
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, April 16 , 2002

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, April 16 , 2002.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, G.C.M., B.A., Dip.Ed.
(Speaker)
His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.M.
(Cantab.)
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and the Civil Service)
Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House)
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)
Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B.
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)
Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc. (Econ.)
Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)
Mr. G. W. PAYNE, LL.B.
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.) Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of Labour and Social Security)
Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)
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. (Minister of Physical Development and Environment)
Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS
Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.
Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Mr. D. T. GILL, B.Sc.
Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)
Hon. A. P. WOOD, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil., J.P. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)
Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of Industry and International Business)
Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P. (Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Prayers were taken by Rev. Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, April 9, 2002.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, April 9, 2002, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I am commanded to lay the following:

The 10th Actuarial Review of the operation of the Barbados National Insurance Scheme as at December 31, 1999.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of the following Standing Orders for the remainder of today's Sitting: Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44.

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

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

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 49 asked by the Honourable Member for St. John is ready.

ORDER NO. 11 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
VESTING OF CROWN LANDS SITUATED AT
PROBYN STREET IN THE CITY OF
BRIDGETOWN TO THE NATIONAL
CULTURAL FOUNDATION

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution which is before this Honourable House today speaks of the vesting of the Empire Theatre in the National Cultural Foundation and it speaks to an intention of the Government of Barbados to have that property redeveloped. That has been the promise for many decades. Since going back to the 1971 Manifesto, there has been a promise for the restoration of the Empire Theatre as a Theatre for the benefit of all Barbadians.

The reality of the preparation of plans for that transition only started in the late 1990s. We have been able to see today a number of steps taken, specifically, as it relates to an engineering assessment as the structural integrity of the building and cleaning the building in order to determine what can be kept and what cannot be kept.

An agreement was signed with the Government of Cuba in February, 2000 to ensure the redesign for the Empire

Theatre. Cuba has developed a level of world-class expertise in the restoration of buildings such as these and an architect from Cuba, Mr. Nelson Manaro Lazzo, redesigned the Empire Theatre where it is necessary to restore it to its architectural integrity.

I would go behind the facts a little for the benefit of those in the Chamber. In the early 1900s, a decision was taken in Barbados to build a theatre with the original intention to locate it at Queen's Park. However, for reasons unknown to us today the decision was then changed and it was decided to construct that theatre in what was then known as the burnt district of Bridgetown. The site that was ultimately chosen was partly owned by the Government of Barbados and Musson & Company. Musson & Company agreed to give their portion to the Government in exchange for another piece of land elsewhere. It is significant that the successors to Musson & Company still own most of the land in that district.

It is also interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that these negotiations were carried out within the context of the British Theatre Act, which was a piece of legislation passed in 1917. In that context, on August 10, 1917, the land was leased to a company known then as the Barbados Theatre Company for ninety-nine years at five pound sterling per annum.

However, in 1921, as is the case with those who undertake activity in the theatrical sector, difficulties were confronted and the Barbados Theatre Company went into liquidation. The assets were purchased by a Mr. J. H. Wilkinson and the unexpired portion of the lease was transferred to him by the Executive Committee of the Barbados Theatre Company. In 1922, Mr. Wilkinson transferred that lease to a George Ivan Rosenfeld, who reassigned the lease the following year to the Colonial Film Exchange Limited.

The construction of the Empire Theatre by the Colonial Film Company was completed in 1922. In 1931, another transaction took place and the Colonial Film Exchange Company assigned the lease to the British Colonial Film Exchange Limited. In 1933, the British Colonial Film Exchange Limited, with funds borrowed from a Mrs. L. A. Pilgrim, took out a mortgage on the Empire Theatre. The property was then leased to her as security for the loan.

In 1946, when the mortgage debt was paid off, Mr. Timothy Rudolph, representing the British Colonial Film Exchange Limited, applied for the ownership of the property then to be returned to the owners. This process was eventually finalised in June 28, 1951. When Mr. Rudolph died, the lease became vested in a Mr. Joseph Anthony Lablanc of Trinidad, this was apparently pursuant to Mr. Rudolph's Will. Mr. Lablanc sought to sell the property

to a company called Caricom Cinemas Limited but its rights to do this was challenged successfully in the Trinidad law courts.

On September 4, 1986, the Cabinet of Barbados took a decision that steps should be taken to terminate the lease. On January 16, 1987, a Notice was issued for the forfeiture of the lease under Section 167 of the Property Act No. 11, 1979. The ownership of the property was then reverted to the Crown. The Empire Theatre was last used as a Cinema on October 6, 1984 and has been closed since that date.

I believe that very few people in the region are aware that there are only two theatres to be found anywhere in the English-speaking Caribbean, one is the Ward Theatre in Kingston, Jamaica, which is still being used, and the other one is the Empire Theatre in Barbados. The Empire Theatre was built in the form of neo-classical architecture and if restored, will stand as a significant monument in the heritage of the English-speaking Caribbean.

Sir, for years we have heard people speaking about the desire to restore the theatre to, what we are told, its former glory in earlier decades. We believe that it would add, substantially to the cultural goodwill of this nation.

The last major investment in the cultural infrastructure of this country came in the pre-Carifesta years in preparation for the Carifesta in 1981. It is true that at that stage the Government invested substantial sums of money in seeking to upgrade the cultural infrastructural plan to accommodate that Caribbean festival. Indeed, stories are legendary as to what was done and what was not done in the preparation for that festival.

Sir, suffice it to say, there is no one in Barbados who has an appreciation for the Arts, who can doubt the significant impact of that investment on the culture and the national landscape of Barbados over the course of twenty years. The significant range of our skills, in the various artistic disciplines and technical theatre were upgraded.

It is fair to say that the cultural renaissance, which some people in the Caribbean refer, took place in Barbados in the 1990s and owes its genesis to the investment made at that time. Sir, that was also coupled with a very progressive policy which saw the marriage of cultural programming, with the work of community development officers and ensured that persons at the lower end of the society in particular, who would not be able to access many of these skills and training on their own, were capable of so doing.
11.30 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is significant that after some 35 years of Independence, this is our 36th year, we have to stop and take stock as to where we are as a nation. Sir, by all measures,

we have done well in respect of the material prosperity of our nation. Individuals have seen the quality of their lives generally improved, in terms of elimination of poverty from our landscape, in terms of the extent to which people can access basic, social and economic services, as well as the general enhancement of individual wealth across the nation. We have not been assiduous in the extent to which we have tried to plot our spiritual prosperity, or cultural prosperity.

However, in spite of my statement to that effect, there have been improvements. Indeed, the very process of independence sparks the fire for the spirit of nationhood to grow and to flourish among our people, but in a very real sense, it has not been as a result of the systematic and coherent policies agreed upon by all sectors, including Government and civil society, but things that have happened in spite of the absence of the systematic road map to deal with our spiritual and cultural prosperity.

In a sense, we are in the price of that absence of emphasis when we recognise, as I have said in here on many an occasion, that a large part of the Government's recurring expenditure, is now applied to those things that are the consequences of what I call individual behavioural lifestyle choices. Such as HIV/AIDS, crime, drugs, and I am adding road accidents because of the reckless nature that very often accompanies the incidence of accidents. As a Government, or as Governments successively, we have to spend more each year, as a result of the consequences of those kinds of behavioural choices.

Mr. Speaker, I am a firm believer that behaviour is a function of attitudes and attitude is a function of values, in particular the cultural values. One cannot speak about development without speaking about culture. Culture is an all-embracing context within which development takes place. Indeed, it cannot be separated. We have done so to the detriment of various spheres of lives, and we have also come to speak about development only in terms of economic development, not just in Barbados but across the world. We have to a large extent, left out or forgotten that concept of development which embraces, not only economic development, but ultimately, human and social development.

Questions such as, what is the purpose of life, what is the purpose of our existence on this earth, and why and what we do, have all to be related to that ultimate question. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that any attempt to divorce development, is an attempt to begin to dismiss ourselves from reality, and not to recognise that people respond and act on the basis of the cultural values to which they have been exposed. I give but a few short examples.

As I indicated earlier, we have seen the negative consequences of individual behaviour lifestyles. We would

have seen burgeoning expenditure in areas of health care, law and order and general activities within the economy, as they relate to insurance premiums, *et cetera*.

One of the other consequences as to who we are as a people can be found in the kind of cultural profile that we have, such that it determines whether we are people who are prepared to take risks, or people who are averse to the taking of risks.

It is interesting that in the context of today's international economy, one of the characteristics required for us to survive and improve the quality of our lives, is the extent to which we can redefine our economic activity. Also, the extent to which Barbadian players can go into the global market and seek out economic activities, such that they are capable of being able to get a good return on their investment, and to provide a better living for themselves and their families.

One of the things that we have noticed, and we come across it all the time, in respect of how, as a country, we are responding to the challenge of trade liberalisation and how the private sector and civil society are preparing themselves for the challenge of trade liberalisation, and a new economic environment within which they must operate, is the extent to which our people are prepared to take risks, to develop their self-confidence, such that they not only sell their services and goods within the context of this 166 square miles, but that they are prepared to go outside and establish entities to sell services and goods to the rest of the world, the extent to which they are committed to the concept of self, such that they are not intimidated by either the size of the market within which they must now operate, or the extent to which they must develop that self-confidence to know that even if I do not know all, I have the confidence to know that I can do what is necessary, by not only my own knowledge but my capacity to ask, and to buy in when the need arises.

In a very real sense, our ability to survive as a nation in the next twenty years, will depend on the extent to which Barbadians, both as individuals as well as companies, accept the responsibility that is being thrust upon them, to move further afield beyond the boundaries of this society, and are able to sell their goods and services to people who are not known to them, but in circumstance where there is a clear demand for those goods and services.

Sir, I can translate it down to its most minute example, which is if I do not feel comfortable, in the context of my village to go outside and talk to my neighbour, I cannot advance a relationship between myself and my neighbour. Therefore, the concept of self-confidence of a citizen, is integrally intertwined within the extent to which this nation can be successful in its fight to bring about a sustainable form of economic, social and cultural development.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, if you divorce development from the cultural context within which it takes place, then you are on a path of disaster. I would give you another example. In the past year or two, we have brought legislation to this House to reform and restructure our capital markets. As part of our economic development, we are trying to establish the ability to have strong capital markets that are capable of providing a fillip to economic development.

Those capital markets, in large respect, have to exist in the cultural context within which they are found. Traditionally, Barbadians have not been trusting enough to invest their money in other entities, largely because of the cultural, social and historical context within which the society has evolved.

11.40 a.m.

The Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in a previous incarnation has written significantly on the concept of trust and how it affects the development of the indigenous and embryonic capital markets because unless you take into account the factor as to whether people are likely to trust one another or not you would not understand why there has not been the significant development as we would have liked in respect of our securities listings over the course of the last decade or so.

Mr. Speaker, when I attended the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) Board of Governors meetings in St. Lucia last year, a paper was presented by a noted Trinidadian economist which spoke to understanding the sociology of our economic relations particularly within the context of the micro-economic matters. All he was really saying is that if you do not understand the people that you are dealing with, you cannot make assumptions as to their behaviour but very often, economics is about the making of assumptions as to a person's behaviour.

Mr. Speaker, all I am trying to do is to locate this debate about our cultural development in the context of our overall national development. Anyone who believes that the Ministry of Culture or the Government cultural programme is simply about the arts does not understand the process of nation building or the process of fostering development among our people.

Mr. Speaker, the business of the arts and the practise of the arts are only some of the strategies used in the overall enhancement of cultural development, in the overall enhancement of the quality of life of our people and in the overall building of self-esteem and building of confidence that are so necessary if we are to pursue other areas in our national development particularly in our economic development as well as to eschew the negative consequences that we have seen in aspects of our social development.

Mr. Speaker, one must come to the conclusion that in the last decade, more so than any other, we have been trying to put structures in place to control the consequences of three decades of foreign cultural penetration in the form of information, whether through television or through tourism and the movement of people as is necessary for our economic activity which brought changes to the profile of our cultural values.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we have not done sufficient to counter those influences. I do not believe that we can cut ourselves off from the rest of the world. That is out of the question. There will continue to be movement of information as well as movement of people within these shores but we need to route our people through the values and the national identity instilled in them such that they can be exposed to other cultural influences without altering fundamentally who they are as a people.

I would like to believe that most of us feel this way and is testimony that can happen. I would like to believe that I can be exposed to any culture from any part of the world but it should not change who I am as a person, what I believe in, what I stand for or my sense of national identity. Therefore, we should be able to develop programmes across the nation, not just as a Government but through civil society, the church, the private sector and all aspects and areas of influence to route our people to develop that innate sense of self-confidence which must be the ambition of not only this Government but every right thinking Barbadian.

Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility through the family, the church, the educational system, the sports and cultural clubs and through the Government in its programming, whether it be in agriculture in terms of promoting what is indigenous to us or whether it be in tourism, to promote who we are as a people because at the end of the day that is what will distinguish us from another destination. Other destinations also have sun, sea, sand and hotels but who we are as a people, is the strongest asset we have within the context of our tourism product.

In respect of our laws, understanding the extent to which the laws have both been an instrument of oppression as well as an instrument of empowerment, in respect of the building of national identity and in the liberation of our people and their spirits, I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the challenge for us in the early part of the 21st century is the repositioning of our concept of development such that – by encompassing in this economic, social and cultural development – those programmes and policies which we pursue, either as governments or civil society, are simply designed to empower and to lift up not only the Barbadian individual but the Barbadian spirit such that it can be tolerant, creative and it can interact with any force or influence from any part of the world without diluting the essence of who we are as a people.

Mr. Speaker, those views would lead to tensions because you cannot fully understand who you are by divorcing yourself from your historical realities or your current realities. Invariably, if we were already who we wanted to be then there would be no issue, but because there is an issue, it means that there are tensions and our test of maturation must be that which can allow us to be judged by the extent to which we can engage in constructive dialogue for the development of this society and the attainment of those goals, without seeing the kinds of dislocation and exclusion that we see coming across other societies.

There are some who feel that this is all airy-fairy and nebulous and has nothing at all to do with Government but they are so wrong, Mr. Speaker, because this is the essence of what we are all about as a people in terms of trying to reposition ourselves and trying to lay it to a stage to the ultimate definition of what 'Barbadianess' means to us. If we can understand that, then we can better understand how we can translate it into success for our social, economic and political endeavours as well as the strict perspective of the arts as opposed to culture. Whenever I speak, I bring the clear division between culture as the context within which all development takes place and the arts as those things which reflect the creative expression of our people.

The Empire Theatre is intended to house the results of the creative expressions of our people and people from elsewhere because I do not support a form of cultural jingoism that our culture is the only culture that Barbadians should be exposed to or that we should so isolate ourselves and so promote ourselves that we forget that we are living in a world where tolerance more than anything else is required of us in this early part of the 21st century.

The challenges that the global society face lie now not so much in the differences in political ideology but in the religious and cultural differences of people. The extent to which you can interact with other persons, respect their differences and build on the commonalities is the test for all mankind at this juncture in our global history.
11.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, unlike those who would not like to see us promote Barbadian music or art to the exclusion of everything else, I believe that while it must be the centrepiece, it must be critical that whatever we do that our people also are exposed to all other forms of expressions that are not necessarily indigenous to Barbados or the Caribbean, such that they begin to foster an appreciation from managing the differences between themselves and other persons.

Mr. Speaker, as Minister of Culture, I took a lot of lashes for continuing to support the Congaline Festival year after year. I did it for the fundamental reason that young, Barbadian children, all Barbadian people, must be able to see world-class entertainers who perform differently from that

which is indigenous to us at a cheap price; no more than \$15 per person. When one looks at developed societies, very often we see concerts being given in the heart of major cities, exposing those persons to different cultures all across the globe. It is no different from the exposure to different foods, music, books, paintings and movies, because if we do not do that, we would not create the kind of critical analytical thought that is also needed to be at the centre of our culture and our profile as Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has reminded me, it is part of the fundamental education to which each Barbadian must ascribe. I believe those who believe the only activity we should practice is Crop Over, are far from the mark. Crop Over and NIFCA are both the essences of our national creative expression in terms of popular culture. Sir, if we only allow Barbadian children, as they grow, to see that, then they will not be prepared to be able to participate in a world where the differences of people are heralded for the cultural and ethnic diversity that makes human kind rich. They would go with the perspective that instead of wanting or seeking to engage, they will recoil because they do not know and have not developed a habit of how to manage differences.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe this Government has, over the course of the last seven years and certainly when I was in the Ministry of Culture, attempted to begin to move toward that concept of culture as the embracing context within which all development takes place but, at the same time, recognising that we have to use strategies through the particular discipline of the art to boost the self-confidence of our people. Those are not the only ways in which the self-confidence of our people can be boosted but they are some of the primary mechanisms by which it can happen.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, we have tried to integrate in our curriculum – and I know the Minister of Education can speak more to this than I can – things like the PEACE programme, which seeks to be able to define the cultural values we believe to be worthy of emulation among our children and to promote those cultural values through a marriage of the subject content of a particular subject, as well as the creative expression of the particular arts: dance, music, drama, even the subject of Mathematics, English Language or Science but, at the end of the day – there is an old time saying ‘there is a moral to every story’ – reinforcing those cultural values that we believe to be worthy of emulation and bringing into the discussion, those which we believe should be changed.

Mr. Speaker, one of the things that we suffer from now is the negative consequence of the Bronx counterculture – double pants dropping at the hips and falling down, the walk.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: If we were to study a lot of these things that our young people believe to be hip and cool, many of them come out of a prison culture out of the United States of America. They have been popularised in music, movies and by the urban lifestyles of young blacks who, very often, are living on the edge of society, who have been marginalised in the land of their birth, without our people recognising that their social, economic and cultural circumstances are fundamentally different from those of young, black men in particular, in the United States. To begin with, the feeling of being a minority and not having access to basic social services or political involvement destroys any hope that many of those young men have. That cannot be said for the average young person in the Caribbean and whatever difficulties we may have with the pace of economic enfranchisement, the reality is that we have done a phenomenal job in broadening the base of access to basic social, economic and political rights in our country and that they, unlike those who are found in the minority, in fact, constitute one of a majority. Therefore, that fundamental point of difference has also to be remembered.

Mr. Speaker, in the anti-colonial movement which started between the early 50s and 60s, there was a point at which intellectuals of the Third World made the point that – only this morning I was reading *THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH*, written by Frantz Fanon – to copy Europe was a futile exercise; that it was not for us to catch up with anyone or any country; that we have a responsibility to evolve our own. Therefore, if they were to land in this jurisdiction in 2001 to 2002, one of the things that would sadden those who are responsible for carrying the fight against that form of cultural imperialism and colonialism some 30 to 50 years ago, is the extent to which, having tried to distance ourselves and to plot an independent chart in our development, many of our people are now succumbing to the same negative foreign influences that generations before have fought against. That is why at the beginning of my speech, I spoke about us doing reasonably well in respect of our material prosperity but having the challenge to reposition the battle to both our spiritual and national identities.

Sir, in a very real sense, in this second generation of the governance of this country of Independence, we have to begin to deal with some of these matters. We have also to recognise what have been some of the intangible consequences of our historical development in respect of race. We have to recognise that in a very real sense, there is more in common between black and white Barbadians than there is between black Barbadians and black Americans and also between white Barbadians and white English people. The cultural context within which we operate unite us more often than not and we have to begin to engage in constructive dialogue that sees the remaining barrier between the two held up by perceptions of history being removed.

12.00 noon

It means that there has to be a recognition that not only tolerance is required but there must be the assertion that there is no ethnic group of people that do not require self-assertion to survive because self-assertion is necessary so black people must feel proud to be black people and white people must feel proud to be white people and the capacity to live with those coexisting positions but still respect one another and build on the commonalities are critical at this juncture of our history.

