

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1999 - 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 19, 2001.

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

PRESENT

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P., (Deputy Speaker) Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.M.(Cantab.) Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc.(Econ.), (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs) (Minister of the Civil Service) Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B.(Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition) Hon. Sir HAROLD ST. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B. Mr. L. R. Tull, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon) Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees) Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B., (Minister of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform) Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Housing and Lands) Hon. R. D. MARSHALL, (Minister of Public Works and Transport) Hon. H. F. LASHLEY, (Minister of Social Transformation) Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN, LL.B., (Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development) Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN Miss H.E. Thompson, LL.B. Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture) Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A. Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., (Parliamentary Secretary, the Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs) Mr. D. T. GILL, B.Sc. Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport) Hon. A. P. WOOD, J.P., B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil., (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development) Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., (Minister of Industry and International Business)

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

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

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, June 5, 2000.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable The

House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, June 5, 2001, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER If there are no corrections or observations, then let these Minutes stand confirmed.

MESSAGES FROM HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am to inform this Honourable House of a message from His Excellency the Governor-General dated 11th June, 2001.

“Dear Mr. Speaker,

I shall be away from the island during the period 14th June to 20th July, 2001 on vacation in the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

In accordance with the provisions of Section 29(1)(b) of the Constitution, the Chief Justice, the Hon. Sir Denys A. Williams, KCMG, GCM, will perform the functions of the office of Governor-General during my absence.

As the Honourable The House of Assembly will not be meeting prior to my departure, it will not be possible for the usual formal message to be sent down to your Chamber. Will you, therefore, please bring my absence formally to the attention of the Honourable The House of Assembly when next it meets.

I have the honour to be,

Yours faithfully,

GOVERNOR-GENERAL” PAPER

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following

Ministerial Statement on the Auditor General’s Report for the financial year ending March 2000.

The Land Tax (Rate of Tax) (Amendment) Order, 2001.

Value Added Tax (Refund) (Variety Club Caribbean (Barbados) Order), 2001.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43, and 44 be suspended for the remainder of the day’s Sitting.

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

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

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

ORDER NO. 9

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING OF SUMS OF UP TO \$20 000 000 IN THE CURRENCY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MARKETS BY THE ISSUE OF US DOLLAR BONDS THROUGH CITICORP MERCHANT BANK LIMITED, AS FISCAL AGENT, FOR THE PURPOSE OF FINANCING THE GOVERNMENT'S CONCRETE ROAD PROJECT.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it gives me the greatest pleasure to lay the Resolution on the borrowing of the sum of US\$20 million on the capital market by the issue of US Dollar bonds through Citicorp Merchant Bank Limited, for the purpose of financing Government's concrete road project.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Government for some time has recognised that road works in rural and urban tenancies have not kept pace with the other forms of infrastructural development in Barbados. It has been also recognised that strips of unkept roads and footpaths have negatively impacted on the social mobility of households living in these areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for too long residents have had to suffer the indignity of trekking over these tracks on a daily basis to pursue their legitimate business. It is the opinion of this administration that this unfortunate situation should be brought to an end.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, equally important is the fact that access to the homes of individuals' who live along these tracks is virtually impossible during periods of inclement weather. In cases of emergency it is virtually impossible for vehicular traffic to get to these residents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should not lose sight of the fact that valuable employment and business opportunities are lost in these areas as a result of lack of proper access.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am in a very good position to know this, having taken over a constituency that was represented by the Democratic Labour Party for a number of years and which has been grossly neglected, so when I stand and pontificate about the importance of proper access, I speak from a position of real authority. Since the Rural Development Commission has turned its attention to the tenantry roads in my constituency four roads have been completed and there has been a marked increase in business for small business persons living along those stretches.

For example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there was a path in the Harlington area that was impassable during heavy rainfall and it was nothing short of a disgrace and disrespect for those people in my constituency. Notwithstanding the proximity to St. Martins Church, on Sunday mornings, when there was heavy rainfall, none of those people could come out to go to church. Since the road has been cut at Pelican

Drive one family has taken the opportunity to establish a small business which is already striving.

11:30 a.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. Mr. A. P. WOOD: They turned around the fortunes of my black pudding and souse lady in Cave Land, for whom before the Rural Development Commission cut that road, business was virtually nil. Further along that stretch of road, there is an autobody repair workshop operated by a man called Nick. Since that road has been cut, the business generated for the autobody repair shop has been booming.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is another stretch of road which was completed by the Rural Development Commission in my area at Nursery No. 2, Four Roads, St. Philip. I could assure you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the business place lying along that stretch of road called Claris Hide Away, it is an area that is known to me, that business there has increased immeasurably.

We know the importance of an improved network, that is, we on this side, and the Government has been very aggressive in its approach to addressing the problem of inadequate road works in rural and urban tenancies and subsidiary roads in general. Sir, this Honourable House was told on October 24, 2000, when the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, in his Financial Statement outlined the economic and financial policies of Government, that this administration will be embarking on a BDS\$40 million concrete road programme to be administered by the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission. Sir, this Resolution before this Honourable House this morning is seeking to make this project become a reality.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should say at the outset that the Government's intention to embark on this country road programme will in no way detract from what it is doing in respect of the asphalt programme which is undertaken by the Rural and the Urban Development Commissions. The funds, which are being made available to facilitate this concrete road programme, will not cause any crowding-out effect in respect of the asphalt programme. We need to make that point up front, lest any Honourable Member in this Honourable Chamber thinks that there will be a scaling down of Government's asphalt programme for the Rural and the Urban Development Commissions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it would be very remiss of me if I did not take the opportunity now that I am leading on such an important subject, to remind this Honourable House that this administration has planned a very impressive road programme in general. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, the Minister responsible for Public Works and Transport, will speak on this topic. The Minister, like the rest of us, needs to remind the populace of this country that the Government of the day is seriously addressing the state of the roads in this country.

Let me look quickly at the allocation in the Estates of 2001—2002, for roads by this Government. There are a number of different projects and I will list them.

Sir, within the Ministry of Public Works and Transport's programme, the Government has allocated a sum of \$47.656 million for highway construction and maintenance, of which \$16.59 million will be for

structures to facilitate works in the areas such as Highway 6, from Sayers to Six Roads; the Bridgetown Road and Safety Improvement Project; the overlay Passage B Programme and other highway improvements. There is also an amount of \$4.5 million for the maintenance of roads and these funds will be use by the depots. Sir, with the residential road programme, the Cabinet has approved a road programme, a few weeks ago, requiring a sum of \$2 million.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me spend a minute here. I said earlier that I am in a very good position to speak about what road improvement does to a constituency. In this residential road programme, this Government has come to the rescue of constituents in my area who have been shunted for a long time by the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Sir, this debate is not about his constituency, this debate is about total Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. Mr. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was about to let this Honourable House know how thankful my constituents of Gemswick are for the work which was done in the residential road programme. A few months ago, I participated in a ground breaking ceremony for a tenantry at Lowthers, in the constituency of Christ Church East. In the audience there was an old lady by the name of Mrs. Rowe. Mrs. Rowe had visited her son who is living in the area where the road is being cut. Sir, when I started to speak, she said, "Minister Wood, the Lord bless you, because I have been living in Gemswick all my life and we have waited 65 years for the road in Gemswick to be done." Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that is coming from Mrs. Rowe, and as I drive and walk through my constituency, I know that the folks who are living in Gemswick are extremely happy and the same thing obtains for the folks who live in Foul Bay.

Let me continue to give you the sums allocated by this Government for road improvement. In the context of the infrastructural improvement to Bridgetown, there is an amount of \$2.33 million for structures for the road rehabilitation in the Baxters Road/Tudor Street area. This is a special project.

The Government has given itself and the people of the country a commitment to do a number of roads over a four-year period. As I said earlier, the Minister of Transport and Works will speak on these matters. During the first year of the programme, if my memory serves me correctly, we have been able to look after about 13 or 14 of the 18 planned projects.

Once again, the programme for the second has been approved by Cabinet and I eagerly look forward to new work in my constituency, which is included in that programme, on the stretch from Six Roads to Kirtons, St. Philip, where a large number of school children traverse in order to get to Princess Margaret and to St. Martins Four Roads Primary School.

11:40 a.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

There is also an allocation for improvements to roads in the Scotland District and this, once again, is a special project. The sum of \$1.92 million has been allocated for improvements to roads at St. Simons, Glen Burnie, Bath to Newcastle, Dukes and Bucks.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we can get some idea of the magnitude of the Government's planned road programme for this year. Those are works which are going to be handled by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. I need to remind this Honourable House that work is being done on a daily basis by the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission.

This year, the Urban Development Commission, for its asphalt programme, has allocated an amount of the order of \$3.3 million, and the Rural Development Commission has allocated an amount in the order of \$5 million. I think I should take this opportunity to let this House know of the performance of the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission in this area.

To date, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Urban Development Commission has been responsible for the construction of thirty-six roads and nine other projects, in the area of foot paths and steps, forty-five projects altogether in a reasonably short time. With respect to the Rural Development Commission's asphalt programme, the performance there has also been very impressive. Up to December 2000, the Rural Development Commission had constructed some forty tenantry roads and resurfaced four. Let me repeat that, they had constructed forty tenantry roads and resurfaced four.

As I speak, Mr. Deputy Speaker, work is ongoing for the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission. I could inform this Honourable House, with the greatest degree of certainty, that roads are under construction in the following areas: Montrose in Christ Church, Ruby in St. Philip, Adventist Gap in St. Michael, Foster Hall in St. John, First Avenue Jackson in St. Michael, Lowthers in Christ Church.

I should also state that within the asphalt roads programme, contracts have been awarded for works at Brighton in St. George, Miller Road in Speightstown, Skeete's Bay in St. Philip, and shortly, work will be started in Evelyn in St. Philip.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said all of that to let this Honourable House see that the concrete road programme which they are embarking on, should be seen as complimentary to what is being done elsewhere, in the area of road construction and road rehabilitation. This is the Government's commitment and it is written in our Manifesto. It is also stated from time to time, by Honourable Members on this side that it is our intention that every community, however small in size the community might be, should have the proper infrastructure in respect of roads and recreational facilities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is instructive to note that an aspect of the new thrust of the Rural Development Commission is to develop rural communities in a very comprehensive way. Let us take for discussion's sake, constituencies that are serviced by the Rural Development Commission but let us break up those constituencies into small cells.

The aim of this integrated rural development thrust of the Commission is to go into those Communities and to get a clear assessment of the social and economic needs of those communities. So we want to move away from the practice where, previously, a member of Parliament or a villager might see the need for his or her home to be repaired, might see the need for a bathroom facility to be provided, the Commission will respond by going in and dealing with that request.

There might be economic potential, business opportunities, and it is the Commission's responsibility when it goes there and does a complete socio-economic assessment of the area, to take all of those facets into consideration, in the discharge of its functions.

Sir, when we go into an area, we want the social needs looked after, the economic potential of that area fully explored and in so doing, there would be a good harmonisation of the work of the Commission in the area of infrastructural development and enterprise development. Sir, that is the new thrust of the Rural Development Commission and that is why it is vitally important that when socio-economic assessments are done, if a tenantry road or a subsidiary road is needed that the Commission provides that road.

I made mention of the fact of what happened previously in my constituency relative to what is happening now. The Commission has gone into areas where many people live, and noticed that those areas had gone to sleep as a result of the lack of activity and the gross neglect by the Democratic Labour Party. It is my duty as a parliamentarian to deal with these problems and I am happy so far, that in areas like Cave Land, Harlington and Nursery No. 2 in Four Roads, this new thrust is taking shape.

Let me bring this Honourable House up to date with the type of planning work which we have undertaken in order to bring this concrete roads programme up to the point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whereby actual road construction is expected to commence in early July.

11:50 a.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

I view this concrete road programme as sufficiently important that I offered my services to chair or co-chair a technical committee comprising members of the Urban Development Commission (UDC), the Rural Development Commission (RDC), engineering consultants and representatives from the various utilities companies and I have accepted the responsibility to chair that committee which is responsible for driving this programme. This is very important not only from a political viewpoint but for other reasons which I have just mentioned.

There is something that the construction of a road does to the psyche of people and I know what I have seen. I would imagine that the Honourable Member for St. John sees it often too because... Of course, he and his predecessors will have to take a lot of blame for keeping St. John as a constituency which is characterized by roads which are in a bad state of disrepair.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: I have a lot to say and I am going to say it. I know the importance of this programme and I have accepted the responsibility to chair the committee to drive this programme.

The engineering consultants who have been with us from the inception have done a wonderful job so far and have been able to identify no fewer than 175 roads to be handled in this programme. The provisional estimate at the outset for these roads is approximately BDS\$46 million. Later on in the discourse, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will get to the technical aspects of the concrete roads. We will look at the characteristics of these roads and we will also speak to the concerns. Naturally, they have been a bit on the down side.

The engineering firms who have been with us from the inception have assisted the two commissions not only with the selection of the roads - this is very important as well - but have been collaborating with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport in the provision of the specifications adequate for use in the construction of these roads and that is very, very important.

What is also important is that at the level of the planning we have engaged the utilities companies from an early stage because what is going to be very important, and it will become clear later, is that there must be proper coordination of this work because once that concrete is laid the intention is not to break the surface unless it is absolutely necessary. So to minimize the incidents of having to break that surface it is vitally important that we sit with the National Petroleum Corporation, the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited, the Barbados Telephone Company Limited and the Barbados Water Authority, and representatives from those agencies have been with us from the inception.

As a matter of fact, when the engineering consultants went out to do the preliminary work and move beyond that stage where they were seeking to prepare the drawings, at each stage representatives from the utilities companies were with them. That is vitally important because proper coordination of this work is needed and the planning committee has a programme spanning a three-year period which was drawn up by the engineering consultants. Now, timing for the planning and execution of this work is very important because the programme is of a considerable magnitude. I said earlier that they have identified no fewer than 175 projects to be undertaken in a three-year period and this is happening alongside a fairly impressive and elaborate programme elsewhere.

I should state at this point, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that a programme of this type offers employment opportunities for a large number of persons. Not only does it provide opportunities for smaller contractors to come on board, but because of the labour intensive nature of this work it provides opportunities for employment for a number of other workers in various categories.

It is our intention, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see this programme done in a most assiduous fashion and we are not prepared to entertain any time delays. The commissions will be mandated to minimize the incidence of cost overruns on these projects so we want these contractors to come in on time and certainly within budget. We cannot lose sight of the significance of this programme. This is part and parcel of Government's commitment to the people of Barbados to provide proper tenantry roads and subsidiary roads throughout the length and breadth of this country.

Because of the magnitude of the programme, we have agreed at the level of planning to undertake the programme in phases. Phase 1, as I said earlier, will commence in July 2001. My colleagues and the Honourable Members on the other side will remember that sums of \$7 million and \$5 million were allocated to the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission respectively this financial year to facilitate the first phase of this concrete road programme. Those amounts can be seen right here in the approved Estimates.

12:00 noon

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

This is the amount of money that we will be seeking to drive the programme this year.

It is estimated that with the \$7 million allocated to the Rural Development Commission 34 roads will be handled in the rural constituencies. With the \$5 million made available to the Urban Development Commission, 28 stretches would be handled in the concrete road programme this year.

Colleagues and Honourable Members on the other side will remember that a notice of tender was put out and we were inviting contractors to submit their bids for the construction of the first set of roads. The closing date for that tender was June 1, 2001. The tenders have been submitted for the two Commissions and they are being reviewed and evaluated by the engineering consultants. It is expected that the Commissions will be in a position to award these contracts before the end of this month.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are at the point that once the contracts for construction have been awarded there will be a start date for construction in early July. As I said earlier, we want to handle this concrete road programme like clockwork and the planning for it has been very meticulous and will continue to be very meticulous. I will stay the course as Chairman of the Technical Committee. We will ensure that when construction is going on that the engineering consultants will be engaged to deal with the drawings for the remaining works which will be coming in Phase II. We do not want any stops and starts in this programme once finance is forthcoming, and this is the whole reason of the Resolution today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me have a look now at the characteristics of these concrete roads. Research has shown that the initial investment in concrete roads is estimated at somewhere in the range of 15 per cent to 40 per cent higher than asphalt. Based on the high durability of the concrete roads which result in lower maintenance costs, the total investment for the two types of surfaces should be similar over a period between 9 to 15 years. Up front, we incur a little additional cost for the concrete road programme compared to the asphalt programme but, over time, the maintenance cost of the concrete road programme will be significantly lower than the maintenance cost of the asphalt programme.

There are other maintenance related benefits of the concrete road programme. The obvious one is related to what I said earlier that resurfacing of the asphalt roads is required at fairly short intervals

compared to a concrete surface. Concrete roads also provide higher visibility and better reflection at night. They are undamaged by oil and gas drips and they could be placed directly on weak sub-grades.

As I said earlier, one would appreciate that there will be some points on the downside and amongst the preliminary concerns relating to the use of the concrete roads the first one is, as I said, the cost. The initial cost might be higher but the roads are essentially maintenance free. The second concern relates to access. Asphalt roads are virtually immediately passable whereas the concrete requires some curing time between 24 to 72 hours and during this period there will be some form of disruption, but this is minor, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Services, installation of maintenance of services after construction is more difficult with concrete roads than asphalt. This is a fairly obvious point. The breaking up of the concrete after completion of the roads will obviously not be recommended. As I said earlier, through the engagement of the utility companies via proper planning and coordination for these projects we have been seeking very actively to address some of these concerns through the Technical Committee. One of the expressed purposes of engaging the minds of those at the agencies is to ensure that proper mechanisms are put in place to minimise the need to break the concrete after construction for the laying of any services. Once we continue to work closely with the utility companies we do not expect there will be any major disruption once the programme is started. We do have a responsibility to make sure that that is the case.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in respect of the financing for the project I should inform the Honourable House that in the initial stages Arawak Cement Company Limited was approached to assist with the determination of a source of financing for the project. Of course, as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has said, the cement is in St. Lucy so one would expect that conditions are right for Arawak Cement Company Limited to figure prominently in a programme of this type.

Submissions were received by the Ministry of Finance for three banking institutions. Those submissions were evaluated properly, as usual, by the officers at the Ministry of Finance. On the basis of cost and effect on cash flow, Citicorp Merchant Bank Limited was recommended as the preferred option. The Minister of Finance has approved that recommendation and the Government of Barbados is in a position now to negotiate with Citicorp Merchant Bank for a loan with a duration of ten years at a rate of interest of 1.6 per cent below prime, giving a current effective rate of 8.4 per cent.

What is also very important is that the loan will be denominated in US dollars so that as the item on the Order Paper says, the Resolution is seeking approval for the borrowing of US\$20 million via the issue of US dollar bonds through Citicorp Merchant Bank.

12:10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

The loan is to be disbursed over a four-year period and the minimum disbursement is US\$2.5 million

with a one month's notice. The principal repayment is to be paid in equal annual payments commencing one year after the disbursement of each tranche. The loan is to be calculated based on the outstanding principal.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are well on the way to giving proper effect to Government's commitment in this regard. I know, based on the strategic position I hold as the representative for a rural constituency that has been left behind through the neglect of the other party, that programmes of this type are vitally important.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know what it is to see the people from Rock Hall area in my constituency having to make the trek previously along the road in heavy rainfall on their way to work with their feet in plastic bags and changing into their shoes when they get to the top of the road.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not exaggerating because it is a fact but it does not happen now because they have been rescued. There is still some work to be done in that area which I intend to do because I know the magnitude of the relief which will be brought to people who live on either side of tracks that are virtually impassable.

