

THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 1999 - 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, April 23, 2002.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002 Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11:20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour I.A. ROETT, B.A., Dip.Ed. G.C.M. (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. Miss B.A. MILLER (Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade) Mr. G.W. PAYNE, LL.B. Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A.(Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), LEC (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) Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN Hon. 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. R.R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of Economic Development, Industry, International Business) Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE, L.C.P., J.P. (Minister of State in the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, April 16, 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, November 9, 2001, 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.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

ORDER NO. 10 - SECOND READING OF THE EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2002

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, the reasons for the amendments to the Education Act are really three-fold. First of all, we are seeking to make provision for the effective management of the adult education programme commonly referred to in Barbados as the evening classes.

We are seeking to give the Minister power to make regulations for the evaluation of teachers, that is, their grading or appraisal of teachers and thirdly, to make provision for the conferral of awards. I will try to deal with all three of them in due course but simply to say that all three of these amendments are very worthwhile initiatives and I would first look at the provision for the effective management of the adult education programme, the evening classes.

Mr. Speaker, when I first started to teach at Princess Margaret School, sometime in 1964, there was at that time a very vibrant continuing education programme at that particular school. I later became involved in the actual teaching of English and History in that particular programme. I have to say that in those days the evening class was very popular indeed. I can also say that it was to me the very first indication of a bias or a gender imbalance in our education because at that time I do recall many young ladies coming to those classes and seeing so few of the young men. That was the first indication to me that somewhere down the line we were going to encounter the problem which we all know so well today.

The classes at that time, and I do not think that things have gotten much different since, but they catered to students who did not get enough subjects at "O" level to enter the civil service. The classes also catered to those who attended private secondary schools and who in my estimation were victims of inadequate staffing or sometimes victims of inadequate teaching. I have known of situations where some of the students who attended private schools complained that the teaching at the private schools was not up to standard and, therefore, when they left the private school they continued in those evening

classes so as to get the required qualifications.

The classes also catered to those students who relaxed at school but who became serious after leaving school because as they became more mature they realised that education is indeed the key to success and then they decided to take their education more seriously. The classes also catered to those persons who were actually working but wanted to improve their qualifications. As I said, Mr. Speaker, I had my grounding in teaching at those evening classes because I remember entering the teaching profession one year and by the next year I was actually teaching some of these classes.

Mr. Speaker, there are numerous persons now in the public service, numerous teachers now appointed in the teaching service who owe their eventual success, who owe their levels of achievement, who owe their qualifications and their careers to those evening classes. I know of a very good friend of mine who is now at the top of his department who attended those evening classes. I know of policemen, nurses, civil servants.

I know of a young lady who gained every subject that she has through attending those evening classes. When she left school, Mr. Speaker, she left without a single subject and that young lady went to evening classes, got three subjects, got three more and I can tell you today, Sir, that she actually went to Cave Hill and graduated from Cave Hill with second class honours. Her grounding was what she got so that she could actually enter Cave Hill and she did it through this evening class programme. I know her well enough and I am sure that if she were ever to hear that we had planned to close down these classes that she would virtually crucify us because she speaks of evening classes and the continuation of this adult education programme with something of a passion. It has literally made her what she is today.

Only this morning, Sir, before I left, I spoke to a relative of mine that I knew left school as well without a single subject. This is what she gave to me. She told me that she has got POB, Principles of Business with a 2; IT Information Technology with a 2, Accounts with a 2, OP, Office Practice with a 2 and Maths with a 2. So these are five subjects that a relative of mine has actually got through this evening programme.

Mr. Speaker, I know of the benefits of this particular programme. I was involved with it and I have people around me who have actually attended the classes and I know of the good that the classes can do. There is no doubt in my mind whatsoever, Sir, that these classes serve a real purpose. It is for this reason, Sir, that we must lend our support to the Adult Education Programme at all costs. I believe that we should think about having more rather than less evening programmes throughout Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, Princess Margaret's evening classes that I spoke about earlier, like most others around Barbados, and there were quite a few when I was teaching, but those classes fell through in the 1980s.

11:25 a.m.

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Continuation of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE:

Sir, in 1989, there was a decision taken to reintroduce these classes. This resulted in four such classes being set up throughout Barbados. Those classes were set up at the selected secondary schools: St. James secondary, Springer Memorial, Foundation and Grantley Adams. The one at Grantley Adams quickly folded up because of inadequate student enrollment.

Sir, the lesson which we learnt from the folding up of Grantley Adams Secondary School is that these classes should be held in very accessible areas, if we want them to work. Some of the students complained of encountering difficulties in getting to and from the Grantley Adams Secondary School. Today, we have a situation, where a lot of the students from the Branchbury and Horse Hill areas in St. Joseph, actually bypass the Grantley Adams and they end up going to the Springer Memorial Secondary School to do their evening classes. The point I am making is that there are now three such classes, but as I indicated earlier, we should look at having even more of these classes because this is a programme which must continue.

Sir, the Principals at these three schools act as the coordinator of the Evening Programme. The specific duties of the Coordinator are to:

1. Plan, establish and coordinate the programme.
2. Collaborate with teachers about the organisation of the classes.
3. Ensure that a proper evaluation structure is installed.
4. Ensure the proper and efficient collection of all monies.
5. Ensure that the timetable is properly followed.
6. Prepare and submit pay claims for teachers and other staff.
7. Submit term reports.
8. Keep up-to-date inventories of supplies, materials and equipment and make requisitions of the same.
9. Provide for the opening and closing of the physical plant at the appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker, I would like the Ministry of Education to go on record, for thanking the coordinators for doing a good job and carrying out the duties, as I have just outlined. I want to make the point though, that there are other institutions in Barbados, besides those Government run institutions, and I am sure you want to hear this, Mr. Speaker, which have contributed significantly to our post secondary education. I am speaking of privately-owned institutions, such as the 'O' Level Institute.

Sir, I pause here to say that I know the 'O' Level Institute has been going for more than 30 years and you can literally identify hundreds of success stories where the 'O' Level Institute is concerned. I know of a university professor, a good friend of mine, who actually went to the 'O' Level Institute after

leaving secondary school, so that he could be qualified to go to university. I also know of a doctor and a lawyer and I am sure, Sir, that you can also identify numerous other professionals that have actually passed through the doors of the 'O' Level Institute.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I know of the work which the 'O' Level Institute is doing. I know that the staff there is extremely hardworking and I also know that there are classes going on there during the day almost, as if the 'O' Level Institute was indeed a secondary school. I know that a lot of the students there are under the age of 18 but perhaps the best testimonial we can give an institute such as that, is to say that I believe when the history of this country's education is chronicled, your 'O' Level Institute, Sir, is deserving of an entire chapter.

I think that you did it, Sir, with very little Government assistance or very little corporate assistance...

Aside.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: ...no Government assistance or no corporate assistance but, Sir, I know that you did it with a lot of good will, and I think that it speaks volumes of what it has been able to achieve.

Mr. Speaker, I began by reflecting on the 1960s and the 1970s when the evening classes at the Princess Margaret Secondary School were active and vibrant. In those days, Sir, the fees that the students paid were very low. This was mainly due to the fact that the Government subsidised the programme. However, in 1996 and 1997, this subsidy came to an end and, sadly, the result to the student was an increase in fees. The students presently pay an annual registration fee of \$30, which is non refundable. Then, for the academic subjects, \$80 per term for one subject, \$120 per term for two subjects, \$160 per term for three subjects, \$200 per term for four subjects and, Sir, where the practical subjects are concerned, \$100 per term for each subject and for computer and related courses, \$160 per term for each course.

Some persons have argued that this is a good thing which has happened because students and parents want to see returns on their money, and they seem to put more effort into their studies when they are actually paying a fee. I also know that there have been instances when students experienced difficulties paying, and Principals have actually allowed those students to take the examination, and have also assisted the students so that they did not have to actually pay the fee.

Sir, I have to say that a group which seems to actually see the benefits from the programme, is that group which needs just one more subject for university matriculation, which is maybe a foreign language or a science subject.

11:35 a.m.

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Continuation of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE:

The programme carries a wide choice of subjects and many of the people who attend the classes use the programme as a make up to get the desired qualifications for entry into the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, the classes continue to be packed with females. It was packed with females when it started and it continues to be packed with females today. Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where the young men are dropping the young ladies to the classes three days a week but they then sit in the cars and sleep until the classes are over and then they drive them home. They do this for a year or two years, and the young ladies get qualified and they move on. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the young men can spend some of that same time in some of the same classes but they would prefer the young ladies to go in and do the classes while they sit on the outside in the cars. So I am urging those underqualified young men to make use of these adult education programmes.

Mr. Speaker, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) is in need of another campus because there is a tremendous demand for the evening programme which they offer and they are doing a lot of these evening classes outside of the polytechnic compound. They are doing them at the Princess Margaret Secondary School which is virtually packed, St. George Secondary and the St. Lucy Secondary School. They do a lot of computer courses as well.

Asides.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: This is not a man thing, because a lot of young ladies are getting into what was traditionally a man's domain and it is a sad thing.

Mr. Speaker, Government will no longer be subsidizing these programmes, they are now to be self-financing. The inherent weakness of the programme is that the materials and other resources of those respective schools, Springer Memorial, St. James Secondary and the Christ Church Foundation School, are often consumed by the programme and it is often very difficult to ascertain whether a particular expense is an evening class expense or whether it is a genuine school expense. For instance, you may have a situation where there is a photocopier foul-up or a breakdown and you may not know which group is responsible and very often it becomes an expense of the school. The sharing of computers is another area as well and we all know that the maintenance of computers can be very expensive.

For the most part, Mr. Speaker, no proper accounting records were kept and it is believed that better supervision of the programme is necessary and that the respective boards at those schools can play a part in this regard.

Mr. Speaker, these new regulations which we are dealing with this morning are aimed at ensuring the boards' involvement in the programme. So once these regulations are passed, the boards, not the coordinators, will be responsible for the management of the programme. The boards will be responsible for the appointment of whoever the coordinator is and must submit a report on the programme to the Ministry of Education not less than five months after the school year. It is hoped that this change will bring about a higher level of supervision and a higher level of budgeting and accounting.

Mr. Speaker, I will now deal with the evaluation of teachers. If the minister at this point in time makes regulations with regard to the evaluation of teachers, the minister will be put in a position where he will be acting ultra vires. In other words, he will be doing something which the law does not empower him to do. Right now, Sir, section 59 of the Education Act states that there are 25 areas in which the minister can make regulations but the evaluation of teachers is not one of them.

Ever since 1999 Cabinet agreed that regulations with regard to the evaluation of teachers would have been prepared and those regulations have been prepared. So we have regulations prepared but the parent Act does not say anything about the minister's power to make such regulations and we are, therefore, regularising that matter this morning.

11:45 a.m.

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Continuation of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE:

Mr. Speaker, we are therefore dealing with this matter by adding regulations for evaluation of teachers, that the Minister has the power to make regulations for the teachers' evaluation.

Sir, the House should also be informed that in approaching this matter of teachers' evaluation, we have had discussions with all of the stakeholders in an effort to fashion the evaluation and regulations instrument to meet the taste of all of the relevant stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, in amending this legislation, what we are doing is nothing to be ashamed about; we are adding something which was not there before. Most legislation is never complete at a single go because one can never anticipate everything that is going to happen later on. Indeed, legislation is often written in a way to give elbow room to amend. No one is ever deprived of that facility. Even our Constitution can be amended. Sir, we have discarded the old annual report. I am sure that, as a past teacher yourself, you will know of these annual reports, where teachers were assessed and a grade given. I was assessed and a grade was given to me. You were assessed and a grade was given to you. I am sure, Sir, that both Honourable Members for St. James North and St. George North were assessed and grades were given to them. Indeed, Sir, it would be a revelation to us, perhaps, if we could go back to those old reports and see what grades we got.

Mr. Speaker, times are changing and those reports where the head teacher gave the teacher an A, B, or C, is outdated and surely cannot be used in these times. Sir, having discarded that old system there is now need for a different and better system of evaluation, for a different and a better evaluation instrument, which is now the subject of a pilot that we have in place.

The assessment of teachers is a very involved and complex matter. Some teachers have spoken about being victimized through the old system of annual reports. It was often done in a very artificial manner because, more often than not, the head teacher who was giving the grade would never have seen the teacher teaching. That head teacher who was so busy at the other end of the compound, very often, would not have seen the teacher but still would have given a grade nevertheless. Sir, that signed report was far too subjective.

Sir, what can be said of the proposed method of assessment is that it is going to be a lot wider than before. The majority of teachers, I can safely say, have supported the need for an evaluation of this sort. What is needed is a transparent process, one in which there is certainly no hint of the possibility of victimization. The truth is, if we are doing an evaluation of our teachers, it must be done properly. The real test for us is coming up with the proper method of evaluation and that is what we are endeavouring to do to make the system as fair as possible.

Sir, that old system engendered a lot of bad feelings amongst some teachers. I know of a quarrel between a head teacher and a teacher. I recall that teacher storming into the head teacher's office and confronting him about a grade C that she had got for cooperation and helpfulness. That teacher had compared that grade C with what she had done at and around the school, on evenings, and even during school, making a good case that she was always cooperative and helpful. She then contrasted her grade C with that of another teacher who had got a grade A; a teacher who did absolutely nothing around the school, during the school time, or after school.

Mr. Speaker, the explanation that the very vexed teacher had given was that the work she had done had appeared to be secondary to whether she was the head teacher's favourite or not. Of course, to the detriment of the school children, she stopped doing anything at the school because, in her own words, the other teacher played up to the head teacher to gain favour and good grades and she, like an idiot, was working too hard and got nothing for it.

Sir, when one's future is in the hands of just one person, there will be that kind of reaction. I think the system we are using now is going to be a much better one; it is not going to depend entirely on one person's opinion. I know of instances where two teachers were so angry about their grades that they came to me, seeking legal advice.

Mr. Speaker, we have to realise there were some principals - I do not think we have that type of principal in the system today - who did not make it easy and did not do a lot to allay the fears and concerns of the teachers. One principal actually adopted this attitude by saying that he was not giving any A's to teachers, because that particular principal had not received any. That principal is no longer in the system but that just goes to show that, in the old system where one person was doing the evaluation, there were complications and pitfalls. Sir, teacher appraisal is something that we most definitely need. We cannot gainsay the fact that there is need for us to assess workers generally.

11.55 pm

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Continuation of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE:

Mr. Speaker, the electorate assesses us as parliamentarians every five years and the perennial grouse of teachers was not about teachers appraisal per se but about the way in which they were done. Let us agree that there must be some process by which teachers should be assessed.

I, therefore, take the opportunity to call on teachers and urge them to embrace the concept of teacher

evaluation because I think it is still the best barometer for their growth in the teaching profession.

Sir, the thinking now is that our appraisal must have a purpose and that it is not being done for the sake of doing it. The real purpose of teacher appraisal should be raising the teacher's self-confidence and it should be used as a platform for exchange of ideas, approaches and alternatives. We want, as a result of that assessment or appraisal, to be able to identify the type of support which the respective teachers would need.

Mr. Speaker, I know a jurisdiction where each school has an assessment committee for teachers and six or seven people come together to evaluate and grade teachers.

Sir, our proposal is that teachers should be assessed by classroom observation carried out by the head of the department who may be accompanied by another trained teacher with knowledge of the subject. The teacher being assessed may also request another colleague to be present and the principal or deputy principal may be present as well. At the primary level, a senior teacher with knowledge in the particular subject area will take the place of the head of the department.

Sir, we are also proposing that the teacher completes a teacher's appraisal form as a self-assessment exercise and that the head of the department in consultation with the teacher will comment on the teacher's performance after which the form will be passed to the principal for the final comment.

Sir, self-assessment by the particular teacher where the teacher grades himself or herself in a dispassionate way is the key thing. I have also seen this system used in the jurisdiction which I spoke about earlier on.

Sir, when there is self-assessment the teacher is usually accurate with grading himself or herself and the teacher is also accurate with the assessment of the committee and teachers will not give themselves A's if they think they do not deserve all A's. If they gave themselves A's while the committee gives them C's something will look wrong. The whole exercise of self-assessment is a conscience grade given by the teacher himself.

Mr. Speaker, evaluation and self-appraisal is another built in characteristic of teacher appraisal in this day and age. It gives the opportunity for self analysis, self criticism and self reflection by teachers. It also allows teachers to make personal adjustments in their actions and performances prior to the appraisal.