It is also interesting that perceptions that have been conjured up in our history that all white people were rich and all black people were poor have also to be removed. One of the last things I did in the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture was to commission a social and economic history of Barbados to be written by Mr. Bobby Morris, Mr. Ronnie Hughes and Cecilia Parris-Brathwaite because it is only through the articulation of historical facts that we can remove misplaced perceptions that are commonly held among our people.

I have every confidence that this process will continue. I have every confidence that once we begin to recognise how much bind us in common that the capacity to see those things that divide us can be easily managed within the context of our total development.

Mr. Speaker, I also believe that the arts, plays, music, paintings and dance represent excellent avenues by which we can tell our story and by which the process of non-formal education can be pursued aggressively. We have a formal educational system that is one of the best in the world and we have now to match it by the process of non-formal education pursued primarily through the artistic disciplines which I have just mentioned. This is one of the things that we try to do and have been trying to do as a Government.

We have seen Barbadian music now being played all through the region as a musical first option and most of all the popular Barbadian artistes have been able to make an insurgence into those markets and much of what they are singing reflect who we are as a people.

We know that those sectors that do not require protectionism, that are being taken away from us in the world of trade liberalisation, are the culture and sports sectors primarily. Those sectors depend on the one thing that is distinctive and that is who we are as a people. It depends on reforming and the exploitation of the creative genius in either the particular sport or artistic area. Sir, members in this debate will speak at length to that.

I have spent seven years in the Ministry of Culture trying to create an economic platform for Barbadians and I believe we have done so in music and individual arts. We have not been successful in drama or dance but, in a real

sense, a small society needs icons to push and expand its people.

Barbados, unfortunately, has not had a resident icon in dance for some decades. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition can speak better to these issues than me because he was a drummer with the Rowtana Dance Movement which used to practise at my house when I was growing up. Therefore, I know that he also shares a passion for the belief that artistic pursuits are an essential part of defining who we are as a people. If there are other things that divide us, this is not one of the things that divide us in the Caribbean and in Barbados in particular because we share the passion of the development of the arts.

Sir, dance and drama have suffered and drama in the context of comedy and satire has managed to 'inch along' but serious theatre and drama have not been at the centre of that renewal process. Although we have seen some excellent plays and the resumption of the playwright competition are indications that different people from different parts of the society want to be involved in the upliftment of the arts.

Sir, Barbados in 1995 won a national gold medal in Santo Domingo. The only other two countries that won gold medals were Cuba and Haiti and Cuba and Haiti are known worldwide for the quality of their arts but for little Barbados to be able to step up there and win a gold medal was an unbelievable accomplishment. We have continued to the extent that resources allow to be able to expand the platform on which Barbados visual artists can reflect their works. I would like to say that there is a certain level of respect for Barbados' art in Latin America and the Caribbean.

By the same token, our efforts to establish a national art gallery and the systematic way in which we have been going about it within the last three years speaks to the Government's commitment to continue to build on these platforms. Indeed, anyone who has read the Annual Reports which have already been laid in this House on the National Art Gallery Committee will be in no doubt as to the thoroughness which is being reflected in the pursuit of the establishment of that gallery.

Once again, it reflects who we are as a people because we have taken a decision that while we might have one central home for the national art gallery that it should be located across every community in Barbados and that by the installation of appropriate material in school halls and community centres across Barbados this experience should be a living one for all Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, I will have to confess that culture is the context within which all development takes place. The difference between Barbadian culture and Trinidadian

culture for example is the calypso. In Trinidad, there are four calypso tents for a population of over one million people. If you do not reach a certain standard you are put out of the tent and you cannot perform. In Barbados, I must confess that at first I used to feel that you should reduce the number of tents, but understanding the Barbadian culture, I recognised the extent to which it is consistent with our culture profile and our pursuit of our political ideas which are also consistent with our cultural profile.

12.10 p.m.

Barbadians believe that irrespective to how good or bad you are, you must be given the opportunity to be heard. It is a fact that Barbadians feel that it is their right and I have come to be convinced that even though the quality is not always consistent, it is more important for us to preserve that aspect of our cultural profile than simply to attain excellence at all cost. Excellence at all cost will mean the marginalisation and the deprivation of persons from having that right.

Sir, at the end of the day, those who obtain excellence must be filtered out. At the initial level, the opportunity to be heard and be given a chance to participate is an integral part of the Barbadian profile. I stand corrected in my initial view as to how we should pursue the development of that sector.

Mr. Speaker, I made these points to reinforce why it is necessary for us to understand what are the aspects of our cultural profile that we must preserve and carry forth to a new generation of governance and those which must be taken out of our governance.

I have not even touched the issue of race and the fact that these societies were developed and constructed purely on the basis of race and also, the extent to which race acts as an inhibitor to the development of self-confidence. When standards of excellence were set in these societies in the modern world, the only thing that was defined was whiteness and everything else was left to flounder. Therefore, all standards of excellence in the arts, all standards of excellence in physical appearance, all standards of excellence in any form of endeavour were defined on a Eurocentric basis that was defined exclusively with race.

We have managed to remove much of the legislation that speaks to the suppression of creative spirit of black people in this society but what we have not done is to remove all of the cultural intangible consequences that a person who is black should not stand up in front of a mirror and feel that their hair is too hard or that their nose is too broad. When you start making people feel that way, you undermine their self-confidence. That will take generations to overcome because we have to ensure that there is a self-assertion that respects and defines who we are and what are our standards of excellence, without denigrating other people but by simply accepting that they are not ours.

I hope that this process will continue. Governments cannot make it happen. This is something that a society must embrace and evolve. Governments could set up examples which will give people the opportunity to open their creative vistas and to do the redefining process that is necessary to make them feel like valid and viable citizens in their own country.

I believe that through the creative expression of the arts we can achieve that. That is the critical importance of the development of a cultural infrastructure at this stage. That is the critical importance of having an Empire Theatre, so that we can be able to appreciate the different interpretations of these issues and be able to reflect on them. That form of non-formal education is the most powerful because it is often subliminal and often causes people to come to their own conclusion without feeling as though they are being spoon-fed and directed into a particular location.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken longer than I intended to speak. I thought it necessary not only to speak in clinical terms about what we are doing with the Empire Theatre but also in terms of our concept as to what is the challenge of development and the cultural context within which it must operate. These challenges extend not simply to the arts but extend across every form of endeavour in this society. The art is simply another mechanism which we use to be able to help define the cultural profile that we would wish to preserve and to carry forth.

Sir, we need to understand that very often those things which are often referred to as the moral of the story are those things which constitute proverbs, often shape how our children are raised and how they pursue the rest of their lives. Some people call them wise sayings and some people call them proverbs. If you look at a lot of the proverbs that inform the rearing of children in the early part of the twentieth century, there were used to encourage people to be docile, submissive and to accept.

Mr. Speaker, they are those who feel that they may have a religious genesis because very often the Christian religion, in particular, encourages that. They are also those who feel that they have a colonial genesis. Nevertheless, whatever the genesis, the reality is that those proverbs help inform the development of a character in the essay 'What Does Barbados Mean To Me', and spoke about the virtues of Barbadians in respect of the need to ensure that there was cooperative action on the part of Bajans' civil dialogue, which were referred to by other persons in the region as hypocrisy and compromise, the habits of good husbandry, industriousness, which was often referred to by people in the region as meaningless, unimaginative materialism or ruthless and self-centered ambition. Those virtues that were evolved and that could be collectively used to describe the character of Barbadian people were very often honed by the way in

which we were raised as children, the way in which we were schooled and the way in which the society defined certain actions as acceptable or unacceptable.

We have the capacity to do that as well today. We have the capacity to define those things which we believe to be worthy; those things which we believe should be taken from our culture, especially those things which were blindly adopted from other cultures that bear no relationship to whom we are. We have the capacity to do it over a period of time through all types of mechanisms.

Mr. Speaker, anybody who says that country does not change or you cannot influence a culture, needs only to remember that when we were children you could not play banja music on a Sunday. Barbadians now play all types of music on a Sunday. Thirty years ago your largest crowds may have come from non-Barbadian acts. It is a fact that the biggest performers to audiences in Barbados, certainly over the last two decades, are Barbadians.

Sir, those things have changed and the reaction of other Caribbean people to the Barbadian character has also changed because they believe that Barbadians, especially since 1966, have sought to redefine themselves in relationship to the society and the environment in which they live. Certainly over the last two decades they come out when the list of performers on the show are Barbadians. It is a fact. Those things have changed and, indeed, the reaction of other Caribbean people to the Barbadian essence and the Barbadian character has also changed because they believe that the Barbadian, especially in the years since 1970, and especially since Independence, have sought to redefine themselves in relation to the society and the environment within which they live.
12.20 p.m.

I believe that while we have seen some gains in this area it has not been the subject of sufficient policy direction but we have tried to change that in the seven years, and I would not stand here and pretend that we have been successful or that we have finished the course. We have been doing good, but it is a course to which we must apply ourselves continuously for a considerable period of time if we are to see that redefinition of character and that change in our developmental circumstances such that we can have the best possible quality of life for Barbadians both in terms of their material prosperity and their cultural and spiritual identity.

I look forward, therefore, Mr. Speaker, to the National Cultural Foundation developing a programme which will see the re-opening of the Empire Theatre as soon as they are capable of finishing the renovations. I look forward to the work with the Cuban architect and the other sub-contractors

being finished. It is in the planning stages such that we can move to the actual stage of the physical rehabilitation of the building.

I am aware, for example, that the work at Queen's Park for the redevelopment of Queen's Park will shortly be undertaken and I am also aware that the work at Golden Square will be completed shortly and I am also aware of the fact that in many of the secondary schools we are trying to develop the capacity that cultural events can be held there with greater ease so that community theatre, community concerts or community art exhibitions can be an ongoing thing across our communities so that we do not only expose the top elements of our society to cultural expression but it is a commitment to expose all Barbadians and, as I said, the lesson that I learnt in respect of the calypso tents to give every Barbadian that opportunity to be heard, to express themselves as well as the opportunity to help define what their development reality should be through their creative expression and through engaging in national dialogue be they black, white, rich, poor, old or young.

This is a policy to which this Government is committed and a reality that is necessary at this stage of our existence if we are to withstand the pressures of globalization, trade liberalisation and all other forms of foreign incursion and know who we are. The essence of who we are should reign supreme but should never reach a point of cultural jingoism such that we believe that only we have the right to inhabit this part of the earth or that only we have the right perspective or that we never assume the moral arguments that our perspective is the only perspective. Nonetheless, we validate our perspective such that it is embraced by all of our people. This is the policy to which this Government is committed and I, therefore, am happy to be able to introduce this Resolution in a very unaccustomed fashion for it would normally be the Minister of Housing.

I think that you cannot divorce Government's attempts to improve our cultural infrastructure to redevelop the Empire Theatre from our all-embracing vision as to what must happen and what must continue to happen in respect of the cultural development of this nation, and by cultural development I really mean the development in the cultural context of this nation.

I hope that we can have all Barbadians engaged in dialogue such that a single defining compact can be developed to which all of us will work in the decades to come. Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak in this debate and I want to say that it is rather interesting to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East speaking the way she has spoken for the simple reason I was a bit saddened about the fact that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is not in his seat because there was a

particular point made by the Honourable Member that I felt that if I could not have convinced him over the period of time that I have been trying to convince him that at least the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would have been able to. That point is that Barbados must not believe that we only have the sun, sea and sand and that one of our greatest assets happens to be our people.

I am very glad to hear that particular point because for months and years now I have been trying to push that point and get the other parliamentarians, particularly in this Parliament, to accept that point. If we are to go forward as a people, we must first learn to appreciate people for what they are and what they do. This is one of the things that has been sadly lacking in Barbados because our people are very much a class people and we cannot appreciate the contribution made and continues to be made by the masses of people of Barbados. We believe that the only contributions that can be accepted are those contributions given by well known names.

I am happy to see that we are moving away from that particular concept and that we have recognised that in order for Barbados to develop from a cultural point of view we have to accept the contributions of all.

It is rather amazing that since 1994, I have been hearing about the Empire Theatre and what is also amazing is that before globalization was the by-word in Barbados before I came to this Parliament, I have been hearing what we are going to do to the Empire Theatre and the reconstruction of the Empire Theatre. What is rather interesting is that today we deal with globalization without recognising that we would have been in a better position if we had developed our culture in those early days.

How can we want to compete in this world at this stage when we have allowed the foreign element of everything to be the yardstick by which we judge everything without developing our people to understand that in order to understand one's culture one must first be able to understand that it is very much local? What we have done is we have fed our people on everything foreign and now that we have given them a full dose of the medicine we expect them now to puke it out and be able to accept their new found love which our foreparents never were accustomed to so that we cannot blame our foreparents for training us in this particular way. Who we must blame is ourselves. In other words, the youngster of today does not know about the sheep in the backyard, he does not know anything about backyard slaughtering any more. What he knows is that he enters the supermarket and can get every cut of meat or produce that his foreparents were accustomed to provide for their families. We accept everything in the name of health to pull down everything we used to develop ourselves. Instead of cutting grass to give the sheep and the product of that to get

manure to put in the fields we are now so glorified that we import everything so that when we tell the youngsters now that we have to appreciate ourselves for what we do, how can they appreciate what we do when everything we do is foreign.

We talk about the big pants and the big shoes they wear, but we never stop to tell them it is healthy to wear big shoes and big pants and we criticise them because they wear big pants and big shoes and at the same time we want the tightest clothes in the world not realising that by wearing the tightest clothes which happens to be a cultural penetration also that we are creating poor circulation for ourselves.
12.30 p.m.

Sir, let us judge ourselves. Are the youngsters wrong or are we wrong? We want to use our yardsticks which we have copied, because tight clothing was never part of our culture. We have accepted the tight clothes because that is what we saw on the television, and that is what allows people to see the better shape. The young ones now feel that they should live healthy, even though they might not know it – and that is the point I would like to make – that big clothes and big shoes allow you to live healthily but tight clothing interferes with your circulation.

I would like to think that the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central will support me on that point. I also think the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central will agree with that concept.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You will not support it because you know why? Even though you accept the fact and you know about poor circulation, you cannot knock your own Minister for the point, but that is okay.

I am saying, Sir, why is it that everything the young people do, we are prepared to knock without admitting that some of the things are right, but they are doing them for the wrong reasons. I am saying that to tell the young people, yes, it is good to wear the big pants and the big shoes but do not wear them because you are seeing that on the television, but by wearing them, you will not have a circulation problem, because they would not bite into your veins and stop your blood from circulating the way it should.

Sir, we also have to understand that the way our fore parents sold produce and interacted within the society was something that broadened our culture. We have now gone to new concepts where we feel that as we move into society we move away from our neighbourhoods. We do not have that cultural interaction anymore and once we can meet at particular locations, and we can use the right things that all of a sudden, we have made it in life.

Sir, we have to understand that in order for the young people to appreciate what life is all about, we must be prepared to let them know about our foundation, or where we came from and what we did to progress. We should stop giving them the impression that the only lifestyle that they should know, is where you can buy a property for x millions of dollars, bulldoze it, or buy a particular car of a particular value.

We must also let them know that there is nothing wrong with walking. Sir, we feel that we cannot walk anymore, Sir, for the simple reason that to walk is to give the impression that you have not arrived. I am saying that we wax warm when it comes to the habits of the young people but we do not recognise that we have contributed a lot to these habits.

There was a time when there was a combination of young and old converging on street corners. These days you do not see that, so how can the youth know about the past culture. How can they know what happened when these adults were youngsters, or learn how they did certain things? Sir, now the only thing they get is a big television screen where everything flows in.

Sir, what is also amazing is that the young people go for dub music and calypso, but the artists who provide some of these types of music must understand that they are impacting on the young people. They must stop providing the negatives in this type of music and use the music to help develop the young people.

Sir, dub is both positive and negative. I am saying that one would have thought that these artists would have recognised how they are impacting on the lives of young people, and use the music to penetrate the minds of young people in a positive way, instead of a negative way.

I sometimes wonder, Sir, if these artists are not being funded by somebody to market certain products. I hope that when the Empire Theatre comes on stream, it will be used to develop the moral fabrics of this society in a positive way. We should give our local artists the opportunity to use that Theatre to develop the culture of Barbados, and not do what we are now seeing on our own lone television station.

Sir, we just had the Interschool Sports and it was amazing to see the number of people who sat and watched the sports on television. Every night they look forward to watch television. It is also amazing that at seven o'clock every night, everybody wants to get to the television set and the majority of that news happens to be local news. We have not recognised that there is a particular culture in Barbados that wants something that is very much local but we feel that we must broadcast everything else, without first developing and promoting what is going on in our country.

We also have a situation, Sir, where we have to recognise that we do not have those pictures any more that we used to watch on television. Anybody can now go into a video shop, a satellite bar or whatever, and have the opportunity to see whatever is foreign. Therefore, the local television station should provide what is regarded as the local product if we are to develop the cultural minds of Barbadians.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, instead of feeding them that dosage, we feed them everything that is foreign. Our capital markets are foreign, our investors now seem to be foreign.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Even the Minister of Tourism seems to be foreign. Sir, we have to understand and appreciate Barbadians for whom they are and we must applaud them when they are doing well. We feel that once we are watching awards for other people, that is a contribution for us, but that is wrong. We must be prepared to go into our villages and look for those old folks who did well and helped to develop Barbados and promote them and let them be the icons for our young people to follow, and not bring somebody who is developing their country, to our country and hailing as our hero.

Sir, I am not saying that we should ignore history or what is going on in another country. I am saying that if we do not build a base, we cannot expect to get the necessary output from our people, when we are feeding them everything that is foreign and nothing local.

We also have to understand, Sir, that in this new technological world, the young people are going to be faced with all types of information coming at them. When you think about it, you cannot any longer believe that you can control the minds of young people because they are exposed to many things. We have to include them and that is what we are not doing. Instead of including them, we are excluding them and at a great price. If we reflect on the price that we will have to pay for that, in ten or fifteen years, we will be embarrassed to see what we have done to our own country. I am hoping that the Empire Theatre will be used to help pull back some of our young people, even though it is over ten years late in being commissioned.
12.40 p.m.

The young people want to be part of the society so we must understand what they are asking for and must be prepared to give it to them. We cannot continue to believe that they must meet us, we must be prepared to meet them as well. We must go out there and understand what they are

saying and when they are going wrong we must be prepared to tell them that they are going wrong. We must also be prepared to share our ideas with them and not talk down to them. Mr. Speaker, the biggest problem in Barbados today is that everybody believes that they have all the knowledge and they must talk down to everybody but the young people are not going to accept anybody talking down to them.

Sir, when you were going to school, you were told that the cow jumped over the moon and you believe it but you cannot tell that to a three-year old child now because the child will ask you how come.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that we have to understand that young people have changed and the acceptance level is not like how it used to be because a lot of the things that the teachers got away with previously they cannot get away with now, Sir, and we must understand that.

Globalisation is affecting small countries like Barbados and we have to do something about it quickly. We have to empower our people to learn to appreciate what they are doing within their own communities. We must also show them that they have the capacity to do anything that is being done by anyone else. I think that this is the shortcoming of Barbados because we in Barbados tend to believe that the only positiveness that can occur is anything that is coming in. That is why you would constantly hear me lamenting the fact that whenever you hear people within the tourism sector speaking the first thing they ask for is a brand name hotel from outside not realising that a brand name hotel from outside is bringing in a particular culture to Barbados that we do not want.

Sir, we need to develop a brand name hotel from within Barbados and take it outside of Barbados. I have always made this point that a brand name hotel coming from outside of Barbados does not necessarily mean that the tourists that it is targeting will come to Barbados because a brand name hotel means that the particular hotel has branches throughout the world. So we must find something important and something special to get people to come to Barbados. It cannot be just for a hotel room or sun, sea and sand, it has to be something better than that. If we do not understand that, we will continue to ask for brand name hotels to come to Barbados to influence our people. We must allow Barbadians to see that we can develop something from here and that we can go much further when we develop it from within if not we will continue to fail our people.