This Government has stuck with the people of this country in such a way that we have given those who hitherto had to undergo tremendous hardship to get in and out of their homes, the opportunity to uplift themselves and feel good about themselves, to develop the business potential in those areas, to develop rural community in a holistic way, all with the aim of reaching out and uplifting persons.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, the concrete road programme of the Government, administered by the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission, is truly a manifestation of Government's commitment to improve the living standards of all Barbadians and to ensure that the social fabric of our society is not undermined by inadequate social infrastructure. This Government should be commended on this initiative.

I want all Barbadians to be assured that the road network throughout Barbados would be substantially improved by the concrete tenantry and subsidiary road programme to blend with the current activity on the major highways and residential areas being done by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport which has been splendidly executing its programmes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those few remarks I commend this Resolution to this Honourable House.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on this Resolution and to say from the outset that I have many problems with this Resolution. I want to say that even though this House is aware of the fact that I have always been the advocate of pushing concrete roads in Barbados that I have a particular problem in the financing of this particular project.

One must ask why the Government which brags about having the largest foreign reserves ever to be attained by any Government would want to go on the capital market to borrow US\$20 million to finance a project that is one hundred percent local. All the materials to be used in constructing the concrete roads are very much local but yet we are finding ourselves on the capital markets of the world to find US\$20 million to deal with a local problem.

Sir, I have always argued that most Governments, including the Barbados Labour Party Government, have always used capital projects as an excuse to build up foreign reserves. This is the best example that can ever be given where there is a project that is one hundred percent local in content but yet the Government goes to the United States to borrow US\$20 million so one must ask why would the Government borrow US\$20 million.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank the Honourable Member for Christ Church West for making a very valid point. The Honourable Member is telling me that Citicorp is in Barbados but we have gone to a Barbadian company to borrow US money. It is a very important point. Why would the Government want to get US money from a local bank when they are bragging about the amount of foreign reserves they have?

Sir, when Governments go to borrow money overseas for capital projects, the money is more for boosting the foreign reserves than anything else. I would like an answer from the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs.

12:20 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I would like to know and I would like an answer from the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, why this particular step had to be taken at this time.

Sir, what is also dangerous is that we are talking about this type of financing when we are told that the liquidity position in Barbados is very good. We have been told that the banks have a lot of money that they need to get rid of, yet we are borrowing foreign money. The question is, when we repay this loan, are we going to repay in local dollars or do we have to find foreign currency to repay this loan.

I do not have a problem with concrete roads, Sir, my problem is about the financing of this particular project. If it means that every time that we have a project, we are going to run and borrow foreign exchange to finance a project, it tells me that we have a serious problem or we are about to have a more serious problem than we anticipated.

Sir, it is not by accident that you would find the Barbados Labour Party with a policy like this. If one looks at the Economic and Financial Statistics from the Central Bank of Barbados, I want to repeat it, Sir, if one looks at the Economic and Financial Statistics from the Central Bank of Barbados at February 2001, one can easily understand why this money was borrowed in foreign currency. If one is to make a serious analysis of the Central Bank administration national debt on page 67, the same document that I quoted from earlier, one would recognise that there is a policy of the Barbados Labour Party to borrow foreign currency whenever they want to get involved in a particular project, even though it can be financed in Barbados.

I would like to give you some statistics to prove my point. These statistics relate to the net foreign borrowing between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party. The record will show that in 1976, when the Democratic Labour Party left the Government, they were borrowing on the foreign market at a rate of \$3.82 million per year; by 1986, when the Barbados Labour Party left the Government they were borrowing at the rate of \$58.83 million; when the Democratic Labour Party left Government in 1994, they were borrowing at the rate of \$15.76 million. Would you believe that the Barbados Labour Party, now in Government in 2001, has gone back to their old ways, Sir? They are now again borrowing at a rate of \$48.65 million.

Sir, what is amazing is that it is okay to say that they borrow heavily but it is the Democratic Labour Party who always have to repay these loans. Even though the Democratic Labour Party borrowing to repay the loans...

Asides

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member knows that the Barbados Labour Party Government has repaid several bullet loans, including the Japanese loan that they contracted, Barclays loan and, indeed, had to repay the civil service the money that they took from them.

Mr. D.St. E. KELLMAN: How could repaying the civil service be a foreign loan, Sir?

Asides

Mr. Deputy PRESIDENT: Honourable Member, address the Chair, please.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: On a point of order. I said that we had to even repay the civil servants, from whom they took the money.

Mr. D.St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, for the Honourable Member who has been in this House from 1971, to call the repayments to civil servants a foreign loan, is rather strange, Sir.

Asides

Mr. D.St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, the truth about the bullet loans is that only one of those loans was contracted by the Democratic Labour Party. There were three Japanese loans and I have spoken on many occasions in this House about those loans. Two of those loans were contracted by the Barbados Labour Party and the late Excellent Errol Barrow warned Dr. Haynes not to pick up the loan that was contracted by the Barbados Labour Party because they already had a loan. Sir, for the Honourable Member for Christ Church West to give this Honourable House the impression that the Democratic Labour Party borrowed more bullet loans than the Barbados Labour Party, then the Honourable Member has to be misleading this House.

I beg the Honourable Member to respect the Rules of this House and to withdraw the remarks.

Asides

Mr. Deputy PRESIDENT: Could you address the Chair?

Mr. D.St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, there is a political history about the Barbados Labour Party borrowing foreign loans.

Asides

Mr. D.St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I have spoken on many occasions in this Parliament about borrowing on the international market.

Sir, what is also interesting is that when one makes an analysis about the borrowing on the local market one would recognise that up to 1976, when the Democratic Labour Party held office, they were borrowing at a rate of \$131.73 million for a year, on the local market, that is net borrowing. The Barbados Labour Party reduced it to \$103.73 million, I am speaking about the local borrowing. Sir, by 1994 the Democratic Labour Party pushed it up to \$148.86 million but the Barbados Labour Party reduced it. Sir, this means that from this analysis, the Democratic Labour Party has always been a Party that has always looked at the productive sector to produce the amount of growth to match its local borrowing. The Barbados Labour Party has never been able to generate enough growth to allow real output to earn enough foreign exchange to reduce the debt of this country.

Sir, that is why whenever I hear the Barbados Labour Party bragging about foreign reserves, I always ask one question. Can you please tell me the amount of money borrowed overseas? Our foreign reserves must be matched by the amount of money borrowed from overseas. Sir, when you have to finance a \$40 million project and you have to treat it as a foreign loan, a story is being told and I would not like to repeat the story. One would expect the Honourable Member from St. Philip South to tell this Honourable House why this story is being told to the people of Barbados.

Sir, they cannot even find \$40 million on the local market to build concrete roads. One would expect that if the clinker is from Clinketts, the people of St. Lucy have their fair share of the project. I am having my doubts about this road project and the fairness of this road project. I do have a problem with Rural Development Commission as to how they administer this road project. I listened carefully to the Minister this morning when he said that he has personal control of this particular project.

Sir, it is rather interesting that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South - a gentleman whom I respect very much, a junior Minister of Government, sitting next to a senior Minister of Government, who has been in the Party much longer than himself, and also sitting next to the Honourable Member for St. George North - the junior Member said that he has taken full control.

Let me explain what I am saying.

Asides

12:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: The senior Member and Honourable Member for St. George North, Minister of Housing and Lands, Sir, could not take control of the Committee, even though he is the senior Member but the Honourable Member for St. Philip South took control and went on to behave as if the particular allocation was all his.

What we have to fear in this House, Sir, and I am seeing too much of it, is that in the housing programme, the Honourable Member for St. George North is taking control but beside him, according to the words from the lips of the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, that all roads to be constructed are in St. Philip South but the Honourable Member for St. Philip North must suffer. I am asking for fairness, Sir, you know I have always asked for fairness. Not one road was mentioned in St. Philip North, all the roads are in St. Philip South.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I do not like to interrupt Honourable Members on the other side but when the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is being so ludicrous in what he is saying, I have a duty to correct the records.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in my discourse this morning, I in no way gave the impression that I was solely responsible for the allocation of the funds or the choice of the roads. I at no point mentioned any road which is to be done in my constituency that is included in the list for the concrete road programme, on either the master list, that is, the general list, or the specific list, that is, the one we are working with, in phase one.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have seen a tender notice in the newspaper a couple of weeks ago...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have made your point of order.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: ...and he knows, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the roads were chosen from all the constituencies. As a matter of fact, it is my understanding that the road in St. Lucy will be done first.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, proceed.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was a rather interesting point made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and I am taking him at his word. He said, Sir, that he was not speaking about concrete roads, he was speaking about other roads. That is the point taken, right?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Honourable Member considers himself so good that he can name the roads done by Rural Development Commission using asphalt, what do you think he would do with concrete?

I can only go by the example laid by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, Sir. He said that the black pudding woman who is on a different road from the road the bodywork repair man is on...

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I never said that. The lady who makes the black pudding and souse and the autobody repair man, they both live on the same road and that is what I said.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, now, we are getting the truth in this debate. You have to be very careful because the Honourable Member for St. Philip South was giving the impression that everybody in St. Philip South is now being treated so well, under the Barbados Labour Party, no one would have thought that the black pudding woman and the body works repair man would have been on...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Get on? I am getting on by putting something on you.

Sir, all this getting up and pretending that they are delivering, now you could understand when I say that they are a party of cosmetologists, pretense, outward looks and nothing else in them.

I am saying, Sir, that we have to recognise that this concrete road programme must be a programme of fairness. I honestly believe that the officials at the Rural Development Commission believe in fairness. I would like to get a commitment from the Minister that he believes in the same policy as his officials at the Rural Development Commission and, as he did with street lighting and as he is about to do with house repairs, I want to hear the same policy as it relates to roads.

If I have to judge the Honourable Member for St. Philip South based on roads, I would have to say that he is not fair. Up until now, I have not received a single road in my constituency, whether asphalt or concrete.

I cannot say the same thing about house repairs. I will not fault him on that because he has always responded well to my requests about street lights and house repairs, et cetera. I cannot fault him on that but I want to hear the same when it comes to the issue of roads.

Since 1994, Sir, I have not been able to brag about one road, whether concrete or asphalt.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, they cannot say they do not know the roads to be done because St. Lucy happens to be that constituency with the most roads to be done and I challenge anybody in here.

I once said in this House, Sir, that if any Government wants to truly develop rural Barbados they must understand that a road is not just a road. A road must be seen as true development and we cannot only deal with allocating or building roads where people live. We must also put roads where people do not live in order to encourage people to come and live in those areas and help to develop those areas.

I said, Sir, I do not know of any place where you could put a road where there are houses and no land for available house spots, when you can impact the same way, Sir, where you put a road where there are

no houses but land to develop house spots.

One would have thought, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would recognise that a place like St. Lucy has the capacity to improve the outlook on rural development and there is no doubt that if there is one constituency in Barbados where one can have a double or triple effect, it is when you construct a road in a place like St. Lucy because you are going to see improvement in the housing stock, improvement in the business acumen and the development businesses.

We have to recognise that rural development cannot just be seen as just a road anymore. It is more than that and I have been trying to preach to this House to show them the importance of a road to the development of the masses of people in Barbados, and the only time I am getting the impression that the Government understands it is now that the Honourable Member is putting a couple in his constituency.

Sir, that is why I will continue to make the argument in this House that the Government must understand that there is a link between a road and the development of housing. That is why I will continue to argue that when the Government is compulsorily acquiring land, they must be prepared to adopt a policy of putting in the necessary amenities and then sell back the land at the cost price. Sir, for the simple reason that you must have a policy like that, if you want to develop the masses and allow them to have the opportunity for ownership.

Then, again, how can I, sitting on this side, expect the others on that side to agree with me. One is about empowering the masses which you expect to come from this side. But with a suggestion like that, everybody would look at the total cost and want to know why the Government should spend that money. I hope some day that some enlightened person, like the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, would understand the policy and he would be able to influence his Cabinet to get involved in debates like this in this particular Chamber.

Sir, I have been hearing a lot of talk about a road for St. Lucy. Nobody can 'tokenise' the people of St. Lucy by giving the impression that because they allocate one road for St. Lucy that all the problems will be solved with one road. Let me tell you this. Whether you all want to give us roads in St. Lucy or not, I do not care.

12:40 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

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

I am going to tell you this, Sir. If we do not get our roads, you all will not get any cement because, let me tell you something, we do not use the Bridgetown Port to export the cement, we use the jetty in St. Lucy to export the cement and you all are more dependent on us than we are on you all. If the Honourable Member wants to bring it to that type of debate let us get this straight. We have the necessary infrastructure that we can go without you all. You all need us more than we need you.

Always remember that.

I have said to this House already that we have the Naval Base facility which is a good area for a hotel. We have old North Point which is another good area and we have enough land in St. Lucy that we can have a smaller airport. Remember this, hear. Stop playing with the people of St. Lucy. Always remember that.

Sir, if you watch it you will see that some of the richest people are now living in St. Lucy. So it means that we also have ways and means of generating the capital to finance the project. Remember that, Sir. Why would we need a financial institution in the heart of St. Lucy when the Government has financial institutions in Barbados and borrowing from overseas? We could do likewise.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am not declaring anything. It is for the people to declare what they want. I have already said that to block St. Lucy all we need to do is to get four concrete slabs from the Arawak Cement Plant, which is very much locally made with the cement that is made in St. Lucy, and put them at only four locations. So stop playing with the people of St. Lucy. We will not continue to allow you to abuse us by believing that you can name nine roads, four in St. James, four in St. Peter and one in St. Lucy. I saw it, Sir, and I hope that the Deputy Prime Minister would speak to the Minister on this particular issue. Who do you think you are 'tokenising'? The people of St. Lucy cannot be 'tokenised'. Out of the nine concrete roads, Sir, for three constituencies, one is for St. Lucy and the Honourable Member wants to tell me about the first in St. Lucy.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I do not know why he is doing it but he is trying to mislead this House. The Tender Notice took care of eight roads, not nine and certainly not four roads for St. James North and four roads for St. Peter. The allocation is different to what the Honourable Member is saying. There are eight roads, one is for Doughlin Road in St. James North, one is for Well Road in St. Lucy and six short stretches are for the Mile and a Quarter area in St. Peter. So six are for St. Peter, one each is for St. James North and St. Lucy; eight roads.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I never realised that we do not have a Member of Parliament for St. James North. Where is he? I will have to speak to my friend because being a Coleridge and Parry boy I cannot allow him to join in that ratio.

What the Honourable Member is telling me is that 12.5 per cent of the roads is for St. Lucy, 12.5 per cent is for St. James North and 75 per cent is for St. Peter after they get all the asphalt roads. I congratulate the Member of Parliament for St. Peter because I know that he did not do it on his own so it has to be the Minister's policy. I have no problem with a Member of Parliament putting a case for himself to get 75 per cent of the roads but I am telling you, Sir, that if the Honourable Member for St. James North does not have a problem with that allocation, I have one. I am telling the Honourable Member for St. Philip South now that St. John, St. Joseph, St. George and St. Andrew are in rural Barbados. Even a part of St. James South, as far as I know, and a part of Christ Church is supposed to

be in rural Barbados and St. Philip North and South. So I want to hear a break down of how the allocation would be for a total road programme.

I am not only arguing as the Minister did for his constituency. I am arguing for the total rural areas because I want fairness. I will never get in this House and tell anybody that because the cement comes from St. Lucy that we should get 75 per cent of the roads or all of the roads. What I am saying is that we need to get our fair share and that it should be divided in a fair way because, as I have always said in this House, there is no need for local Government. All that is required is for the necessary ministries to do a fair allocation.

I praised the Honourable Member, the Minister, during the Estimates debate for attempting to be fair but now all of a sudden he has disappointed me. I want the Minister to get back to the policy of the 'Kellman's Law' as it comes to fairness and the allocation of Government funds in the same way you can get the 'Hoyos' Law' as it relates to consumer purchases, et cetera.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I need to make this point. Whether I am in Government or not is not important. The political history of this country must be written that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has been able to make a contribution to this country even though he was never in Government. It is not important whether I am in Government or not. I am here to serve the people and once I have ideas I will continue to lend them to this Parliament. So I do not understand this point about being in Government. Are they telling me that the Barbados Labour Party can only operate when they are in Government? Why do they keep hiding their talent? That is why even when they get into Government they do not use their talents.

I am saying that the concrete road programme in this country must be recognised for what it is. In the initial stage it is going to be very expensive but one must recognise that you do not measure the contribution of anything by the initial cost, it must be measured by its long term effect. That is why I feel it is good to get involved in the concrete road building programme because there are certain roads that one would recognise that you can easily do in concrete and you would not necessarily have to worry about them as you would normally when you are dealing with asphalt roads. I also want to send a warning to Government. We have an example on two roads so far that have been concreted. The road at Fontabelle called the Reef Road which has been there now for over 25 years ...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Of course, it had to be done in the Democratic Labour Party time. That is no problem.

Now, we have the roundabout that has been done lately. The truth is, Sir, that the road at Reef Road is a better example of a concrete road than the roundabout because whereas the road down there was done with four inches of concrete and there are no cracks in it, we have 18 inches up there and there are cracks...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: It is not 18 inches?

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Which part are you disputing? The 18 inches or the cracks. Which one, Sir?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you please address the Chair?

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: If the Honourable Member is disputing what I am saying, he has to get up on a point of order.

Is it the 18 inches of concrete and some cracks, Sir?

Asides.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Yes, he said the one up there in Christ Church. He said so.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member, proceed.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Honourable Member for the City is too smart for herself and sometimes she must lead the lesser folks to get embattled and fight for themselves.

Asides.

12:50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001.

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

Because eighteen inches of concrete is a lot of concrete. If we are going to continue to build roads with eighteen inches of concrete, Sir, it is going to be a very expensive programme. We are not going to be able to cover the number of roads we would expect to cover as originally planned.

Sir, I am saying to the Government that they need to consult with the personnel of Arawak Cement Plant about the required thickness of the amount of concrete to be placed on those roads. As I said

before, Sir, eighteen inches of concrete...

Hon. A. WOOD: On a point of elucidation, Sir. I would just like to inform the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that the Chief Executive Officer of the Arawak Cement Company Limited has attended three planning sessions to date and the company is very much involved in discussions.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, am I to believe that the Honourable Member who just spoke is saying that the Arawak Cement Plant has agreed that all concrete roads will be eighteen inches in thickness? That is my charge, Sir. He got up and he gave an explanation. I want to know if all concrete roads in Barbados will be eighteen inches in thickness because I know that the honourable gentleman from the cement plant will not agree to that. He would understand quite well that his company will not be the beneficiary of anymore contracts after this particular one. Any person would know what would be the consequence of eighteen inches concrete layer going right through Barbados in roads.

Sir, I am saying that we need to find out whether the road is four inches thick and if that is the right measurement, or whether the one that is eighteen inches thick is the right one because the difference is too great. When one looks, Sir.. .