Sir, we are not pushing evaluation down the throat of teachers as we work towards an objective standard to properly monitor the standard of our teachers because anything we do must be done with the concurrence of the teachers through their unions, the Principals and the Ministry. No group should remain isolated from the process and all of the stakeholders should be included.

Sir, ultimately the child has to be the beneficiary. We are also aiming for professionalism but in the long run the child should be the beneficiary of that professionalism and teacher evaluation is a way of properly determining whether certain basic standards are being met in our school and ensuring that our students receive proper guidance.

Mr. Speaker, a follow-up mechanism is built into the evaluation exercise because we think that follow-up is very important. Sir, good teachers want to assess their own progress and improve their classroom practice and young teachers in particular need a lot of help. They need to know how they are doing and whether there are any shortcomings and this is why follow-up is important.

Sir, just as staff evaluation is necessary, follow-up is also necessary to enable teachers to improve their standards.

12:05 p.m.

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Continuation of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: In other words, the system must be such that teachers are confident that they are not being victimised but that they are being helped and encouraged. They should feel good about the evaluation exercise. We have to dispel the notion that the purpose of the evaluation is to use it against the teacher at a future date. In fact, the valuation is really to help the teacher. Mr. Speaker, some teachers have commented and questioned the confidentiality of the old system. I must say that the element of trust and privacy of the individual will be at the heart of the proposed new evaluation system.

I want to close by saying that the pilot programme which is in place is going to be evaluated on a term-basis. At the end of every term the pilot project of the teachers' evaluation will be monitored by the Ministry of Education and Youth Affairs, University of the West Indies, The Barbados Union of Teachers, the Barbados Secondary Teachers Union, the Barbados Association of Principals of Public Secondary Schools, the Association of Public Primary Schools Principals, Erdiston Training College and the National Council of Parents Teachers Association. These are the agencies that will monitor the pilot project so that at the end of the project and there are any kinks in it, they can be worked out and we can continue to move forward with an evaluation system for teachers that is acceptable by all of the stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, institutions such as the Barbados Community College (BCC) and the Samuel Jackman Polytechnic ushered in their unique problems in education, sports and other forms of school life. Let me give you an example of what I mean. Sir, there was a situation at the last Inter-schools Sports where there was a young lady who was educated at the St. Michael School, went to Combermere School to attend sixth form, because St. Michael School does not have a sixth form, and she ended up by running for Combermere School against the St. Michael School. At the end of the sports when she was hailed as *victrix ludorum* the students from Combermere School had their banner behind her. Sir, I witnessed the students of the St. Michael School got up and went behind the young lady and put up the St Michael School banner, as though to say that she does not belong to you she belongs to us.

Asides

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Sir, that all came about because the St. Michael School does not have a sixth form.

There are also situations where boys play cricket for the St. Michael School and when they attend the

Barbados Community College they can no longer play cricket for their school because the school does not have a sixth form and, therefore, they have to play for the Barbados Community College. The Harrison College, Queens College, Lodge School and the Combermere School students, of the same age, can continue to play for their schools because these schools have sixth forms.

Sir, principals have been calling for rules that would say that when students leave Schools that do not have sixth forms and go to the Barbados Community College and the students are still of sixth form age, they should be allowed to continue to play for the school that they attended, especially when they are playing against sixth-formers of other schools. Mr. Speaker, it is not a foolish argument.

Sir, I said all of that to crystalise the point which I am going to make. Sir, with the influx of students doing A'level subjects at the Barbados Community College and with the competence of the staff of the BCC, it is not surprising that very often there are outstanding performances by students of the Barbados Community College. A lot of students go to the Barbados Community College and do extremely well and perform as well as they would perform at Harrison College, Queen's College and Combermere School. Students attend BCC because there were no sixth forms at the schools that they attended.

I recalled sometime ago that a view was expressed that if you are attending the BCC and you are thirty years of age and you are performing well, then you should be eligible for the Barbados Scholarship as well. The only fault with that argument is the age because the marks and quality of performance are the same.

Asides

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Sir, the only problem there is the age of the student.

Sir, recently the rules have been changed. If you are doing the Associate Degree at the Barbados Community College and

you are under the age of twenty, you are eligible for a Barbados Scholarship.

Asides

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Perhaps, this is not too comforting to those schools who have traditionally monopolised the scholarships. These under-twenty students who did not have a sixth form at their secondary schools, I do not think that those students should be penalised simply because there were no sixth forms at their schools.

12.15 p.m.

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Continuation of Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE:

So they go over and if they do well enough, under 20, then they get a scholarship. What we also said, Mr. Speaker, is that if in the age range between 20 and 30 these students are outstanding and they are

top notch they will not get the Barbados Scholarship but what they will get is an award called the Award of Excellence. It will be very close in keeping with the Exhibitions. So that is the main thrust and I hope you will follow the argument.

This brings me now to why we are amending. All we are doing, Sir, is slipping in awards this morning. In section 46 and section 47 of that Act, it speaks about students being eligible for bursaries, for grants, for scholarships and exhibitions. Now we have something called Award of Excellence. All we are doing with this amendment is to include awards to facilitate this particular initiative. This is why we are going to see that we insert the words "awards of excellence".

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I will not bore the House anymore. I just want to say that the three amendments that I spoke about are three amendments of substance. They are very worthwhile and I commend them to this Honourable Chamber. I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this amendment and I want to start where the Minister has ended. It is rather interesting that some months ago when we dealt with the raising of the bar for scholarships in Barbados I reminded this House that the Government of the day was seeking to cut out the number of people getting scholarships in Barbados and I hope that this House would reflect on what was said.

The truth is that the admission has now come today, Sir. The new Minister is acknowledging what has occurred by the increasing of the limit for a student to get a scholarship that there must be something in place to compensate those students who have done well and the Award of Excellence is only a compensation for the raising of the bar for the scholarship level. I am glad that he has acknowledged that, Sir, and something is done.

I also want to say that in Barbados there are a lot of people who tend to forget where their primary and secondary education started. There are a lot of schools which because they take students from schools that do not have sixth forms behave as if they are theirs and they have provided the foundation for them. It is creating a negative effect in the educational system. You are now having a demand where people who go to schools like Coleridge and Parry and who have done well are now demanding that those schools be given sixth forms, instead of having to attach another two years to another school with a sixth form for them to claim them when they win scholarships.

Sir, if those schools were allowed to have sixth forms, the truth is that the common entrance problems that we have today we would not have because a lot of students would prefer to go to a school, like Coleridge and Parry, instead of putting their names down for a school like Harrison College. Believe you me, Sir, there are a lot of parents now who are saying they are not allowing their children even though at primary school level they have the capacity to get the marks to get to Harrison College and Queen's College and some of those schools they still feel it would be better for their children to go to other schools because of the demand and the competition that it involves.

It might sound like a joke but it is a fact because I know of many cases and I might be guilty of that, Sir, because my son is now doing - not that I am trying to personalise this debate - very well at school but the truth is that he has to understand that it is better sometimes to go to another school where he can continue to shine than to put unnecessary pressure on himself just because he is going to Harrison

College.

I believe sometimes that a lot of other parents recognise sometimes that they are only “unfairing” their kids because by getting a level of 90 in school exams you also have to recognise that there are other school children who will be getting those marks and what we will be doing if we allow all of what we call the high flyers to be concentrated in one particular school is encouraging people to fail at an earlier level. I do not think that we should allow our school system to destroy our bright students. I want people to ponder on that particular point.

I also want to say, Sir, there is nothing wrong in encouraging the system to look after those students who have done well and whereas I welcome the Award of Excellence I also believe that we should reflect back on what we did earlier in trying to increase the level for scholarships every year to keep out certain people and to increase the number of scholarships more so than decreasing the number of scholarships and then attaching the Award of Excellence.

I want to say that the Minister said that the evaluation system is for the teachers that they would be able to assess themselves and that when they assess themselves, judge themselves fairly. The truth is that when the teachers do the evaluation and they assess themselves fairly then there is no need for the other grouping because the Minister is admitting that the self-evaluation does the trick already but yet you are going to bring another group to do the evaluation.

Sir, that is duplication and my other fear of this is that we have to be clear in our minds that this is what the teachers want. We have to acknowledge one major point and that is that there is competition in the world for teachers. If this is not what the teachers in Barbados want, what we are doing will only be providing an excuse for them to leave the system quicker and go elsewhere or leave the system instead of teaching to find alternative work. I hope this will not be the end result of this particular system.

I am not even interested in whether this is what the unions want. At the end of the day, it is the teachers we have to regard. Sometimes even though the unions are supposed to represent the interest of the teachers we know it does not always happen. We have to be sure in our minds that at the end of day it is what they want. I agree that the union is the body that is supposed to represent the interest of the teachers.

As you know, Sir, I have always been a part of a union and I have always had conflict because what was in the interest of the mass based people is not necessarily what is in the interest of those at the top. I will give an example of what I speak. When I was in the sugar industry we had a union called the Sugar Industry Supervisors' Association and every leader or some person in some senior position....

Aside.

12:25 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

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

I was able to command my position in the industry, without having to be a senior member in the union.

Sir, I am hoping that this is not a situation where the unions come prepared, believing that they know what is best for their followers, when in truth and in fact, the followers want something quite different. I am also hoping that at the end of this process, we do not see a situation where we have to invite people from outside of Barbados to come here and teach our teachers. The teachers get fed up and they decide to leave the system because of this type of amendment. If it is not favourable to the people involved, it will encourage them to leave the system, or seek other employment.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am being told, Mr. Speaker, that wherever the teachers go, they will be evaluated. The truth is, wherever cane cutters go in the world, they cut canes but the ones in Barbados do not want to cut canes in Barbados, so I do not know what is that argument.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is clear that what people are prepared to leave their home lands and go elsewhere and do, they are not prepared to do those things in their own country and we must acknowledge that fact.

Sir, I also want to deal with the adult education classes. From the time I was a child, I have always thought that was one of the most progressive things that has ever occurred within the educational system, after free secondary education and tertiary education. I remember that I was very angry, when those classes were stopped, for the simple reason, Sir, I cannot imagine that any enlightened Government which believes that the education of one's people is the most important thing, would have stopped that system.

Sir, it is not by accident that it was stopped in 1980 and was restarted in 1989, for the simple reason that if one remembers well, this was stopped at a time when a famous Prime Minister was quoted as saying that we are providing only a particular type of work and that we needed people to work in the hotel industry. The fact is, that it was stopped around that time when that statement was made. I am saying that was being shortsighted, because even though a man is well educated, it does not necessarily mean that he cannot do a particular type of work. In Barbados, we much allow people to do the work they want to do, and if we have a system where everybody in Barbados is educated, it means that we would increase the efficiencies of ourselves and our country.

Sir, some people believe that to stop a person from getting education, is to create a particular type of work force, when in truth and in fact, it could be seen in the reverse, that you are increasing the level of the work force in certain jobs. I am one of those who strongly believe that in Barbados, and this is my personal belief, sometimes there are people who, instead of clambering to do certain jobs, they should do the job they know that they are suitable for and perform well in, instead of striving to do jobs, they are not capable of doing even though, according to the piece of paper they have the qualification. Then, they go and compete in those jobs and they do the opposite too well, when they could have taken a

different job, and have done well in that particular job.

We have to recognise, Sir, that this is a very competitive world and if we are going to get involved in the service industry, every sector and segment of the labour force must be given the tools so that they can operate efficiently in order to propel the economy of Barbados.

Sir, there is a common error that occurs within Barbados. For example, you go to meetings and someone is talking to another person or a group of other persons. They do not want to speak so that a lawyer can hear, but they speak in front of the messenger or the maid, because they believe that the messenger and the maid do not have common sense to understand what they are saying.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You could say, please, but it is a fact. They feel that if they speak in the company of a particular group of persons, the news will get out but they can talk, in front of the maid and the messenger because they do not have the capacity to understand what they are speaking. This is the biggest joke. Then, they turn around and blame other people for saying these things because they do not believe that the people have the capacity to understand what they are speaking. This is saying that we are a snobbish society and we believe that only certain people have common sense.

Sir, I am also saying that we need to expand these classes. The Minister stated that there are three: St. James, Springer and Foundation. There used to be Grantley Adams, but we also have to understand that because of the transportation system within Barbados as it stands today, we need to make sure that these classes are accessible to other people. We also have to make sure that it is spreading in such a way that anyone who wants to be part of this new system, can have the ability to be part thereof.

The Minister is claiming that because of the fee structure, people are now clambering for these types of classes but I am not too sure. He then went on to say that the boyfriend is dropping the girlfriend to class and the boyfriend is remaining outside in the car and not attending the classes. The Minister has not recognised that things are so hard with the masses of people in Barbados, that they can only afford to pay for the girlfriend and they do not have the money to pay for themselves.

Sir, I am hoping that now the Minister understands that there is a fallout, and the men of Barbados are the ones who are suffering, he will recognise that a pilot project could be implemented to see if you allow everybody the opportunity to get those classes without having to pay the fees, if there will be an increase in the men whom he thought were not interested coming to join these particular classes.

I think the mere fact that the Minister has raised his concern about the number of people attending the classes and the sex of the people, he must recognise that it is in his interest to make sure that everybody has the ability to enter and be part of these classes. I hope, Sir, that he will try it and we will get the feedback on this particular suggestion. Sir, it is a very dangerous thing because when one looks and sees, that our male folk are now being alienated in all sectors, one must be concerned.

Sir, I have already said in this Parliament that if we do not watch ourselves, not only the men folk will be alienated in terms of work but in many other things. Sir, soon from now, if the women are so progressive, it means that we, as a society are creating problems when it comes to marriage, because the

women will not want to marry any more or they will have to marry outside of Barbados and bring their husbands into Barbados. The truth is . . .

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, we have to be very serious because if everything is going against our men folk, we must stop, think and look for solutions to solve the particular problem. It is a very serious problem. It is okay for women to say, so what? But we, as men have to recognise that we have to be our brothers' keepers and we have to use the capacity given to us, by the same men, to make sure that they are not left behind.

12:35 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

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

If this is what is going to happen ten or 15 years from now, we will have a Barbados that would not be of any help to itself because of the lack of the ability of its males to perform within the society. What would be happening is that we would be laying a foundation for other people to come to Barbados and take those positions which our men should be taking and this is a very serious thing. This might look like a minor point to some but it is a major point because at the same time we are hearing this particular talk we are hearing that our men folk are going to prison, they are on the streets liming and they are involved in this and involved in that.

We have to acknowledge what has been said in this Parliament today by the Minister of Education because if we do not do anything about it then we will be the ones responsible for the failure of our men. It is one thing to acknowledge that you know the problem but it is another to find the solution and we need to find the solution to solve that social ill that is being created in this society.

I have always said that there is a well-calculated plan to destroy the young men in Barbados and we are allowing it to happen. There are outside forces who understand quite well what they are doing and that is why they bring the drugs and all sorts of things into this country to make sure that the process used in other countries to off balance the ethnic grouping, they know full well it cannot happen in Barbados so easily and they must find another route to get it in.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: All those who want to laugh at it, can laugh at it. I have stopped believing that the drug trade in this country is about money. I have long come to the conclusion that the drug trade in this country is about power and politicians must understand that because the type of capital that is used in this country against our people is not to build big pockets for the people but to destroy the young men of our society and leave that citizenship route open so that the young women can then get married. I know they are some people who are going to walk around and say that I said that the young women in Barbados should not marry foreigners because that was said already but I am above that particular point. I must point out the ills of society and try to solve them.

Mr. Speaker, we must educate our people that even though the habit might feel good to them, it is going to have a long-term effect on them and on this country. We must understand that every young man of this country who finds himself on drugs is one more out of the grouping. So we have to use our educational system to ensure that those young men the Minister spoke of would have an understanding that it is better to get involved in this programme than to get involved in the ills of society.

You are in education, Sir, because you think you need to deliver something to deliver our people. We cannot put our finger on the particular problem and then walk away from it but that is exactly what we are doing. We understand what is going on, we are talking about it but then we are walking away from it.

I am saying that this adult education programme should be the platform to get our young men back into school and to educate them on all the ills within the society and make sure that their minds are turned away from those things.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is what she saw in society and it is a fact that people are seeing it as tools.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: If you want me to repeat it, I will repeat it because the facts are there, so do not let us go down that road. We cannot continue to bury our heads when we know that these things are occurring in society. Everybody knows that the guns are coming in along with the drugs. That is a known fact. So we need to solve it and stop looking at it as a political point because as long as we sweep it under the carpet we are going to continue to fool ourselves that we do not have a problem.

