did contribute in some measure to the development of the region, the question will always be, would we in Barbados and the region not have been better off and far more developed without that monopolistic albatross around our necks. I think the answer is clear and the answer is yes. We would have been far more advanced and developed if we had allowed competition to flourish in the area of telecommunications at the earliest possible opportunity.

I am pleased, and I wish to compliment the Honourable Member for Christ Church East for being able to ensure that that monopoly will now come to an end by the end of the year 2002 and that we will witness the full liberalisation of the telecommunications sector by that time, and, in fact, the process is going to begin in a mere five weeks time. I am very pleased about that because it would further provide a far more favourable environment to the development of electronic commerce and the conduct of business generally in Barbados.

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the matter of the accessibility to internet at affordable rates would not have been fully dealt with what I would call the community outreach aspect. It is a fact that there are a number of people in communities across Barbados who cannot access the internet from their homes, usually because they cannot afford to pay for it or because they cannot afford to be trained to utilise it as

fully as it should be utilised.

Whatever the reason, Mr. Speaker, my Ministry felt that the time had come when everyone had to be brought on board so that everyone could be given the opportunity to use the internet and to participate in the whole area of electronic commerce and information technology. Some of the residents of my constituency have already called me to ask me to thank the Prime Minister for his announcement on Tuesday night that \$1 million would be made available to the Community Development Division of the Ministry of Social Transformation to enable it to equip community centres with internet facilities and, more important, to provide training.

People have to be made aware of the benefit of electronic commerce. There is a lot of skepticism in the absence of the usual face-to-face transactions and people are naturally sceptical about going on internet and using it to make purchases or to conduct business transactions and the like. I think, therefore, that the issue of training will involve the process of sensitising people to the benefits, allaying their fears and letting them know how to use the internet fully to their benefit, whether they are consumers or whether they are small businesses so that they can survive and prosper in this technological and informational age.

Mr. Speaker, the action plan has to do with the role of Government. This Government has recognised that it should take the lead in using information technology in as many transactions as possible. Already we have it in use by Government in relation to EduTech 2000, the IPSI Project which is a network of a number of Government departments, the Customs Direct Transfer Import project, the Smart Stream Project which the Supreme Court has used as well in relation to the management of certain documents. All those are areas in which Government is leading by example and participating in the information technology.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that in order to take Barbados to the forefront of the information age there is need for the formulation of an information technology strategic plan. Electronic commerce is but one area of information technology although it is a very important area and it clearly needs very special and focussed attention.

As part of my Ministry's action plan, therefore, we will be making strong representation to the Ministry of the Civil Service for the establishment of information technology in a strategic programme executive unit under my Ministry to oversee the implementation of Government's information technology strategic plan when it is formulated. I must say the process of formulating the strategic plan is a process that is well underway.

We also believe that unit should be headed by a chief information technology officer and that there should also be a special electronic commerce advisor who perhaps can be referred to as an e-czar, who would advise on matters relating to electronic commerce and electronic government and assist in further development of electronic commerce.

We believe that the appointment of an electronic commerce advisor is critical to taking the process forward in the development of electronic commerce in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, those are the comments which I wanted to make in relation to electronic commerce. I

want to commend the Prime Minister. Everywhere I look I see a success story. I took up the Central Bank Report for 1999, the very first page read -

“The Barbados economy continued to grow in 1999, with real GDP estimated to have increased by 3.1%.... This is the seventh consecutive year of expansion. As in 1998, growth was spurred by new investment, particularly in the tourism sector, which has led to continued expansion in the construction sector.”

On page 2, it spoke about the fact that the net international reserves rose by \$74.5 million in 1999. The Prime Minister gave an update on that this year to indicate that in fact it had topped the \$1 billion mark for the first time in our history. On page 6, it spoke of construction activity and at the end of December the rate was estimated at 19.8% compared to 11.8% and 12.2% at the same time in 1998 and 1997 respectively.

According to the continuous household samples surveyed, an estimated 122 000 persons were employed in Barbados at the end of 1999, an increase of 4 800 persons over 1998, so there is a success story wherever you turn. What is important is that this prosperity has been used by this Government in such a way that we have shared it through the people that we brought on board to ensure that every step of the way the people of Barbados benefit from this macro economic success.

In the midst of macroeconomic bliss the Government has ensured that roofs on the Government housing estates across Barbados are in the process of being converted from asbestos to galvanise so that every single roof on a government housing estate in Grazettes has been converted from asbestos to galvanise and we are seeing signs that it is about to begin in Eden Lodge as well. We eagerly anticipate that.

In the midst of financial macroeconomic bliss roads, primarily tenantry roads, have been paved in areas such as Small Land in Green Hill, Well Gap in Cave Hill, not only across St. Michael North but across Barbados as a whole. Buses were once again put on certain routes, for example, in Grazettes, in Phillip's Road, St. Stephen's Hill, Eden Lodge, Hinds Hill and Husbands New Development.

Mr. Speaker, I should finish in two minutes.

Mr. SPEAKER:

That was two minutes ago.

Hon. R. StC. TOPPIN:

We want to see the buses re-introduced in Well Gap and on Whitehall Main Road and expanded into the Husbands new development area.

Amidst the macro-economic bliss Government ensured that little things that matter, like the street lights that were installed throughout Barbados, whether it be in Cave Hill, Hinds Hill, Airlie Tenantry Road, Clearview Heights Stage III, Warrens Park South and since the last elections, in Ealing Road, Grazettes. The macroeconomic bliss, Mr. Speaker, is funnelling down to the ordinary man in the street. It also ensured that playing areas were developed across Barbados including at Reservoir Road in Lodge Hill where the youngsters had to stand up in 1994 and watch their playing area cut up for middle class

housing development and they were out of a playing field for the last six years.

12:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

They have got a playing field, a multi-purpose hard court in Lodge Hill and the young people are very pleased about that. In addition, people in urban tenancies can now purchase their lots at \$2.50 a square foot with Government picking up the tab for the difference.

Mr. Speaker, the residents of Brewsters Land, Well Gap, Johnson Land, Mottleys Land, Fordes Land and all the other tenancies in Barbados expect to benefit from Government's proposal and they will be able to buy the land at \$2.50 per square foot with Government picking up the tab.

Mr. Speaker, the last point before I sit. In the midst of the macro economic bliss, recognising that there is the existence of the working-poor the Government decided, and still implements the policy, where all persons who earn \$13 000 a year or less and, therefore, constitute the working-poor, have been able to receive, on an annual basis, a \$500 a year reverse tax credit. Mr. Speaker, I do not think that Government can be called upon, really and truly, to do more in such a short period of time for people across Barbados.

I am very sorry, Mr. Speaker, that I did not get a chance to deal with the issue of small business development because I wanted to make a comment on the point that the Honourable Member for St. John made yesterday about the concessions that were granted last week in this Parliament. He must understand the concept of development, he must know that concessions play a part in development. When we speak of concessions having been granted to Royal Westmoreland and Cruise Terminal Incorporated back in 1994 we are speaking of concessions being made to big businesses across Barbados at a time when the small business sector was crying out for help and was getting none whatsoever from the Democratic Labour Party and that is what made it shameful.

If I had the opportunity today to show all that we have been doing for small businesses and what we plan to do in relation to bankruptcy and insolvency, I would have pointed out that there is no difficulty in granting the concessions that were granted last week in this Parliament because they were granted in

the context of not only making concessions to the big business operators to ensure the development of Barbados but in the context of the sustained development of the small business sector in Barbados in every single way possible.

Mr. Speaker, I am indebted to you.

Miss H.E. THOMPSON:

Mr. Speaker, I rise in this debate to support the Budgetary Proposals and the National Policy Statement which came before this Chamber on Tuesday evening.

The policy statement made by the Prime Minister represented a departure from the usual format of the Budget to which we have become accustomed over the years. It was a wide and varied presentation which indicated the economic status of Barbados, which indicated what sort of broad social framework and policy planning the Government has intended and it spoke to the positioning of Barbados not only in the short term but in the medium and in the long term.

The presentation allowed us to understand what the vision of the Government is and where it is that the Government wants to take Barbados not only what its fiscal planning is but its social planning. It was an extremely useful statement for all Barbadians and it helps to cement, Sir, what has become apparent over the course of the last six years and that is an increased confidence in Barbadians about who they are, about how the Barbados economy is performing, about their place in the Caribbean and in the world. It helps to tell Barbadians what the future for them as individuals and what the future for their children will be.

It, therefore, represents a departure from where we were at the end of 1993 and, certainly, where we were in September of 1994, when there was a total loss of confidence in the leadership of the country, when there was loss of confidence in the Government of the day and people were fearful for themselves. They did not know if or when they would lose their jobs. People were fearful that every member of their household would be put out of work. They lived in fear of losing their motorcars, their homes and everything that they had fought for as a family and as individuals to improve themselves in life.

It is clear the change and the mood of the country. It is clear the degree of confidence that the average Barbadian has because of the way in which people are conducting themselves in their private and business affairs.

There are a number of indicators which make it apparent not only at the local level but, certainly, the increased confidence also extends into the international community. At the national level there is the absence of fear and uncertainty, at the national level people know that there will be given work and that even if jobs are not opening up in the public sector that there are increased jobs in the private sector for people who are skilled and equally for people who are unskilled.

It represents a departure from the time when the leadership of the country was surrounded by all kinds of jokes. Wherever you went, to parties, to social events, people were making sport about the leadership of the country, about the politicians of the day and the fact that they had become objects of ridicule rather than objects of respect. People did not have confidence in the vision which the leadership of the country of the day had for Barbados.

At the international level we have come to a point where we are no longer regarded as a credit risk and people are keen to lend Barbados money because our reputation on the international market over the course of the last six years has grown so tremendously.

There is a willingness on the part of international businesses and on the part of foreign nationals to invest in the Barbadian economy and to invest in Barbados because the indices of growth and development are apparent even with the naked eye.

Wherever one goes across Barbados one sees high quality housing stock. Whatever village you go into, whatever road you go down in Barbados one can see an improved quality of housing and everybody is expanding and improving and you can see paved drive-ways. You can see it in the quality cars that people are driving and the cry for more housing and better roads is a reflection of the improved quality of life that people are having. It is an indication that people have disposal income and want to invest in Barbados, that they too want to buy a piece of this rock and own a piece of this rock which can be their own and which they can call home because that is important. Mr. Speaker, from the time we are very young we are given a dream of eventually owning our own piece of the rock.

One sees it, Mr. Speaker, Sir, in increased savings in the local banking system in the Central Bank's report. The figures I am using throughout the course of my presentation are going to be from the Central Bank's Report. I say that now in case anybody queries them. At the end of 1994 domestic savings stood at \$343.7 million

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Continuation of Miss H.E. THOMPSON:

but by the end of 1999, domestic savings had grown to \$323.5 million. People have money, they have money to save, invest and they have disposable income available to them to use.

This has been brought about because the Prime Minister has said to us from as early as 1994 that there will not be any reckless giveaways and that he intends to follow a path of prudent fiscal management to get the country where he has the vision for us to go. Mr. Speaker, Sir, no where, is the confidence in the economy better demonstrated than in the housing and construction sectors.

Let me look first at construction.

Asides

Miss H.E. THOMPSON:

The Honourable for St. Lucy teases but I do not hear him.

In 1993, according to the Central Bank Report, the construction sector grew by what the Central Bank Report itself describes as a modest amount - 2.2%. In 1994 it grew by 3.3% and what the Central Bank said in its commentary on these statistics is extremely important because it indicates that this growth in construction did not come from the construction of private domestic dwellings, it did not come from the construction of houses for Barbadians, but it came as a result of the refurbishment of hotels and the construction of the Royal Westmoreland Golf Course which we know provided income at the highest level and primarily for non Barbadians. It was not targeted to the local markets.

By contrast we can look at the growth in the construction sector in Barbados in 1998 which was 19.8% - a significant index of growth over the course of a four-year period. For 1999, the growth was 5.5% and the Central Bank gives its reason for the decline as the difficulty

in accessing skilled artisans and workmen in the labour force to meet the demand for the construction sector.

Construction is always an indicator of investor confidence. It is always an indicator not only of foreign investor confidence but of local investor confidence. If a person has money available to them and they are uncertain of what is happening in the economy they would prefer to hold on to the money rather than spend it.

Asides

Miss H.E. THOMPSON:

When you are uncertain of what is happening and where you have no confidence of what is going on in the economy, you tend to hold on to your money for the rainy day rather than spend it. This spending in the construction sector also has to be seen against the backdrop of the amount of money that people are also saving simultaneously with the spending on various consumer goods and in the construction sector.

These are clear indicators that there is increase of money in the economy at every level.

If we can turn to another very important indicator of growth and the state of the economy, we can look at employment. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North, during the course of his comments, spoke to the actual increase in numbers - 122 200 people employed at the end of 1999, representing an increase of 4 800 over 1998. If we go back again, as I have been doing the comparative analysis, in 1993 unemployment was at 24.7%, at the end of 1994 it was at 21.9% but in 1998 unemployment had dropped to 12.2% and by the end of 1999 unemployment was at an almost unprecedented 10.4%.

These figures from the Central Bank Report clearly demonstrate that all over Barbados increased numbers of people are at work. When people are at work it means that families are doing better and the best way of protecting families is by making sure that family members are working, not that all family

members are sent home as they were in 1993.

I have two concerns in respect of unemployment and I would wish to speak to one now. Unemployment for women, at the end of 1998 was 13.3% as opposed to 8.4% for men men, that is a clear indicator that there are more men in the economy working than there are women. This is not an unusual phenomenon neither in Barbados nor in the rest of the world. Invariably, that is what national statistics show that there are more men working than there are women.

We have to be extremely concerned about that in Barbados because in societies that are primarily matra- focal, where women are responsible for raising children and where invariably households are led by women, then we have to make sure that there are fewer women unemployed and we have to specifically target looking at increasing job opportunities for women. There is a core of women, and they are in their early 20s and 40s, who are unemployed in Barbados and we have to make it a particular strategic objective to reduce unemployment within that age group. All of these women either leave households or live in household in which several other women live, usually a mother and three daughters and all of the children of the various generations are from that household. We have to specifically target reducing unemployment amongst women and particularly in those age cohorts.

It means that we have to ensure that women are given skills in areas which they do not traditionally work. Women must now become masons, carpenters, electricians and plumbers because if the jobs are being created in the construction sector, then the women have to equip themselves with the skills in the areas of the economy where jobs are being created. Everybody cannot be maids at the hospital. Everybody cannot be National Conservation Commission NCC Rangers. I say those because these jobs are the two jobs for which invariably women invariably who are looking for jobs come to you and ask. We have to think in terms of branching into new areas of endeavour and non traditional areas of employment for women.

Another indicator of the growth in the economy and the fact that people are doing well and I have spoken so far to about different indicators - construction, employment, housing, the overall positioning of the economy, savings and investment. I would wish, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to turn now to the area of domestic mortgages because that is a clear indication of what is happening in respect of home construction. I am not talking about hotel construction, the big houses on the west coast that are inaccessible to some of us. I am talking about the average Barbadian. I am talking about the people in my constituency, who have recently moved into a house in the new development at Hoytes. I am talking about my constituency in relation to Husbands Heights where a new development is going up and I can call several other areas.

In 1997, and I am using the Prime Minister's statistics here and not the Central Bank's because I did not have enough time to check through that Report.

12.50 p.m.

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Continuation of Miss H. E. THOMPSON:

The indicators are that in 1997 mortgages in Barbados were at \$36 million, that figure, at 1994, has moved to \$247 million in June, 2000. Now, that is a significant growth. There is no denying that growth and if one looks at the breakdown.

A couple of days ago, I had the opportunity of speaking to someone in management at Barbados Mortgage Finance Company Limited and that is why when the Prime Minister gave his statistics, they struck a cord with me because this manager said that four years ago, the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company Limited was doing \$10 million dollars a year in mortgage loans for housing, and for this year, the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company Limited is doing between \$30 and \$35 million in Mortgage loans to householders, or perspective householders, and they anticipate that by next year they will grow to \$40 to \$45 million in mortgage loans.

Now that is only one finance institution, that does not say anything about the credit unions, it does not tell us about the commercial bank, it does not tell us about the trust companies, it does not tell us about the insurance companies or other lending institutions, because there are others. So that when I heard this figure of \$36 to \$247 million I knew, from what I was hearing that they had to be accurate.

Again, on the same day, I had a conversation with a person from CLICO speaking about a client of mine who was borrowing money from them and he said to me that he was extremely busy, that he had on his desk 300 mortgages which he was dealing with.

Asides.

Miss H.E. THOMPSON:

I am the wrong Thompson, I cannot work for CLICO, but if they would send me some I would not object. I would do it well and I would do it quickly.

But Mr. Speaker Sir, the point that I am making, and it is interesting that I asked what did they attribute this growth in the mortgage sector to, and they said greater income and liquidity in the

economy, but most of all to the advent of the 100 percent mortgage. The Government has to be complimented for the introduction of the 100 percent mortgage, because whenever we see the growth in these mortgage loans we have to understand the implications of this for all Barbadians.

It means that a person who was renting land to an individual for a long time and would like to be able to sell it but knew that the person could never afford it that individual, who, if given a loan, would pay the loan assiduously, would ensure that they meet every payment but could never save enough money to get the 10 percent deposit, or the 15 percent deposit that the bank or the finance house wanted, that individual can now get a loan. It means that all kinds of person who previously would have been renting houses for either a long time, or for the whole of their lives, that they could now walk into finance institutions in Barbados and get a 100 percent mortgage, that they could become home-owners just like anybody else, that they could have a property to pass onto their children and to their children's children.

Often you can see it, go into any constituency where starter-homes have been built, even the smallest of starter-home and you see how, over the course of a few years, as people 'catch their hand' - to use a good old-time Bajan expression - how these homes are expanded and extended and developed into beautiful palatial dwellings that the whole family takes pride in looking after.

Witness the development in the growth of the mortgage industry in Barbados, it is not only about statistics in the economy, it is not only about reciting statistics and percentages because it represents an improvement in the quality of the housing stock in Barbados. It represents an improvement in the quality of people's lives. It represents upward social mobility for the average Barbadian and these are important considerations. It tells us that Barbados is on a good, stable growth path, that we must - to use the Prime Minister's expression - stay the course. That this is not the time to be drawn away by the illusions of kisses on the front page of the paper, or any other illusions, or delusions thrown out to us on Wednesday evening, this is the time to stay the course. Those who want to buy a piece of rock, and I tell you, there are many of my constituents who are grateful for these increases and these improvements, and ...

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON:

No, no, I am doing quite well where I am, thank you.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I apologize for taking up the distraction from the other side.

I am very pleased, as indeed many of my constituents are pleased, and they speak to me. For me, I go to some of the developments in my constituency where people have benefited by 100 percent mortgages and I cannot tell you the gratitude. You knock and they say "Ms. Thompson, come in". They want to walk you through the house. They want to show you all of the furniture. They carry you out in the yard. They tell you what they are planting, what they are planning to plant.

The joy and pride that people feel that they are property owners, that they are doing well, that they are working, that they are able to send away the children for a holiday, or carry the children away for a holiday,

and that they have confidence about themselves and their future, and the future of their children. This really is a major transformation of significance, or of the kind of which all of us can be proud, and the kind of which all of us can feel that the country is doing well. We can feel proud of ourselves as a people but we must not rest on our laurels. There is still a lot of work to be done.

In St. James South, and I would wish to make a few parochial points, and then I would wish to sound a national caution. I am concerned still, like the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, that while unemployment is significantly reduced that there is high unemployment in certain districts in Barbados. I see it in my constituency, in Haynesville. I see it in Durants Village, I see it in my constituency, to a lesser extent at Halls Village.

I have had my own constituency poll and I know that unemployment in my constituency is higher than the 10 percent national level. I would really wish to see us specifically target those areas where there are remaining pockets of poverty and where unemployment continues to be high.

I believe strongly that it is time for us to go into all of the communities in Barbados that have Housing Areas. A lot of them are looking drab and a lot of them need significant improvement in the infrastructure, in the buildings themselves and they need the surroundings spruced up; nice planting of trees and parks and so on, so that people have interest within the community, so that there can be improvement, and so people do not feel that they are living in ghettos. Many of the Housing Areas in Barbados are looking too dingy and the N.H.C. has to embark on a program to paint all, starting with Haynesville, Sir, of all the Housing Areas in Barbados.

Similarly, there are a number of projects in my constituency about which I met with officials from various Ministries, Community Development, and so on. Over two years ago, a community centre that is to go on Melbourne Cricket Ground. Melbourne Cricket Club is one of the oldest cricket clubs in the country. It has a rich history and tradition, and we need to put proper sporting facilities in place there.

At the Desmond Haynes Pavilion, I have been asking for lights for certain parts of the Pavilion for over four years. I am not taking on the nods of certain people that I am seeing now, because for four years I have been writing to them and I have not got it yet.

Similarly, there are roads in my constituency where the various government agencies came and did the surveying prior to election but up to now has started no work. I am speaking of Lower Holders Hill, I am speaking of Upper Holders Hill, I am speaking of Upper Durants' Village, but most of all, I am speaking about Halls Village.

Halls Village, in terms of the roads, is one of the worst areas in St. James South and in 1994, the Honourable Member for St. Peter walked this area with me and promised the people there that if we were to win the election they would be given road as a matter of priority. This is the year 2000. Every year since then, I have written about the road at Halls Village and the people at Halls Village have not got their road yet. They are getting angry, and rightly so, and now I am making this appeal from this House, as I have done myriad of times before for the road at Halls Village to be done.

I turn now Mr. Speaker, finally, to the national caution to which I would wish to make...

Asides.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON:

I do not speak about that. It has nothing to do with me.

At the national level Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that it is my view that the country is doing extremely well. We are doing extremely well, economically. But we must also ensure - and I caution - that the benefits filter down to all levels of the society, that nobody feels left out or excluded, that in relation to the politics of inclusion that inclusion must not only be a political practice but has to be social and economic as well; that every Barbadian must feel included in this economic approach.

In this regard it is absolutely critical that something is done in relation to crime. While it is true that the overall statistics on crime have reduced and have reduced significantly, the types of crimes which drive fear into the hearts of the average Barbadian - the murders, the robberies, the break-ins; all of these are on the increase, some have doubled, some have tripled, and they must be dealt with if people are to be made to feel comfortable again.

Similarly, there is a concern that small people like wayside vendors are being dislocated in preference to big business.

Equally, there is a perception that too much land is being sold to non-nationals and that Barbadians are having reduced access to it.

Well, in relation to the amount of land being purchased by Barbadians and properties being built, when one looks at the statistics, that perception is not necessarily supported by the evidence.

These three areas that I have just cited - crime, social discontent, unemployment and various other concerns, these are all extremely significant.

It has been our experience here in Barbados that the economy can be doing extremely well and that Government can lose the election because of social issues. That has also been an experience internationally.

We cited England in the last election that the economy was doing very well under the Conservatives, but Labour won a massive victory because of social concerns. It is extremely important, in so far as the public's whole perception about the state of the country, that those perceptions are addressed. If the perceptions are false, let us have proper public relations campaigns putting the truth before the public, and if those perceptions are accurate, then let us address the problems which are causing discontentment within the country.

Our goal, Mr. Speaker, Sir, must be, in my view, economic well-being and social justice. If we can achieve that, not only is the Barbados economy and society secured for years to come but I believe that the position of this Government, as a Government, will also be secured. Thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. Mr. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be now suspended to 200 p.m.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly at 1:10 p.m.

1:10 p.m.

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER:

This Sitting is resumed.

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL:

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

First of all I would like to commend the Right Honourable Prime Minister for an excellent presentation of the Financial Statements as well as the Economic and Financial Policies of Government over the last year, as well as to some extent, over the last six years.

Since 1994, Barbados has been able to enjoy a very good economic performance. As a matter of fact, we have had eight consecutive years of growth and during the last five years, we have had 3.6 per cent annual growth in the economy.

During that time too, we have had a reduction in the unemployment levels of Barbados. Seven years ago, we all will remember when unemployment was around 25 per cent and right now the unemployment level is below the 10 per cent level which is the lowest ever, since Independence.

We have also been lucky to have good foreign reserves, they are now over \$1 billion. It is true that out of that \$350 million were borrowed sometime over the last two years and this was more or less to prop up or to cushion the effect in case there was any fall off.

We must recognise the fact that the world, economy, over the last decade or two has risen by 2.5 per cent as compared to the good glory days of 1950s and 1960s when the world economy rose by 5 per cent. So nowadays it is very important for any Minister of Finance to be very innovative and also to think in terms of restructuring the economy, especially in the light of globalization.

Globalization in itself is a new phenomenon which is frightening to some people but the fact is that it is something that we will all have to accept. I was reading an article recently and the author referred to globalization as 'Godzilla'. You all would have seen the movie 'Godzilla' and during that movie, Godzilla, New York was virtually destroyed, not really by the people but by the problems inflicted because of the people trying to defend New York. In other words, similarly, globalization is such that we have to recognise that we have to accept globalization, we have to accept the rules of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and if we do not accept them, we would be just like New York, as in the movie 'Godzilla'.

We also have an example to look up, if you look at Australia, you would find that at the beginning of this century, Australia had the richest people in the world. As a matter of fact, Australia had a very solid economy. However, Australia's economy was run in such a way that it had no sort of impact on the outside world, in other words, it was a central sort of economy.

You will find that over the last 50 years when there have been some depressions, for example, you had the depressions of the 1960s and 1980s, the economy of Australia found it more difficult. They went through more problems in the economy than some of the G7 and G8 countries which were not in as good a position as Australia. In other words what I am trying to tell you is that this is a small world. The world is a global village and we all have to conform to the rules of the WTO.

I would also like to say that the barometer by which a Prime Minister or a Minister of Finance should be measured by is how he controls his fiscal deficit. If you look back, in 1991 and 1992, we had a fiscal deficit of \$248 million. Since 1994 we have been able to reduce that one year to about \$35 million, another year to about \$29 million, another year about \$52 million, one year to \$118 million and last year to \$67 million. That in itself is a great achievement looking at the fact that Barbados is now a \$5 Billion economy.

We can even go back to the 1980s, the 1981/1982 period when the fiscal deficit was in the vicinity of \$120 million yearly. We could also go back to the years 1983 to 1986 when the fiscal deficit was over \$130 million. If one had to look back at what it was, today when you look at the fact that at the time in Barbados, the GDP was even less than 50 per cent than what it is, the economy was even less than 50 per cent of what it is today and right now, we have a deficit net amortisation of \$67 million.

I would like to commend the Prime Minister of Barbados for prudently handling the economy in such a way that we could now reap some of the good benefits which all of us have had over the last few years. We have had an improvement in almost every aspect of life in Barbados. However, do not care how good one has done, there are still one or two areas of concern and I would like to mention a couple of areas of concern as far as I am concern.

In my constituency of Christ Church West Central, I have had some serious problems stemming from the Barbados Water Authority where many of my people had their water disconnected. I think you must be cognizant of the fact that a lot of these people suffered during the structural adjustments of the last administration in the early 1990s and although some of them have got work and they are beginning to feel better, they are still suffering and have not yet fully recovered from what has happened in the early 1990s.

I think it is ridiculous, I am not saying that people should not pay their water bill, but I think it is ridiculous when every week, the people in Silver Hill, Gall Hill and Sargeant Village water is being disconnected. I wonder if the Barbados Water Authority would like to see people go back to public pipes and public baths. That is not nice at all. Those days are gone past and we have to better sort out things so that everybody would benefit.

Since Barbados is in a better position economically, I think it is imperative that we give back something to the people at the lower strata of the society. This is where those poor people whose water

has been disconnected need to be given that sort of buffer.

It is also a shame when these people go to the Barbados Water Authority, they made arrangements because they are frightened and very often they are not able to keep the arrangements, then, here comes another month and the water is disconnected and in some cases they have to pay \$1 000 and \$2 000 to get the water fully back on. And do you know who they are coming to? They are coming to certain Parliamentary Representatives. For example, they would come to me, they would come to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, they would come to certain people who have housing schemes. I have Silver Hill Housing Scheme and I am very familiar with the people in Gall Hill. It is not an area I represent but it is an area to which I have been very close for a very long time and naturally, a lot of those people come to me when they have difficulties. Sometimes we have to pull our pockets to make sure that these people's water is connected and I think that is very hard on us and it is very bad for the Ministry to be adopting that type of attitude to poor people in Barbados.

2:10 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of His Honour J. M. EDGHILL:

If the economy is doing that well, let some of these people share in the profits.

A problem which I know is very common to everyone in this Parliament is that of inadequate housing. It is true that the Government has done a pretty job so far in getting houses and house spots for people but I still think it is necessary for us to go even faster than we are going now because there are still many people who need house spots and houses. I am talking about poor people.

Right now, I find that we are building a lot of houses for \$75 000 and \$100 000 but no worker getting \$150 a week can afford to buy that type of house. Added to that too is the fact that a lot of those houses are not up to standard, they are too small. I do not see how you could ask a man to pay \$70 000 for house and land with the house only being 420 square feet, that is not right. I think we have to find a

cheaper and more affordable form of housing the poor people in Barbados.

Added to that, I think it is also necessary to make sure that land would be made available to certain type of persons who cannot buy or who is not in a position to buy land. There are still some very poor people in this country who cannot afford to buy a house spot. I think it is going to be very important for the Government to give a percentage for the land or a percentage of these spots to some of these people to rent so that they could put their own houses. In some cases these people just want a little \$15 000 or \$20 000 to put up a chattel house and they are comfortable. On the other hand, we have been concentrating on \$75 000 and \$100 000 houses which a lot of these people can ill-afford.

Another problem we talked about for quite some time is that of the asbestos roofs on houses in Silver Hill and Gall Hill. I think it is time that these roofs should be removed because they are health hazards. These houses were built about 30 years ago, so the asbestos roofs were on these houses for over 30 years but after 20 years, the fibre starts to emanate from the asbestos. When this happens it can cause a condition called asbestosis among these people and if nothing is done to it for a very long time you will find that people could also get fibrosis which is the hardening of the lungs thereby making people become a lot more susceptible to heart problems. So it is better to try to solve this matter now than for it to cost us a lot of money down the line when people will have to be treated at the hospital or by private doctors. All of this in itself will cause Barbados some additional money.

I also have a problem in the Gall Hill area. I could remember in the 1980s, about 1984, there was a piece of land that was used as a playing facility for the people in Gall Hill. I supposed you are wondering why I am talking about Gall Hill, it is not my constituency, but Gall Hill is very close to me.

Asides

His Honour J. M. Edghill:

I will represent Gall Hill whether I am in St. Michael South or St. Michael East. Gall Hill is dear to me. Gall Hill had a field in the back in the housing area some years ago, and I must say that it happened under this Government, where bulldozers went into the area and bulldozed the ground, put a road into the land and there was no more playing facility for the people in that area.

So far some land was bought in the Fairways district for these people but it is my feeling that it is taking too long for the people of Gall Hill to get their playing facility. They were promised this facility since we were in Government and this is six years now and only so much has happened. I am wondering - if without I saying anything or for that matter the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central not saying anything - how long it would take for these people to get a playing facility. Right now there is an out of season football tournament and do you know that Bayer Pride of Gall Hill has no place to practise because we have been using The Foundation School for a long time and when cricket is on they cannot run on the pitch and as a result of that they have to be going from place to place to practise their game during the course of the week.

I have had discussions with the Chairman of the Board of The Deighton Griffith School because that school has very good facilities. I find that some of these people who we put in positions seem to be so caught up with themselves that they cannot understand how the people at the bottom live and they cannot understand the thinking of the people at the bottom. As a matter of fact, they feel that the schools

belong to them. You know these people. I have asked them on several occasions to do something to help the Pride of Gall Hill so that they can practise and up to now the Pride of Gall Hill has been able to practise only occasionally on Saturdays at The Deighton Griffith School.