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: On a point of elucidation, Sir. The Honourable Member obviously has to be replied to since he is speaking in general. I know of one road at Flagstaff that has been very well constructed of concrete. It was done very quickly and it is now being used and it does not take heavy traffic as a highway would. There is a road on the top of Flagstaff Hill, which is a beautiful road, and I would like to thank the Urban Development Commission and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central for doing that road. I also have driven through St. Patrick's and I know that the roundabout there which came under a programme was well inspected not only by the local contractor, Mr. Rayside of Rayside Contractors Limited, but by the Ministry and the financiers who were the Inter-American Bank. This is a tremendous improvement to what existed. This is an outstanding example of how to use concrete. But I am now prepared to learn from the Honourable Member. If the Honourable Member could tell us what depth he wants us to have, that would be appreciated. I am trying to ask him, Sir, so that we can follow him and understand his speech to the House. He can tell us in the circumstances, Sir, what is the true position and not lead us down the road.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is amazing is that the Honourable Member got up and told us this. The Honourable Member for the City will tell you, Sir, that I have always been asking for concrete roads in Barbados. I have always had support by the Honourable Member for the City.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I congratulate the Honourable Member for the City for talking about concrete roads 25 years ago and never repeated it after we now have the cement plant.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I want you to tell the Honourable Member that he could not get a cement plant if I did not give you the land.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us get back to the point. Please address the Chair. Move on.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am saying is that we need to know the thickness of the road in Clapham. The point that I am making is so important and we need to know from this House the thickness of the road in Clapham that was so well constructed. Because we know of the one in Reef Road and in the other location so that we can come to a sensible judgment of the importance of the thickness of this whole issue.

Sir, if we are doing concrete roads for the first time, surely we should be guided by the example that we had previously. I am saying that the Reef Road is the example that we have to follow and somebody must tell me, Sir, why we must increase a road by 450 percent. Somebody must tell me that, Sir, to get to the thickness of the new road when four inches were being used previously. Now we are using eighteen and I believe, Sir, that you will agree that we are using the multiplying factor of four point five.

Sir, I am saying that eighteen inches of concrete is a lot of concrete. How many roads can you continue to build with eighteen inches of concrete? Do you know what that reminds me of, Sir? It is like when the Honourable Member for St. George North came to this House to move the housing loan limit from \$75 000 to \$250 000 without recognizing that it would decrease the number of people being able to borrow from Mortgage Finance. The same thing would apply. The number of roads which would be available for people would decrease if you increase the thickness of the concrete. Somebody must convince me, Sir, that there is the need to have eighteen inches of concrete in a road in Barbados. I am not a technical person and I am saying that I cannot allow this argument because the Arawak Cement Plant is in St. Lucy. If we allow eighteen inches of cement to go in every single road soon from now we would not be able to buy cement, because the Arawak Cement people and my people in St. Lucy will have to go home due to the bad management of Government.

Sir, I would hope that the bigger issue would be looked at and not the smaller issue and that you recognize the point that I am making. If four inches can do it, there is no need to have eighteen.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: We will break at this time and come back.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move at this time the House be suspended until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House is in resumed.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: One must also recognise that this concrete road programme is not by accident. An enlightened party like the Democratic Labour Party would not have been talking about having concrete houses. we would have been speaking about the number of roads that we would have constructed.

If one looks back to the 1994 period, one would have recognised that we had already moved from the chattel or wood house to the concrete house. Why I mention that point, Sir, is because I find it rather strange that the Barbados Labour Party would today come to introduce this Resolution using the person that they used to introduce this Resolution. It is clear that it cannot be the policy of the Barbados Labour Party to push concrete roads. It is only by accident and because of the pressure coming from the Democratic Labour Party. If one only looked to see who introduced concrete roads one would recognise there is a conflict between 'concrete' and 'wood'. There is no way that the Barbados Labour Party should have asked the Honourable Member for St. Philip South to introduce this particular Resolution having the Honourable Member for St. George North who is very much a concrete man and who knows how to cement a case.

Fortunately for us, it shows that there is also another difference between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party. They are now moving towards the process of using 18 inches of concrete whereas the Democratic Labour Party used only four which shows, Sir, what it takes us to do, it takes them four and a half times to do. It shows that the Democratic Labour Party can use four inches and can satisfy the wants of the motorists but the Barbados Labour Party would have to take 18 inches to satisfy the needs of the people. They have always misused resources while the Democratic Labour Party has maximised the use of resources. That is why the Democratic Labour Party would have used four inches while the Barbados Labour Party uses eighteen. We know how to be effective in what we do, Sir.

We also have to recognise that in the concrete roads programme there have been a lot of people using concrete as a negative and they give the impression that the cars would not be able to stop if they have to brake. One has to recognise that we need not worry about that particular point, Sir, because where we would use concrete roads, in the roundabouts and short roads and districts, no sensible person should

be using that road to speed on. I do not think that that point should ever be made. One should not expect someone to be going through a district and be travelling at high speeds. The point about the concrete being smooth or the point about wearing your tires should not be a point because one would expect the drivers to display a certain amount of carefulness.

We have to recognise that in order for this concrete roads programme to be properly managed that the utility companies in Barbados must be brought on board right now and they must be told that they must come up with a plan to make sure that there will be no need for them to tamper with the concrete once it has been laid.

As I have mentioned before, Sir, the Barbados Water Authority must recognise that they must now allow anybody who is planning to have a housing development to put in the infrastructure up front. In other words, I do not want to hear about somebody putting in water mains after the road has been constructed. By now, everybody should know where their lots should be and the possible connection should be made before the concrete is poured.

Even though I am hearing on the other side that they know that, I do not expect to see situations that after it has occurred that these things are happening. The cost will be great once you tamper with these roads. I do not want people to use the tampering with the roads as an excuse why we should not have concrete roads, considering where the raw material is coming from. Some people might feel that that is a way to stop St. Lucy from getting the prominence which it has. I want people to understand that it is not about asking for prominence for St. Lucy, the prominence is there already and the point must be made that its representative believes in being in an enlightened party.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: ... He knows that I am here to stay.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we also have to recognise that, as I said earlier, I have a serious problem with the financing of this particular loan. Why I have a particular problem with this is because I do not want anybody to come back later on and tell the people of Barbados that one of the reasons why we are in the economic position we are in is because we had to borrow money to finance a project for the masses of Barbados. I believe the masses would have been much happier if they knew that the amount of money being used now to finance this project was borrowed on the local market. I do not think that the masses would like to know that they have to repay a loan, and also find foreign exchange to repay the loan, when they know full well that they would not have committed the foreign exchange cost in the building of the particular roads. That is my point.

The masses must not be tied to the repayment of any loans with a foreign element in it for the simple reason they would not have done anything to incur the loan and in the foreign element. People must understand that these are things I think through and I recognise the point that has to be made.

We also have to recognise that this road building programme must be seen as a background at a time when the masses of people in Barbados are asking to have the right to land ownership. This programme must be accelerated to make sure that new housing lots are added to the other lots that are out there and that new people be allowed an opportunity to own land in Barbados. I think that any progressive

government would recognise the point and would do everything in its power to recognise the importance of a road.

That is why I said earlier that I was very happy to recognise the point made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip South because, previously, I would have expected only the person from St. George South and the one from St. George South East to understand that particular point but it is clear now that it is expanding and the political education coming from this side from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is now impacting on the Government benches. Housing is not necessarily the key, but land and roads will be the key. The truth is that in Barbados it is very easy now to get a house but it is not easy to get a piece of land to put that house on. You should give people the land. You do not have to worry anymore about the housing aspect of it. If you drive through Barbados you would recognise that there are many houses of wood next to concrete houses and the hardest thing to get rid of now is wood as it relates to housing. Previously, before the Tenancies Act all you had to do is to remove a house and people would remove it to another spot. Now it is not happening.

Another thing that we also have to consider why concrete is better than wood is that since the Tenancies Act has been passed there are now many house fires in Barbados and I want this Parliament to stop and recognise that since the Urban Development (Amendment) Bill has been made in this Parliament that we have seen an increase in the number of house fires and I am listening very well to the officials from the fire service and the Police.

I want to hear a clear message coming from the police and the fire service because somehow I am picking up something that is not being said. My analysis tells me that people are now solving problems using the wrong process. What we might have to do is not only have concrete roads but we might also have to have some more concrete houses so that certain people will not solve their problems by doing certain things in this country. A word to the wise is enough. I want the Government to understand that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy understands quite well what is happening in Barbados because of amendments that were made in this Parliament.

I want you all to understand that I have my ears to the ground and I understand what is going on.

2:10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

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

I have said to this Parliament before that the problem of the masses cannot be the problem for the masses, that it has to be the problem for the Government. The Government must solve the problem of the masses. The Government refused to deal with the problem and every day we are seeing one or two house fires. Every day I come to this Parliament and divulge knowledge which is not accepted and the masses suffer. One would expect the Government to solve the particular problem and not continue to use the poor against the poor. We are creating a civil war where the poor have to take out their frustration against their brother man. I expect corrective measures to be put in place and the same way

we moved from asphalt to concrete roads, we will move from wood to concrete houses.

Government should also make sure it understands its role to provide house spots and that it is not the landlords who should provide house spots because landlords are reacting in the wrong way on the wrong people. I have said that to let the Government understand that they have enough evidence to correct this particular problem.

I hope the Honourable Member for St. George South understands the problem and will speak to these matters because I know he understands exactly what I speak of because he too happens to be a 'ground man'. I think that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East should also understand because I do not think he has leaned too far not to understand what I am speaking of because the drums are beating and he should be listening to the beat of the drums. After hearing him speak at the last house fire, it is clear to me that he understands the importance of concrete and that he has to protect the masses from the masses. If concrete is going to do that, then we have to use concrete not only in road building but also in house building to stop some of these fires.

I have to ask if it is by accident that we are having so many fires and if a piece of legislation can be used to create a fire. This is the first time I know that a piece of legislation can cause a house to get burnt.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: As the Minister of Housing, you should not be questioning me but rather you should be seeking knowledge on things like this. Do not speak to me but speak to the Chief Fire Officer and others who understand what is going on in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope the utility companies understand their responsibilities and understand that even though the road programme is expensive in the initial stage that in the long term it will be the cheapest way of financing road projects in Barbados because of the type of material being used.

Sir, we also hope that the divisiveness in road allocation will also have to stop. The Minister has to understand that he should create a policy of fairness because at the end of the day the total blame will rest on the Minister of Finance. The Minister must understand that all Members of Parliament should be given a fair share of the cake. This does not mean that the Ministry of Public Works should pave the roads from Black Rock to Eagle Hall or that the Ministry of Housing should believe that St. George North should get all the house units, neither should the Minister of Rural Affairs believe that only St. Philip South should get tenantry roads. It must be recognised that they are all Ministers of the Crown. What is even more ridiculous is that you can have one parish with two representatives but they do not believe it is one parish anymore and the parish has been divided in two. As we witness what is happening in St. Philip and St. George we would like to see the day when those things stop.

I hope that people will recognise that even though the cement comes from St. Lucy I do not want all the roads for St. Lucy. I want the roads to be shared throughout Barbados. I expect the Minister to understand that we have more than seventy roads to be constructed in St. Lucy and since 1994 not a single road has been constructed.

I would like to pause and thank the officials at Rural Development Commission for understanding how badly St. Lucy has been treated since 1994 by using some of the reject material to fix three roads in St. Lucy. I welcome the reject material because Rural Development Commission understands how badly we are being treated and at least they tried to do something for the people of St. Lucy. I congratulate the officers for doing their best to try to solve the problems in St. Lucy but I cannot congratulate the Government for doing likewise. If they think they can only give rejects to the people of St. Lucy, they are wrong because St. Lucy is at the top of the map and it is the first thing people see when they come here on a plane and if you create the wrong impression, when people look down from the plane they will think that Barbados is all the same. If you put the infrastructure in St. Lucy, people will think that all is well in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy President, I do not have a problem with the general Resolution but my problem is how we are financing this particular project. We are giving the masses the impression that they can only get roads by borrowing foreign exchange when this is a one hundred percent input from Barbados into the road structure. I do not want to hear anybody telling me that the reason why the foreign debt is so high is because we had to borrow on the foreign market and the masses of people of Barbados will be blamed for something they have not incurred.

2:20 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: There are foreign companies coming to Barbados that would impact more on the foreign reserves than this road structure. It is very strange that the timing of the two is so close. When the foreign reserve of the country is much lower than it is now, I do not want anyone to blame the concrete roads for the decline in the foreign reserve when, in truth and in fact, the foreign companies might be sending out their profits and reducing the foreign reserves of the country.

Sir, all I have to say on this matter is that I am not happy with the financing. Forty million dollars is too small a figure for us not to be able to raise in this country and it comes at a time when the majority of the \$40 million is being spent on the masses. I do not believe that they should be blamed for the borrowing, neither should they be blamed for having to service the debt from this loan.

Sir, what is also worrying is that this debt also comes with an interest factor. I am told that we have surplus funds in Barbados. Since we have surplus funds in Barbados, those surplus funds should be used to help the pockets of the people of Barbados and not the pockets of those outside of Barbados. When the crop is bountiful, let us maximise the crop and do not let us waste the crop when it is bountiful. We are behaving as if we are in a crisis situation and we are not supposed to be in a crisis situation. The signal is that we are preparing for a rainy day. If we are preparing for a rainy day, speak towards the rainy day and let the whole population understand what we are preparing for, Sir.

I thank you very much but I want some clinker for Clinketts.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very happy to support the Resolution before

the House. Since 1976, when I first came in here, I have been making the case for concrete roads. It pleases me greatly that this administration has seen the wisdom of the concrete road as opposed to other road making methods in Barbados.

It is perfectly true that your capital outlay, at the outset, is larger than when you are building the traditional colas road or even the more recent barber-green surfacing in Barbados but you cannot beat the concrete road. Sir, you pay a little more in the beginning but you do not have to repair it for at least 20 years. If you do not cut it, you do not have to repair it at all.

I never understood, especially since we have a cement plant in Barbados, why this was never given priority by the Ministry of Transport and Works. In fact, in all my years in here, the argument that I heard coming from the Ministry of Transport and Works is that it was too costly up-front but they could never see the economy and low maintenance down the road, when compared to higher cost up-front and I am prepared to accept that.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this is an administration with the long view planning toward a future in Barbados, whether we are governing at that time or not. We are not governing for ourselves, we are governing for the generations, not only present but the ones that would follow. I am prepared to trust the judgement of the Minister of Finance of this country.

Sir, this is an administration where we are prepared to spend and, indeed, are spending \$100 million on the port; another \$100 million on the new airport and we have to do that. We must be prepared to spend at least \$250 million to retrofit the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which has given us 40 years of good service. Any building, any equipment, or any factory would need retrofitting after 40 years.

This is an administration that, in respect of major highways in Barbados, is prepared to spend \$100 million. What am I hearing from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy? Is it because there are little tenantry roads, alleys and gaps that the people do not deserve that kind of treatment? This is the Barbados Labour Party administration that started off with land, Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act. The then Opposition found a way to oppose that. We started that in rural Barbados, then we came to urban Barbados. We were preoccupied with housing. The people themselves determine these priorities, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, the next natural priority would have to be the roads. Sir, nobody wants to be living in a nice house, on land that they now own, after 15 generations, coming out, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip North has said, with two pairs of shoes. Sir, not in today's world, not in today's Barbados.

I was never going to stand for it in the City of Bridgetown, because even in an earlier administration between 1976—1981, I had some concrete roads put in on a so-called experimental basis.

Asides

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes. In places in town called Santo Domingo Alley, you never heard of it; Dukes Alley, upper and lower . . .

Asides

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Oh yes. Sir, that was an attempt to make the technicians...

Asides

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Do not ask me how I got these things done. After 25 years you will learn how to get these things done, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The point that I am making here is that those were experimental initiatives which were taken hoping that the technicians and the officials in the Ministry of Transport and Works would understand, but we have never had to repair them. I have to thank the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance when he said that, as far as the Urban Development Commission was concerned, concrete roads would have to start in the city because I have been making the case for them from the time I have been in here. I have to tell you, Sir, they are lovely.

Asides

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER: They are lovely. I am planning to walk with the Minister of Social Transformation and I want all of my constituents who live in the gaps and alleys that got fixed, along with the residents of Pond Bottom - when you hear Pond Bottom, by St. Mary's Church wall, you will understand that you are dealing with a bottom. These are people who are walking on roads for the first time; people who have been living out there, before I was born, are now walking on a proper road. I want the photographers; I want the people to come out and stand up on the road and I want all the people of Barbados to understand that 50 years from now, those concrete roads off Spruce Street, King William Street, Pond Bottom and the other concrete roads in Bridgetown will still be in pristine condition.

I am bringing my full support to this Resolution and I think that the Government is right in its policy direction to have given this task to the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission to deal with roads that you cannot properly describe as secondary roads. We glorify them sometimes by calling them subsidiary roads but these are the alleys and the gaps that we all grew up with in Barbados.

We are not yet living in a Barbados with enclaves. We live in a Barbados where big fancy houses are next to little houses; where people who are in the highest income brackets are living cheek by jowl, next door to the people in the lowest income bracket, and that has helped to preserve a certain social balance in this country of which I am proud. It has allowed us to escape some of the social unrest that we have seen in other parts of the Caribbean and, indeed, other parts of the world where people think that they can close themselves off in enclaves and somehow shut out social reality.

I think that it was good judgement. The same way that we can make a major capital programme in respect of larger projects, that equally deserving - and the people who live in the gaps and alleys will tell you, perhaps, even more deserving, as a full proper capital project costing this kind of money - that we can now put an end to a situation in Barbados where people travelling along a rocky gap have nice houses, decent motor cars and have to drive on an unpaved road. It needs to be a thing of the past in a

new era; in a new century in Barbados and I give credit to the Ministry of Finance and the Minister; I give credit to Minister of Agriculture and the officials of the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission and its Minister for bringing this project to implementation at a soon date.

2:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER:

Sir, that did not turn into a five-year or ten-year plan, thank goodness. We are seeing where our tax dollars are going. We are seeing where the Government's programme can get past the planning stage and into execution and implementation, within a reasonable period of time.

I am very happy with what I have seen in the City. I know that Honourable Members who are the beneficiaries, on both sides of this House, of the concrete road building programme, can only speak well of it. Those people who are going to be walking on a road for the first time, are the people that we represent. We are the people who come in here sometimes and, in a rather sanctimonious fashion, like to say that we are so humble and we are so privileged to represent these people and they now see the fruits, so to speak, of the representation. They now will be able to literally walk on, and feel tangibly, the benefit coming from the representation and the confidence that they put in an administration.

I am glad that the Honourable Members on the other side of the House, Sir, are going to be and are, indeed, as we speak, the beneficiaries of this as well. This is not a case where you can be politically partisan. All kinds of people, as I have said, Sir, live cheek by jowl in Barbados. Even within households, you have people on two and three sides of the political fence.