Mr. Speaker, at a time like this, when we are fighting globalisation and trade liberalisation and all sorts of other things, we need to put every hand to the plough because every drop-out in society is a link out of the chain and we will not keep the chain connected if we look at the problems in society from that point of view. We have to understand what is going on in this society but some of us believe that once it is not happening to us that it is our job to laugh at other people. That is not so. Our job is to bring everybody on board and hold their hands but there are people who feel that once they are not touched by it or it is not near to them that they can walk away from it. To say that it is a problem for a particular person because the person carries a particular hairstyle and that is what they are expected to do in society, is foolishness.

We have to see every single person in this society as our brothers and sisters and we have to build a foundation for them. If they are doing wrong things, we have to find a solution to the wrong doings but some of us believe that if we just take people and pelt them in prison, that will solve the problem. That is wrong. We have to understand that a small country like Barbados has to be a productive country. If we imprison them or have them on the streets and out of the system it is not going to help Barbados because then we will have to tap the resources of other people to do our development and I am against that, Mr. Speaker.

We have to stop alienating people and looking over our glasses at them and learn how to appreciate and elevate them so that we can build a better society. Our job within the next year or two is to turn the wrongs into rights and use the resources that we have to educate our people because every single person who decides to do something wrong will affect us. If we look at it that way, we would not have the problems we are having today but the first thing you hear is everybody saying that it is that person's child and they know that will always happen. That should not be the approach.

When we were growing up, Mr. Speaker, we never had that problem. If you were walking going to school and you pull a cane blade, there was someone there to tell you that the cane blade was important to the cane but now if we see someone going wrong we want to walk away because it is not our child.

12:45 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

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

Mr. Speaker, you see them in the streets, on the wells and we ignore them. Sir, when we were growing up we had people to guide us but now there is none and even though no guidance is provided we want to contribute everything to solving this particular problem. Sir, I hope it is a good programme and can be implemented in that way and that the values of the programme can be carried on to the street corners.

Also, that when the young men come to park their cars and to wait on these ladies, that there be counsellors there to counsel and to show them the true value of the adult classes. Therefore, instead of these young men wasting away their time sleeping in their cars while waiting for these young ladies, they themselves, would be prepared to do something in the classroom.

Sir, if the fee structure is a problem, this society cannot see fees as something to deter people; it must be seen as something that we must be prepared to remove by coming to this Parliament for necessary supplementaries in order to correct that problem.

Sir, it does not make sense to say that one sex is doing well while the other is not. The mere fact that one is prepared to do well, we must find out why the other is not. I find it hard to believe that, while teaching a group and recognising the problem within the educational structure has to do with a male/female problem, that you are going to pull towards one end and not the other and will not carry out any investigation. Any good teacher would do that. Surely, one would have to ask, is it that the men do not want to be with the women? Sir, we need to move from co-ed back to the original system.

Sir, I know of boys who have said they like to know that when they are finished playing sports and go back to the classrooms they are sitting among their equal and not next to girls while smelling sweaty. This is a macho image and must be understood because the same school girl who the boy sits next to while smelling sweaty, is the same girl that he might want to court. Sir, we have to be realistic and understand what is going on in the system...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the Minister of Education has recognised the amount of work being placed on a selected group of principals is burdensome and that there is a need to reward them for that additional work. Sir, when they were first employed, they would have been employed to look after the day-to-day running which was the normal daily students and not the adults ones. Sir, now these principals have been given this additional responsibility, one would expect that there would be additional compensation. If compensation is not coming, it means there is going to be a breakdown in the system because there is going to be the creation of frustration among that group and the original people who these principals are supposed to be supervising, will not be provided with the supervision.

Sir, I am glad to hear the Minister is looking at it and understands that final point; that there will be something to deal with it. Sir, when one is saying that the headmaster, who is the coordinator, is responsible for the opening and closing of the school you are saying these classes start after the normal school hours and there are some teachers who tend to give additional time in their teaching. It means that a headmaster can find himself on the school premises for long hours when he could have been doing other things.

Sir, the Minister has also made the point that places like the 'O' Level Institute would have done a lot of work over the years and will continue to do good work but, in Barbados, we have a problem to which I have been speaking for the last two weeks. We only know how to award and reward persons from outside and do not know how to honour those persons who have done well for us within the system. The Minister is bold enough to say the 'O' Level Institute has done a lot of good work but has not stated what the Ministry has done to encourage the 'O' Level Institute to do better work. The same point I have made about the 'O' Level is the same error which occurred with the Julie N' Supermarkets, where these supermarkets were prepared to bring a mega-store in the 1990s while Barbados was going through a tremendous crisis...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, when one hears people talking about the negatives of places like the 'O' Level Institute and Julie N' Supermarkets, they do not realise the kind of sacrifices these businessmen go through to keep the economy afloat. Sir, if there is going to be a system for awarding persons, it should not only award students but also those persons who had the vision of setting up institutions like the 'O' Level Institute, and in the commercial sector, persons like Julie N' Supermarket, who had the vision, not only to want to have supermarkets in Barbados but had the foresight to go outside of Barbados and take that good product elsewhere. Sir, instead of encouraging and helping them, we always want to pull them down and to look for the negatives and not the positives. Sir, I know that this side is prepared to compensate those persons who have done well.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I said this side. I cannot speak for that side. I was never on that side. I never had the vision of being on that side. I never had the feeling of how it feels to be on that side.

Therefore, as a society and at a time when we brag of having local national heroes and being an Independent country for so long, I feel that we could recognise, reward and award our own and lay that foundation for the youngsters to understand that once they have done well, there will be some compensation for those who have strived to do well in order to develop the country of Barbados. I thank you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Honourable House do now suspend until 2.15 pm today.

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

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

12.55 pm

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

RESUMPTION

MR. SPEAKER: This Honourable House is now resumed.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I first became aware of what is called continuing education when I was a small boy and I vividly recall as a teenager an Education Officer called Mr. Cuffley from St. Thomas being in charge of administering evening classes in select schools throughout this country.

Mr. Speaker, this was during the era of the 60s when a number of important things were happening in Barbados that suggested quite clearly that our people were about to use education as a means of empowerment and upward social mobility.

I will take my colleagues back to the glorious days of the 60s where I vividly recall youngsters on evenings going to public libraries in Barbados to take back and borrow books. I also vividly recall in many villages mature ladies offering classes in shorthand and typewriting and many teenagers going to schools administered by Mr. Cuffley to whom I made reference earlier.

Mr. Speaker, in time it became clear that somewhere between 1966 and 1970 that system which had existed seemed to have lost momentum and I well recall that there was something in the nature of a void at this post secondary stage in the period between 1968 and 1971. I remember an institution opened its doors in the Bank Hall area known as the Barbados O'Level Institute which came into existence primarily because there was a demand for the type of services that this institute was to deliver and also there were those intent on offering services as teachers and willing to receive an education.

Mr. Speaker, there would have been part time and full time students at the University of the West Indies who had time to teach at the Barbados O'Level Institute. In fact, those who had to go to the university full time and had no income as such, often were employed by the Barbados O'Level Institute because they had time both to pursue their studies at Cave Hill and offer teaching services at the Barbados O'Level Institute. Sir, there were persons who would have been given an opportunity to continue their studies at Cave Hill out of the income they received from part-time teaching at the Barbados O'Level Institute.

Mr. Speaker, I am heartened when youngsters, whether male or female, have done very well and publicly say that they have been able to succeed in life out of an education given to them at the Barbados O'Level Institute.

Mr. Speaker, in my possession there is correspondence from a young man whom I met on Brandons' beach between 1977 and 1979. His intention at that time was to become a beach bum. I talked to him and told him he had the ability that would commend itself more to onshore activity in gaining a secondary education than on the risk associated with the adventure that beach bums and gigolos are wont to pursue. This young man enlisted as a student at the Barbados O'Level Institute, having decided to give up his aspirations as a beach bum and today, he is the Corporate Vice President of a bank overseas lending millions of dollars to clients.

Sir, many young girls, unfortunately, got pregnant and their education was interrupted in the normal school system but thanks to the Barbados O'Level Institute they were able to go to classes, benefit from an education, resumed life and went on to position themselves.

Sir, the Reverend Elesius Joseph at one point of his life, faced with the usual challenges that confronted juvenile and puberty, only started to achieve focus in life when he enlisted as a student at the Barbados O'Level Institute. Today he is a great outstanding priest, trained in the field of sociology with post graduate training.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that where there is an absence of opportunity like what the Barbados O'Level Institute offers, you do not know what will become of those who are fit to pursue such opportunity but denied them. I know for a fact that for years the management of the Barbados O'Level Institute was sufficiently benevolent to offer many scholarships to persons who did not have the cash and wanted to go to that institute.

About seven years ago I talked to 45 students and 25 of them were on scholarship at an institution belonging to the private sector where people are apt to think that private sector institutions are actuated by the bottom line of profit.

Sir, I am saying that where an institution gives up the profit motive and functions on altruistic and humanitarian grounds there is a strong case for a recommendation that all systems should be so mobilised to facilitate the assistance of such institutions. Sir, hundreds of ordinary Barbadians were able to benefit from this system.

Sir, the first time I went to St. Lucia I was met by a buxom young lady from the famous Foster tribe of St. Lucia and she told me that she was here in Barbados for two years solely to attend the

Barbados O'Level Institute. Sir, I do not want to belabour or exhaust the point about the Barbados O'Level Institute but in an era when the stated policy of this administration is to ensure that Barbadians as a people, are fully equipped with education and training, in an era as well where our economy has transcended the agrarian way of economy and is positioned to fulfill itself at a tertiary stage of production, a strong case can be repeatedly made for our people to be attracted to education, instruction and training.

A strong case has to be made to every youngster in Barbados to fully appreciate the value of a basic foundational strong education and the value of seeing education as something that does not come to a halt when one reaches the age of 70 but as a continuing undertaking.

Sir, all of us in Barbados owe it to ourselves to respect and value education and to pursue it into adulthood to ensure that we are always equipped with the knowledge and skill necessary to assist ourselves in the world of work while at the same time contributing to national development.

Mr. Speaker, years ago I also became familiar with an institution that used to be called the Technical Institute which is now call the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. Many youngsters from St. Lucy, St. Peter, St. Andrew and other parts of the island would go to the Technical Institute to learn technical drawing, carpentry and a host of other studies.

Sir, through the Barbados Labour Party administration the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic now has a new focus. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has modernised the operation of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and it now has a broad curriculum which to some extent overlaps with a few things offered by the Barbados Community College. For example, the business studies programme at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic is a relatively new programme and to some extent resembles the business studies programme at the Barbados Community College but these two separate institutions may eventually come under one umbrella.

2:25 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: I am not saying that any wastage should incur in what appears to be something in the way of duplication of effort.

In an era where a Government is trying to encourage its youth to develop their skills and interest as entrepreneurs, no amount of training in business and business-related activities can be too much. In case a cynic is tempted to say, how come you are duplicating business at the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, that cynic should be told that where a Government has introduced programmes like the Fund Access, the Urban Enterprises Fund, the Rural Development Fund and where the Government has the Youth Entrepreneur Scheme and is very interested in promoting self-employment as the way forward, while at the same time ensuring that Barbados is positioned to deliver services, many of which can attract the earning of foreign exchange, all of our efforts at business and business studies are clearly justified.

Sir, in the context of technical education, the Barbados Vocational Training Board has been assigned

to me since October 1, 2001. In the context where the objectives and policies of the Barbados Vocational Training Board differs somewhat from the Polytechnic, what is being done now in addition to all that the Barbados Labour Party has been encouraging since the Barbados Vocational Training Board was first established, is to rethink the courses being offered, encourage participants in the programme, to come and train as electricians, plumbers and steel benders as a separate occupation. In an era where we are telling our young people the importance of being multi-skilled, we are now looking at introducing a system under the Barbados Vocational Training Board called the Modular System where we are going to encourage persons, who are willing to cooperate, to undertake two, three or four electives rather than one elective.

Sir, the real world is an interesting place. In the real world if a young lady is a specialist stenographer and works as a stenographer for five years, when that employment of her choice ends it will take money and time to retrain her in a new profession if she is to get a new job. If at a young age she does a number of modules and goes beyond the stenographer's art, she has options available to her. By the time the job closes down on her she is already qualified to pursue another one and is more marketable in a situation where she has three or four skills rather than if she only had one skill.

Sir, increasingly, more spokesmen in this country are talking about the importance of being multi-skilled. When I join with Honourable Members on this side of the House in encouraging young Barbadians to be multi-skilled, I am doing so out of all sincerity. I am not paying lip service to the concept of being multi-skilled, because in a situation where as a third world country we are prone to the stresses and uncertainties of the external world which can impact on us, our people always have to be prepared. Sir, it would be a short-sighted student who goes to school and finishes school with only a certificate in Office Practice and Principles of Business, only two subjects and allowed five or six years to pass before doing something else.

Sir, clearly, the person having got two CXC's had some set back that affected his or her position before or after achieving the CXC's, the person should look to see what opportunities there are available to further his or her studies. Having earlier addressed the contribution of a private sector agency in Barbados, the Barbados O-level Institute, there are now public sector agencies which exist.

I am told that at the Springer Memorial School, St. James Secondary School and Foundation School, there are now opportunities being offered to our young people.

I do not take kindly to young people coming to me, as one came last week from a far place not in St. James, at age twenty-nine to tell me that she wants a job as a school meals worker. I did not take it kindly when she first came to me and I do not take it kindly now. The reason why I do not take it kindly is because she went to a very good school in Barbados and whatever happened in her life I am sure that she is above average intelligence. Sir, she told me these exact words, "they are people in Barbados who get jobs at the National Conservation Commission (NCC) as Rangers and at the School Meals Department." I said to her that the jobs do not abound, there are limited, there are not numberless. She then told me that it cannot be a fair world where the School Meals Department close down their opportunities because I am not to get a job there.

I said to her, in no uncertain terms, that her ability is so high, that as long as you are prepared to take the advice, please go and increase your education. I even promised to use my position to get her placed

somewhere but her story has been the typical low-level job where she does not have to exert herself.

Sir, she wanted the school meals job, not because she wants to fulfil her skills as a cook but it offers the opportunity for what she perceives to be security. It does not, in her mind, entail hard or stressful work and that is where she wants to go in life. I am not encouraging people with ability to set their sights so low when they can do something more on their own for themselves than to be fitted them into some low-involvement job. They are too many Barbadians with ability who settle for low-involvement jobs.

Low-involvement jobs are jobs which are below the ability of the person taking part and it does not offer an opportunity beyond a wage as such. The interaction between the job and the worker is not a strong one. That person comes home miserable at the end of the day because the contribution being made by that person does not truly fulfil the person.

The context of what our work should be doing for us should mean more than the earning of a wage or salary. It must mean an opportunity not just to exert ourselves but help to build the country and at the end of the day feeling fulfilled psychologically that they are doing something, while at the same time having the satisfaction that we are patriotic enough to build our country.

I conclude by looking at the teachers' appraisal. There is no doubt that the typical employee has to be told that the real world is such, that the employer, manager and supervisor are interested in the output of the person subordinate to the owner, manager or supervisor. A lot of our people go to work without realising until after a year that they are being subject to an evaluation.

In cases where somebody goes to work and it takes a year for the person to be told that there is going to be a performance appraisal, then we have to blame management because management should have made it known to the employee up-front that part of the experience is that there would be an evaluation of the person's job.

Historically in Barbados, systems of evaluation have not been what they ought to be. I remember reading a book by Professor Khan who spoke about the concept of evaluation. He spoke about the concept of evaluating the subordinate. He raised issues as to how fair it would be for the subordinate to be evaluated and the superordinate to escape evaluation. Sir, he raised a number of important issues.

In the real world, over time in Barbados, systems of evaluation have been too subjective. Very often the employee is made to suffer at the whims and fancies of a person supervising who, for reasons best known to the supervisor, has not been fair one way or the other. I know of a person who has been evaluated in Barbados and evaluated harshly because of personalities difference with the evaluator. The evaluator was not able to assume the lofty couch, detached from the personality differences, and impose a proper evaluation. In fact, whatever consultation there was with the person evaluated afterwards came ipso facto when the subordinate quarrelled with the superordinate about the unjust assessment that was made.

Sir, the way I understand the system, which the Honourable Member for St. Philip North is proposing, this system has more checks and balances than any other system before. This system is going to root out senseless subjectivity. It is going to achieve more equity than ever known before. In fact, I understand

that its ultimate objective is to give everyone his due and to achieve a level where performance is evaluated properly, sensibly and fairly in the interest of all concerned.