I do not think that board members and chairmen of these boards realise that when the schools are there the facilities are for the community and if the communities are not allowed to use the facilities they will be vandalized. We have to get that into the heads of some of these board members. As far as I am concerned, a lot of them want changing and the right type of people put in these positions who understands what is going on at the grass root level. That is the problem.

I would also like to say that I know that the Government has done a lot for my constituency during the last six years but there are still some other worrying aspects, some things that I would like them to look after, during the next couple of years. One problem is that of roads. I was happy to hear, two evenings ago, when the Prime Minister stated that \$40 million has been allocated to the Rural Development Commission whereby concrete roads will be built for the rural and urban districts. If you have to look at this money - in the context of what it is, \$40 million - it is fairly easy for me to ask to be given at least 2 kilometres of concrete roads in my constituency. If you are thinking in terms of dividing the resources of this country equitably, I think that Christ Church West Central deserves 2 kilometres of road within the next 18 months.

2:20 p.m.

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Continuation of HIS HONOUR J.M. EDGHILL:

I have some areas in Sargeants Village, Bartletts Tenantry. There are a couple of areas in Bartletts Tenantry that need roads badly. It is necessary to have a road to the back of Silver Hill. This is on top of Reagan Hill. This was a road promised to those people since the 1980s when that land was sold to the residents of that district and up to now no road has been made available to them.

I also have a tenantry in the Canevale area which needs a road very badly. I am now working on getting those people to buy the land. This tenantry has about 25 or 26 tenants and I think during the next year or two these persons would be able to buy that land through the Urban Development Commission.

I am really looking forward to getting quite a bit of these roads constructed in Christ Church West Central. There are also a couple of areas which need some lighting. There are still certain areas like Silver Hill, Landing Scheme, Vauxhall. There are still about 4 or 5 areas which need some lighting and I am looking forward to get some assistance so that these people will feel that they are also part of

Barbados.

I was planning to talk about the Abilene Jones Club but my friend on the left from Christ Church East Central, I understand, has dealt admirably with that particular problem so I would not worry to bore you by repeating some of what my friend has said. However, I would like to congratulate once more the Prime Minister for a job well done in prudently handling or managing the economy of Barbados over the last six years. Barbados is now on a sustained and sustainable growth path and we in Barbados could expect a lot more of the goodies coming under this Administration because, regardless of what you say, you could only get goodies when the economy is properly run and you have to be realistic, that has happened over the last six years.

It is true that it will never be a perfect situation but, by and by, I think that we can say that Barbados has done excellently over the last six years. I would like to commend the Prime Minister and on that note I will say thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice to the debate in this Honourable Chamber. I want to congratulate the Right Honourable Prime Minister for so ably presenting the budgetary proposals here on Tuesday afternoon.

The Honourable Member for St. John in his reply to the Right Honourable Prime Minister started with a litany of woes and in so doing he mentioned that the roads in Barbados were in very bad condition. Indeed, Sir, if this statement was made last year or earlier this year I would have no reason to stand up in here in its defence. Last year, the Nation newspaper almost every weekend for a period of time carried what was known as a pothole competition. This was where their photographers on seeing roads with holes and roads that are broken and damaged would have taken photographs of these damaged roads and holes and they would be published in the newspaper and people would call in saying where they saw a pothole and I guess it was a good thing in a sense that it made the Ministry aware of some of the areas that needed attention. I saw nothing wrong with that. A duty of a newspaper is to inform and bring news, whether good or bad.

Mr. Speaker, the unusual heavy rainfall last year, the utility companies working on their services also in Barbados; recently, we have had an influx in the number of heavy trucks using our roads on a daily basis; a lot of the roads in Barbados were not built to facilitate that kind of heavy vehicle with those kinds of axles. Also I would say that at that time the bitumen that is used in making the asphalt to pave the road was not always available because as you know this material is imported mainly from Venezuela and we have to wait until the importers import the material in order to sell it to the producers of this asphalt.

Mr. Speaker, we are now almost at year end and the newspapers have not been able to report in the manner they did last year and there is a reason for this. At this year's Estimates, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport was given \$5 million in order to rehabilitate the main highways and roads in Barbados.

We were given \$5 million this year and for the next three years we will be given \$5 million per year, a total of \$15 million to rehabilitate the major roads in this country to be done over a four-year period. In

this year's programme, there were some 18 roads that we said we would complete between June this year and the end of the financial year which comes at the end of March, 2001.

It was in May, I believe, that I said that this programme started. I will now give to this Honourable Chamber the results of the programme to date. We have so far completed Gemswick in St. Philip, known in the past as Penny Hole, St. Philip, that has been completed, that is in the constituency of the member for St. Philip South. We have completed Deighton Road, Halls Road, parts of Bay Street, Jemmotts Lane. The ABC Highway is being rehabilitated at this present moment. The Speightstown bypass road which was part of this year's programme had to be deferred because the Water Authority now have to put a new water main there.

Church Village to Ebenezer has been completed, that is the constituency of St. Philip North. So many grains of sand has been laid there - St. Elizabeth Village in St. Joseph has been completed. I am quite sure that the member for St. Joseph will be happy with that. More will be coming next year.

You can see, Sir, that it is a reason why the newspapers have not been having a field day in the area of potholes. I must also say that Foul Bay in St. Philip was having some problems because the National Petroleum Corporation and the Water Authority were both laying new mains there and I understand now that they are getting ready to pave Foul Bay.

I must also say that in the constituency of the member for Christ Church East, Leadvale, too, has been paved and the people up there have been calling the member for Christ Church East and thanking him because when this Government put in place the new road from Searles to Six Roads, that road was used as a detour road. The road was heavily used and destroyed. Right now the road at Leadvale has been completed and they are all very happy with that. 2:30 p.m

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

Sir, as I said earlier, we will be continuing our programme over the next three years and will be doing fifteen roads per year under this rehabilitation programme.

Sir, Hindsbury Road is also giving problems. It is well known that this road needs repairs. The entire road will be reconstructed. It lies on the bed of the Constitution River and like Bank Hall Road and the Headleys Land area. This Bank Hall Road some ten years ago was reconstructed because it was just a road built on mud and silt but then a material was used that was brought in from the United States call geofabric. This material is a very strong material and is used as a base for roads. This is the same kind of material that we will be using when we reconstruct Hindsbury Road.

Mr. Speaker, we will be spending some \$3.3 million on this Hindsbury Road. It might look as though there is no physical construction on this road today but work is still going on. As recent as yesterday morning I passed there and the surveyors were taking their technical measurements and so on. Sir, I can

safely say that by the beginning of the next financial year we will be able to start some kind of construction on this road. It is a very important road to Barbadians because it takes between eighteen and twenty thousand vehicles a day.

Mr. Speaker, as I sat and listened to the Honourable Member for St. John yesterday he talked about not having anything done in his constituency. If he were to visit the constituency of St. John, he would notice that the Glenburnie Village Road is now being repaired. This road is being widened in certain area and construction work is going on there. If the Honourable Member for St. John goes to his constituency before the year is out, if he decides to change his mind and goes before the election is called, he will see that we are paving Glenburnie Village Road.

The other road, Glenburnie Main Road is having some gabion work done to it. When that gabion work is finished, we will be paving that road for the people of St. John, not for the Honourable Member for St. John but for the good people of St. John.

Mr. Speaker, work on Martindales Road, John Beckles Drive and River Road has been delayed because of the non-arrival of this same geofabric material that we will be using for these roads because these roads also lie on the river bed of the Constitution River and were built with the same mud on silt. When the geofabric material arrives we will go into those three roads and put the necessary work in there.

At the same time that we are awaiting the arrival of the geofabric material the Barbados Water Authority will be doing work there as a new main has to be run. The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has decided to meet the Barbados Water Authority halfway. We will do the digging of the trenches and the Barbados Water Authority will put in the pipes and by the time the geofabric material arrives in Barbados, the road will be ready for paving.

Sir, Collymore Rock has been deferred because of the major traffic problems we are having there. The section between Dunlow Lane and Beckles Road has been deferred at the request of the South Coast Sewerage Project so that they can inspect the under sewerage pipe installed by the previous contractor, Fomentos y Cubiertas.

Sir, as I have said, some work needs to be done on the Speightstown bypass road so that will be deferred. Work on Foul Bay is continuing and Barbados Water Authority and National Petroleum Corporation have finished work there. Sir, I now turn to Black Rock Road. Mr. Speaker, Black Rock Road is part of the old Highway One road and over the years it did yeoman service to Barbadians traversing one part of the island to the other. This road is being done under the Bridgetown Bypass and Safety Project Road Programme. Part of it lies in the constituency of St. Michael West Central and in the constituency of St. Michael North West. This road is being done in three sections. The first section starts at the bottom of the University Drive by the Frank Worrell Roundabout and ends by the junction at Brighton Road.

Recently, there were some concerns from business people in the area who believed that they should have good new roads but no dislocation. It seems that although they want to get to heaven, they do not want to die.

Sir, we had to dislocate some people and many of the people living there told me that they are happy, do not mind the discomfort, to have a new road. Mr. Speaker, people are in business to make profit but sometimes you have to make sacrifices but these business people are not prepared to make any sacrifices. As I have said, the road work has to be done and we are doing the work.

The road is going to be seven metres wide with 1.5 metre sidewalks on both sides. There are two schools in the area, the primary school at St. Stephens and the Ellerslie Secondary School and children use both sides of these roads every day, to and from school. The 1.5 metre sidewalks would be an asset to those children using the road.

We are also putting box drains on both sides of the road. These box drains will be in a position to take all the water which runs in the area because whenever rains fall in that area there is heavy flooding so these box drains will be taking away the water from the area. Also, the utility companies are putting in services at the sides of the road. The Barbados Water Authority have already put their water mains on both sides of the road so that if there are any problems with pipes there would be no need to cut the road in order to do repair work. We will have roads free from dislocation by the utility companies. This road goes as far as Eagle Hall so parts of Eagle Hall corner will be widened.

The traffic lights at Eagle Hall will also be improved.

2:40 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000,

Continuation of Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

The traffic lights at Eagle Hall will also be improved. There is a new market being built at Eagle Hall. This market is being built by the Ministry of Transport and Works for the Ministry of Agriculture. The market is scheduled to be completed by year end. We will also be widening parts of the road and laybys will be installed. As I said, that is the first phase of this By-pass and Safety Project Programme.

This project is being done in three sections. The second section would be from Brighton corner to Deacons Road corner. Traffic lights will be installed at this junction. The third section goes to Eagle Hall Corner.

The third phase goes from Tweedside Road to Pine Road. We are trying very hard not to lose any of the mahogany trees in that area. We are thinking that we are going to build the side walk around the

trees as we widen those roads. The construction continues along Culloden Road, Dalkeith Road, Dalkeith Hill and up to the Garrison. That is what you call the outer layer.

The inner layer starts at the end of President Kennedy Drive, goes in a southern direction up Westbury Road along Passage Road, Country Road and up to the Globe Cinema. Some houses along that route would have to be resited but we are having the Ministry of Housing build some houses for us at the corner of Country Road area to relocate those people.

I would also say that Passage Road would then become a two-way street again. At the junctions of Passage Road Corner and Country Road we will be having traffic lights installed in that area. This is a \$53 million project. In fact, the revised figures show that it will cost over \$70 million to complete this programme.

The other major thing that we are doing is at Headley's Land. We are going to be spending over \$3 million at Headley's Land which is prone to flooding. That area is just like areas like Holetown and Gills Terrace, St. Peter. We are trying to alleviate as much of this problem as possible. We have a programme being run at Headley's Land which is manned by approximately 20 people. We have to acquire a property below the Globe Cinema, I think it is a shop. I believe that will be coming to Parliament soon to acquire this property so that we can put a tunnel across the road to facilitate proper drainage in that area. I am quite sure that by this time next year the people of Headley's Land should have all of their problems alleviated, and I am quite sure that the member for St. Michael West would be quite happy with that.

Mr. Speaker, I am very glad to see that in the constituency of St. Michael Central, the constituency that you, Mr. Speaker, have the honour to represent, the National Housing Corporation is building some units in that area. As you know, Sir, I arrive from that area and I am always in the area still. I am happy to report that the people are very glad, but you will have one problem there, Mr. Speaker, you are going to have to build some more very soon.

On Hill Road, Mr. Speaker, some work was started there and I understand that very soon the Ministry of Transport and Works should be going in there to pave that Hill Road area. I am quite sure that the people in those areas will be happy with what is going on there.

Mr. Speaker, St. Michael West Central, now this rehabilitation work is going on in that area, I am coming close to home, those roads in Black Rock - St. Stephens Hill, Clevedale Road, Brownes Land, Seclusion Road, Yearwood Road and Fairfield, these roads are now being used by the heavy traffic, minibuses, ZRs and Transport Board buses, especially Yearwood Road, and they are taking a beating down there.

I want to assure the people of those areas in the constituency of St. Michael West Central, that they have asked me to represent, that when the Black Road road has been completed we will go in there and make sure that we rehabilitate all of those roads and barber green all of them.

Asides

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

I have to go to the Ministry of Finance and make sure that we have some kind of special fund to rehabilitate all of those roads, because we made a sacrifice in there that those roads would be used by the vehicles, and there are being destroyed, so that the people on Black Rock main road would have a nice new road to drive on.

I also wish to say, I am not selfish, that the people in St. Michael North West, Deacons Road, Free Hill and Goodland have also made sacrifices by allowing their minor roads to be used and those roads too would be rehabilitated.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I also want to assure the people of Melvin's Avenue, Belfield, Pillersdroff, Derriston and all the other areas that I have visited recently concerning natural gas that very soon natural gas will be run in those areas.

I want to thank the people of those areas in Black Rock who have made those made those sacrifices to get that new road in, to bear with us, we will soon be finished - by July 2001 we will be finished. They have offered their services and I want to thank them very much for giving us the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

2.50 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Hon Sir HENRY FORDE:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was reflecting that this is my 29th year in Parliament. In fact I have just put in my 29th year - in fact, I am on my 30th year, and I have listened to, at least, 28 Budgets Proposals. None of this would have been possible without the strong support of the people of Christ Church West, the Barbados Labour Party (BLP), my family and colleagues and the Good Lord. I am eternally grateful for having been given the opportunity to represent the people of Christ Church West, in the first place, the people of Barbados at the national level and I hope that during the time that I have done that, I have been able to make some contribution to public life.

I have reached the stage where I am now in a reflective mood and I believe that people will understand this, because without being immodest, I must have in the process, acquired some knowledge and some experience of Government.

I have spent a lot of time on the Opposition Bench and I have had the unenviable task of leading an Opposition that was battered and decimated, and I believe, again in a reflective mood, and without being immodest, that the contributions I made then were probably more important than the contributions which I made, either on the frontbench or backbench.

It was important to preserve democracy, it was important to build the morale of a great party and it

was important to strengthen the hands of my colleagues who are now in Government and also to give support to those who are out of Government.

Even more important was an order to ensure that Barbados had a good view of its own perspectives and its belief in itself.

But, in the same reflective mood I recall very well Sir, the period immediately before I remitted office as the Leader of the Opposition. It was a rough period for this country. A period of structural adjustments in which the economy was battered, unemployment was at its highest, almost every Ministry was under strain, whether it was health, as represented by the terrible conditions at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, whether it was road systems, whether it was in housing, all aspect of social affairs, and of economic affairs, were under tremendous stress.

I recall these things not, Sir, only to look back, but to say this, that Barbadians tend to judge things from a very short-termed perspective. I believe that our country, in the last sixty years has achieved more for the ordinary man and woman than it achieved in the years that have gone before that. Not that there was not any contribution before, but from ever since the formation of political parties in this country we have seen a widening, not only of the franchise for voting, but a widening of the franchise in economic terms in this country.

It is misleading and worrying to those of us who have given so much of our time and our energy to politics, to hear occasionally, people making remarks about the contribution or lack of contribution which politicians have made to this country, and the civil servants. But there has been good leadership, and, in fact, I regretted yesterday the very personal nature of some of the attacks coming from the Leader of the Opposition on one of the most outstanding of our post-war leaders here - in fact our Leaders in Barbados which is the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter.

I heard him being accused of being insincere, deceptive, on saying one thing and meaning another. Words that surprised me, and, therefore, when some of our Members were moved to reply, almost in similar terms, I could understand them, but I do regret it. I do regret it when we have to bring politics to that particular position. Because, make no mistake about it Sir, when the history of the period under the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is written people will see that he had the creativity and the foresight to position Barbados for the tremendous change which has affected the world from the globalisation of the economies of both developed and developing countries.

2:55 P.M.

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Sir Henry FORDE:

We are going through a tremendous economic change. Free trade has become the rallying cry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the clear goals of both developed and developing countries. Even the few remaining planned economies such as those in China and Cuba have to accept that globalization is here

to stay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also have to recognise that there are benefits which will flow from globalization. I will mention a few very quickly: Faster growth, rising imports, boosting world economic growth, cheaper imports, newer technologies, the spirit of foreign competition. These will result in greater economic prosperity for the world as a whole but at the same time, there are serious disadvantages during the period of transition and change.

We will find that the environment is being challenged seriously, that food safety and security both from the changes in technology and from the concentration in certain countries will be under challenge. We will find that rich countries are becoming richer and monopolising, to a large extent, the great bulk of world trade. We will find dislocation in the economies of the developing world and particularly in small economies such as ours.

We will find that there are, unless we put in the necessary balances, increasing poverty and particularly in some of the developing world. For instance, it is recognised now that of those children, and there are millions of them, who died below their fifth birthday, 98 per cent of these are in the developing world.

The Prime Minister spoke of HIV/AIDS and has rightly taken it under his hand and guidance at this stage because of the tremendous, disastrous effects it can have on the labour force of a country and we have found that of the HIV positive people in the world, 95 per cent are in the poor countries. And unfortunately Barbados and the Caribbean rank very heavily up there in terms of the numbers per head of population which we have.

We will find that those people who are dying of the old diseases like tuberculosis, malaria and diphtheria, all but a few thousands are in the developing world. Therefore, there are doubts about this process. There is a mixed reception for what is happening as we move into a more globalized economy. Small states such as ours are particularly vulnerable and in this period, we will find an absence of significant resources and a non preparation of our human resources to grapple with these problems.

Traditional industries, such as banana, sugar and rum are being driven back and challenged and in some cases, obliterated. There is a massive dislocation of workers and particularly in small countries such as ours and developing economies and that is the picture that our Prime Minister and our Government have to face at this time.

Barbadians must recognise that they have in themselves the skills and the ability to rise to the occasion and I have no doubt we will. There are the few doubting Thomases among us who have not got certainty in themselves.

They wish for instance, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to tell us that we must reduce crime and institute hanging but when Her Majesty's Privy Council in England rules, as it has just ruled in England, to prevent the countries of the Caribbean from carrying out capital punishment which is part of the law of the land, the same doubting Thomases would want to vote for a Head of State from England.

It is a contradiction which those of us who feel certain about ourselves, cannot understand. I have

always supported a Caribbean court because I believe you must understand yourself and your culture and be certain - if I may quote the late Errol Barrow:

“You must understand your own mirror image”

- and particularly, at this time to provide the leadership that is necessary.

If there is one thing which the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter knows, he has the certainty of his own mirror image and he has a vision of where this country is going. Sir, I think that people have to realise that we must remove the doubts in our minds, nor can a debate in this House be a debate about trivialities.

One of the things I regretted so far in the Leader of the Opposition is that he had a wonderful opportunity to carve and even go beyond the Prime Minister in challenging the Government to take initiatives that are broader than even those that are contained in this Financial Statement. Instead, we got into the gossip about 56 000 pounds of chicken that has spoilt - which is not so. Instead, we got into the gossip and neither one has been refuted by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. We got into gossips on the land for landless farmers and that there is nothing being done for it.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip has spoken beautifully on it but I know that the landless farmers who are next to me where I live up in Society, would have been glad if this Government was in power some years ago when it could have taken over Coach Hill Plantation and given it to the landless farmers who farm there now with cows. That is the Honourable Member for St. John's constituency.

Sir, I believe that we must lift the debate, not that there is not a duty on the Honourable Member for St. John to call for accountability because those of us on whom power has been conferred must exercise that power in accordance with the Constitution, and with the laws and in accordance with moral standards. But none of the charges that I have heard laid here last night and yesterday afternoon, seem to me to really merit that type of level of debate that came out and some of the invectives that came from the Honourable Member for St. John.

Sir, I would have hoped that he would have educated me and the public of Barbados about things concerning the single market, a little deeper, indepth analysis of where he thinks Barbados should be positioned in the globalization race. Instead, he pooh-poohed the fact that the Prime Minister has shown the leadership to assume at this time the subject of HIV/AIDS, not to demote any Minister but to signal the country about its importance and this is done.

Very often I have seen the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow do it. The Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams did it. I have seen it done, Mr. Speaker, by the late Right Honourable Tom Adams. There are times that a Prime Minister, not as loading himself with responsibility, must assume certain responsibility to focus the country's image on the damage that could be caused if the country itself, does not undertake these tasks and that is the only relevance of that.

So, Sir, we politicians are challenged by globalization and our challenge is to make ourselves relevant to the changing times and, therefore, to give the leadership of the country as a whole on the issues that are coming before us. Now, Sir, any objective analyst, looking at the performance of Barbados over the

last six years must admit that the Government has done well.

3:10 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE:

Now, Sir, I remember six years ago when thousands of people were being sent home and civil servants' salaries were being cut, I was saying then to the country, not rumour but truth, that the International Monetary Fund was around the door and would have been within the gates soon and I was called a liar then. I have to remind the country about that. It is the very Democratic Labour Party that was designating the country by its policies who called me a liar then. Whenever I came in here and made allegations whether it was about dope in the diplomatic bag, the stealing that went on in CARSICOT ...

Asides

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE:

... I made them based on facts and not merely rumour. But, Sir, we must recall that that was the terrible situation facing Barbados both economically and socially. I am going to talk a little bit about crime too, Sir, because we forget that during that period the Barbados Labour Party - the three of us in here and the two in the Senate, the Deputy Prime Minister and the Honourable Member for St. George South in the Senate, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the Honourable Prime Minister and I - called for the establishment of a task force.

We reminded the Government about the position of gangs in those day and they said there were no such things as gangs. We show the Government the mayhem, the shootings and the stabbings that were going on in the schools in those days, including The Foundation School, my good old school. The country forgets these things easily. We had to come in, in 1978 and later under the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and increase the size of the police force, decrease some of the duties that were outside because we realize the long term problem that was going to confront us including the problem of drugs.

Now, Sir, Barbadians understandably must be concerned if there is violence in the community and they must recognise as well that there is not an instant solution to it. I am holding, Mr. Speaker, in my hands, the front page of "The Sunday Times" in London for last week. A police force has introduced armed foot patrols on the streets for the first time in Mainland Britain in an attempt to combat rising gun crimes. That is what it said. This is in Britain, which some people believe is the mother country. It goes on to say that this is because there are drug-related incidences and there are increasing throughout the world.

What we want at the moment is for people - and not people who are going to be carping merely, sure, if the Government is not doing what is right you have to give criticism but - to recognise that the problems are there and that we are finding solutions. I am not going to trespass on my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas' domain but the Government has been going to the solution and going to the solutions whether it be in the economy or whether it be on the social front.

I want to say something on the economy quickly. Obviously, this is one of the strongest economies that we have had for a long time. I believe it is right to say that it is the strongest ever. I hardly hear the Opposition complaining about 'Job No. 1' which we took on. Our 'Job No. 1' was jobs. Even the most diehard of the Democratic Labour Party must admit that we have tackled the issue of jobs effectively. We have not completed the job yet.

This document laid by the Prime Minister in his speech, speaks of going towards full employment so why is he or this Government not to get the benefit for the tremendous job we have done in reducing unemployment in the way that we have reduced it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not to say that we have overcome the problems but we have tremendously solved a lot of the problems.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I prefer to err with the Standards and Powers rating of February 2000 giving Barbados a very strong rating, Sir. I am reading from the Standards and Powers Release which they so kindly send to me as soon as they are out. It said that:

"Barbados' rating reflects its tradition of prudent economic management which has contributed to seven consecutive years of economic growth and resulted in a per capita GDP approaching US\$10 000."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the whole of the Caribbean, if you keep Bermuda out in the Atlantic, it is only the Cayman Islands and the Bahamas that are ahead of us. Even Trinidad and Tobago with its oil wells, Jamaica with its Bauxite, Guyana with its minerals, the Dominican Republic and Cuba, Barbados is ahead of them in terms of the quality of life and the standard of living of its people.

It says: "The country's high educational and health standards..."

This is an external agency, Sir, people like to listen to them sometimes more than they even listen to their own people and if you listen to the Leader of the Opposition you would believe that the health standards in Barbados are so low and that the educational standards are so poor under this Government that nobody is progressing but this is an objective analysis.

With our high educational standards and health standards, Barbados ranks 24th in the United Nation Index of Human Development and have allowed it to shift towards a service economy and away from

one dependent upon commodity prices. Now, you have heard the Prime Minister dealing with that service economy and putting in place measures to shift even further to the technological age and economy.

EduTech Programme: We will be one of the few countries in the world that have taken on a programme with the vastness and creativity of EduTech. E-commerce; you look at it, Sir, we are positioning ourselves. The Prime Minister is taking the leadership among small states in dealing with the OECD and its attack on our capital markets. That is the positioning that we want to hear, Sir.

The Prime Minister taking the lead, as he did last year and the year before, on concentrating on re-tooling our manufacturers and giving them incentives to do so. The Prime Minister taking the lead in making sure that there are enough resources to re-tool our people. You heard last night, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Hon. Mia Mottley, speaking here about what is being done in the educational system and the achievements that we have already reached and the Prime Minister taking the lead even in a Financial Statement such as this in making more money available for sports.

Now, sir, the foresight of recognising that a small country like Barbados which has the human resources among our young people to excel in swimming, - you know I will mention swimming first, Sir, - in cricket, in running, in hockey, in karate and in basketball, you name it, - I could not forget basketball in Christ Church West - so we are positioning ourselves to make more money available for that and we will make it available for culture too because it is my contention that in the field of culture and in the field of sports in particular, we have the possibility for two new industries with vast potential for employment and for using the human resources of our young people. I trust that the idea of coming to one Lottery and making its profits solely available in those areas, would be achieved in this financial year.

You have signalled that I have two minutes, Sir. I want very briefly in those two minutes, therefore, to deal with a few things like roads.

Now, Sir, again last year I hear people on the call-in programme, much of it is repetitive because I understand that the Democratic Labour Party, as it is entitled to do, now have a series of people who get together on the call-in programme and articulate it. That is good public relations. I do not believe it came only from Mrs. Laszlo. It is good, Sir, but it creates at the same time the impression that everything is wrong in the country. People who listen to the call-in programme... when I heard 94 people said that this Budget made no difference to them, I realized that that was 94 of the Honourable Member's articulated people calling.

There is no doubt that this Government has done more for tenancies roads than any other Government in the history of Barbados. I can speak, Sir, knowing what has been done in your constituency. I see the smile on your face, but I can also speak of my own constituency, up in Rockley New Road, up in Lynch Gap and I can talk about all that. I have not got all, Sir, and I told them to be patient.

You have heard, however, that \$40 million over three years are going to be spent on the poor man of Barbados. Now, that is what we called passing on to the people. I want also to talk about the \$1 million being given to the Ministry of Social Transformation for the communities centres. It is in good hand, Sir. Sir, I had the privilege of persuading the Urban Development Commission to build a community

resource centre to the value of half million dollar in Bonnetts. The Minister has given me his assurance last night that it would be opened all day. I personally have donated eight computers up there, Sir.

Years ago, I donated computers to the St. Matthias School, now the Arthur Smith Memorial School, with the foresight of recognising that the grandmothers and those persons out of work had to be brought into the age of technology and the internet, if they are to help their grandchildren and at the same time be properly educated for the 21st century.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Honourable Member your time has expired.

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE:

I am going to finish, Sir. I am not surprised when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Honourable Minister for Education said that computer classes are among the things being done for the young people of Christ Church West. Sir, I have a great and abiding faith in the strength and character of the people of Barbados, in their strength and character to recognise when good has been done. I have faith in their judgement, I have faith in our country. I have faith in our Government and I have faith in our ability to achieve, to aspire and to move onwards and upwards to greater heights.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM:

No useful purpose would be served, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in debating whether or not the Prime Minister's presentation to this House on Tuesday last constituted a Budget as we have come to know it in Barbados or not.

3:20 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Dr. R.L. CHELTENHAM:

It is clear that no attempt was made to raise revenue for expenditure for public property and that is the definition of a budget. To that extent, we have to agree with him that it was not a budget.

The Honourable Member took the opportunity to set out before this House a mix of proposals and ideas which he called a comprehensive, economic policy intended to regulate our affairs in this country for the next many years and dictated by the challenges which we face at this juncture of our history. For example, he has defined an employment protection bill which will shortly be coming to Parliament,

intended not only to humanise relations at the workplace but also to deal with the impending dislocations and loss of jobs that will arise in the name of efficiency as a result of the impact of liberalisation and globalisation.

He proposed a set of ideas to deal with the crisis of AIDS facing Barbados at this point in time. He set forth his ways of strengthening our offshore financial and business regime so as to make sure that we can strengthen it and withstand the challenge of OECD. There is a need for e-commerce and he has promised us legislation in a very short while.

Among other things, he put forward ideas for strengthening the capacity of the Government to deal with the crisis in law and order in the country and also ideas positioning Barbados to withstand the challenge of globalisation and the World Trade Organisation's rules. It seems to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the ideas were forward looking, constructive and relevant and in some respects they were urgent.

I feel compelled to submit, Sir, that it is no response to the ideas put forward to disclose an instance of misconduct on the part of a public officer in the Ministry of Education, that has nothing to do with the Government. It is part of the every day happening in this country. Whether in Government or private sector people at the workplace misconduct themselves from time to time. It is no reflection on Government policy. It is no reflection on the Minister who to her credit as soon as she learnt about it made sure that disciplinary steps were put in train.

It is no response to the mix of ideas put forward by the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to provide us with a tale about a shipment of chickens arriving at an agency for the Ministry of Education School Meals Centre which had to be dumped because that shipment was not up to standard.

All of that is low-level story-telling that does not in any way advance the national interest or respond to the important ideas which the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance put on the agenda. There is an old story, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a man can only run with the weight that he can bear. It is borne out by the tale of an elderly and frail man who once went to the doctor and the doctor told him that he needed exercise for his body. His neighbours saw him in his verandah on the mornings thereafter pushing up what appeared to be a pillow well above his head some 50-75 times, and on closer examination it was found to be a feather pillow. That was the weight that he could carry and that is what he exercised himself with.

The relevance to the Leader of the Opposition is clear. He found himself incapable of responding to the ideas set forward relevant, constructive, strategic, forward looking ideas. Rather than defining an alternative path or indicating how the ideas could be strengthened in any constructive way, he contented himself with story telling and gossiping and details of misconduct on the part of a public officer as though any of that would advance the national interest or help the people of Barbados in any respect.

I want to turn now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to deal a little with the ideas put forward by the Minister of Finance and the Right Honourable Prime Minister in relation to positioning Barbados in order to withstand the dislocation and accept the challenges resulting from the imposition of the World Trade Organisation rules in our trade and commercial activity. Permit me to say before that, however, that the

challenges facing Barbados at this stage result directly from the changing regional and international environment in which we operate as a country.

On the regional scene, we have the single market and economy that will shortly be coming into being. We also have the expansion of regional trade resulting from the free market arrangements with the Dominican Republic and with Cuba.

At the international level, we have dominant ideas which now call for a reduction in the role of the State, ideas which say that there should be a free movement of trade, of finance, across state boundaries, as though we are living in a world without boundaries. The challenges arise too from the fact that we are witnessing a revolution in information technology and in the spread of knowledge across the world. That is the sort of milieu as it were, in which we are operating in Barbados at this juncture in our history. That is why it is necessary for any self-respecting leader of Barbados at this point to be concerned with putting on the table strategic ideas to respond to the challenges arising from the environment, regional and international, in which we are operating.