Sir, I have nothing but praise for the programme that is underway. I wish to utter nothing but words of encouragement for its continuation, until it gets to a place where there is no rocky gap in which anybody lives and there is no alley in which anybody lives, which is not sufficiently paved in a manner that will allow easy movement for people. I am not saying that every road has to be looking like the Highway but every road should be passable.

In my profession, Sir, we speak about access to market and to church and everybody should be able to have that kind of access in Barbados, no matter how far in rural Barbados you live or how near in the inner city or urban Barbados that you live.

Sir, as I began, I end by simply saying that I give my support to this and I would like to urge all Honourable Members likewise to give their support.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I am happy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to be alive and to give support to the Resolution before this Chamber today.

Asides.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, at another time I will deal with the comments relative to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy who is alluding to the 'duppy' rumours put out by his side, Sir.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir, by giving the impression that I have put out rumours about the Honourable Member and the Honourable Member must withdraw those remarks.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Please continue.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: All over Barbados, people are speaking about the need for roads. That need generally falls into two broad categories and I want to structure my comments today to speak to both.

In the first instance, there are the types of roads to which I think this particular programme speaks directly, those roads in communities that will seriously and beneficially impact on the quality of life of large numbers of people.

Every parliamentarian in here today has areas in his constituency where, as the Honourable Member for the City said, there are people who were born and have lived all their lives, generations of families, and indeed families, have passed on and do not know what it is like to have the benefit of a road in their community. All their lives they experienced walking with two pairs of shoes. When it starts to get dark and muddy, like it is now that the rains have come in, they are people who live in districts who have motor cars and cannot take their cars near their homes. They have to park some distance away from where they live and walk to their homes because the area is virtually impassable to vehicles.

There are persons who live in fear that if there should be an emergency in the night, where they live is inaccessible to emergency services, whether it is fire or ambulance. So the development of roads within small communities and rural communities will have the impact of immediately improving the quality of life for several people.

We must not underestimate the value and pride of the construction of a road, and the difference that it can make to the appearance of a community and the quality of life that that community enjoys. I am very pleased, therefore, to be able to support it.

Sir, while I am on the topic of the facts and implications of not having roads, I would wish to remind the Chamber, as I look through this particular brief, in respect of how the programme is structured and those areas which are going to benefit, I cannot help but notice that Halls Village which is in St. James South, though not necessarily a rural constituency, is not going to be the beneficiary of such a road programme.

I am concerned that this is a community which suffers some of the worse disadvantages that I just

outlined as existing in some rural communities. Halls Village is an area with perhaps more than four hundred houses and I hope that the Urban Development Commission, even if they are going to give them only asphalt, that they will soon get to the construction of the roads. I have spoken about this every year since I have been a member of Parliament. Every Member on this side, and indeed on that side, has heard me speak about it. It is an area that is ripe for development. It is an area where, as I said, people have to walk with two pairs of shoes, where people live in mud and very terrible conditions, where people's cars cannot get near their homes, and which is totally inaccessible to emergency vehicles of any sort. I just put that in, Sir, because I think that it would be irresponsible of me, as the representative for St. James South, given the fact that it is perhaps the worse road in the constituency.

I have spoken about it consistently since September of 1994 in this Chamber, and in every other official and unofficial gathering, with the powers that were able to affect change. We are still to see development in that area and I am really keen to see it.

I started by making the point that there are two ways in which people are speaking about roads. The other concern which people have about roads ... and I think that the construction of concrete roads in rural constituencies..., and even if that were to spread to other than rural constituencies, it would help alleviate what is the second problem because – given the longevity of the concrete roads and the fact that they do not need frequent maintenance – then it means, or it should mean, that we could have more money in hand to look at a total road development capital programme because that is very much needed in Barbados.

We are at the stage today where we have in Barbados about eighty-two thousand vehicles on the road and that represents a significant growth over the last seven years. The number of motor vehicles in Barbados has nearly doubled in the last seven years.

2:40 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Miss H. E. THOMPSON:

That represents a significant growth over the last seven years because the number of motor vehicles in Barbados has nearly doubled in the last seven years. So with that kind of growth in vehicles the second question comes as to what kind of road development there is going to be. One only has to drive at peak hours in Barbados to feel on the edge of hysteria.

It can take 45 minutes, an hour or an hour and a half to drive the shortest possible distance and at peak hours it is now impossible to estimate how long it will take to get from one point to another in Barbados. It has implications for people getting to school on time, for people getting to work on time, for people rushing to the assistance of a friend and for your whole peace of mind and equilibrium as you sit in traffic inhaling carbon monoxide, fumes from other vehicles, blowing on your horn or having the man behind you blow on you.

In fact, I have seen developing in Barbados evidence of that phenomenon which is known

internationally as 'road rage' because people now become so tense as they sit in their cars waiting to go from one place to another that they become highly irritable. If you are at the traffic light a second after the lights turn everybody is blowing on you and shouting some obscenity and so on. This is all from the tension of having to get some place and get there quickly and not being able to get out of traffic.

People are speeding in areas where they should not be speeding. People are driving on the shoulders of the road to get ahead of the other person. It is really getting completely out of control. Therefore, we have to move to consideration of a significant road development programme for Barbados. What roads are we going to develop in communities? What industrial access roads will now be developed? What other forms of public transportation are we going to use? People have used bridges in international communities. There is the Brooklyn Bridge, the Manhattan Bridge and the London Bridge. There are bridges that are famous all over the world that can take you quickly from one site to another thereby bypassing traffic.

We must, therefore, give consideration to whether or not we are going to start to use roads with flyovers, whether or not we are going to start to use roads that will link us from one coast to the other, whether it is from the west coast to the south coast or from the west coast to Bridgetown thereby bypassing all the traffic coming up the road, and we have to consider whether we will move to transportation methodologies such as ferrying.

I went to Bequia in 1999 and was fascinated by the fact that they have a form of water taxis there. They behave, Sir, I would have to admit, very much like the ZR drivers but the point is that water taxis exist which can take you anywhere quickly without your having to use the roads. Bequia is very hilly. It is not accessible and flat like Barbados, from one point to another along the coast. So you move literally from one coastal site to another and you get off and then you determine whether you will catch public transportation to go into the village, the community or where you want to go. We might think in terms of having a ferry that moves along the coast perhaps stopping from Speightstown to Holetown, to Bridgetown to perhaps Bay Street and then on to Oistins. So that there are four major stops along that route very much in the way that we have the Oistins Bypass bus which comes out of the west coast and links up with the south coast. We must think in terms of whether or not we are going to have a look at whether trains are viable in Barbados.

The point that I am making is that we really have to start looking now to deal with the issue of transportation and public transport on our roadway system in a far more comprehensive way. Yes, the repairs, the development and the redevelopment of roads within communities are good but the absence of adequate roadway and improper road systems have implications for access to business, access to work, the speed with which business can be done and, in fact, the opening up of infrastructural and other developments.

One appreciates fully the value of a road and the implications to business especially when one looks at what the Spring Garden Highway and the ABC Highway have done for Barbados. We think now of all of the persons who opposed Tom Adams's attempt to build the ABC Highway but the reality is that in today's Barbados we could not function without it. Businesses, whether they are large industrial sites, restaurants, fast food restaurants or office buildings have mushroomed and developed and are continuing to develop all along the Spring Garden Highway which was thought to be overbuilt at the time. Warrens, for instance, has become now a major commercial centre because of the existence of

the Spring Garden Highway and its easy linkages with Bridgetown, with the Airport and so on. So Tom Adams is to be commended, posthumously albeit, for his foresight in respect of that road.

We have to look now and determine what is the next stage of development for Barbados and what kind of road systems we are going to need in place to facilitate that development. Since we are talking about Information Technology (IT) maybe this would be something that would have some linkage with new technologies. The point is, we are almost at saturation point now with vehicles and in terms of the existing road systems and we now have to think in terms of where do we go next.

Sir, having read the brief, I think it is important to make the point that there is a form of cultural behaviour in Barbados in respect of road repairs and road construction that is fascinating. Once a road sign is up saying 'No Access' you can be sure that that means drive through but do not drive at your full speed. If the sign says 'Detour' there are those who, like the market vendor, would ask, 'So where is the tour going?' because they do not think of the detour as being a direction to them. If it says 'Access to Local Businesses Only' you can be sure that there would be somebody who is prepared to drive even on rubble to gain access to the other point. I watch it, Sir, every day because of all the road construction and development that is going on now and see this behaviour and this is important because it would have implications for what would happen when these concrete roads are built. My understanding is that when a concrete road is put down it would take 72 hours before it is cured. That means that people will really have to be restrained from driving on that road. Given the nature of our cultural behaviour, the executing agency and the Rural Development Commission would have to think carefully about what methods they are going to use to ensure that the road surface is protected until such time as it cures because you can be sure that somebody's cow, somebody's black-belly sheep and very many people's motorcars will be driving over that surface before it is cured unless they are restrained. That is something that we need to point out to people. It is something that we are going to have to build into the education programme in respect of what would happen when these concrete roads are under construction.

I think too that it is important to sensitize the public in a major way. Every road construction involves major disruption or dislocation until such time as the project is completed. There are times when we feel, as members of the public, that the executing agencies are not moving sufficiently swiftly, that people are sitting down on the job all day. Whether it is for absence of material, absence of management, absence of organisation, absence of drawing or absence of money you do not know but you do not feel that these projects are effected as speedily as they should and in that way they can be a severe irritant to businesses in the area and to the people who live in the affected areas.

2:50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001.

Continuation of Miss H. E. THOMPSON:

Businesses are inundated with dumps. Sometimes people have to close down and they have to be cleaning all day. It has an impact on people who suffer with asthma and other rhino-tracheal conditions.

You really have to look at how you execute these projects because right now you get the feeling that all over Barbados is being dug up. Wherever you go, there is a detour sign and sometimes you do not know how to get to where you are going. That is possibly because not enough information is being given to the public.

Therefore, I would like to urge the Rural Development Commission, that in executing what is a very worthwhile project, let us not do it in such a way as to cause a major disruption and irritation to businesses and residents in the areas where these projects are going to be carried out. Structure the programmes properly. Give the public a lot of information. Let us have proper signs and wherever possible let us give advance notice when you are planning to move into an area to start your work there.

In this regard, Sir, I would wish to speak to the fact that far too frequently we see a road repaired or resurfaced today and about a month later some agency comes, whether it is private sector - Barbados Light & Power, Cable and Wireless BARTEL - or Government itself, and starts to dig it back up to install new lines or to check something. There must be coordination of all of the services and utilities involved when these roads are put in place. Otherwise there will be cost implications, given the cost of construction of a concrete road viz-à-viz that of an asphalt road. There will also be much more dust and disruption because we know that concrete gives off a lot of dust. Once the roads are made, they dig them up for services which they should put in up front.

Finally, Sir, I would wish to speak to a point which has to do with roads but does not necessarily fall directly under this concrete road project. It is to sign a caution that we need now to start looking to this. I do not know that it is being captured by Government in any of the discussions that I have heard and I do not know if there is any agency which currently has the issue in their contemplation or is gearing up for action.

Sir, it is purported that the West Coast Sewerage Project will soon start. Already, we see on the South Coast that there has been major disruption and that is unavoidable. You are putting in a major system involving perhaps six or seven miles of road with drainage and sewerage systems. It is not possible to do it without some disruption and dislocation. One of the benefits that the South Coast has had which the West Coast will not have is that the South Coast has a number of minor or link roads which take you from the coast to inland Christ Church.

Sir, when the South Coast Project executing agency is working at Changers, for instance, or by Kentucky, you can move up Rockley New Road. You can go through Dayrells Road. You can go up Rendezvous Hill and a number of other gaps such as Harts Gap and St. Matthias Gap that will link you from the coast back to Bridgetown and inland Christ Church onto the ABC Highway and so on.

I wish to point out, Sir, that between Holders Hill and University Drive, probably a distance of two or three miles, there is no link road that opens from the coast into inland St. James. All of the roads along the West Coast in that area are dead ends, cul-de-sacs, closed communities or call them whatever you want. But yet that strip of two miles of road has a large community that in terms of votes it is about 1500 or more. I do not know that I am counting the boxes accurately in terms of households. It probably has in the region of 2000 or more households and several of those households will have two or more vehicles. Then add the fact that you have a lot of supermarkets on that piece of road. You have

restaurants on that stretch. You have several hotels. You have guest houses. You have every manner of business in Barbados located on that stretch of road.

Sir, when the West Coast Sewerage Project starts, this will be interesting to see and it is going to be a major challenge to move people along that road into inland St. James or to link back up to Bridgetown. We know the kind of disruption that will come because we have the South Coast Sewerage Project as an example that cannot be ignored. Therefore, as early as now, the Government must have in its contemplation which of the roads, and the MP has her views, on that coast should be used and opened up as a link into inland St. James and further on to the ABC Highway and to the Spring Garden Highway and Bridgetown. If that is not done, Sir, then the West Coast Sewerage Project will be more of an irritant than the South Coast Sewerage Project has been.

Sir, let me make it clear that I support the West Coast Sewerage Project for the benefit that it will bring to our coastal waters and to the improvement of our quality of life in St. James. But unless the project is executed in a sensitive manner and unless all of the considerations which can impede the progress of the project are taken on-board, then it can and will be a major problem. The kind of up-link road to which I am speaking today, Sir, will not benefit the communities only in the sense of the West Coast Sewerage Project. It is because, Sir, that no such road exists that in the event of a major accident between Holders Hill and University Drive or in the event of a major fire, since, let us assume, that not everybody has natural gas, and there is an explosion or something that will block that road, then we will be creating a major inconvenience for a large number of people.

Therefore, the up-link road can be very helpful in creating access for people who live uphill and who want to come downhill. Right now access is obtained by a number of tracks which have been used by communities over the years. As tracks go, Sir, they are not paved. In the wet season, they are muddy and people slip on them. Nefarious people secrete themselves in the bush or footpaths and they interfere with women. They snatch handbags, tease young girls and they get into activities that nefarious persons get up to, Sir. It really would be for the benefit of all the communities of that area in inland St. James which is substantially large. In inland St. James, I think that we have close to perhaps 3 000 households with the usual multiplication for cars and numbers of people and so on. It would be considerably beneficial to the community of St. James as a whole and to Barbados, because lots of people use the coast road to get access from Speightstown, St. James North and so on into Bridgetown, St. Michael and onto the Spring Garden Highway and so on. Therefore, the benefit of such a road should be considered...

3:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Miss H.E. THOMPSON:

...but I do know such a road is urgently and desperately needed and I think we need to have it done before the West Coast Sewerage Project comes on stream.

I would wish, Sir, again in closing to give support to this very worthy project and urge that the project be executed with minimal disruption and inconvenience, and to hope that since it will also generate quite a lot of jobs that the people of St. James South will get some of them.

Thank you very much.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise first of all to congratulate the Minister on his presentation this morning. I believe that the Urban and Rural Development Commissions, the two agencies which will be executing this project, must be warmly congratulated for the excellent track record which they have built in a very short time. That gives every confidence that my support for this programme will translate into a sense of urgency and efficiency in execution of which we can all be proud.

I want to say, Sir, that this particular project, this concrete roads programme must be seen within the framework of a very assertive, aggressive, large programme of this Barbados Labour Party administration which is attacking all aspects of infrastructural development in Barbados to build the capacity on which the future economy and future society will rest. We recognise that, based on our projections for growth, and based on our projections for what will happen in the various sub-sectors of the economy, based on our projections for what will be happening in the society generally, we need to have the capacity.

Never before, Sir, has so much infrastructural work been undertaken by any administration within a short space of time. We have works ranging from the Bridgetown By-pass road, to allow persons to move from the North of the island to the South of the Island, and the outer ring around Bridgetown. We have other works going on within Bridgetown to improve traffic flows and capacity in the area. We have work going on to improve parking in the Bridgetown area, work in St. Lawrence, work in Speightstown, to improve those town centres. We have the Six Roads to Searles Highway to improve the flow in that southern part of the island that I know so well. We have work going on from Dash Valley to Walkers in St. George to make one of those cross country routes which are well travelled but not known by persons other than the ones who use them - very important connections.

There is the Rock Hall to Crane roadworks going on and then other projects with tremendous infrastructural implications. The South Coast Sewerage Project, stretching from the outer rims of Bridgetown to Oistins; expansion of the Airport; expansion of the sea port. So that this administration, Sir, is manfully attacking the task of building capacity for the future.

I am pleased, Sir, that that focus on the big picture, on the macro project which benefits all people in Barbados and our visitors, has not caused us to lose focus on the continued need to focus on the needs of people in their communities. This concrete roads programme is aimed specifically at ensuring that none are left behind; that all are able to participate.

Sir, we would have been impatient, quite miserable, were we to constrain ourselves with simply doing two or three roads a year here and there. We would not have been able to get to the point where we wanted to get within the time we wanted to get there. Our plan to do at least 150 roads in three years with this BDS\$40 million loan - and that is in addition to the already very aggressive and successful asphalt road programme - will make a significant mark in our drive to ensure that every community has

a paved road as part of its access within a generation. None must be left behind.

Sir, I want to say that this is a pleasure for me to be involved as a Member of Parliament with a constituency which has significant work yet to be done as far as roadworks and other infrastructure are concerned, notwithstanding that in the constituency of Christ Church East there are major installations, roadways going through and major developments. There are also several communities, and these communities are usually tenancies and it has been that the uncertainty and the lack of tenure of persons living there has usually resulted in not much infrastructure being provided - certainly none by the owners of the land - and it is usually left to Government to improve their lot.

Sir, I have personal experience of how roadworks can be used as a catalyst to stabilise and to strengthen communities. The area in which I grew up, Baird's Village in St. George, was one such community, a community which was a tenancy, basically, in which we had combinations of rock and mud as our roadway. There was no security of tenure on the land. Perhaps, luckily for us, it was not a plantation tenancy and the private owners were not particularly keen on getting us off but neither were they keen on selling.

I recall that when in a previous Barbados Labour Party administration, in fact, at the start, that Barbados Labour Party administration, the Honourable Member for St. George South who is still the Honourable Member for St. George South, my good friend and comrade now as he was then, moved swiftly soon after 1976 to put a paved road in the community in which I grew up.

Also, Sir, this Barbados Labour Party administration implemented the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and that not only triggered plantation tenancies, but other private tenancies to decide to sell their land. Sir, you will not recognise that community today compared to what it was before. Immediately on persons being able to have access to paved roads and therefore having no difficulties in getting in and out and also, more particularly, having ownership access to the land, the quality of housing improved. The number of houses improved. The number of businesses in the area also improved and what it meant is that for persons who would otherwise have been motivated to leave their community to go into other communities, that motivation was completely eliminated.

This particular investment of BDS\$40 million to provide 150 roads translates to providing 150 opportunities for stabilising and strengthening communities all across this island of Barbados, providing opportunities for persons to improve their lot in life, some persons in the worst possible condition. For some, it means the opportunity for an ambulance to be able to get to their doors if they are in illness or other distress. For others, it simply means being able to expand their business opportunities.

The Barbados Labour Party's approach to this project is not merely by way of putting in roads to make another project but by way of stabilising and strengthening communities. That is important.

Sir, why I am particularly pleased and proud to support this initiative is because I have at least 21 tenancies in Christ Church East listed in the official records of the Government. The land space that is covered by these tenancies is upwards of 55 acres so that you will understand how tremendously significant this project is to me.