Sir, in earlier days people used to barter within the communities where they shared things among themselves. You give me an ackee, I give you a breadfruit. You give me a mango, I give you something else. Or you give me a sheep for a young goat or a young cow and I give you a pig. We

need to see that system coming back because when that system was in place there was unity among the communities and everybody used to look out for each other and everybody appreciated the other person's feeling and way of life. All of a sudden now we believe that we do not have to look to our neighbours anymore and that everything we need we must pay for it and we cannot reach over the fence to speak to our neighbours on any matter because we feel that if we do that the neighbour will believe that he or she is more than the other person. We need to bring back the true community life where we continue to share our ideas, our wealth and our goods.

If we feel that everything we must source must be sourced outside of Barbados, this country will never be able to develop its culture. So who do we expect to promote this? One would have expected that the policy within the Government would be clear for the people to follow. I personally believe that the expectations of the mass public of Barbados is much clearer than the policy of the Government on this particular matter because one gets the impression that everything you hear is offshore and I am saying that we do not need to have everything offshore but we need to develop things within our local culture so as to get our people to appreciate each other feelings once more.

How can we continue to trust people when we are fed a dosage that the only people we can trust are those from outside? We have to seriously understand what is going on. Even from a political point of view, people believe that political supporters cannot be friends which is foolishness. If we are to develop culture in Barbados we must see all of us as one and we must know when the political divide must come. We cannot continue to divide societies and communities along political or economic lines and worse of all we must not divide along religious lines. We must allow people to know that they can meet and associate with each other but you get opposite to what I speak of in Barbados because people believe that if you do not belong to a particular religion you should not speak to the other religion. That is foolishness.

We should all be fighting for one common good which is the development of all people in Barbados and nobody should be allowed to use the divide and rule strategy to destroy the masses of people in Barbados because in order for the masses of people in Barbados to go forward they must first learn to come together and the best way to do that is through good cultural programmes.

So I am hoping that the type of programmes put on at the Empire Theatre will be such as to bring Barbadians together again. When I talk about Barbadians, I am not talking only about the masses or the rice and stew party ones or the cocktail party ones, I am talking about all classes of Barbadians. We have to have a good blend and we must be able to appreciate everyone for what they have to offer.
12.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we judge people based on the wrong things but yet 10 years after the fact, we are still talking about reconstructing the Empire Theatre to exploit the cultural capacities of our people, when we have already been exploited by the foreign cultural penetrations.

Sir, I have always said I hope sometimes the negative influences we see coming from the young people are not negatives in their own minds, only in ours and that might be a way they are fighting off what we had taken for granted. Sir, I hope that due to their love for certain things, they will be able to move away from the negative and convert it into a positive so that we can have a better Barbados and a better understanding of what we want for Barbados because, at this point in time, the road we are traveling is not the road on which we should be. We should be on the road where we are prepared to develop what we want for ourselves and not depending on others to develop it for us. We must change the approach and must be prepared to tell people when they are doing wrong or right. We must congratulate them when they are right and be prepared to slap them on their hands when they are wrong.

Sir, our culture must be one that allows us to develop Barbados to its fullest and the necessary finances be put in place to help those artistes who are out there trying to put Barbados on the map; that the same support we give to foreign artistes who come here to project a foreign image, that 100 per cent more be given to the local artistes than is given to the foreign; that we must get away from this myth that everything foreign is good and everything local is bad.

Sir, if we take it to its logical conclusion, one would recognise that, at sometime, that also played a part when it had to do with colour. Sir, I look forward to a Barbados where we are able to marry these things and be able to bring Barbados as one unit and not to see a Barbados where it is now segmented. Sir, I look forward to the day when we can truly appreciate our culture for what it is and can maximise the uses and appreciation for our culture. I thank you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended until 2.00 p.m.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Before I move the suspension, I would like to recognise and welcome to our Parliament Madame Helene' Marie Gosselin, UNESCO's Director for the Caribbean region. We welcome you, Mam.

The question that the Honourable House do now suspend until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my small contribution to this debate on the restoration of the Empire Theatre. Sir, up front, I must declare in principle my strong support for the restoration of this historic building. Sir, I am concerned about the approach that is commonly used by successive Governments in the acquisition of historic buildings in Barbados. There must be a philosophical basis for the acquisition and restoration of historic buildings. We must be extremely clear on these matters. Sir, most of the times we are responding or rescuing private individuals out of entanglement, acquiring the buildings after they have been abandoned or, in this case, restoring a building which belongs to the State after a long time was spent witnessing its rapid deterioration. Therefore, in an attempt to restore it, we have to spend a substantial sum. Sir, I believe that rather than have that reactionary approach, we need to have a progressive philosophical framework for the acquisition and restoring of historic buildings in this country. We must be extremely clear in our ideological position on why we want to acquire these buildings and what we hope to achieve by acquiring or restoring historic buildings. What do they mean to the Barbadian people? What do they symbolise? It must be extremely clear on the ideological currents which direct our thoughts when we acquire buildings. Sometimes it is necessary not only to enlighten those who are responsible for our governance but also to enlighten the society on why it is so important that we preserve buildings which are of historic significance, why we have to reacquire or reclaim important historic resources in this country and what type of philosophy will guide us in the future as we begin to administrate on how we use those buildings for progressive purposes.

Sir, I make that point because I want to address what I consider as the cultural imbalances in the society and to go back to the early days when the building was acquired and named with a sense of pride with the title colonial attached to it. That would not be the ideological current that would guide the thinking of contemporary persons in this House of Assembly. We have to do all we can in order to ensure that the strands which have been suppressed for a considerable time be now elevated to equal status, with the eurocentric strands in our culture which are the strands of what many perceive as the eminent, refined qualities of culture in the society.

Sir, I want to address that as it causes me to reflect on our stolen legacy; the raping of the colonies in the region of their greatest resources; the raping of the Afro-centric cultures universally, not only here in Barbados but as far as Egypt, when Alexander the Great went into Alexandria and

raped the temples of Alexandria and brought a level of civilisation to Greece by stripping it of its literature; destruction of monuments and temples. Sir, the great civilisations of the East were destroyed in order to establish the supremacy of a specific race in this world. Sir, our task is a fundamental one in addressing this topic today. It makes me reflect on Cheikh Anta Diop and his studies; Chancellor Williams on the destruction of black civilisations; Frantz Fanon in *THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH*; *BLACK SKINS, WHITE MASKS*, and a whole set of literature that can be very instructive to make us know that it is not simply the acquisition of a building but the responsibility of black people, not only in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Egypt or wherever they are, but black people within the diaspora have a responsibility to assert themselves. This issue is fundamental to the struggle and achievement for self-governance and it holds equal status with the call for economic enfranchisement and with the concept of nationalization.

2.05 p.m.

We have to take our roles seriously because nationalization can only become meaningful if we have respect for our cultural foundations, the sustenance and perpetuation of those cultural foundations and that we can respect our achievements and contributions with a sense of pride.

We were subject here earlier today to a range of dialogue from this Side, what I describe as cultural expositions and explorations and what we had from the Other Side as a form of cultural tyranny from people who never came to grips with the topic and should be charged with assault because a topic like this is fundamental to where we go in the future, how we shape the Barbadian psyche and what gives us a sense of pride and inspiration.

Sir, the only way we can have a legitimate form of resistance to the present drive of globalization, the noble term given but a more legitimate term would be neocolonialism, which has been imposed on our people is by providing our people with a sense of pride and dignity in the contributions which they have made to our development. Sir, it was necessary for me to reflect on that.

I also want to say that our strength of thought and our current ideology must be to identify genuine nationalisation, one that is relevant just like the colonial powers understood when they constructed this building that their interest had to be perpetuated. They attempted to use important erections like this building in order to symbolise strength and dominance and we too must understand that our role today is to put ourselves within an ideological framework and do things for national development.

Sir, when these institutions are resuscitated, I expect the administrators to be extremely clear on their objectives

and have a clear perception of the cultural strands that need to be addressed. Sir, there are people who believe in cultural integration and pluralism. There are other people who believe that metropolitan dominance must remain with us forever and that they possess the more refined cultural qualities.

Sir, what purpose will this institution serve? Will we continue to believe that the Eurocentric strand in our Barbadian culture must remain dominant?

Will we be prepared to make the radical change in this new Empire Theatre to allow the creative arts that are the mirrors, manifestation of the qualities, character and creativity of the people long suppressed economically and culturally to be elevated to equal status in the society in which they have been long suppressed?

Are we going to allow creative arts and the Afro-centric arts which they find difficult to be recognised in the society to be elevated to equal status as those who spin on their toes and have what we call a more refined touch to dance?

Are we going to introduce calypso music which was once described in the most pejorative way as 'banja' to occupy such halls?

Sir, I recall when Sherbourne Centre was built that there was a lot of conceptualisation which continues as to what was going to be the purpose of the hall. Some people felt it was to serve the purpose of the CXC examinations and some felt that only refined musicians and artistes would use this centre because in this society there is a phobia that the only respectable music that ought to be accepted is Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Chopin, and the like. There is a heavy weight on the psyche of black people and although they wind to calypso and Jamaican music, they have relegated this music to an inferior status. It is not perceived by certain people as genuine music and they call it 'banja' music.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I do not like to interrupt the Honourable Member in his flow but we cannot in this debate, of all debates, misrepresent what is true. The Honourable Member is to be recommended to go to St. Mary's Church, listen to the choir there and in particular to see who is called 'Coco' from my constituency on whom Pavarotti has nothing in order to give the lie to that statement.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I do not know who the Honourable Member is defending but I am on a specific course and I will stick to it. Although we tolerate the music in the society, it is still classified as 'banja' music. Those elitists in our system who want to believe that they have acquired the finer cultures and are part and parcel of it, still

stock their houses with symphonies and classical European music because they believe that they are more bars and techniques to the music than what they commonly call 'banja'.

Sir, they go to institutions where they feel comfortable and where they believe that the rhythms do not stimulate those present to behave in a specific way and they even attribute bad behaviour to those cultures that emerge out of the people who are being suppressed.

In this society crime is sometimes related to a certain type of music and another type of music is for stimulation, relaxation and reflection but when it comes to dub, calypso, certain types of reggae and Afro Caribbean music, there is a school of thought that argues that the causation for criminal activity derives from the type of music that is being played when young people socialize. Sir, nothing can change me from that view.

Sir, many of them do not respect music that is indigenous. The very term 'banja' is given for a specific reason. I heard a man trying to argue justification for the use of the word 'nigger' or 'Negro'. There is no justification for the word nigger or Negro. Black people call themselves niggers with a sense of pride. These are realities and this is what we seek to address when we begin to develop cultural and educational institutions.
2.15 p.m.

Many people are victims of Eurocentric education. Not only did Eurocentric education provide us with the tools for analysis but there are also many persons who are victims of the ideology of Eurocentric education. I am saying that we have to redress the situation by removing the suppressed culture of the black people, the Afrocentric culture, which should be running parallel to the Eurocentric cultures in this society. We have to move them up to equal status because the majority of people are placed at the level of subordination. It is a tough reality to accept.

Mr. Speaker, people talk about gyration and the moving of the pelvic area. It is an art which is unique and Europeans and non black people, most of them possessing a board-hip movement do not acquire the art of a smooth rotation, gyrating is unique in our culture. I do not think that we need to establish clearly that not to take this view is a weak approach to the whole analysis of what we intend to do. I am only asking that this institution accommodates the other arts which might not be classified as creative or refined because it is the taxpayers' money that is being put into that institution.

I want to make the point that this building is the State's building but we have many historic buildings in this country which stand as important symbols to the contribution of

black people in Barbados. If some people believe that to relate what is happening in Egypt or Zimbabwe is only relevant when it comes to deciding who should rule, I understand how culture affects culture across the universe. What has been done throughout this world by European powers is to destroy all the great black civilisations in the world and this is no exception to the principle to the rule. The whole intention was to place people in subjugation and accepting that they were responsible for rescuing us because they were blessed by some divine source and they had the qualities to teach us what is righteous and good for us.

Sir, while I respect the role of the National Trust, Great Britain and Europeans looking after their own interest, I am at pain and am confused that why they always have to be some verbal tangle when you begin to talk about black people ascertaining their right in this country and addressing some of the imbalances, including the cultural imbalances in this society.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, to acquire political power and then put agents in place to perpetuate the same standards, values and qualities as though the white man was in control is not a fundamental change. People cannot claim any independence if the same things that were being done and respected prior to 1966 are the things that still remain important today in the development of this country.

There are many buildings in this country that we need to acquire as part of a policy. We do not have to wait for when there is confusion over any succession rights or when a building is abandoned. Sir, greater meaning should be given to the Nightengale Home, Black Rock, and greater respect should be paid to the former owner of that building, Samuel Jackman Prescod. Many people in this country do not know that building belonged to Samuel Jackman Prescod and the name that we keep above the heads of everybody is Nightengale. It was called the Nightengale Home after Samuel Jackman Prescod.

Sir, we do not show any respect for the major contribution that 'King Ja Ja' made. We never ask the question, why did the State acquire an expensive building for a man who is a cultural and political clown, as they so described him then? The Nigerian Ambassador and other people from Africa came to Barbados to see the building where 'King Ja Ja' lived.

The Barbados Government, if it is forward and progressing, must also focus its attention on that building as well. Greater attention must also be paid to the building which once belonged to Sir Frank Worrell. We have been dragging our feet for too long. Sir Frank Worrell has made a major contribution to the development of Barbados. All of this information is important to black pride. This will give

the youth of this country something to be proud of and they would be able to recognise that we were not only slaves but we made a meaningful contribution to the development of this country. The same energy that we use in debate for the preservation of George Washington House should be used for the preservation of the house in which King Ja Ja lived, the house in which Samuel Jackman Prescod lived, even Sir Conrad Reeves. The house which once belonged to Sir Conrad Reeves is in a state of disrepair in the Community College yard. I would feel better in preserving the house of Sir Conrad Reeves, whatever the negative features of history are, than preserving the house of George Washington. He slept there a few nights and the house was preserved for that. Whether Conrad Reeves attempted to kick the ladder down or not is that...

2.25 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: We do not even respect that. I am only calling for these forms of redress in our cultural policy in the Government. I am supportive of what is happening and I have no quarrel with people looking after their own interests. I strongly believe in cultural dualism. I believe in cultural pluralism. I believe that there are a number of cultural strands in this society but they should be respected, all equal to the other.

What I am concerned about is that the majority of people's culture is suppressed and labelled as secondary to the others. There is nothing wrong with respecting the Asiatic cultural strand or if there is a Chinese component respecting that strand as well, but I am concerned because the majority of the people are relegated to a lower status. Now that we are clear in our vision of going forward and now that we recognise how culture can be used as a form of resistance, the institution and culture must be used as a form of resistance to colonialism and neo-colonialism just like the Japanese did.

The Japanese and Chinese, because of the preservation of their culture, have been relatively able to resist cultural penetration. When people are bewildered as to what their culture is and even disconnect themselves from the origins of their culture and argue that they are not Caribbean, they are not African, when you have black people arguing these things you are in serious trouble, because we are the only people in the world that make that argument. Chinese in Trinidad are Chinese. Indians in Barbados are Indians. Wherever these people are they respect their ancestry. They do not disconnect from the motherland. A year or so ago when John King sang about the motherland Barbadians were still confused about whether he was referring to Britain or to Africa. I had to endure no such confusion, Sir, because I know where my mother country is. Other people were of the opinion that he was talking about Great Britain.

We must be extremely clear on what we are doing and I want to suggest, Sir, that complementing our policy must be the concept of community theatre, that strategic points across this country if not connected to the resource centres, special halls should be constructed where persons who have genuine talent and are creative can have access at an affordable rate. While accessibility exists, in these institutions that we are now creating, the segregated encumbrance to not having access is finance. All a person has to do is to make the building expensive so that ordinary people cannot have access to it. It is available, but you cannot get it because you cannot pay for Sherbourne Centre, you cannot pay for Frank Collymore Hall so that the creative arts of the people at the lower socio-economic ladder also face another obstacle, that of finance. That is why you find the talented young men who were perceived before as useless have to keep dubs on hard courts around Barbados.

Probably we can use a complementary theatre in the central part of the urban community. Even the enclosure of the same Golden Square can be used as a centre which those persons who are not privileged to be able to have access to these buildings, and I am talking about meaningful access, not just using the word loosely because as I said, it is all right to tell a man that he has access but then you stipulate conditions that debar the man from utilising the building.

I feel that there are other aspects of it that I would like to touch on, the whole concept of the traffic within the central location and the hope that we will be able to acquire property in close proximity to this theatre so that people can have a comfort zone when they come to park and so on. I believe that I have made some major points and I would hope the Government would clearly indicate to us whether we will be taking a purist approach to the development of culture, whether we will continue to respect metropolitan dominance, whether we would respect that our culture is unique and it has already been creolised to the extent that it is a culture that is unique from the cultures of other black people throughout the entire world.

The perception has to be clear by the administrators so that we can understand what type of Barbados we are about to shape in the future. Mr. Speaker, you have indicated to me that my time is up and I am extremely grateful for your tolerance. Thank you, very much.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to lend my voice to this debate and I am not going to be as philosophical as the other speaker but I am going to deal with it from what I consider to be a knowledge of the background to the very building of which we are debating. The fact of the matter that the Government owns the property is not a case of Government taking over the property but that Government has already owned the area of Empire Theatre. History has shown us that the lease terminated in 1987 and Government by right had access as

far back as then. My concern at this particular point is supportive of the fact that Barbados definitely needs a theatre. One must understand fully that we must put our history correct. Someone seemed to believe that it is the first time that the Empire Theatre would be used for stage productions or plays.

My knowledge is that in the early days the Empire was built with some of the very things of that day that Barbadians were not subject to. For example, I have been told that it would have an orchestra pit. Those of us as youngsters who had the privilege of going to the Empire would know that the Empire always had an orchestra pit. Those of us who had the privilege of going to the Empire would know that the Empire always had removable screens. Those of us who had the privilege would know for a fact that in the early days schools like Harrison College and Combermere held plays at the Empire Theatre, plays such as Macbeth and others were held on the stage of the Empire Theatre. In truth and in fact, all that is happening here is that in this day and age we need to bring it up-to-date with this new century and make it adequate not for the year 2002 but to be able to look 20 to 30 years beyond.

In restoring the Empire Theatre, I am concerned with the projection of the restoration. If you are telling me that you are going to restore the orchestra pit, that is nice. If you tell me you are going to restore the removable stage screen, that is nice. If you tell me that by right we are going to have all the draw curtains that the Empire Theatre has been known for, for many years, that is okay because they were there and because it is necessary to retain those things.

What is extremely important is the question of seating. Seating is the point that I have to challenge based on the fact that yes, there is a need for the restoration and bringing it up-to-date, but you also must understand fully that Barbados is not in 1987 anymore neither is it in the year 2001 anymore. Barbados is in the year 2002 and moving forward. Barbados is looking toward a certain amount of sports tourism and also entertainment tourism where we are now looking at bringing one of the world's top golfers to Barbados. I am sure that the hotel responsible has been making preparations for the arrival of this international top golf player so that when he gets to Barbados it will be fully adequate for him to play golf on the course.
2.35 p.m.

Sir, we must understand that we might have accommodated the play, Macbeth, many years ago. We might have accommodated some of the off Broadway shows that came to Barbados. Some of us do not remember but the Ursuline Convent was also used for staging some of these shows and it is, perhaps, the only place in Barbados to date that is equipped for staging plays but because of the situation at the Ursuline Convent, it is not really used for stage

productions. Our stage productions are being produced at the Civic Theatre in Queens Park which has a seating capacity of 200 to 250 people.