We have signed on in the developing world, Barbados included, to the World Trade Organisation's rules and it must be said at the outset that many of the countries insufficiently understood and appreciated what these rules were about. The World Trade Organisation arose out of the Uruguay Round of negotiations and it is a fact that in five years of negotiations only one hour was devoted to the affairs of the developing world except for that hour, all the time was spent addressing the affairs of the rich countries of the world.

The World Trade Organisation is, therefore, a rich man's club and there is a school of thought that is growing up that insufficient attention has been paid to the developing world, that labour will suffer greatly as a result and that the environment will suffer too. That is the reason why there was such resistance to the meeting in Seattle and that is the reason why we had those scenes in Prague and that is the reason why we had the marches in Okinawa.

The feeling is that it is necessary for the Bretton Wood institutions of the World Bank and the IMF to adopt a human face and to appreciate the needs of the developing world. Each member of the World Trade Organisation has the same number of votes, one each. The developing countries, because of their distinct majority, can refashion the institution in their own interests.

It seems to me that we have a responsibility to forge an alliance with those in the developed countries that are leading this fight to provide a human image to the World Trade Organisation to refashion the Bretton Wood institutions and to make sure that the interest of the developing countries is taken into account.

While we are wise and right to reposition ourselves to take advantage of the benefits and there are a lot of non-benefits and disadvantages too, many emphasised by the last Honourable Member who spoke, that will flow from membership in the World Trade Organisation, from globalisation and liberalisation. There are benefits and we are right to make sure that we do our utmost to maximise the impact of those benefits.

At the same time, Barbados is well positioned because of the important and the highly impressive and

successful role played by our own Prime Minister in trying to get the development agencies to use the vulnerability index as their basis of development assistance to small island states like ours for Barbados to play a leading role in forging alliances with the forces that are at work in the developed countries, in making sure that the World Trade Organisation is refashioned to accommodate our interests and to minimise some of the dislocations that will result from the imposition of its rules.

3:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM:

We are right to make ourselves more competitive, to cut out inefficiencies and to prepare ourselves for the changes that are bound to arise in the way that we conduct our trade and commerce.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a word about the problem of AIDS. In the last fifteen years this disease has spread across the world at a dramatic pace and there are now some 34 million people who have been affected during that period with AIDS. Some 31 million of them happen to be in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. Barbados is not exempted as a small country, we have a high rate of AIDS here and because of the fact that the disease is not a notifiable disease, the statistics of some 2,350 people who have died of AIDS in Barbados is conservative as acknowledged in the Prime Minister's presentation. If you speak to morticians who are given the truth, in their own interest, as to how they should deal with the dead, they believe that it is something like three or four times as high.

It is a serious matter which will severely impact on the productive capacity of our people because the people affected are in the work force. It will create a sense of panic in the country, strain relationships across the land and lead to all sort of other consequences already identified by other speakers.

We have, therefore, as a matter of urgency to take new initiatives. In the past we have been concerned with public education and techniques of control. In truth and, in fact, we have paid insufficient attention to the care of those who have been affected but because it is now a plague on the land, new and urgent steps must be taken, new leadership must be provided, new resources committed and new partnerships forged. The whole of civil society must be involved at the level of groups and community centres, at the

level of the school, at the level of the trade union movement, at the level of the home and at the level of the Government itself.

The Rt. Honourable Prime Minister was certainly right to put the new initiatives under the aegis of his Ministry but that is not enough. It is important that some well qualified, highly respected person be given the responsible of leading the effort, that is very important indeed but it cannot be led by any agency within Government or by any civil service organisation.

The figures are frightening indeed. In the sixteen most affected countries more than 10% of the adult population is suffering from AIDS. In South Africa itself it is said that 43 million people are suffering from HIV which is the stage before AIDS at which the immune system collapses. Five people per day in some parts of Africa die of AIDS and some 16 000 worldwide every day become affected by AIDS. In Barbados it is more like one every two or three days who die of AIDS. Sir, we have a major problem on our hands.

In the past a lot of our people have suffered because of the fact that they had no access to the expensive drugs. I have played my part in instances across parts of the area that I represent in helping people to buy these drugs. These drugs are not on the Government's formula. It has been outside of the reach of large numbers of people who have had to go to an early death without the benefit of the drug that may very well prolong life for 20 years or more after becoming HIV positive, that is after the immune system collapses. This is why it is important that the Government provides access to the drug.

There are three initiatives that have taken place in the world in the last year that have created a new momentum in the fight against AIDS. We have had the highly publicised and successful 13th International Conference on AIDS. We have had the Millennium Conference in New York and we have also had the agreement by five drug companies to cooperate and work together in the fight to make the drugs affordable and accessible to the poor and also to ensure that within the next five years we have a vaccine. As I speak, in Kenya in Africa, 90% of the beds in some hospitals are taken by AIDS victims. In Oxford, New England, tests are going on with respect to the search for a vaccine. It is a problem of unprecedented complexity because of the speed with which the disease changes. The speed of mutation of the virus makes it very difficult to find a vaccine. We have to find one.

3:40

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Dr. R.L. CHELTENHAM:

We have to find one because this has become the plague on the world. We are seeing new bonds of solidarity between the north and the south in the fight against AIDs.

We need to have more testing centres in Barbados but we have to find ways in the small society of making them anonymous. We have to train more people in counseling, we have to put more resources behind the effort, we have to tap into the information and the resources that are available in the many international agencies ...in order to fight this new plague that is affecting man.

This is an important initiative which the Government is taking and we all look forward to the details of

the measures that will be introduced shortly in this Parliament. It is those responses to the initiatives to tell us about which public servant misconducted himself or whether there was a shipment of chicken that for one reason or another had to be dumped. There were no responses to these important initiatives to tell us anything about that.

There are certain stigmas and misconceptions which have got to be eradicated. AIDS is not a homosexual disease only. That is one of the misconceptions which we have to eradicate. It is not a public health issue only. The idea that people have to be ashamed to go forward and make sure that they get their testing or treatment, we have too to remove that stigma. Indeed, that is one of the most enduring contributions, perhaps, the most enduring contribution that Lady Diana made during her life, the fight to eradicate the stigma associated with AIDS.

We have a big problem. We need an outstanding leader. We need to put the resources behind it and we need to fight the battle against AIDS at several levels and not forgetting the many orphans that have been left as a result of the AIDS crisis. The fact that we cannot concentrate on public education and prevention alone, we have got to provide care facilities for those who are suffering from the diseases.

I want to say a word about law and order as perceived by many affecting the country. It needs to be said at the outset that there has been a decline in the overall number of criminal incidences as reported to the police in recent years but there has been an increase in murder, burglary and in some of the more serious crimes, many of them of which have been highlighted in the press and it has led to a feeling, crimes involving firearms too, of anxiety and disquiet in the country.

There is a feeling in some circles that we are not realising that objective of making Barbados a safe and secure place for all its people. It has got to be addressed because apart from the impact that it is having on our own people it could adversely affect the investment climate in the country.

The first point, I think, that needs to be made is that the fight against the rise in lawlessness. The increasing incidences of the class of crime syndicate are not a fight for the Government alone. The Government has a clear responsibility which it has accepted, it has taken many initiatives and continues to take initiatives in providing and improving infrastructure, giving the equipment for the agencies of law enforcement, patrol equipment, improved physical facilities and improved training. What we are witnessing is a breakdown in the value system of the country.

We have an absence of coherence in our value system and it is a serious problem that provides difficulty for any Government trying to enforce law and order. There are many people in the country who do not believe in the sanctity of human life. That used to be the opposite when I was growing up but now a generation of people who would have grown up who would say why you cannot kill. There is no big thing about that let him die. There is no belief in the sanctity of human life. There is no respect for the neighbour's property. The earth is the Lord's why can I not carry away all of your breadfruit and all your pears and all that belong to you. Why do we all have to work? Why is it that by the sweat of our brow we should eat bread? Whoever said that is wrong. You do not have to work, certainly not work that as all understood and still understand it.

You have this divarication of values. It is a big challenge for the schools. I am not satisfied that the schools are doing as much as they should. It is a particularly great responsibility for the schools because

sacrilege has taken over from religion. There are declining numbers in the church and because of the large participation of women in the work force, there is less guidance being provided in many homes.

We have got to rely on some of the public media to make sure that they talk to the people of the country about some of the values that we believe are wholesome and necessary to correct the situation. I think that we have to agree on what is the sort of value that we are talking about because right now there is no agreement in the country. So, we have a value crisis and it has to be addressed. I am not sure that adding to the numbers of the Police force will itself be the answer to the problem because many of the people that you will recruit are some of the very people that do not share main stream values. So you have a real problem there.

We cannot just fold our hands and say that it is a problem, we have to take initiatives, some have been indicated and we have to appreciate that it is not responsibility of the Government alone to combat the problem, but the responsibility of all of us.

I would want to be talking too, in the course of this debate, about how we are going to address the traffic problems. That is a matter of serious economic import but we cannot do everything in one debate. I feel that even though that we have not been concerned in this debate with the raising of revenue for expenditure for public purposes, it has nevertheless been an important and constructed occasion. I think that we all must applaud the initiatives of the Government and call on the Opposition for constructive response.

3.50 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Mr. L. R. TULL:

So much has been said in this debate about the nature of the Financial Statement given by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance. So much has been said about that that I do not need to be repetitive.

I do, however, think that I should say it is important that the new developments - the international community and the effects that it will have on the economy and on the standard and quality of life of Barbadians, it is important that we should get ready. Preparation for the ill-effects that everybody is forecasting arising out of globalisation and trade liberalisation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, those in effect, must be anticipated and be planned for carefully.

If the Statement of the Minister of Finance was to be one further step in getting us ready, then I

commend him. I would, however, recommend that the people of this country be given more detailed information as to the implications of these new international developments, so that we, ourselves, can, as individuals and groups, prepare for those ill-effects.

There was a Caribbean Leader, Prime Minister, and still-serving Prime Minister of the Caribbean who once suggested to a group of businessmen in Hartford, Connecticut and he was moved to tell those businessmen that Barbados was as oasis of common sense in the Caribbean. We pride ourselves on that Sir. We are thinking people who keep our balance, who see problem and try, as a community, to solve them.

I was a little bit disappointed by the contribution made by the Honourable Member of St. John. I am not in that kind of debate, I am not trading blows, so to speak, but there are some things which I feel compelled to say in a few minute' time.

I am advocating, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Barbados should move towards the good society. An original, Kenneth Galbreau, a renown liberal economist, was the man who coined a phrase and he spoke of it at international communities.

I, myself, Sir, try to extrapolate this and use it in relation to the Barbadian community. What I am seeing Sir, is that this Government is moving slowly, but relentlessly towards the creation of a good society.

There are certain aspects of a good society, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that are very dear to me. In my whole public life, and I am now heading towards my thirtieth year in Parliament - not looking for thirty-five but I can say Mr. Deputy Speaker, those who are putting a little pressure on me to move I say to them, at this stage, that not so much energy, but that I have promises to keep...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

I had told my learned and dear friend, the Honourable Member for St. James South some time ago about the whole situation; that I was weary with hunting and fame with lying down...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

That is Robert Burns, - but I I am restored at that, and this business of having promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep - that is Robert Frost - so I have things to do.

As I see the Government in these new measures, one after the other, coming before Parliament, I see Government inching and moving closer and closer towards the good society.

A society, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where there is social justice, where there is no under-class, where every single Barbadian has a part of the patrimony of this great land, where Government acts as a catalyst for distribution of wealth in this country, where anyone comes under the tent - and I am not talking now, Sir, about the politics of inclusion - I am talking about the social gains and benefits of the

people across this land. I have based my whole political career, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a fight for those who are marginalised, those who are poor, those who have had no fair share in this society; I have based my political career on fighting their cause, and as I see the Government moving more and more towards bringing about, not a utopian stage, we will never get there, but a stage in which every one could wake up on mornings and feel that they are part of it.

When I see that, Sir, I feel that most of my utterings in politic have finally been vindicated. I will tell you this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a time in this Parliament when nobody used to talk about the poor.

Poverty was a word that did not fit on the tongues of politicians, and when I talked about it, Sir, some of them behaved as though I was a pariah; they did not talk about those things. Now, there is Poverty Alleviation, Poverty Eradication, and the tremendous work being done by the Ministry of Social Transformation to transform the lives of Barbadians at the bottom of this community.

When I see that, Sir, I feel a tremendous sense of pride and justification.

I will continue to speak about the good society. We talk about it every hour of the day, sometimes sitting in Chamber, and sometimes as I listened to the debate on the radio in my motor car as I am traveling, and everybody is now moving, Sir, with a certain dispatch, towards the creation of a good society.

You know what bother me, everybody talks about the just society and all kinds of things, but because I have been talking about the good society, I would really like my colleagues to start using it too. I do not hear them talking about it, Sir. Maybe, if they do, it will help us advance the cause even more.

There is something else I want to say quickly, because I said I was not going to use the whole afternoon...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL:

I want to, very quickly, use a cameo visitation in relation to AIDS, as my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph has just very passionately put the case.

I want to make a few comments. I, too, understand that AIDS is pandemic and it destroys people in their working lives. You see, the other pandemics that we have had over the centuries on this earth are things that affected the young, the aged, and the generally disabled. There is only one thing that has caused the havoc of young men and women of productive years as AIDS - and that is the two World Wars.

More people have already died of AIDS in this world than have died in World War I, and it is anticipated that within another two years more people on this planet will die from AIDS than would have died in World War 2.

It is a Government that is not worth its salt who does not meet this problem head-on and come out

with the kind of policies and actions to meet this severe problem.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph said that this is not about health. It is not only about health, Sir, it is about labour, it is about housing, it is about education, it is about transportation, it is about tourism.

Actually, every area of public endeavor in this country is affected and will be affected by the continuous spread of AIDS.

4:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

Continuation of Mr. L.R. TULL:

There are no foreigners anymore. I say tourism. People come to Barbados and a lot of them come just to have a good time. When they come, they themselves can be the purveyors of this dreaded disease but in every area, the spread of AIDS is a problem with this country. It is not only in these areas of public endeavour that I have identified. There are problems in the homes. There is enormous stress and strain brought on families when a member of family is affected by HIV and worse if he develops the diseases of AIDS.

It affects the schools because we have not yet taught the people in our schools and institutions and even in our homes, how to deal with the problem, and worse than anything else, Sir, is the social stigma attached to this disease and we have to deal with it.

There is an organisation called the National Advisory Committee on AIDS (NACA) that was established a number of years ago and in my view, has been doing exceptionally good work in getting into the community and working with small and large groups in the community to educate them about the problem of AIDS and the HIV virus and to teach them how to cope with it. The support of the Government has not been as generous as it might have been in the past but that has changed and I welcome, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this new initiative.

I want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very quickly to deal with the question of the environment. An environment levy was levied on the people of this country some time back and we were made to

understand that this money would Barbados spent to assist with keeping the integrity of our environment and to fight against all the enemies of a good and clean environment.

A lot of things are happening, Sir, apart from the most obvious things. I work in Bridgetown. Bridgetown is an extremely dirty city and it is getting worse and something has to be done about it. I am still concerned about the indiscriminate litter that one sees happening in Barbados. But more important than that, Sir, is the way in which things like the carbon dioxide and the pesticides and herbicides and all these killers that are rejected in the so-called first world but are found in places like Barbados and are destroying the fauna and the flora of everything in Barbados.

I remember when I was a boy, Sir, there used to be some plants that do not exist anymore. I remember that there was a plethora of birds that nobody seems to see anymore. What have become of the peewitler, the wood-dove and the gaulin? There is a whole range of birds...

Asides.

Mr. L.R. TULL:

...there have some gaulins left.

There is a whole range of birds that one used to see in Barbados and you do not see any more and the herbicides are poisoning Barbadians. All these things that are indiscriminately sprayed in the fields of Barbados and then they take up the carrots and the other vegetables and carry them straight to the supermarkets and then into the homes. They are wrecking havoc on this land.

Sir, there is a lot of literature on it. There is a book written by a woman Rachael something, I do not remember the last name, called 'The Silent Spring' which is a similar work on the environment and the damage that is happening to it. It reminds me of a few lines of John Keats, the English poet when he says,

"The sage is withered on the pond and no birds sing."

Sir, he was talking about the devastation of much of the English countryside and we are seeing gradually in Barbados that kind of devastation coming to our land. I am urging the Government, when they are building this good society, not only to think about the shelter, the food, the clothing, the education and the health of the people but to think of the evils that are being inflicted on this country.

I drive my car, Sir, from time to time on these roads and get fairly abused by people travelling behind me because in front of me is a bus or car that is belching black smoke that is detrimental to my health. I usually slow down and allow it to get about 200 yards ahead of me so that all that black smoke can blow away so that I do not have to breathe it for the two or three miles for which I am following behind him. The people behind me start honking their horns but we have to do something about these things. We are destroying this country if we do not meet head on with the problems of environmental degradation.

Sir, I want to move away from that very quickly now to deal with this question of facilities. When the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act was passed in this country giving the people in agricultural Barbados access to land ownership and a better way of living, we shouted to the stars. In my view, as I have said

in the past, it is one of the most important pieces of legislation passed in this country since the Act to abolish slavery. It gave people all across the plantation tenancies in Barbados the opportunity to lead good, wholesome, productive lives. They could buy the land cheap, which they did and built good houses and lived the way in which Barbadians should live.

I have a problem however, Sir, with the continuing problem with the people who own the plantations. Sometimes I do not always understand it and sitting behind here I do not always understand what the frontbench does but this Government has given permission for a number of plantation owners to develop the land on the plantations. There is one up by me that is selling at \$18 per square foot and making millions and I do not envy a man regardless so that is not the gravamen of what I am saying.

What I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the plantations have a responsibility to give something to the communities that have made them affluent. Take a place like England, Sir, if you across England, you will see a number of industries, businesses, playing fields, pavilions and community centres for the people of that area. I am not seeing the plantation cutting off five acres of land and saying I am giving this to the people in this area, who worked for four and five generations or however many, giving of their blood, sweat and tears to the development of my wealth.

They have to become better corporate citizens and the Government has a responsibility, when it is giving these people permission to cut up and subdivide land all around rural Barbados and to make their fortunes, that they require them to make a contribution to the community from which they earn their wealth.

Sir, take a place like Drax Hall.

4:10 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Mr. L. R. TULL:

I remember when I was trying to get a playing field in Drax Hall, it not given by the plantation and a man named Commander Drax living somewhere in Somerset, England. I was not seeking to get them to give, although I cannot understand how a plantation that big could not freely give a playing field and a pavilion to the people who worked on the plantation for so long, but when I identified the land that I thought that the Government should acquire for the playing field, I was met by some fairly hostile resistance from the people who own the plantation.

I am ashamed, Sir, that we have gone into another century carrying so much of the baggage of the past. Although, we have a Government, and in this case I am talking about Government which include Government and Opposition the kind of Government that in my view is far more forward looking, far more liberal and far more progressive than Governments in the past - although I speak that way - still we are allowing ourselves to remain prisoners of systems and of practices that have been albatrosses around the neck of our grandparents and we have to do something about it.

In this whole business here of moving towards a good society everybody must come on board. We cannot have a good society with some people on and some people off. Even in the Government, there are those who have not yet signed on, take the Town and Country Planning Department. They say you must not criticise the Civil Service but I beg to differ, I will praise them when they need praising and when they need criticising I will criticise.

I am seeking to get a playing field in the areas of Greens, Drax Hall Hope, Prerogative, St. Judes and Bairds Village. This is a whole big area where large number of people are living. It is part of St. George North and part of St. George South. I cannot think of an area in Barbados with the population density that is in greater need of a playing facility than this area but every time the National Sports Council, the Ministry of Housing and Land, the Ministry of Sports and I go and identify a piece of land, we are hearing, "No, we are not taking this out of agriculture". St. George is agricultural land. If you do not take land out of agricultural for sporting, will they ever have a playing field?

My friend, who is a former good denizen of St. George South, who has now move to better lands and climes, is telling to me that the same Town and Country Planning Department approved the construction and setting up of an asphalt plant, in my constituency, on agricultural land. To tell me that I cannot get a playing field ...

Asides

Mr. L. R. TULL:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they say a word to the wise... There are eight members of the Frontbench who are listening to me, I hope I do not have to say any more in that regard. I hope not.

Now, you have indicated to me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have only two minutes left. I do not want to spend any more time on any other lands but there are two things in relation to my constituency. At this stage, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should not have to be putting any constituency case, my case is so

obvious.

I heard other members speak during the day and they quarrel about 30 metres of road and that they have two bad roads in their constituency and they want housing area and a lot of new houses and so on. Sir, I do not want any 30 yards, I want thousands of yards because in my constituency there are large stretches of roads that need to be done.

Sir, we need equity in the system. We are doing well, Sir. We are moving towards the good society. Step by step we are getting there, and this Government will take the credit for it, never mind what the other side said, but you would only reach the good society, if we operate and give the services that are available based on equity. The distribution must be based on equity. I am sure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that you are ad idem with me on that.

We sit back and we see all kinds of wholesale selfishness taking place. You cannot create a good society based on selfishness. As I said, Mr. Deputy Speaker, since you have indicated that my time is up, a word to the wise is enough. You and I, Sir, will look forward in the coming year to getting a greater share of the national cake that is being distributed, too often too selfishly, by the Honourable Members of the Frontbench.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, two evenings ago, this Honourable House heard a presentation which was designed to focus Barbados, indeed, to position Barbados to meet the onset of a number of challenges. Challenges in the economy, challenges facing society, challenges facing our youths and the challenges facing our people.

The purpose of that presentation was to alert this country to the need for Barbados not only to modernised its economy but also to develop a number of stratagems that would ward off the many vulnerabilities with which Barbados is faced in the context not only of ordinary competition which would affect us but also in the context of particular difficulties that may ensue if we do not position ourselves for the possibility of a fall-out if we have not been properly prepared.

However, yesterday afternoon, we heard something that can only be dignified as a political diatribe made up more of strictures and characterised more by forms and by certain idiosyncratic histrionics than by any depth or substance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will no doubt recall that the principal spokesman on the other side yesterday appeared to lament the fact that Budgets as he has come to love them, and Budgets as we have been told used to be delivered in this country, were a thing of the past and he sought to justify the old order and to challenge the new order more out of an attachment to things past than any respect for things present or any appreciation of the future.

The Honourable Member for St. John must be told and must be reminded again that if there is an imperative in the context of the management of Government finances, that imperative as set out in the Constitution, clearly requires this Parliament, as a matter of duty, to pass Estimates every year by a

particular time.

That whole question, as I raise that matter of Budgets, is a question more of practice over time than of any mandatory, statutory or legal requirement. Yet, despite the very clear pronouncement of the Honourable Member for St. Peter that as far as he was concerned, the Estimates represent the real Budget and that provisions that enable the Minister of Finance to deliver what I called the customary, non-statutory Budget are optional, yet, the Honourable Member for St. John is insisting that what he as the Honourable Member of St. John would have done would be appropriate, and by inference and implication try to suggest that the exercise as undertaken by the Honourable Member for St. Peter was not done in the right way.

Nonetheless, Mr. Deputy Speaker, all Honourable Members would no doubt remark on the fact that the 101 pages presentation, informed by the right objectives which were presented the day before, set out to prepare Barbados to reposition itself in the context of Barbados being an economy dependent heavily upon services.

4:20 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

Also, to reposition Barbados from the standpoint that there are going to be some new challenges and with these challenges, potential difficulties that have to be met and faced. I take heart, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the people of Barbados who have been following this debate are more appreciative of what we are doing on this side in relation to modernising our economic practices and in relation to preparing our people than with anything that would have been said to detract from the sheer brilliance with which the presentation was delivered and the sheer seriousness of the proposals as enunciated.

Let me move to address a couple issues which were raised by the Honourable Member for St. John. The Honourable Member for St. John made bold to say that he has some evidence that the contract has been awarded without authority at the National Petroleum Corporation. He actually said that there was no tendering process undertaken and he said that the materials provided under the contract were the wrong materials. He did not take this Honourable House into his confidence and give all the specifics nor did he provide details as to when, where, by whom and such like.

In any event, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I give this Honourable House the assurance that a full investigation is going to be launched and that if ever any wrong-doing is uncovered then it will not be a matter of sweeping the issue under the carpet, any wrong-doing uncovered will be dealt with. That is one matter.

The Honourable Member for St. John also suggested that there was something implicitly wrong about

Caves of Barbados in relation to Government's involvement in Caves of Barbados. No doubt, not on this occasion but in time I will inform this Honourable House as to Government's involvement in Caves of Barbados and the extent to which Caves of Barbados as a company is going to have to position itself to behave responsibly.

The third issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I respond to allegations made by the Honourable Member for St. John, has to do with the excise. The Honourable Member for St. John indicated that as far as he knew the Barbados National Oil Terminal owed the Comptroller of Customs \$35 million in unpaid excise.

The whole manner of the Honourable Member for St. John seemed to suggest deliberate tax evasion or a measure of culpability on the part of the Terminal in refusing or failing or neglecting to pay the sums due. The whole fact of the matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there is no debt in the amount of \$35 million but perhaps if I deal with the matter now Honourable Members, including the Honourable Member for St. John, will be able to understand the whole scenario.

As you are aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we in Barbados are not 100% self-sufficient in oil. Barbadians use between 4000 and 5000 barrels of oil per day, crude oil equivalent. Barbados only produces around 1 500 barrels of oil. It, therefore, means that Barbados is a net importer of oil.

As was indicated quite clearly, for the past 20 weeks or so we have had the very challenging situation where over that period of time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the prices of oil imports continued to escalate and what transpired in the period between the onset of increasing oil prices and eventual action was that there was a whole climate of uncertainty. You did not know at what point the price would stabilise. By law, oil prices in Barbados are regulated, so it transpired that for those 20 weeks or so oil in Barbados and oil products were being sold below the rate at which they were imported.

In the whole process, the terminal whose feed and mark-ups are controlled, whose rate of return is controlled, did not have the financial elbow room in the absence of a price increase to be able to discharge all of its financial obligations expeditiously.

It is a fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that even before the current onset of escalating oil prices, the Terminal, having suffered some financial setbacks last year, had always until the coming of the new prices been very badly cash-strapped and very badly constrained. I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that because of those constraints and the financial pressures on the terminal there were problems in the Terminal meeting its financial obligations; but it is a fact that any debts owed to all the various creditors of the terminal are no way of the order that the Honourable Member for St. John pointed out.

Let me say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that at some point this week after the presentation by the Honourable Member for St. Peter at least one journalist in Barbados gave the impression that the increases in energy prices suggested increases in revenue. If you check a news column the day immediately after the presentation by the Right Honourable Minister of Finance you would come across an article by one of Barbados' foremost journalists that suggested that the price increases partook of increases in revenue.

The price increases have come in the form of increases designed to reflect the financial and economic reality of the situation. We had been importing for the past 20 weeks at significantly higher prices than we were selling at. The effect of this, is that for about 20 weeks in real terms the consumers of Barbados

were being heavily subsidised. Another effect, too, is that the Terminal was being drained of financial resources, hence the need to raise the price of oil both to allow for the Terminal to continue being viable and at the same time to reflect the true reality of the situation that the price has reached a particular level as far as its CIF value is concerned and that an adjustment in the price has become necessary out of the fact that the suppliers overseas have been requiring and asking for and have been paid in higher prices.

What actually transpired was that consistent with a promise made by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter last year to adjust the excise, the excise tax was reduced. In other words, the reduction in the excise tax has actually cost the revenue but in reducing the excise tax what has happened is that the consumer in Barbados has not been required to pay the additional seven or eight cents for gasoline and an additional four or five cents for diesel.

In other words, if the Honourable Minister of Finance had not reduced the excise on this occasion, and he said so clearly on Tuesday, we would have had to pay significantly more for gasoline and diesel than will happen. I am, therefore, saying that to a significant extent even though - and I am not happy to say this - the consumer will from November 1 pay relatively small price increases, the fact of the situation is that the increases could have been more substantial and significant if the excise tax had not been reduced, or if it had remained at the same level or if it had been increased.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this point, I had better cite a passage out of the mouth of the Honourable Member for St. John at page 4754 of this House of Assembly's debates, January-June, 1994 when he himself made a pronouncement on what happens in energy. He said, speaking on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party at the time:

"It has been the declared policy of this Government that when prices of feedstock fall, the consumers should benefit and when they rise the consumers will have to meet the additional costs."

4:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

"From time to time because our obligations under the agreement with Mobil we are forced to delay any adjustment in the prices to the consumer until we are satisfied that Mobil will achieved the agreed rate of return."

Mobil, a massive multinational corporation, operating in Barbados, has just been described at page 4754 of this House of Assembly's records, January to June 1994, as being the beneficiary of an agreed rate of return. What was that agreed rate of return and what are its implications? What is this thing about this obligation to Mobil?

The Democratic Labour Party had an agreement with Mobil by which Mobil was guaranteed 12% to 12.5% rate of return after tax and notwithstanding movements in prices, Mobil always had to have this guaranteed rate of return. If the vagaries and vicissitudes of the world of petroleum production had so worked that Mobil in the market place did not get its 12.5%, then the final consumer had to make up the shortfall.

The late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, commissioned a study on this matter in the 1980s and that study concluded that Barbadian consumers were for a long time supporting and propping up Mobil in the amount of nothing less than \$6 million a year. Mobil, a multinational corporation, operating all across the globe was being subsidised by the Barbadian taxpayers in the amount of \$6 million a year for quite a while and this administration on this side decided that enough was enough.

The Honourable Member for St. John might some day come and say that at page 4754, we have actually been paying a lower price at that time but the fact is that even if they were lower prices at that time the real world situation was such, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Mobil always ended up getting ten cents per litre more for gasoline and seven cents per litre more for diesel than the market place actually dictated. This side objected to that type of pressure that Mobil extracted on the innocent consumers of Barbados, that point had to be made, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow said, after having seen the results of the work of that Committee, that such a situation could not be allowed to continue. Since then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there has been the closure of Mobil's operations at the level of refining at the Mobil site in Bay Street.

These are matters for the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are matters which have to be clarified and put right. The words of the Honourable Member for St. John in this Hansard Report at page 4754 have said quite clearly that because of the Government's obligations under the agreement with Mobil, Government was forced to delay adjustment to prices to consumers until being satisfied that Mobil would achieved the agreed rate of return.

In the context, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of Mobil's successor, we have a Government run terminal, which we do not propose to make permanent, which is currently performing the turbinning functions that Mobil used to provide and we have not given the current temporary terminal anything beyond a 6% rate of return.

Mr. Speaker, I, therefore, welcome the adjustments made by the Honourable Prime Minister to energy prices. I do not announce the increases with any pleasure but this is the reality of the situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. As they say, necessity is the mother of invention. Nobody likes price increases. Government hesitated and thought a while but the situation is, that internationally the prices of oil have been so volatile that in countries which were perceived to have aggressive tax regimes there were disturbances some nine or ten weeks ago.

Our tax regime is by no means oppressive and our excises have been adjusted downwards in the interest of not forcing the consumer into a situation where the consumer would be required to pay higher than Government thinks is fair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in respect of other charges made by the Honourable Member for St. John in his speech yesterday, the Honourable Member tended to suggest that our effort on this side, as enunciated by the Right Honourable Prime Minister day before yesterday afternoon, was an effort that did not match reality and was an effort that did not live up to expectations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, nothing could be further from the truth. This effort has mobilised Barbadians to be on the alert for the expectation of the coming millennium. This effort has been designed to ensure that all Barbadians ready themselves in training at the work place attitudinally to take on what will be required of them in the foreseeable years. This effort also clearly signals an intention to allow the youth their rightful role in this community. Mr. Deputy Speaker, certain disadvantaged persons were not left out at all in this exercise. While I am looking at Hansard page 4754 to page 4758, permit me to remind this Honourable House that time was, when the principal spokesman on finance and the economy on that side served in Government between 1992 and 1994 and he had an opportunity to serve as Minister of Finance. On the last occasion he served as Minister of Finance, it might have been the only occasion he served, to tell you the truth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he delivered a Budget and Financial Proposals, 73% of which was spent on background, history and on the review.