2.35 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. R.C. EASTMOND:

A person's entire job prospects often hinge on the type of evaluation that person would have got over the years and if we hold factors constant outside of the job and do not put them on the job in a situation where a person has clearly performed properly, efficiently and done his or her utmost, then there should be a system of evaluation that takes into account that type of performance.]

The whole question of the appraisal being broken down into a number of heads and the person doing the assessment fears giving the same grades over and over has to be dismissed. I have seen people evaluated and the person doing the evaluation said, "I have given you three As and I am timid to give you three more As because those who find out that I have given you 6 As are going to object." That cannot be right. If the person deserves the six As let the person get the 6 As, do not call in the teacher and say, "Teacher A, I have given you A for classroom control, A for preparation of lessons, A for attitude to work and then there are three other things which in my heart I want to give you A for but the Ministry..."

I remember being a teacher, Mr. Speaker, when a lot of teachers used to get up on mornings, say their prayers and then proceed immediately to worry and pray about the Ministry as though the Ministry was some monolithic goliath that was anti-humanitarian. A lot of teachers for years in the classroom, and anybody in here who has taught would tell you that you go to school and the Year Head or the Deputy Head would come to you and say, "Mr. X, you cannot do this. The Ministry..." The Ministry used to be treated as something up there in the clouds imposing foolish directives. We used to laugh at the Ministry years ago and say that everything from the Ministry of Education would always start with "I am directed." Sometime after that you made no sense of the two lines that followed and people are in the staff room saying, "The Ministry..."

I remember one time a head teacher who was so scared of the Ministry that he told a teacher not to eat more than two Eclipses from the tin of biscuits because the Ministry knew every biscuit in the tin. I also remember a head teacher who was so scared of the Ministry that the rain was pouring one day and when it held up the pipes went off and there could be no school and the head teacher said, "I cannot send off the school before I write a letter."

Because of these systems and attitudes and trends over the years, very often good people were driven to being absurd. I am not talking about anything that has transpired in the last ten years. I am talking about way back then. Mr. Speaker, you yourself have been a teacher and you must have known about curious and strange decisions made because of a fear of the Ministry. People sometimes found that their productivity did not proceed at the pace it should have or be met with the type of intensity that it should have because at the end of the day they were not sure how they were evaluated by the Ministry.

It is an amazing thing, Mr. Speaker, that the difficult teacher who taught in the seventies and the eighties knew that there was something in the way of an appraisal but then he or she would often wonder who would be the person appraising the boss on location, the head teacher. It seems as though some head teachers themselves were not too sure and you had the very curious situation and anomaly where education officers were coming into schools supervising head teachers and working for significantly less than the head teachers. What a lot of people who wanted to be head teachers did was to get a job in the Ministry as education officer en route to becoming head teachers.

A lot of education officers years ago actually served there hoping eventually to become a head teacher. It seemed as though if you moved from teaching to education officer you could make it as head and a lot of people came through that way.

The amazing thing about it, Mr. Speaker, which you will recall, is that in the same way that the year head at one point in the school worked for less than a university graduate whom the year head had supervised, the education officer coming to St. Leonards in 1972 and 1973 was supervising the head teacher and working for less than the head teacher.

Aside.

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: ... a man called Archer. A man called Jackson whom we know now was an education officer.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude now with the whole question of awards. There is no question about the fact that in a situation where every educational institution that is serving at a certain level will be preparing students to do subjects and exams within a syllabus or curriculum at a certain level that we have to re-examine where we are.

I recall that around 1967-8 that persons went to the Ursuline Convent to do advanced level subjects. They were not denied the opportunity to write the Barbados Scholarship exam, but it did not last long. I am not sure if right now the Ursuline Convent still has a sixth form but clearly there are institutions which are offering the equivalent of "A" levels and the equivalent of "A" levels which do not seem to be embraced when it comes to there being opportunities for their graduates to be eligible for particular awards.

Let me repeat. A person going to Harrison College, Queen's College or the Barbados Community College doing "A" levels is subject to a few things and entitled to write examinations for the Barbados Scholarship in the same way that some people doing CAPE are entitled. A person at the Barbados "O" Level Institute doing accounting, law and sociology who is an "A" student is not facilitated when it comes to permitting that person to be entered for a scholarship.

In a situation where we talk about justice and equity, I would like to persuade my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, to look closely. When I say persons at the "O" Level Institute the assumption is that such a person is between 16 and 19 years old. I am not going to support a fellow 61 years old at the "O" Level Institute doing accounting, sociology and law, being eligible for a Barbados Scholarship. I am talking about people in the same age range as their counterparts at the Barbados Community College, Harrison College and Queen's College.

I am going against some informal policy I heard somewhere north where old people who have taken long to reach maturation or maturity and whose intellect did not proceed as fast as their physical or emotional development should be given a chance later in life to compete with 17 year old people for Barbados Scholarships. I am not going to go with that.

I am being heckled from here, Mr. Speaker, to modify my position. The Honourable Member on my right whose name and constituency I will not call is shocked that I am taking this position in view of the fact that he was present when I heard somebody else suggest that people 50 and 60 should not be denied Barbados Scholarships.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude by saying that what this House is being asked to do is indeed noble. We are met here to provide for efficient management of a programme of adult education.

2:45 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. R. C. EASTMOND:

We are met here to provide for the efficient management of a programme of adult education. We are met here also to give the Minister the power to make regulations for the improved evaluation of teachers and to make further provision for the conferring of awards. Mr. Speaker, subject to all I have said, I will wholeheartedly endorse what the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and Minister of Education and Sports is bringing before this House.

I am delighted to have taken part, Mr. Speaker, and I thank you very much for your patience and understanding. Thank you.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to take part in this worthwhile debate on education. It is important for us, first of all, to notice and take note of the contribution that, no doubt, has been made by tertiary institutions in this country. I am one of the persons who fundamentally believe that without the adult educational programme, many persons would be lost in this country.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that one has to take it from the background as to what happens and what is the philosophy behind the teaching in the primary, secondary and tertiary institutions. It appears to me that in the secondary school, most children go there, and remain in school until the age of 16 and many teachers' philosophy in the entire system, is mainly to keep them until they reach the age of 16 years old.

I believe that a teachers' appraisal system should no doubt, look at those teachers that have made and continue to make a contribution in the teaching of children and adults, to look at how the appraisal can help the teacher, the children, the teaching system and how to motivate the children to learn in an atmosphere that is productive to the country.

I say so because we have noticed that in the teaching system, less than 15 per cent of all the children

who go to secondary school, usually come out with any certification.

Aside.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: One finds that without the tertiary institutions and educational systems that cater to the adult education, one can safely say that the majority of the population will be lost. Therefore, I want to focus, to some extent, on the importance of the tertiary educational system.

I also want to look at what I consider to be a system that still perpetuates an elite system to some extent, and which needs to be totally revolutionalised. I must say from the outset, I am glad that this Government took office in 1994 and tried to upgrade the teaching facility as a school, and the concept of the three Rs, because there was a time with the three Rs were important: reading, writing and arithmetic. Sir, that is what the fundamentals of the teaching system were based on and for many years, that was the philosophy behind the learning in the schools.

Mr. Speaker, today, we find that the Government has taken a shift. Sir, while these three Rs are important, the Government has looked at how teaching and learning can be produced productively in a new environment based on technology, and how the programme can produce the added results.

Mr. Speaker, I must say, fundamentally, that when one looks at this 15 per cent of only persons coming out of school with certification, one has to ask the question, what happens to the other 85 per cent of students who go to these schools? They are totally lost. Sir, without the tertiary education, especially for a school like the old St. Leonard's Evening Class, I must say that institution provided help for many students in the 1950s and 1960s. When this school went out of production, a vacuum was left and, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North spent a lot of time on the Barbados 'O' Level Institution. I must say that he has said a lot to compliment the management of that institution.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at the institution called the Barbados 'O' Level Institute, that came out of a dire need to fill a vacuum in the 1970s, where more than 70 per cent of the school population was failing, and these same students came back in the institution, and year after year, they were able to motivate themselves to pass examinations and to go on into society to make a contribution for themselves, so one must applaud that institution.

Mr. Speaker, it appears to me that many children are not motivated in the school system. I want to ask the question, why is it that these students are not motivated to take the examination. Why is it that children would leave school at age 16, and I make the point that many students remain in schools, and teachers only see them remain in schools because they have to remain there until age 16. Sir, but what happens beyond that? As soon as child becomes 16 years old, he is out through the door. As I said, there is lack of motivation in the schools' system, for most of these students. Therefore, at the age of 16, they are sent into the world without proper certification and without proper education.

Sir, the need for tertiary education to fill the vacuum is important and that is why I must salute the Barbados 'O' Level Institution for 31 years of adult education and 31 years of providing opportunities for a number of Barbadian students, business people, professionals, lawyers, doctors and I speak of students that were completely written off by the school system. I speak of names like Dr. Boxill who

went to the 'O' Level Institute, a student at the St. George Secondary School. I speak of many persons who came back into the school system and who were motivated to do work and I ask the question then, what motivates students after the age of 16, but not before 16 years old. Something has to be wrong.

I believe it has to do with not only the commitment of teachers, but with the school plant. Children remain in the schools. They go there, day after day, week after week, month after month without that motivation. I believe that the Government itself cannot provide that motivation within the school system. The Government can do its part by providing the atmosphere which they have done. We have gone beyond the three Rs and the days where teachers taught in an atmosphere that was not conducive to learning.

I was a teacher in the early 1970s and I remember in those days, Mr. Speaker, that the whole school plant was in a state of disrepair. A number of school plants, Mr. Speaker, were not upgraded. Teachers taught under severe stress, poor classrooms, the visibility not good and desks, chairs, tables were all broken down.

I am saying this because I know that this Government has spent a lot of money upgrading the school system and the plants. For example, all the schools have been upgraded in my constituency in the last seven years.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: It has nothing to do with me. It is the Government's programme and most of the schools throughout Barbados have been upgraded so that teachers are now teaching in better surroundings and under better conditions. Therefore, I do not see the need why the results should not be better. I am saying that institutions like the Barbados 'O' Level Institute teach for results.

2:55 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Persons who work and then go to the Barbados O'Level Institute and the other adult educational institutions go for results. I have seen students who went into these institutions without certification but in three years time they were able to get the required six subjects to go into the University of the West Indies. Some of them have also gone on to do their Masters and Doctorate degrees. So I believe tertiary education is fundamental and must be continued.

The Honourable Member for St. James North tried to make fun of slow learners but, Mr. Speaker, the majority of people in Barbados are slow learners and they must be accommodated. I fundamentally believe that when you have a system...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I believe you are including all of us here.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: All of us are slow learners to some extent. There are not many bright people

in the world. The majority of the people in the world are of average ability.

Mr. SPEAKER: Which do you mean, average ability or slow learners?

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Average ability, Sir, but there are many slow learners.

I feel good as a teacher when I am able to get someone who is considered to be a slow learner to pass their examinations and get the required qualification to go into university or into a professional occupation, and these tertiary institutions provide that opportunity for them to do so.

Mr. Speaker, if we are saying that only students who are between 16 and 21 years old can write the scholarship exams, we will be debarring a number of people from doing so and the Government knows my position on this. I believe that a person should be able to write the scholarship exam beyond age 21, I am not going to say at age 60.

Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if you know this but in some developed societies 16-year old students who take their grade 11 and fail can go back into a teaching institution until they pass their grade 11 because they cannot get a job in the society unless they pass their grade 11 so they have to repeat that grade 11 until they pass even if it means that they would have to remain in the school system until age 21 or until they pass the exam.

When I was living in Canada, I know of students who were 23 years old who went back into the school system to do their grade 12 and grade 13. That is why I have been saying all along that there must be an opportunity for students beyond the age of 21.

I am also saying, and I have said it before, that there must be some tolerance. I also fundamentally believe that Barbados scholars who want to do medicine or law should be made to do their medicine and their law right here in the Caribbean. If the disciplines are not available within the Caribbean, then they should be allowed to go beyond the Caribbean to take the necessary courses. Why would one opt to do law in Britain, in the United States of America or in Scotland? I have a niece who just got an Ontario scholarship but she had to do her degree in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, developed societies are saying to their nationals that scholarships are available to them but they have to do the disciplines within the country. If they want to pursue it elsewhere there is nothing wrong with that but the scholarship is paid for them within their jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, it is important for us to continue to look at tertiary education. Persons can get free secondary education up to age 16 and then they can get free university education but if a student fails his CXC and has to go to into an adult educational institution they have to pay and it is hard sometimes for those students who have to pay their way to reach the goal they set. If Government is prepared to pay for free secondary and university education, what about those many students who have failed their examinations and are going on to adult education and who have to pay until they get the five subjects.

Mr. Speaker, what type of help is given to institutions like the Barbados O'Level Institute which has provided such valuable service over the years in preparing those many students to go further who have not done very well at the secondary level. I am, therefore, saying that the Ministry of Education should

look at a system to help schools like the Barbados O'Level Institute and the Urban Adult College not only to upgrade their plant but to provide hardware in terms of computer systems.

3:05 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

Mr. Speaker, it is also important for us to look at a reward system for those persons who have helped. I heard the Member for St. Lucy this morning speaking on this, that there is need not only to reward students but those persons who had the foresight in starting these institutions that have remained in existence for so many years. Therefore, persons who had that foresight in starting these institutions should be honoured in no uncertain terms; that success has come to so many students and have made a valuable contribution to the lives of Barbadians.

Sir, I am also of the view that there needs to be more training of students in subjects and areas for the future. For example, in the 1950s' and 1960s', we were being taught Housecraft. There was a Housecraft Centre at the St. George Girls' School. In those days we were teaching them for the job market. Now the time has come for us to have these institutions, whether the O Level Institute, Springer Memorial School, Girls Foundation, et cetera, they must address the future, therefore, the emphasis must be on how students are prepared for the future. Therefore, if it is tourism or the Information Age, students should be taught and the emphasis should be on that to prepare students and the Barbados public for the world of work. Sir, I believe that there is nothing wrong with a Government preparing its people for the job market. There is nothing wrong with training 100 policemen per year; 100 nurses per year; 100 scientist per year. We must be in the business of training so that these persons can be able to go, not only here in Barbados nor in the Caribbean but in the wider world to give them the opportunity and that when people migrate the country benefits from that migration. This country has benefitted tremendously out of persons going to the United Kingdom, Great Britain, or some other scheme that was set up to help our people. If this happens, we will find that we will not only help young Barbadians to achieve their goals but also help our country in a way in which the country was helped in the 1950s' and 1960s' preparing them for the job market.

Sir, at the outset I have said that the three Rs' that were taught years ago were fundamental then and are important now because that is the base at which we start but, Mr. Speaker, we must move beyond the three Rs' and must teach for the job market.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that the teachers' appraisal system is fundamental. Teachers must be conscious of what they impart to students. Teachers have always been the body in which more emphasis was placed on the evaluation and appraisal system.

In times past when there was the inspectorate system where inspectors would go to schools, this was a system in which the teachers were very fearful of these inspectors. Sir, having taught at the primary, secondary and tertiary level and having gone to institutions like the Erdiston Teachers Training College and the University of the West Indies, I am aware that the appraisal system can help the teachers. The teachers need to know when they are teaching wrong and I believe there should be a continuous

assessment.

A teacher who goes before the class without preparation should be told early that the preparation needs to be improved. Teachers should not be going before the classroom half-dressed or unkempt, without proper clothing and discipline. Sir, I believe if this is done the evaluation of teachers should be a straightforward thing.

Sir, many times during my teaching career I have been evaluated but of course it all has to do with one's preparation. I do not think it is right for teachers to get to a class constantly late, teachers should be prompt. Sometimes there are circumstances where this is not always possible but these things can be accounted for and can be used, not to the detriment of the teacher, but to help to empower the teacher not only to become a good teacher but to help make the profession a true one, similar to that of a doctor or lawyer.

Teachers have to understand that all other professions have to be evaluated on. I understand that a proper evaluation system will take into account not necessarily the annual report that was given sometimes but the system in which the teacher was involved in the process of helping to evaluate himself. Teachers must be prepared to have changes as times goes on.