Sir, if we are looking at entertainment tourism or sports tourism, we are then looking at accommodating in Barbados at a later date some of the top Off Broadway plays that are likely to come to Barbados at a later date. We are not talking about international artists like the Lou Rawls, Luther Van Dross and Percy Sledge. We are talking about classical plays such as South Pacific, *et cetera*, that have been shown on Broadway for many years, and it would be good for Barbadians to have the privilege of seeing some of them. I am saying that the time will come when some organisation in Barbados, whether it is a charitable organisation or an individual promoter, may look at the possibility of bringing an international play to Barbados.

Sir, if we are going to rebuild the Empire Theatre to accommodate 850 people, then we are not going anywhere. I personally believe that it should be built to accommodate at least 1,200 to 1,500 people. It has the facilities to accommodate the additional seating because only last week, I took the opportunity to go and look at the interior, to make sure that what I am going to say in this debate has some ground.

Sir, I am saying that even though we might have been advised by the Cubans that was the seating capacity necessary at the time, I believe that, as Barbadians, we should have an input into the suggestion of what Barbados should look like in the future. The Empire Theatre has perhaps one of the highest ceilings of any building in Bridgetown and it has been built with one balcony on the right.

Sir, you also have to look at the cost involved. If you are going to refurbish the Empire Theatre, I am sure that the cost would include, lighting, proper sound system and acoustics. Now, rather than an average seat costing \$10, you are looking at the average seat costing at least \$30.

Sir, the least seating that you have, the greater the cost of maintaining the facility, so in order for Barbadians to have the benefit of seeing some of these events, the more seating you have, the cost to the patron is likely to reduce tremendously. The least seating you have, there is a possibility that the cost will be exorbitant.

Sir, in looking at the infrastructure of the Empire Theatre, I think that the balcony seating should be re-introduced in the restoration because of the building. Sir, the Empire Theatre has perhaps one of the better acoustics you can get in Barbados.

Sir, as my memory tells me, prior to the 1950s, the Empire Theatre was not used for stage production or talent shows. It was in the late 1950s when the late Morris Jones started keeping talent shows at the Globe Cinema. Then, he shifted from the Globe to the Empire Theatre, and before that time, there were shows like the Madam Ifill Star Buzz, Mr. Stewart's Show as local stage productions.

Sir, the Empire Theatre has always been used for stage productions and we need to encourage more stage production in the future. As I said before, it has the facilities for good acoustics, also provision for the orchestra, provision for collapsible screens. However, the production area and additional seating, should be looked at which, in my opinion, would make it easy for local organisations in fund-raising ventures, to bring some of the top shows to Barbados for the benefit not only of Barbadians but for tourists.

My other concern in supporting this is to suggest that some thought has to go into the area surrounding the Empire Theatre. I know that the Beautify Barbados Development Plan for Lower Bay Street is on stream. I know that lots of things are happening in Bay Street and I am sure that in another ten years, people who travel on Bay Street would be comforted to see the changes that have taken place there.

Today, when you look at what happens on Lower Bay Street, there is a hardware business which always has the area blocked. At night there is the possibility that one of the establishments there, whether it is the Bay Shore Inn, or the Boat Yard, may have an event. You must also be concerned that opposite the Empire Theatre there is the Fire Station and lower down on the other end, there is another place known as the La Club and there is also the Waterfront Café, and those who travelled there over the last couple of months, can attest to the fact that around 1.00 a.m. and 2.00 a.m. the Independence car park is blocked and you cannot get a parking space there on weekends, because of all those night clubs in that area that I have just mentioned, La Club, Waterfront Café, including Harbour Lights and the Bay Shore Inn.

I am asking the question and I believe the Minister responsible for Public Works will be able to find the answer here. What is going to happen after the Empire Theatre is restored and there is a stage play there, where are the patrons going to be able to park? Have any provisions for parking been taken into consideration? Are we thinking of moving the Fire Station because it is within a restricted parking zone? These questions have to be asked as we seek to restore the Empire Theatre, so that at a later date, John Public will not be critical of the exercise because parking provision has not been made for patrons attending the Empire Theatre.

Sir, nobody would want to go to an event in the Empire Theatre and have to park their cars as far as the Esplanade, neither would they want to park their cars in the Carlisle Car Park. I am in favour of the restoration from the point of view that I have been involved, as all of you know, in the area of entertainment.

There was a time in Barbados when the ordinary stage production was addressing an audience of probably 200 to 500 people. Today, when you look at stage productions in Barbados, in terms of shows at the national stadium or the gymnasium, you would realise that you are accommodating 7 000 to 10 000 people. This means that over the years, the attendance at shows in Barbados has increased. It also seems that within the last couple of years, Barbadians have become very patriotic and are supporting local productions.

Sir, are you telling me that the Frank Collymore Hall, has seating for 499 people and the Civic Theatre has seating for 200 people, but you are going to restore the Empire Theatre and you are looking at a seating of 850 people? I am asking the question because it has me a little boggled why the 850 has been accepted and not a recommendation of more seating for that area. There is a possibility that at a later date, what we consider to be the stage production audience in Barbados, would have grown to at least 450 people, and when you look at 'Laff it Off' and the stage productions that are held on weekends at the Queen's Park Cinema, you would realise that they are packed. Therefore, over a weekend they have approximately 1 200 to 1 500 people. Sir, with three nights running, Friday, Saturday and Sunday, they are accommodating approximately 300 people per night, it is the same 1 500 people. This means that instead of having a cost of running for three nights, you would have a cost of running for one night, because you would be accommodating the same 1 500 people in that one night. If it is a good production, you may even be able to accommodate another 7 000 people at an event, similar to what a local comedian is now staging. So it would be the same 1 500 persons. If one looks at it from where I am looking at it, Mr. Speaker, one would only incur cost for running the show for one night instead of four nights because you would be accommodating the same 1 500 people in one night. Chances are too that the production might be so good that you may be able to accommodate the same amount of people in one night just like the local comedian because Barbadians are becoming very supportive of things Barbadian.

2.45 p.m.

My position on the Empire Theatre has nothing to do with whether it was owned or supported by colonial government. We all know that many years ago only a certain type of people could go into the Empire Theatre. The plantocracy used to visit the Empire Theatre and the Barbados Club which eventually became the Bridgetown Club for certain things in the early days.

Within the development plan of Barbados there is a need for a theatre to do productions but one must understand the cost involved. People talked about how costly it is to rent the Sir Garfield Sobers Gymnasium but the rent charged is adequate according to the seating there. It is when you have to do infrastructural work to make the show possible that you incur additional cost of about \$40 000 so the show becomes extremely expensive to the patrons who would have to look at paying \$70, \$80 or \$90 to attend a performance at the gymnasium. Shows become costly to patrons because of the cost of production and the cost of the venues. So in order that the cost of stage shows in Barbados can be reduced and be of benefit to Barbadians, we have to look at additional seating in the restoration of the Empire Theatre.

The entrance of the Empire Theatre was one of the most beautiful scenes you would see in Bridgetown. So I am asking that nothing be done in the physical plan to change the entrance of the Empire Theatre. I personally believe that if we are going to restore it we should take that into consideration and allow the Barbados National Trust to have an input in it so that it would not go too far from the original Empire Theatre we know it to be.

In closing, I am supportive of the Government move for the restoration of this theatre. Government took over the lease and it became Crown property in 1987. We are into the year 2002 and we are a little bit late with the restoration, nevertheless, we are getting started now. So I am hoping, along with the advice given by the people from Cuba in terms of the restoration, that Barbadians would be given an opportunity to say whether they are in agreement with it and whether the seating is adequate.

Barbadians are the ones who have to use the facility and they have to be proud of it. So I am asking that a second look be given in the restoration plan of the Empire Theatre in terms of additional seating. This would save us from having to have another look at it in another five to ten years.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I support this Resolution because I believe now as I believed when the Democratic Labour Party was in office that Barbados needs to have an additional state-of-the-art facility for theatrical productions.

I cannot join with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West because my conception is slightly different to his. He speaks about it from the point of view of a promoter or as a person involved in the business side of it but I speak of it as one who has had experience in production.

Barbados does not have, other than the Queen's Park Theatre which was renovated for CARIFESTA, any facility

which is state-of-the-art for theatrical production. The Frank Collymore Hall is basically a recital and music hall, that is why so much attention was paid to the acoustics and to that kind of design. It is good for dancing too because the floor is good enough for that kind of thing but I do not think it was ever conceived for theatrical productions.

When 'I Marcus Garvey' was performed in Barbados, the people who put on that show had a lot of trouble with their sets and so on because of the way the Frank Collymore Hall is constructed. So what we need is an attractive state-of-the-art theatre.

The numbers are things that promoters and business people are interested in but we also have to have an element of intimacy. There is a level of intimacy in a lot of those theatrical productions like the one that was done the other day about AIDS where the actors of that show were interacting with the audience on stage and this is a very common thing.

A couple months ago I was in New York and I went to see a production at a theatre called 'The Turning Point'. It was a theatre that reminded me of Yoruba Yard but it was not as well appointed as that. This was a theatre in which patrons of the arts brought old settees and reading lamps and outfitted a small corner of 12th Street and parked on the east side. It could only accommodate about 40 people and if you had to get up to go to the bathroom during the production you would have had to climb over the people because of the way it was constructed. These were patrons of the art who were involved in providing a small corner of New York for productions that were in keeping with their perspective and their culture.

So I think that whatever the numbers are it should not be so large that it is not intimate. It has to have some physical characteristics that make you, when you go inside, believe that it is a theatre. It has to be designed for the benefit not only of the people who want to make money out of the production but for the people who are going to put on the production. That is what is going to be very, very important here.
2.55 p.m.

Sir, providing money for the arts is always going to be a controversial issue and the Honourable Member would know how controversial this can become since he is at the receiving end of criticism. Sir, but at the end of the day, no one can doubt that the investment made in the theatres in Barbados and in the facilities and also in the work towards preparation for CARIFESTA which produced a new cadre of people involved in cultural production, did make some impact on Barbados and that those investments have not continued apace. One area in which I think we are retrogressing is in the area of dance. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East probably would take the

perspective that perhaps that I am reflecting a bias that he does not share. I think it is excellent that we have groups like the Pinelands Creative Workshop, Dancing Africa, *et cetera*, but a Barbadian who has a strong sense of self and a sense of their own nation and what it is about, is the only Barbadian who is going to be able to move on to conquer other art forms which are not innate. Therefore, I do not assume that somebody who said they have a greater appreciation for cultural art forms that emanate elsewhere is necessarily a person who is insecure or lacks identity. In fact, he or she may very well have conquered and have been so imbued with those characteristics of the society in which he or she lives that they then move on as almost super human beings to be able to become outstanding performers.

Then there are others who start the other way and we cannot put out the baby with the bath water; technical competence has to start somewhere. Sir, for a musician, that technical competence is written in the text books that we either inherit in our system or the teaching method that we use and as long as those teachers and facilitators have, at the back of their minds, that they must encourage both young and older people to give...

Last Tuesday I left the House to go to one of the BAPIT Assessment programmes, I saw a lady almost 80 years, now starting out on the piano. Also a guy who has just retired from the civil service playing a 4-second, first-year piano piece, but the objective at the end of the day is to encourage people to be as creative as possible.

I believe in Barbados, there is much more balance than the Honourable Member for St. Michael East has given credit for. If one goes to the Opera at Holders' Season, on almost every programme, there is an attempt to involve Barbadian music and Barbadian musicians. When Pavarotti came to Barbados, who went on first; the Desperadoes. It is alleged that Pavarotti was so annoyed at the popularity of the Desperadoes in that audience, that his performance was truncated because of his alleged anger – so they say. I do not know how true it is, but that was the folklore that emerged from the Opera.

Sir, when we see these young Trinidadians from Laventille and other depressed parts of Trinidad, dressed up and standing behind some oil drums – and for some people who have never seen or heard a steel band before – then to hear them play music by William Tell and others, one then recognises that these guys had, in fact, gone way past what may be the limits of their own cultural identity and were now pressing frontiers of cultural awareness and achievement; taking other people's music and infusing it with their interpretation.

Sir, likewise, Alvin Aimey, he used to be on his toes. I remind the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, he was one of the most prominent, successful dance

choreographers. He always made the point that as long as you know where you are coming from, you can then start to put the frontiers. They have all started somewhere but the technique we know is imported but the fact that people are able to take that and do something with it, what then happens is the interpretation. How do we feel when we see a black man or woman doing ballet? Sir, the critics of the American media are bitterly complaining that when sportscasters are describing Venus Williams, they talk about the power of this black athlete but when they are describing her opponents, they talk about their minds; how they are tacticians against the raw power of this athlete, as if to give the impression that all black people have is brawn, no technique, no strategy.

However, it is for us to conquer that by making the point that she has taken an area of sportsmanship traditionally and almost uniquely dominated by Europeans, shoved it in her back pocket and pushed the frontiers. That is what I see as being the achievements of the Arturo Tappins and many of the other Barbadians who leave here and go out into other parts of the world and impress persons with their talents and abilities. They start with the technical competence and understand that to push those frontiers they have to dominate those basics that others have set for them. Regrettably they were not around to set them and because there is a gap between our knowledge of our African past, someone who is teaching African dance is, by and large, going to start with students who have preconceptions of what dance is about and who, themselves, would have been socialising in an environment where the natural impression about quality dance is not what they are doing.

Sir, by getting them involved in training and getting a cadre of persons working with them, we can reverse all of that and I am confident that can happen. I am glad the Honourable Member for St. Michael East has put in that plea. I do not think it was entirely overstated but there was a point where I still believe the vast majority of primary school programmes that I go to in Barbados, the teachers there are involving those youngsters in things that are Barbadian. Sir, even white Barbadians, when they are gathered at Cattlewash to make plans for the rest of Barbados, they are eating pudding and souse, sweet potatoes, cou-cou and salt fish. They are not eating hamburgers nor chicken. They are imbibing in the most basic Barbadian culture which some Barbadians said they would not eat.

I believe that we must be conscious, as Barbadians, of the many strands that make up society and one strand has to be dominant. I do not share the Honourable Member's view that all must be equal; a strand must be dominant and the strand that is dominant, is the one that reflects...

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, on point of order. I never suggested that a specific strand has to be dominant. I

did say I believe that in cultural pluralism, there must be different channels of culture that exist in the system. I am not even suggesting there must be a form of fusion or integration in those cultures because just a small element of it is likely to be cultivated into a kind of creole culture itself. I still believe in pluralism where the strands move independent of each other, while moving parallel. I thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: A point of elucidation.

Mr. D. H. J. THOMPSON: A very good point but I am of the view that one strand must be dominant. I am saying it has to be the strand which reflects the majority of the people. I am of that view and I am unapologetic for saying that. I feel strongly that is the case and that any pluralization waters down often some of the basic features of what you might call that innate culture of people.
3.05 p.m.

In 1973, Yoruba was established with dancers like Sade Leon-Slinger and there was a big debate about the pelvic which was mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. Sir, I think we are beyond that because I was passing through St. John yesterday and I saw three primary school children completely bent over with their hands in their waists.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I would not even call it 'wukking up' because it was way past that. In fact, if you go to any other carnival, you will not see people 'wukking up' and dancing in the same way that Barbadians do. I have never seen it at carnival in Trinidad or in St. Lucia and we have now accepted it at the shows at the Gymnasium, the calypso tents and during Congaline Festival and some people now feel that it is time to pull back from that behaviour because they feel a bit shame about the full expression of the Barbadian culture.

Sir, it is far too late for that in my view because the full expression by our young people and how they feel when they hear music has flowered.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East is talking about a very narrow sector of the Barbadian sector and you might hear one or two editorials grumble about things that do not glorify traditional white Barbadian culture or foreign culture. They attack dub music and reject it as part of our culture and tell you that something else is our culture even though they cannot tell you what that something is.

Sir, our people must be exposed to foreign art forms. When Barbadians travel they should spend a little less money shopping and perhaps take in things like flamingo because the Spanish flamingo dancers are now using their waists and arms more than they did before because there is this realisation taking place. Whichever city Barbadians visit, they should share part of those cultural experiences and bring them back to Barbados to bear on the various expressions of art in communities, homes or schools if they are involved in PTA because they are important in building the character of Barbados and Barbadians.

Sir, a lot is happening in Barbados now for which our children can get great benefits and which can mould and build their personalities. I agree that we need more facilities in communities. We also need a cadre of people involved who have professional skills in dance and music to get them to work more actively with young people because that is the area in which we have been falling down in recent times.

There was a time when the Barbados Dance Theatre was active and groups like the Rowtana Dance Movement and Dance Experience were involved in modern dance but there are hardly any with that type of profile anymore but it is vital and important that a focus be returned to that aspect of our cultural experience.

Sir, this is always going to be a controversial subject. I am glad the controversy came in because we need to talk about what type of Barbados we are going to see, what areas we are going to commit resources to, and what direction we are going to take because that is how our children are going to express themselves. This is the only way our children are going to feel confidence and feel that they are participants in this society. This is why we need CBC and local productions.

Sir, there may be aspects of art that I do not like but there are some that I do like. There are personal judgments that people will make but they must be exposed to all forms of art so that they can make these judgements. I do not support any policy that is so restrictive that it does not provide opportunity for our citizens to be exposed to the widest possible cultural experiences both in Barbados and outside.

This is why I say that when our cricket and football teams go overseas they must become integrally involved and be supportive of cultural activities that are taking place in other countries and get to learn and see the culture of the nations they are visiting.

I always lament the fact that when Barbadians travel they stay in hotel rooms and shop and they do not get the chance to see the culture of the place they are visiting. This would also allow them to relax and take some of the burden from their shoulders.

3.15 p.m.

There is no promoter that can make certain kinds of productions successful and somebody has to underwrite them and it is usually a combination of Government's subsidy as well as the patronage of individuals who are interested in the arts. I believe that a larger proportion of the resources of the lotteries need to be devoted towards the arts in Barbados.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said that unless you can get a certain production to be underwritten and make sure that your tickets are affordable, you are only going to get a limited number of persons who are interested, and he is right about that. We need to make sure that there is enough exposure.

Sir, very often in Barbados there are activities where you find that the hall is practically empty. In the middle of the activity you would say to yourself that it would be wonderful if 50 or 60 school children could get the opportunity to come to see this particular activity. I believe that more needs to be done through the schools to ensure the exposure of school to certain kinds of activities.

When I was younger, there used to be a programme called 'Love Thy Neighbour', a comedy in England. They brought the actors from 'Love Thy Neighbour' to Barbados, not to perform 'Love Thy Neighbour' but to do readings from Shakespeare and for the first time we were able to see that interpretation, which was more interesting than we had experienced in the classroom, of Shakespeare on stage by a prominent black Trinidadian actor who was in the 'Love Thy Neighbour' series.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: It was outstanding. It changed my view because I was of the view that this was a waste of time. Why are we doing Shakespeare? Why are we doing European history? Although we were doing West Indian history, I was man enough to say that this is nonsense and that we should not be doing it. Later on in life I have recognised that all of that would have been vital and important because those were critical tools of analysis and comparison, providing great insights and opportunities to understand how the world works and what experiences other people have.

The final point that I want to make is that it is always going to be difficult in a country like Barbados, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said but not in this context, in which tourism plays a critical role. Sometimes you get a tremendous leveling down of our cultural activity just to support a spectacle for 1 000 tourists off a ship or performing in the hotels, that you lose some of the characteristics of our cultural art forms.