In terms of substances, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to draw your attention to pronouncements made by the Honourable Member for St. John when serving as Minister of Finance.

4:40 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000,

Continuation of Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

At page 4 757 of the House of Assembly Debate January to June 1994, this document originated in this Honourable House and therefore there is no need to lay it as a document of this Honourable House, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

At page 4 757 the Honourable Member for St. John so gave the impression in his speech yesterday that he was not easily going to bend or comply with outside agencies, had these words to say. He said as follows:

“In this regard we have a mutually satisfactory relation with the International Monetary Fund. They understand us and we understand them. They know clearly what we are prepared to do and when, we know what they want us to and when. On the basis of that understanding we hope to conclude our discussion...” et cetera.

The Honourable Member for St. John on an occasion when he was Minister of Finance, speaking plaintively about his involvement and his Government’s involvement with the International Monetary Fund. There was more, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on that occasion. There was more that the Honourable Member for St. John indicated at that time when in Government between 1991 and 1994.

At page 4745 in and mournful tones the Honourable Member for St. John delivered himself in this way:

“Mr. Speaker, let no one fool you. I wish that I were able to be the Minister of Finance who can usher in a new era of new employment opportunity in Government, new social programmes...”

He wished in mournful tones that he was able to do something about unemployment. Yesterday when he spoke he said nothing to convince us that he had gone beyond the quality of his thinking and these policies enunciated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would forgive me if I am accused of not being present on that occasion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the Honourable Member, under pressure to indicate to this Honourable House, what was his perception of his role in motivating the youth and in fostering youth development programmes. This is what the Honourable Member had to say.

Page 4758 of the House of Assembly Debates January to June 1994. The Honourable Member for St. John referred to in here as Hon. D.J.H. Thompson. There are two “rubits,” revenue implication of its proposals and conclusion. Towards his conclusion he said:

“ Mr. Speaker, let me share an idea with you. I hope the youngsters who may be listening to me could take it up. It is not novel since I hear the late Errol Barrow espousing these years ago and I consider it such a thoughtful suggestion as to merit repetition. Some of our unemployed youngsters can offer their services to certain businesses for a minimum cost. Volunteer to work as a learning experience, and apprenticeship for a small stipend to cover bus fare, lunch and pocket money.”

His philosophical attitude to mobilising our youth to take part in national development was to sell themselves, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a pay that cover bus fare, lunch and pocket money is his vision for youth,

The question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is this. What did the Honourable Member for St. John do yesterday to indicate that he has gone past that type of thinking? Has he transcended that desperate position of a fighting drowning man, Mr. Deputy Speaker? I am not going to suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that he

has made a good speech. By no assessment did he make a good speech but he made a speech of his life, he made a speech for his life like a man fighting for his life and for his political survival.

The Honourable Member, Mr. Deputy Speaker, came close to being the personification all that which is a let down. The Honourable Member is a let down as a relatively young man, he has let down his constituents, he has let down the youth, he has let down his Party, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The Honourable Member's contribution was ably described by at least three Members on this side. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who rebutted him toe-to-toe, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, and the Honourable for St. Philip North, almost brought him to tears and to final political destruction last evening.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will appreciate that in all this I have steered the course properly, I have not attacked the Honourable Member for St. John, I have made use of Parliament's records to expose to the people of Barbados and to this Honourable House, the type of political being that this country has to deal with on a day to day basis as it sets about its affairs.

We regret, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that in the management of our public affairs he has played a minimal role.

I thank you.

Hon. H.F. LASHLEY:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will like to give my presentation under the theme Social Transformation or mistransformation, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in following the tradition of this Honourable Chamber, I want to thank the Chamber, Sir, for allowing me this opportunity to congratulate the Right Honourable Prime Minister for his presentation of the Economic and Financial Policies which reflect Government's intention of creating a stable and harmonious society for all of us Barbadians, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was not by chance that the Ministry of Social Transformation was created or Mr. Deputy Speaker, a special favour granted to Hamilton Lashley. Rather, the Ministry of Social Transformation was created as a Government's commitment in honouring the Copenhagen Accord of 1995 which most of the developed and developing countries in this world signed, with priority number one, which was to eradicate poverty from the face of this earth, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to further congratulate the Right Honourable Prime Minister for allocating \$1 million to the Community Development Division to transform in the first phase, and I want you to note, Sir, community centres into resource centres in which information technology, Sir, can be provided at the community level. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to use this opportunity to expand on the concept and precept of resource centres in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, communities in Barbados, Sir, must play a more fundamental role in their own development. Communities must be brought to a level now where they could manage their own resources, where community leaders must equip and re-equip themselves for the challenges of globalisation and the new challenges of a new technologically driven economy as it is now, Sir.

I really want us to set a picture and understand what I am trying to establish, Sir. Resource centres are really one stop shopping malls for social services, particularly for those persons at the community level, Sir.

4.50

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

Sir, in a resource centre initiative, you should find components such as enterprise development which would provide the training and development of small businesses, helping young, potential business persons to access funding, also for the provision of counselling services, Sir, but within this whole environment, help community to organise sporting and cultural activities, Sir.

Furthermore, when using the integrated process, the decentralisation of the services of Government and private sector should be located and found at these resource centres.

Why, Sir, should ordinary Barbadians all have to crowd and cluster at the Immigration Department when they could go at a resource centre across Barbados and collect ordinary immigration forms, Sir.

Why, Sir, do you have to go at selected areas in Barbados to pay water bills, light bills, et cetera , when you could use the same community centre which we are proposing to turn into resource centres to have these things done in the community; that is why I am talking about a one-stop shopping mall for social services, Sir.

In addition to that, Sir, we have started the process within the Ministry of Social Transformation by having the Home Help Services decentralised and the Home Helpers moving from various points of Community Centres across Barbados.

Another important element of the resource centre concept is that of compensatory education. Whereas, those persons who have been through the formal educational process and did not succeed, Sir, we are glad to work very closely with the Ministry of Education to provide alternative avenues of education.

Sport is a very vital component, but sport is no longer sport, because the tradition of popular sport such as Soccer and even Cricket in Barbados are particularly subsidised. It is more an import/export business where those players that are sold to the European circuit, part of their funds come back to the respective community. So, within a resource center initiative project you find that we have these special programmes.

Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for St. John made a very vital point yesterday, Sir, and whenever I come to this Honourable Chamber I always like to call a spade a spade, and acknowledge truth where truth is, Sir, and that is to Community Centres across Barbados, Sir.

There are too many community personnel in Barbados who are not really functioning. If you travel throughout Barbados you will find that at specific times these Community Centres are closed.

What we in the Ministry intend to do, Sir, is to hand over the management of these Centres to organise community organisations; to hand over the management, to give them the key to manage their own resources. That is what I am talking about, having communities manage their own physical resources, Sir. Why is it, Sir, that organisations like the Pinelands or Bonnetts cannot be given the opportunity. Even the Sanitation Department is within the geographical periphery of Pinelands. Why is it that the expertise management that we have at Pinelands cannot take on the responsibility, too, of managing an institution like the Sanitation Service Department, and others. Sir, Sometimes we have to think more progressively in terms of dissolving some of the powers from the central government which is critical in the new globalised environment.

Sir, again, I want to thank the Honourable Prime Minister for the million dollars, because when I was on that side I was always talking about the fact of helping ordinary Barbadians - carpenters, masons, fishermen, housewives, etcetera, have access to the internet, and I am happy, Sir, to see the poor, marginalised and ordinary Barbadian that we have taken a position where these poor Barbadians now have a chance to become computer literate, and have themselves available to all the new trends of modern technology, e-commerce, et cetera.

So, I said that, Sir, so as to inform this Honourable Chamber, Sir, that the resource centre concept is not only about putting computers into a community facility, but rather a more holistic approach where the computer/internet services will be a whole component of that resource centre concept.

Against that background, I will now like, in the time that has been allocated to me, because remember I began with transformation or mistransformation, and we have to keep focussed Sir, because the Ministry is focused. I believe, Sir, that there are some people in this world, some people in this country to whom, I believe, Sir, that it would apply. There is a saying that "there is none so blind as those who cannot see". But I believe Sir, that "There is none so blind as those who do not want to see", If you examine very carefully from the outset, from the time that I was Minister of Social Transformation the stress began, not from the people of Barbados, but because our society is so partisan divided that we cannot always see, Sir, the progress, especially with this initiative being made by Gvernment and other

institution.

At this juncture in our history, Sir, we have got to move away, at this point in time, from political partisanship. Sometimes, Sir, state objectives clearly and let us call a spade a spade.

I have already said, Sir, that the Ministry of Social Transformation is the people' Ministry and therefore, Government, NGOs, CBOs, Private Sector, Sir - I want to touch on the Private Sector later - Sir, all of them should join hand in hand in helping the Ministry, because if Government allocates \$66 million to the Ministry of Social Transformation to run its programs to help the poor in this country to find a better livelihood, then therefore, I believe that the Private Sector should also get involved.

Sir, churches in Barbados must be commended for their help with the Ministry so far. The CBOs, some NGOs in Barbados, but up to now, Sir, the Ministry of Social Transformation, since I made a call to the Private Sector to join us and help us in our poverty eradication program, Sir, we have not received not one red cent from Private Sector.

The burden of this country should not be on Government and Government alone, it is an impossibility. The development of this country should not always, and cannot always be measured in dollars and cents. We have to take the future of this country very, very seriously. The times, when we just only come to Budget to hear what Government, or how much money is being allocated, or what prices are raised, or what is being subtracted, Sir, are over.

The Prime Minister is talking about inclusion, and I understand it in the context where we are asking all hands on deck. This is the time, this is the critical time now, Sir, for us, Barbadians, to come together in a rapidly changing global environment. We are either going to do it or we are going to perish. We have to stop the internal fighting. We have to stop, Sir, believing that everything is for the sake of the almighty X, and it is a critical thing, for some of us will go to any length and do anything for that X. Not me Sir, I stick to principle, policy, philosophy, and programme.

Sir, in addition, and at this time while I said that all of those honourable persons in St. Michael South-East, who are currently viewing this telecast, I just said that because I am reminding them that I came from the Pine where it is P - for Pine, P - for Perry, and P - for Prison.

Sir, a Parliamentary question was asked of this Honourable Chamber. A total of \$8 million was allocated to the Poverty Alleviation Fund during the period 1999 to 2000.

Transformation Sir, or mistransformation. A number of specific activities have been funded during that period and are currently being funded from the amounts disbursed through that fund.

For the first time, Sir, I want to introduce them into this Honourable Chamber because I am putting the record of the Ministry of Social Transformation before this Honourable Chamber, Sir.

Again, it is either transformation or mis-transformation.

5:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

Continuation of Hon. H. F. LASHLEY:

Sir, when I am through with this, I want to say that it is tantamount to political lawlessness for anyone to walk about and look at a new Ministry that has been in existence for just a year and eight months and talk about mistransformation. They were saying so even before Hamilton Lashley received the position as Minister.

Sir, but we established a Smart Lead Team of young person to carry out heavy duty interior and exterior cleaning to the homes of the elderly persons in Barbados so that their environment could be cleaner and much brighter.

We cannot wave a magic wand and expect that everything can happen at one time. Jesus Christ walked the face of this earth, Sir, and he went through...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

Proceed please.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we carried on a programme with the UWI School of Continuing Studies. It was really a Summer project, an internship programme where we took 64 children from the newer secondary schools and brought them to a job-training related programme. Out of those 64 children who attended that particular course, 31 of those children are currently being employed in the Government and the private sector.

I want to paint a scenario. Let us suppose that we could get every single Government Department, during that period of time, taking on 1 000 school children, Sir, you could imagine that having those school children being trained on the job, what potential we have in encroaching into the job market? The question that most young people have that employers ask, what experience do you have, when they first go for a job. Sir, what experience they could have if you do not provide the necessary assistance and training for them, preferably, on the job.

Sir, transformation or mistransformation, the Barbados Association for the Blind and the Deaf recently engaged themselves in a mop programme. These persons with this particular sight disability got together and decided that they were going to make some mops for the local market to sell.

I am making a call for Barbadians here in this Honourable Chamber now to support the Barbados Association for the Blind and the Deaf in their mop programme. I am calling on all Barbadians at this particular time to buy locally. Buy only the mops that are made by the Barbados Association for the Blind and the Deaf. Even if up to a point in time we have to stop the importation of mops to support this local entity, we have to. Transformation or mistransformation.

Sir, we have allocated \$600 000 towards the Soroptimist Club of Barbados to build a new concept of senior citizens villages in Barbados.

Sir, transformation or mistransformation. The Pinelands Creative Workshop is a model NGO, CBO in this region, in this hemisphere and I intend to use that model and replicate it throughout this entire country and the region. I want to use this opportunity to inform all Honourable Members of this Chamber that come January, we will be hosting the first Caribbean Region Grass Roots Meeting in Barbados, where community leaders from throughout the Caribbean will come to Barbados and we will discuss poverty eradication and everything else that affect the man at the bottom level in the Caribbean.

The Ministry of Social Transformation has taken on the mandate and challenge for the entire region. I will soon be talking about poverty. Poverty transcends colour, it transcends class, it transcends everything, it deals with human beings, Sir.

Sir, the Hedgerow Project: Someone in this Honourable Chamber made a vital statement, he was talking about the community. If you take a realistic look at what is happening now in the most populated communities across Barbados Pinelands, Gall Hill, Silver Hill, Haynesville, all those housing areas, yours, Sir, included, you will see that all of the talk that we highlight in crime and violence in the newspaper is of a few persons because I lived it and I experience it every day.

Sir, if we listened more to the people at the bottom, we would know exactly what is going on but these same communities are at the forefront for the first time in the history of Barbados of furthering social development: Haynesville - stable, Pinelands - stable, Gall Hill - stable, Silver Hill - stable. Do you know why, Sir, because for the first time, there is a holistic concentrated approach to bring stability to communities. Nothing happens overnight. It takes time, Sir, and you cannot wave a magic wand and make it happen.

Teen Challenge, another vital youth institution, was funded from the Poverty Fund through the Ministry of Social Transformation. You remember the Hospitality Programme, Sir, to the tune of \$6 150, a meagre sum, but yet was able to place a dozen single women, Sir, in work in the Hospitality Sector in Barbados.

Sir, we worked a three-pronged attack using sports as a gateway concept engaging Eden Lodge, Pinelands, obviously, and Gall Hill...

Aside.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY:

Sir, when we used sports as a gateway concept, we were able to get those 112 young people under 16 years old to graduate at a skill, preparing them for the world of work and other areas of development. St. Martins Church was funded and the Moravian Church was also funded.

Sir, we also developed a unique programme within the Ministry called 'Relief 2000' and I heard a lot of talk in this Honourable Chamber here today about single mothers and so on. So one day I went to Ghana...

Asides.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY:

I was poor because they say that all the world is a stage and the people in it make the players.

Sir, you know that acting is one of my fortes but the point is when I look in this Honourable Chamber, it reminds me of the fact that this is a very serious institution and we have to take it very seriously. In here the outcome of people's lives are decided upon and we have to be serious. Barbadians are no longer at the stage where they are going to tolerate hypocrisy, Sir, they are not going to do it.

Barbadians, particularly the youths are very well in tuned with what is going on in this country politically so that when my partner the Honourable Member for St. Lucy...and it hurts me deeply to hear them call the Ministry, the Ministry of mistransformation, Sir, again I say it is political, I mean the Party...

Asides.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY:

I was out of the island and I saw it in the newspapers that they held a meeting under the theme and guise of mistransformation. I saw it in the newspapers too, marked the 'Ministry of Social Transportation.' They said all kinds of derogatory things, Sir, but I am focussed and I am committed, that is the important thing.

Sir, recently Cabinet approved a broad-based policy and I remember the Honourable Member for St. John mentioning in the preamble to his budgetary response and this was the establishment of a Bureau of Gender Affairs. Cabinet, only last week passed the broad-based policy for the Bureau of Gender Affairs. In keeping with the election promises of the Barbados Labour Party, the Government of Barbados agreed in principle, Sir, to change the name of the Bureau of Women's Affairs to the Bureau of Gender Affairs. We agreed, Sir, to the agreements that were coming out of the numerous Town Hall meetings that were held, the Bureau of Gender Affairs - I want to paint this position very clearly - must have a clear vision and focus which should be a mainstream gender issue within the country so that the gender suffices everything.

5:10 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. H. F. LASHLEY:

Sir, the Bureau of Gender Affairs should also act as a coordination body for gender issues. Ongoing and sustained public education on gender issues will be one of its main critical functions. Capacity building, institutional strengthening of relevant Government departments, non-governmental organisations and CBOs were critical or will be critical variables. Research will be carried out into selected areas where gender is critical, monitoring and evaluation of the progress towards gender equality, gender equity and gender mainstreaming which I called the equation "Gender Justice."

Sir, in addition to that, we will be redesignating the National Advisory Council on Women to that of a National Advisory Council on Gender. We also note that a national policy on gender is being formulated in relation to agencies such as the International Development Bank and the Commonwealth.

Sir, as from last week, The Bureau of Women Affairs is now renamed The Bureau of Gender Affairs and I want to thank all the technocrats, bureaucrats, staff and everyone who made this possible. The staffing arrangements will be done sometime next year. But, Sir, just in case people believe that we are speaking in a vacuum, these were outcomes out of the Beijing Declaration of Platform of Action of 1995, the Commonwealth Plan of Action of 1995, the CARICOM Charter on Civil Societies of 1995, the ECLAT Plan of Action of 1995, the Commonwealth Project on Engendering the Budgetary Process of 1996, the Regional Policy on Gender and Social Justice of 1996, CARICOM Post Beijing Plan of Action 1996 - 2000 and the Barbados National Plan of Action 1995 - 2000.

Sir, we will shortly be changing the name of the Welfare Department to that of a Bureau of Family Affairs. I believe that the Honourable Member for St. John would be very interested in hearing that.

Asides

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY:

The Welfare Department is mandated by law, - very few people know this, Sir - to act on cases of domestic violence. Sir, we are currently expanding on our domestic violence programme and we are setting up a subcommittee involving members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. Sir, how many persons in Barbados know that the Welfare Department carry out protection orders to deal with premarital counselling and marital counselling.

I believe, Sir, that my time is up and I think I would like to make an amendment to the rules of the House in that we should be given an hour or an hour and a half to speak or that sometimes persons will give way so that we would get into more time. In my summation let me say again that I want to thank you for your indulgence and I want again to urge all Barbadians to join us at the Ministry of Social Transformation in our fight to create this social revolution that the Prime Minister of this country is seeing.

Finally, Sir, I want to conclude by reminding all Barbadians that let no obstacles be greater than the proverbial cause.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for a well thought out, courageous and, indeed, innovative Budget Speech two days ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, certainly, the new millennium will pose severe challenges to all nations especially small and vulnerable islands like Barbados.

5:15 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon G.A. CLARKE:

Therefore, the preparation for the future is necessary. It is better for us to build a strong nation at this juncture than to perish in the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a known fact that the economy of Barbados has sustained economic growth for the past six years on an average of six per cent and it appears that the growth pattern will continue for many years to come. It is a fact that the employment rate has gone up, more people have been employed. Unemployment figures are down from 24 per cent to under 10 per cent. Reserves seem to be up from \$11 million in 1993 to well over \$1 billion today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a fact that the Government of this country has kept faith with the people of this country. We have returned the eight per cent to the civil servants of this country and we can boast of a very high standard of living today. When one looks at the quality of life in this country today we can boast that we are indeed one of the proudest people in this Caribbean having sustained this quality of life over time.

Mr. Speaker, when we look around this country we see a number of things happening and we ask ourselves why these things are happening, they are happening because the country is well run. You see more cars on the streets, more people owning land and houses, more people paying mortgages than before, more people are saving, more people are investing, yet the Leader of the Opposition would have us believe that people are worse off. I believe that he would agree with me that in his own constituency there are a number of people building house. In fact, when I looked at the electrical statistics recently I found that in the area of housing in St. John in the last year or so more than 50 new houses were added to the stock. This is indeed a great improvement.

The Honourable Member can just look at the statistics either the Town and Country Planning statistics or the statistics from the Barbados Light and Power and he would find out what is going on in his own constituency.

Surely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can boast of a country that has added to stock in terms of housing, better tenantry roads, more lights, more sidewalks, more recreational facilities, and I would like to congratulate the Right Honourable Prime Minister on his initiative to improve the lives of people in such a way that people can now purchase shares in two of the islands's enterprises:

Insurance Corporation of Barbados (ICB) and the Barbados National Bank (BNB). I believe that this is a good step where the ordinary persons investing in credit unions can now hold shares in the two enterprises that are very profitable indeed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can also take heart that the credit rating of Barbados is very strong today. As we go into a globalised world, we can take confidence in the fact that the island of Barbados is reckoned to be one of the first ten countries in the world.

Already the member for Christ Church West has spoken on the impact of the WTO and globalisation on local business. I just want to say that in terms of how we position ourselves in Barbados I feel that businesses must be more efficient and now take on more of a marketing strategy in order to push forward their products and make Barbados more of an exporting democracy.

I am happy too to see a dismantling of monopolies, especially in the telecommunications service sector. For too long, Mr. Deputy Speaker, these monopolies exist and I believe that that will do us well in the future where more jobs should be created because of the competition. I also believe that the impact will be positive on the Barbados economy since consumers will benefit in the long run.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Budget also contains something for my constituency. The \$40 million over the next three years for the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission will help to provide opportunities not only for creating jobs within the rural sector but also providing roads in rural Barbados. In my constituency in St. George South we have more than 20 tenantry roads that are in need of repairs. I hope that in the next two or three years we would be able to benefit from this large sum of money which I believe for the first time Government has made available to the Rural and Urban Development Commissions. Over the last four years all constituencies in rural Barbados have benefited from the road programme of Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to turn at this time to look at the area that I have responsibility for. First, I want to say that this Government has a proud record in the area of housing. You would notice that it was this Government that put forward and implemented the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and we have implemented other financial programmes to help the housing sector and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the last four years the programme for housing has taken off a bit slowly but we are happy that it is now beginning to gather speed.

In the last five years or so, the demand for mortgages has increased. The Barbados Mortgage Finance (BMFC) Company Limited since 1994 has loaned more than \$77 million to Barbadians and this year alone they have loaned more than \$90 million. At present, they have commitments for over \$31.6 million which represents more than 292 applicants. You see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the introduction of the six per cent mortgage at the BMFC has increased the demand for mortgage funds and it is estimated that within the next two or three years the demand for mortgage loans would be more than \$30 million and in 2001 it should go up to \$33 million, 2002, \$34 million and 2003 - \$35 million.

The demand for mortgages has been increasing every year. The same thing is true for the General Workers' Loan Fund. Over the last four years or so the General Workers' Loan Fund had lent more than \$30.5 million in five years and they have loaned to more than 3200 persons. This does not include those persons who have benefited from the \$5 000 that we have introduced. I understand that more than 2 000 persons have benefited from that Fund to the tune of \$8 million.

The funds from both the BMFC and the General Workers' Loan Fund are in strong demand. We will definitely have to look at financing over the next two or three years. It is believed that a secondary mortgage market would have to be created in order to meet demand for large funds to replace those funds which are in need.

It is also true to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that all the finance houses in Bridgetown are under pressure for funds. All of the mortgage institutions, banks, insurance companies, the credit unions, have increased their mortgage portfolios. It is anticipated that with the strong demand for housing and a programme that Government and the private sector have put together we can see this demand keeping pace within the next three or four years.

I also want to look at the National Housing Corporation programme, Settlement 2000. The member for St. John did make the point yesterday that he envisages a programme of 1000 lots if and when he attains the office. I must say that we are producing at present almost 1000 on an annual basis. The Settlement 2000 programme is centred around over 2000 and possibly 406 houses. It comes to about 2600 solutions. So far we have provided more than 292 houses on the market today where people are living in these houses. Many people have purchased. Some persons are waiting for the keys to purchase. So far, we have completed more than 545 lots. Many persons have paid the 10 per cent deposit.

Surely in the constituency of the member for St. John where there are 56 lots and 20 houses, I think all the houses are now occupied. The 10 per cent has been paid and the persons are waiting on legal documents to complete the sale. This is the same position throughout Barbados - St. Peter, Christ Church, St. Philip, St. Michael. St. Lucy has not taken up your lots but I understand that very soon those lots will be allocated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the basic problem that we have is the long time it takes to complete these sales. We are hoping that we can do something about this. Also I must report that in the next two or three years we will be creating more than 2 750 lots. We have allocated these lots across Barbados and we are hoping that within the two-year programme that we can do approximately 1 400 lots per year and this would take up more than 500 acres of land which we have at present. These are lands that have been acquired by Government and they are now under development for construction by the National Housing Corporation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have also done more than that. We have done terrace units. So far we have provided more than 92 persons with keys for terrace units in the last year or so. Another 18 persons will be receiving keys within the next month at Bush Hall and Bonnetts. We are also looking at Country Road. We have cleared a site and we are now at foundation level. We will be looking at 80 high-rise houses at Country Road.

As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this may be the way to go at this time. I believe that Barbadians will have to readjust the way they see house ownership and ownership of property. In many developed countries across the world people are living as many as 18 storeys high. The way forward in Barbados will have to be high-rise. Those persons who live at London Bourne Towers are meeting a new experience and they like it. We will do the same thing at Country Road. Eight high-rise units will be provided at Country Road and we will do the same thing at Six Roads - 32 and 208 units at the Pine East/West Road.

We envisage that 320 terrace units will be provided over the next two or so years. In terms of housing solutions it is a fact that we have introduced two show houses, one at Brighton and the other at Flat Rock, St. George. We call them quads. Very soon these quads will be open. A quad is a one-house solution with four separate units. These units will be made available to the public for viewing in the next month or so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the problems that the member for St. John mentioned yesterday was the one about overcrowding. Overcrowding is a problem and we are currently addressing this problem. We must not believe that it is only a problem in Barbados, it is a problem worldwide but we are currently

addressing the problem. There are many people within the housing units that are now adding on. Whenever you see this you know that there are more than four or five persons, sometimes ten.

5:30 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

I do not think we will go the way of building houses with six bedrooms but surely we will provide more units for rental. We talked about the 325 terrace units that we provide and we will carry out a survey to find out all those persons who now live in these overcrowded situations and we will try to relieve them.

Mr. Speaker, I must speak about the refurbishment of the terrace units and the asbestos roof. I want to thank the Deputy Prime Minister who took me on a tour a few weeks ago to see the dangers of asbestos in her constituency. The Ministry of Housing with the National Housing Corporation have carried out a study and the report which came to me recently showed that out of a total of 3 744 asbestos roofs they have changed 2 300 roofs and there are another 1 400 roofs to be changed. Each roof costs the Government \$3 000. You will notice that to change the remaining 1 400 roofs will cost Government more than \$4 million. We are hoping that in the next financial year we would be able to change all these roofs in one year. We have to change them because Government recognises that it is a health hazard and we will endeavour to change the roofs.

The Government is also committed to the sale of the terrace units. We have set up a committee, a report has been submitted to the National Housing Corporation and very soon a report will come to the Ministry for submission and approval by Cabinet. We envisage that we will appoint an individual simply to look after the sale of terrace units. We are committed to it, we have it in our Manifesto and we will do just that.

Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that this Government understands that the social problem in Barbados now is housing. We recognise that there are hundreds of people out there who are seeking house spots and who want housing solutions. We have looked at our portfolio and we recognise that we have to do

something and very soon we will be announcing the multi-family unit which will help to alleviate some of these problems.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, we are not idle. We are taking this very seriously and we have met on several occasions over the last six or so months to look at new programmes and new ideas and I must tell you that from all reports the high-rise units may be the way to go, as we said before.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that this Government must be congratulated for putting the 6% interest rate at this time. Many people are looking forward to this 6% interest and seeking the loan although it is difficult to obtain because people can only obtain the 6% loan if they have land or a house. As I have said before many people will find the land within the next year or so when we bring the programme that we have.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John also asked about Warrens. I want to say that there were problems at Warrens with the foundation as there were several caves. I believe the private sector buildings at Warrens also had problems with caves. I understand that in the area of Warrens there are many caves and foundations had to be redesigned. I want to say to the Honourable Member for St. John that we are now at the second level, that work on the building is going quite slowly but that the building is definitely being worked on. There are several problems existing but these problems are being addressed. I will be in a position at the end of October to report on the finding of a special committee that has been set up especially to look at the Warrens Complex. I also want to let the Honourable Member for St. John know that the office building at Country Road is moving along quite well and we are hoping to complete that building within the next six months or so.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to encourage all Barbadians to save for the future. I want to encourage all Barbadians to get involve in owning a property. It is this Government's intention to encourage all Barbadians to own their homes. We have solutions but it will take some time and, in the final analysis, I believe that an investment in property is the best investment at this time.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to lend my support to the Economic and Financial Policy of the Government for the year 2000.

Sir, this is the first opportunity that I have had to speak in a Budget debate as a Minister of the Crown and I would, therefore, like to start first of all by thanking God for the opportunity to be here and then to thank the good people of St. Michael South for sending me here to be their mouthpiece in Parliament.

Sir, I believe this is a wonderful opportunity that has been afforded anyone who is in Parliament at this very critical time in our socio-economic history. It is a wonderful opportunity because the world is being reordered and reshaped and this may be the most critical time ever in the socio-economic history of Barbados since Independence. I say this, Sir, because the existing global situation has obviously created a very challenging scenario under the name of globalisation.

5:40 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. N.A. LYNCH:

Globalisation is not a new phenomenon, it has existed for quite some time.

However, the markets, actors, tools of the trade and the rules that govern globalisation are being modified and altered, because of this, globalisation takes on a whole new guise. It encompasses not only economic issues but the issues of culture technology and even governance.

This global situation is going to make more difficultlies for small open economies like ours to exist and to prosper. Globalisation has served to compound many of the socio-economic challenges that have made us even more vulnerable than we have ever been as small states. This, Sir, is a very debilitating scenario for a small economy like ours - accelerating liberalisation, non- discriminatory trading policies, reciprocity and national treatment.

However this is shaped is going to make a difference.

What we need, Sir, obviously, is long term solutions that are sustainable, a very strategic approach to how we plan to reshape this economy. The real question is how do we reposition a small internally oriented economy to compete in the global economy, particularly when there is little or no learning curve. How do we deal with the new players that are emerging - WTO, multinationals, NGOs? Those organisations that literally transcend national boundaries.

Today, Sir, I believe that the Arthur administration has done sterling work in terms of proving that we can create policies that can reposition Barbados and that can take Barbados squarely into the twenty-first century. Another real question, however, is how do we build upon this work and continue on this sustained growth path.

The six Budgets that have been presented so far, have all been presented by the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister as sustaining the economy and building for the future development of Barbados.

The first in 1995, there was a restoration after the economic holocaust of the early 1990s. In 1995, he set about putting the productive sectors back on track. In 1996, there was a deliberate effort to create savings and investments in the country. In 1997, there was a direct tax reform and the introduction of the Value Added Tax that was needed to create the base that we wanted, to take Barbados forward. In 1998, we looked at capacity building - the future and in 1999 we sought to build upon the concepts of retooling the productive sectors.

However, the year 2000, is really, may be, the most critical step that we have ever taken in terms of retooling and repositioning Barbados. In this effort to prepare for globalisation, we have introduced the concepts of being able to reconfigure the technological and the information base side of our country.

This, Sir, I believe, maybe a quantum leap into the concept of how we reposition Barbados for the future. We have boasted that we can make unemployment a thing of the past. I believe, Sir, this particular move is going to, actually, take us over the edge in terms of how we can really make unemployment a thing of the past.

There were times the Opposition pooh-pooh the issue of full employment for Barbados. I believe, Sir, that it is very plausible and very much achievable. Particularly as we seek to reshape our country in terms of how we deal with technology and information.