Sir, when I was a young teacher there were induction systems and a number of other systems at Erdiston. These courses were conducted during the Easter vacation. I am not sure now how many teachers go to these courses and I would like to find out how many and also what is the ongoing programme for the upgrading and training of teachers. I believe that every profession should have an ongoing training programme. There should be training sessions to help teachers to adjust to both new technology and a new way of life. This happens and I have said that at the 'O' Level Institute people are motivated to do well. Sir, I am sure that the teachers at the O Level Institute are motivated to keep students continually going. There is also extra curricular activities like basketball, football, fashion show, dress day - these are things that help to motivate students. Mr. Speaker, if these things are done in the school system and if teachers are properly appraised, these are the fundamentals that will go towards improving our society; to keep our society in the new technology age and the focus will be clear.

Mr. Speaker, I am of the view that a teacher is important, for one to read anything, they must be able to thank the teacher. Therefore, that teacher must feel that he or she is important to the welfare of society. Mr. Speaker, I also believe that the award system the Minister of Education is speaking about is fundamental to the system. There must be awards given for good and excellent service within the teaching system for persons who have committed their lives to the upgrade of others. Therefore, in the area of tertiary education I believe there must be a way of honouring those persons who have spent all of their monies in providing, not only the opportunity for students but who have done so in such a way that many students were given help, not because they had the money but through scholarships, to help them get past the initial Ordinary Level or the single CXC subject.

3.15 pm

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

There are many students who went to the Barbados O'Level Institute free of cost and received five CXC certificates. We need to honour those students, teachers and the people who were motivated to provide institutions to provide a beautiful service for the underprivileged and the people of Barbados because education is the wealth of our people.

Sir, these institutions have helped us to maintain our 99 per cent literacy.

Sir, I thank you.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I boast no background of previous experience as a teacher so I will make my presentation strictly as the representative of the people of St. Michael East.

Sir, this is relevant because we cannot examine education strictly from the perspective of individual segments of the whole. We have to take into consideration any dysfunction in the system that is likely to impact on the individual at the end of his experience within the school system. By saying that it gives me legitimacy to touch on an issue that happened early this morning at the Belmont Primary School. While it may not appear to be relevant to the document, it is relevant to the pragmatic application of our educational policy.

This morning, the genuine and poor residents of my constituency at Belmont Primary School commissioned me to give the Minister a message and it is my responsibility to do so. Sir, the parents are crying out for assistance. They also asked me to say that the dust surrounding the school is offensive and is causing harm to the children.

It was indicated this afternoon how important it is for the facilities of our primary and secondary institutions to be conducive so that ordinary working class children can have the opportunity in those environs to advance on an equal scale with those of the more affluent social background. We spend long hours in these halls talking about theoretical positions but they are only of importance if they can be translated in a pragmatic way.

Sir, we have competent officers but sometimes there is a need for them to get on the ground in the individual schools around Barbados to see the problems way in advance before the beginning of the school term if the principals do not report the concerns of the parents. Mr. Speaker, the school was built after Hurricane Janet in 1956 with a limited capacity relative to the amount of children now and there is a need for expansion. I have been given the assurance that these matters will be addressed in the near future. Sir, it is relevant to this debate but I will not expand because I want to respect the principles of protocol and we have already made the necessary arrangements to meet with the Ministry at a later date and the Ministry has assured us that they will do all they can to address the problem.

Sir, one part of the Bill deals with the provision to shift the responsibilities away from the principals in the secondary schools who are now responsible for the coordination of the adult educational programme. I am not saying that we have to amend the legislation but if we transfer the responsibility to a person selected by the board, we should take into consideration other things as well. I regret that the option was not given in the provision of the Bill for the principal to accept or reject the offer before

an alternative person is given the responsibility if he or she so desires.

I do not know what motivated this particular amendment but in the life of an institution, its credit evolves around the principal. The principal's image and capability of administration is reflected in the ultimate results coming out of the school. If the results are poor, the principal is charged for incompetence and for not doing as good as he ought to. When the results are creditable, it goes back to the principal and administrative staff of the school.

When this provision is put in place, we hope that the board will use its good judgement that if a principal builds up an image at a school, especially a school that its image was once on the negative side, that the relationship to the new principal will remain cordial. We should also ensure that the alternative to the principal is adaptable to the conditions stipulated by the principal on how the school should be run.

Sir, I am concerned because sometimes we make decisions in legislation without taking into consideration human behaviour. I hope that when the responsibility is passed to the board to make the selection that a healthy arrangement is worked out.

3:25 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Mr. T. A. PRESCOD:

of there was no income to sustain a long life span within the secondary system and as soon as they thought they were at the age where they were qualified to work, they pulled them out in order to rescue the state of the family. These are serious sociological problems that must be examined.

Wherever the Ministry of Education sees it prudent and wise to put in place the provisions to give assistance to those persons who are not responsible for all of us being here we have a right to do so. That is why I am saying that it must begin at the pre-primary level and, obviously, it would not be wise for me not to take into consideration that if they did not succeed in the secondary level, the formal structure, then we have to put mechanisms in place to address and redress that in the post-secondary period of our lives.

That is why, Sir, I have to give a lot of credit, not to you just as Speaker of the House, but to being a very compassionate, enlightened and far-seeing individual who recognised that these disadvantages must be redressed and you have actually put in place an institution that makes it easy for persons who have been disadvantaged in the system to come back into the educational system and correct what was wrong in some cases not as a consequence of their fault, and given the opportunity to have a secondary education and to prepare themselves for the world of work and to seek a job of their choice and not necessarily one that was forced upon them because they were not qualified. You provided the opportunity and cultivated the right qualities in those persons, not only in terms of having arrived at a sound academic career but in a school environment again they become very disciplined and respectable Barbadian citizens and because of that discipline they moved from secondary qualifications into tertiary education. That is very important.

What makes it more important, and unfortunately elitist values in this system do not give any credit to the “O” level Institute and other institutions like that across the island, including the institution which I have the responsibility as Director to coordinate an educational programme. Like the “O” Level Institute every year we enter students to sit the CXC and the “O” Level General. We have outstanding academics with university degrees teaching those students but for other reasons we do not enter under the head of the Israel Lovell Foundation. You must appreciate that we are a charity and I am sensitive to know how I would be disqualified for any grants to the institution.

Sir, I believe that your institution should be given a grant. The kind of job that the institution is doing, what the Minister ought to be saying to you today is that we recognise the contribution and not only are we going to give the principal an award but the institution will be given an annual grant in order to facilitate and assist those children who can least contribute to their own welfare in terms of moving on with their education.

Some of the poor people in this country do not even understand the importance of the service which you are giving because people only understand reciprocity sometimes when there is a material exchange but when it is an intangible exchange in the form of a service, people cannot measure it by any barometer to determine its value.

Nobody understands how important it is for an individual to set up an educational institution with little financial benefit. Probably, Sir, you find yourself in the red as a consequence of the institution and sacrifice your personal income to make it a subsidy in order to make this institution move forward. I am sure that many members of this Parliament and other individuals throughout Barbados have had the privilege even of your generosity receiving a scholarship or two within their individual constituencies and still we have not seen the benefits that ought to be returned if they are really men of a social conscience.

Mr. Speaker, I am very serious. Our educational system needs to be examined carefully. There are little bits and pieces of adjustments from time to time on the Education Act but there must be a holistic philosophical guide and I always make the point that as egalitarians in our political life we have a responsibility to stick firmly to the principles of equity and equality so that if that principle was upheld as wholesome then when one Member of Parliament says that in his constituency he has enjoyed the benefit of the refurbishment or the renovation of all the school buildings in the area I also would be able to say so too. The principle must guide us. We should not have one set of people boasting about certain things, especially if you hold to those noble principles and others do not have the same opportunity to say the same things. I would hope that in the future the persons who are responsible for the educational system would look closely to see what are those areas that are dysfunctional and serve as incongruities.

Sir, many young women who now go to those post-secondary institutions also called adult education institutions came out of the secondary system, and up to the standard they were at on par with some of those persons who went on to excel. I am not only going to make the point of poverty but there are also the problems where children came out of school as a result of early pregnancy and were pushed out of the system.

It is only recently that the society is more acceptable to allowing a young woman to go back into the

school system after the post-pregnancy period. It was not allowed before because any young girl becoming impregnated before completing her secondary education was perceived as being responsible for some act of criminality. There is a great change in our attitude. That kind of social snobbery does not exist in the system. It was even seen then to bring some discredit to the schools, to the teachers, to the child and to the parent. We had all of these stigmas attached to what are natural human functions. The reason for this is because we had too many people in the system and in our society who talked about academics but they themselves are not, because an academic must be a thinker and a thinker must be a person who can apply theory in a pragmatic way, not toss around a bundle of ideas that are incoherent and do not arrive at a logical conclusion.

Aside.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West asks whether I am speaking about some unknown person called Mascoll.

3:45 P.M.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I did not identify any particular person.

Sir, I think that we really need respect in our society and we can only come to a higher principle that will guide us. We must respect the people who did not achieve in the prescribed academic areas of life, and treat them as equal to other persons. The people whom they consider as useless, as I indicated before, have shown that they have the natural ability to excel in other areas.

Some people do not excel under the same teaching principles, or within the same atmosphere but they will improve if you develop an atmosphere which gives them individual attention. There can be many distractions in some homes and some children need individual attention. Sometimes you will take a student out of a class that contains 30 and 40 persons, and give it individual attention, and it can become at a later date, after 18 years, like some of the best who actually exceeded in the system.

Sir, I believe that education to the poor man is the only sustainable means of development. Anything else can collapse. You can acquire wealth and if you have no intelligence, \$1 million can almost evaporate overnight because you do not have the capacity to even govern and manage the money which you have, but education is a sustainable, social component that is vital. If we are to enhance our human capital in this society, we need to have greater elasticity and widen the net so that more and more persons can come into the educational system and make meaningful contributions.

Sir, I know that I have stretched the debate but I thought it was an excellent opportunity for me to expand on other elements, as they relate to education in general. I hope that its contribution is worth as much to those who have ears to hear, as it meant to me. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I would like to add comments on the amendment to the Education Act, Sir, and to give my full support to the information that is being discussed. I want to add to comments made by other Honourable Members, particularly the Honourable Member for St. George North who spoke, in large measure, about the situation in the past and the benefits that have been derived from the continuing educational classes.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, in the 1960s and 1970s, and it would have run down to, perhaps, the very early 1980s, there were a lot of circumstances surrounding our youths and reasons why many of them relied heavily on the continuing education classes. At that time, students dropped out of school because of the lack of funds. Parents could not pay for them adequately at the private secondary schools. Therefore, few of us could get into the public secondary schools because the spaces allocated were very limited.

As a result of poverty, Mr. Speaker, we all know that some students had to remain at home to assist parents, particularly in the agricultural area, during the crop season. There were also other reasons, for example, where families were so large that bigger sisters remained at home to look after the siblings to give the parents an opportunity to go to work, in order to look after their family's needs.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael East spoke about pregnancies and the reason why the young girls could not continue their full education in the system. Of course, we all know, Mr. Speaker, of the situation where the then administration, the Democratic Labour Party, was continuing the policy of putting 14 year olds out of school.

We know, Mr. Speaker, that there were few schools to accommodate the large numbers of young people, but with the establishment of schools such as St. James Secondary, Roebuck Secondary, St. George Secondary and so on, it allowed more students to be allocated in those institutions, diminishing the role of some of our private secondary schools. Hence, we saw the Arlington, the Modern, the Federal, the Washington High and schools of that kind, gradually closing down, because of access to the public secondary schools.

Indeed, in 1976, Mr. Speaker, in the regime of the Barbados Labour Party, the 14 year olds were returned to school and that gave them a better opportunity to further their education and to be able to get certificates. It did not mean, that because many of us were not given places in the regular public secondary schools that we were not intelligent, or that we could not achieve certificates, but as result of a number of circumstances that impacted on us, we were unable to reach that level at secondary school to be able to write the GCE examination, as was the case at that time.

Mr. Speaker, I can speak of it with a lot of authority because I would have been one of those students. Sir, because of poverty, my parents could not pay for me, so I went no further than Fourth Form, but the continuing educational classes made the difference in my life as it made the difference in thousands of lives then, and continues to make contributions to thousands others today. I welcome any exercise that will help the continuing education programme to look after the needs of young people.

We all know, Mr. Speaker, there are some young people who become frustrated and they were a lot of sentiments expressed by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. I support some of them and, I will not want to deal with others right now, but a lot of young people are in school and they are becoming frustrated. The frustration is not only because of the content and the kind of treatment in

school, but a lot of it is from the home and the community. They are impacted upon in many ways. There are many cases of child abuse, beating, cursing and sexual abuse, impacting on young people and between the 9:00 a.m. to 300 p.m. period in school, they are not able to think through, study and therefore produce on paper, so when they reach age 16, some of them are superannuated. Some of them give trouble because nobody pays them attention and they walk the corridors and things of that nature.

Mr. Speaker, they seize the opportunity when they grow a little older and understand that it is important to be well qualified, to write a couple of certificates in order to get the job. The certificates are not only academic, because we know that the expansion programme at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic is, not only an expansion of the subjects but indeed, expansion of numbers, by more than 1 000 within the last five years, to ensure that most of those young people who are skilful at using their hands, get opportunities to be certified for the job market.

3:55 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE:

I want to speak of my experience not only of having to leave school uncertified but also of the opportunity that was made available to me as an individual and to the hundreds of other young people from within the community where I live. We took the opportunity to attend private institutions like the Urban Development College and the Barbados O'Level Institute which helped us to become qualified.

The history of the Barbados O'Level Institute is one that is worth recording because I was one of the first students to attend it when it occupied the building which was part of the St. Anthony's Secondary School at the corner of Country Road opposite Stoute's Drug Store. Through the high quality tuition that was offered at that institution, I was able to improve my qualifications to become a teacher in this country and I am very grateful for the knowledge, the skill and the attention that the teachers offered to me and those individuals who came under their care to ensure that our needs were adequately met.

Mr. Speaker, the adult education programme which was set up in 1989 relied heavily on Government funds to sustain it. The plan now is that the programme should be self-financing. Individuals who want to attend this programme are charged a small registration fee and then they are charged for the amount of subjects they want to take. Many people are taking advantage of it because they consider it as an opportunity for them to pursue their studies without having to pay a large amount of money as is the case in some other areas.

Mr. Speaker, this amendment we are dealing with is to ensure that there is accountability and transparency in the whole exercise. The principal or the deputy principal, being the overall coordinator, is to look after the programme and manage the curriculum while the schools' board of management would oversee the entire programme.

Mr. Speaker, these adult educational programmes are run to match the school terms, therefore, they would be the use of the schools plant, computers, washing facilities and electricity. Therefore, as is the situation now, there are some institutions that do not get adequate funding coming forward. So we want

that programme to be self-financing and we will assist with the utilities and the proper programming to ensure that the needs of the clients within the institution are adequately met. So section 17 of the Education Act, Cap. 41 will be amended to facilitate that particular request.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak specifically of the outstanding contribution of the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central who for the last three or four decades has worked unselfishly to ensure that those thousands of young people who pass through the Barbados O'Level Institute reap all the benefits to be gained at the O level and A level bases. More than 50 per cent of those students received scholarships to help them in the times when a lot of people were not working. There are a lot of young people who need to get that extra attention paid to them.

Mr. Speaker, we always hear individuals saying that politicians are no good and that they look after their own interest but the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central is a godsend. He ensures that people who cannot afford to pay are given free education to become proficient and professional in their approach and be able to offer services not only to themselves and their family but to the growth and development of Barbados. Therefore, I want to give kudos to the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central.

There are other aspects, Mr. Speaker, of the Bill and I want to speak to the teacher appraisal aspect of it. We have a number of highly professional persons in the teaching service. Many of them are young teachers and training is being offered to them but we expect them to be able to deliver the high quality education that is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I went through that system of teacher appraisal which I did not consider to be punitive from the point of view that I worked at the primary level and the teachers at the primary level always had a form or forms to be filled out that was submitted to the Ministry of Education to ensure that at the end of every school year some kind of evaluation took place. The teachers always had an opportunity to look at it to determine whether they are in agreement with it or not and that worked well in the primary system.

However, when we look at the secondary system many teachers are of the view that they are not so well done by, that some of the comments are unfair and that the observation in the classroom while performing was not always forthcoming. Therefore, no one can really judge them in a manner that would be correct if that activity did not take place. This is the reason why we want to ensure that the appraisal system is implemented and not to have the punitive measures put in place but to ensure that all teachers are examined and that from the exercise one is able to determine the strength and the mastery from that individual when it comes to the classroom delivery of the lessons, attendance, professional performance and things of that nature.