It is important for us to understand that there is something different between dance groups in frilly skirts performing for the hotels, entertaining tourists and yet building a cadre of artists who also, either in addition to that or separately, are involved in pushing the art form to new frontiers. It is always going to be difficult because in a society in which people would want to be paid or receive some benefit from the activity in which they are involved, is going to dominate significantly but that can also affect your best artists, the way they develop and grow, then you end up in a lot of cheap commercial artistic productions. Sometimes you can see this in the arts that is on display where people give you the impression that they are scenes of Barbados, a lot of cheap stuff being paraded all over this country. This does not help the young artists who are struggling and trying to do creative things, some of which we like and some of which we do not like, but who need our encouragement.

We have a balancing act to play as a society and any investment that goes to the arts, to my mind, is a worthwhile investment.

I believe that having a state of the art theatre is something that is desirable and it has my full support. Sir, particularly from the point of view of the people who are involved in theatrical productions, which are often very difficult in terms of the facilities that are available in Barbados.

Sir, it has my full support and I wish the National Cultural Foundation every success in getting this project on the road and ensuring that the Empire Theatre is once again a centre of the excellence that exists in Barbados.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I would wish to lend my support to this matter before the House. The Empire Theatre is one of several institutions which speak to the arts and to our culture in Barbados which need to be restored and enhanced.

It is my experience, Sir, that in Barbados today we are, perhaps, more culturally deprived than we were one hundred years ago. In most of the big cities of the world, whether there are in developed or developing countries, you would find what is sometimes described as a theatre district and this used to be true of this little City of Bridgetown a long time ago. We are more deprived in that sense today, particularly in the theatrical or the dramatic arts than in past times.

Sir, when I was a child there were the Empire Theatre, the Civic Theatre, the British Council, before we became independent, and an open-air theatre on Whitepark Road. All kinds of shows were held there. I can even hear the voice of Rudolph Hinds singing there as I speak. I used to belong to one organised by the late Daphne Joseph Hackett, three, four, five or six of us at Christmas or Easter, any opportunity

for a festival or even when there was no festival we would be in some old truck or some old car performing anywhere you could make up a stage. Across from this Chamber, Sir, in the Fountain Gardens, I remember at Christmas one night you would be Joseph and the next night you would be Mary or the next night you would be a shepherd, everybody knew everybody else's part. Drama was a part of our lives in every school and every church.

3.25 p.m.

In fact, the first dramatic production that I ever took part in was at James Street Methodist Church – Harvest, Easter, Christmas and that went across the whole broad spectrum because that is the nature of art and of our culture. It is as old as human kind and we cannot live without it. No matter how primitive or how sophisticated by western standards a culture may be, it is there. People sing, people dance and find ways to communicate their history, their ancestry, what they feel. They celebrate nature, they celebrate humanity, they speak to what is happening in the culture of the day, whether warfare as it is today, crime and violence as it is today. It was so 4 000 years ago. There is nothing new to this, but I am glad that the Empire Theatre is going to be restored and will become again part of the stock.

Fifteen years ago, almost every month there could be a production. When Nell Hall came to Barbados she sang at the Harrison College hall. I have gone to productions at Combermere hall. I have gone to productions in the steel shed in what used to be the Civic Theatre, in the open air, in the old Lower Green. There used to be an Upper Green 50 years ago and people performed. The Empire was a part of that. It is not a good thing that we have allowed it to deteriorate to the stage that it is at because it is at a place now where part of the roof is falling in and unfortunately the part above the stage and that has destroyed the stage.

Many years ago when I was a much younger person in the Parliament, I spoke to the restoration of the Empire Theatre and nobody took me on so it gives me an especial pleasure today that this measure is before this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, other Members have spoken and I am sure that other speakers will speak to the heritage aspect of the Empire Theatre as a building. You have two feet thick walls, a theatre which was custom designed with a proclivable arch. Perhaps the only other one is in Kingston, which is as small.

The last time I went to the one theatre in Kingston, a women's association was having a function and invited me to participate so I would expect that a modern Empire Theatre would have a multi-media function and would not only have, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North

West has hoped, a stage such as we know and an orchestra pit but it will have many of the features that will allow all kinds of production. Nowadays, productions are not limited to the stage and I am glad that this point was made by the Honourable Member for St. John.

The last time I went to a play in London, the Phantom of the Opera, one of the best that I have seen in years, it started off with a fantastic set and machinery and cast members coming out of the ceiling literally. Years ago, they would have come from under the stage and not only the wings. The lighting was out of this world. We can do all of this.

In the fifties, my late father together with a band of intrepid Thespians as it were, produced three years in a row, open air at Kensington Oval, Dorothy L. Sayers, *A Man Born to be King*. It used to play Good Friday night, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday and then Easter Monday we always went to Bathsheba for a picnic to celebrate. It was not a costly production that you could not afford it. In those days he built a set like a Hollywood set: Herod's temple, crosses that were larger than life and ordinary Barbadians participated in it, some who are still alive today.

Rudolph Hinds was one of the thieves on the cross and so was Sir Clyde Gollop the other thief who said when you get into your kingdom remember me. He who played Jesus became later on an Anglican priest. Gilmore Roachford was Pontius Pilate and his late wife was Claudia the wife of Pilate. A very tall distinguished man called Edward Powlett from St. George, I well remember, was Caiphas the High Priest.

I was coming home on a flight from Miami a few years ago and a young man sat next to me and shook my hand and said he was pleased to meet me and for years he had wanted to meet and he told me his name was Powlett. I said, "From St. George?" He said, "Yes." I said, "You know Edward Powlett?" He said, "He was my grandfather." I said, "Let me tell you something about your grandfather." He was reduced to tears. He had never seen his grandfather play Caiphas in *The Man Born to be King*.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are starved in Barbados for good modern plant, particularly for the performing arts. I will not limit it to drama. The Empire Theatre used to be not only a theatre in the twentieth century but a cinema as well. I remember it as a theatre. All kinds of productions took place there. I was a member of Joyce Stuart's Dance School and performed at the Empire Theatre. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West who is not now in his seat reminded me that he, too, because Madam Ifill had a dancing school, performed at the Empire Theatre. I well remember the former Lucinda Tudor, now Lucinda Hassel, and I tapped danced to a song called Bibbity Bobbity Boo. Joe Tudor was the MC. I was beautiful.

Mr. SPEAKER: You still are.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, it was a wonderful thing. It is a part of my memory for the whole of my life. I will never forget that.

Not only one class of society but right across the spectrum people have performed. What is important about the Empire Theatre as well as the environs. The environs are historic and remember that this matter before the House also speaks to the re-development of Golden Square which is part of the history of the twentieth century in Barbados. That the Empire Theatre and Golden Square would be the subject of a massive restoration project should be pleasing to all Barbadians of all walks of life. The entire area is going to be transformed.

I speak now of the Empire Theatre, Sir, in the context of the wider redevelopment plan of Bridgetown. That whole area is going to be revitalised. Everybody knows that the Minister of Finance has charged the Barbados National Bank with part of the responsibility for the restoration of Independence Square. Independence Square in Barbados, Sir, is a horrendous apology for a square of which we should be proud and at Independence time should be the focal point of activity. It is no more than a car park.

I was there last Saturday night. The Seventh Day Adventists were having a "We Can" youth service. We each took our can and wore our red ribbon. In typical Barbados fashion, the generator let them down but we all waited patiently 45 minutes. I see the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West laughing. As an aspiring impresario, he well knows those things but don't we all. We have all been on political platforms and know what it is when the set breaks down.

People waited patiently and I explained to them that the day is soon coming when Independence Square would be a green civic area with a stage floating on the Inner Careenage. When the Pierhead Project gets underway, that will be another component. Lower Bay Street is already under transformation for those who have eyes to see. Honourable Members must not worry about parking. High-rise car parking has already had Town Planning permission in respect of an area in the back of what used to be Modern Living that fronts onto Independence Square. Behind there, Barbados Shipping and Trading has already got plans underway – I see work going on but I do not know if it has begun – for multi-storey car parking.

Multi-storey car parking is also part of the Pierhead Redevelopment on the other side of Lower Bay Street. The Bethel Church also has plans for multi-storey car parking on their property which is larger than I ever knew, and I am a Methodist. They own almost that entire block from Probyn

Street right back to Wellington Street. They do not go back to Nelson Street. The properties that front onto Nelson Street, their back premises, so to speak, tends to be where Bethel's property goes back.

They came to see me in the context of Bridgetown redevelopment and discussed plans several years ago and those plans include multi-storey car parking. Already they have ground car parking and there is going to be a great deal more because of the development which is already underway.

Mr. Speaker, the city is like so many cities that are not set out on the European grid. Bridgetown is a patchwork of little villages and you can still see how those are: Church Village, Chapman Lane, Cheapside. That was downtown and uptown across the river, the Empire Theatre is uptown of the river as we would say in the City. Its cultural relevance and its historic relevance together with what is going to be done at Golden Square are of importance to us.

3.35 p.m.

We are living in a generation where we do not sufficiently communicate some of these things that we took for granted to the generation coming after us. When we were children at school, there were no drugs and alcohol for us. Our parents were a little too strict for that but at school in lunch time, I used to produce plays. I know what it is to go to a white English Head Mistress at Queens College and ask permission to produce plays at lunch time, in Barbadian dialect, where Jeanette Layne Clarke or someone else played the piano. Sir, we engaged in all kinds of pursuits after school every evening, such as the Drama Society, singing and the Scripture Union. I am not saying that they do not exist today, but I would like to see even more of those activities.

Mr. Speaker, the way that you encourage young people is to put examples before them. In my recollection, when I was a child and certain shows came to Barbados, there sometimes used to be a school's Matinee, and at a special charge, we went at four o'clock in the afternoon, chaperoned by our teachers and we would get to see some of the shows that were deemed suitable for school children. Sir, in this way, we were introduced to other cultural influences and it allowed us to have a better appreciation for what was our own. I do not recall, in my time, having any difficulty with recognising what was Barbadian and what was peculiar to the Barbadian culture.

Sir, the same goes for almost everything. Fifty years ago, this Chamber in which we meet did not look like this. These walls were covered in a horrible green cement plaster. When this was restored, the architect was afraid even to touch it and I came in here with a stone mason's axe and started on a wall and said, now, finish it. This is good Barbadian soft stone and part of our culture. Nobody

remembers now what it used to look like at that time. We take it almost for granted and these are the things that we must do, and I hope they are not going to take the Empire into any plaster, but let us see the beautiful soft stone.

Sir, like the Honourable Member for St. John, I feel the same about the size of the balcony. The kind of theatre we are talking about is one where intimacy is important. The people on the stage have to interact with the people in the audience. The acoustics are important because you do not want too much of the sound coming up. When you go into a theatre like that and the lights go down and the curtain goes up, you are in another world immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that everything...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: There were many other places for entertainment. The Marshall Hall which is a derelict building now on Hincks Street, over 100 years ago used to be what were known then as Assembly Rooms. The late London Bourne built assembly rooms on Bay Street, where productions and big dinners, *et cetera*, were held. A lot of what goes on at the Sherbourne Conference Centre now, used to go on, at all kinds of venues, in and around the City of Bridgetown.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased because, as you know, we have great plans for both downtown Bridgetown and uptown Bridgetown. A lot is going on in downtown Bridgetown now and the Cheapside Market is well underway. I am amazed that at 6.30 a.m. on Saturday mornings when I am passing there going to the gym, to see that cars are parked right up to lower Broad Street. People are so excited that I know that when the market is finished, it is going to be patronised like we have never seen in our time.

I would wish – and I see the Honourable Member for Agriculture looking in my direction – as the Minister of Finance has already given approval, so that we can soon start on the Fairchild Street Market. When we were children, Bridgetown used to be humming at the two ends. A Saturday morning was an experience out of this world in Bridgetown and it must go back there again. It must go back to a place where in the evenings, there are all kinds of entertainment so that people can choose.

You may choose to go to a production at the Empire Theatre, you may choose to go to the Globe cinema, or you may choose to go to the Daphne Joseph Hackett Theatre to another kind of production. Sir, I do not have any problems with multi-culturality or what the Honourable Members are referring to as pluralism in culture.

Jazz is now very much a part of our lives as it is everywhere in the world. We all know where it started and on an evening, you can go down to the Waterfront here and get some jazz. There was a time when you could go further up Bay Street to a place called the Cave and get some jazz and even shortly before that, at the Belair you could get some jazz and all of that has to return to Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, that enriched us and I would like to think that the generation coming after me now, although they have different expressions of art which did not exist in our time, should also be able to widen their horizons, just like our generation must look now to an appreciation of some of the newer art forms that are coming upon us. We do not have to like everything, but we should have this opportunity for exposure to all things. The dramatic arts perhaps are the earliest, together with cave paintings and signing. I suppose those were the earliest of all, but when men and women began to imitate each other, that was the beginning of the theatre of that time.

Mr. Speaker, I have been calling for this a long time and I am pleased that I now have the support of Honourable Members on all Sides, in and out of this House, to see that the Empire Theatre will come to join many other buildings which are right for restoration and preservation in the City of Bridgetown, such as the Old Town Hall and the Barbados Mutual Building. Sir, you know, we take these things for granted as we pass by them every day and we want to see, not only the tourists, but local Barbadians using these facilities.

Your Honour, Sir, you would have recognised in this House earlier today, the new UNESCO Director for the Caribbean who is paying a courtesy call. This is her first call and she came here at the invitation of myself and the Honourable Minister of Education. She met me early and I took her on a tour of this House. I showed her the Senate Chamber and this Chamber, explained to her that all of the mahogany paneling and these chairs were the work of Barbadians. It is good old Barbadian mahogany and the work was mostly done by the prisoners at Glendairy Prison. I explained to her about the soft stone and the stained glass. I do not think that there is anywhere else in the world where Cromwell is immortalised in stained glass. Sir, that is no small, little treasure that we have there. She is a Canadian, so as a member of the Commonwealth, she understands these things.

Your Honour's Chair, carved in teak, is a gift from the people of India. You will see them in other Commonwealth Parliaments because this is the gift that the Indian Parliament likes to give to other parliaments. Again, this chair speaks to the Indian culture. It also speaks to the parliament culture of the Commonwealth and makes many statements.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: ...Everything, and that is culture. Sir, Dame Elsie Payne taught me history in fifth and sixth forms and of all the things she taught me, I always remember she said that religion means your way of life. Some denominations depict and personify that more than others. The Jews and the Seventh Day Adventists actually live their religion on a daily basis in a way that other Christians do not. So I think that culture in the context in which we are discussing it in this debate is like that. It speaks in every way to our way of life.
3.45 p.m.

Sir, everything in this Chamber, everything in my house, your house and everybody's house must reflect who we are as Barbadians. When I walk into my house I see those things which are Barbadian. I see wood, soft stone and paintings on the walls. All of these reflect my culture in which I am most comfortable.

In listening to other Honourable Members, it is clear to characterise this debate as one in which the Empire Theatre is symbolic of an aspect of our culture which is worthy of preservation. There are other buildings in the city in need of restoration, I am staying in the city not that there are not other buildings outside of the city whose preservation I do support, but I am seeing the Empire Theatre in the immediate context of the redevelopment of Bridgetown.

Bridgetown 150 to 200 years ago was a place where there was entertainment and cultural pursuits in a way that is not so today. In those days, the planter class had town houses. The remnants of these houses can still be seen in Belleville and George Street and a few of them are still left along River Road and Bay Street. The planter class came to town for a season of culture and entertainment and we need Bridgetown to go back to that again. Bridgetown, as well as Speightstown, Oistins and the Glebe, has to be the place where one would wish to come. Bridgetown is the capital city and capital cities must reflect the culture of its people. A capital city cannot be barren of a cultural statement in this way. A capital city has to be that which is a foretaste of everything else that you would see when you traverse a country or a little island city state which is essentially what Barbados is.

Mr. Speaker, what is proposed for the Empire Theatre is only a part of a larger campus in which this Government is painting images which we hope, 100 or 200 years from now, those generations who succeed us will say that we have preserved something for them that was worthy of preservation.

There are other competing interests at this time but we have not overlooked the cultural component amiss a recession and other competing interest which say something positive for us in our generation.

I hope that in my time we would cease to call the Empire Theatre 'the Empire Greats'. I had difficulty with it when I was younger so now I am older I would have an even greater difficulty with it. The Empire Theatre needs to speak more to us as to who Barbados is. The days of the Empire are gone. I know that it is used in other connections but in this connection speaking to our culture it is now a contradiction and will be even more so when it is restored to former glory. So I hope that the Ministry of Culture will look at that as well.

Mr. Speaker, when Bridgetown is restored and the redevelopment is more advanced than it is now because this is a work that will go on even beyond our time, I have stated it publicly and I will state it again that I am prepared to devote the rest of my life to this, the renewed Empire Theatre can only add to the lustre of the city not only for ourselves but for those who come from outside like she whom I spoke of earlier.

The UNESCO director is a Canadian and she was greatly impressed with the antiquity of our parliamentary process. She said that this is a lovely building. I told her it is not a very old building because it is barely over 100 years old. In Barbados in terms of our Parliament you have to be over 370 years old to be described as very old. She said; I am a Canadian and we are just over 200 years old. So I did not have to say it, it was better for her to say it than I. So we must not take for granted this genuine antiquity that speaks to our mores including our cultural mores. The Empire Theatre and all that it stands for is a part of that.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to salute the Ministry of Culture and I would like to end on this point and other Honourable Members have spoken to it. Everywhere in the world theatres of this kind are not profit-making entities. Those of us who watch Channel 58 PBS see the appeals being made for support. Any public cultural undertaking always has to be subsidised, whether they are national art galleries, national music, national schools, national orchestras or national theatres.

Those of us who love the arts particularly the performing arts must be prepared to help with fundraising when the Empire Theatre becomes an entity and to help to generate the kind of performances and the kind of life that we want to give to a new Empire Theatre. We must not take it for granted.

Our theatre groups, dramatic groups, singing groups and other performing groups do not exist in great numbers today as they did 30 or 40 years ago. So I hope that the very knowledge that this kind of investment is being made will encourage and give a fillip to existing groups so that they begin to prepare themselves for what is going to be presented

to them and understand that they would have to make some little and in some cases some larger contribution so that it does not fall into dereliction again.
3.55 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have been able to participate in this Debate. It is something that I have waited for many years to come to pass. It is extraordinarily pleasing and gratifying to me that we have come to this place. Sir, I hope very soon – I do not want it to turn into a long five-year plan – the works will come to completion and that we will...

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Well, these things take time. It comes from an idea. Somebody has to have the dream; that turns into an idea; which turns into a plan; which turns into a project; which turns into a reality and that is what I think is happening at this time.

Mr. Speaker, I am much obliged for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, this Debate gives me enormous pleasure because, over the years, Debates on Culture in this Parliament have tended to empty the House; we shied away from dealing with these matters. I was trying to get a record of debate on Culture for the last 20 years but I have not got it.

Sir, Members who have already spoken have touched on the relevant aspects of Government policies in relation to culture and although I feel I should essay a few points in that regard I want to move to another point. I am very glad the Government has decided to use the Empire Theatre space for drama and theatre in Barbados. Sir, there is a little history to it. Too often in this Chamber they try to hurry some of us out of Parliament and tell us we are too old but we need memory so that debates in Parliament can be rooted in the reality of what has happened in the past.

Sir, in the 1970s' the Government bought the services of Edward E. Brathwaite Consultancy to look at the State and the number of places in Barbados for cultural happenings. He came up with a number of recommendations for the restoration of a number of our cultural spaces and our cultural values. Among the recommendations of Professor Brathwaite was the Empire Theatre which had become derelict. The gestation period for this has been a long one. We must not believe this is something that has happened in the last 10 years or that, as the Honourable Member for St. John mentioned, it has been their policy too, to restore it and, therefore, I believe all parties who have any interest were supportive of that idea.