We have been dealing with the economy and sticking to sound macro economic policies which are really the keys to preparing the sound base that we need. The macro economic framework, low fiscal deficits, little external financing, low inflation, prudent monetary policy, fall in unemployment, stable financial sector and continued improvements in our external position have been the hallmark and the platform under which the Arthur administration has worked over the past six years.

Whether or not people want to admit, particularly Honourable Members on the other side of the aisle, the fact all of the economic and social challenges that Barbados has had, the facts are there for all to see. Eight years of continued economic and positive growth for the Barbados economy.

Obviously, there are challenges and challenges will continue. The Minister of Finance outlined the challenges that we have. There are the non-trading and trading sectors. He outlined that the trading sectors needed to grow a little more and that the non-trading sectors were growing quickly. I believe, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North outlined very clearly that if the non-trading sectors were growing at a much faster rate than the trading sectors and were out of 'synch', that we would be looking at an over heating of the economy.

Sir, with all the criticism and all of the things that come down against this Government from some other quarters in the Caribbean and globally, I challenge them to pick a better country. Pick a country with the resources, confined without any natural resource, depending upon its people to move forward, I ask them to pick another country. Pick a better country in terms of what we have done with the resources that God has blessed us with.

Sir, this is the type of critical analysis that Barbadians seek, as we seek to move forward to the twenty-first century - sound analysis of our economic affairs. Tell us how we can move this country along. How we can create more opportunities for all Barbadians? How we can build more capacity for the future of our country? How do we build social capital which is ultimately a check and balance system for the economic policies that we are putting in place? Give me a clear defined set of objectives, a clear set of fixed goals. This is what Barbadians were expecting. This is what Barbadians wanted to hear from the Leader of the Opposition.

He came pregnant with expectancy and once again he aborted. Two hours and forty minutes of no analysis at

all of the economic affairs of our country. What we were treated to was a tirade of political chicanery to which the Leader of the Opposition is becoming renowned and famous.

However, that is understandable from a man who, in my opinion, admits that he knows little about economics.

MR. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like that word chicanery withdrawn and struck from the records.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Could you proceed, please?

Hon. N.A. LYNCH:

Chicanery only means manoeuvring, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Asides

Hon. N.A. LYNCH:

Sir, what he is frightened about it is that this same gentleman has been the Minister of Finance and seemingly aspires to be the same again. I hope, however, like the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, that a word to the wise is enough. If you trick me once shame on me, if you trick me twice shame on you but if you trick me thrice God help us all. I would hope that the Members of the Democratic Labour party would not be allowed to let anybody trick them again.

5.50 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Mr. N. A. LYNCH:

Again, what we were treated to is a tissue of lies; chickens being dumped, but the one that I particularly took offence to was the issue of the Tourism Industry being in shambles.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is an offence to the Standing Orders of this House to accuse any Honourable Member of lying. The Honourable Member may wish to continue in his trend in abusing the Thompsons but I do not think you would wish to allow that to happen in this Chamber, and I would ask you to rule on that, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member, could you please rephrase what you have just said.

Hon. Mr. N. A. LYNCH:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, he is a stranger from the truth in terms of Government policies and what has happened over the years.

The one that I took offence to, Sir, is the issue of my stating that the economy was in shambles. At no time, in no forum, did I ever state that tourism was in shambles.

Now, Sir, this administration has achieved more for the common man and for the ordinary man in Barbados than any administration in the history of Barbadian politics, and that is a fact, that is in the record.

In this Budget - by any other name, in my opinion, this is the one that will push Barbadian, really and truly give them the platform to go towards full employment.

Taking internet into the community centres, liberalising and freeing up telecommunication sector, easing the way that people do business all over Barbados in every sector and particularly how people use telecommunication, how they deal with each other in terms of communication, should be down to the benefit of every single Barbadian, to the common man.

The regulatory framework for e-commerce, again, in an era in which there are no longer going to be sovereign state, but in which sovereign individual is really going to be - by which every one has the opportunity. The regulatory framework of e-commerce is really the issue I believe that is going to push Barbadians into the concept of how they trade and really give everyone an opportunity to be employed in this country.

The empowerment of ordinary Barbadians by permitting them to share in the ownership of our most productive government enterprises, a serious step in terms of enfranchising ordinary people, shares made public in the B.N.B. and in the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, shares soon will be coming to other government enterprises, the Airport and the Seaport. These are the issues that I believe that make a difference in terms of really empowering Barbadians to move to the next step.

Sports, Sir, and the \$10 million that was offered to allow us to move forward. Now, Sports and Culture are really going to be the true profession of the 21st Century when any athlete, sports person, when any musician, when any actor have the opportunity to transcend any national boundaries or applied restraints anywhere in the world. That, creates a basis for us to create employment, where employment and the true concepts of employment have never existed. This offers us the opportunity to be able to ply our trade anywhere in the world.

The issue that we, after all of the outstanding performances of all of our sportsmen during this year, now can create a platform for raising \$10 million more for them to move forward, for them to be able to ply their trade, and really become true professionals, is certainly, Sir, an act of genius.

Land Tax reduction and the reworking of Land Tax, Sports and Culture and the Community Centers,

these are really, Sir, objects of harnessing the best quality and the best values of our people being able, Sir, to go into the heart of what Barbados is. The Minister of Social Transformation describes it best when he speaks of issues of being able to harness the best of what we have got. Go into the communities that are most vulnerable and really offer them the opportunity to be at the core of everything that we are doing in Barbados, everything that we are building in Barbados, as we continue to build this new and good society.

Now, Sir, the sound macro principle that I have spoken about, there is very little more that can be done at the macro level to change the direction of Barbados. There are, obviously, things that can be done in reaction to the global changes - interest rates adjustments, et cetera, but the issue is, Sir, that once you have created a sound macro economic base, we then need to consider the micro level at which Barbados operates and how we can create scenarios that create the best opportunities for those trading sectors to move forward.

Now, it has been repeated often in here, it was repeated by the Prime Minister a couple of day ago, that tourism is, maybe the most important plank in terms of creating export-oriented economy that we want. Tourism is easily the most W.T.O. compliant in its natural form of all of the industries in which we are involved. Tourism has always been forced to compete on a small global competitiveness and has done so rather well.

I acknowledge the awesome responsibility that I have been given in terms of being at the helm of the tourism sector at this time.

I want to say, Sir, no matter what you hear, the mouthings you hear from the other side of the aisle, that tourism, Sir, is on sound footing.

Now, the 1999 performance on tourism sector, in some areas, may not have been exactly what we wanted it to be.

Long stay arrival of the tourism sector were up 1.1 per cent over 1998, the long stay arrivals being recorded at 517,780. Cruise tourism, however, was down 14.6 percent with the figures being recorded 432,854.

The projections for 2000 are more than good and we are expected to more than exceed the 1999 figures for tourism.

We have, in the sector, sound statistical figures from January to July, and preliminary figures for August and September.

Now, this is an area that has always been somewhat of a bother to tourism technocrats and to Ministers and I am sure that those who have gone before me would be elated to hear - that when sometimes statistics fell there is one administration at which the tourism statistics fell by eight months behind, in terms of knowing exactly what we were doing, we now have additional personnel working with Immigration and a new company has been keying in the back log of statistics and the back log of E.D. cards coming into Barbados. We now have official data up to July and as I said before Preliminary figures for September.

It means that we are able to offer, not only to Barbados to tell them how they are doing but in our major markets where many people are working very busily on behalf of all Barbadians, for some time, they have not been able to measure their efforts in the short term.

In tourism, that is exactly what we are doing. By end of October, we will be on real time. In other words, as the month finishes, within one week, we will be able to tell Barbadians how the tourism sector is doing.

6:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

Continuation of Mr. N. A. LYNCH:

Sir, for this, we must thank the civil servants and the Chief Immigration Officer and the Immigration Department for being cooperative and for some of the work that they have done in terms of bringing us up to date with the figures.

Sir, the tourism figures, up to July of this year, were up by 7.3 per cent in terms of long stay over last year - 305 146 to 327 359. September was a little slow but August was up 10 per cent and October is set to be even better. As a matter of fact this is now going to place us in a position where for the first time in our history, we are projecting arrival figures of over 550 000 for the year 2000 in terms of long stay.

Aside.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH:

Cruise tourism is also expected to be up and it has been doing very well. Already through October, we are recording a 21 per cent increase in cruise tourism for the year - 387 000 passengers as opposed to 312 000 at the same time for 1999.

This is a response to a lot of the misinformation that comes out of the Opposition, particularly from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who does not seem to understand simple Arithmetic. You can have a

reduced number of calls but if the ship is bigger and there are more people on board, you have more passengers coming in. When he comes here to 'pompassett' and to 'jump up' about he sees one ship down in the Harbour and all this nonsense, as far as I am concerned, you can have one ship. The world is moving, the cruise industry is moving towards bigger ships, mega ships with 3 500 passengers and cabin crew coming in. What we have had this year is a drop off, yes, the number of calls has been less overall but the point is that the numbers are going up.

Sir, you know I like to hear all the talk about those who do not understand, who are physically challenged, who do not have even the slightest idea of what is going on in the economy, with all those hollow mouthings, shallow as echoes they are...

Asides.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH:

To try to tell people or try to pooh-pooh the industry of where the industry is going - 2 000 in the cruise sector is projected already.

Sir, for 1999, as I said before, we had 423 000. Already for this year up to the end of September, we have almost 380 000. This means that we will more than go over the amounts because, even the Honourable Member for St. Lucy should know this, November and December are going to reap even more. He should already know that and we are more than going to surpass. In terms of what we have been negotiating already for the FTCA, we believe that 2001 is going to be even better for Barbados.

It is critical however, Sir, that we do not take all these figures just at face value because the cruise sector itself needs to be analysed and consistently analysed, vis-a-vis the long stay sector. What you want is a critical analysis of how these sectors are actually working together and how they are complementing each other.

Sir, we need to move the industry along, particularly the cruise sector on how to make money and money talks of the VAT. People are talking about head-tax increases. There is a lot more economic benefit that can redound to a country if we start thinking about the issues of sourcing and other social programmes that they could contribute to, on an island: sourcing on employing, sourcing on goods and services, being able to really create a conversion programme. There are a number of issues that we need to discuss and these issues are ongoing with the cruise sector, not all, of course, is rosy.

There are some key challenges that are facing the industry. If the Leader of the Opposition had quoted that, I would have said, yes, there are still some key issues facing us. There are some key economic issues, the issue of investment and there are some operation issues facing the subsectors in Tourism. Public and private sector cooperation is important, which leads to some social issues as well: Community apathy and non appreciation for the tourism sector, lack of local entrepreneurship and local investment, issues of safety and security. There are some issues that we still need to grapple with, if we are going to move this industry along. Overall, how do we create a much more enabling environment for the operation of the industry?

Sir, our Hotel Aids Act is a 1956 Act and some revisions and consolidations were made and a revision in 1985 but the fact is that the concessions built into that Act, are still archaic. The industry has outlived

its legislative clothing and it needs to be reclothed.

Now, the 1999 Budget sought to address a number of these issues. The most vulnerable operation in the Tourism sector and the subsector has been - and this debate is ongoing - the issue of small hotels which make up 40 per cent of our accommodation sector.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. N. A. LYNCH:

O Lord, you have not given me a lot of time.

Sir, while we have been working upon retooling this industry, one of the things that the Prime Minister quoted and which is fundamentally important, is that a new Tourism Development Act is coming for Barbados.

The new Tourism Development Act just does not fall out of the sky or is just not the wishes of this Government. We have created a policy document and framework which is going to be exposed to all Barbadians in both national dailies on Sunday the first day of next week. That policy framework has as its plan, participation and collaboration.

We are clear that the people of Barbados must share in the sustained development of tourism. They must be the core of setting the policies and that out of that must flow any of the regulations and legislation that moves tourism forward. Therefore, all Barbadians are going to have a wonderful opportunity to comment on these issues.

There are some other issues, Sir, in terms of retooling the industry which are, a better public sector overseeing and a better marketing agency for Barbados. There are a number of issues that will be created for Barbados to better the tourism sector.

Let me also say, Sir, that I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy constantly quote about all-inclusive hotels, et cetera. Only 20 per cent of all the business that came to Barbados last year actually stayed at all-inclusive hotels and that is a statistical fact. I want to say that the Democratic Labour Party continues to give us facts that are not totally near to the truth in terms of the things that they project about this sector and about this Government, period.

The Democratic Labour Party continues to give Barbadians, to cut it short, pathetic leadership, our people who really need to rethink what they are doing. Leadership is lacking across the isle and it is lacking in that party and I want to tell them, Sir, in conclusion, if your leader is dead, you should try mine.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Sir HAROLD St. JOHN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am grateful for the opportunity to say a few words in support of the Resolution which this House will vote on at the end of this debate.

I am convinced in my own mind, Sir, that the policies and programmes of the Government do demonstrate a commitment to repositioning the economy of our island and to maintain and advance its strengths in the continuing liberalisation and globalization of the world economy.

6:10 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Sir. HAROLD St. JOHN:

I believe that the fear Barbadians have is not the fear of crime as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition told us yesterday. There may be concerns but the real fear relates to what impact these new economic paradigms arising from liberalisation and globalisation are going to have on the standard of living of Barbadians.

Barbadians are exceedingly proud of our achievements. All sides in this community have great pride in the fact that we are a small country, that we have been able to build up over the course of years an excellent image internationally and that we have been able to provide a standard of living of which the vast majority of Barbadians can be proud. It may not be as good as that of The Bahamas or of the First World Countries but it is certainly better than nearly all of the rest of the developing countries.

It is very important, therefore, that at this time we do not lose our self-confidence. Something which I believe that the leadership of the Government is bringing to Barbadians, is a constant reminder to them that we should not spend our time tearing down one another and destroying one another but we should spend our time in a constructive analysis of what we have to do to survive in the new millennium.

It is in that context, Sir, that I look at the Budgetary Proposals that have been delivered yesterday and at the programme of the Government over the course of the last six years. I also would like to suggest that in our deliberations, we spend some time in a critical analysis of where we are and where we need to improve. I make no apologies for saying that there are some aspects of how our society operates that need change and I want to start off and deal with it. Some of the things that I am going to say may not be popular but I believe we need a critical analysis of our Civil Service, of our Judiciary, of our Police Force and of our attitudes to work.

I am very pleased that this Government is bringing before Parliament an Employment Protection Bill. It will give us an opportunity to examine our existing employer/employees relations. I want to make it clear, that the Government can introduce new concepts of unfair dismissals but sooner or later, the obligations of employee to employer will have to be defined. We all know, Sir, that just as there are employers who exploit employees, so too there are employees who exploit one another and employers.

It is exceedingly important that our concepts of what is good service, our concepts of what is punctuality and our concepts of our obligations to our job, be examined. We are in the height of a construction boom in Barbados. Let there be no doubt about it, Sir, that part of the cost structure that we have in our construction industry and the fact that it is so out of proportion to other parts of the Caribbean, is derived from the fact that from the top to the bottom, there are inefficiencies arising from a lack of critical self examination of our standards. Whether they be Architects, whether they be Quantity Surveyors, whether they be Engineers, whether they be Builders, whether they be Artisans, everybody it seems to me, are on a rip-off train.

In my constituency, I happen to have a lot of people who have come back from the United Kingdom. There are two points of criticism that nearly every Saturday morning I have to deal with as they come through the door. They have two favourite targets, one is lawyers, they are number one and number two are builders.

Now, I happen to have had the opportunity and requirement of doing analyses and seeing comparative study of cost of construction in the hotel industry throughout the Caribbean as a result of my being responsible as Chairman of Needhams Point Development. I want to say that the commentary on cost here in Barbados is something that gives me cause for concern.

We all know that whether it is under the Democratic Labour Party Government or under the Barbados Labour Party Government the public sector programme has been bedevilled by the fact that there has not been sufficient examination of the plans and execution of the plans prior to contract award. I feel that is an area in this era of globalisation and liberalisation that we have to pay attention to. Our competitive position is important. We cannot continue - it is going to make me unpopular, Sir, - believing that it is possible to have an international business centre in Barbados in which people are going to be paying \$10 000 to \$15 000 in rent per month. If we are to be competitive, we have to examine why is it that we can only produce a property with the amenities that are produced at that price.

I want all of us to understand that the measures that have been brought here today and the measures that Government over the course of the last six years have brought in the sense of the legislative framework are not going to be enough. We have to be self critical and carry out an examination of many other areas of our economy and our human resources.

I am going to deal now with another problem, Sir. We cannot continue to think that we are going to be a prime international business centre when our dispute resolution procedures are such that it takes Judges 18 months, two years and in some cases three years to give a decision.

6:20 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

It cannot be acceptable. Of course, we all know and the Leader of the Opposition provides us with an opportunity because he attacks the Government sometimes as though the Government has the power to do something about it. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West had said the Government may want to carry out executions but the judicial system can frustrate it. The judges can even reverse themselves in a year. The Government, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has said, cannot be responsible for the functionaries who carry out the day to day work. No Minister of Government orders chicken.

The point is that our system of government is dependent upon machinery for discipline which is in the hands of people outside of government. We must rely on those people who are assigned, whether it is the Public Service Commission, the Judicial and Legal Services Commission or special commissions appointed for disciplining judges because we are coming to that. This scandal of failure to give decisions by judges has to come to an end. We have been talking about it for a long period of time and it has to come to an end.

I want to say something else. Under the terms of the Employment Protection Act they have appointed a Tribunal. Tribunals are in the same position because the fact that you invest a tribunal with this power, seems to go to their heads and they feel that they do not have to give decisions either. We have a long history of income tax appeals and other tribunals. The only tribunal in my experience of 30 to 40 odd years is the National Insurance Tribunal which used to function with a great degree of efficiency.

Aside.

Hon. SIR HAROLD ST. JOHN:

I am told now that they have lapsed into the same indecisive mood. Nobody should want to be a judge if he cannot make up his mind. The essential characteristic of a judge is to give a decision. If he does not have that capacity, quit the job!

No lawyers that have any sense ever identify themselves with the results of a case. They get paid to do it to the best of their ability. If they disagree with the judge they can appeal. The trouble is that the Appeal Courts are in much the same position. Sir, that is an area that we have to deal with.

There are other areas too that we have to deal with in this area in order for us to say with confidence that we have the institutional and human resource framework within which we can face a new blast of competition that is arising from globalisation and liberalisation.

I want to mention in particular, Sir, that having self-confidence in what we have attained is a very important thing. There is no reason for Barbados to have an inferiority complex in these areas. We have been under attack in respect of our financial services industry.

6:25 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

I am grateful for the fact that the Leader of the Opposition made the statement that international business is a bipartisan issue and that he criticised the OECD. I never had any doubt in my mind that there were hypocritical in their criticisms of countries like Barbados in respect of money laundering because I always had clear evidence in my mind that London, Zurich, New York and Luxembourg were the biggest money launderers of all.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Well, if I had any doubts, on the Friday, October 20, 2000, the Financial Times of London had a headline as follows "Lauderers put U.K. banks in a spin." We should have a massive public relation exercise as part of our counter-attack.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Joseph mentioned another vital point. The WTO has received a lot of acceptance but the workings of the WTO and its impact on small countries and lesser developed country should be the subject also of continuing review. We ought not to feel that we cannot make a contribution to the reform of that institution because we have allies in the developed world and in the developing world. One of the things about the developing world and small countries is that we are excellent laboratories for how policies work. Big countries do not have the same opportunity to observe the impact on policies as we have, that is what a laboratory is for, a small area that you can observe and

control the thing, that is what we have to deal with. Remember, we must not fail to continue to remind the so-called First World countries that before they cast a stone they should look at themselves.

Sir, I have confidence in myself and in the Barbados Labour Party because, after all, we know both sides. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition is only going through what we went through on many occasions even though we went through it for a longer period and his long time has not come to an end yet.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

The Opposition is where you learn your politics, that is where you learn how the system works. Two bouts in the Opposition is not enough, they need a third bout.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

My friend here next to me is saying that he is difficult to teach so he has to have a longer period of teaching.

Sir, I want to deal with a few things. I expect the Leader of the Opposition to make an attack on Needhams Points and the Gems of Barbados but he cannot take away the fact that the Barbados Labour Party conceived of the greater Bridgetown plan. It has taken fifteen years to come to fruition because the Democratic Labour Party had no faith in it and for the nine years between 1986 and 1994 they did nothing but they could not kill the spirit of the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even before the new policy, this Government has never discriminated against any Barbadian who had ideas. As we pass by the old Harbour Police Station there is a company called Bayshore Development and I am told that a large number of the investors in there have more sympathy with the Opposition than with this side.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

I do not know because things change so much now that they may have greater sympathy with us now. At least the electoral results suggest that some Dems must have voted for us otherwise we could not have 26 seats to 2 seats.

Sir, people say that the Hilton is rubble but I want to make a very important point. The Hilton was being changed from a hotel with 180 rooms to a hotel with 350 rooms. Obviously, the footprint of a hotel with 350 rooms had to be larger than the footprint of a hotel with 180 rooms. If you are wise enough, before you build, you will do your site investigation although I have seen buildings put in Barbados and engineers certified the site without investigation and as soon as the bulldozers go they find they are building in a cave. My experience has taught me that is not a wise thing.

We commissioned a well-known firm who tests foundation to do the study and the first thing they told

us was that they had to do a study of the whole footprint. They could not do the study with the building on it so we had to knock down the building first before the study could be done and that is one of the reasons for the demolition. Site preparation was necessary and site preparation demanded that an intensive investigation take place.

Secondly, Sir, we have designed the building and prepared the site to comply with the new Caribbean building code and to comply with earthquake standards. Many people at the beginning said that it was a waste of money, that Barbados does not have any earthquake but lo and behold, before we started to build there was an earthquake.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Yes, very recently here there was an earthquake. We have done a tremendous amount of work and it is not even a year since the demolition of the Hilton. I am pleased to say that we hope to have a formal contract document sign certainly in time for construction, to start very early in the new year. Sir, a lot of work has been done and all of the site preparation has been completed and finished.

Sir, when we come to the Golf Course the Leader of the Opposition would know that my views and his do not agree on that. One of the greatest things that this Government did for Barbados is that we have provided on the south coast of the island a golf course which, now that it is completed, is earning nothing but praise from all aspects of the tourism industry.

This is another project that we left and the Democratic Labour Party decided since 1985, when we bought the land for \$750 000, that they were not in agreement with it. The people put us back in and we decided that since we had announced in 1985 that we had bought the land we would resuscitate it and we did it. We feel that we have the political approval to carry that into effect so we do not bother about the criticism from the Opposition. When the Opposition gets back in and they want to sell it they can sell it.

Sir, they sold Heywoods and I am going to deal with that because the Leader of the Opposition has a twist on that. He said he sold it for \$32 million but he did not tell us that when they were selling it that they had, from a very reputable real estate agent, a value and that the true value was \$47 million.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

He did not tell us that but they were desperate and I do not blame them. I do not blame the Democratic Labour Party for selling Heywoods for \$32 million nor for selling Cable & Wireless the Government's shares because they were desperate. They had ran the country into a position in which the IMF were at their throats. They had lost control of the reins of Government and they had to submit. It was that or devaluation.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Yes, they made a judgement call. I am very pleased to know that so far the way how this Government is running that the IMF does not have the opportunity to be at our throats and long may it continue, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

That is why the people have faith in us.

6:35 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

All of the macro economic indicators show that we have had growth. I do not want us to be so complacent as to believe that unless we institute some changes in the country that we can continue.

I am very clear in my mind that some of the policies for repositioning the country have to be implemented with a speed that Barbadians are not accustomed to. People forget that it took 50 years of discussion to get the Deep Water Harbour built. I believe that it was almost 50 years to get the hospital built. Similarly, the Bridgetown redevelopment has taken nearly 20 years. There are some things that we have to do now that the whole machinery of Government has to speed up.

The agricultural reforms that we need - we cannot go along as we are without understanding that we do not have the luxury of long periods of time to make decisions in those areas. We have made up our minds, some decisions are going to be popular and some unpopular. The point is, it is a sense of urgency that everybody must appreciate and understand when these decisions come to be taken and have to be taken.

I am satisfied, in my own mind, that there is still a future for agriculture in Barbados. I believe that all of the research that has been done from the 60s, on have demonstrated that we are excellent in some vegetable growing. A lot of work has been done on things like carrots, onions and tomatoes.

There are people now at the university here in Barbados who are using biotechnology techniques and are consultants in breeding disease resistance tomatoes for countries like Spain. That is the new area that we have to get into. Our agriculturalists must now be highly scientifically trained. We must become a laboratory, that is what we have to do, that is the kind of change that we have introduce in this country is we are to survive.

Sir, within the context of the Caribbean, there are opportunities that our agriculturalists must exploit.

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN:

Yes, Sir, two more minutes, Sir. Yes, Sir. What I am going to say illustrates the lack of self confidence in some of the institutions of our society.

It is no point any officer of any NGO or any agricultural society screaming at the Government about wanting protection in these times. The Government can help them with their transition period but Government having committed itself to the rules of the WTO cannot change those rules until we are able to persuade the other members to that direction.

What they should be looking at, is trying to ask the Government for research grants for other areas of help and when they do that, I know they will be reaching an open door.

The Honourable Member for St. John came in here at the time and he asked the Government to support the companies for the reorganisation of the sugar industry, and they were private companies- not one was a statutory board - and the instruments creating these companies did not say that they must bring their Reports to Parliament. The Honourable Member may have forgotten that he set a precedent. It is his precedent that we are following.

If we have a second thought on it, we are entitled to change our minds. I will like to point out to you that where the

Government is having co-partnerships with other investors, very often that the terms of the co-partnership is embodied in a shareholder's agreement and that shareholder's agreement contains provisions against disclosure except with the consent of the other. That is the problem that you have.

I agree with the Honourable Member of the Opposition that we should look for mechanisms for greater disclosure. I will tell you why I agree with it. It is not the directors of these companies that you have to watch. It is the operators who operate that you have to watch and the best policeman is exposure. That is the position, Sir.

I am grateful to you.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am extremely grateful to the good people of St. Lucy for allowing me the opportunity to speak in this debate.

I want to say, Sir, that I thought that when th Prime Minister delivered his Budget on Tuesday that he would have spent more time dealing with globalisation and also Barbados for the effects of globalisation.

Sir, globalisation has created certain problems for us where previously we were able to protect our imports by way of licences, now we are not able to do that. What we have done instead, Sir, is introduce a system called bound rates which allow any importer to import any item he wants into Barbados, which in truth and in fact will create a foreign exchange problem for us, where previously we would have been able to use the licencing system to correct that particular measure. In light of that, Sir, one would have thought, Sir, that an educational programme would have been implemented into the system of Barbados

to guide on the importance of using those things that are produced locally and an import substitution policy would have been put in place.

Instead of import substitution policy being put in place due to the lack of education on behalf of the Government, we have a situation in this country, Sir, that you cannot now differentiate whether you are in Barbados, the United States or any other part of the world. Globalisation has created an atmosphere for us that any product can easily be accessible in Barbados and we must understand that is going to be a serious charge on our foreign reserves.

In order for us to continue to live at the rate we are living, our productive sectors must generate the foreign exchange to match the import. There is no doubt, Sir, that we are at a stage where our imports are outstripping our exports. In a situation like this one can understand why the Government had to borrow over \$350 million in one year.

One would have thought, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that having to borrow \$350 million in one year, that the Government would have us, GIS and all other avenues to educate Barbadians about the importance of maximising foreign exchange.

I saw in the press, Sir, where it was said by the private sector and the tourism officials that it was a good Budget and I would like to hold them to their word. If it is a good Budget, I would expect, Sir, that when we get the Economic Report next year that we would see growth in the tourism sector and the manufacturing sector. What those two sectors would have said to Barbados is that they have received what they required of the Minister of Finance and that there is no good reason why the productive sectors of Barbados should not produce.

6.45 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

But if we pick up the Economic Report next year, and if we were to find out that the productive sectors are not producing, one would have to ask whether it was a good Budget or not.

We also must recognise, Sir, that in order to export goods, that the W.T.O. and other organisations that they have been asking us to be I.S.O. 9000 compliant.

I would really like to ask the officials in Barbados how many companies in Barbados are I.S.O. 9000 compliant. I would really like to ask that question, and how many companies are being assisted by the Government of Barbados by some planned policy of being compliant, for the simple reason, if we are to tap into the export market we must put our house in order.

I am saying that one would have expected, not this year, but since 1994, and even earlier, that mechanism would have been put in place to make sure that these companies prepare for globalisation in the year 2000.

But I must remind this House that in 1991, that the Rt. Honourable Minister of Finance at the time, Mr. Erskine Lloyd Sandiford, put measures in place to make sure that the manufacturing sectors and the productive sectors were aware of what was becoming of them, but there were certain players within the economy who frustrated the efforts and made sure that those companies who should have been I.S.O. 9000 compliant today are now fighting to become I.S.O. 9000 compliant.

What it means, is that the Democratic Labour Party, through its foresight since 1991, was prepared to put measures in place to put the manufacturing sector who had the capabilities of exporting in place and in line with the world but sectors and agencies within the economy frustrated the efforts and now we are nine years after trying to put those same policies in place.

I am saying to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have lost a golden opportunity in Barbados, to be ahead of the world, but my question is how long can we continue to expect the private sector to do the things that they should have been doing since 1991, without putting the necessary measures in place to correct those problems?

We also have a situation in this country, Sir, where, everytime we hear people they are talking about protocols. My argument is that we are also about six to nine years late with the protocols. How can we be now talking about protocols when we have to deal with globalisation.

I have already said in this Parliament that the protocols should have been practised in the individual countries first and then those protocols should have been practised within the Caribbean so that we would have then been prepared to deal with globalisation. But instead of that happening, Sir, we have a situation now where we are dealing with protocols, and dealing with trade liberalisation, free trade and globalisation at the same time. What utter foolishness we have been caught up in!

I am saying to this Parliament that we cannot any longer be tardy in what we have to do to push the masses of people in Barbados forward, because when one considers what is happening in this country, who will be affected. It will the masses of the people already within Barbados.

You are seeing mergers, Sir, and you know who are suffering? Those employees who have to depend

on these large companies would some day find that instead of operating in three or four warehouses, everything is combined in one warehouse and they have to go home, and there is no work for them.

I am saying that any enlightened Government must recognise that policies must be put in place and that we must be proactive and not reactive. That is the problem with this Parliament. We can only see issues as it relates to the piece of paper we have in front of us and we cannot look down the road.

I am grateful to the people of St. Lucy, Sir, for allowing me the opportunity not only to see the piece of paper but to see the opportunity ahead of us.

When one considers, Sir, that in order for Barbados to go forward, it is going to be the tourism sector and the Minister of Tourism could jump up in here and show off all the new clothes he has, he will not be judged by his new clothes. He will be judged by the growth produced by the tourism sector, because if you had to deal with the new clothes and productivity, the new clothes would outweigh the productivity.

I am saying, Sir, to come to this Parliament to say, Sir, that I have been saying that we have been only able to attract two cruise ships and to criticise me for it, when, in truth and fact, what I have been saying is true, is nonsensical. For the simple reason, Sir, the only time that we have been able to see an increase in the number of ships calling in Barbados was this week when we had three in one day. It is my business, and it is also the business of my little son when he goes to school on mornings to look in the Harbour to see how many ships are there, because he has been properly trained to realise that in order for Barbados to go forward that we have to fight globalisation by increasing the number of tourists in Barbados and the number of ships calling here in Barbados.

Sir, globalisation is not a problem for me, even my son understands what we have to do in order to put Barbados forward, but the problem is that the Minister of Tourism who is supposed to shape Barbados is not aware of his duties. I am saying that this cannot continue. The Minister of Tourism also has made the point today that I am always talking about all-inclusive tourism. He is always in here telling us that the way to go is all-inclusive tourism and he makes the point that all-inclusive tourism is only 20 percent of Barbados tourism. He has always said it, now he wants to deny it, but you know what is amazing, Sir, just this week two spoke- persons, the Minister of Tourism from St. Lucia, the Deputy Minister of the C.T.O., they were on radio telling the whole of the Caribbean that in order for the tourism product in the Caribbean to improve that we must have something called "sustainable tourism". Do you know what they described as "sustainable tourism", they described "sustainable tourism" as that tourism that impacts on the people in the country. When they talk about the people in the country they are not talking about the hoteliers, they are talking about the masses of people of Barbados and it makes sense, Sir.