3:10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. R.R. FARLEY:

Sir, I will give an example. Already in those areas where the Rural Development Commission has built roads in the constituency of Christ Church East there has been phenomenal improvement. For example, in Lowthers Hill where road construction is currently on the way with the help of Rural Development Commission, persons living there, who have never been able to have a vehicle come near to their door, not even for leisure or recreation let alone for an emergency purpose, will now have access to their homes. There will be no need to move out and they are now in a position to improve their lot in their location. Lowthers Hill in a few years will be one of the communities of which the residents and all other persons can be proud. I look forward to this project being able to replicate that positive example in these twenty-one tenancies.

Sir, you know this well, but many others do not know that as you proceed up along Enterprise Main Road from Waverley Road to Hopewell, just pass the Sayers Court roundabout, that on the left there is hardly in existence a paved road in any of those tenancies and these good people of Christ Church East will be able to benefit, in no small measure, from the work done by the Barbados Labour Party administration.

Sir, also further inland in Charnocks, even today there are persons who are still suffering the problems of tenantry living which we spoke about before. As has been highlighted some time before, there is a problem with access into one area of Charnocks where a landowner has established a roadway for his tenants and subsequently sold some of the land and proceeded to block the road. The Government, through the Ministry of Housing and Land, is moving with the greatest haste to acquire the road which for the last forty years was the official road but which was never properly conveyed or made the lands of the Crown to secure the right of persons to travel. Through the efforts of the Government, these people will now be put in a position of certainty by way of road of access and, through aggressive programmes such as these, will be brought into a condition of comfort by way of having access to their homes.

Sir, in areas like Pilgrim Place, Wilcox, Providence, Balls Tenantry, Fairview, there are still short stretches of roads which people have to cover with mud and marl in order to get access to their homes.

Sir, this short intervention today is simply to make the point that notwithstanding the essential projects which this administration is pursuing to secure our capacity to handle the economy in the future, that we recognise and take time to ensure that our projects strike at the heart of what matters to our people, where they live and how they live.

We would not have been patient enough to tackle these roads one by one, but set ourselves the ambitious programme of at least one hundred and fifty concrete roads in communities in Barbados over the three-year period, in addition to several asphalt roads which are already in train and which will be executed during that time.

I am very pleased to support this programme on behalf of the people of Christ Church East and I look

forward to the roads in the communities which I have mentioned being more than adequately represented in the work programme of the Rural Development Commission which will administer the programme in my area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is with pleasure that I support this programme which strikes at the heart of living in communities in Barbados.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too would like to lend my support to this debate before this Honourable Chamber. I believe the constituency which I represent will become a beneficiary to this project since it will mean so much to the lives of many people not only in the constituency of St. Michael North West but throughout the length and breadth of Barbados in terms of upward mobility and a better standard of living as far as their community is concerned.

For too long people who live in some communities have had to change two pairs of shoes when it is raining. I am sure that, and I am certain, that situation will be corrected with the building of these roads because there are people who live in these communities who own vehicles but have to walk up the gap to get to their homes. People said it would not be possible to see vehicular traffic moving in and out of Danesbury but I am proud to say that this Government, which I am proud to be part of, has provided a better standard of living for the people of Danesbury by providing them with roads.

There are fifteen roads in my constituency which need to be built so my constituency will become a beneficiary of this project. This project will mean better roads for Barbados and people will have better control of the areas in which they live, in the sense that a lot of people do not have any utilities. There are some places in urban Barbados where there is no water or gas. I am requesting that, before these roads are constructed in these areas, that utilities should be provided.

Quite recently we found in the same constituency of St. Michael North West which I represent

3:20 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: ... there is a very strong demand for natural gas by residents in the constituency which I represent. I would like to know whether a study is to be done before the roads are completed to determine whether natural gas and other services are installed. Some people do not have water but the main focus is, similar to what the Honourable Member for St. James said, that everything can be done before the completion of the roads.

I have a problem with an area in the constituency where residents have requested the installation of natural gas. But, because the roads in that area have been completed, they have to wait a certain number of years before natural gas can be installed. I would like to thank the Ministry of Public Works for providing the barber greene. Sir, since I have experienced a problem at Retreat, Black Rock, I would like to see that the various services are provided along with the road construction.

It is amazing when I look at the Manifestoes of the Opposition Party for the period 1976 - 1994. The Democratic Labour Party said in their Manifestoes that there would be road building, but asphalt roads. This Government must be given credit for providing concrete roads. I heard people refer to the concrete road at Redman Road, Fontabelle. There is also an area at the upper part of Second Avenue, Free Hill, Black Rock. I do not know if it was done on a trial basis. The people who live in that area use water hoses to wash down the road, which seems to me as this is an effort to keep the area clean and also to maintain the road.

Unfortunately, my constituents would benefit only from the second phase of construction. As far as I can see, two of the roads are in the constituency of St. Michael North West. These are Clarkes Gap and Second Avenue, Spring Garden. Those of you who are not familiar with Clarkes Gap, they are some people who have been living in that gap for more than 80 years and some have spent all of their lives in Free Hill. I am proud to say that I have taken the news to the folks of Clarkes Gap, informing them that they would soon be benefiting from this Government's plan to provide concrete roads for them. I am very happy about that, Sir.

There is a similar situation in this area where a road has never been built or looked at. Tonight I can go to those folks at Second Avenue, Spring Garden and give them the assurance that this legislation that has been passed in Parliament will enable them to benefit from the concrete roads which will be built in St. Michael North West. These are the two roads that I have been told that my constituents will benefit from, and I believe the Honourable Minister can correct me if I am going astray or misleading the Honourable House. These two roads are Clarkes Road, Free Hill, Black Rock and Second Avenue, Spring Garden.

Sir, the important aspect is that, for too long, people have been talking about road building in Barbados; people have been promised roads in Barbados; calypsonians made songs about pot holes in the road and calypsonians said several things as far as the road improvements are concerned. Sir, when you look at the road network, under this present Government, you can see that there has been a clear distinction between the two Governments in terms of providing a network of roads for the benefit of the people of Barbados and for future generations.

I have heard people debating the amount of traffic on our roads. I personally do not believe that it is the network of roads in Barbados that is at fault. I felt that a lot of the fault rests on the drivers of vehicles. I am talking experience. They are drivers who travel a particular route on a daily basis and do not use other roads. They are people who travel from St. Philip to Bridgetown who take one route all the time. You find that as a result of this, there is a heavy flow of traffic on a regular basis on those roads.

Sir, a perfect example is the roundabout at Simpsons. Any afternoon at 4 o'clock you will realise that there is a heavy flow of traffic going towards the Bussa roundabout and vice versa. On mornings you will see that there is a heavy flow of traffic going northbound. There are other roads that these motorists can travel to get to their destinations, both in a northerly and a southerly direction.

I do not believe that it is the road network that is really the fault. I think that it is the bad habit of drivers and the drivers' attitude in terms of their choice of roads in Barbados. The drivers do not experiment in order to get to their destinations at times.

Mr. Deputy speaker, there are a lot of areas in St. Michael North West that need to have roads, not only the rebuilding of roads but also new roads, so that people can traverse from point 'A' to point 'B', without having to travel the long route as they now do to reach their destinations. They are people who live at Free Hill Development who have to travel the complete distance around Free Hill to get to the automart or supermarket. There is an area in the Free Hill Development where a road can be cut which would enable, not only the motorists but, the older folks to get to the automart, the supermarket - or whatever destination - a lot faster. Sir, apart from the rebuilding of roads, I would like to see additional roads put into that area. I have only named two areas but there are several other areas where roads are needed.

I would also like to say that this concrete road project would not only enhance certain areas but it will also create employment for a lot of people. In doing so, if it is going to generate employment, one of the things that is extremely important is that there are several youngsters in the communities on the block. I believe that wherever these road building programmes are carried out, that some of the youngsters from within that community should be given some work.

3.30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS:

Sometimes it is hurtful to see the fellows who want to work sitting and watching people from other communities come into their communities to work. Sir, they feel disenchanted and unhappy about it. Sir, we have heard in this Chamber that employment will be generated but I would like to see a situation where people from the surrounding area are given the opportunity to work with that Project.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of St. Michael North West have elected me as a voice for them and I am speaking on their behalf so I have to deal with a little bit of parochial politics at this particular level.

I would also like to establish that there is a lot of unhappiness in terms of the movement of people from Danesbury to Pile Bay and from Pile Bay to Danesbury, and let me explain this particular point. There is an area of land that is owned by the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited and they have just cleared some of that area to be used as a car park. In that area, none of the folks who live in Danesbury go on to Pile Bay, and some who live in Free Hill and Black Rock, who have to go on to Pile Bay, Mr. Deputy Speaker, find it very difficult to get to that point based on the fact that they have to go through a bunch of trees with a little walkway. Sir, sometimes the older folks are frightened because of the situation in Barbados to date. Therefore, some people do not travel that road at night because they have to travel all the way to what is known as 'the Fowl Farm Gas'.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask this Chamber to ask the Minister responsible to inquire of the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited if no more than a cement walkway could be provided for those people so that they will have a better access of getting to their destination.

Asides.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like this matter to go to those people who are responsible. It is all right to build the roads. Yes, we need the roads for the benefit of the vehicular traffic. It is better also to build the roads for the pedestrians but at times there are some pedestrians who have to rely on movement outside of the vehicles and we have to think of those people as well.

I have seen in St. Michael South East that there was a cement walkway built - a very long distance if you are going to carpet it, Mr. Deputy Speaker - but it is a long walkway. I would be very grateful if the folks in that area of Danesbury would be given the privilege, under the same project, of having a nice walkway built, which will enable them to have access to the villages to which they commute on a daily basis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in so stating these points, I do not have to worry whether or not they will be done because I am sure that under this present Government, and under the present Minister who is responsible for this project, that the people of St. Michael North West will become beneficiaries of this exercise.

I would also like to take time, since we are talking of road building to thank the Minister of Public Works for the wonderful stretch of road that has been provided for the residents of Black Rock.

Asides.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: They negotiated and they delivered and, on behalf of the residents of Black Rock, I am thanking the Minister responsible for that stretch of road between Carlton and the Frank Worrell roundabout. Everything they asked for has been provided including their driveways and walkways.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take the opportunity today, in this Honourable Chamber, to ask the Minister to do the same for the areas of Bridge Gap and Carlton. I think he already knows that this is what he will have to do since he has done it on the northern end and I hope he will do it on the southern end.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no other statements to add other than, whatever is to be part of this exercise, I am sure that some will fall towards the people of St. Michael North West.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the length of this debate is a clear indication that this particular project and programme is close to the heart of every representative here in Parliament. I will say, on both sides as well, where some of us are likely to differ, in some cases, that all of us might not enjoy the benefits of the programme in the same manner as the other.

I have to, at this juncture, enter a brief mercy plea on the behalf of the people of St. Michael East because there is a lingering phobia that the people of St. Michael East were well served over a decade ago and there are no roads needed in the constituency.

I said a phobia because there are some Honourable Members who believe that because there is a memory which haunts them from past political history, probably because of a former representative of the constituency's manner of dealing with public business, that all future representatives must be judged by the action of this former representative and, therefore, we have to pay the price of what might be perceived by them as wrongdoings, or an inequitable way of distributing the development of the country in general. That is why I say I have to make a mercy plea. Also, to this general House and to my colleagues on this side, because the perception is untrue although it has been said over and over again, to the extent that it is becoming the reality within the psyche of many and I would like to see a change in this attitude.

At present, I might be in the plan. For, on many occasions, you are in the plans and when the end of the five-year period is completed, you are still in the plan. I want to move from the plan to being a beneficiary of the executing of the plan and that is what I am asking for, Sir.

I believe any genuine intention, especially the genesis of the approach to this concrete road programme, derived from an attempt to transform and uplift the quality of life of the people who live in poor neighbourhoods across Barbados. Most of us were forced into a barefoot culture, not because we want to walk barefoot, but because we had to walk barefoot. We were forced to walk on mud tracks, not because we like mud tracks. It is because we had no choice because those were the only locations available to most of us to construct a house. Therefore, I am not concerned with the focus of whether the financial institution is an overseas institution that is financing this project or not. That is secondary to the point that we are attempting to uplift the quality of life of people all around us. That is how I see this particular programme.

The Asphalt Programme will be complementary to this and I would expect, simultaneously, while we are working on this programme through the two agencies of the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission, that the Ministry of Transport and Works will be doing likewise.

3:40 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Mr. T. A. PRESCOD:

This plea is made not only to the Urban Development Commission (UDC) and the Ministry of Social Transformation, but is made to the Government in general, as well as to the Minister of Public Works and Transport. I am hoping that he would not be guided by the misrepresentation that I am quite well served, and I am making a plea to him on this occasion.

I believe, Sir, that as a result of this effort we would see a general improvement in the quality of life of people because, most of the time, central to the development in individual communities is having roads as the central focus of that development. As soon as you put in roads in a particular community you will see many other utility services coming into play as well. So in general you would see an upliftment in the quality of housing which would come as a result of almost a subconscious inspiration where people will improve the quality of their houses as a result of the improvement of the aesthetics within the community itself. So you will have better roads, better houses, and the general environment would be improved, Sir.

You would not have a situation, which is a traditional one, where as soon as black men - I am not afraid of that - and black women achieve vertical mobility as a consequence of education, they will have to escape the environs in which they live and look for special communities in order to put up a house. They will be able to remain in their community because I believe this is a major flaw in the sociology of black people in Barbados where, as soon as they improved their education and their economic and social conditions improved, they pulled away from the community and the community does not have... All of these things are interrelated. When these people move out of the community, the community becomes weaker. People who ought to be there as models to the community leave the community and then the axis of the community becomes weak and then the whole community begins to 'speed-wobble' and you get a lot of social disorder within the particular community. I strongly believe that, Sir.

I am hoping that in the dark corridors of Flint Hall in St. Michael East, where there are unpaved roads with large rocks protruding, and in areas like Licorish Village, where many people pass on the front road and are unaware that there is a community to the left of them which is experiencing all types of social problems, that they too would be the beneficiaries of this programme. I am hoping that all those in authority who are not deaf and are in possession of the two ears which were given to them by the Almighty, whether they are members of this party or officers of the State in the form of the civil service or statutory bodies, would also understand that the people of St. Michael East are worthy of the benefits of this new programme.

I am sure the Honourable Minister will do his best to ensure that this programme will stretch from St. Michael South East to St. Michael East and throughout the entire St. Michael community. I am sure about that. He is mindful, Sir, and I like to believe that this is the general feeling of the party, that we are indebted to these people who are suffering the disadvantages of poor roads and poor housing. We need to make them feel a sense of dignity and this is a radical attack by this Government on changing conditions for them.

This is going to be executed through the direction of the Ministry of Social Transformation through its department, the Urban Development Commission. I am absolutely sure that the Minister is conscious of this because the Minister himself has experienced conditions similar to those in his constituency and while he was a boy growing up in one of the poorest districts in the community, which is not unlike the Ivy, Licorish Village or Martinique Road. The demographics of the St. Michael areas are similar and have the same commonalities as with the problems in Carrington's Village, in Cats Castle, Farnums Land, Reed Street and parts of Eagle Hall. But Eagle Hall will be well-taken care of because the Minister of Public Works and Transport is responsible for the Eagle Hall area. That is why I said that this is a brief mercy plea.

We are cognisant that these changes have been long overdue. Sir, I was a little concerned that my colleague, whom I have a lot of respect for because of... I will give him the credit of his orientation although his focus is not always correct. I cannot judge whether it is genuine or not but I have respect for his orientation...

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: I have made a distinction between the quality of the two men from the Opposition side, Sir. That he spent a little time saying that it is unfortunate that we have gone on the foreign market to have a loan of \$20 million and he could not see the advantages of it.

As a result of using the cement from the Cement Plant we would be able to sustain, on a long term basis, the labour there; and the employees there have greater assurance. We are not using our own resources in order to do this. There are many advantages and, as long as the terms and conditions are reasonable and the institution is a creditable institution, I believe that point should have taken a secondary role to the importance of the sociological benefits of this contribution to the general development of the poor people in Barbados.

A lot of us who escaped it over the last few years might not know how other people in the different pockets of the various constituencies feel about a road and we might believe that a road is basic but a road is still fundamental to the quality of life for these people. We believe that roads and street lights are not relevant but that is not true. We can only hold this view if we believe that the people are ignorant because every day in the society the very people come to us asking us if they can have a street light placed in the street in which they live, can we improve the road around them or can we put in a walkway so that they would not have to trek through mud on a daily basis. So it is paramount to the general development of the community and there are many other social things that come along.

Empirically, I might not be able to prove it but I believe that the social behaviour changes. A person who has studied social psychology might be a more legitimate source to speak on the subject matter.

3:50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Mr. T. A. PRESCOD:

As a layman, I believe that when the conditions of life and the aesthetics are developed and the environs are more pleasant to the eye, conditions change psychologically and probably many of the things we see happening might not happen. It is not a ghetto environment anymore. It is genuine urbanisation. We are committed to this whole redevelopment programme and this is only a part of the programme. It does not move in isolation from the other forms of development that are going on in the urban and rural communities at this time.

I believe, Sir, that we have a right unequivocally, and almost uncritically in some cases, to assist the Government in the methodology or the equitable way in which this must be handled so that none of us would become victims of nepotism, that all of us would acquire equal status and equal benefit in this Parliament. And nobody must believe, that because somebody has a traditional foundation in a political party, that he must have priority over somebody who comes into the Party late. Even though these things might not be stated, these are things that normally influence people, consciously sometimes and in some cases unconsciously. All of us must be equal in relation to the benefits of all of these exercises.

I am saying, Sir, that I hope in the spirit in which this brief contribution was made that people would understand that I am making a plea. My voice is the collective voice of the people of St. Michael East and I would hope that my plea would be respected and heard and that I would be involved in the benefits of the execution of this programme.

Sir, I want to thank you very much for being patient in listening to me.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am grateful for this intervention. I must say from the outset that I would want to support this Resolution. This Resolution is about redressing one of the greatest pieces of social injustice ever placed in this country, and it is important to note that when we look at social injustice in this country, we talk about land and we talk about lack of road facilities. I am from a constituency that for years had problems of inadequate roads. In fact, I must say up to 1994 the constituency of St. George, and indeed the parish of St. George, had problems in finding and having adequate facilities. I must say too that it was the Barbados Labour Party of 1994, which highlighted the fact that the Party, if it became the Government, would take the construction of roads very seriously. It was this Party that pledged in its manifesto of 1994 to provide adequate road facility in every conceivable constituency. In fact, it was put very high in the ranking of the manifesto.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we believe that adequate roads would lead to adequate shelter, adequate roads would lead to proper lighting, proper development, running water and, of course, to other facilities like the telephone.

We believe that the time has come when Barbadians, especially rural folk, should not for all time walk in mud, walk on undeveloped roads. We believed at the time, and we still believe, that we have to provide an opportunity for rural people to develop themselves. That is one of the reasons why this Government established the two Commissions. We established the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission to redress the economic imbalances which existed at the time and which could sometimes exist.