Sir, there was an economic period when we in Barbados were made to feel that anything that did not relate to material; whether it was money, GDP, mortar, nothing other than those were important and, therefore, cultural development was put on the back burner in many cases. However, in 1977 when the first Ministry of Culture was established – and I had the honour of being the first Minister – prior to that period, there was a Minister of Education, who had made a rather idiotic comment in these Chambers that, 'What culture? The people in Barbados are already cultured. They know how to eat with knife and fork.' That was the extent of the appreciation of that Minister of the DLP of what culture was about.

The Debate today shows we have made a quantum leap since then because contributions from both Sides of the House have revealed there is a greater and deeper appreciation of our cultural values and traditions, and the importance it means to the society and to individuals in our community. This Ministry was established in 1977 and, for the first time, Government injected very large sums of money into a Government agency to help with the development of Culture. In 1981, CARIFESTA was the catalyst of much of what has happened since then. There is no doubt that – and nobody disputes it – there has been a renaissance of a number of cultural traditions or practices since CARIFESTA, 1981, which has given Barbadians and particularly Barbadian children, far more confidence in themselves. We have created a new generation who is more creative, more expressive, more confident and more aware of whom they are in this whole community. Sir, that is something that cannot be quantified but there has been an enormous transformation of the life of Barbadians outside of what is material. CARIFESTA was a historic event in the lives of Barbadians. As the Honourable Member of St. John has said, there was a lot of criticism but it was facile and ignorant. The Honourable Member of St. John has spent many a time in this Chamber and on the outside, wondering about the expenditures and so on.

Sir, the only theatre space there was in the last 25 years was the Queen's Park Theatre which was rebuilt, refurbished and refurnished during that period. The other space was the Combermere School Hall, with the equipment, lighting and other things being put in to equip the Combermere School Hall as a proper theatre space. Sir, nothing else was done for the creation of any space in Barbados since that period in 1981.

Sir, despite the limitations that had been imposed by Government and the society, we have struggled through all this and have managed to create a strong and healthy theatre in this country. Sir, the Honourable Member for the City has said that this country is culturally deprived and there was a lot that used to happen in the past that does not now happen. There is also a lot that is happening now

that did not happen in the past and a lot that is happening now is steeped in tradition of the past.
4.05 p.m.

Sir, as I said, a lot of this has to do with the hosting of CARIFESTA in Barbados in the 1980s. Crop Over from 1980 and onwards changed the face of cultural behaviour and patterns in this country.

Sir, the Honourable Member for the City was in the Cabinet at that time and I remember that there was reluctance on the part of the Cabinet of that period to go overboard in creating, devising and putting on a newlook Crop Over because there was the feeling that somehow Barbadians were not expressive people, to put it in a euphemistic way. They would sneak into Trinidad and jump up in Carnival but their middle class inhibitions would not allow them to do the same thing in Barbados because they would be concerned about whether the neighbour would approve of this behaviour. We felt that Kadooment would not succeed in Barbados because Barbadians would not go out and jump even though it was the biggest event in the history of Barbados and that was proven to be wrong.

Professor Rex Nettleford who is one of the cultural leaders in the Caribbean wrote that culture was the product of one's creative intellect. I have a lot of regard for the professor and I value him as one of my friends but I think that is too narrow a definition of culture and what it entails in the community because creativity is important and it is at the essence of all culture and development. Other people define culture as the sum total of man's experience but perhaps that definition is too wide. Sir, somewhere in between the two Barbadians have found a happy medium. What is happening in this island in this period is a refinement of all the best traditions in this country and the adjustment of traditional Barbados to meet modern realities and everybody is fitting in.

Drama in Barbados is no longer the Green Room Theatre and one of the biggest things we now have is 'Laff It Off'. While I do not use 'Laff It Off' as the best expression of our people, it is an expression of our people.

Sir, I am a classical man by training and inclination. I believe in dialectics when people are more concerned with other material things. In the past when we had debates on Culture, the House would become empty because Members would walk out and sit in the lounge as they wanted to talk about roads and housing. I once heard a Minister of Finance say that we should not give \$2.5 million to culture because that same \$2.5 million would build a lot of houses but I now see that the Ministry of Culture has been taken over by the Prime Minister.

I am of the view that a Minister of Finance can make any Minister look good or bad depending on how much money he gives to a particular Ministry. Now that the Minister of Finance is the Minister of Culture, I am sure that there will be an enhanced cultural revolution in this country and it is going to work to the benefit of all in this country. It is not something that one section of the community is going to enjoy and not the other.

Sir, as I said before, I am a classical man and I was weaned on plays of people like Socrates, Aristotle and Euripides. I was taught the subtle appreciation of these things and how drama can be used to impact on the lives of communities and people in a positive time.

Sir, a restored Empire Theatre is going to be a very important agency in the development of the people in this country and I commend the Government on this. It is going to be part of the general Bridgetown development and is important as well but I am sure it is going to be a beacon in central Bridgetown and that it will radiate outwards. It will transform life in Bridgetown and the lives of people who want to do something useful in the evenings.

I picked up a debate between the Honourable Member for St. John and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East about this business of 'strands of culture' and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East found it necessary to get up and explained that he was talking about 'a plurality of cultural strands'. Sir, I hold the same view that the Honourable Member for St. John holds, that in a society like ours there must be a positive cultural strand and I see this in many parts of the world. In Brazil they do not make excuses to anybody about what they are doing because they are maintaining and preserving African culture in this hemisphere. I think that we in Barbados should not shy away from it. There must not be any exclusivity.
4.15 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Sir, language is beautiful in itself. Whether Martin Carter, Kamau Brathwaite or the great poets of the 16th and 17th Century write, I see beauty in the use of language. I also believe that there has to be the dominant cultural strand in making such a comparison. If we do not have a dominant cultural strand, we are not going to get those that should be onboard, onboard. There has to be something that they believe with all their heart that it is part of them.

We have shied away from giving expression to these things. We do not talk about culture in this country. We talk around it but we do not talk about it. There is a view in this Parliament that our culture cannot be everything without having leadership, something must be out front and we know what that is.

I want to make a comment, not for criticism. The Honourable Member for the City mentioned something about primitive culture. There is no such thing as a primitive culture.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Do not mind them, they do not know anything. People from the west do not know anything, our civilisation predated theirs and they cannot tell us about the state of the development of our culture.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: They do not make life comfortable and fulfilling. They still run to the Psychiatrist and tie themselves up with rope.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to finish without talking about Bulkeley.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member this is all part and parcel of heritage, so you have to make it connect.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Sir, I am going to make it connect. Do you think that I am going to bring that in and do not connect it? It is an integral part of the lives of the people of St. George.

I am going to suggest that if Bulkeley closes, as I am hearing that it will at the end of this crop season, that the Government gives serious consideration to having Bulkeley listed as a world heritage site and that we seek funding from UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation) for the development of such a site. I have a draft proposal that I will submit to the Government on what should be done to the Bulkeley Plant if and when it closes.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: In 1972, the World Heritage Foundation was passed but I do not know if Barbados signed the Convention. If Barbados has not signed the Convention, I wish that they would because Barbados needs to access funds for heritage sites such as the Bulkeley site.

I have asked the people at the Government Industrial Service to go into Bulkeley this week and take photographs of the operation of the factory machinery because it is possible that we might never see Bulkeley Factory in operation again and we need to preserve it.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I am going to submit a project with all the details for funding for Bulkeley to be a heritage site. I have already spoken to the Ministry of Tourism to get their input.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: There is a preponderance of projects in Europe and Latin America but there are not enough in the Caribbean and Africa. The World Heritage Convention is currently looking at old churches and things of that nature. However, they are now prepared to look at factories and gorges and things of that nature.

I looked at the criteria that they used and Bulkeley fits into two or three of the categories. I would be putting in this project and will be exhorting the Members of the Government to give their support to it because we in Barbados have rich heritage that should be preserved for posterity. I have not yet seen any project that can outdo Bulkeley Factory.
4.25 p.m.

A lot of people come over from Edey Village out of Christ Church to work at Bulkeley Factory. They are going to go home at the end of the crop. The Empire Theatre is an old heritage site in Barbados and I am giving an old heritage site in Barbados, in my view, even more important than the Empire Theatre even though I can see that the Empire Theatre is very important.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North does not want to listen because it may not fit in exactly to what he understands would be difficult. I am not going to get any further, Sir, because I understand that we have to talk these things over and over again. Even though I get in here and repeat over and over my own view on Bulkeley and those of the people of my constituency of St. George there are still people who say that I have to put the case some more so I will put it every time that I have an opportunity. Government has a responsibility to be a greater facilitator of cultural development in this country. Historically, it has been left to the private sector and individuals. The Honourable Member for the City has carried me back to my childhood when all these events used to take place in Bridgetown and its environs and I remember those were all private productions. It is now necessary more and more for Government to get involved in cultural productions because it is at the heart and soul of society. Any society that seeks to develop without taking on board its traditions, its values, cultural and otherwise, is a society that is heading in the wrong direction.

I am grateful to you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to support this Resolution and to say that I am very glad to be still in the House to see us reach the stage where at long last the Empire Theatre is going to be restored to perform some of the very vital functions which it performed for many years. I am now in my 60s and I can recall from a child the importance which that building played in allowing persons to display their artistic skills and to hone a lot of the culture of our country, Barbados.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, Sir, there are only two persons in this House who have had the privilege of performing on the stage at the Empire and that is the Honourable Member for the City who was quite a tap dancer in her youth and who has performed on the Empire stage as a tap dancer and myself who have both danced and acted on the Empire stage. I have certainly witnessed at the Empire outstanding performances by Barbadians, whether it was the late Frank Collymore, whether the late Joe Tudor or Mrs. Joyce Stuart or whether Mrs. Penny Ramsey on the dance and particularly the ballet in her case. These were people who made a tremendous contribution to the cultural development of Barbados and who took children some of them without the financial wherewithal to pay their way to take lessons, took them freely and helped them to develop their artistic skills.

So when I see that we are once again restoring something that has played such an important role in the development of all of our citizens, both black and white, and in fact one witnessed sometimes integration taking place in that theatre that you did not see taking place normally in the society, I am extremely pleased, Sir.

People do not recall a lot of our local history but the Empire Theatre was part of the development by special Act of Parliament of the area of Bay Street where incentives were given to the private sector in particular to develop that area. When I became Attorney General, I came across the Act and I was pleasantly surprised to find that the land was owned by Government but nothing had been done even to collect the rent which I think was something like \$1200 a year for the theatre. Those persons who leased the theatre then were obviously not keen on spending money for its restoration since it would have reverted naturally to Government in the year 2000. They were therefore in breach of their obligations.

We started since the late 70s and it took us I see up to 1987 to seek to recover the cinema or the theatre for the people of Barbados and that is why the lease was forfeited. I believe that we should put this into history because very often we do not realise the history of these things. When I saw the Government bring the Special Development Areas Act here and heard the criticism coming at one stage from some members of the House, I was surprised because this was the way in which we did development over 100 years ago.

Sir, the fastest growing industries outside of tourism in the world are the creative industries and those creative industries can be classified under two headings or categories, one is culture and the other is sports. Any Government that is conscious of economic development must therefore ensure that it places a significant proportion of its gross domestic product or its annual revenue into the development of these industries because of the economic impact which they can have on the country's development.

I am going to speak a bit about that a little later. A second reason why we must place a significant proportion of our GDP on the development of these two industries is because they are the industries that attract our young people more than anything else and allow them to give expression to their God-given talents. I have seen and witnessed, certainly since the 1980s when the Honourable Member for St. George had the responsibility for education and culture, a tremendous flourishing of the arts in this country. Whether it is the performing arts or any of the other arts, one has seen the blossoming of a tremendous amount of talent. Just look at the painters, the sculptors, the persons who are in dance and music today and see how Barbados has really developed in this area in the last 20 years or so.

I believe those are two strong reasons and I regret very much that we have been rather late in placing the accent on either. Even today we are not spending enough on either the development of sports or the development of culture. I really make a plea to the Government and to the private sector to get seriously involved in this area because it would help us develop our people skills and at the same time provide employment and economic rewards and development for the country as a whole. Last year, I believe The Economist carried a very useful article on this very subject and underscored the importance of sports and of culture to the development and even to the cohesion of the nation.

I do hope that this Government and any other Government that comes after it will find it possible to increase the amount of money that we are spending in this area. Only over the weekend we saw the explosion of talent in an island of 260 000 at the Barbados Amateur Swimming Association sponsoring the CARIFTA meet. It was a pleasure to witness the performance of our young people in that area. At the same time when you looked around you saw people from other CARICOM countries doing likewise but bringing money into Barbados, keeping our young people out of drugs, giving them confidence in themselves to see that they are as talented as other people so that they do not have any hang ups and fears about themselves and how they look and what they do because they are exercising their talents.

4.35 p.m.

I think that, in addition to money, the Government has to do a lot more for the protection of these industries. Again,

when I was in the Ministry of the Attorney General, together with other Ministers, we developed and reformed the laws that protect these types of industries, such as copyright, trademark, design and industrial arts. I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael East in this respect.

Part of the problem that we had with the development of our industry was that the colonial domination was very strong because we had on our Statute Book, a law which says that if a trademark was registered in London, it had automatic protection in Barbados. Could you imagine that someone develops an industry here or a particular product, or an industrial design and before they can register it somebody registers it as a trademark in England, and automatically it is protected and they lose their own protection? We had to change that and the same happens, to some extent, with culture.

Therefore, I think that the Government must constantly revise the laws that give protection to our artists and sports people. The Government should not only improve the laws, but the manner in which we fight for their protection overseas. Our best singers and song writers are virtually unprotected in the American market because before a calypso is properly minted in Barbados, it is copied in New York and elsewhere. There is no proper protection given to the artists in this respect, and we do not seem to have the capability of using our embassies and elsewhere to add to this protection. Therefore, we have to put our support behind the artists, in a practical manner, if they are to grow.

Sir, I do not only want to see that we are protecting our music, I want to see that we are protecting our paintings and our poetry. Anybody could see Adisa Andwele developing a new art form for the world, not only for Barbados. I predict that unless we put some money and support behind him, his art form will be copied by the Germans and the Swedes and the next thing we know, it is their industry and culture and not our own.

It hurts me when I see for instance, that we import steel pans from Sweden, although the steel pan was virtually developed in Trinidad and Tobago. The Swedes now produce and sell on the world market and in Sweden. I have been in Sweden and seen them selling steel pans. Sir, that blows my mind...

Aside.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: I also see that in England the steel pan is so respected that it is taught in schools. Now, Sir, we had a fight here to get the churches to understand that church music has developed down through the centuries and that they have used instruments, whether it is the flute, the oboe or something else, in order to inspire

people. We have had a fight here to get our churches to accept the calypso within the church and I do not understand it.

I am very fond of church music, whether I am listening to Jacobean music or church music of the Germans. Joseph Niles and Sister Marshall are heroes for me, in Gospel music.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: They must be, but we are not accepting them in our churches. Sir, my grandmother was Pentecostal, so she understood the tambourine and the symbols. It was part of my upbringing to realise that I could praise God in this way and enjoy it as part of our culture, but I could never understand why the Anglican Church ran away from it, in Barbados.

Now, in England, they see the possibility of incorporating calypsoes into their classical music, and are making use of this concept. We have here one of our outstanding musicians who has written a symphony, using the calypso in particular. What are we doing about it? We wait until the English people come to Holder's Hill and they will incorporate Gabby and a few others in their shows, rather than us taking the initiative in this respect.

Sir, I think the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was right to talk about that contradiction. We have to be confident about ourselves and appreciate our very valuable talents. If you come to my house, you will probably see a reasonably good collection. My first collection I gave to my first set of children and told them not sell them while I am alive. They can have the use of them, but they become theirs when I am dead. I have started a second collection of paintings, but I never waste my money to buy a reproduction on a piece of paper from Europe, when I can buy an original here from Barbados and encourage our artists...

Aside.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Sir, this is a fact. I have taken from the young artists, from school children right up. If I have the money to spend, I spend it with them to encourage them. I do not go to acquire a Rembrandt. Not that I do not appreciate and love Rembrandt, but I feel at this stage of our development, my emphasis must be giving protection to the artists in Barbados and in the wider Caribbean.

I think that the Honourable Member for St. Michael was making the point that we have to lend this support and I say to the private sector, when I walk into your offices in Bridgetown or elsewhere, why do I not see more support given to our painters and to our sculpturers? It does not cost a lot. I go in and I see a picture of some film star that you

cannot identify. Why the support is not given to our photographers? We have some of the best photographers in the world and why do we not support them? Why do we not see their photographs taken, and placed in the offices here? Sir, I am making the point that we have to protect our photographers. We have to protect our dramatists, we have to protect our artists and we have to protect the performing arts, in all due respect.

Sir, the other reason why it is very important that a place like the Empire Theatre should be made the centre piece and part of our cultural heritage, is because of the educational aspect. I want to say this because I hear a lot about community theatre. When I was a child and growing up many years ago, more than half a century ago, community theatre was practised, Mr. Speaker, right in our schools and in our churches, including the little church hall.
4.45 p.m.

As a child three years old, I came up reciting poetry which was written by my school teacher and by preachers in the church halls in Lodge Road and in Water Street. The first time that I ever recited poetry was in the Wesleyan Holiness Church in Lodge Road. Throughout the year not only at harvest time we had these community events to bring the community together in God's setting and also to protect people who did not have any opportunity.

All Honourable Members who are over 40 years old would recall that you used to dress up in your only suit if you had one. That was the khaki suit you wore to school during the week. It was taken off you on Fridays and washed, you wore it to church on Sunday and it was repressed and ready for the next week. Very few people had shoes then. If you get a pair of pumps, you usually get those pumps at Christmas and those guinea bird shoes had to last you a long time. They were used for special occasions, to go to church and to perform on the stage. That is part of our culture.

Sir, it is usually the people at the lower end of the economic scale who represent the culture of a country more so than those at the top. In almost every country the people at the top are the ones who are able to get the ones at the lower end to perform for them. Sir, we have not got many sponsors of the artistes here and I wonder why. Barbadians who have made it to the top and are rich by Barbadian standards do not sponsor a little child from Bonnetts, for instance, who has artistic talent like in ceramic or whatever. The Dukes, the Kings, the Counts, the Earls and others did that for the great artists of the world and Europe has managed now to get a Rembrandt and a Van Gogh who sells paintings for millions and millions of pounds.

Many of them do not appreciate or support our calysonians. Gabby is an artist of international repute. He is an asset. He rivals some of the best in the world, however, he is not the only one. Joseph "Joe" Tudor, was one of the

best comic actors that have been produced in the world. For comedy you could not beat him. If you see him on the stage or listen to him on the Rediffusion you would see an outstanding artist.

Mr. Speaker, Rudolph Hinds was one of the best actors, singers and dramatists but you would not have known him. How many of them would have supported Festus Thompson or Cynthia Alleyne-Wilson? These are the people whose names we do not even have on a stamp or on a street. They are unacknowledged despite the tremendous contribution they have made to our cultural development.

What other country would allow people like Joe Tudor, Joyce Stuart, Rudolph Hinds or the Reverend Pat Deane – he is one of the best singers in the world.

There is a youngster who comes out of the Rock and the Goodridge families from St. Peter who is now a leading tenor rivalling some of the best operatic singers in the world but he is operating in Canada in order to make a living.

Across the wider world there are Barbadians who have made their mark in the dramatic arts, in the performing arts and in music. There are those at home who are unacknowledged. So we have to say to our people that have the talent, we have faith in it and we will assist it. So I believe that the Government must put its money where its mouth is.

Asides.

Hon. Sir HENRY FORDE: Sir, my wife would say that wherever spouge was being played, whether it was Jackie Opel or the Draytons Two who have tried to preserve his music, I would find myself there along with the Honourable Philip Greaves. We were not out for any other reason at nights. We were following around what we thought was the blooming of a new music.