It is exactly what I have been saying in this Parliament, that in order for our tourism to continue to go forward - and it is not something that has been happening since the 60's - the reason why our tourism has been able to develop the way it has been able to develop is because the tourists have been able to blend with the people of Barbados and whenever a market survey is done, whether by the "Visitor" or whoever, the tourist always says to you that the best thing about Barbados is the people.

Any country that wants to take tourism away from its people is a country destined to destroy itself and

I hope that the Minister of Tourism would understand that. Only hope so, Sir, because all this foolishness about all-inclusive tourism the same problem that we are having with the O.E.C.D. can easily happen to us with all-inclusive tourism.

When you allow outsiders to control your tourism product within your country you are allowing them to take a larger share and you are also giving them permission to take that market from you whenever they are ready, but with sustainable tourism that involves the people there is something unique that allows people to come back to the particular country.

I also want to say to the Minister of Agriculture that we have been faced with globalisation, and he must recognise that it is going to impact on the masses of people of Barbados. He must also recognise, Sir, that it is very important to have a program where people are prepared to see themselves, like what happened in the early 1990 when there had the eight per cent cut.

You know sometimes you get a negative, but out of a negative, sometimes you get a positive and I am telling you in the 1990 we had productive people. We had civil servants who, even though they were not allowed to work in two jobs, were prepared to work in two jobs, even if it meant growing vegetables in their back yard. I am saying that any country that finds itself where its people are prepared to do things like that is a productive country. I am also saying that we must also understand that systems must be put in place to help civil servants to supplement their incomes because there is no doubt that the Government can brag all their like about the growth and they said they had sustainable growth for six years at 3.5 per cent...

Aside

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

I heard you said that ... which is 21 per cent growth, but I want to ask the trade unions in this country - that the Incomes and Prices Protocol ask for much of growth to income. I want to ask the trade unions if they have been able to get 21 per cent increases for their civil servants and the other workers in this country.

I am saying it is not the Government at fault because of that, it would have to be the Trade Union Movement, because they have an obligation to match growth with the increase in salaries for their workers. I want the Trade Union Movement to understand that I have nothing against them, all I am asking them to do, is the duty that they have been paid to do by the workers.

6:55 p.m.

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

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

I am not asking you to go above the growth rate. I am simply asking you to extract from the Government the same amount of growth they received as wages for your workers. Do you know what is happening in this country? We have had a relationship which we can call a triangular relationship where the private sector made their profit, the Government got their taxes and all of those two increased but the workers' bottom dropped out because the Trade Union Movement did not do what they were supposed to do.

I am saying it is not fair to the workers because now that we are caught up in globalization, we have a situation, Sir, that we will not be able to sustain our workers and the workers will be the ones to suffer more so than anybody. Whereas, Sir, if we had built a solid foundation in this country, we would have had a situation where the workers' base would have been so strong that we could carry forward the country.

The same people you expect to carry forward the country, now have what I call, environmental stress. The environmental stress is impacting so much on the workers that they cannot carry forward the country because they are all stressed out. What will happen? Barbados will find itself in a position where it cannot go forward because the private sector has what it wants, the Government has what it wants and the people who suppose to produce the productivity cannot operate because they need to go and see their doctors because of stress. All of them will be on sick leave.

I am also asking the Minister of Agriculture to arrange a meeting with the directors of the new Caribbean aqua farms, the directors of the sea moss project, the directors of the company that is now looking after the lobsters and you can find them all in St. Lucy in the Half Moon Fort area. I am going to tell you why you should have an urgent meeting with these people.

All three groupings have been able to come up with a strategy, Sir, to help us replenish the sea moss in Barbados, to replenish the fish that we eat in Barbados and also how to replenish the lobsters. If we are going to prepare ourselves for globalization and it is going to be very important for the people at the new Caribbean aqua farms to be given the permission to hatch the fish and spread them throughout Barbados so at least the fellows who know how to go on the rocks and fish will be able to supplement their incomes by being able to have some of the catches.

I want you to think about that. The lobster market is a very good market and if we...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

We will soon get somebody in St. Lucy to look after the sea eggs and hatch them for you.

I am saying that the lobster market can also be a very beneficial market to Barbados because when one looks at the cost of a pound of lobster, it is very important for Barbadians to be able to produce that lobster for themselves.

I am saying that outside of the Ministry of Tourism the Minister of Agriculture has a very important portfolio to help fight globalization. I am telling you the biggest problem I have in this country today is that we are going into something called globalization and I am not seeing the educational programme to gear people towards that particular problem.

Let me tell you something. Globalization is nothing new. The only thing about globalization that is new is the removal of the licenses and the introduction of a book rate. Globalization is all about a market share and you must understand that and the Bretton Woods institutions have always done that. They have always set aside a certain amount of the market for themselves and they always made sure that they did not go under and whenever they felt threatened...

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

...that is why you have the problem now with the OECD organisation for the simple reason, previously all the money laundering money was looked after by the G7 and G8s and somehow they feel that some is slipping away from them and they have introduced an institution to look after that. That is a fact and you do not have to be an expert to know that.

I am saying that the OECD countries must understand that the same way I said to them in the Bahamas that the same way you want to interfere with us on the Australia banks, et cetera, we need to find out from you how much money you are making from our all-inclusive tourism within the region.

If the Ministers of Finance in the regions would only ask their technocrats to tabulate the amount of money that the sales reps in the G8 countries are getting from us, then we will have something to negotiate. You can call it the Kellman suggestion or whatever you want to call it but it is something that needs looking at. Sir, that is what will protect the interest of the masses in this country and people must understand that globalization is not something that you sweep under the carpet and believe that sometime you will be able to come you will be able to come out of it. Globalization is something you must deal with and deal with and deal with, head on...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, we also have a system in this country where we feel that the only way we can cushion globalization is by borrowing money. I want to say that that is a false premise. We must cushion globalization by productivity and maximising our foreign exchange whether we are encouraging people to use local products or otherwise earning it.

If we feel we are going to borrow our way out of globalization we are going to fool ourselves because at the time when we are borrowing money to cushion the globalization effect, what will be happening is that other countries will be gearing themselves to get out of it using their productivity syndrome.

I am telling this Government that its policy is wrong and that is why I hear every bragging about the Government selling the BNB and the ICB to empower the masses. The timing is wrong. That available cash we have in Barbados today cannot be for buying shares in ICB or BNB it has to be investing in productive sectors to make sure that our foreign exchange is maximised by exports.

I am saying I have nothing wrong with the masses being empowered but you must watch when you are doing it and I am saying the timing is wrong. To tell me that the credit unions should take up their money and put it in the banking system is to tell me that you want to destroy the credit union movement, which had more flexibility than the banking system and that you want to suppress the masses of this country from having the privilege of going to the credit union and getting money without red tape.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

You do not have a clue. You watch it. I am saying this is a very serious step. This step might have been good prior to globalization but not now. We need to look at things that are productive and are indigenous.

You hear all this talk about we want to get BS&T to go on the London market to borrow money for a productive project but at the same time you are telling BS&T to go on the London market to borrow money or to find a partner but you are telling your masses to go and get involved in a bank.

The masses need to get involved in a productive project right now. This is where we need to go and I want to know from the Government when you sell the shares in ICB and BNB what you are going to do with that money. What productive projects are you going to put it in, the most important point and I want to know and the people of Barbados want to know. That is why I am in here speaking for them tonight.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

I do not know the meaning, neither did Obadele know how to run 100 metres nor 200 metres.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Speaker, we also have another problem. I was told in this Parliament that we are going to increase the Police Force by transferring 200 from the left hand to the right hand.

7:05 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

I do not agree with that because if you have 1 400 people available to you, 1 200 one way and 200 one way and you move them, you will end up with the same thing.

I am going to tell you what I would have done if I were the Prime Minister of Barbados. We are not in a cold war anymore - and let us get this point clear - we have some men and women at the Barbados Defence Force that are available and who are being used by the police force every day in this country. I want to know what is wrong with transferring some of those men and women from the Barbados Defence Force to the Royal Barbados Police Force so that they can get a pension because the same way that the Commissioner of Police can borrow them whenever he wants them, you can give them to him on a permanent basis.

If we were in a cold war, Sir, I would not have made that suggestions because I would understand the needs of the personnel at the Barbados Defence Force. But as long as we do not have a cold war and we have a drug war, the best people to help deal with the drug war is a blend between the Barbados Defence Force, and the Royal Barbados Police Force.

I am telling you, Mr. Deputy Speaker ...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

...that the police force needs to have about 2 000 to 2 200 people in total because when you are calculating for the number of people on a shift you must account that some are going to be off duty and you have to divide it by 4 and not 3. They might have 3 shifts but you have to account for the off duty shift so you have to divide it by 4.

I am telling you that it is possible tonight by one stroke of the pen to give the police force everything they want without additional cost to the Government of Barbados. All you need to do is to send an order to the Garrison asking the Brigadier to transfer 800 men from up there down to Coleridge Street.

So all this nonsense that you cannot solve the manpower problem at the police force, I am telling you that it can easily be solved. It is like Mr Barrow saying to the Minister of Education: "If you cannot institute free secondary education, give up your ministry". Because there was a big problem when free secondary education was supposed to be introduced in this country. But it would take the Democratic Labour Party to show the Barbados Labour Party how to solve the problem for the police force and we are prepare to do it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a problem with this you know. I had to sit down in here from 10 o'clock this morning to wait until 7 o'clock to speak and then get the same 30 minutes as everybody else. If I were to leave in here, Sir, what it would have meant is that the Government would have been able to close the debate, therefore, I cannot be the same member as anybody else.

Asides

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER:

You are getting the same 30 minutes like everybody else. Please proceed.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Concrete roads, Sir I am very happy, Sir, to see that the concrete roads that I was told were too expensive are now being implemented in this Parliament. For years in this Parliament, I have been asking the Government to utilise the resources at the Arawak Cement Plant to put some concrete roads in Barbados. I am happy to see that we are now getting concrete roads but I want to remind the Government of one thing, that the concrete roads started in St. Lucy and the building of them must start in St. Lucy too or we will have to block the trucks from bringing out the cement.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

I am serious about that, Sir. I am also saying that in the manufacturing sector we have to realise that rum is important. We have to realise that we also have export markets for our vegetables, mauby, pepper sauce, tetra-pack juices and last but not least in the manufacturing sector we need to develop our cotton.

I am tired telling this Parliament that cotton is like oil to the Arabs and that we must exploit the uses of cotton in this country and make sure that we put it to the stage that we have something in the international market that nobody can compete with us. But instead we want to get involved with every other thing that is not important to Barbados.

My last topic, Sir, is health. I have been hearing a lot of talk about AIDS and all of that. I support the amount of money that is being given for the AIDS victims et cetera, but we also have to understand that the AIDS problem happens to be the G7 and G8 countries. There is a move afoot in this world to look after the population growth in this world and the reason why we do not have a vaccine at this time is because people want to look after the population. The same way that wars were used previously to look after the population growth, now AIDS is being used to look after the population growth.

I am saying that we must understand, Sir, that we are all part of the world and that we will be affected by everything that occurs within the world and that we as a small country cannot believe that just

because we are a small country that we must lie down and accept everything that is given to us. We must be prepared to use our brains and to recognise what is going on in the world and we must put the counter position to defend this small country of Barbados. I am sorry to report that the Barbados Labour Party has not been able to do that but the Democratic Labour Party have the plans and policies to do that as you have heard just now.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended for dinner until 800 p.m. today.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

I beg to second that.

The question that the sitting do now suspend until 8:00 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

7:15 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER:

This session is resumed.

Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

Mr. Speaker, I thank you on behalf of the goodly people of Christ Church East in whose honour I have the pleasure to rise and participate in this year 2000 presentation. Thank you on behalf of those folks from Silver Sands to Leadvale, from Chancery Lane to Charnocks, from Fairview to Fairy Valley and all over that lovely part of Christ Church.

Mr. Speaker, we were here to have the very pleasant experience of having a visionary leader present us with a clear path for the future. We were also here to witness a more unfortunate spectacle when a budget which was dedicated to the youth and which charted a clear path looking to the future, to new areas of e-commerce, reform of telecommunications, restructuring and repositioning the Barbados economy to ensure that not only are we able to reap economic benefits but we are able to be a day's march, or to quote the Prime Minister's words: "A decade's march closer home". That home, of course,

being the target of the good society of which the Honourable Member for St. George South speaks so eloquently.

In a tale of two budgets we had on the one hand the excellent and very clear and focussed presentation of the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and on the other, a disappointing presentation from the young Leader of the Opposition. It is tragic, Sir, and I felt very sad as I listened to the Honourable Member for St. John as he struggled almost in pain. He had to find some means of responding to something which was clearly out of his depth.

I am told, Sir, that notwithstanding what your training is that when in trouble you tend to go back towards your natural instincts. Given his admission of lack of economic training, lack of economic ability, he went where he was most comfortable, seeking to paint a picture of sleaziness and secrecy. He sought to attach an improper motive to everything. He even went to the long, deep, dark and dismal route of trying to suggest that a presentation which was made before this Parliament, the people's parliament, the epitome of openness and transparency, was something secret.

Can you imagine, Sir, that in the year 2000, in fact during the week when I was not even in the island, I was able to go on the Internet from my location in Canada, check the Nation newspaper and see the reports in the House and see what were the discussions in the Pierhead Development Act. The Honourable Member for St. John who was so hell-bent on suggesting secrecy and sleaziness that he would seek to suggest that there was a secret in that but we know that he is still trying to find the secret deal which he tried to foist on the electorate of Barbados in 1994. He is searching and still has not found.

I do not propose, Sir, to spend too much time on the Leader of the Opposition tonight. I want instead to focus on the business of this Parliament, the presentation by the Right Honourable Minister of Finance. This occurs against the backdrop of a very sound economy. There are those persons who want to suggest just like the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that the soundness of the economy is not important. All of us who lived through the pain of 1991, all of us who survived the holocaust years, the 4000 public officers who went home, the many persons who lost their houses, the many families that were broken up, they know the importance of a sound economy. We are not stopping there. I am simply saying that we have to give credit where credit is due.

We are able to undertake our very ambitious social programmes only on the basis of having strong economic fundamentals. If you are busy fighting for your life, fighting for basic survival, you do not have the time or the interest in the higher order of things. What we have done so far is to lay a very strong foundation of confidence where persons do not feel an immediate threat to their very livelihood, where they have the confidence to progress.

I have no doubt, Sir, that it is that sense of confidence, that sense of comfort, that sense of trust, that have allowed this Barbadian society to have had a banner year in sports, in arts and in culture. It is against that background, Sir, that all of these things occur.

Sir, this presentation was designed to move this society in a direction which we had charted from the earliest days of this administration where we were aiming for very high, social, economic goals including the elimination of poverty, continued economic growth, the reduction of unemployment in negligible portions, and we could go on and on. The record has been impressive.

The prophets of gloom and doom, the members of the Opposition, even now in the face of hard evidence, still predict economic uncertainty and a fall-out in the economy. I had the privilege of undertaking a task on behalf of this country. In June this year, I was asked to lead a delegation from Barbados, including members from the Central Bank and members from the Ministry of Finance on a mission to New York, the financial capital of the world, where following approval from this Parliament by way of a Resolution, not a secret deal, we were seeking to raise our first commercial loan on the international capital markets, based on our A rating from one institutional investor and BAA2 rating from Moodys. I can tell you, Sir, that in two days - we left on Wednesday, had some meetings on Thursday and Friday - when I was walking across a cricket field in St. Christopher, Christ Church on Monday bank holiday at two o'clock in the afternoon, I got a call on my cellular phone letting me know that the \$100 million was in the bag, as a matter of fact, Sir, that the issue was over-subscribed. Such is the confidence which the international investors and the international world have in Barbados. Sir, I will spend no more time on that.

This Budget focussed on important initiatives in the Ministry of Industry and International Business. We have heard and have known for a very long time that telecommunications are a fundamental part of the society of the future.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN:

On a point of order, Sir. I do not like interrupting Honourable Members in the Budget debate but the Honourable Member would have to be misleading the House when this Parliament was told that that loan was supposed to have been raised on the London market. I seek some clarification on this.

Hon. R.R FARLEY:

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member does not understand the intricacies of international financing.

Mr. Speaker, I want to provide some more detail of the telecommunication situation. In the deep, dark days of the Democratic Labour Party administration, the Democratic Labour Party rather than seizing the opportunity to lead the society into a new era based on technology in 1991, with only three years remaining on an agreement with Cable and Wireless - there was an existing 10-year agreement, signed in 1984 and due to expire in 1994 - the Democratic Labour Party signed a new agreement not for any extension of 10 years but an extension of 20 years. So it is really as a result of their actions that this country was put in a position of having a 20-year agreement with a monopoly provider, Cable & Wireless.

It is really to the credit of this administration, Sir, which has indicated in its 1999 manifesto that we would renegotiate the monopoly arrangements and that we would secure competitive rates and an adequate capacity to facilitate telecommunications into the future. That is important, Sir.

I will speak some more on training because it is between telecommunications and training that this country would be able to benefit from the tremendous potential which it has in the information services area, which potential has not as yet been fully tapped because of the constraints in those two areas. In fact, on the training side, Sir, Barbados is not alone. In the United States there is a shortage of some 50 000 software programmers and you should hear the kind of salaries which persons who have not even finished college as yet are earning in those areas, both in the United States and in Barbados.

8:10 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

If the Leader of the Opposition wants to speak about secret deals, he might want to speak about what happened in 1991.

Sir, I want to say that this type of communication reform is being developed on a platform of fairly substantial infrastructure, 170 000 telephone lines of which 80 000 are household, 12 000 Internet subscribers and we could go on. We already have a telecommunication infrastructure which is similar to those industrialised countries from of the OECD. The complaints, however, have always been in an area of the delay in getting new services. There are some persons moving into new developments who have not been able to receive a service connection in a short time. It relates to congestion both on the domestic and international networks where you get: 'All circuits are busy'. There was even a calypso made using that all too familiar tone that one receives. Sir, we have experienced that problem both here and overseas.

Sir, this administration will give Barbadians a choice by introducing competition into our telecommunication infrastructure. We will give them the choice as to whom they will use for their cellular calls, their domestic calls and their international calls. Already, Sir, within the Ministry we have received countless applications for licences to provide these services and we will ensure that the structure we have in place give Barbadians the best deal.

Sir, we can expect on the basis of the lower rates which we will get out of competition because you know as well as I do that where businesses are competing for the same market share they will try to outdo themselves on price, they will try to outdo themselves on quality of service and the customer benefits in the end.

Sir, I want to signal that one of the more important aspects of the new framework for telecommunications will not so much relate to the details of technical issues but it relates to the nature of

business undertakings, not only telecommunications but in business across Barbados. We all know about unfair business practices and what this Government has ensured is that new entries into the telecommunication areas are not unduly disadvantaged with unfair business practices. We will make sure that this occurs not only in telecommunication but in tourism, transportation and in all areas.

One of the key components of the Fair Trading Commission when established, will be the administration of competition policy legislation. It is a fundamental aspect of the restructuring of the Barbados economy because what that does is to ensure that whether you are big or small, a new entry to the business sector or as old as the hills, that you are able to conduct your business in a fair, open and transparent manner.

All of us know, Sir, that in Barbados there are interlocking directorships, that there are particular connections as far as ownership of business which, on the surface, may appear as if they are competing but, in truth and in fact, they are all owned by the same person. Sir, unfair business practices will undermine the small business sector like a hurricane. The Fair Trading Commission, with its competition policy, is what this Administration is bringing to bear to fundamentally restructure the way that business is done in Barbados. This, Sir, along with the new insolvency legislation will ensure that having provided an adequate group for entry into the business arena, that should a business run into some hard times that the business person, that innovator, that entrepreneur is not merely thrown to the wolves.

Sir, do you know of any business in Barbados that has gone to the receiver that has come out in one piece? I do not know of any. Sir, going to the receiver in Barbados is like going to the graveyard. What this new legislation will do is to ensure that there is a legally administered means of restructuring failing businesses, giving small people, new entrepreneurs another chance. Sir, it is the business that has failed, not the individual.

Sir, look at the profile of many of the large and successful business people across the world, take the United States for example, many of them are on their tenth business experience and that is the first success that they have had. If those successful persons, multimillionaires, were operating under the existing arrangements that we have in Barbados they would not have got passed the first failure and they would not have been available to the society to succeed in the future.

If there is nothing else that will give the small, young, black entrepreneur an opportunity to succeed, it will be guaranteed entry under fair conditions under the Fair Trading Commission. It will be insolvency legislation to protect him in case he fails, that is fundamental restructuring and fundamental repositioning.

Sir, what about the divestment of profitable enterprises. When the Democratic Labour Party was into divestment, it was by way of a fireside sale, a scramble to get money at any cost or it was offloaded on profitable enterprises which were a drain on the public purse. Sir, that is not the way to go. The only persons who would be interested in that are large businesses with capital. We are providing opportunities for the ordinary man and woman to be able to own a piece of a profitable Barbadian enterprise, that is enfranchisement, that is empowerment and that is providing real meaningful transformation, not just of the economy, Sir, but of the society.

Sir, I notice that my time is slipping away and I still have many fundamental points to make in relation to the work of the Ministry.

Sir, a full framework of protection has been established for the manufacturing sector in Barbados. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke about what they did in 1994. All they did in 1991 was to say, fellows, your days are over, we are finished with you, we do not see a future for manufacturing in Barbados and that is the end of it.

Sir, the truth of the matter is that we have had to do a rescue job. In 1994, this administration rescued the manufacturing sector. We stuck by them and we have provided \$1 million a year over the last three years in technical assistance and we will do more in the area of information technology which was an initiative in the last Budget. Sir, I will make a document of the House the list of all the technical assistance that has been provided.

Sir, we have established a training centre at the Harbour Industrial Park of 10 000 square feet. Already BIMAP, in joint venture with the IDC, is providing training there and the Barbados Community College will establish two computer labs with video conferencing facilities to train hundreds of Barbadians as software engineers. We are doing it, Sir, in association with one of the best technology Universities in the world, the Carnegie Mellon University.

Sir, this means that our young Barbadians, trained as software engineers, will be internationally marketable. They can get the best jobs here and they can get the best jobs anywhere in the world because, whether we like it or not, our young population is mobile and we might as well equip them with the skills which would aid in their mobility and enable them to make the best and greatest contribution to Barbados.

Sir, before my time expires I want to make a few quick points on some other aspects of the programme.

8:20 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

In my constituency there are still places where persons have to use more than one pair of shoes to make it out onto a main road. Many people do not realise, Sir, that the parish like Christ Church, my constituency, in which is located the airport and other sophisticated infrastructure that we still have this dichotomy where there are traditional villages which in their hundred years of existence have not as yet seen the blessing of that modern infrastructure which is only a stone's throw away.

Sir, this Government being a government of social justice, recognises that we cannot have two Barbadoses. We want to strengthen our communities. We want to ensure that the infrastructure is

provided such that persons do not have any special need to leave places where they live, where they already have interest.

I, therefore, applaud the initiative for the provision of \$40 million to install the infrastructure in the communities on behalf Lowthers Hill, Gibbons Boggs, Enterprise, Pegwell, Coverley, and one or two roads in Parish Land. In Silver Sands you drive around on the outside where you will find paved roads but on the inside, where people live, there is still much work to be done.

Sir, there is another important aspect of the programme. In my constituency there are many persons living in private tenancies. Many years ago this administration dealt with the issue of plantation tenancies and I know that our next task is to properly enfranchise the people living in private tenancies. In Christ Church these areas are known as lands, you will hear of Ashby Land and Sobers Land. In Christ Church there are many of these tenancies and this administration will facilitate the ownership of those lands by the tenants. I will not get into the details of the programme tonight, Sir. I will make full pronouncements on those later.

Social justice and economic prosperity that, Sir, is the model of development which this administration, of which I am proud to be part of, happens to be following in our presentations this evening.

Sir, I could not close my presentation this evening without making some comments on the international business sector. The international business sector continues to be one of those sectors with tremendous potential, it represents the second largest foreign exchange earner in Barbados at present. Sir, I want to salute and compliment this House for showing solidarity with my Ministry in our fight for survival of the international business and financial servicing sector.

I must thank the Opposition, Sir, for at least taking the high road in this one issue because the one thing, Sir, that we cannot have is discordant voices on this issue of national importance. The issue is much larger than the OECD, it is a matter of what role our small states will play in the international community.

Many years ago manufacturing was a means of diversifying from agriculture, then we were told to diversify the services, of which financial services is a major component, now, because we are successful, we are being penalised. Where next will we go?

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South was right on the ball tonight when he pointed out the gross hypocrisy where the international community would have us believe that small financial centres like Barbados are major blackholes, major open gaping holes in the international financial infrastructure through which dirty money flows. Nothing could be further from the truth.

London was the route which the Nigerians used to get their ill-gotten gains into the world financial system. I have not yet heard any call for London to be closed as a financial centre. The BCCI scandal - London. The Bank of New York - mafia, there you go. I have not yet heard any calls for those centres to be closed. If through our diligence we discover that there is some dirty money or some other infelicity, and we notify the international authorities about it, do you know what they would do, Sir? Rather than thanking us for working hard to discover what was wrong, they would say, no you are a

dirty jurisdiction, we need to close you down, we need, Sir, to fight with every sinew in our bodies, we need to throw all of our national resources at this issue. It is a fundamental issue of principle, Sir.

Sir, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, as one of the foremost leaders in the developing world, has been attacking this issue as well. We are pleased, Sir, to note his initiative to have a forum with the OECD and affected countries. I want to salute on that score, as well, the Minister of Foreign Affairs who has been very active in drumming up international support for the very strong position of Barbados.

Some folks have questioned the issue of a Caribbean position. I think that I am obligated to speak a little about that. Ideally, Barbados would have loved to be speaking on many of these issues from a Caribbean perspective. In the early days of the initiatives that were going on, at the insistence of Barbados, regional meetings were held to articulate a Caribbean position. However, Sir, unanimity rule in Caricom requires that their initiatives are to be taken, that there has to be the fullest support of all members of Caricom.

Having proposed the formation of a Caribbean Association of Regulators of International Business as a mechanism for raising our regional standards in the international business and financial services sector. One of our Caribbean partners has indicated that he will not support these initiatives which, I think, put the Caribbean initiative on hold.

We have decided, Sir, that we cannot put Barbados' position on hold. Barbados must proceed to protect its vested interest. We are happy, Sir, to work with all interested parties in Caricom and around the world, but we cannot wait around for others to join in a fight which is a fight for our very lives. There is no lack of resolve or lack of interest on the part of Caricom in taking a regional approach to this matter, Sir, but we are constrained by actions of others who have decided to opt out of the process.

Mr. Speaker, I notice that you are signaling me furiously that we have come to an end but I want to say in closing that this Budget is a good budget. This programme on economic policy is a sound springboard from which Barbados can leap proudly into the future, and its mixture of sound economic policies as well as the components of social justice would ensure that there is something in there for all. We recognise that each and every citizen of this country of Barbados, that each and every parish and community, and we on this side, Sir, must move expeditiously to implement the most excellent policies articulated in this document and will be able to report, Sir, in a similar exercise, next year's progress.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you.

8.30 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Mr. SPEAKER:

The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am delighted to give my support to the Resolution before the House and I feel that I would wish to speak to the Resolution itself, particularly those paragraphs which state-

“The Government has enunciated policies and programs which demonstrates its commitment to the repositioning of the economy of Barbados, so as to maintain and advance its strength in the continuing liberalisation and globalisation of the world economy.

Seeks policies from Government which is now proposed designed to take Barbados boldly into a new millennium incorporating the best assets of the old economic and social environment and embodying the most imaginative aspects and approaches of the new global environment...”

I am pleased to give my support to that, Sir. I do not understand how it is that the Leader of the Opposition could find it to say that only the rich and the powerful have benefited from this Budget.

I do not think that any of the tenants of London Bourne Towers, Sir, would feel that they have not benefited from the past several Budgets, since 1994 of the Barbados Labour Party’s Administration.

I would like to feel, that when I look at this Budget, I would like to feel, Sir, and I believe that I have the majority of Barbadians with me, that every worker would be affected by it, and in a positive way.

We are talking about employment in Barbados now, Sir, running at less than 10 percent. First time in the recorded history of Barbados that this is happening.

I believe that anybody who truly wants to work in Barbados today can find work. I truly believe that. I believe that every worker would be pleased with what was said in this Employment Protection Bill, about Unfair Dismissal Legislations, about a Pensions Benefit Bill; all these go to enhancing the terms and conditions under which people work in this Barbados.

I would like to think, and I verily believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that every manufacturer, every landless farmer, every landed farmer in Barbados is affected by this Budget.

People who are working in the tourism industry. Every home owner, ever sporting person, even every sporting enthusiast, every young person, and I think that it is good that this Budget would have been

dedicated to the young people of Barbados. Even every criminal, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is meant to be affected by this Budget and I have no doubt that the Hon. Attorney General will speak to that when he gets up. But, Mr. Speaker, Sir...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

No, the Budget speaks of accelerating write-offs off the cost of installing electric surveillance equipment which is going to be part of an allowance with effect from income year 2001. I would like to think that Barbados would take advantage of that. That will dishearten, I hope, many criminals but a great deal more will be said about that but that is not where I wish to center my remark this evening, Sir.

What is perhaps the most appealing thing to me this

year is the format. From the time that I came into this Honourable House many years ago as a younger Parliamentarian, it always struck me, Sir, that somehow we were doing things backwards.

We would have in March the Estimates of Expenditure debated in the House and then we would have a few weeks or few months later a Budget.

I am not an Economist, nor do I aspire to be one, but I never understood why we would come to the House to talk about how we would raise revenues and how we would expend them and then come with a Budgetary Proposal after.

It has taken twenty-four years in here but it has arrived, Sir, and this, as I said, is the most pleasing thing for me, that now we have a format in here where the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs will make Budgetary Proposals and speak in a general and comprehensive way about the performance of the economy, after that you will set out to the House how you would propose to raise revenues and how then you would expect to expend them. So, this format, Sir, I think is good and I think it is the correct way to go into a new era, a new century.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to make a few comments about some of the proposals - three to be exact and I want to start with the concrete roads.

For almost all of the years that I have been in this House every year at the Estimates Debates and at any other opportunity that came my way, if there was a Debate that had anything to do with public works, in the Cabinet where I have sat, always consistently, I have made the case for concrete roads.

I never understood why it was, with a cement plant in Barbados and with other materials necessary for road making, we did not see fit to move to a programme of building concrete roads.

We have done a few experiments many years ago and so it is proven that although you may have higher cost up-front, and with the prevailing cost of petroleum products nowadays that may not even be the case anymore, it is the sustainability of these roads. Especially, it seems to me, that in tenancies where you would have fairly low vehicular traffic movement and in subsidiary roads we could over the years have put down roads which could have had a good twenty-five/thirty years life without ever

having to do repairs.

Many years ago, I was able to persuade the then Minister of Public Works to give me some concrete - I cannot even call them roads, Sir - to give me some concrete ribs in Bridgetown. There is a place not known to many of us, I am sure, but certainly known to me called Santo Domingo Alley, just off King William Street, and there is a place called Clarkes Alley, running between Vine Street and Beckwith Street. There is Upper Clarkes Alley and Lower Clarkes Alley and we put concrete ribs in there.

I virtually had to tell them this is how I wanted it done, this is all you have to do to take people out of the muck. Over the time, people have put in grates and so on, put in shrubs, and Mr. Speaker, Sir, we never had to do repairs in all these years, so you will understand how happy I am that the Minister of Finance is now making it possible for a concrete road program to go here in Barbados.