I think the exercise is very necessary because if we are to detect the strength, the mastery and the skills of individuals, we should also be able to detect the weaknesses and be able to put programmes in place to ensure that those who are not performing as well as is expected would get the necessary training to prepare them to be able to deliver the quality education that we want. So strategies and methodologies should be put in place to help to prepare that person.

The Honourable Member for St. George North spoke about the induction course of the past. I am

happy to say that is again in place for young teachers who are untrained to get an opportunity to know how to deliver the goods when they reach the classroom. There are other courses as well that are run throughout the year particularly at Easter time to prepare the teachers to present the lesson plans well.

Sir, you, as a former tutor at Erdiston Teachers College, and being my only tutor in my two-year programme at Erdiston Teachers College, always held good standards which other young teachers who were under your tutelage could emulate.

4:05 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE:

Mr. Speaker, if you have produced me, a student with distinction, I am sure that there are hundreds of others that you would have been able to help inculcate those professional duties and responsibilities. Again, I have to say thanks to you. It is unfortunate that I have to do it from the floor of the House but the opportunity does not always arise.

Mr. SPEAKER: And we would not always be on the floor.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I support the call for teachers to be professionals but, likewise I support their call as well for fairness in the system; for opportunities and good working facilities, which have been agreed to by everyone. I spoke earlier of the large percentage of teachers within the system and I support the instrument that will be presented so that teachers understand and are aware that they have been given a fair chance, their performance has been examined by their peers and principal and whatever record comes up at the end of the day, that teacher is satisfied that is truly the case.

Sir, we must remember the unions that have their own documents and the consultative process that took place among the number of stakeholders to hold things together to come up with new ideas and with this particular document that could be made a document of the House - A Guide to Teacher Appraisal in Primary and Secondary Schools in Barbados of which every school and, I would say, every teacher has got a copy ought to be able to peruse it and internalize the contents to become familiar in those areas in which they would be evaluate as times goes by.

Mr. SPEAKER: I do not think it has been made a document of the House as yet.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: I will be happy to do that, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, added to that is the fact that some teachers, through the unions and individuals, have been expressing concerns of some aspects of the Document. It has already been agreed upon and the Ministry of Education saw it fit to have dialogue with them to be able to give them an opportunity to fix the details of the Document in a pilot plan that is now ongoing, so that individuals can get an opportunity to know what the document is about and to see if it is workable and in their interest. Therefore, the first year this piloting will be taking place there will be no formal record of any such

kept because it has not yet been put into the legislation. Therefore, teachers are aware - and I have been having meetings with the various school boards over the past six weeks - and as far as we have been told, members are giving it a try to see how it will work.

Mr. Speaker, after the issues are clarified to the satisfaction of the stakeholders and teachers, then the legislation will become effective. The system is one that will ensure that more people have a chance. Mr. Speaker, nowadays, there is talk about supersession and victimization and, therefore, I think this document will truly give individuals an opportunity for the system to know who are the individuals who are to succeed; where everybody will be given a fair chance. People will not only look at seniority but also suitability for the management of our schools and for the various positions that will come throughout the school system. Most teachers have agreed that the appraisal is fair, non-threatening and collaborative but as I said the piloting will determine the outcome as to when the instrument will come into full being within the school system. We know that all over the world, in every profession, there is some form of evaluation. We know it has been happening in the private sector for some time now. The Government is, therefore, looking at a reform system and as time goes by, individuals will gradually set in and be able to know and feel satisfied that they have been properly evaluated and whatever the outcome is I am sure that individual will be satisfied. Sir, I want to laud those stakeholders who have met with the Ministry and have given of their time, knowledge and service, to ensure that at the end of the day, the document that has been prepared is to the satisfaction of all. I am sure that the pilot would give us the kind of results that they will all be satisfied with.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make mention of the amendment of the Scholarships and Bursaries, et cetera, to say that provision was made for the conferral of awards. It was passed in this Honourable Chamber as well as in the other place sometime between July and August last year and some amendments were inadvertently omitted from the amendment.

Hence, this aspects being highlighted here will be useful in tidying up the regulations which were approve to ensure that individuals across the board in our educational institutions at the Community College and sixth forms can get the opportunity to get such scholarships because of their outstanding performance.

Mr. Speaker, it is with those words that I would like to add my comments and to wish that this discussion will be as fruitful as possible towards the whole agreement to the amendment. I thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak for two minutes and to bring this Debate to an end. Sir, in so doing, I would like to thank all Honourable Members who have spoken and as indicated the Debate reflects three critical areas

1. The move to bring a transparent and efficient system

of administration as it relates to the post-secondary provision of classes - the adult continuing education programme, as it is called, and which currently operates in three schools.

2. To deal and to give the Minister of Education the legislative authority which will empower him to make the teacher appraisal regulations such that what is being done administratively to be a pilot project and take on legislative authority.

3.To correct an omission in the passage of an amendment last year which spoke to the provision of new awards in the range of secondary education; namely the addition to the Barbados Scholarships, the Award of Excellence and, indeed, widening access to the Barbados Scholarship, to persons who undergo a programme of the Associate Degree in respect of the Barbados Community College.

Might I say, Sir, that I clearly have great pleasure in seeing these amendments before this Honourable Chamber. These three areas that I am aware the Ministry of Education has spent considerable time in preparing and there are three critical area.

Sir, regarding the adult continuing education programme, one of the challenges that Barbados will face in the future in its educational system, will be to ensure the expansion of access at two areas. For the better part of the last 50 years as a country, we have been concerned with the provision of access at the primary and secondary levels. Sir, we have been successful. Indeed, we have been one of the few countries in the world that has been successful as a developing country in obtaining 100 per cent success at both primary and secondary levels, but we have not yet reached 100 per cent coverage at the pre-primary level and, indeed, may well be in seeking to do that we may have to set the goal by amending the legislation so as to lower the age of compulsory education from age 5 to 3 because, it is at that stage there can be significant foundations made for a child's learning process, while all medical and educational evidence have suggested that a child is capable of absorbing far more at that stage of its development. I am happy to say that we have been in the range of 70 per cent about a year ago, with the recognition that within the next five years we should reach 100 per cent.

4.15 pm

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY:

Sir, because of the inability for Government institutions to meet that demand alone, there will have to be a review and some form of subsidy or partnership with private institutions as Government has done at the secondary level to assist private secondary school with a clear and transparent programme of assistance.

Equally, the same should be done at the post secondary level which is concerned both with genuine tertiary education as well as post secondary adult continuing education where persons are given an opportunity to be able to make good that which they may have failed to do during their period of time at a secondary school.

Mr. Speaker, you more than anyone else in this Chamber would be familiar with that system having had the opportunity in your other responsibilities to preside over such an institution for over 30 years in this country and to provide opportunities for thousands of Barbadians by giving scholarships and education free of cost. In so doing, you gave people another opportunity to be able to rise to the challenge of being able to be self-reliant and provide for themselves and their families and not be simply at the mercy of the states or other charitable institutions.

Mr. Speaker, we would have to review what the kind of assistance to be put in place for people with financial difficulties in order to expand the numbers who benefit from adult continuing education as well as expand the numbers who benefit from genuine tertiary education.

Sir, I believe that the Ministry ought to continue its work in that regard because we stand to benefit as a country and individuals cease to become a drain on the state in respect of the social security benefits that they would otherwise have to rely on if they could not provide for themselves.

Sir, in respect of the teacher appraisal, it is said that every journey starts with a short step. The short for teacher appraisal started when I was in secondary school about 20 years ago when previous Ministers of Education put on the table for the first time the fact that Barbados needed a modern appraisal system for its teachers in the context of primary and secondary education. The journey has been a long and arduous journey but one which, I am happy to say, has virtually reached conclusion.

Sir, today, we stand here to give effect to the legislative authority which will underpin the functioning of that system. After vigorous consultation and negotiation this led to a document being accepted which seeks to provide for evaluation at a number of different levels and recognises that no single person should have that right. It also allows for the person who is being evaluated to comment, as is consistent with the rules of natural justice, and provides for the system to provide training for persons who have fallen down in particular areas such that on the next evaluation they should show a better performance.

Mr. Speaker, it recognises equally that if a person is given training and a number of chances to do what is in their job description and they fail to do so, then the employer has the right to make a determination about the person's future.

Mr. Speaker, I will make a simple point and I hope it is something that will be remembered when we speak about teacher appraisal because it is an integral part of the EduTech reform program. Sir, more people will benefit in this country from a transparent system of appraisal that is nonthreatening in terms of promotion than people who will suffer from it by reason of disciplinary action or dismissal.

Sir, it is critical because for too long there have been allegations of people not 'getting through' because they figure that only those who knew somebody would 'get through' and meritocracy must be built in this country in circumstances where the rules to the games are transparent, where there is accountability and where we can get the best from those who have been given the opportunity to perform.

Mr. Speaker, I truly believe that this system of appraisal will lead us in a large way to being able to upgrade the quality in our educational system by reason of ensuring that teachers reach the highest standard that we know the majority of them reach, that in reaching that standard they will be appropriately awarded and that determination as to their suitability for other tasks can promptly be made because the system of appraisal actually dissects the nature of the job description and the action which they must perform in the course of their job. Sir, instead of assuming that a good teacher would make a good manager because the skill for one is different from the skill for another, we would have objective information such that a determination can appropriately be made rather than playing the deadly game of Russian roulette and hoping that we have chosen the right one, given the absence of

appropriate information to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Minister of Education and the Minister of State in Education for continuing the work and ensuring that the process which has taken almost 20 years can come to the end of the pilot and allow the formal approach to start with the legislative authority being put in place once we vote appropriately today.

Sir, I also want to commend the Ministry of Education for ensuring that every teacher in this country has been given the document 'A Guide to Teacher Appraisal in Primary and Secondary Schools in Barbados'. I am firmly of the opinion and I have made it clear while I was in the Ministry that you cannot introduce a system which will govern persons unless we ensure that every person has the opportunity to see the system that governs their actions and operations in respect of the evaluation system.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke last year on the matter of the award of scholarships and, sufficing to say, this is part of the process of broadening access to persons. Mr. Speaker, I know that you have advanced in another place the view that not only persons who take examinations through Government institutions should be eligible for Barbados scholarships and I believe it is an idea worthy of consideration by the Ministry of Education.

4:25 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: such that persons who are enrolled in private institutions but who can comply with the regulation should be able to benefit from the conferment from either the Barbados Scholarship or the Award of Excellence in respect of their performance.

I also believe that it is only a matter of time before we create a different award of excellence for person in technical and sporting disciplines. I can only say that this is some of the work that was in train and I have every confidence that it would come to conclusion under the astute leadership of the Honourable Members for St. Philip North and St. Thomas. I look forward to that day when those additional awards can be given to people who achieve technical excellence or people who have achieved a certain degree of sporting excellence. Tangentially, I also look forward to the establishment of the academy of excellence in sports and culture at secondary level, because that would help us to provide the appropriate framework for determining who should benefit from Barbados Scholarships or Awards of Excellence in those types of non academic disciplines but disciplines, nevertheless, critical to the advancement of this nations' interest and the advancement of individuals who are blessed within that particular discipline.

Sir, if we are to remove the stigma that attaches itself to non academic pursuits, then these are some of the things that must happen. I have learnt in the course of public life that reform of education is a long-term process. Therefore, you have to do certain things at one level before you can move to the next level. We would like to think that this Government has done much to ensure that when we look back ten years from now, we can see the extent to which we have raised the bar in education and the extent to which Barbadian individuals have benefitted from that effort.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time and thank all Honourable Members who have taken the time to participate in this debate.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

COMMITTEE

On the motion of Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, seconded by Hon. R. D. MARSHALL, the House went into Committee, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 5 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, seconded by Hon. R. D. MARSHALL, the Chairman reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, seconded by Hon. R. D. MARSHALL, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Education (Amendment) Act, 2002.

ORDER No. 11

THE RESUMPTION OF THE DEBATE ON THE RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING OF LAND IN THE NATIONAL CULTURAL FOUNDATION

MR. D. T. GILL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution to this debate with respect to the restoration and refurbishment of the Empire Theatre. Last week this debate covered a wide spectrum of our culture and cultural development and it must be seen against a background of an island which has a strong history for music and folklore but it must go beyond that. Barbados being an island whose economy is based on services, particularly the hospitality industry, we must have a mixture and blend for not only our locals but as part of our entertainment. Sir, at times I find it difficult to see that Barbados, as a tourist destination, goes rather quiet after 4.30 p.m. when most businesses are closed. On weekends it is very difficult to get certain services available to do business, postal services and other essential services.

We must have certain facilities opened, not only to locals but to our visitors. There are certain changes that must come with time and nothing can turn the hands of progress back.

4.35 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Mr. D. T. GILL:

We were basically a football and cricketing nation but today we would have seen over the years the burgeoning of golf courses. I am not prepared to say that there is need for any more golf courses. Suffice it to say as we improve our standards and move forward as a destination for visitors golf courses have become popular. Bowling alleys will become popular, polo fields will also take their place. In other words, sports and activities which previously would have been unheard of or operated at a minimal level would take their place in time.

Hence, Sir, there will be concert halls, theatres and one only has to look at the improvement and the increasing popularity of the HOlder's Festival. This festival, the Jazz Festival, all of these activities five or more years ago either non existent or very limited. Barbados, whether you want to call it a plural society or whether you want to look at it as a mixture or an importation of various cultures, is swiftly beginning to change in its cultural makeup.

I happen, Sir, to represent a constituency which has at least some four ethnic groups. It is within the St. Michael South Central constituency that you will find people of Hindu background, some of Islamic background, some of a Christian background and also you can find a festival which is creeping into our calendar, that of Kwaanza. In one year there could be Easter, Eid, Diwali, Kwaanza. I say this to reinforce the point that our culture will become more and more a mixture and we should not at any point in time forget from whence we came. Therefore, there are certain basic things in our culture that we have to hold onto to more tenaciously.

Sir, we are about to vote these sums for the improvement of the Empire facility. I guess some of us would be excited and some of us will see it as the right step forward and the money will be well spent but that is not my greatest concern. My greatest concern is that of maintenance of the building after it has been set in due perspective. Concert halls the world over, theatres and edifices of that nature require a lot of maintenance. They require that they be held at the correct temperature, that the correct electrical works are redone and rewired or else the standard will fall.

So expensive are the maintenance costs of such halls that in developed countries foundations are the main source for the upkeep of concert halls and the like. I remember shortly after the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium was opened going to the facility only to see some ceiling tiles hanging and that does not speak well. Governments are known particularly in this part of the world to be very poor caretakers of their real estate.

Sir, I spoke about the language and the various cultures that would impact on our basic culture but there is something I must hasten to add at this point in time. Sir, culture is made up of language, sports, culinary arts, performing arts, fine arts but there is something which concerns me quite greatly and that is the English language.

We must tell our youth that standard English is the only language in which this country conducts its business whether it is in Parliament, whether it is in the law courts, whether it is speaking to someone via internet there is standard English and we must therefore at this juncture of our development let our young people know that Barbadian is a dialect and it is not a formal language. Just as we have clothes for formal functions so we have a language for formal and a language for informal. Bajan will be learnt. If you take a look at those Asian communities that came here after the Second World War you will see the offspring can handle not only the mother tongue and English but they speak Bajan as good as any

Barbadian. Therefore, it is not something that is taught at school but something which you learn while playing or while mixing with your peers.

A strange thing, Sir, is that if you hear two young people speaking, suppose they want to address their friend, David, they call that name no less than four times before they start what they are going to say. There is yet another lingo which has crept in recent times and that is one which carries a very strong Jamaican base. I can tell you that you could have two young people listening to music and they understand without any difficulty what is being played but we, and I think I can speak for all of us, have great difficulty in understanding those lyrics. Sir, even among themselves they now have new words in their vocabulary which we do not have a clue as to what they mean except you have frequent mingling and making contact on a regular basis.

Therefore, I say without any reservation, that English must be taught in our schools as a foreign language. The time has come when the children must again do classes in dictation and spelling and they must have at the primary and secondary level a vocabulary book into which they should enter new words and just as how you go into the use of idioms when you are learning a foreign language this approach must be done rigorously at all levels in the primary and secondary schools.

Sir, in our culture in recent times I have noticed a third fabric being woven into our Barbadian culture. There is that hostile way in which people answer one another, that hostile way in which peers speak to one another, in which children speak to adults. What I am a little concerned about is the regular use of abusive language by our younger people. I am going to say that has no part, as far as I am concerned, with our culture.