Jackie Opel's memory is only now recalled but we missed a great opportunity because he was ahead of a lot of those who developed in Jamaica later. Barbados would have been on the forefront at that time but he did not get the support. The Jamaicans took our form and developed it into the Ska and various other things. If you go back to Jackie Opel's beat, you will find that it is really indigenous music because my blood father who is still alive at 106 from Silver Hill, and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central should be here, and my uncles used to play that form of music. My father still makes his own guitar. He can make a violin if you want him to. I do not know if he can do it as well as he used to before.

Sir, 106 years ago he had no school to go to. He was privately educated in which there were two hours of music every day. One hundred and six years ago he was not too far

from slavery so people of talent then did not have this opportunity. He grew up to be a carpenter with the skill of designing houses but he would not have had the opportunity to go to any primary, secondary or tertiary educational institution and we are forgetting these things.
4.55 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, my view is that the people at the top either come sometimes to laugh or to show almost a cynical appreciation of these matters which takes them some time before they understand themselves. Sir, when I look at a person who is interested in the arts, when I look at the arts worldwide, that seems to be a feature of what happens in the community.

Sir, I hope that the Empire Theatre would be rebuilt but I also make a plea for a number of other places. The Queens Park Theatre was restored soon after our Independence. I remember when the late Lisle Carmichael, Iris Bannochie and a few others were alive, they had a hand in helping with Professor Oliver Messell in the restoration of the Queens Park Theatre.

Sir, I was deeply disappointed to go into the Park recently and to realise that it needs money being spent on it. I have since had the assurance from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North that the Government is going to be restoring the Queens Park Theatre. I am happy to hear that because for us of my generation, the Queens Park Theatre was the place where, not only one went to exhibitions and agricultural shows but also cultural events. For example, our Police Bands down through the year. Sir, that is why it hurts me when I see that we have only just been able to restore the Hastings Rocks but there is no reason why Hastings Rock should not get back to its full glory.

When I was a child, every Friday night at Hastings Rocks – I hope the Minister of Tourism is listening to me on this one – the Police Band drew thousands of people of all ages and colour. That was where the heart of tourism began and we provided that opportunity. Sir, at the time when we started to break down the colour barrier in this country, as a child I have witnessed the performances that took place in the basement of the Ocean View Hotel. Not many people of my complexion could have gotten in there other than those persons working as barmen or something of that sort but we must be realistic about Barbados. I probably am the only member that represents such a large proportion of our white citizens in the population. Sir, the reality is, there was discrimination in this country to the extent that certain people of a certain colour could not enter the Ocean View Hotel to witness a show, neither could they get into the Marine Hotel. That has now been broken down. My adopted mother never saw any colour barriers. She had to be let in or she would take you to court. She has even had discrimination at the altar of a church.

Sir, I have seen cultural performances in these places, therefore, the point I am making is that the hotels and the schools can still be used for cultural development and cultural presentation. Therefore, just as we are doing now, when we build the new resource centres, we should also put the emphasis on that. Sir, I want to see the Queens Park Theatre restored. I want to see a wider use being made of the hotel plant in this respect and that they do not renegade our artistes; that when they come they have somewhere to change; they are not treated as though they are just coming with their instruments, to stand up and can hardly use the facility. I think that has been changing a lot now but in past days, the artistes were treated as though they were outsiders.

Sir, I am begging for more sponsorship. I do not believe this can be done by Government alone. I believe that corporate Barbados and individuals who have made a lot of money, whether from selling land or from professions, should help the artistes and contribute to them so that they could expand their talents. Sir, I believe we ought to also invest in future in our young people and not constantly to harp on how bad they are. I have seen the Pinelands Creative Workshop take children that normally would not have had an opportunity and turned their artistic talents to the extent that it rivals that of the children of developed countries that have more money and it is a tremendous pleasure to watch what is happening there.

Sir, why I feel so deeply about this is that I have the good fortune to have two mothers – a natural mother and one who has adopted me. I have seen her hone the talents and skills of poor, rich, black and white children all her life and has made an outstanding contribution to dance, drama, as well as to design. Therefore, I feel deeply honoured that both NIFCA and the Barbados Community College have named trophies after her, for her outstanding contribution at a time when people did not recognise her. I was very moved a few weeks ago when moving tributes were paid to her from persons like my good friend, Mr. Rudolph Hinds and others, who she had worked with over the course of 50 years.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the talent which we have will benefit in the future from this reinvestment in the Empire Theatre.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a small contribution to this Resolution on the restoration of the Empire Theatre.

Sir, I never thought that I would be so attracted to the whole idea of drama as I was when I was at law school in Jamaica. Indeed, I used to find myself every week asking the question what was going on at the Creative Arts Centre at Mona. Sir, I was there with about 5 or 6 other students from Barbados and we always found ourselves over at the Creative Arts Centre because there was a kind of intimacy, closeness and connection between the artistes and the

audience and I think that was one of the things that drew us, like a magnet, to the Creative Arts Centre. Sir, I would, therefore, hope that when the restoration of the Empire Theatre is completed, this intimacy and connection I have spoken about, would be a feature and a characteristic of that Theatre. As someone has said before, we do not necessarily need a massive ten thousand seating capacity Theatre but one where the spectator feels himself as part and parcel of the whole drama.

Sir, I was not surprised at all today at the stance taken by the Honourable Member for St. John in support of the restoration and refurbishment of the Empire Theatre. Sir, to my mind, this is a subject that cuts across political lines; the Barbadian part within us tends to come out while the politics tends to recede.
5.05 p.m.

Therefore, I was very pleased to hear the Honourable Member for St. John, a former Minister of Culture himself, commend the National Cultural Foundation and wish them every success in getting this project off the road.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes I wonder whether we in Barbados appreciate the importance of cultural heritage because other people do. It is a fact and no one can deny that the WTO has never touched culture. It is not regulated by the WTO like other services. It is an exception to their call for regulation because culture is seen by them as something unique so there is no attempt by them to harmonise culture across jurisdictions and borders. It is accepted that everyone is different and should be allowed to remain so as culture is very distinctive.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in Barbados that we have a lot of slave paraphernalia and I believe that we should have a slave museum where the chains, whips and shackles which can be found at Sunbury Great House or the Barbados Museum should be in a central place called the slave museum.

I have seen schools from St. Philip visit Sunbury Great House and when the explanation is given as to how these items were used, children cried because it was the first time they had seen something that was actually used during the time of slavery.

Sir, the warri board was brought from Africa by the slaves and these are also things that we need to preserve in a slave museum. We should take the opportunity to upgrade certain slave sites in Barbados so that they can become attraction to tourists as well as to our people.

I know that the Director of UNESCO for the Caribbean who was here in the gallery this morning is also interested in

pushing a project like this where some of our slave sites are restored. Sir, the Bayleys Plantation in St. Philip is where Bussa, our National Hero planned his revolt, led it and the fields of that plantation should be immortalized, a search done on it and that plantation should become a slave site in this country. We have allowed persons to purchase the plantation but it should be a national treasure.

Mr. Speaker, our visitors and school children should be able to relive this slave period of our history. The only way that people can be educated is for them to understand their heritage and what makes the society what it is now and where we are coming from. We as a people should look for more things Barbadian and these things should be always kept in our sight and minds.

Sir, The Bahamas has done everything to promote something called 'jonconoo'. In Barbados we tend to hold back our 'tuk band' and treat it as something to be ashamed or afraid of yet if you see what The Bahamas call 'jonconoo', which they are proud of and which the tourists flock to see it, Mr. Speaker, you will agree that the 'tuk band' is a better product.

Mr. Speaker, I was in The Bahamas two weeks ago and I saw 'jonconoo' in living colour and the tourists were in a frenzy about it yet we have the 'tuk band' that we do not promote.

Mr. Speaker, I also feel that we should have more text books that are Barbadian. When I was teaching Mathematics I used Langs Mathematics book and it would say that a train leaves London at 6:30 p.m. and got to Chelsea at a particular time. When I taught poetry the poem talked about daffodils and we had to learn the poem by heart and analyse it even though none of us had ever seen a daffodil. I feel the time has come when there should be textbooks written by Caribbean and Barbadian people in our schools. Mr. Speaker our plays and poems must be put in a concrete form for study and analysis. Mr. Speaker, somebody might write a good poem and that is the extent of it. I think an anthology of good Caribbean poems and Barbadian poems is something that we need.
5.15 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am also happy to see that we are doing something about the retention of monuments, where people can see themselves, for example, the monument of Bussa, the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams and the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers. Sir, a few years ago when the Government did their National Heroes project that virtually titillated the psyche of Barbadians.

I believe that we need to go a step beyond the National Heroes. I believe, like the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, that the time has come but we do not have

in the Government's coffers the money to do such projects. I also believe that the time has come for us to have a hall of fame, particularly of our sportsmen, Suki, Oba, the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers and the long list of world-class cricketers that we have had that have made this country proud.

Mr. Speaker, I am not speaking only about black Barbadians. I am speaking about all Barbadians whether black or white. There is a rich diversity of culture in this country and I believe that we as Barbadians can teach other people in the world tolerance, the tolerance of Barbadian blacks living with Barbadian Indians and Barbadian Indians living with Barbadian whites. I think that is one of our strengths and I believe that we can teach others about that.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think we have worked on our ancestry and our past as we should as a people. Sir, you will no doubt recall the film 'Roots' which was made popular by Alex Haley, when he relived the life of Kunte Kinte who retraced his steps to his homeland. Recently, I had a discussion on this with a foremost historian in the region, and there is a town in Nigeria called Bussa Town where almost every person who lives in that town has the surname of Bussa. When I heard that I asked myself the question, have we done our homework in that regard?

I think that we must find the opportunity and the funds to help our school children and our teachers to relive the Middle Passage. I do not see anything wrong with a trip to Africa every three years to see the holding cells where our foreparents were kept prior to being shipped as slaves. Recently, I was watching a documentary where an agency in America paid for American children to go to Africa to see the holding cells and other areas where their foreparents were kept.

Mr. Speaker, I would now speak on our homeopathic remedies like sersee bush, gully root bush and so on. Nobody has ever tried to claim them as theirs. There is no documentary on these remedies to say that they belong to us. I think that it is time that we take the opportunity to put these things in a concrete form. People should be able to see these things in print, we must say that these things belong to us.

Sir, the parish from which I hail, St. Philip, has played its part in our cultural industry. I am happy to note the part that our parish has played. St. Philip can be called the home of Bussa that is where it all started. Of course, you will see his statue being put somewhere else but we want to say that we know of the richness of that parish culture.
5.25 p.m.

St. Philip is the parish that can hold its head up and say to Barbados it will always be having an annual carnival. Which other parish? A carnival is something that is done on

a national scale, but you have a parish that in recent times has said to this island we have our own character. That speaks volumes, Sir, for St. Philip. I heard someone say that it flopped, but we had as many people at our St. Philip Carnival as they had at Spring Garden. The Honourable Member for St. John could bear testimony to this.

Even more than that, St. Philip is the parish that can boast of having its own annual calypso show. Which other parish can boast of that? We have had as the calypso king in recent times a youngster by the name of Richie. He used to be a former junior monarch. We have a young lady called Malaika who was also a three-time monarch. We have some very talented calypsonians.

I need not mention the long list of RPBs, Mac Fingalls, the Adonijahs, the John Kings and the Ronnie Ds. Not only that, the best young drama group in this country comes from St. Martins/Mangrove. I have seen them do some work on AIDS and they were fantastic. I recall when we were doing NIFCA the only school that was called upon to do drama was St. Martins/Mangrove. This is the home of the country theatre workshop.

I have said all that, Mr. Speaker, to say that I am now making a plea for St. Philip. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West has made a plea for the refurbishment and restoration of Queen's Park. My call today is for the complete demolition of King's Park House and setting up something big and proper for us in St. Philip. We deserve it. What happens at King's Park now is that even a little dance, in two-two's the place is full. You cannot do anything in there and we have enough talent that we should have some type of facility there so I would expect, Mr. Speaker, that we will soon be having an upgrading of King's Park.

Mr. Speaker, I know I said that I would only take a few minutes but I am going to make one final point before I take my seat. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West made the point about sports. We have to be very careful where our sports are concerned. I went to the CARIFTA Games in Bahamas. I watched all the events. Grenada, a team that normally left the CARIFTA Games without a single medal, is now coming after Jamaica and after Bahamas. They are beating Barbados.

Where the swimming was concerned, I saw little Cayman Islands – if you look into the paper today you will see the medal standings. Trinidad came first with 20 golds and silvers and bronzes. Cayman Islands that would have the same population as St. Philip got 18 golds. The point I want to make is this. We must have proper coaching for our athletes. I am hoping that within the next two or three months we have in Barbados no less than eight or nine coaches of international standing come to coach our sportsmen to take them from where we are to the level that

they can rise and go back to where they belong, above Grenada and above Cayman Islands and, perhaps, above all others.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I have sat and listened to the debate on all the aspects of cultural development in Barbados. First of all, let me say that I am pleased to see how many Honourable Members are so interested in the development of culture in Barbados and the direction that culture goes in this island. Let me say that there is a new development environment in Barbados and because of that both economic and social levels, culture and cultural development, obviously, will take on new significance or have taken on a new significance and continue in that vein.

Sir, not only the aspects of culture in its pure form in terms of who we are and what we do every day – Barbadiana. The issue of concepts of cultural development that speak to issues of identity and self, who we are as a people, what our space and place is in the world. Sir, the aspects of these expressions in terms of cultural activity like Cropover and everything else is where most people seem to base a lot of their arguments and a lot of their interest in actual expressions of culture.

The issue as related to the development side of culture and being able to create a basis for us to move forward is something that I believe this administration has really squarely put on the front burner. I feel that this administration has advanced that direction and the development of culture in Barbados in recent times to a stage where no other administration in previous history or in recognisable history has been able to do.

Sir, I speak of some of the issues, the significance of issues relating to cultural development that are important to Barbados and to Barbadians. I speak, for example, of the significance of National Heroes recognition and the concept of having a people and having symbols that one can easily see and emulate people of the same ilk or even from a lower social status than we are but having people to hold up so that we can emulate. The issue of national heroes is important.

Sir, the concept of the recognition of emancipation and Emancipation Day as a special day on our calendar also is in the vein of taking on that new significance. The revival of Cropover and the Congoline Festival and what has been done with the Congoline Festival as a music festival is also important to cultural development. The Independence celebrations and the community based independence celebrations, another aspect of cultural development associated with this administration which I think is forward thinking. The revival of NIFCA and its recognition, even the

concept of the National Awards Ceremony and how the National Awards Ceremony is looked at and the meaning it brings overall to Barbados and to people is important.

I believe, Sir, that this initiative to vest the Empire Theatre in the National Cultural Foundation and the restoration of this Empire Theatre fits in squarely with the renewed direction for cultural development in Barbados, with which this administration is seriously associated. Let me say, Sir, in the new global economic environment in which we exist the concepts of being able to create for oneself comparative or absolute advantages which can be used for further economic and social gain for our country is what is particularly important.

5.35 p.m.

Sir, culture and cultural development set up the basis to be able to do that and we have to look for areas in which we have absolute advantages, with excellent opportunities for people to make a difference for our small country, in a big world where the playing field now is supposedly level in trade and commodities, *et cetera*.

Sir, I want to speak on some of those issues. One is sporting development, one is cultural development and service excellence, for example, which we have in our hotel industry. These are bases from which we can now seek to market skills in a way that nobody else can emulate and nobody else can take from us. What Brian Lara does on a cricket field and what Obadele Thompson does on a track nobody can emulate or replace and, therefore, it is a marketable commodity and service on which we can build.

Therefore, Sir, it is important that these global marketable qualities are those that we seek to base our future on for the protection of our people. These are the things that the WTO and the OECD cannot touch. These are issues of being able to create for yourself absolute advantages in a world in which we are seeking to level the playing field, where trading issues are concerned.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North spoke on some issues relating to past CARIFTA games and the performance of Barbadians. He also indicated that our performances have been supposedly coveted, and of Grenada winning Barbados and getting more medals.

Sir, this goes way beyond the aspect of coaching. We have long been beaten by Jamaica at the CARIFTA games and in athletics. One of the issues that makes Jamaica strong in athletics is not the issues of coaching, identification of talent and the systems that they have, but that Jamaica has a long legacy of excellence in athletics. Therefore, there are symbols and people to emulate, constantly. The idea that Jamaica is superior to Barbados, because they have superior coaching methods or systems, is not the only issue.

Obviously, where Jamaica and other countries are going, have a lot to do with the cultural aspect of the development of their sports. The issue in Grenada now is to be able to deal with social status, as it relates to these events.

I am not surprised that Barbados will now do better in swimming than in athletics, because everybody is getting their child to the pool, or to the tennis courts. Athletics is a hard 'sweat-up' sport and people who are driving around in BMWs and Mercedes Benz, and the like, are not going into any hard sweaty sport, because they have other economic and social opportunities that did not formerly exist.

Sir, as we continue to expand the middle class in Barbados and the development path on which we are heading, it is going to be even more difficult to find people competing successfully at those sports that require getting sweaty, like football, cricket and athletics. We do not even have any cricketer in the West Indies Eleven. I think, Sir, that before it gets better, it is going to get worse, unless we not only devise new systems and methods relating to coaching, but we create a cultural basis where we hold up icons for people to emulate.

I believe, Sir, that we are heading on the right path. The issues though, are the kinds of images on television. If you cannot see yourself on television, or on any stage that you can easily emulate or see who these icons are – now that in a country like Barbados everybody has Multi-ChoiceTV and DirectTV – if you see more of Michael Jordan, and more American football than you see West Indian athletes and cricket, then you must be heading in a direction where Barbados is not going to do well.

I want the Minister of Sports to hear this. It is not only about coaching because as far as I am concerned, Barbados has just as good or better coaches than anybody in Grenada. As a matter of fact, per capita, Barbados has more FF Level 2 or Level 3 trained coaches than any country in the Caribbean. The problem, as I say again, is the cultural basis of holding up somebody.

Sir, that is why I want to make the point that we are moving in the right direction with the refurbishment of the Empire Theatre. This will set up a basis for our cultural development at another level. When you talk about sports and people trying to understand what we mean by holding up people to emulate, a good example is Sir Garfield Sobers. Sir, in my opinion, Sir Garfield Sobers, as a national hero, has little or nothing to do with his ability at cricket, but has more to do with the concept that a man or a woman can come from this 166 square miles and from among 260 000 people and be the best in the world at something. It sets up a basis for being able to tell other Barbadians that you can be the best in the world at what you do. It has little or nothing to do with the concept of how well he can bat but that he is the world's Number One.

Sir, that is why when I made my statement in Sydney Australia, Barbadians got offended but it was the issue of excellence and not about the issue of...

Aside.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: The issue was to be able to create a basis for understanding that if a Barbadian could actually get to the goal, that sets up a better basis for us to be able to have other behaviours to emulate. The issue was emotional at the time, actually trying to taste the medal...

Aside.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the development of the cultural industries, I think that the Empire Theatre sets a basis for being able to move those industries to another level, such as sports, cultural development, service excellence and the performing arts, drama, dance and music. We have people that we can hold up in the service excellence and the sporting areas, who can compete with anyone in the world.

Sir, in the concepts of the performing arts, we are still very much underdeveloped and not fully recognised. I believe now, that the refurbishment of the Empire Theatre sets up a better base for the performing arts to uplift their standards so that they can be recognised.

I believe that the environment in which we operate many times sets a base for how we can deliver. I also believe that having this particular excellent home in the Empire Theatre, now sets up a better basis for them to be uplifted in the performing arts. There are other venues that service us well, but I believe that we need a high quality stage to be able to push us to the next level. This gives us a better basis for bringing even more recognised and quality acts to Barbados for our own artists to see, understand and emulate and therefore move their particular standards to another level.