We saw two Barbadoses, the developed Barbados and the undeveloped Barbados, and it was this

Government that decided from early that we had to redress some of these problems and that is why the Commissions were established to fast-track these things. It is important for us at this juncture to provide adequate funding for roads despite whatever the Opposition will say. I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy recognises that these roads cannot be well developed unless you have proper funding. It takes a lot of money to develop roads and one of the reasons why the Democratic Labour Party was unable to develop proper infrastructure in this country was because they do not believe in borrowing for capital works. That is fundamental. I believe that the Democratic Labour Party is still the same party they were in 1961 as they are today. There is still a divide.

In 1961, when the Barbados Labour Party was borrowing for the Deep Water Harbour, the Democratic Labour Party criticised. The Deep Water Harbour today is a money earner, a well developed deep water harbour. When we borrowed for the Airport, it was criticised. When we borrowed for the Tom Adams Highway, it was criticised. Now, today, we are borrowing for tenantry roads, they criticise.

I am saying that BDS\$40 million, which is US\$20 million, is well spent when it is spent on behalf of the poor people of this country. We have no apology for that. In fact, I must say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is better for us at this time to borrow. A country should borrow when it has money. Who will lend you money when you are broke? Nobody lends a person money when they do not have money. A country can borrow and should go to the capital markets when that country has funds. All countries that are properly run do it. Financial people, persons who have the ability to borrow, do so. Especially when you have a credit rating of AA+, you must borrow. That is important.

I also believe that...

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House in giving the impression that a country should borrow for the sake of borrowing. I do not think that that is the impression that he would like to reflect on his Prime Minister.

4:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not saying that a country should borrow for the sake of borrowing. I am saying that one of the fundamental differences between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party is that we have always borrowed for capital projects dating as far back as 1961 when we borrowed \$26 million to build the Deep Water Harbour. The Democratic Labour Party also borrowed but nobody can see what they borrowed for.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The figures which I produced today on page 67 of the Economic and Financial Statistics from the Central Bank of Barbados prove that the Democratic Labour Party has always borrowed to repay the debt of the Barbados Labour Party. You only have to look at page 67 and have the ability to analyse what is going on and one would recognise why the Democratic Labour Party had

to borrow.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Whether that is so or not, I cannot think of any major project the Democratic Labour Party did in terms of big capital projects in this country. Whenever this Government has the reins of this country, we have borrowed continuously to uplift this country.

I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is proud that we can borrow \$20 million on our credit rating to push forward concrete roads for the poor people whom he always speaks about. He always says that we are taking from the poor to give to the poor but we are borrowing to uplift the poor people of this country.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that the only way the Barbados Labour Party is giving poor people roads is because they have the capacity to borrow and if they could not borrow this loan on the external market they would not have constructed the concrete roads. I would not like that to enter the records, Sir.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not follow the logic that we are not borrowing the money only to prop up poor people. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are borrowing this money to help rural and urban Barbados and to ensure that people who had no roads in the past get roads. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you go through the country, you will see the development which is going on is because of road improvement and the sale of lots. These two things go hand in hand.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that the development which occurs in tenantries happens because of the roads. He is misleading the House because since 1994 there has been no tenantry development in St. Lucy but yet those tenantries have been developed. I would like the Honourable Member to withdraw the remarks.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, St. Lucy has also got its fair share of roads. No other Government before this Government would start a project in the Opposition's constituency. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South decided that the first road would be done in St. Lucy. He is going to start the first concrete road in this programme in the Opposition's constituency. It shows the confidence of a Government when it goes into the Opposition constituency and starts the first road. Sir, a number of roads will be done in St. John and St. Lucy. I understand the Honourable Member for St. Lucy did not ask for Well Road to be done but this road will also be done.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member continues to mislead the House as he does on a weekly basis. Anyone who has any relationship with the Rural Development Commission or Ministry of Public Works will tell you that Well Road is one of the roads about which I spoke to the Rural Development Commission. In case the Government does not know where Well Road is, it is the road that leads to the east, south and north. It goes in one direction to Paynes' house and in another direction to River Bay. The Honourable Member does not know what he is speaking about.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recognise that the road needs fixing and we will fix

it. I also want to compliment the Minister for trying hard to ensure that there is fairness. Since the Honourable Member became Minister responsible for rural development, he said he wanted to spend X amount of dollars in every constituency based on fairness. No road has been fixed in my constituency over the last two years and when you look at other constituencies, there are no roads fixed at all so the Honourable Member is going to be fair and I agree with that.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member continues to mislead this House.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you telling me that I am allowing the Honourable Member to mislead the House all the time. This is the fourth occasion on which you have said so.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not for you to get involved in discussions like this.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are saying that I am allowing the Honourable Member to mislead the House.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Standing Orders of this House allow me....

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am speaking. Could you please sit? Honourable Member for St. George North, please proceed.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I want to compliment the Minister for ensuring that fairness prevails in every constituency. We see this as a priority and within the next five years the twenty-two roads in St. George North will be fixed. The Honourable Prime Minister has also insisted that fairness should prevail throughout Barbados so I am confident that the Minister responsible for rural development will insist that these twenty-two cart roads in my constituency will be fixed.

4:10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, it is important for us to recognise that concrete roads have advantages over the asphalt roads. We hope that the Minister would insist that proper planning be done where the services will be put in along the side of the roads to avoid the digging up of the concrete roads as is now being done. There is a high degree of planning where the water, natural gas, electricity and telephone lines will be situated on the side of the concrete roads. There is an example of a concrete road in Barbados located at Reef Road. This road has been in existence since 1961.

I lived in Toronto, Canada and most of the roads are concrete roads. I believe that there are a lot of advantages for having concrete. Concrete roads are expensive but they are long lasting. We currently spend a lot of money on tenantry roads because we have to repair these roads every five years. Therefore, the concrete road programme should be beneficial to small economies like Barbados, especially when there is a concrete plant in the country using local material.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that if this programme is sustained over the next five years, our future Parliamentarians would not have a need to come to Parliament to discuss roads.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support this Resolution and urge other Honourable Members to do so.

I thank you.

Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to speak in support of the Resolution that is before the Honourable House, where we are having a debate in which the issue is not in dispute. The Honourable Member, from the other side, has expressed fullest support for the programme. He has acknowledged its benefits to the constituents of St. Lucy and the wider Barbadian community. In fact, he has only offered a weak protest, a point relative to the source of funding which I think is immaterial and which I did not feel convinced that the Honourable Member on the other side, who spoke, expressed with much seriousness. Sir, this is not the first time that funding is sought for support of programmes in terms of road development across this country and it would not be the last.

There are a few things which cause certain geographical areas in Barbados, and particularly urban Barbados and the St. Michael's area, to take on a character which seems to suggest that there are two Barbadoses. One of those things is the lack of access to proper road infrastructure and roadway facilities.

I grew up, much of my early life in Station Hill, St. Michael Central, and I spent a lot of time in the Hindsbury Road and Carrington Village area. I passed through the City areas on a daily basis and I see the same things in certain parts of St. Michael West, in Richmond, Thomas Gap, certain parts of Goodland and Westbury Road. Sir, one could easily get the impression that we are quite out of sync with the level of development which is taking place in Barbados, in more general terms.

Sir, I think that such a situation must be corrected. Such circumstances must be addressed and, if I understand Government's socioeconomic development programme to any extent, it seems to me that a vibrant effort is being made to address this on several fronts, with reference to housing, amenities, and certainly with reference to road development in these tenancies and urban areas.

I see this measure in that light and I appreciate the embarkation on this programme of building concrete roads in several areas across the island, especially in the St. Michael area. Reference has been made that the lack of such roads creates serious impediments to persons. Sir, reference was made to people having to walk with two pairs of shoes. These are serious impediments, especially for persons who are aging, persons who are physically challenged in some way. It is a serious impediment not having surfaces which are smooth, level and sure-footed. I think that the removal of such impediments speaks volumes to such people. It tells them that we are not a part of a Barbados that is forgotten. It

says that their well-being is still very important to those who are said to be the planners, movers and shapers of Government; those who are responsible for infrastructure, through various Ministries and agencies.

I also agree with the view that development of road infrastructures, whether they are larger highways, smaller asphalt surface tenantry roads or concrete roads, could easily lend itself to the development of further business opportunities and the opening of other opportunities which are, perhaps, now not possible. Access for emergency vehicles is vital. If you speak with reference to very close situations for housing, as obtained in much of St. Michael West and other parts of urban Barbados, it is the kind of quality housing which is very much a part of the Barbadian life in these communities.

Sir, one needs to recognise that the access for emergency vehicles in the event of fire and other emergencies is a thing of tremendous importance. The proliferation of smaller business opportunities for persons who found themselves in such an infrastructural context is being created by this type of programme.

4:20 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

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

I assess this programme as being very much complementary to the Tenancies Transfer of Title programme. In St. Michael West, we are very much appreciative of the fact that, through the Urban Development Commission, this is being pursued in several of the tenancies across St. Michael West.

St. Michael West has, in fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the largest urban tenantry in Barbados, which is the Garden Land, and that is one hundred and forty lots in that tenantry which, under such a programme, means that ownership is being conveyed to large numbers of persons, with many households being affected by this.

Two weeks ago, I had the privilege of attending a meeting with residents of the Reginald Wickham Tenantry, in the First Avenue, Goodland area, with members of the Urban Development Commission staff for the purpose of informing them of the status with respect to transfer of title for those persons who live in the Reginald Wickham Tenantry. Those persons are very appreciative of the fact that they now have a clear understanding that they can move with haste to this matter of coming into ownership, owning their own lands in this Tenantry.

This is one of the smaller tenancies. We are talking about fifteen lots or fifteen households when compared to one like the Garden Land of one hundred and forty. Whether we are talking about fifteen lots or one hundred and forty lots, we are talking about people coming into ownership and a new experience.

The point I am making, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that I do not think that on the one hand we can take the first step and make it possible for people to own their own properties and own their own lands, have a sense of ownership and empowerment, then on the other hand, not making sure that there is proper

access by way of roads to their properties and premises to enhance the quality of their lives and, certainly, their surroundings. So, Sir, I see that as very much complementary to that.

Sir, I see this programme of complete road development as very much a part of the sound capital works management programme undertaken by the Government since 1994. I do not think that this present administration, either in this term or this last term, could rightly be accused of being loose with respect to their management of infrastructural development and their capital works programme.

I do not think that they can legitimately be accused of using such a programme, for instance, for electioneering purposes. Certainly, this aspect of the economic development of Barbados and the social infrastructural development of Barbados has been carefully managed and I think this administration would take high marks for the sound management of its capital works programme. I see this as but an extension of that.

As I said, whether it is with respect to massive Highways or small asphalt surfaces, the idea of the source of funding being a cause for concern loses any weight which might attach itself to that point when one considers it in that context.

It certainly is part of a wider Road Development Programme and some reference has been made to the fact that the road works, now going on, are proving to be an irritant. Surely, any measure of dislocation can ultimately amount to being an irritant but I think one would have to acknowledge that the roadways of Barbados, for a long time, were in a sad state of disrepair. They had been very short of maintenance for much of the time and, at some point in time in this country, we had to stop to pay attention to the repair and maintenance and, indeed, development, of further road structures, and I see this as being very much a part of that.

In St. Michael West, we are very appreciative of the road development which has already been undertaken at Ward Land and I think that is the first since this Government returned in early 1999. We have now seen the putting in of a totally new road, for the first time. It cost the Government over \$600 000, again through the Urban Development Commission. At Yearwood Land in Bank Hall, these persons who never before in their lives had paved surfaces on which to walk, ride or drive, now have that for the first time.

We have seen similar roads put in for the first time at Belair, just outside the parameter of the St. Leonards School. We have seen a similar road put in on the southern end of the St. Leonards School, from lower Richmond on the southern end of the St. Leonards School. So, Sir, we are appreciative of the fact that some attention is being paid, not only to the repairing of existing roads, but to the actual putting in of new roads for those who, in the past, have not had.

We welcome this programme of road structures based on the method of the use of concrete. We look forward to such infrastructures in certain parts of St. Michael West when our time comes around. We hope our experience will not be that of St. Michael East where you are in the plan and only in the plan. In fact, we hope to be in the works. We confidently look forward that that would be the case.

Sir, in terms of the Government's continuing road programme on the major roadways of Barbados, the work to take place at Westbury Road and Passage Road, the continuation of the work along Black

Rock - Highway I, and the work at Hindsbury Road and Passage Road, which we hear are on schedule, we believe with confidence will soon materialise.

I would like to raise two issues of concern before I sit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and one has to do with this matter of blockage on some of these smaller roads in the urban areas. I have a couple such areas in the Mannings Land area and Peterkin Land area where persons who are given to small auto repair businesses find it necessary to completely block these roadways from easy access to either pedestrian or vehicular traffic. Sir, one continues to worry as to what will happen in the event of an emergency where you have a whole avenue blocked off with bodies of vehicles, vehicles under repair, or bodies just disused and abandoned.

Clearly, there needs to be a policy of enforcement to make sure that these roads are cleared. It continues to be a bit beyond me as to why we cannot seem to get this work done and keep these roads clear. While I call on a policy to enforce that these roads are kept clear and these types of activity not be allowed to impede road access and to present problems of obstruction, at the same time I would think that it should be complemented by a policy of enablement, which would help these small business people to continue with their undertakings. They are doing self-employed endeavours, they are supporting their families with such, in addition to which there are usually, from time to time, one or two youngsters from the street, village or block who are involved in learning, at least the basic elements of such a trade, and I would not want to see these businesses put out of circulation.

I am simply saying we need to enforce a policy where these roads are kept clear but, at the same time, that needs to be complemented with a policy which enables such persons to operate, perhaps in a clearly defined and stipulated area, Sir. And with some assistance from some Government agency, they could acquire such spots to continue their work.

The second point I would like to make before I take my seat, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has to do with the matter of signage as that relates to the roads. I want to speak about the lack of signage in some areas. There are several parts of the St. Michael West area where there are no road signs. In fact, roads without names and, unless you are very familiar with the area, you tend not to know where you are because there are no names given to such roads. The road may, in fact, have a name but there is no sign for John Public to be able to identify such a road.

The other point has to do with misleading signage. I have a couple such areas in my constituency of St. Michael West. First Avenue, Goodland is way west of Second Avenue and in two completely different districts.

4:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

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

If you do not know the Gill's Gap area and you go into it, you will get lost up in there trying to

determine which is first avenue, second avenue, third avenue, fourth avenue or fifth avenue because the signs are misleading and the avenues are not numbered in any seeming order and this can create all kinds of problems. So where there is a lack of signage there is also misleading signage and then there is dangerous signage and this is the one I am most concerned about.

There are several areas like that in the Carrington's Village, Alkins Land and Greaves Land areas. I almost lost my life once in Carrington's Village because of that. Just two weeks ago I almost lost my life in Waterhall Land because of that. I am talking about bad stop signs which are at the exact end of the road and stop signs which are on the line mark, if there is in fact a line mark. You do not see these signs until you come to them. People from St. James passing through Carrington's Village do not know when they are supposed to stop and they are going to kill somebody. People from St. James taking the back roads to avoid the congestion do not know when they are supposed to stop. If you are from Carrington's Village and you are crossing Alkins Road, you know you are supposed to stop at the Quakers Road junction. If you are from St. James or St. Peter, you do not know that and there have been many accidents there. This is a very serious situation in some of these villages and I would like to call attention to it as we debate this matter of roads.

That is my contribution, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to support this Resolution on the concrete roads for Barbados by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to just make a short quotation from the National Highway Institute which was done in 1990 and it says:

"The first task for transportation is to maintain the assets that we have. If roads and bridges, ports and other transportation facilities are not kept in sound condition they cannot support the level of service they are designed to handle. That means that the performance of the system declines, safe operating speed drops, travel time rises, accidents increase and add further delays. The longer the maintenance is deferred the higher the eventual cost of restoration will be. Over a long term, essential transportation facilities must be maintained on a continuing timely basis".

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the road network of Barbados has been built up over the last 360 odd years. This road network presently consists of some 1570 kilometres of road. The road network is as follows. We have 374 kilometres of primary roads, 222 kilometres of secondary roads, 658 kilometres of local roads, 316 kilometres of development roads, a total of 1 570 kilometres. These roads can be further developed into construction and types. Of the roads made of hot mix there are some 997 kilometres. Roads with an asphalt service treatment, 552 kilometres. Marl bond roads, which we called tenantry roads, are some 19 kilometres and the concrete roads totalled some 2 kilometres, a total, as I said, of 1 570 kilometres of roads.

A study was done in 1974 on the conditions of the roads in Barbados and it was summarized that approximately 36 per cent of the nation's roads were in good condition, another 23 per cent were in fair condition and the remaining 41 per cent were found to be in poor to very poor conditions. Since this survey was conducted, the traffic in Barbados has grown by some 7 per cent due mainly to the importation of the reconditioned vehicles that are so prevalent on the roads of Barbados today. The

traffic now stands at well over 80 000 such vehicles in Barbados. With the increase in this traffic there has been a serious increase in the distress on Barbados's roads resulting in many potholes in our roads.

What I am trying more or less to base my presentation on is comparing the construction of hot mix roads as it pertains to concrete roads in Barbados. As I said, this Resolution is about the introduction of concrete roads to some 175 roads in Barbados mainly between the rural and the urban areas.

Now, 90 per cent of the tenantry roads in Barbados lies in the rural area. In these areas, these roads are mainly plantation tenancies and in these plantation tenancies some of the roads are very long. For instance, the road at Windsor, St. George is about two miles long while the roads in urban Barbados are of a shorter distance, about some 50 to 100 metres of roads. And a lot of these roads are not owned by plantations but by private landowners. Sometimes you have five and six persons owning the tenantry as against those in the rural area that are mainly owned by the plantations.

Now, I just want to look at the composition of roads when it comes to the surface laying of roads, or what is popularly known as the hot mix. We called it the hot mix asphalt. This is the most common type of material which is used on surfaces in Barbados and maybe throughout the world. In fact, it is generally very effective in providing for the load carrying capacity of vehicles and so on. It has what we call the natural soil at the bottom, then a sub base, then marl, then another base of stone and then the hot mix goes on top and this is how the road surface is laid out on these roads. The asphalt surface treatment consists of two layers of sprayed application of asphalt emulsion form by the embedment of brush rocks. So we have, as I said, the hot mix and then you have the emulsion kind of road. We are introducing, as I said, the component of concrete roads in Barbados.

I would say that traditionally the best use of asphalt surface treatment has been on pavements with lower capacity of vehicles. As I said, the highway is of the first type where we have the natural soil, the sub base, marl, the stone base and the hot mix. The roads in residential areas are roads of the asphalt surface treatment where, as I said, you would not need that kind of base in the road because you are not experiencing that heavy load of vehicles on a daily basis on those roads.

I would now look at the concrete roads. As I said, we are looking at the introduction of such roads for the tenantry areas. Now, one technical person from the Arawak Cement Plant in Barbados mentioned that the highways in Barbados should all be made of concrete but if we look at putting concrete on the highways in Barbados it will be a very, very expensive process. Right now all the services are run in the middle or at the side of the road and, to put concrete on all of these roads, it would mean bringing in all the utilities companies and removing all of these services from the middle of the road and putting them at the side of the road; a very, very costly exercise.