Now, I would like to hope, Sir, that she who has been the chief proponent over all the years will be among the first, if not the first, to benefit from this program. There are a few alleys ...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

No, no, Kellman cannot come before me. The Hon. Member for St. Lucy cannot come before me, I was in here before him talking about it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is a place called The Concrete, between Spruce Street and King William Street which is mud. There is a place called Dickinson Alley, off Queens Street. Mr Speaker, Sir, it is nothing but mud, even in the driest of times in Barbados.

8:40 p.m.

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

There is a place off Literary Row - Sir, I am calling places that I know you do not know about but this is where many of my constituents live and have their beings - off Literary Row there is a place called Pond Bottom and it is not called Pond Bottom for nothing. Sir, it is called Pond Bottom because it is all

pond bottom and the people come out to church, to market, to work in mud and for the first time I am expecting them to have a concrete road.

There is a place called Green Park Lane, better known as the Marl Hole. I need say no more about that. There is a place off Light Foot Lane called Bamboo Alley where once in a campaign, about 15 000 dog-fleas attacked me and I had to run out in the main road and beg for help. Sir, you would not know where it is but that is where people live. The people are now fixing up their houses out there and what they need is a road.

Sir, I am only calling these because this is a list which has been in existence for a long time. I know that it is in the hands of the Urban Development Commission and that Commission has been very kindly disposed to us in the City of Bridgetown and I expect that it will continue to do so.

Sir, Homeowners Allowance: I welcome greatly the increase in this allowance which speaks specifically to the step that Barbadians must and should take in respect of hurricane and storm preparedness.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I listened to Professor Gray and I am disposed to hearken to his advice. Professor Gray has been saying that in the first 15 or so years of this new century, we are going to have the worst storms. They are going to be earlier and this is the part that concerns me greatly, they are going to be more southernly.

I went ahead earlier this year and put hurricane straps on my roof.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

Well, I lost out on that.

I put in some shutters too but I still have more shutters to put in...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

Yes, I have more to put in because I could not do them all one time. Sir, I hope to be a beneficiary of this and so should every Barbadian take note and I will tell you why I am saying that.

Sir, in recent years we had a lot of hurricane activity, more to the north of the Caribbean. Antigua has been hit by six hurricanes in five years. The Bahamas had a double hit last year. St. Croix had a hit last year. I had to go to a meeting in St. Croix days after the hurricane hit and I could not believe that a hurricane had hit and I asked,

“Is this the right Virgin Islands and was it this one that was hit?”

Sir, the same thing happened in the Bahamas where property and residential plants stood up well. It was the infrastructure and utilities that suffered. Roads were washed away by the sea erosion and so on,

light poles came down and so on and so forth but houses stood up well and why, Sir, because in those countries, learning it the hard way, they have a building code which is mandatory and which, even in some cases, is better than the Florida building code. It requires houses to be protected in a way that they could withstand winds of 150 to 160 miles an hour.

It is important too from the point of view that our insurance premiums go up. When they have a bad hit in Florida, that touches us too because so much reinsurance out of the Caribbean is into Florida. I am hoping, Sir, that this is only the beginning and that we are going to come to a place - and I have been making this point consistently in this Parliament and I will continue to make it - where we are going to see mandatory home insurance in Barbados.

We do insure our motor cars and that is mandatory. We see house fires almost on a daily basis in Barbados. When I was a child, home insurance was something that was the order of the day. Every chattel house was insured and I do not understand why today, people would invest so much of what they work for in a home and then fail to protect it by way of insurance and I hope that one day that would come. I am told that the Building Code is on its way that I will welcome.

The other direct reference in the Budget that I would just like to make passing comment on, Sir, has to do with the HIV/AIDS. I am very glad to see this, and that is another issue I have been talking about in this House for many years. At least 10 to 12 years ago, I was pointing out that the World Health Organisation has been saying that the incidence of AIDS per capita is highest in the world in the Americas, this was even before the outbreak in Uganda, and that within the Americas, it was highest in the Caribbean and Barbados was near the top of that list. Nobody was listening to me then but they are listening now and it is better late than never.

Mr. Speaker, this initiative that the Right Honourable Prime Minister is taking is important because we must not forget, AIDS is destroying not only a certain age cohort between 26 and 40, where people are most productive, it is hurting us in our reproductive capacity as well. Sir, that is why it was so important that the AZT Cocktail should have been made available to pregnant women, who were at risk. We must continue to do that because without it, it would mean that AIDS would be attacking not one but two generations at one and the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to hope that this, again, is only the beginning of something which will encourage us for the sake of our own health to stop self-inflicting damage. We are doing it with tobacco smoke, we are doing it with alcohol, we are doing it with the use of illegal drugs, we are doing it with reckless driving, we are doing it riding and walking recklessly as well on the road and we are doing it by engaging in unprotected sex, we are over eating too much and too much of the wrong foods.

Sir, all of these are self-inflicted. You would think that we have enough to be dealing with those illnesses which are not self-inflicted and which come to us at great cost.

The point has been made in here already in this debate that we are seeing again, the resurgence of some of the old communicable diseases which we thought had gone which in fact are not gone. We do not need to add to that, these, what I have described as self-inflicted diseases at one and the same time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words before I sit about what is assailing us in the international arena.

Honourable Members have made reference during the course of this debate to the fight which we continue to put up in respect of what the OECD is trying to do to us and what they want to continue to do to us. Sir, what we are seeing with our financial services is only the thin end of the wedge because in respect of tax policies, they are not only looking at financial services.

Sir, financial services is one of many services. They are looking also now at tourism and we are hearing talk about concern of the concessions that we give to that sector, to the ten-year and longer tax holidays that we give in respect of it and so we have to continue to fight and to be vigilant in that respect. Sir, as if that were not enough, there is the whole question of the tax policy.

Now a Parliament such as ours, the Westminster style model, Parliament has two major functions and this goes back to over 360 years as far as Barbados is concerned:

To legislate laws, to pass laws and

To levy taxes.

Sir, any person or persons or group or whomever, seeking to dictate in anyway to a country like Barbados, how we should formulate our tax policy is looking to directly attack our sovereignty. There are some who think that there is nothing so big in that but there is everything to be, in that, that is the beginning of a 21st Century form of colonialism and to that we do not intend to return.

Sir, the point has already been made that the developed countries had better be looking to put their own house in order and this is a point I made at home and abroad all the time. Who are they to speak to us? Money laundering began in the developed countries. There are whole cities, states built upon it, not that anybody is making a case for it. No sensible Government in this day and age would want to say or do anything to be supportive of it but it is the attack on our tax policy that concerns us.

8:50 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

Continuation of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we complain that you woke up one morning in Barbados and you heard that the OECD has arrogated to themselves the right to say to Barbados how we should order our affairs and that Mexico, high on the list of most corrupt countries, would be the country to monitor Barbados and we woke up a morning not two weeks ago to hear now of a new assault of something called the Everything about Arms (EBA) initiative.

I think everybody in Barbados must know by now - goodness knows I have talked about it enough and

so have other Honourable Members in here on both sides - that for the last couple of years we have been strenuously trying to negotiate a successor to the Fourth LOMÉ Agreement, that is an agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific States and the European Union, that came actually to signature in Benin, Africa in July.

I did not go to the meeting. I was not going to a meeting to sign a piece of paper. The work had already been done and it was signed in the city of Cotonou now called the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. We do not call it LOMÉ anymore. We have gone into a new kind of agreement, a quite different in many ways agreement, from the old LOMÉ Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, that agreement has not even yet been ratified. The ink is hardly dry on it. It was signed in June and we could wake up in October and hear that the European Commission has now decided that all of the United Nations designated least developed countries whether they are in ACP or not, all 48 of them - and there are 48 designated by the UN - are now to have duty-free and quota-free entry of goods and services into the European Union.

This is a blow. This makes me feel that all of the two years of work is worth nothing. They are trying to suggest to us that they did not even know about it, that this is the Head of the Commission, Mr. Pascal Lamy initiative - I am not swallowing any of that - and that it is only a proposal. I am not swallowing any of that. I have seen lesser proposals become policies overnight in my time but this threatens us.

Those of us who still produce sugar and thought that we have negotiated a breathing space for sugar, those of us who are producing rum... It was only in the first week of October that I stood up here in Barbados in a meeting between the West Indies Rum and Spirit Producers and the French Producers who are competitors but who in their own strategic interest came together to talk and to negotiate. It was only at the beginning of October, they came here for their meeting and invited me to address them and I commended them and the rum industry on how well it has prepared itself.

Now, we are going to hear that all of the least developed countries are now to compete with us, that the breathing space, the few years that we thought that we have negotiated are to go to the walls.

Mr. Speaker, just to give an example, rice is grown in Guyana and to a lesser extent in Suriname. Guyana produced 600 000 tonnes of rice a year. One of the least developed countries not in the ACP is Bangladesh. They produced 29 million tonnes of rice, so you will understand where the Guyanese are with their rice and where they are in the marketplace, it is the same with rum. We may not know it, but the Bangladeshis produced a great quantity of rum and some of it is already introduced into the European Market.

Mr. Speaker, we sat down in St. Kitts last week with some of the Europeans and spoke very frankly. I was asked to open the bowling, I spoke very frankly and said that this was a breach of the Cotonou Agreement even before the ink could dry on it because that agreement requires that in the case of any such initiative, the first thing you have to do is to sit down and have consultation. There was no consultation. We have not even yet, today the 26th of October, been officially informed that this is the case.

Now, you have Prime Ministers including Prime Minister Arthur - in fact, I have the draft here now to

show it to him - having to write letters. People are writing letters to the Heads, other Prime Ministers and Presidents of various European countries. We are writing to the British and we are writing to the French. The French President sat down with the CARICOM Heads in June in Guadeloupe and promised all kinds of things, two weeks later, the French walked away from the Caribbean Development Bank.

All of these are challenges, Mr. Speaker, that we face. When the Right Honourable Prime Minister is telling Barbadians that he is making it possible for them to grasp these new technologies which are going to be the way into a globalised economy for us, they have better take him at his word, even at the level of the community centre.

I know what it is, like the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, in the City of Bridgetown at Mall 100 in Baxters Road, you used to be able to pay \$15, the big boys snapped up the young man who was conducting those classes and we have to find another young man who is going to be prepared to work for small money to come and train people. When people could not afford that, I used to tell them, I will pay the \$15 but they must go and learn the technology. In our skills training programme there, and I have to thank the UNDCP again and again and again, that was most heavily subscribed. Your name had to be on a list three and four months before you could get onto the class there.

Mr. Speaker, this appraisal of the economy of Barbados at the beginning of a new century, a new era, a new a way of doing things, puts these positions with a clear understanding of where we are in the international arena, where we are in the regional arena and where we are nationally. I cannot imagine that any right thinking Barbadian would want to do other than to congratulate the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, that at this time he would put the big picture in front of us.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, this is now six years that you have been sitting in that chair, Sir, and I believe that you will have to concede that the consistency of the quality of this year's debate, on this side has been perhaps the best in those six years.

As leader of Government business, my task has been made very easy this year because of the performance of the Honourable Members of this side, but more especially because of the way they each stuck to various aspects of Tuesday's presentation and enlarged those sections of the presentation so that at the end of tonight's debate, I am sure that the public of Barbados would have been very well informed on Government policies over the six years on the state of the regional and international world order that requires Barbados if it is to continue on the successful path which we have been following for the last six years to reposition and restructure itself, to meet the challenges that will necessarily be posed by a new world order and at the same time to prepare our citizens to seize such opportunities as may be opened in the new world environment.

9:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

I believe that on Tuesday was the first time in the recent history of this Parliament, certainly, within the last 10 years - and I was racking my memory to see whether in the 24 years that I have been in Parliament it was ever done before certainly, in the last 10 years this is the first time that an economic and financial presentation has sought to address security concerns in the context of economic and social development.

This linkage was first advanced by the Barbados Labour Party when the Attorney General was the Honourable Member for Christ Church West. It is about 20 years since. He was the prime mover of the theory that justice, security and development were inextricably joined and we tried to get the international financial institutions to understand the linkage. It is only within the last four years that the IFIs are indeed understanding that linkage. On May 10, 1997, when the Caribbean signed with the USA what I call the Clinton Plan of Action, we fought strenuously to have written into that document the inexorable joinder of justice, security and development issues.

I think that I should begin properly by congratulating the Right Honourable Prime Minister for being yet again innovative in providing a discussion within the framework of the budgetary process for security and justice matters.

Mr. Speaker, it has been advertised that I have a substantial speech to give, on what they have called law and order, on Saturday but I would be failing in my duty if I did not as Attorney General address matters which are concerning us as parliamentarians and the wider society, matters which relate to crime, violence and security.

Let me begin first by saying that the causes of crime are many and complex. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West, the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, touched on some of these matters this morning and said that he was reserving other matters for me to deal with. The Prime Minister in his budgetary presentation explained that the best international criminological evidence still holds that there is no single explanation for crime but in the language of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West this morning it is a multifaceted phenomenon. There are several influences which may come together to produce the deviant or the criminal offender. Some of those causes may be related to personality, some to poor parenting, others may yet be related to unemployment or economic deprivation, others to social exclusion or poor socialisation, some may also be related to a loss of values.

When this Government assumed office in September 1994, we committed ourselves in the manifesto of 1994, to tackling the causes of crime. Never in the history of Barbados had any government sought to understand the factors that were predisposing to criminality in this country. We set up the National Task Force on Crime Prevention with a specific mandate to investigate the causes of crime.

The Report was laid in here in 1997 and identified a number of criminal risk factors and the Government has been working on the recommendations of that Report. If one accepts that the causes of crime are multifarious then it follows inexorably that in tackling those causes Government must promote a mix of strategies aimed at intervention at the different levels. Intervention with the youth in their homes, with families at risk, in the schools, in the churches and in such social groupings as may exist.

This the Government has been doing, Mr. Speaker, and you heard the Honourable Minister of Education and to a lesser extent the Honourable Minister of Social Transformation speak to some of the initiatives and interventions which their Ministries have been taking to interact with the young people. I am going to seek the opportunity to highlight some of the strategies later on. The Government first focussed on identifying the causes of crime, what the criminologist call the etiology of crime but, at the same time, as one was seeking to understand what were the factors at work, we had a duty as a government to try to control crime at the same time as you tried to understand crime.

Crime control has been pursued essentially through law enforcement. In Barbados, unfortunately, the majority of our people see the response to crime not in a multifaceted way but purely as a law enforcement response so that it is common place to have a crime committed and then to ask the question what is the Attorney General doing. The Attorney General should have been there when the crime was being committed. It is commonplace for them to say to hang somebody even though there is nobody in Barbados who can be hanged but the Attorney General must hang somebody. He must make the laws and break the laws.

Few people in Barbados appreciate that by law the Attorney General has no role in relation to operational matters of the Police Force. Way back in 1968, in the case of the Queen against Metropolitan Police Commissioner ex parte Blackburn it was held that no Secretary of State, no Minister, can give any directions to any Commissioner of Police as to operations. I cannot tell a Commissioner to go and arrest somebody, to do this or that. I have no place in the law. My role would be limited to policy initiatives.

How has the Government been seeking to control crime? I must begin by going back to what we found in 1994 and the state of Barbados as it was on June 26, 1993.

9:10 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

The then Commissioner of Police wrote to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Public Safety in these terms:

“Request for assistance from the BDF in the maintenance of law and order.”

I will read this one paragraph, Sir, because people are talking about the state of crime today:

“On June 29, 1993 - gang violence and the excessive and unlawful use of firearms posed a significant threat to the general state of law and order in our society. Serious street crimes in the form of aggravated robberies and muggings carried out with excessive force and violent aggressions continue to plague our society. Extreme lawlessness among the youth is creating a great deal of apprehension amongst people of reasonable soundness and firmness.”

In the Royal Barbados Police force Annual Report 1993, the then Commissioner at paragraph 54 wrote:

“The street crime phenomenon continued in 1993 to attract the attention of the Force’s administration who concentrated the vast majority of its resources in this direction. 1992 has seen an unaccepted high level of robberies and attacks against the nation’s adult female population, a repeat of which occurred in 1993.”

Sir, in addition to that, at paragraph two, page 84, he said these words about the state of the police force:

“I have repeatedly called for the provision of computers, additional and modern communication equipment, surveillance and other special operations technology, additional vehicles, greater sentencing powers for magistrates in respect of imprisonment and a wider range of non-custodial measures such as community service orders and suspended sentences.

I must again point that many stations are in a scandalous state of disrepair.”

This was the state of crime and the state of the Police force that we found when we were preparing the Manifesto for 1994. It is because we were reading these documents that we were able to plan a strategy of response to those concerns that had been repeatedly expressed by the Commissioners, as the Prime Minister said in his presentation. I do not need to repeat but I will do so on Saturday.

We did a number of things for the police force some of a physical and infra structural nature but the first thing we did in 1995, was to come here for \$1.5 million to computerise the police force. Every police station in this country since then has been substantially repaired and renovated and a whole redevelopment is taking place at Central Police Station.

We have, in pursuance of the Manifesto promise of 1999, at page 61, we promised:

“Improve the terms and conditions of service of police officers, regrade posts and increase the number of officers.”

The 200 additional posts, is in partial fulfillment of that pledge in The Manifesto of January last year.

We also found, Sir, an average rate of crime between 1989 and 1993. At page 4 of the Commissioners Report 1993 he showed that crime grew by an average every year between 1989 and 1993 by 5.5%. Every year since then the overall rate of reported crime in Barbados has come down to the point where the criminal statistics are showing that the overall rate has fallen from 1 307 crimes in 1993 to just over 1 052 in 1999. There was a slight growth of 1% for the first time last year. Otherwise, overall crime has come down under this Government by 30%.

Asides.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

We get no credit for that. I sat in here and heard almost every Member who spoke in this debate quoted a set of statistics and figures on AIDS, economic growth, sectoral growth in tourism, all kinds of figures and nobody questions them but when the Royal Barbados Police force puts out its set of criminal statistics it is alleged that they are unreliable. Mr. Speaker, there are only two internationally accepted ways to measure crime (1) by reported crime which we use in Barbados or (2) by using crime surveys at periodic intervals such as the four year victims surveys that are used in England. It is a wide sample where the public is asked their experience of criminal activity. We have not done that in Barbados because it is a costly exercise but it is one of the things that we are seeking funding for in the IADB project which the Prime Minister referred to in his budgetary presentation.

We have been relying, under the other side and under our side, on the official statistics of the Police force. I will agree with all those who say that reported criminal statistics do not tell the whole story, that is true, because certain crimes are not reported for all kinds of reason, which I will not go into now but all countries still use official police reported statistics as the basis for measuring crime.

Sir, it is an amazing feature of our society and last week Monday there was a news item in the Press which said that crime had fallen in the United States of America. President Clinton, Vice President Gore and all of them were talking about how crime had come down in the United States and they quoted the figures. They were committing 24 000 murders eight years ago and they are now committing 15 000, one murder every thirty-four minutes in the United States but yet they are saying that crime is down. Their Government feels good about it and their people feel good about it but yet one murder is being committed every thirty-four minutes.

Sir, when one speaks of a decline in crime, one is not seeking to say that crime does not exist because crime will always exist, but what one is seeking to say is that one is able to control certain types of crime.

In Barbados despite the drop by 30% there are four types of crimes which are causing our people concern. Other Honourable Members spoke of them today, robbery, firearm crimes, drug crimes and burglary in dwelling houses but even though these are of concern, there is no need for the society to panic.

Asides.

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Yes, to be concerned but not to be hysterical and not to panic.

I wish to assure the public that the police force and the Government are doing all within their powers to keep the crime and violence situation under manageable proportions.

9:20 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000,

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

We are not just responding for the sake of responding by traditional methods. We are carefully chartering a set of court strategies to tackle the crime problem on several fronts.

I insist, Sir, that the crime problem cannot be dealt with purely as a law enforcement matter. It has to be pursued from various angles and perspectives. This is the second draft of the Green Paper and Government's proposals for crime reduction. We will be going back to Cabinet within the next two or three weeks, thereafter, it will be published, it will be available to the public and we are going to have a series of town hall meetings and public discussions to get the public's view on the approaches to crime.

Basically, we have identified ten court strategies and it is important to understand this. The Government did not dream those ten court strategies. Those ten court strategies represent the results of vast studies carried internationally, condensed in the Sherman Report, 467 pages, that is on the internet as well as a shortened version of about 100 pages and that has provided for the international criminological community, a set of initiatives which have been proven by evidence to work in tackling the crime problem. Not surmised, not guessed work, not hunches, not subjecting opinions but strategies which have been tested and shown that only certain things work. We have been seeking to dispel from the international evidence those best practices that work.

We have discussed them with Professor David Bailey of the University of Albany. He is, perhaps, in the first five leading criminologists in the world. The Caricom Secretariat had a Ministerial meeting in Jamaica last year for Intergovernmental Task Force on crime and drugs at which Professor Bailey was the feature speaker. He has responded to our court strategies in this way.

I have the plans as well as the policy suggestions for establishing a special unit against persons who use illegal drugs. I very much applaud the Government's commitment to programmes for reducing unemployment, relieving poverty, working with problem ridden communities and intensifying the work with the youth commissioners. The structural underpinning of crime is too frequently neglected.

As far as I know, the ten-point proposals are all sound and sensible. They show a knowledge of what has worked elsewhere as what needs doing in Barbados. Those are being reflected in the core strategies which call for early intervention between children and family at risk, the development of informal social control of promotion of community cohesion, the strengthening of the resources of law enforcement agencies, which we have just done with the large number of vehicles, the diversification of police strategies, assisting the public in situational crime prevention through public education and possibly

incentives to business. I am going to stop there, that is where this year's presentation is relevant to crime prevention and situational crime prevention, Sir.

The Prime Minister has said to the country that we all have a responsibility to assist in controlling and preventing crime in our country. Individual householders can do it by improving the security of their premises to reduce burglaries in dwelling houses, which is a problem. Businesses can do it by installing electronic surveillance equipment which can assist in the detection of robbers and so on. Apart from the fact in Income Tax Law you can get an allowance for the installation. He is going to make the equipment to enhance the security of private and business premises duty free. There are five others, Sir, which I will deal with on another occasion, of the court policy.

Let me wind up, Sir, by saying that those Proposals on Tuesday have been designed as a response to burglary, robberies and violent crime. They represent a strategy that has been proven to work and I, therefore, applaud the Government, and the Prime Minister in particular.

I wish to end by saying that the Government tried to reach out to the Opposition by creating a Committee for Law and Order on which they could have their views represented. The Committee met on May 17, 2000 at 10.00 am. The minutes of that meeting did not come to hand until three weeks ago. Those Minutes show that the Leader of the Opposition came at 10.30 a.m and left at 12.30 p.m. The meeting went on until 1.50 p.m and out of one hundred pages his contribution was one and a half pages. The other representative of the Opposition, the then Senator Thomas, did not even bother to come. The Honourable Member has since resigned.

What the Honourable Member has done is quite consistent with his pattern. He has resigned and he is entitled to do as he likes. I do not think that he would be missed in the light of that contribution. However, what he has done is quite consistent with his pattern.

We set up a Select Committee because of the technical nature of the Fair Trading Commission and the Utilities Regulation to allow people to scrutinize that legislation most closely, both Parliamentarians and members of the public. They had about four meetings and the Member of the Opposition has not attended one of them. That is his attitude to Committees of Parliament but he wanted to curse me at the Annual Conference, so he announced at the Conference that he was going to resign. He wanted an excuse. Check his historical attitude to the work of Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, before I finish, I will have a long time on Saturday in the Party scene. I just wish to say the phenomenon of crime and violence is not localised, it is a globalised phenomenon. Only in the Sunday Times, of Sunday gone, you saw that the British Police in Nottingham are arming themselves and they say that it is a response to gun crime on the streets. Crime on the streets is happening in Leeds and other counties in England and it is a matter that is quite foreign to the culture Britain.

Finally, I wish to thank the Honourable Minister of Transportation and Works. His Ministry has responded superbly to assistance which I sought in repairing roads in my constituency. They have helped me in Vault Road, Kew Land, Bryans Road, Spring Farm and Grand View Heights. I am looking forward, as well as the people who I represent in St. Thomas, to Welchman Hall No. 1 and 2, after they have finished with Bryans Road. I want some work started to repair the bridge at Christie Village to Buck.

Sir, I stand here as a proud Member of the Barbados Labour Party Government 1994-2000, which has ensured that this country has made the kind of progress that has made it the envy of others nearby and it has also brought admiration of others stronger and more powerful than ourselves.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER:

I would now ask the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance to wind up this debate, please.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it for me a very high honour to have the opportunity to wind up what I regard as one of the most uplifting and enlightening debates of its kind since I have had the honour to serve in this Parliament for the needs of good people of St. Peter.

I have set a goal for myself in seeking to bring a new approach to an old cause. The new approach, Sir, is to get the people of the Parliament to begin to see economic policy and economic formulation as being distinct from budgeting. To get across the point of view, Sir, that there are a large number of important tributaries into the great big river of the economic policy of which budgeting, financial, social and health policies make up the economic policy and at the end of the day all of us have a responsibility, not just the Minister of Finance but all of us have a responsibility once we understand the reach and depth of economic policy to contribute to it, Sir. This debate clearly reflects the fact that the Members on this side have understood the focus that we have sought to bring to this presentation of Economic Policy and Financial Programme of the Government.

I too want to thank all the Members of my side who spoke. I would want particularly to single out two contributions for special merit. The Representative for St. John and Leader of the Opposition gave a speech in this debate that I regard as one of the most spiritless speeches of its kind that I have ever heard. It is a speech that I think he would have to acknowledge that might have been formed in 1970 when you were the cricket captain of both the Member for St. Philip North and me.

I got into your team in the second last match in the season at the expense of the Member for St. Philip North and I went into the nets. Sir, we were due to play against the Psychiatric Hospital for the championship, Sir, and it was his play or mine. I went into the nets to style on him. He was bowling so fast that he hit my stumps at least six times and I thought that he was bowling from fifteen yards Sir, and you picked him ahead of me. Perhaps, that would explain why you are there and he is here.

Asides

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

Sir, the point is he hit my stumps that evening about six times.

The Honourable Member's performance in this debate in defense of his Ministry and his work, Sir, has caused me to reflect on that 1970 experience because he hit the Member for St. John's stump at least six times too. My only fear, Mr. Speaker, he dealt with the presentation of the Honourable Member for St.

John in such a savage way that I really feared that after he has left the precinct, a police might have arrested him for child abuse.

Asides

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay a special tribute to the speech made by my parliamentary representative, the Honourable Member for St. James South. Politics is a very tough game, not very easy for us to do things in the public domain, Sir. It is not an easy thing for there to be the appearance of people being either put down or made to lose. It takes a very special character and graciousness to survive, sometimes, under very difficult circumstances and continue to be gracious. I thought that the Honourable Member for St. James South who is not bound today by the collective responsibility of Cabinet showed very strong sterling character in her very strong and eloquent defense of the Government's policy.

9.30 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

As I said Sir, we who live in the full glare of public live are under continuous scrutiny, there is no graceful way for me sometimes to do what I have to do. There is no graceful way for me to create the rules but it takes character to continue to be loyal and I thank you for your loyalty Sir.

I took note of the comments that you made about the representation that she has been making about Hoytes Village. It is truthful that she has written over and over about it Sir, and there have been a number of constraints that have stood in the way; some legal, some institutional. Some of the institutional constraints have been removed Sir and there should be no impediment now, to that project being completed.

Mr. Speaker, I will come to the speeches of the other Members in totality but this was a rich Debate in which all members contributed and I want to thank them all. I want to thank the members of the

Ministry of Finance and the entire Public Service who have contributed a policy statement that cut across not just financial statement, but a whole raft of issues, but I want particularly, Mr. Speaker, to thank the private sector. This year in preparation for this presentation we had a national consultation on the economy. There was a special private sector consultation, among and between itself, and there was a number of sectoral presentations between Government Ministries and the Private sector to bring us to this point. The Labour Movement, Sir, was involved in all aspects of this.

What I was able to bring to the House for the very first time was the embodiment of an economic policy for the country that represents the distillation of the very best ideas of a whole cross-section of the Barbadian public.

It comes to no surprise to me Sir, and I am not being modest, that this is so acclaimed, because it is not so much my economic policy Sir, I am just the person who has the honour to present this economic policy to this country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I speak in this way because I understand my responsibility to the country. I can easily allow things to course along. We have enough foreign exchange reserves. Even, if every year I felt that we need to draw on \$100 million here and \$100 million there to carry programs, Sir, no problem, there are enough investments taking place and planned, that I could just allow things to continue as there are.

There will be no electoral problems Mr. Speaker, steady growth will continue, but there is a day for testing that Barbados has to face and it is quite likely that I may not necessarily be here as Minister of Finance when that date with destiny comes. After the year 2005, when a new Free Trade Area of Americas comes in, the life of the Minister of Finance and the life of the person who has the responsibility to manage the critical interims of the economy are going to become very testing. After that year, in each year, new trade arrangements will be introduced, every one of which is going to reduce the tax basin of the country. After that year, in each year, perhaps for the next fifteen years, up to 2020, things that we are negotiating now will still be affecting the Barbados economy, and, therefore, Sir, even though things are well in the economy. We really do have a burning necessity to put this economy in a condition such that none of the things that are planned to take place between 2005 and thereafter, can have a negative effect on the Barbados economy.

We have to do it for the young people of this country

because we, of this generation, have had the benefit of living in a well-ordered, well-developed, small society and that must be the legacy that we must leave to the young people of Barbados, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

9:40 p.m.

Thursday, October 26th, 2000

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

Therefore, Sir, I take no sense of complacency from where we are. My concern is where must Barbados be, in the year 2010 and 2015 when the things that I am negotiating now and my Minister of Foreign Affairs is negotiating now and my Minister of Agriculture is negotiating now when all those things come to affect the economy of the future.

Sir, I sought to set this Economy Policy less in the context of the comforts of today but of the challenges of tomorrow. I really must express the very gravest sense of disappointment that the Opposition did not believe that the nature of the occasion was one that enjoined upon them, a responsibility to be responsible.

Sir, I really do feel that what was intended to be a presentation by the Leader of the Opposition was not a responsible presentation since it bore no relationship, whatsoever, with the requirements of the moment to help us to shape a future for the betterment of the young people of this country.

The Leader of the Opposition, Sir, I suppose now finds himself in a far more comfortable position, politically than he was in the first term. He has managed to lead the Democratic Labour Party to a situation where they face no obvious challenges in the political party. He has himself surrounded now by a group of persons whom I think the late Mr. Barrow would have said, "have submerged to the top." A goon squad whom you hear on the call-in programmes before 6:00 a.m. every day and persons who really pander to his worst nature which is to indulge in the politics of character assassination and vindication.

Sir, strict of any constraining influences in the Democratic Labour Party, the Leader of the Opposition is more and more giving depth to that very unfortunate tendency which has shrouded what other political talents he may have kept secret by his entire political career.

Sir, in this debate there was a great abundance of that politics of vindication which really has no place in the modern Barbados and which really has no place in the modern Barbados which is a bad signal to send to the young people in the country who want uplifting examples rather than this tearing down of people's character. I have not come to this debate to tear down anybody's character but to describe things as they are.

One of the things, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I must deal first of all with is, rather I will touch on about five broad areas of this presentation, is seeking to cause some political destabilisation in the Barbados

Labour Party.

Sir, I have to make the point that sometimes the way in which the Leader of the Opposition tries to involve himself in the affairs of the Barbados Labour Party could cause one to believe that either his grandfather or father has left him some political shares in this party but he always wants to run the Barbados Labour Party. We are in the second term and I have had cause to speak to the Members of the Barbados Labour Party in a particular way.

I beg them not to become arrogant, Sir, and I urged them that they have to be fully responsible. We must not be, as a party, victimise our supporters because they are our supporters and nobody will victimise them but because they are our supporters, I believe that they have to go the extra mile. If one of our supporters happens to get a contract, he must feel that he has a responsibility to the Barbados Labour Party to bring in that work within time and on budget.