I would like to believe also, Sir, that when the Honourable Member for St. Michael East spoke about cultural pluralism in Barbados that, maybe, his argument was good fifty years ago, but I would like to think that we have diversified so much in terms of our cultural development, and where we are going, that there is a lot more importance given, in terms of cultural development at the performing arts, than had been there previously.

Sir, I would like to think that the afrocentric side of culture and the performing arts will not be kept out of the Empire Theatre, but will be encouraged. I understand the issues relating to price and all the other technical issues that we would get into, but I can see an administration seeking to create a base. I believe that we have given much recognition

to the Afrocentric side of our cultural development and expression in the art forms, which are now practiced in any theatre or venue around Barbados.
5.45 p.m.

Therefore, I would like to think that the Empire Theatre is part and parcel of that and that the Afrocentric side of our culture and our cultural development and its expression would not be left out of the Empire Theatre and would not be prohibited from performing at that particular level.

I think it is important for us to realise that the redevelopment of our capital city is at the centre of being able to create this new identity for Barbados. A lot of work has already been done in that area and we have heard many times in this Chamber of the many plans in relation to the redevelopment of Bridgetown. The Honourable Member for the City spoke about some of them today. These include the Old Town Hall in the Lower Green, the Boardwalk Project, the Spirit Bond, Swan Street, Broad Street, National Heroes Square, Golden Square where the Empire Theatre is located, the inner and outer Careenage and the Pierhead Project. Independence Square, as the Honourable Member for the City said, needs to become a real Independence Square and not just the car park. Sir, what has happened with the old Harbour Police Station is testimony to what is happening in terms of the redevelopment of Bridgetown and the Empire Theatre fits squarely into it.

Capital cities identity concepts that are important to national development particularly to national identity. This takes the basis from cultural identity. In most of the cities of the world where there is a serious recognition of a capital city, it gives the people an opportunity of somewhere to go, somewhere to live and somewhere to be.

I believe that Bridgetown needs more activity to come alive for Barbadians before it can be talked about in terms of the tourist sector or anything else. People need to be encouraged to stay in Bridgetown after work. People need also to live in the city again. The only way a city can continue to show its true character and continue to be a basis for that identity and cultural development is if people continue to live in the city. Just as the people of New York and Tokyo feel about their city, Barbadians must feel the same about Bridgetown. Bridgetown must become the premier Caribbean city and a city of tomorrow.

I said last week that it must also become a competitive premier tourism business centre, a cruise gateway, an arts and entertainment hub and an exhibition and convention centre. I believe this project will go a long way in the area of arts and entertainment because Bridgetown must become alive.

There is an aspect too of where culture fits in with the development of tourism. I believe that we have not exploited

anywhere near what we could have in terms of the linkage aspect between tourism and culture and the basis that cultural development sets up for tourism development for it to become even better. Culture is a natural thing with tourism not only from the supply of services to entertainment and the like but adding diversity to the tourism product offering.

Sir, we talked a lot about culture and cultural development in terms of entertainment in which we get people to dance and sing in the hotels but cultural development adds diversity to the tourism product and to the future of the tourism product. This means getting more Barbadians involved in and benefiting from the industry. It also sets up an opportunity for constant renewal of the product as the culture is developed. That is what will keep us. This is the platform as well for attracting new investment in the sector.

There is a further relationship between culture and tourism. In this new global environment there is a lot of pressure that is going to be put on the other sectors of the economy to perform and tourism is going to be even more dependent on culture. Sir, global challenges are presented for some areas of our economy such as agriculture, international business and manufacturing. With all the pressure that is being put on the developed countries to maintain their competitive edge across this region tourism is obviously the next threat.

The economic importance of this sector is not so much to be perceived in terms of the economic gains for the developed countries but the economic leakage that is coming to us.

Sir, we spend a lot of time negotiating on safeguarding jobs, on investment incentives and on duty free incentives but the diversity of our tourism product is the only way in which we are going to remain globally competitive in the tourism industry. We spend a lot of time dealing with airlines and tour operators and what they do and spend very little time on some of the more serious issues that relate to the diversity of the product.

I believe, Sir, that we should continue to add more diversity to our product. Many of the things that are happening in tourism can easily be put back if we spend more time looking at the actual cultural diversity of what it does to our product overall. True competitiveness will only come through having a better and more diverse product.

Sir, we need to look more seriously in terms of regrading our marketing strategies in tourism. I believe that this theatre will go a long way in creating that basis for the performing arts that will create that cultural and tourism diversity. As we develop our industry, we would need to pay more attention to the heritage and historical aspect of it. Sir,

this theatre has a strong heritage and historical value which will contribute to the development of our tourism industry. I believe, Sir, that we can develop our industry even better if we respect the ecological heritage, the cultural heritage and the architectural heritage that we have got in Barbados.

Sir, I believe, like the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, that the only way we are going to be able to do this is if we are able at both the level of the public and private sector to receive much more funding than we now do in some areas and aspects of development like sports and culture. So I am calling for more private sector people and private sector entities to get involved in the development of culture.

Sir, I want to give kudos to all those who have pioneered this project and brought it to this level. I believe it can do a lot in creating the type of Barbados which we all would be proud to live in.

I thank you, Sir.
5.55 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that there will be further consideration of this Resolution at a later stage.

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

The question that further consideration of the Resolution be now postponed until a later date was put and agreed to without division and Mr. SPEAKER did so postpone.

CONGRATULATORY/OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, some days ago we were advised that Sir John Antony Jerningham Murray had died in London.

Sir Antony would have been well-known, although he was an Englishman. He was a Barbados Knight, so to speak. He would have been well-known to Honourable Members on Both Sides of this House, perhaps one generation ago and even some who now sit in our distinguished Chamber.

Sir Antony was an extraordinary man. He was of the English upperclass, as one would have to say, and had come to inherit a property which was Kendal Plantation, St. John. Therefore, properly speaking, he was a member of the plantocracy but to those of us who knew him, he would not have represented the plantocracy of what is now known as the bad old colonial days. He was a man who came to have a fine and very sympathetic appreciation of agriculture

generally, but sugar agriculture in particular. He was a man who came to have a fine appreciation of things Barbadian: Barbadian architecture and Barbadian cuisine – we do have a cuisine.

Sir, his family managed from afar and, quite often, certainly every year, he visited Barbados. There came a point where he and his brother owned a home here at Sandy Lane and therefore, he was a frequent visitor. Sir, because of the fact that he was largely self-taught, as a lay person, he learned as much as he could about the sugar industry. Also because of his relationship with Honourable Members on Both Sides of this House, certainly the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, one of our National Heroes and the late Right Honourable Tom Adams, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, would have known Sir Antony in his capacity as what we would describe today as a very special envoy for Barbados on matters pertaining to the sugar industry.

Sir, for many, many years, through successive administrations in Barbados, he represented the interest of the Barbados sugar industry, both in the United Kingdom and wider afield in the European Union. Certainly in the sugar protocol negotiations over those years, his was the voice and the advice that often was heard.

Sir, even though he came from the British upper classes, in many ways he was a very humble, an almost self-effacing person. He never wanted to accept pay for what he did and even when it was offered to pay for expenses incurred, he looked for the least expensive way. He would never go by aeroplane to Brussels from London, he would go by ferry, take his car and go over.

Sir, from time to time, he would need a place from which to work in our Mission in London. He was a man who was so modest in his demands, he never would ask for a complete office. If he could just get a chair in the corridor or at the corner of someone else's office, that would be about all that he would ask for.

He would look for the cheapest possible hotel room and if he could find something less than a hotel like a guest house, he would stay there, but always his voice would be heard in defence of Barbados. He had important contacts in the British political circles both in the Conservative and the Labour Governments and contacts in Europe which inured to our benefit as he would sometimes have to put the case for the Caribbean and for Barbados in particular, in respect of sugar.

Sir, I first met him 24 years ago as a young Minister of Health, the first time I went to the World Health Assembly. In fact, the only time I went to the World Health Assembly in Geneva, which I thought to be a very expensive place. Sir, in the *Salle des Nations* where these meetings are held, I was

in a bookshop and this very tall, imposing person was looming above me, looking at me in a very strange way. Sir, I almost rudely asked: "Who are you? Why are you bearing down on me in this fashion?" He asked me who I was, then he introduced himself and over time we became personal friends. Whenever he came to Barbados, he would invite me to his home. He would visit me at my home on Sunday mornings where we would sit and have old talk and it was always the interest of Barbados which came first. Therefore, it was not surprising that over time successive administrations, paid him honour in recognition of the great service he gave to Barbados.

In those days we could hardly afford to pay a sugar lobbyist because it was beyond our pockets. Indeed, I believe there was hardly anybody else who would know Barbados intimately in the way that he did, because he had a plantation in Barbados and so understood sugar from the 'inside out' and from the 'bottom up'. In the very early 1980s he was awarded the Commander of Order of the British Empire and then in 1987, Barbados recommended him for a Knighthood. In that sense, he was a Barbados Knight and worthy of remembrance in this place as he is one who has served Barbados long and faithfully to the bitter end.

It saddened us greatly when he succumbed to a stroke. In fact, there was a series of strokes a few years ago but he still would keep his interest. He had a home outside London and for many, many years – a man much interested in cricket – very Barbadian in that respect, sometimes more on the Barbadian side, I thought, than the English side – he would organise annual cricket matches between the Barbados High Commission and the people of the little English village where he lived. In almost every respect, this was a man who saw himself always as a person with a dual nationality.

He lived a long and interesting life. He lived in other parts of the world other than Barbados but Barbados became a second home. This was a man who helped to promote the Errol Barrow Memorial Trust and, in several ways, behaved as a Barbadian would, so that it is entirely fitting that we should mark the passing of this remarkable, honorary Barbadian, so to speak.

Sir, I would wish to move a motion that a suitably worded Resolution of condolence should move from this Honourable Chamber to his widow Lady Murray and to his son, recording our appreciation of the contribution he has made to Barbados and in particular, to the sugar industry in those years when sugar, as king, was beginning to decline.

In no small measure we owe to him the fact that we were able to hold up the head of sugar. Even when he was losing his power of speech he still asked how things were doing in Barbados and how the next sugar crop was doing.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I beg to move the Resolution of Condolence.
6.05 p.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the Resolution. Sir Antony Murray was of great assistance to the Democratic Labour Party in the period between 1991 and 1994 when we were in the process of restructuring the sugar industry. During that time he wrote more letters in his handwriting with clippings of what was happening in relation to the European Union than anyone else during that period. The Honourable Member for the City is correct when she said that he would give a running commentary of his perception of events and how they impacted on the Barbadian sugar industry.

It is also true that he had a great love for Barbados as a country; and he had a great love for the parish of St. John. He shared a birthday with Errol Barrow and they also shared other unique experiences of which he often spoke about. He was also a fine host not only here in Barbados but whenever one paid a visit to London. Whether Government or Opposition, he always found time to go to lunch, get an update on what was happening here and to share his own perspective.

There were a couple of persons in Barbados whom he almost idolised. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South was one of them. I do not remember the stories he told me about him but for some reason which may never be known, he had a great fondness for certain individuals.

He liked to take the sugar project on his shoulders. Whereas we had many High Commissioners and others who took no interest at all in what was happening, he was the only individual from whom you could get an opinion and was not only interested in advancing his own personal agenda or his financial gain but he was genuinely interested in the success of Barbados as a country.

The word "selfless" in every sense of the word must be applied to his contribution. He was greatly honoured when the Barbados Government recommended him for higher honour and that recommendation was accepted.

Mr. Speaker, it is highly appropriate that his family be notified of our regret at his passing, that we extend sympathy to them and to all of those many Barbadians with whom he developed friendships down through the years and I also extend my sympathy.

I reiterate that my Party when it was in office is greatly indebted to Sir Antony Murray for his contribution.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the sentiments that have been expressed by the Honourable Member who moved the Resolution and the Honourable Member who seconded it. The contribution of Sir Antony to Barbados has been so great that it merits the departure from the usual tradition in this Chamber, to have a Resolution of Sympathy passed to a person who had never been a member of this House.

I first met Sir Antony when I became a Senator in 1964. I met him when he was on holiday to Barbados and during the course of that holiday there was industrial action in the sugar industry and it was clear to me that he had a distinct and sympathetic interest to all those involved in the sugar industry.

I did not know of his connection with Kendal Plantation but he quickly disclosed that to me. He also disclosed another significant point of interest, that it was not the Democratic Labour Party who had first invited him to help with the sugar industry but that he had met Dr. Cummins on a casual visit to Barbados and was invited by him to inform the Government of interesting developments in relation to the sugar industry.

Of course, he became a very good friend of the late former Honourable Member for St. John, the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, and he enjoyed that friendship, as the Leader of the Opposition said, because they had a common birthday and always indulged in great social activity on that occasion.

As the Minister responsible for sugar industry negotiations between 1976 and 1985, I had plenty of opportunity to witness the contribution of Sir Antony to the sugar industry in Barbados and indeed, to the Caribbean because we met frequently both in London and Brussels.

There can be no doubt about it that his unselfish contribution to our interest was something for which we should be very grateful. That contribution relates not only to Barbados but also the entire Caribbean and ACP. We built up friendships with the technical experts from Mauritius, Fiji and Guyana, although Guyana's industry was under public ownership. Few people appreciated that Booker Tate were the principal advisers to the Guyanese Ministers because of their long-term arrangement for payment after the sugar industry was under ownership. His contact with these experts was such that every argument that was put to the ACP Commissioner of Agriculture was refined so that the sugar spokesman for the ACP was able to meet and engage in discussions and win the argument.

6.15 p.m.

Sir, as the Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs said, he did this without any special reward. Perhaps, his greatest

reward was the undoubted honour that he felt when his services were recognised in the form of recommendation from the Government of Barbados.

Sir Antony was a very special person to me. Whenever I was in Brussels he was delighted and he invited me to many restaurants which he regarded as top quality restaurants. I spent many afternoons with him in Brussels enjoying a variety of food, due to the vast repertoire of knowledge of the restaurants that Sir Antony had.

Sir Antony's love of Barbados was unquestionable. He had a home in Barbados and would always visit Barbados during the time of his ownership. During that time he entertained a wide cross-section of Barbadians. He was one of those people who through his efforts, demeanour and manner of operation, did much to break down the prejudice that was prevalent in those years between the various colours and classes in Barbados. Sir Antony Murray had friends of all colours and classes and he was never ashamed to let it be known to all and sundry that his friends were his friends and it did not matter whether the classes or colours that regarded themselves as superior liked it or not, that was a great contribution that he made.

I would like to join with the other Honourable Members in passing this Resolution. I think that it would be a very fit measure for us to indicate by transmitting to his widow and his son, who is a recognised financial journalist and who loves Barbados, our expressions of appreciation for his contribution to Barbados.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this Resolution. I can only say that I knew Sir Antony from the year 1981 when I was transferred from Porters Factory to the Head Office, at the time, of the Barbados Sugar Factories Limited, the Sugar Producers Federation and Barbados Sugar Producers Association. I remember very well receiving a handwritten note on a monthly basis from Sir Antony. Sir, you could tell when any official from Barbados was visiting Brussels, because he seemed to have known all the restaurants that were inexpensive. Sir, whatever was said about Sir Antony and entertainment is true because he never exceeded the budget that was allocated to him annually by the Barbados Sugar Producers.

Sir, what was amazing at that time, regardless of who visited London, whether from the Government or the Opposition of the day, Sir Antony made it his business to entertain those persons. What was also amazing was the way he kept expenses down. At times I wondered why he could not have been made Barbados High Commissioner to London because the amount of work that he did for the Sugar Producers Federation of Barbados and the Barbados Government, was of great benefit to Barbados.

I also remember that every January 21st, he would make a telephone call to a lady by the name of Ms. Miriam Manning, the accountant at the time, who shared the same birthday as him. He always reminded her that there were three special people in Barbados on that particular day, Errol Barrow, Miriam Manning and himself.

I want to say that we cannot be out-of-pocket for what we would have spent on a gentleman like Sir Antony. In my opinion, he gave us a lot more than what the Government paid him to do. Sir, the amount of work that this gentleman did for Barbados you would hardly find anyone doing, that was the kind of person Sir Antony was.

Sir, you could always rely on Sir Antony to know when there was a shift in the sugar price because he made it his business to send a fax to Barbados so that we would be informed of what was happening in the sugar market.

I cannot speak of what would have happened on the political side. I can only speak of what occurred within the sugar industry. I believe that those of us who were involved in the sugar industry owe his family a sense of gratitude for the work that he did for the sugar industry. I do not think that you would find another person who would have contributed so much at such a low cost. It is very important in this day and age that we not only have people whom we pay for what we get, but we also have people of a particular standing who are prepared to stand up for a small country like Barbados even though they do not have any links of nationality with the country. I believe that most people in London would have regarded Sir Antony as a part of them more than a part of Barbados. I hope, Sir, that these types of relationships could be developed throughout the world and that we could get High Commissioners and Ambassadors like Sir Antony at such a low cost.

To his family, I offer my deepest sympathy and I hope that his soul rests in peace. I thank you.
6.25 p.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, between 1994 and 1998, I had the opportunity to interact with Sir Antony Murray and I recall that he did not spell his name "Anthony" but "Antony". That was the first thing that struck me because in this culture Anthony normally has an "h" and the translation for Mark Antony in 'Julius Caesar' leaves out the "h". As a person in love with words, I had this fascination with how he spelt his name, Antony.

He made it his business to keep frequent contact with us in government and he kept as frequent a contact with the

Barbados High Commission in London. He became an expert on sugar, not just on Caribbean sugar but he maintained an enduring interest in the developments in sugar worldwide and, in particular, the developments among the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

The advice he rendered was genuine and accurate and I can recall notes in a clear handwriting. I do not recall ever receiving a typewritten note from him. The only other person I can recall receiving notes from in handwriting was a former head teacher called Mr. J. S. Yearwood who does not communicate in typewritten material.

Within sugar, Mr. Speaker, there are many international organisations and bodies some of which are lobbyists. Sir Antony was careful to advise Barbados as to which international organisations concerned with sugar Barbados could work with and which to leave out, either advising to leave out some because of the cost of association with them or because they had nothing to offer us.

Shortly after I took the portfolio which was granted me in 1994, around 1996, Sir Antony fell ill and had a stroke but continued to work for Barbados. He was already a man advanced in years. Having experienced a stroke, he still continued to work for Barbados and attempted to apply himself with the same enthusiasm and vigour as if he were younger.

I discovered that he owned property in the constituency of which I have the honour to represent and I also discovered that one of the reasons for his passionate attachment to things like sugar was because he saw himself as being part of Barbados' sugar history. He will be sadly missed. The effort he made on behalf of this nation has been outstanding and it would be very difficult for anybody succeeding him to surpass that excellent work that he put in so unselfishly on behalf of our island.

I, too, Mr. Speaker, take pleasure in associating myself with the remarks made by all those persons who preceded and I will have no difficulty supporting the Resolution at hand. I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to associate this Honourable Chair with the sentiments expressed on the passing of Sir Antony Murray. Based on what we have heard from Honourable Members, Sir Antony can be said to be truly a friend of Barbados and I would like on behalf of the Honourable Members who did not speak to express our sincere condolences.

This House with acclaim accepts the Resolution of Sympathy and so directs that this Resolution be sent to grieving relatives. As a mark of respect I now invite all Honourable Members and all present to stand and observe one minute's silence.

(One minute's silence was observed.)

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do adjourn until Tuesday, April 23, 2002 at 11.00 a.m. in the morning.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Just before I move the Adjournment, I would like to remind Honourable Members that Books of Condolences for the late Princess Margaret and the late Queen Mother are placed on the long table in the Clerk's office and you can sign those.

The question that the House do now adjourn was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
6.35 p.m.

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