4:40 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

What I am saying is when we are introducing the concrete roads we are catering first to the tenantry roads. These tenantry roads are roads, some of which never had a proper surface but had mud, grass and wood. If we are introducing these concrete roads we will be asking the utility companies, Barbados Water Authority (BWA) mainly, to come in and run their services at the side of the road. We have Cable and Wireless BARTEL, National Petroleum Corporation (NPC) and the Water Authority running their services at the side of the road because the Barbados Light & Power mainly run their services on the poles overhead. BARTEL, NPC and Barbados Water Authority are going for the ground services. These services can be run at the side of the road or if you are going to run one side of the road you go under the road and pull through your material and you are able then to service the ones on the left and the ones that come on the right hand can be serviced from there.

I have heard members, especially the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, mention the running of services in the road. I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North mention that also. That is the way we would be going.

Under the same concrete programme, I heard the member for St. James South mention that the concrete roads will take 72 hours before they are cured, which is a fact. Asphalt roads can be paved today and within a few minutes, ten to fifteen minutes after that, vehicles can go on them. The concrete road itself has a period of time before you can drive on it. That is one of the other differences.

I just want to look at a cost comparison of asphalt versus concrete roads. For the period of January to December, 1999 we spent the sum of \$400 000 on the patching of our roads, the potholes and so, using the hot mix programme whereby you clean out the whole component of the road, bring your tamper, put in the hot mix and tamp it down. Probably about \$195 000 was spent on cold mix, which is chips and asphalt.

Additionally, just over \$3½ million have been spent on overlaying the surfaces through the Ministry during that time. Many of these roads which were overlaid had reached their terminal service life of 20 years. A road has a 20 year span before you resurface the road. After 20 years these roads had shown major signs of failure due to fatigue and age hardening. Patching of the roads was therefore not a viable alternative.

A comparison of construction costs: in the case of asphalt treatment roads, the cost per square metre was \$25; hot mix asphalt roads, the cost per square metre was \$96; and concrete road costs per square metre, at that time, were \$149. I am basing this \$149 on the price that the Ministry paid for putting in place those four concrete roads at Well Gap, Cave Hill. It is very expensive up front.

The use of concrete for road construction, while it is 33 per cent more expensive than hot mix asphalt, typically has a life span of 30 to 40 years. In Barbados, our exposure to this form of road construction has been limited. The earliest known cases of concrete roads were as follows.

The first concrete road was built in the Bayland in the 1950s. The road linking President Kennedy

Drive to Fontabelle, which is known as Redmans Road, was done in the 1960s. In 1986, two roads were done at Everton Main in concrete and at Black Rock facing the 'Mental', Brown's Gap. That was also done in 1986. The four at Well Gap were done in 1999. These were the concrete roads with which we experimented.

It must be noted, however, that although the maintenance of concrete roads does not occur as frequently as asphalt roads this maintenance is generally more costly. Most of these failures occur due to inadequate slab thickness, inadequate joint construction and inadequate placement of reinforcement, failure of the joint seals and improper mix designs. As in the case of flexible pavements, if due attention is paid with respect to design you have a construction life of between 30 to 40 years. As I said, I do believe that if we are looking at these concrete roads over the long term it is worthwhile to apply the concrete road. Up front, the cost is important.

As I mentioned before, we do not have to worry about this new programme of coming and cutting the road for the utility companies to work because, as I said, once the programme is put in place... I know that with the roads that were done under Urban Development Commission, the contractor knew that the services had to be laid at the side of the roads. They are not roads that had any services, just what we call the banjo strings where the Water Authority will run a pipe for a distance up the gap and across the gap. As I said, there is no fear of coming to cut the road again as long as the contractors stick to the programme that we are carrying out.

Although this Paper has not dealt in depth with various models of flexible pavements, if a comparison were to be done on a performance basis, there is no question that concrete roads are superior.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to look at one or two problems that presently exist in Barbados as it pertains to congestion on the roads in Barbados. In our last debate here when we spoke about the seat belts I remember the Honourable Member for St. John dwelt some time on the issue of congestion in Barbados and what the Ministry of Public Works and Transport was doing to try to alleviate this problem with congestion. I want to say that a lot of the congestion in Barbados has to do mainly with the Government's programme for the roads and the programme of the utility companies in Barbados.

What we do in the Ministry is to ask the utility companies every year to give us a breakdown on what their programme would look like on a yearly basis. We then try to coordinate that programme with the Ministry's programme. I get cooperation from many utility companies but I would say that the Water Authority gives us some problems and we get the papers late from them or they change programmes. As I said, we try to coordinate our programme with the programmes of the utility companies and try to work at it.

There is a price to be paid for progress and there is a statement which I always hear my Prime Minister with, that people want to go to heaven but do not want to die. It is a fact. People want progress but every time you go to make progress in this country somebody is complaining about the dust. We started a road in Black Rock and the talk was, "The dust is annoying". One or two business people wanted compensation. Up front, I let the Ministry know that we will not be compensating anybody for any dust problem or any problem whereby they cannot access their business places because of the Government's programme. The Government's programme has to be carried out and we have not set any precedents in the Ministry by paying anybody for loss of profits.

In the Black Rock area, people complained about the dust and when the road was paved between Frank Worrell Roundabout and the Brighton Road I had numerous calls, "Mr. Minister, Mr. Marshall..." or in some cases, "Rommell, we know what we went through but we are happy to have the road done." If people knew how that road was before that road was fixed, how the people in Danesbury had problems. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and myself walked that area before that road was fixed and we saw the kind of problems that existed. When we worked together in the campaign we saw areas where when the rain fell, or if a donkey stood up in the road and just relieved itself, there would be water enough to flood in there. It was so bad.

4:50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

We had a situation where a baby was born in the side street because the ambulance could not get in. We have done work there and the people are happy about it.

People are talking about the ongoing congestion on the Black Rock road and other roads. We are not just paving roads which would take a matter of days. We are moving all the services from the middle of the road and putting them at the sides. Sir, the National Petroleum Corporation, Barbados Light & Power and the Barbados Water Authority are putting box drains on both sides of the road. These box drains hold water from the sides of the roads instead of the water running along the sides of the roads. There will be 1.5 metre sidewalks and the roads are now seven metres wide from the Frank Worrell Roundabout to the end of Brighton wall. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you will now feel safe walking that road. My only complaint is that vehicles are speeding on the roads, because we have a problem with people speeding on our roads.

People are complaining that we are digging up too many roads at one time but we have to coordinate the efforts. We are doing the Black Rock, Welches/Pine, Culloden and Dalkeith roads which are the outer ring. The inner ring consists of President Kennedy Drive, Westbury Road, Passage Road and Country Road right up to Roebuck Street and up to the Globe cinema. All these areas will have the box drains at the side of the road, 1.5 metre sidewalks and seven metre roads.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all the junctions will be improved and widened as is happening at Eagle Hall now. We are putting traffic lights in areas that did not have traffic light before, for instance, at the Fairfield/Black Rock junction.

The Eagle Hall market is also part of the programme and, hopefully, would be opened by the end of June. The entire junction there is also being widened and the craft shop and hairdresser will be moved into the market. We are waiting for the Ministry of Housing to insure the property so that we can move the people into the market and get the junction developed. Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the end of the day it will be a beautiful junction.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the work is being delayed at the Welches corner because the utility services have to be moved. After the services are moved, we will go across to the Dame Nita Roundabout and Culloden road. Ideally, we should make Culloden a four-lane road because there is a tremendous amount of traffic on this road but there is a constraint of time. We are not simply repaving the road but we are doing major reconstruction of the road which is a four-year programme of the Bridgetown bypass road.

In addition to the above, the Ministry is concentrating on its five-year programme. We voted \$5 million this year to do work on the major highways of Barbados and will be doing eighteen roads in this programme. It looks as though the roads are congested but we are doing the work for the progress of Barbados. This country depends heavily on foreign exchange from tourism and the offshore sector, and the international organisations all have headquarters in Barbados so we must have a good road structure for vehicles.

We are just asking people to bear with us. Never before was there this amount of road construction in this country. This Government thinks about people. As the Deputy Prime Minister said, a time will come when another Government might take over but we have to think about the people and not about ourselves. We are thinking about the development of this country.

My Ministry is also looking at work on Broad Street. The public complained about Swan Street but they are pleased about Swan Street now that it is finished. I will be discussing Broad Street with the Minister of Tourism and International Transport in due course.

The Swing Bridge also has to be worked on and the Careenage will be dredged. We are also looking at the diversion of traffic through Milk Market and Chapel Street. The Deputy Prime Minister has mentioned to me the possibility of making Kensington New Road a one way street. Only last week I received numerous calls about the ZRs and minibuses using the Kensington New Road indiscriminately because Mason Hall Street is closed. The Deputy Prime Minister and I will have a look at it next week with the view to making it a one way street from the Baxters Road area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport has enough work to last for the next twenty years but we have the interest of the general public at heart and we do not want to create too much congestion.

We will be taking a paper to Parliament soon to look at the question of traffic management in Barbados and whether we should look at 'park-and-ride' which is prevalent in the United States. I will be talking soon with the Minister of Education to discuss the possibility of staggering school hours, and with the Employers Confederation about staggered work hours. We have to make a decision about the amount of traffic on the roads. We are also looking at the possibility of flyovers. The same paper will be looking at the ABC Highway and making it into four lanes between the Bussa Roundabout and the Garfield Sobers Roundabout. It should be the whole of Highway 2A but the Government owns the majority of land between Bussa Roundabout and the Garfield Sobers Roundabout on both sides.

5:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Sir, we are also looking at the possibility of fly-overs. I think that a few years ago a Paper went to Cabinet about fly-overs but I am not sure if the okay was given. However, a Paper will be going to Cabinet for approval of work at the ABC Highway. We are looking at making the area between the Bussa roundabout and the Garfield Sobers roundabout four lanes. Ideally, it should be from Highway 2A right up to the Garfield Sobers roundabout. The Government owns the majority of land on both sides of the road between the Bussa roundabout and the Garfield Sobers roundabout. What we can do, is look at spending the money in those two areas since most of the traffic comes from St. Phillip, Christ Church and St. George and these are the two areas that have the most congestion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, corporate Barbados has an interest in having their logos on road signs. We are looking at international signs throughout Barbados. Some of the signage that we see in Barbados is very poor and we are hoping that we can improve to international standards.

Sir, the Barbados Water Authority has a lot of work to do. If we give them the go-head, they will go. They are several developments in Barbados and the Barbados Water Authority has to get water to the homes and businesses. We have the desalination plant which supplies three million gallons of water per day and it is under utilised because we cannot get the pipes installed underground to take the water to the west coast of this island, which will take some of the pressure off the Monlyneux Reservoir and which would carry more water in a northerly direction. Sir, these are things that we are looking at and hope that the public will bear with us as we continue to develop.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to inform Honourable Members of Barbados that there are 13 depots which service all the constituencies in Barbados. I am asking Members to contact the officers at the respective depots in their constituencies when they have problems in their constituencies. The officers at the depots work very well with Members of Parliament. I know that they are Members who call the depots and get things done. As long as you call the depots' Technicians 1 and 2, they are willing to come out and work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wholeheartedly support the introduction of the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission to manage the building of these concrete works and look forward to my Ministry servicing these roads after they have been handed over by the Urban and Rural Development Commissions and I look forward to working with them.

I thank you very much.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this Resolution. Sir, so far the debate has been very sound and there is not much more left to be said sociologically, philosophically, politically and even scientifically. I heard Honourable Members give reasons why, the pros and cons, why concrete surfaces over asphalt surfaces.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central were ordered

expunged from the record by His Honour the Deputy Speaker.

5:10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Mr. D. T. GILL: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy gave the impression, by way of his speech, that the Concrete Road Project will be using a surface of eighteen inches of concrete in these new roads. Is that clear, Sir, without casting any aspersions, whatsoever, on the Honourable Member for St. Lucy?

Sir, I went on to say that probably, the Honourable Member got mixed up in converting from the metric system to the imperial system but you cannot use the same numbers interchangeably. You know that all of us know that, so 125 mm is the same thing as 12.5 cm and, Sir, that is 5 inches of concrete. And to make matters even worse, when it was said by the same speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, that the road at Reef Road - and I was informed that it was not Reef Road, that was the old name; it is now Redman Drive, or something like that - the thickness of the concrete used there was nothing less than twelve inches, for sure.

It was not 5 inches. So I do not know, Sir, if that is an untruth or otherwise. I have been reliably informed by two engineers, one public and one private, that the concrete thickness of that drive is no less than one foot thick. But, Sir, it seems as if the basic standard of what you will call for tensile stress or strain is 18 inches of mass concrete, but you can cut it down, proportionately. If you cut it down by 25 per cent, therefore, there is a given amount of fibre mesh, which could be incorporated into the aggregate.

Sir, courses in concrete structure are given the world over and there are different techniques of plastics and metals being used. I think the Egyptians in early days actually used their hair, as sites of bonding for structures.

Asides.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Straw, okay.

Sir, if you go back through in archaeological sites, you will see that there were different mixes used in coming up with a strong aggregate. Right here in Barbados we use the cane peelings

Aside.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Yes, bagasse.

Sir, this plan with the specs - I will be willing to make it a document of the House, if you so desire - calls for five inches of concrete and the use of 12 mm bar steel, either that or the appropriate amount of mesh. But I am tired, Sir, of hearing these stories about the thickness of gabions and what the thickness of a gabion could give you. Sir, whether it is eighteen inches, five inches, four inches, 125 mm, those structures will last 20 to 25 years.

We have also heard, coming from the other side about the Urban Development taking away people's land. We have heard under the street light, about depriving people of their real estate and disinheriting persons. One Sunday, Sir, I was at home and I heard that the Urban Development Commission was repainting houses that were worm eaten. Sir, those persons said to me, "Mr. Gill, we have the proof, we have the evidence, come up here now." But I did not fall into the trap.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have not yet decided if I am participating in this debate, but is this a debate about the Urban Development Commission or is it about a \$40 million loan for concrete roads in Barbados?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I was giving the Honourable Member some latitude to see if he was going back to the original subject.

Please proceed.

Mr. D. T. GILL: There are detractors, within and outside of the Chamber. This Resolution, Sir, and the execution of this project is done jointly by the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission. I am showing that one untruth, not necessarily stated by anyone from in here, could send the wrong signal to the public, if reported and if unchecked.

Sir, I have made connection with the same Urban Development Commission in its housing programme, and it is jointly administering asphalt and concrete roads. It would be only a matter of time before the same types of innuendoes would be applied to the construction of the roads.

To date forty-five roads, if you take allotment of roads, contracts, et cetera, have been done by the Urban Development Commission and there have only been eight complaints. Out of those eight complaints, four have been settled.

I said, Sir, like the house which they tried to state was painted over, that when a check was done, it was really the grouch of a contractor who did not get that job and who wanted that job.

Sir, there is also the talk about contractors going off with a mobilisation fee. To date, nothing as such has happened in our Asphalt Programme or any of the road programmes. Only once has such been cited in our Housing Programme and, to the best of my knowledge, the fraud squad has been called in that case. It is reported that the contractor has fled to Guyana.

Sir, no matter what the Urban Development Commission or the Rural Development Commission does, they can do all in their power to carry out the necessary social work, the technical work, all compensations and restorations but they cannot tell another agency how to run their show. Therefore, there comes a point in time that they are held up to the mercies of the Barbados Water Authority (BWA), they are held up to the mercies of the National Petroleum Corporation (NPC), that they are held up to the mercy of the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited (BLPCL). They cannot go and shift around poles for the BLPCL, they cannot do the tunnelling for NPC, they cannot put down the mains for the BWA, they simply have to wait.

5:20 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Mr. D. T. GILL:

At the moment there are two roads under construction and the contractors have done their best but we are now waiting on the Barbados Water Authority because they were supposed to tackle it over the weekend. When last we checked with them on Friday evening the work had come virtually to a standstill, not through a problem of the Commission but as a problem of the Barbados Water Authority; however, great attention has been paid.

Sir, so as not to interrupt or disrupt the surface of the concrete once it is laid, great attention has been, and will be, paid in the plans and in the actual laying to the correct tunnelling and the laying of conduits so that after the surface has been completed the actual fracture of the surface should be minimal, if at all. That is part of the requirements.

Sir, this programme should not be seen in isolation, but it should be seen as working in tandem. The pathways and drainage form part of the road infrastructure also, and they should be seen as working hand in hand with the tenancies programme. The moment you improve one, you have to improve the other. It behooves you to improve the other and I am certain that this is what has gotten under the skin of the detractors to see that this Barbados Labour Party administration is able to deliver a total development package and not a piecemeal package.

Sir, these are some of the steps that either Commission has to take. There are people who would like to convey the impression that you just go in one morning, seize people land, excavate, lay surfaces and come back out, as in true western style. Sir, first of all, you have to identify and address any problems that are likely to arise and you have to seek the cooperation of the landowners for the construction of the roads.

Sir, as I said here before, there have been problems at Holders Hill and you will remember me saying that reports from the other Chamber gave a negative view of the way in which the excavation and the laying of these roads were done at upper Durants, Barkers Road No. 1 and 2, 2nd Avenue Haggatt Hall, as well as Deanes Land, My Lords Hill where landlords had some - note what I say had some - reservations about the project.

Sir, the Urban Development Commission followed the procedures and the Commission did not knowingly or unlawfully encroach on those properties. Sir, there is provision for compensation. As I said, we just do not take the people's real estate or encroach on it without compensating them. Sir, in those cases where it is necessary to have new plots prepared for affected lots, the Urban Development Commission engaged the services of land surveyors because, as you know, the Urban Development Commission will be jointly executing the project with the Rural Development Commission and, in so doing, you have to replace land marks and prepare new plot plans without passing on a cost to any landowner.

Sir, where there is a breach in the law it has occurred with the Commissions and they have sought solutions with the rightful agencies. Sir, again, we do not encroach on people's property without compensating them one way or the other.

Sir, I said that there were eight discrepancies and the Commission has settled four. Of those four, the landowners have concluded amicable agreements and substantial progress is being made in the negotiation through the attorneys-at-law and through direct talks with the landowners. So, Sir, there is nothing to fear if a new road, if a track or if a concrete surface is going to be laid on the property or outside of the property of any person, whether it is rural or urban Barbados, because I am fairly sure that whatever obtains in urban Barbados would obtain in rural Barbados.

Sir, there is just one instance which I would like to address before winding up and that is the one in Dayrells Road where it was stated by a member from the other Chamber that the Urban Development Commission had rent the person's property in twain, one on the left and one on the right and that the person has not been compensated and, now that they have come back to Barbados, their dreams have been dashed. Sir, nothing could be further from the truth. The problem right now is in seeking the adequate compensation for that individual.

Sir, a few weeks ago while watching the late evening news, I saw a shot done of a lady crawling back through a door and that a road had been put right through her house and the only access she had in and out of that house was to jump through the door and then crawl back through the door. Sir, that young lady knew beforehand, and was informed by her representative, that she would be given a new house because, the state the house was in, it could not be touched, let alone move. Anytime you touch it, the whole structure would collapse. So, Sir, these are things which must be addressed and which must not be allowed to go into the public domain unanswered.