4:45 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Mr. D. T. GILL:

Sir, when it comes to music, we have our folk music, but you see in recent times, as I alluded to earlier, that there is a strong influence of modern day black American and Jamaican music and rhythms coming into our culture. I have no problem with that but what I am going to say, nonetheless, is that I do not think that our people should limit themselves to any one type of music, just as they should not limit themselves to Bajan dialect.

I am very catholic when it comes to music and I think the start up of music by young people, should be one which carries a very strong, practical base. Sir, all music, whether it is rhythm and blues, bemboc, avant-garde classics, spouge or ragee, is determined by harmony or disharmony if you could appreciate such, as in some modern music. It is made up of the basic scales, arpeggios and the basic strings. Therefore, it would be foolhardy of us to limit our children or our young adults, just to one brand of music.

Sir, to each his own and if a person thinks, at Crop Over time to listen to calypso, that is their

business. If somebody prefers to listen to Ragee that is their business. The society has become so pleural and advanced and is in contact with so many other foreign cultures that one has a choice. It is part of our Government, political system and democracy, where we must take the good with the bad. If you have a choice, the same choice which you are entitled to, is the choice which may seek to dilute what we may refer to as our cultural origins.

Therefore, I take my hat off to people like 'Punka', Mr. Wayne Willock, with whom I would have done secondary school. He is an individual who has a vast repertoire of all types of music, and you can only reach that acclaim when you have been fully exposed to various types of music. It is for that reason, Sir, that you go on to an international level, like Winton Marcelles, who was here in the Jazz Festival, I think, some two or three years ago. He is at home with barouche music, playing his trumpet, whether it is with the Boston Pops or the Philharmonic orchestra, just as he is at home with his own band, playing the black Jazz rhythms.

Sir, it is always dangerous to limit a young person in his or her primary development, to any one type of music or literature. I would say, do not lose foci of things which are African which have a certain degree of African ethnicity. It all comes down to understanding the language and the language can be related into music. I did a brief unscientific survey and found that even at our common entrance level, you would find there are children who will get the mark of 35 to 45 in English, and that is a sizeable amount of students who will score within that percentage range.

Sir, this is of great concern to me because if you are not understanding the language and you are not conversing in the language then, the ability of the child to comprehend - as is stated ever so often, even at the CXC level - would be greatly impaired. Sir, understanding the language will also spill over into mathematical concepts, because a child cannot understand or appreciate those mathematical concepts, if it does not understand the language. This is the reason why we should not depart from enforcing, in our children, at an early age that English is our standard language.

Sir, culture, like any other living organism, will go through its changes. There will be fusions of culture and therefore we would have concert halls and other sports which are foreign to us gaining great mobility in our society. Nowadays, there are not two youngsters on the street who cannot tell you who played today in the European qualifiers, or who will play tonight in the NBA play offs. These things are now common and they have become part of the acculturation in our system.

Sir, culture will regenerate. We heard some Honourable Members last week say that when they were children, there were Theatrical performances and plays. In recent times there has been a lull and maybe, in times to come, these sorts of activities will gain momentum.

With respect to the Empire Theatre, I am of the opinion that once we have brought it to a level which is desirable, it should be put up for lease. I am certain that there will be international groups and organisations, just as how the Holders Season runs, who would like to manage the Theatre and make sure that there will be regular performances. The difficulty is that if a building like that is kept closed for long periods of time, it will court degeneration and most of the fine state-of-the-art technologies which would have been introduced and incorporated, would come to naught.

Sir, cultures will go through a period of replication and you would wonder what has happened. We

will continue to argue if soca is calypso, if zuke is an African rhythm, if zuke is calypso and if ragee is a break off of early jazz and we have to come to grips with these things. I was listening to a documentary on BBC which ran for four consecutive weeks, dealing with ragee. Sir, the wealth of information which can be found in countries like America and England of our music, even of our cricket in England, stored, locked away and held in safekeeping, is astonishing.

Sir, it showed the development of the ragee beat and why the ragee beat has taken the world, whether it is in Asia, Europe, Africa or the Caribbean. This is part of what I would call, the replicating of a basis rhythm. It could be even seen as a metamorphosis of a basic rhythm which, over a period of time, when we look back, there may, or may not be any strikingly sharp connections.

Sir, as I said, the cost of maintaining such a building, would have to be taken into account and a system whereby it could be kept viable and functional, will also have to be considered.

4:55 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Mr. D. T. GILL:

Sir, part of our culture which need greater promotion is our fine arts. We go to various cities and we see the artists, the painters and the sculptures are out. Sir, that whole area around the Empire Theatre could be use as an area where our artists can come out and do their canvas work, their pen and ink or their small sculpting and have their products available particularly during the tourist season rather than being tucked away in distant corners and in buildings. Sir, vending is part of our culture and I have a soft spot for street vending. These are people who have no other means of survival and this is part and parcel of the existence of the artist.

We know that when things are hard people will be driven to sculpting and carving because the first cost is not expensive. You only need to get a piece of tree trunk and some clay and this is when your basic and innate idea is expressed.

Speaking on culture, we must promote people like George Lamming, Derek Walcott and Bentley Callender because these are our unsung heroes. These are people, as the representative for St. Michael South East has alluded, who must be recognised and put into their rightful positions and chronicle because there is a place for all of them in our cultural development as Barbados seeks to become more culturally aware.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes to conclude.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Sir, we should not limit our reading to any one novelist. There is a place for George Lamming as well as George Orwell. There is a place for the African writer Chinua Achebe as well as Molière. Sir, if an individual is exposed to a wide and catholic outlook on culture whether it is the culture of reading, the culture of performing, the culture of cuisine or the culture of cricket it can only but go well at this point in time when the world, and we have been saying this for years, is but a global village. We said that years and years ago not knowing that the system of globalisation would

have crept in and enveloped us as rapidly as it has in recent times.

Sir, I am most pleased to see that Government is taking an approach to invest some money in a building where it would be catering not for the great numbers of the gymnasium but for a much reduced number in keeping with the types of activities and performances of such buildings.

Sir, it gives me great pleasure to be part of this debate which seeks to restore and refurbish the Empire Theatre.

I am most obliged.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this debate before this Honourable Chamber and to compliment the previous Minister of Culture because it was her brainchild to have this Empire Theatre restored as an area for culture.

Sir, I want to put in the records of this House the contribution of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. We in Barbados have talent. Just recently we had the statue of Sir Garfield Sobers being made by a Barbadian named Karl Broodhagen. It was a father and son contribution and I want to compliment them for the work they are doing in this country.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport has this talent in a young lady named Miss Jennifer King. Miss King has been trained in the area of tropical architecture. She spent five years in the United States of America at City College, New York where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in tropical architecture and she spent another one a half years studying urban planning. Miss King is from a family of architects. Her father before her is an architect. After her Bachelors Degree she went on to Santo Domingo where she did her Masters Degree for a year. She came back to the Ministry and when the architect from Cuba, Mr. Nelson Melero was commissioned to work on the Empire Theatre, he requested from her the measured drawings of the existing building and she spent long hours of her personal time working to make sure she had those drawings in time for Mr. Melero to start his work.

5:05 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. R. D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Speaker, all of this work that Mrs. Jennifer King has done no overtime was paid to her. Therefore, I want to put into this House that Mrs. King from the Ministry of Public Works and Transport will be involved throughout the restoration of this building. Mr. Speaker, we do have this kind of talent in Barbados and as long as Mrs. King has this kind of exposure to this kind of building, if there is any work of that sort to be done in the future, then Mrs. King's expertise will be used.

Mr. Speaker, I also would like to deal with the area where the Empire Theatre is situated. This Theatre is situated in an area where there was also the Bridgetown Plaza which was destroyed by fire some years ago. Sir, there is some concern that this area is crowded and that also the Independence Car Park is used for much entertainment. The area on the Bay Street side is also used because, on that area,

we have the well known night spot called the Boat Yard and the Bayshore Centre, which was recently built on the old site of the Old Harbour Police Station. We also have the Waterfront Café. That area is very lively at times and the patrons in that area will also be looking for parking, therefore, we are having the Empire Theatre coming back on stream. Therefore, with the opening of these businesses there will be large numbers of patrons at any one time and, therefore, there is the concerns of some persons that the area will become congested and problems with parking will arise.

Sir, I want to say there is no need to worry about the parking facilities in the area because very soon, two high-rise car parks will be established in that area. The owners of Bethel Church grounds have recently given notice to the Government Electrical Department to vacate the premises because they will be erecting an office block and a high-rise car park. Also in the area behind the old J. B. Leslie building on the Bay Street side, those lands are owned by Musson and Company and I understand that they, too, will be looking at establishing a high-rise car park in the area. As I said, I do look forward to the time when this Empire Theatre will be back in business as it will do a lot for culture in Barbados. With those remarks, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to join this Debate on the Empire Theatre at this time since the last Debate in this Chamber, I was out of the island.

Mr. Speaker, I join the Debate at this time as a cultural practitioner, still practising my craft in the area of drama as an actor and director.

Sir, I have some very fond memories of the Empire Theatre from the perspective that, at that time, it was part of a cultural norm, where many young men and women would normally trek to both the Empire and Plaza Cinemas to 9.30 am, 12.30 pm, 4.30 pm, 8.30 pm shows and if one's mother would have allowed them, then that person will stay until midnight. Those were the days when hundreds of people used to assemble at the cinemas, where we got to see some of the best serial films at that time. The only other cinema that had a crowd that was larger than either the Empire, Roxy, Plaza or Olympic Theatres was that of a mobile cinema, which was free. This mobile cinema used to trek throughout Barbados, particularly in the rural areas, in order to bring that kind of cinematography to them.

Sir, when we look at the Empire Theatre, and I am particularly speaking about its restoration to be a place for the performing arts, I want to say that we in Barbados have got to push the performing arts to a level where we would only accept excellence in performance. I believe the time has seriously come where we have to look at the development of drama at the community level. In Barbados, there is a serious absence of scriptwriters, directors, stage managers, lighting and sound managers. These are areas of non-traditional businesses that could be developed to provide employment for those young, cultural practitioners across Barbados.

Sir, I believe that script writing is an art and want to use this occasion to call for a Hall of Fame so that our cultural practitioners, those that are dead and those that are currently alive, can be placed in this Hall of Fame so that their works and performances could be encapsulated. Sir, I want to talk about persons like Anthony Hinkson who is probably one of the most prolific writers in Barbados and yet not recognised. Mr. Hinkson, in his work, would have produced some the best scripts that Barbados has ever seen, outside of Sir George Lamming and others. Anthony Hinkson is one of those prolific script writers in Barbados with such productions 'Nigger Yard,' 'Of Age and Innocence' and 'Bulldozer.'

Sir, I always like to talk about practical things. I do not like to guess or theorized. I believe in sound and practical approaches. Whenever I speak in this Parliament, I always like to speak of precedences that were set or to things that, I am sure, will happen. I do not believe that I should get up in this Honourable Chamber to grand stand; that is why I choose my wickets and very carefully.

Sir, I believe the time has come in Barbados where we should be developing a vocation school in the Arts Programme and it be located at the University of the West Indies so that our young people within the community throughout Barbados, could be getting involved in all aspects of the arts: developing arts, drama, calligraphy, et cetera. They should become involved in the overall business of production management. I believe that come every summer vacation we should design a course across the community and have it centred at the UWI where those interested persons will be able to graduate from this school.

Sir, as you know, Barbados is a rapidly aging society and, probably as the demographic profile of Barbados is showing, Barbados has possibly the highest number of over 60-years old in the Caribbean. This means that there is now a paradigm shift of how we are going to do things and to refocus our priority and certainly this is going to have a profound and distinct effect on the arts. Sir, there is now a dramatic market developed for senior citizens drama. Sir, I say that against the background that we, at the National Assistance Board, had foreseen that some 8 years ago and had formulated the Senior Citizens Drama Group. Sir, I must give credit to Mr. Winston Farrell and Mr. Tony Thompson who have worked with these senior citizens and are still working with them to produce some wonderful productions like Golden Towers, In the Su-Su, The Old Ladies in Waiting, which was a hit production and which was sold out for 6 consecutive weeks. It was also sold out in New York. Sir, this Drama Group is currently rehearsing the real golden girls outfit, which will be travelling to New York for the month of July for these senior citizens to practice their craft.

5.15 pm

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. H. F. LASHLEY:

We realise the changes and transitions taking place in Barbados and we must be ready to make the necessary adjustments.

Sir, I also want to see a Barbados Music Festival which will involve all the communities across Barbados. In the early 1960s Barbados was known as the folk capital of the Caribbean and the folk cultural norms which we practised were then handed down to other Caribbean countries.

The Barbados Music Festival will look at developing all areas of music like classical, calypso and folk. I was recently in Trinidad and saw the Trinidad Music Festival. I saw performers from the south of Trinidad performing Plastic Bag's classic piece 'Volcano' and you could not tell whether it was calypso or folk. It was so well executed that it won the top price at the Trinidad Music Festival. Sir, since Barbados was the folk capital in the Caribbean during the 1960s, we should redevelop, rediscover and practise our craft by bringing these new innovations.

Sir, we should also continue the Prime Minister's Best Community Drama Competition and all communities should be involved in the development of drama. The communities from all eleven parishes in Barbados should be able to compete against each other, then the grand finale should be brought to the National Stadium and I am sure with a paying audience that all the stands at the stadium will be packed to capacity.

Sir, it would be remiss of me if I did not speak to the fact that across the Caribbean we have established a Caribbean cultural fusion which was established in 1978. Last month I was in Trinidad to attend a meeting and 14 years later this fusion is still in existence. It involves Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Guyana, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Grenada, Antigua, Dominica and Jamaica.

Sir, I believe that the Caribbean leaders have failed the Caribbean integration movement and the best way to see an integration in the Caribbean would be at the grass-root level with grass-root organisations working at the level of sports and culture to bring about the integration process. This Caribbean fusion will have its first summit meeting in Barbados in the month of June. The main focus of the meeting will be to establish for the first time a Caribbean Cultural Grass-root Ambassador.

Sir, there is no better way to preserve our history than remembering exactly where we came from. I am speaking about an important event that took place up to the early 70s when January 1st used to be known as Civic Day. Sir, the Civic as an institution had the biggest membership in this island. Over 40 000 persons across Barbados were involved in this institution and on January 1st every poor person was given a free ticket to attend Civic Day in Queens Park.

The Civic as an institution was headed by a directorship of black persons, the management was done by Belfield Layne, the board consisted of persons like Mr. Hewitt and Mr. Mottley and it provided help for poor people in Barbados at that time which allowed them to survive.

This institution brought about the insurance system and it would be unfortunate at this level of our development if we did not preserve January 1st as Civic Day in Barbados again so that our children would have a sense of our history. Sir, no wonder our children are alienated and lack a sense of identity because we are not preserving the cultural norms in this society to a level of recognition.

Sir, have asked the Ministry to prepare a Cabinet paper to make January 1st in Barbados Civic Day because it is one of the true Barbadian festival that represent the masses of this country.

Sir, it would also be remiss of me if I did not use this occasion to speak of the Pinelands Creative Workshop which I consider the premier cultural ambassadors of this island. Next year the Pinelands Creative Workshop will be celebrating 25 years of its existence as a cultural entity. This organisation has won every major award at NIFCA and has performed at every major festival in the Caribbean, Canada, North America and Europe.

More important, the organisation did a production called 'Of Snakes and Grasshoppers' and they were the first organisation in Barbados to use the media of drama and acting to bring the message home to Barbados about the important of the AIDS pandemic.

Sir, through the cultural fusion established we were able to bring Earl Loveless Production to Barbados. This production was done specifically for school children doing the CXC examination at the time.

Sir, drama can be used in many different ways to educate the masses particularly at the community level. We continue to believe that the only way people can be educated in this country is through the school system but the informal way of education is proving to be the most productive system of education by using the community to educate people.

5:25 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I also want to use this occasion to talk about the creation of a cultural hall of fame. It bothers me that every other Caribbean country, countries in South America and all the other countries in the world can recognise the hard work and achievement of their cultural ambassadors and we in Barbados have not yet found it important enough to establish Halls of Fame in the various disciplines. The nearest we come to doing that is in school halls, and that is for outstanding academic achievement, where we place the names of those excellent scholars on a shield and hang them on the walls within the school halls.

I believe that the time has come when every outstanding Barbadian should be honoured in their respective community. Communities should now become halls, walls and walks of fame, where in community across Barbados every major building should be named after someone who has performed outstandingly for that community and for Barbados.