I feel that our supporters also, if they are going to bid for contracts must be competitive and they must not believe that because they are supporters of the Barbados Labour Party, Mr. Speaker, that they must get contracts and that is the way things must be. I feel that our supporters must understand that when they go to work, they must work harder than other people because it is their party in office and they are not there because the politicians sent them there. They are there to pull some weight. I feel that the attitude that one probably must have ten house spots and ten houses, must stop. They must understand that we have been elected by them and with their help meet people's needs and that is the politics I am speaking to the Barbados Labour Party people about.

Sir, he would want to take that and twist it and cause the Barbados Labour Party people to feel that I am cursing them or causing them to think I am abusing them in the worse possible way. I feel we can get away from that kind of politics.

I really want to make the point, Sir, that Barbados is not Democratic Labour Party country. They had painfully to find that at the polls because they used to believe so. When myself and the Honourable Member for St. John was in Christ Christ West and St. Thomas came through the lines in 1986, people told us that you will be going now to 2030 because the Democratic Labour Party felt that Barbados was Democratic Labour Party country.

I say, Sir, that Barbados is not Barbados Labour Party country. It belongs to all of us and my message to the Barbados Labour Party people in St. George was to pull weight and do not let the blessings of office turn us into power hungry and people who do not understand that our mission is to serve. He would want to warp that now, Mr. Speaker, and use that as an instrument against the Barbados Labour Party. We are too old and mature, too mellow to get caught up in that kind of foolish politics.

Sir, the one thing that I can agree with that he said is that there is too long a time lag between the announcement of policies and they being brought into effect by way of legislation and this is now new. I stress that point first because in 1986 the then Minister of Finance made an announcement that thereafter, entities exporting services from Barbados, extra regionally, were going to qualify for an income tax rebate.

Between 1986 and 1994 nobody benefitted from that by way of the application of the law. In fact, it

was left to my 1995 presentation here to put it right but for ten years the International Business and Financial Industry here in Barbados was built because a clear intention had been sent, as to exactly the manner in which the Government wanted to confer benefits in response to desirable activity and people acted on the strength of the signals.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I announce things there, they have to go back and be then put in the form of the elaborate policy proposals. Those have to be discussed with the social partnership and all the stake holders. Then the legislation is to be drafted, it is circulated for more comments and that is the process that has caused many of the initiatives that would have been announced, not to come back to the House by way of speedy legislation.

Sir, people are hearing them and they are acting upon the signals. They are developing a set of rational expectations as to what those signals mean and they are shaping economic and social activity in this country, in response to the signals and the directions that they are setting.

Mr. Speaker, I would like very much to see the Securities Bill comes here but it is being drafted. I would like to see all the legislation that I have said must come, come. In the meantime, people are saying that this is the Government's intended policy and we can begin to gear ourselves to shape our behaviour in accordance with it.

He was harsh, Mr. Speaker, as is his right, by saying that I announce things and then we do not get them. Sir, but people are responding to them because there is a clarity in the intention of the Government to make this society better for the Barbados public.

Sir, he sought again to try to suggest, as some commentators that the wicket on which we are batting is the wicket that he prepared. Meaning that he is responsible for the present economic circumstances of Barbados and I have a responsibility to dispel that.

I have a responsibility, Sir, for a number of reasons. The Honourable Member for St. John had but one and only one opportunity ever to present a Budget to the country. He offered \$2 million of concessions alone, to the private sector. I came in the same financial year and my first economic act was to remove \$10 million of duties on the private sector that he could only offer \$2 million in the same year.

Sir, that is not even the point. In 1994 we offer the country two starkly different choices. I said that I felt I had the capacity to construct a new framework for the economic policy for this country, without the International Monetary Fund having to be a part of it. The Honourable Member for St. John said in his March 28, 1994 presentation that for him, the future of Barbados was going to be a future under an enhanced surveillance programmed with the International Monetary Fund. A programme as you know, Sir, by which you do not get funding from the International Monetary Fund but that you have to follow their policies in terms of quarterly programmes and so on.

9:50 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

In fact, I speak in his own exact tongue, using his very words. He said:

“We have a mutually satisfactory relationship with the International Monetary Fund. They understand us and we understand them. They know clearly what we are prepared to do and when and we know what they want us to do and when.”

I have to enter this thing into the records again, Sir, because an Enhanced Surveillance Programme with the International Monetary Fund, such as was intended to provide the framework under which a Democratic Labour Party administration after 1994, was to conduct our economic policy, was not going to be an easy thing.

On October 29, 1993, the Honourable Member for St. John took that economic surveillance programme to the Democratic Labour Party Cabinet and he said:

“Amongst the matters discussed was an Enhanced Surveillance Programme. The International Monetary Fund officials having indicated that the conditions that would apply to Barbados under such a programme would be more onerous than for a standby arrangement.”

The significant of that, Mr. Speaker, is simply this, that what we had between 1991 and 1993 under the International Monetary Fund was a standby arrangement. In October 1993, the Honourable Member for St. John was telling the Democratic Labour Party Cabinet, let us have an Enhanced Surveillance Programme for the future that was going to be more onerous than what we had in 1991 to 1993. He can contradict me now if he wishes to do so because that is what he said.

That was to be Barbados' future, Sir. What was it to entail, Sir? He set out the facts to his Cabinet. The Minister of Finance, May 12, 1994, added that the National Housing Corporation had not yet complied with the scheme to ensure that persons who should not benefit from subsidised housing would be prevented from doing so. This was under that presentation to the Cabinet dealing with the International Monetary Fund Enhanced Surveillance Programme. So under the International Monetary Fund Enhanced Surveillance Programme, no person who the International Monetary Fund said should not qualify for subsidised housing could get subsidised housing in Haynesville, Eden Lodge, Silver Hill, Gall Hill and Church Hill. Sir, the International Monetary Fund said no more subsidised houses.

You may understand why the Leader of the Opposition and a certain Mr. Johnny Tudor were always fighting. On May 12, the Honourable Member for St. John informed the Cabinet that the International Monetary Fund Mission dealing with the Enhanced Surveillance Programme indicated that it was not going to come to the country until a decision was taken on the Barbados Transport Board bus fare structure. They said that it had to move from \$1.25 to \$1.75, and Mr. Tudor was asked to bring the necessary paper to Cabinet as a matter of urgency. That was the future that the Honourable Member for St. John was committed to have this country pursue under the guise of being part of having the International Monetary Fund implement an Enhanced Surveillance Programme in this country, so that the choice was clear.

Sir, at the earliest opportunity, I asked the International Monetary Fund to please remove its representative from the Ministry of Finance so that I can get on with the business that the people of Barbados have elected me to do, to giving them a future free of International Monetary Fund dictation. It, therefore, rings hollow and insincere.

The Honourable Member for St. John should know what he had planned for us. The Honourable Member would now want to claim credit that Barbados free of an International Monetary Fund Enhanced Surveillance Programme has recorded the kind of outstanding performance that we have. I am not saying it is my performance, Sir. I thank the whole society for helping. But we have established that a small society can, without dictation from the international institutions, create conditions for sustained, robust economic growth of a kind that has never been before realized in the history of this country. It is something, Sir, that this administration is proud of, it is something that all Barbadians can be proud of and it is something that the international community is increasingly holding up as a model.

It is, therefore, not surprising that in this debate, in his presentation, the Honourable Member for St. John at no time did what all other shadow spokesman of Finance has done, that is, refer to the state of the economy. I heard a presentation from the Honourable Member for St. John and there was no reference to what is happening in the growth of the economy, there was no comment about the state of Government finances, there was no reference at all to the foreign reserves and there was no reference to employment. He made a few references to the state of sectors.

The Honourable Member for St. John is embarrassed by having now to come into an economic discussion because lest the country forgets, Mr. Speaker, I know what is was to be savaged by the Honourable Member for St. John and his practise of the politics of deception in 1994, in being held up as a person who would betray Barbados by having entered into a secret deal with the International Monetary Fund to devalue the Barbados dollar.

The reality that is now confronting the Honourable Member for St. John is, that our economic circumstances and more especially so the state of our foreign exchange reserves, is making that lie that he told in 1994 appeared to be the most monstrous lie in the entire history of the Barbados society. He will, therefore, not want to join any economic debate in a structured way, although, I must say that on January 18, 2000, when he thought that there might have been a little economic distress, he too went on record as saying that our economic circumstances now were worst than in 1991.

This debate, Mr. Speaker, was characterized by a void, that a shadow spokesman on finance and economic affairs in Parliament did not comment upon the state of the economy, the state of Government financial resources, the state of Government fiscal condition, the state of employment for the country nor the balance of payments in discussing a Budget and Economic Policy for the country.

I was a Shadow Minister of Finance for several years but I would not know how to come to the country and not offer the country an alternative with respect to what is happening in the economy in an informed way. So there was a void on the Opposition side. Why was there that analytical void, Sir? It was because the Honourable Member for St. John sought to fill the debate with the innuendos as the series of contradictions.

I really want, Sir, to begin to deal first with the contradictions that stood out in his presentation. You know, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John has to come to terms with the fact that as his representative said, he faces a serious problem of trustworthiness. He caused a lot of people in Barbados to leave their homes to go to Queen's Park to see him present my version of a secret deal with the International Monetary Fund, and so every time he makes a statement which is at odds with himself, it reinforces in the minds of the people of Barbados that he is not to be trusted.

10:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

I say, Sir, that the Honourable Member's presentation only reinforces that very fierce image even further.

Sir, this Government is being told that we should not be selling the land of the people of Barbados to foreigners. The Government of Barbados has not sold any land to any foreigners. We are being castigated when Barbadians sell but we are being told by the Opposition that we should not sell Government's land to foreigners and that we should not sell land to big business but the core of the presentation by the Honourable Member for St. John - and I recall it very carefully, Sir - was that what I

presented to the House was not the Budget, that the Budget had taken place the week before when the Pierhead Development was brought to the House.

Sir, what was the Pierhead Development? The Government of Barbados owns land at the Pierhead on which the Coast Guard is located. We have decided not to sell the people's land. We have vested it in the Barbados Tourism Inc. to put up as our equity in an investment on which we propose to confer incentives.

We were told not to sell the land that it is a bad thing for Barbados to sell the lands and it is a bad thing for the Government of Barbados to give people incentives and not have a claw-back from those incentives. Now that we have done exactly what he has prescribed is the thing that we should be doing, he condemns us and condemns that project in the most derogatory terms.

I go further, Sir. The Pierhead Development Project represents the essence as to how Barbados should be developed. The Coast Guard is now located in a place where if there is a hurricane it would cause it not to be of any assistance to any Barbadian because it would be of no assistance to itself. The place would be swamped in a hurricane.

Running up from the Pierhead, Sir, is the best beach in Barbados. If you travel along the coast in a boat you would see a whole raft of businesses using our best beach land inappropriately. There are some people who are selling lumber on a beach. We must be a very wealthy country that can afford to sell lumber on a beach. Our beach land should be used for beach related activities to create jobs for our people related to the use of the beach.

We have a lot of abandoned warehouses that reflect an old Barbados where sugar was king and the Pierhead Project is a ten-component project that is going to take all of those old abandoned warehouses and land that are now inappropriately used and transform them into marinas, a marine museum - and I hope to put Lord Nelson there where he should be - a screw dock to create heritage assets, bring new residential high-quality living back to Bridgetown, put in facilities that can earn foreign exchange by being designated by units for the tourism market and water taxis, vending facilities for the vendors. What we have done is decide to grant to Barbados investors concessions in collaboration with the Government to take resources that are not utilised and make them find their most productive use in this country.

The Honourable Member criticises us for not taking Government land and selling it. So when we do not sell, we are lambasted. If we were to sell, we would be cursed. It is these contradictions that continue to plague the Leader of the Opposition in establishing a position of credit worthiness with the population.

Sir, I stress the point because it is not an isolated thing with the Democratic Labour Party. It is part of a syndrome. In 1994, in his only presentation to this Parliament, the Leader of the Opposition spoke in these terms:

"A value added tax, will be introduced in Barbados with effect from April 1, 1995 and will be levied as a single positive ad valorem tax on a wide variety of services," he said.

Sir, that is where the contradiction now comes in.

In 1994, the Honourable Member said that he was going to introduce a value added tax in this country as a single rate tax at 15 per cent on a wide range of goods.

Mr. Speaker, he may not remember what he said to his Cabinet and I would like to give him a copy of his Cabinet Paper in which he says the rates would be 15%. His Cabinet Paper said also that the VAT should fall on all foods because a tax on food is desirable. It should fall on funerals, building materials, everything, and that was his commitment to the country in 1994 that by 1995 he would have in a VAT of 15 per cent on everything.

The Honourable Member's advisor was of a different view. He said that the VAT should be zero on hotels accommodation but on all foods. He said that he would review it. We brought in, not a single rate tax but one that was split - 7.5 per cent on accommodation, 15 per cent initially on food and then we removed the food.

Sir, this same person, who in his only presentation to this Parliament as a Minister of Finance committed himself to introducing a value added tax on 15 per cent on everything including food, is now in this presentation this week telling the country that a value added tax is a social injustice. I have never heard a man so condemn himself.

Sir, the trick is that he needs to appear innovative and his thing now is that the Government should now allow building material for low-income housing to be zero rated. Mr. Speaker, the incidence of taxation has to be certain. Can anybody in this House tell me how you could institute a system such that building materials for low income people would be zero rated? Is there a block that you can go and buy called a low-income block or bag of cement? Would you be able to police a system where builders, who are both building for the low-income market and the middle-income market, could go and buy cement and then charge everything and run it through. Could that possibly be policed? Does it not make better sense if you want to help the low-income people not to give a benefit to everybody, because that is what would happen, but to target them and do what we have done, not subsidise building materials but their mortgages while the rest of the society has to borrow at 9%, let them borrow at six per cent. They, then, can be sure that they and they alone get the benefits.

Pray, tell me, Member for St. John, how would you police a system where you would extend a concession that is intended to allow low-income people to have access to building materials at zero rate of tax and they and they alone? That was the major proposal that came out of the mouth of the Leader of the Opposition.

Sir, I speak to the intrinsic contradictions in the politics of the contemporary Democratic Labour Party because it is at the core of their difficulties and economics. It reflects and magnifies itself more fiercely in all of their other utterances, not the least being now the way in which they seek to treat to this society on the important issue as to how we should proceed in the future on the matter of a Head of State of Barbados. One thing is being said in here and one thing is being said by DLP representatives before the Constitution Review Commission. Full support is being expressed for it because they want to be high-minded but out there they want to create the maximum confusion on a matter on which all Barbadians should be united.

Sir, the time has come for the politics of confusion and contradiction to be put behind us. The young people deserve our spending our time making sure that after 2005, they can live in the kind of good society that we before them have lived.

Sir, I want to say that the attack on the leader of the private sector was undeserved. The project called the Pierhead Development Project has received less concessions than Westmoreland or any others. All we have done is put in a Schedule all of the activities that the project carries and each of the activities would have got different kinds of concessions and we have just put down all the other concessions that each of the activities would have been entitled to in one place.

We have brought it, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to this House in a transparent Act of Parliament in the same way that we dealt with the Port St. Charles matter by way of a transparent transaction.

10:22 p.m.

Thursday, October 26, 2000

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

Sir, Royal Westmoreland, Bushy Park, and Kingsland were given grandiose concessions by the Honourable Member for St. John but no document, no Act of Parliament validates that excessive generosity.

We tried to bring this matter within the four walls of public propriety by saying that it is an investment in which the Government and the Barbadian private sector will be involved to maximise the use of our resources. We brought it to Parliament by an Act of Parliament and we are being condemned but when the Honourable Member for St. John gave concessions of a more generous nature - not to Barbadians but to foreigners - he was right and we are wrong. The time has come for that kind of politics to stop. The time has come also, Sir, for innuendos to stop.

Sir, I say that the Honourable Member for St. John's presentation was an unworthy trial of many good people in this country by any measure, a trial by innuendos. My predecessor, as a Member of Parliament

for St. Peter, used to have a newspaper called "The Truth" that said: "I am minding my business but I would like to know." You can be sure that if the Honourable Member for St. John knew, he would not be asking questions or if there was anything corrupt he would not be waiting to ask questions to reveal it. He would be laying it out for the public to have access to it so this, I am asking this question because I want to know, is just a way of trying people by innuendos. He is on the platform now trying us by innuendos. I am being told that we are wasting the \$30 million that he left in the Public Enterprises Fund. Sir, first of all I want to say this to the Barbadian public. If I were responsible for selling the Arawak Cement Plant, Heywoods, all the Government's shares in the Flour Mill, all the Government's shares in Bartel, all the Government's shares in BET, I would not need \$30 million. Sir, those \$30 million come as close as you can get to 30 pieces of silver.

Mr. Speaker, every quarter I bring to this House, as required by the law, the statements of the Public Enterprises Fund setting out clearly what the money has been used for and I want to repeat them because the Honourable Member knows because he repeated them too.

Sir, for twenty years the golf course at Durants was in bush. The hotels on the south coast would love to be able to sell their services to the rest of the world saying that they are members of a golf course so that when visitors come here they can have access to golf course facilities. Sir, no such facility was in place. If you want to play golf at Royal Westmoreland, created by the Democratic Labour Party, you have to pay a membership fee, not a match fee because Royal Westmoreland is a Private Members Club. Mr. Speaker, Barbadians want to play golf too and I decided that \$1.5 million of that fund should be used to do exactly that.

Sir, today we have fifteen hotels on the south coast of Barbados which can offer to the rest of the world a vacation in Barbados and the person staying at the hotel can enjoy part of a golfing experience in Barbados, thanks to that investment from the Public Enterprises Fund.

The West Indies Cricket Board of Control has approached us with the notion that we have to get our grounds in place to allow the West Indies to be able to host a World Cup but the BCA is broke. Is that a waste of the people's money, Mr. Speaker? We found a situation where the previous administration had committed itself to invest in Carib Express, I only honoured it by making the funds available.

Sir, we were presented with a report by the Small Business Association that small businesses in this country were failing because they were relying too much on loan financing and they needed a venture capital facility. I said that I would let them have \$2 million to help them with a venture capital facility. Hilton's funds were used to refurbish it and money is now set aside to give to Needhams Point to redevelop the Hilton from those proceeds.

Sir, the Gems of Barbados was maligned by the Honourable Member for St. John and I do not have to go through it but the Gems of Barbados issued a Prospectus. Since the Gems of Barbados have been in existence, I have been tough on the board members. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South, a former Prime Minister is a member of the board and the Deputy Prime Minister is a member of the board. All contracts issued by the Gems of Barbados have gone out to tender, Sir. I am going to make every one of the tender reports and all of the quality surveys available and I will give them to the Honourable Member for St. John so that he can go through them at his discretion.

Sir, there is a Tenders Committee of which the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is the Chairman that awards these contracts in a most scrupulous way but because the Honourable Member for St. Thomas' family is involved and they have lost their family business, because the Honourable Member for Christ Church South is involved and they have lost their family business, there are these nasty little whispering campaigns that we have brought the Gems of Barbados into existence to help them. Sir, they have lost their family businesses but because a friend of mine is involved in a web of corruption, am I also suppose to be in that web of corruption? Sir, this has to stop.

If the Honourable Member for St. John wants to, let us change the rules of the Public Accounts Committee. Let us agree that if necessary, only Members of the Opposition are needed to constitute a board and let them call the Public Accounts Committee and deal with these things fairly.

Sir, in November last year when my whole Government was condemned for having bought three factories, I called on the Honourable Member for St. John, as a matter of most urgent public importance, to convene in a public place, a meeting of the Public Accounts Committee and I insisted that I should be invited to give evidence and that the general public must be invited as well.

Sir, that was last year in November when he accused us of taking up \$200 million of the taxpayers funds and giving the sugar industry for three old sugar factories in return for campaign donation. I told him to call the Public Accounts Committee, have the meeting at Sherbourne, call me and I will stop what I am doing and come and bring the public. Sir, I am still waiting to be invited. The time has come for him either to put up or shut up. I am prepared, Sir, to agree that we change the rules, that we should have meetings of the Public Accounts Committee and that only Members of the Opposition will attend.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John holds up the formation of public companies as something that we should be suspicious about. Sir, he, as a Minister of Finance, created only two companies and they were both private companies and he is now holding up to the public of Barbados that companies formed by the Government as private companies now represent some decay in our democracy.

Sir, the Government of Barbados, through successive administrations, has formed private companies where the activities that are carried out are strictly commercial activities that cannot be done by having the organisation replicate the feature of central Government bureaucracy. These were Caribbean Airways, Tourism Investment Inc. and so on. The Honourable Member for St. John as a Ministry of Finance, created only two enterprises in his time. They were both private companies not answerable to Parliament.

Sir, I am not blaming him because they were commercial activities that needed private companies to run them. When the Government sets up a private company the public has to be told that the companies are set up under the Companies Act of Barbados where, in some instances, the reporting requirements and the auditing requirements are more stringent than those of statutory boards because they must have annual general meetings and every year they must have audited financial statements. The public is not to believe, Sir, that because it is a private company there is deep-seated corruption in the Government

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because they must have an Annual General Meeting and every year they must have audited financial statements.

Sir, I also want to say that once a company gets funds from the Consolidated Fund, the Public Accounts Committee is at liberty to have the Auditor General audit those companies and carry out an investigation into the circumstances and the law already provides that.

Why doesn't the Leader of the Opposition discharge his responsibilities under the law, as it is already in him by reason of his Chairmanship of the Public Accounts Committee? You would have heard things like the private companies are a threat to our democracy, Sir, when many of them are more up to date in the auditing of their accounts than any statutory board that I can reference, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I can go on about the politics of innuendos. I have heard that there are two kitchens at Illaro Court. One is for the private use of the Prime Minister and his family and the other is for official functions. Nothing has been done to the kitchen of the Prime Minister. The kitchen for official functions had rusted out and the Ministry of the Public Work said that it must be replaced and they replaced it, Sir and it now being made to appear that I am involved in it.

I am not going to go to the level of the Honourable Member for St. John, Sir. One of the Ministers, who apparently, forgot to pay his car licence and he was lambasted. There are people in the DLP who tend to speak about those things but I am not going to get down to that level in this debate. Let us move above from the politics of innuendos.

I need to say, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. John took a public meeting down to my constituency and the occasion was that I had refused, as the Minister of Town Planning, to let Mullins block access to the beach. I refused to agree that they could take any development on the seaside. They was a public misunderstanding and he took a meeting down to St. Peter to complain about beach access.

Sir, I would have, in previous presentations spoken about things that the Leader of the Opposition did when he was Minister of Finance. For example there were transactions in which he was involved in as a

lawyer that came to him as Minister of Finance, where officials did not approve for the Heywood project. I have spoken at a time when he was telling every Barbadian national living abroad that they could not bring a car into Barbados duty free, Sir. One of his doctor friends, Sir, a stalwart of the DLP, Sir, got his car into Barbados duty free. Every Barbadian who wanted to come back from England to Barbados could not bring theirs duty-free but he gives his friend, Sir, he set new standards when nobody else could get money to buy a jeep, he set the tariffs, Sir, and I could go on.

I would suggest to Parliament that there was nothing he has done that was as outrageous as his conduct during the Heywood transaction. Sir, there were three sets of issues involved that were at the center of controversy in the Heywood transaction, Sir. There were the terms of the employment of the workers where 15 shop stewards had to be sent home. Sir, do you remember the fuss that they made about that? There was the price that was paid. Heywood was built for \$60 million and it was sold for \$34 million. There were offers on the table for more and people in the BTII and elsewhere were keeping noise about it. There was another issue also. In 1961, when that parcel of land in my constituency was first thought of being developed, Sir, and in 1973 when the application for the Heywood Project, as it was then conceived, was approved, there was a stipulation that the footpath running north and south should be kept as a buffer between the hotel and the beach to provide full access for the people of Barbados and my constituency to that beach

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Sir, the persons who sought to buy Heywoods insisted, as a condition, that the sale and purchase must be subject to the condition for the removal of the existing pedestrian way - to stop many people from getting access to the beach.

Let me finish, Sir, let me finish. The Chairman of the Corporation raised fundamental concerns about it and expressed how unhappy he was about it, Sir.

Well, you would expect, Sir, that if the Chairman of the corporation raised concerns about the condition under which Heywoods was being sold, that the Minister would call in the Chairman and say, let us hear these things and talk them through and protect the public interest.

But what did the Minister of Finance did do, Sir? He wrote, on 27th May, the most outrageous letter

to a Prime Minister in the whole history of this country.

1994, May 27, from Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, M.P. to Rt. Hon. L. Erskine Sandiford, M.P., at a time when the Chairman of the Corporation, Mr. Leacock was wholly unhappy about the conditions, Sir, he wrote this letter saying:-

“I am writing to you on a tourism related matter. I do not know what problem Mr. Leacock sees arising from the advice being rendered but it would be grateful if you would, in the public interest specify and enumerate issue...

Then he goes on, Sir.

“I should be grateful if you might consider intervening in this matter so as to ensure that the Chairman of the B.T.I.C. is ad idem with the Crown on developments relating to the sale of Heywoods.”

So the Chairman was seeking to protect the public interest, Sir, by raising his unhappiness, and the Minister of Finance of the day, rather than saying let us take care of them, wrote the Prime Minister saying let us muzzle, let us muzzle.

Sir, then he goes go down to St. Peter, in my constituency, after I had refused, Mr. Speaker, to give Mullins permission to develop the beach, when he knows that in ‘61, ‘73 we built Heywoods, insisting that there must always be public access and that he agreed that it should be sold without that public access and that when people in a position to protect the public interest try to protect that interest, he told the Prime Minister to put a muzzle on them. Does he dare to come into my constituency, Sir?

Now, the people of St. Peter has access to that beach, provided by successive Governments, Sir, and he... I can only, therefore, close, Sir, by citing The Merchant of Venice.

Mr. SPEAKER:

Not all of it?

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

No Sir. I do not have to Sir. “There is no vice so simple ...”

As I said, he is now the Champion of “Access to the Beach”, and “Not Granting Concessions to Foreigners”, and “Barbados Must Not Sell its Land to Foreigners”. He is walking about as a Hercules; I am fighting for these things, Sir, and the Merchant of Venice said these words, Sir.

“There is no vice so simple but assumes

Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:

How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false

As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins

The beard of Hercules and frowning Mars'

Who, inward search'd, have livers white as milk;

And these assume but valour's excrement

To render them redoubted.

It applies to him, Sir. As I said before, he is not fit to be a Prime Minister, Sir. Last year I said that he was not fit to be the Leader of the Opposition, Sir, I fear now that I must conclude, Sir, on this evidence that he is not fit to sit among Honourable Members.

I am obliged to you Sir.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER:

Order please.

The question that this Resolution do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:

AYES:

Rt. Hon. Mr. O.S. ARTHUR, Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER,

Hon. Mr. G.A. CLARKE, Hon. Mr. D. A.C. SIMMONS,

Hon. Mr. R.C. EASTMOND, Hon. Mr. R.N. GREENIDGE,

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY, Hon. Mr. R.St. C. TOPPIN,

Hon. Sir H.B. ST. JOHN, Hon. Mr. R.R. FARLEY,

Hon. Mr. A.P. WOOD, Hon. Mr. H. F. LASHLEY,

Hon. Mr. N.A. LYNCH, Mr. L. R. TULL,

Hon. Mr. R. D. MARSHALL, Hon. Dr. R.L. CHELTENHAM,

Miss H.E. THOMPSON, Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, Mr. D.T. GILL, Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS, Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, Sir H. FORDE

Mr. D. CARTER, Hon. Mr. J. M. EDGHILL. - 24

NOES:

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, Mr. D. ST. E. KELLMAN - 2

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, that concludes Government business for this week, Sir. We have had a long, wonderful Debate.

I think I said when I began my Speech it has been really satisfying, enlightening and edifying but we have work tomorrow, Sir, in Cabinet and I am, therefore, not going to delay the House any longer in moving the adjournment which I do, not until next Tuesday but the following Tuesday, November 7th, at 11:00 a.m.

But in doing so, Sir, it is with a tinge of solemn sadness that I have to announce to the House that tomorrow one who has given 35 years service to this Honourable Parliament is going to be retiring.

She retires officially on the 31st December, but she is going on pre-retirement leave tomorrow and I did not think that we should let this occasion pass without paying tribute to Mrs. Muriel Bradshaw, who has worked here.

Asides.

Hon. Mr. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Sir, Mrs. Bradshaw is here with us. I did invite her to stay, Sir, and I am glad that she is here.

Those of us who have been in this Parliament whether a short time or as long as some of us who have been here from the '70's will recall, over the years, with warmth and fondness, the manner in which Mrs. Bradshaw has discharged her duties, how she has been so cordial, accommodating, and unobtrusive, in the discharge of her duties that she has made life for us, as Parliamentarians, all that the more easy in getting assistance of whatever kind. She has been most accommodating.

She has been so quiet that you would not know if she was here any day unless you went to the room behind the white doors, in the Library. I know that she was Assistant Librarian, but I more often see her in what I call the room behind the white doors, and if you want anything photocopied or looked up, a

report or something, Mrs. Bradshaw was always there to have it to hand.

At an appropriate occasion, I am going to invite the Management Commission of Parliament to pay its part in a suitable memento to Mrs. Bradshaw but I would wish, on behalf of all Honourable Members on this side, and yourself, Sir, to thank Mrs. Bradshaw on behalf of the people of Barbados for the excellent, dedicated and committed service which she has rendered to the people through this Parliament.

Even though we are sorry to see her go, and she is going well ahead of the appointed time, we wish her a long, happy and healthy retirement.

It has been my fortune to have gone to school at Lodge School with her husband, Nigel, who was a Mathematician of no mean caliber. He was a little ahead of me at school, Sir, and they have been a wonderfully successful couple and I wish them both on behalf of all of us on this side, all the very best in the future.

Thanks, well done, thy good and faithful Servant.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON:

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am rising to speak, I believe, on the adjournment but also in support of the comments which were made by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas in respect of Mrs. Bradshaw.

Thirty-five years of service in any institution is really a long time. I cannot even fathom the kind of changes, the kind of people who you would have met, their different personalities and the many experiences that you would have seen coming and working for this Parliament in its pre-Independence era, and right up to the 21st Century.

But I want, certainly, on behalf of all present and past Parliamentarians, on behalf of my Party and Members of this side and all those who are not able, either by their demise or otherwise to be here to speak, to congratulate you, I wish you all the very best and to thank you sincerely for the hard work that you have done on behalf of the people of Barbados.

There are not many people who would recognise what it takes to ensure that a Parliament can run smoothly and sometimes, even as Parliamentarians, we do not recognise and extend our appreciation.

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

We can turn up and leave, not even imagining that behind the wooden doors and the panel doors of this building that there are people who have to work very hard to make sure that the work we do on behalf of public is efficient and is carried out with alacrity.

In that regard you played no small part, I know from personal experience, in ensuring that our task was made much easier. We appreciate it very much and I am so happy to have the privilege, Sir, of being in this House to extend my gratitude to one of our staff members and by extension to all, as part of the team with whom she had to work for 35 years.

I join with the Leader of the House in supporting this Resolution.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D.A.C. SIMMONS:

Mr. Speaker, I formally move, Sir, that we adjourn until Tuesday 7th November, 2000 at 1100 a.m.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR:

I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER:

Before I move the adjournment, let me just say on behalf of the staff, Mrs. Bradshaw, that I know you have been around for 35 years and I believe I have known you and your husband for a little more than 35 years.

On behalf of all the staff members here, the Clerks and all the other workers, we are very appreciative and thankful for all that you have done. I know in your very quiet way you have always been extremely helpful and no task has ever been too difficult for you.

Sometimes, we might not have shown you the kind of appreciation we felt and I can assure you that we have appreciated everything you have done for us and I especially thank you on behalf of the staff.

The question that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 7th November, 2000 at 11:00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

10:42 p.m.