I have just been informed here about the Halls Village, St. James Project which will come on stream this year and which will cost \$1 million, or probably in excess of \$1 million. Sir, this programme, as I said, is one which speaks to development, improvement, enhancement and empowerment. We cannot, as we have done for years, focus our attention mainly on the highways and the major roads and forget the minor roads and the tracks.

Sir, it gives me great pleasure to be able this afternoon to lend my voice to this Resolution.

I thank you.

5:30 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a duty as representative of a rural constituency and as Minister of Finance to lend my full support to this Resolution which is intended to be symbolic of the desire of Government to accelerate the programme of poverty eradication, insofar as the existence of abject poverty in this country, at the turn of the new century, is represented in

substandard facilities at the level of communities. It is part of the strategic objectives being sought by this Government that this country should put abject poverty behind it at the earliest possible opportunity in the 21st century. It is totally unacceptable that a country that has attained Barbados' material development should still have in its midst communities without proper paved roads and communities without facilities for recreation or for social and cultural expressions.

Government, therefore, has set very similar objectives to be met. The first is that every established community in Barbados must, as of right, have a paved road at the earliest opportunity in this century. I want to repeat that because our politics for too long seem to be reduced by the treatment of the provision of roads as something in the nature of largesse by politicians. But the citizens of this country have, as a right, access to paved roads. This is true whether those citizens are in St. Peter, St. Lucy, St. James, St. John or wherever else. Every Barbadian has, as of right, access to a paved road in their constituency and every established community in Barbados in the judgment's view has a right to community facilities to allow the citizens of this country to be able to have an opportunity to social and cultural expressions which are essential to life. The fact is that we have come a long way in both of these two particular spheres of social life in this country. Now it requires us to bring a new approach to launch a big push to get over the hump.

In relation to roads, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are a society that has known from time to time the need for the Government to raise foreign loans to build major highways or to undertake substantial maintenance of highways. But there has never been the acceptance by Government to date that it should borrow a substantial sum to build roads in communities. As a result, that essential aspect of our nation building has faltered, if only because the building of community roads has been made dependent upon Government's cash flow position at any one point in time. It is particularly true that by reason of recession, or whatever else, the Government's cash flow has been under difficulty. One of the first projects to suffer has been tenantry roads because there has been no earmarked source of funds to sustain that work.

Sir, it is the wish of this Government that the provision of a road in every community should be undertaken as a sustainable activity with funds deliberately earmarked for the purpose, namely funds borrowed from a source as if the community roads enjoy the same status as a major highway or roads to be maintained by way of World Bank loans.

We have therefore determined, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, in addition to the normal asphalt programme by these two Commissions, that we would supplement these programmes by a \$40 million concrete road programme. This would serve the ideal purpose of enabling us to use more domestic resources to build roads in the communities but also to serve another purpose. It is absolutely true that the level of maintenance by MTW and the closure of subsidiary roads have been sadly lacking and this has left a lot to be desired. All across Barbados there have been, in fact, many roads that have been built in suburban and residential areas by private enterprise and these are in a bad state of disrepair. Recognizing that there tends to be a sense of diffidence to have high levels of maintenance attached to subsidiary roads, the Government has determined that we need to put concrete roads in communities because, although the initial outlay may be large, these roads will be maintenance free and we will not have to go back and spend a lot of money in maintaining them.

Sir, having said that, we have a view of what development is about. It is about lifting the bar of social

and economic accomplishment. It is about mastering the little things that make all the difference in people's lives. In addition to this concrete road programme, Sir, the Government is going to come shortly to Parliament with another request to raise funds to fully capitalize every depot of the Ministry of Public Works so that those depots, at which over 800 Barbadians are now employed, can be fully equipped to be able to maintain all of the little roads in Barbados where the ordinary man and ordinary woman live.

The Ministry of Public Works maintains certain depots employing over 800 people and those depots are not in a position to fully engage the workmen and women - not because they are lazy but, in many instances, because of the lack of a front loader here, a tractor and truck there, they are not working. We have a situation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where depots do good work in weeding the roads and then trucks are not available to remove the stuff and the good work is lost.

The Government, therefore, intends to put these depots in a condition where each of them can be fully functional. I have asked the Ministry of Public Works to give us a list of what is required to fully capitalize the thirteen maintenance depots of the Ministry of Public Works, so that we can have an ongoing programme in this country where the roads in tenancies and residential areas where ordinary people live can enjoy a level of maintenance that is befitting the needs of our people in our country at our level of development.

Sir, I think the day must come in Barbados where roads are taken out of politics in speech, where politicians are no longer judged by how many square feet of roads they pave or do not pave. In the final analysis, this is not in the discretion of politicians. It is about the availability of resources and the extent of the programme available. I want to be still in politics, which means that there is an urgency attached to it, where the public will feel that there is a programme for road construction and road maintenance at the community level which is so clearly articulated and fully supported by resources that the public in general has confidence in that aspect of national life which will be fully discharged.

(5:40 p.m.)

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

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

Those of us who are called to public life and to serve in this Parliament do not have to be judged by whether we succeed in a kind of a bureaucratic lottery, managing to convince a low level official at the Ministry of Public Works to go and weed a piece of road for us here and patch a piece of road for us there as politicians have, over the last forty years, spent a lot of their time engaged. We need to be clear on this. I say this not in any gratuitous sense. But the quality of an M.P.'s time has to be less and less engaged in terms of how he succeeds in the lottery in relation to the distribution of public benefits, because it is not at his discretion, and more in terms of the contribution he makes to policies and to the development of the laws of this land and general management.

We will put in place, Sir, a programme to construct all roads in tenancies as well as a programme, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for continuous maintenance of both the subsidiary roads and the major highways. I say this, Sir, in the presence of all members of the House that there is to be no divide as between

Frontbench and Backbench in this matter. There is to be no divide between Government and Opposition in this matter, Sir. I would like to say that there is no such thing as a St. Peter road because when I go to the St. Lucy and the roads are bad, the car is damaged. This programme is being conceptualised to meet needs and I am saying from the Floor of Parliament that there is to be no divide in allocation as between Front-bench and Back-bench or Government and Opposition, except that I want to make two caveats, Sir.

From the time that I came into politics, the member for the City, the distinguished Deputy Prime Minister, has been urging that we should move to the stage where more of our roads are concrete roads. If there is to be anyone who is to be acknowledged publicly for having us reach this stage where the first substantial - because there have been concrete roads before - serious, concrete road programme is concerned, I think that the accolade truly belongs to the member for the City, and I really hope that the Urban Development Commission will build the first concrete road in the City. She says that they are doing a good job and I commend them.

I also want to say, Sir, that symbolically cement belongs to St. Lucy, and I would strongly support the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, through the Urban Development Commission, in choosing an appropriate road in St. Lucy to start the concrete road programme, and the Honourable Member should pick a road symbolically where we can start it. It symbolizes our wanting to use our natural resources, to use the talent of the men and women in Barbados, to put a basic community facility in place. I urge that St. Lucy, Sir, be at the top of the agenda for us to get on with this project. He did make some statements that I need to correct, Sir.

First of all, the Honourable Member questioned why we are borrowing these funds rather than using the foreign exchange reserves of the Central Bank. But the fact is, we would only be able to use foreign exchange reserves of the Central Bank if we were to go and run up an overdraft to the Central Bank and have it to print money and then the Opposition would accuse us of being wrong for doing precisely what they advised us that we should do. I can only draw on the reserves if we get the money from the Central Bank and I can only get the money from the Central Bank if I run it into overdraft.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has to be fair as to what he wants. He cannot be advising me to go and build these roads by running up an overdraft on the Central Bank. He is experienced enough in this matter - I know you would stop me from talking, Sir - as he should have by his father about 40 years ago...

Aside.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: He ought to have apologised to the House for suggesting that a concrete road programme should be financed by a Central Bank overdraft and the reason is that the capital outlay on these roads will be larger than a road similarly built by an asphalt programme and we do need a dedicated source of funds for it. But the only source that we would not use is an overdraft.

I would shudder to believe that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, who is a shrewd businessman, Sir, and I know it because I go to St. Lucy, would build a house out of an overdraft. He knows that too, but he would want the Government to contemplate carrying out a \$40 million road programme using Central Bank overdraft facility. I am not going to do it. I am not going to give the member for St. Lucy

the unmitigated joy of using his own advice as a whip with which to beat the Government. If I were to use the overdraft and run down the reserves, he would be the first person who would tell us that his prophecies of doom and gloom have fully been realised.

As regards borrowing from Citicorp, I just want to say that I wish that other regional and domestic commercial and other financial institutions would be as assiduous in seeking financial opportunity as Citibank has been. All of the bond issues put out by the Government of Barbados and its agencies have been put out to a competitive market for people to tender and I find it a little bit disgraceful that the commercial banks located in Barbados, and some of them who have relationships with corresponding banks, have never really taken a serious interest in putting in bids for Government bonds when we put them in the market. Even when they have excess liquidity, they do not.

Citibank has been very aggressive in Barbados - and in the rest of the region, I might also add, including Trinidad and Jamaica in particular - in keeping track of instances where Caribbean regional governments put tenders for bonds in the market, and they have been competitive in meeting the needs of the governments. It speaks volumes for the development of our regional financial and stock markets that a regional bank and a regional merchant bank can very often be more competitive than larger international banks, in terms of the interest rates and other terms attached to loans to enable Caribbean governments using competitive market processes to be able to raise markets in the marketplace.

I have to say, Sir, that you very often see officials of Citibank at major debates in this House when Government's borrowing requirements and financial needs are likely to be identified; and I am told that they have been going through the rest of the Caribbean paying careful attention to what respective Caribbean Governments are seeking to do in the market, what their agencies are seeking to do and I say that to make the point that I do not think that a regional financial institution should be condemned because it is seeking to be aggressive and innovative when others are sitting back and wishing to be conservative. I want to make that point, Sir, that I would be glad if some of these bonds were being underwritten by other indigenous financial institutions but they are not aggressive nor innovative. They are not sometimes prepared, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to go into the marketplace and compete with the First Boston and others to meet the needs of governments for the lowest interest rates and the best terms of issues put in the market.

It has to be said - and I am not advertising them, Sir, but - it is a great and pleasing thing to see a financial institution paying attention to what the governments are trying to achieve and deliberately structuring financial instruments to meet those needs of the State and the agencies of the State in the most competitive and sometimes in the most innovative ways.

Sir, the Government of Barbados has done business with Citicorp and Citibank to our mutual advantage. They have underwritten a lot of the bond issues of the sugar industry, a lot of the bond issues of the Transport Board. They have competed for Government of Barbados bonds in the market and have won them, not by any particular favour extended by the Government but, by being the most competitive; and I am saying that to say that, in this instance again, the Government did not go to Citibank and ask for a loan. We invited offers and they have proven to be the most competitive.

I am very pleased that they have recently established a presence in Barbados and I am saying this, not to promote Citibank but, to promote their example to others, who are also flush with liquidity, that now

is the time to be more innovative and aggressive in meeting the needs, not just of the Government and its agencies but, also meeting the needs of the private sector in general.

5:50 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

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

We are here this evening dealing with this bond issue that is being underwritten by Citicorp because of the outlook of that financial institution to Caribbean development. The House should not deprecate it, although we have to take careful note of the extent to which we are borrowing from institutions, but we should use this as an opportunity to tell others that they must get involved.

Sir, these terms are adequate for the purpose. We are borrowing at 2.5% above the US Treasury rate which is as competitive as you can get. There are some times when we have borrowed 4.5% above the US Treasury rate, so 2.5% is very competitive. What this does is provide a source of dedicated financing so that once the concrete road programme starts, it can be sustained without interruption.

The essential difference is that there have been instances in the past where there have been spurts of activity on tenantry roads but the absence of dedicated finance meant that there have been starts and stops in these particular initiatives.

Sir, I just want to say that there will still be an asphalt road programme under the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission. I want to make a point in case the Minister of Public Works and Transport did not make it. The Government has rationalised the relationship between the Urban Development Commission and the Ministry of Public Works. The Ministry of Public Works will no longer be responsible for building tenantry roads. Its focus will be on maintaining highways and subsidiary roads. It is now greatly involved in the highway rehabilitation programme involving thirty-one roads across Barbados but I make the point that the Government is also interested in the deepening of the role of the Ministry of Public Works in maintaining, not only the highways but, all of the subsidiary roads across Barbados. We will soon come to Parliament to fully equip the Ministry of Public Works depots where the hardcore of Barbadian labour is concentrated. People have acquired a bad image of these depots, not because of any fault of their own, but they have not been given the tools to do their work. When we come to Parliament to raise the loan to fully equip them, it will make a difference because there have been many instances where there has been an inability to get the job done because they have not been adequately equipped to do the work.

I want to thank all the public officers and officials of the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development who have contributed to bringing us to this point.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have responsibility for the Cabinet and I want to stress that there must be no divide. This programme is on the basis of need and not on the basis of partisanship. Where people have needs, they must be met. So there is to be no divide. I say to Members on both sides, to the frontbench and the backbench, that where roads are bad they should be fixed.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: The Honourable Member for St. John knows that I have an interest in St. John. The people from St. John and St. Lucy need to have their roads fixed too. Let us, as a Parliament, convince the people of this country that as parliamentarians in the 21st century we can conceive of programmes that will allow us to master the first aspect of development and that we can meet the basic needs of the ordinary man and woman on a sustained basis.

I am obliged to the House.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank all those Honourable Members who spoke during the course of the day's proceeding in support of the Resolution before this Honourable House. All Honourable Members acknowledge the importance of the concrete road programme which we are about to embark on. They also acknowledge that the provision of these roads in the communities will bring multiple benefits to those communities.

I can perhaps summarise by using the terminology of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East that the overriding benefit from the provision of these roads is to be felt in stabilising the communities. These roads can be seen to stabilise the communities in a number of ways. For example, a proper road in a community will provide encouragement for residents who otherwise would want to leave that area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another point to be made here is that the provision of a proper road in a community will lead to capital appreciation for the landowners in that area. It will also lead to improvement in the housing stock. A good road serves as an attraction for persons wanting to come into the area and it also leads to an improvement in the housing condition. Persons will naturally respond to improved road conditions by dropping anchor in that area and, as is customary, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they make the requisite improvement to their living conditions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I made the point earlier that provision of proper roads in small communities also encourages development of small businesses and I cited examples in my earlier presentation relative to my constituency.

One of the other points I would want to make at this juncture is that, in addition to an improvement in the living conditions and increases in the housing stock, we have seen a greater movement of persons into those communities to visit those persons who remain there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all in all, one would appreciate that there will be a marked increase in community activity and an enhancement of the quality of life of all those persons living in such communities.

6:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. Mr. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, efforts like this one that the Government is embarking on hit at the core of representation. We are talking about those who could be considered less fortunate, socially, economically, and culturally, living in such areas. We are talking about a programme that recognises that those types of persons have certain deficiencies in areas that should be addressed, as we are moving forward with advancing this economy into a new century.

Sir, this is at the core of proper representation and I am happy that all Honourable Members of this Honourable House, whether it is on this side or the other side, recognise that any road programme that is directed at the rural community, will result in a transformation of the social landscape in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, our dear Prime Minister, is correct when he said that this administration had reached a level of maturity where we are firm in the belief that a discussion on roads and the allocation of resources for roads should be taken out of the realms of partisan politics. We should reach the stage of maturity in this country where we accept that the provision of a road be treated as a local public good. It should be a basic need which should be met for all communities in the country. Sir, in that light we are not using the piecemeal approach in addressing this problem. The programme that we have structured, at this stage, is one that has to be done, indicating the medium term, and we are not seeking to deal with any stop and start approach in the execution of this programme.

We have set ourselves three years to expend BDS\$40 millions on this programme. The mechanism which will be used to determine which roads are to be done in the three-year period would be based on equity. We do not want this programme to be deemed as one which does not deal with the underlying social and economic needs of the communities. The Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission have been given \$7 million and \$5 million respectively. We have a list of the work which is planned for the rural and urban constituencies. I want to assure Honourable Members of this Honourable House that, once I remain in charge of the Planning Committee and once the thinking on this side of the importance of these roads, there will be a measure of equity built into the choice of these roads.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy was mourning the fact, earlier, that his constituency might not feature prominently in this road programme that is to be executed over the next three years. Sir, of these thirty-four roads which appear on this list, there are no fewer than six constituencies with a single road in the first phase. There is one road in St. Lucy in the first phase which, for all intent and purposes, is expected to be completed during the current financial year. There is one road in St. John, St. James North, St. Michael North East, St. Michael South East and St. Philip North. There are two roads in St. Andrew, St. Thomas, Christ Church West Central, Christ Church East Central, Christ Church East, Christ Church South and St. Philip South.

Sir, nothing can be further from the truth that there is some sinister attempt, on the part of those who are planning this road programme and the Members on this side, to operate in such a way that there is a shrewdness in the distribution of the resources for this programme to a few constituencies. Sir, just as we have started in phase 1 we intend to continue, and the same thing obtains for the constituencies to be serviced by the Urban Development Commission.

I want to put that matter to rest. Sir, it is a fear that is unfounded and as soon as we have disabused the mind of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy or any other Member who may be sitting on this side, behind me, the sooner their minds are disabused of such thinking, the better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to use the next five minutes to address two of the queries raised by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. The Honourable Prime Minister spoke very eloquently on the question of why we are seeking to raise these funds on the international capital market as opposed to using the local financial system.

Asides

Hon. Mr. A. P. WOOD: Sir, before I close, let me reiterate a point which I made earlier. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, and a few other Members, expressed some concern about the planning of the technical aspect of the programme and the need to ensure that the services are relocated in particular areas, so that when the concrete is laid you would not have a problem with the services being trapped under the concrete.

Sir, those of you who have listened to me carefully today, would remember that one of the things that we paid close attention to was engaging representatives of the utility companies at the planning stages. Sir, at every meeting which I have convened with the technical committee, there were representatives from the utility companies. They understand how this work should be coordinated so as to ensure that mechanisms are put in place which will result in as little disruption as possible to the programme once we start construction. We will continue in that vein because it is vitally important that we do such.

Once again, I want to thank all of those contributors to the debate today. I am very glad that this is one programme which, I hope, once construction starts, that it would be taken out of the realm of partisan politics. Sir, we are trying to enhance the quality of life of those persons who are living in rural communities; those persons who are somewhat advanced in age, those who are not so advanced in age but who have had to suffer indignity and hardship resulting from the lack of proper access to their home, not being able to get out to church during periods of heavy rainfall; not being able to have the garbage collectors coming into their area, not being able to have emergency vehicles gain access to their homes.

6.10 p.m.

Tuesday, June 19, 2001

Continuation of Hon. A. P. WOOD:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will have to conclude by saying that it has given me the greatest pleasure to introduce this Resolution to this House on such an important subject and I beg to move that this Resolution be passed a second time.

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

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

On the motions of Hon. A. P. WOOD, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Resolution be read a third time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, that concludes Government's Business for today and I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 26th June at 1100 a.m.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 26th June at 11:00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER, adjourned the House accordingly.

6:15 p.m.