Sir, it hurt when I read that Venice Richards, a jockey of an outstanding ability, was inducted into the Trinidad Hall of Fame and we in Barbados have not seen it fit to induct him into a Barbados hall of fame. We have recognised his work but we cannot do it because we do not have a Hall of Fame for sports in Barbados.

Asides

The Hon H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I believe that all the communities across Barbados should create their own Halls of Fame and recognise the work and worth of those community practitioners across this island. This nation was not built by our leaders alone. There are so many heroes in this nation whose work is still unknown. The Red Plastic Bag penned a beautiful song about unknown heroes and this song is the best song written by unknown heroes, in my view.

Sir, performing groups such as Stage One, the Green Room and the Barbados Theatre that have made a tremendous contribution to the development of the arts in Barbados should also be placed in this Hall of Fame. I want to make an urgent plea and an urgent call on this Honourable Chamber that now is the time that we have to create and change the social and cultural landscape for our children and our children's children. We would be burdened and hard-pressed if we do not do what should be done now. There should be no partisan divide on whether or not we want to create the necessary and enabling environment for our children. It is not a sin to ask that we reserve these cultural icons in this country so

that our children and our children's children could relish them and see with pride and dignity.

Asides

The Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, I want to say that it is time that we in Barbados examine ourselves and see how best we can push this nation forward. I have presented a number of options today in this Honourable Chamber. I would like the entire country to work with them because I believe that as we move ahead and start to chart a new course to bring about the social revolution that is necessary in the 21st Century in our history that we would need everyone onboard this great ship the 'S S BARBADOS'.

I believe that if we followed this fundamental set of programmes of policies that I have set out here today, it is possible that we in this Parliament could join together and make all things possible and no obstacle is greater than the cause.

I thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I want to add to this interesting and historic debate. I want everyone to be aware that I strongly support this entire exercise. I think that the restoration of the Empire Theatre will serve our society well in the reinforcement of our cultural and historical development.

I want to refer to the need for the inculcation and training our people in certain aspects of our culture and it could not have been better expressed than by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. We must ensure that we make our people aware of where we came from, where we are at this time and what future developments they can work towards achieving for our country.

I heard other Honourable Members made mention of the year 1978 and the cultural explosion which took place here in Barbados in the form of CARIFESTA. I know that the Honourable Member for St. George South would have been the Minister of Education and Culture at that time and he would have been very instrumental in the exercise of CARIFESTA. I must say that was a period in time when we were gradually losing a lot of our culture. During that period our parents told us not to dance to the Banja and so on. We saw, coming out of CARIFESTA, an explosion of persons getting involved in calypsos, poetry writing and the appreciation of story -telling returning to our society, something that we were known for. When we were young children, we used to sit under a tree on a bench and listen to folk songs and storytelling but gradually that died. I was very happy to become actively involved in my community to be able to make a contribution and to help sensitise others about our culture.

We have seen the continuation of cultural activity through Crop Over and NIFCA. I do not need to elaborate on the growth of Crop Over as it is now an international activity. Every year people come from all over the world for two or three months to participate in Crop Over. Mr. Speaker, NIFCA has helped to broaden the horizon of our young people, particularly our children. Parents and teachers must be highly commended for their acceptance and involvement in NIFCA, on a yearly basis, helping our youth to develop the appreciation of our culture, history and national heritage.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to the Civic Theatre, as mentioned by the Honourable Member for St.

Michael East, and the important role that it played in helping our society to be more cohesive and to encourage our young people to save, be industrious and to make sacrifices. I remember the annual Agricultural Exhibition which was held in Queen's Park and the bus excursions where we all would flock to the beaches. I also remember the 'Service of Songs' which were the typical activities in communities. These 'Service of Songs' used to hold the people in the communities together.

Sir, today a lot of that activity is lacking and a lot of the young people become bored because they do not have a lot of activity that would assist them in channeling their energy into constructive activity. We must continue to lend our support to the various groups within the communities. I remembered Mr. Tyrone Trotman of Bush Hall, had productions at Combermere School.

Asides

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE Mr. Speaker, I remember communities developing their own band playing music, like the Escorts group, the most outstanding group originating from St. Thomas and at one time was the number one group on the music charts in Barbados.

5.35 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE:

We know of the Blue Rhythm Combo among many others and the creativity that came through. Individuals wrote their own songs and their music and of course we had the spouse that held on to us with the Draytons Two and the late Jackie Opel in helping to reinforce that we are a people with a rich talent and we only need to have it tapped into.

The National Cultural Foundation and this is what really pleased me most of all in the very early 1980s when Mr. Elombe Mottley with a team of individuals and pardon me if I have to call names but they are the name that I have to call because I saw a whole change in the landscape not only in Barbados but indeed in that little community of St. Thomas where persons of the calibre of Mrs. Peggy McGeary, Tony Thompson among other teachers, who were put on secondment from within the schools because they were all teachers to work in the communities on a daily basis on evenings after work with community groups to help young people develop that appreciation and that respect for their culture.

We saw during that period, Mr. Speaker, between 1980 up until about 1985 almost every parish in Barbados had a festival where only those who were creative performed but others who had other skills other than the performing arts displayed their culinary skills. They were able to use and mix fish cakes and bakes and things of that nature that all of us enjoyed when we were growing up and suddenly started to drift away to the macaroni pie and hamburgers that we would not have had as our culture.

Nowadays, Mr. Speaker, any activity that you attend it is fish cakes and chicken wings, pork chops and things of that nature that are really ours and we need to hold on to them for a little longer as the

other people in other Caribbean countries hold on to theirs dearly and use them for their own development in the tourism sector. We need to hold on to what is good for us, hold onto the conkies and fish cakes and others to make sure that our young children know what they taste like and develop that appreciation and want to continue the promotion of those various foods within our culture.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that the National Cultural Foundation had that perspective for a developmental approach to reaching into the schools and into the communities and it served us well. I would like, Sir, to see even more of that continue as we go from strength to strength in the development of our culture and the appreciation of what is being done to hold our Barbadians together as a people.

Mr. Speaker, the Empire theatre only one of two remaining theatres in the Caribbean. We know the other one is in Jamaica and I think that because of the architecture of the building and indeed the location of that building it is necessary that the Government seek to restore the facility in order to facilitate the needs of Barbadians and so the restoration of the Empire theatre to its former glory as a state of the arts theatre is welcome. We are aware that it will host dramatic presentations and performances of all types and that the facility would in the restoration exercise be prepared to accommodate a maximum of 850 people.

We also know that because of the location so close to the Daphne Joseph Hackett Hall to the theatre that will continue to facilitate the needs of Barbadians. We know of the historical representation that these facilities have in the radius of Bridgetown and they will facilitate the needs of Barbadians who are involved in the performing and visual arts. Mr. Speaker, the location is ideally that. It is central and most people can get to Bridgetown and therefore I am sure that facility will be used to its maximum.

We were told last week of the plans for the upgrade of the Independence car park and the Methodist car park and the proposal for it to become a high-rise. I am happy to be part of this Government to be able to work towards the restoration of the Empire theatre. The other features the theatre will have as we seek to work towards that kind of development where the National School of Dance and the National Youth Orchestra will be accommodated in that facility. It has specific features in the plan for an orchestra pit, for moving stages, for state of the art acoustics which we know are extremely important to the whole exercise and the improved lighting for hosting of the various events.

The full package that we have in the Ministry of Education is integral to this whole exercise and already this Curriculum 2000 Reform booklet has been a document of the House and I am sure that Honourable Members have copies of this document. It says that not only must the focus be on the communities but there must be a place in the school as well. We know that there are young minds that are being trained and that is where the values and the skills will develop and continue to permeate the rest of the society. We know that as a result of the performing arts that individuals develop discipline. They learn to listen and work with others and know to arrive on time and so on and I think that this is significant if we are to change the attitudes of our people to be on the cutting edge. We have to start in the cradle, in the nursery and the kindergarten and, of course, right through the primary and secondary schools.

This document that is before me, Mr. Speaker, speaks about the cultural arts and the emphasis is on reinforcing the values flowing from the social and emotional targets which help to shape the attitudes and behaviour as well as exposing children to basic rudiments of these art forms and create

opportunities for growth and expertise and the development of audiences as well. It says as well on page 16 of the same booklet under Aesthetic Studies:

The Arts (Visual and Performing) help to develop children's natural creativity while allowing them to explore multifaceted aspects of their own culture as well as those of others. This area of the curriculum seeks to promote the creative aspects of the child's personality and helps to develop cultivated behaviours. At the same time, it should help them to live harmoniously in their communities, while exposing them to the expressions and cultures of others in an effort to foster tolerance and understanding."

That is the extent, Sir, to which I will refer to this document. If it is actively included in the day to day activity of a school or in the rationale and guidelines for curriculum reform in Barbados. If we could work towards this, I am sure that later down the line we will not be bothering so much about the cultural penetration. We have our own that we can show off and let other know that we are people with a strong character, excellent discipline and creative ability that I am sure will go from strength to strength.

5:45 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE:

Mr. Speaker, I would like to speak on two other important projects that are happening within the schools that will help to tie into the general discussion here today. I am sure that years from now, we will be able to see them translated into the same Empire Theatre, the community centres, the pavilions, school halls and so on, and they would bring about another kind of camaraderie and support system for these various activities among us.

The first one I want to mention is the CHEKS programme. I heard another Honourable Member speak of Mr. 'Punka' Willock and his involvement in the development of culture. I want to laud the team that worked with the CHEKS, which stands for Cultural Historical Exposure for kids in school. Sir, that has been going for the last three to four years, in all of our school both primary and secondary, so that young children can learn, understand and get actively involved and appreciate the cultural expressions of our people. Emphasis is placed on the Landship, stilt walking and the tuck band.

Mr. Speaker, it is a joy to see the young children perform in the various activities. Again, we need to say hats off to 'Punka' and the lady who teaches the Landship dance, as well as Ivy Wilkinson who spent a lot of time helping the Ministry to offer exposure to our young people. More than 5 000 students have been exposed to this kind of activity and it continues within the schools and communities. The discipline, love, appreciation and participation are very outstanding.

The other programme that is now being worked on, and this is going into the second year, is to do with a PEACE programme and that stands for Personal Empowerment through Arts and Creative Education in the areas of poetry and drama. Mrs. Spencer-Cross, working in close association with Ms. Jennifer Sealey are both piloting that particular programme which is also another aspect of our reform.

Mr. Speaker, if you would allow me, before I close, I would like to mention the Government's recognition of heritage sites and the need for locals to be properly educated about the history of Barbados. Around the mid 1980s, there was an effort by a community group in St. Thomas to recognise what is called a first Freedom Village. A lot of work was done by Professor Woodville Marshall and Mr. Ronnie Hughes in collating the information and presenting it to the locals but somehow, things came to a halt.

We, in the parish are of the view that we must recognise our history and educate our people about St. Thomas and the outstanding role it has played in the people in Rock Hall, being some of the first people in Barbados to acquire land lots in that community, and so, there are plans afoot to meet with the locals. The Government is looking seriously at implementing some kind of monument and inscription in the Rock Hall area, that would be called a commemorative plaque, to make the locals aware of the role that Rock Hall has played in the whole exercise.

Sir, added to that, when we look at that entire area, there is a need for locals and well as visitors, to get an opportunity to hike through the gullies. There is potential in the project for the long term where individuals would be able to get involved from the business aspect, to have small shops and kiosks to sell and display the crafts that they have prepared, and the whole of Barbados would get an opportunity to be part of that exercise.

Sir, that is in discussion now, and locals and others could come and bring some measure of understanding to the whole exercise, about Rock Hall and the surrounding districts such as, Portvale Factory, Porey Spring, Fortress Hill, St. Thomas Parish Church among many others which are also aspects of our culture and history.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to mention the Manifesto pledge by the Barbados Labour Party where we want to show the people of Barbados that we do not just prepare Manifestoes, and then wonder what we can cut or if it is just a piece of paper we make promises on that can be thrown through the window. The Barbados Labour Party does not operate like that but we believe in looking at the Manifesto and implementing all the possible areas that have been identified, depending on how the economy can facilitate all those needs. Indeed, we treat it as a very important document.

Sir, I am sure that when they look at page 19 of the 1999 Manifesto, they will see the part which says that we will establish a national company of performing arts and restore the Empire Theatre as its home. This first stage of the restoration of the Empire Theatre is a clear indication of the Government's plans to fulfill its pledges to the people of Barbados. We know it will be costly, but at the same time, we know that it will also have long term benefits, in bringing about a change and appreciation among our people.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be a part of this Government that has lived up to that pledge, and I know that the growth and development of the cultural industries all over the world, will also benefit Barbados in the long run. It will help to inject funds and a number of other tangible qualities and attributes in our people.

Sir, I support this particular amendment, as well as whatever efforts are being made to rename that

facility after an outstanding Barbadian or a group of Barbadians. I know that we need to acknowledge and commend the works of our people who display a lot of creativity and who make outstanding contributions and sacrifices to ensure that our people move from one stage to the next because our motto still speaks for us. Sir, according to the motto of the Barbados Labour Party, we must work towards, ensuring 'a better life for our people'.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would like first of all to thank all Honourable Members who have spoken in this long debate, especially the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who, over the last seven years has led the Government's cultural revolution, as it were, in this country. I must say that it was she, as Minister of Culture, who has put forward a number of proposals and ideas which are now bearing fruit.

I would also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that all of the Honourable Members who spoke, on both sides of this House, have expressed the view that our culture is important and the vesting of the Empire Theatre in the National Cultural Foundation, is indeed a worthwhile venture.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, that the Government will continue to look at derelict properties, around Bridgetown and vest them in entities that would renew them in a way to bring back life to Bridgetown. I also want to say that we will see, in the very near future, buildings like the old Spirit Bond being refurbished. The old Harbour Police Station has been refurbished and it is operational. We have seen Golden Square being transformed. We will see also the Marshall Hall and it is the Government's intention to create that atmosphere all around Bridgetown.

Mr. Speaker, we will also see, within the next year or so, and I would think surely within the next ten years, a full transformation of Bridgetown right before our eyes. There will be high rise buildings going up at country road, London Bourne and Mason Hall Street. Sir, throughout Bridgetown, we will see a renewal which will remind us of the early years when the Empire Theatre was built around 1917 and was first leased by the Colonial Government.

5:55 p.m.

Tuesday, April 23, 2002

Continuation of Hon. G. A. CLARKE:

I want to thank both Governments, especially the Democratic Labour Party who had the option in 1993 to privatise this venture. In 1993 a trade commissioner asked that the Empire Theatre be leased to a committee of concerned citizens but although that was tolerated for a little while, it was never accepted because it was the Government's intention to refurbish this building.

In 1997 Cabinet agreed that this building should be vested in the National Cultural Foundation. This has taken a long time to happen because we had to wind up the lease and purchase an additional parcel of land for \$63 000.

Mr. Speaker, this is a worthwhile venture and I want to commend the Ministry of Housing and Lands and both Governments for making sure that this venture remains in public hands. It is the Government intention, with the help of the private sector, to restore some of these derelict buildings around Bridgetown and throughout the island because we have a number of plantation houses that are either the property of Government or are old properties that can be refurbished.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I beg that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: I beg to second that.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: With the House's permission we will now revert to documents to be laid, notices by the Leader of the House and replies to parliamentary questions.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Prime Minister I am commanded to lay the following documents

1. Fourth Report and Recommendations of the Electoral and Boundaries Commission.
2. Draft Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Review of Boundaries) Order, 2002.

May I say, Sir, that the procedures for dealing with these reports is set out in section 41 (d) of the Constitution of Barbados. Under the provisions I accordingly lay these reports with the expectation that at the next sitting of the Senate the reports should also be laid but at some date in the future the Resolution which I will give notice of shortly, would be debated.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the draft Electoral and Boundaries Commission (Review of Boundaries) Order, 2002.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: This is the reply to parliamentary question No. 49 asked by the Honourable Member for St. John. The Honourable Member is not in his seat at present and this is the third time that the reply to this question has appeared on the Order Paper. Therefore, I am suggesting that in accordance with Rule 16 (5), the answer to this question be laid on the table of the House.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to move that the reply to Parliamentary Question No. 49 asked by the

Honourable Member for St. John be laid at the table.

Mr. SPEAKER: I believe the regulations would state, therefore, that the answer would be passed on to the enquiring member.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today's sitting and in the circumstances I beg to move that this House be now adjourned until Tuesday, May 07, 2002 at 1100 a.m.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

6:02 p.m.