
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 22, 2003

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 22, 2003.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, G.C.M. B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney General, Minister of Home Affairs, Leader of the House)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, B.C.H. (Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Labour and Social Security)

Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Public Works)

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL, (Chairman of Committees)

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

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment)

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P. (Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry to the Attorney General and Home Affairs)

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

Hon. A. P. WOOD, J.P., B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil. (Minister of Energy and Public Utilities)

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance) (Leader of the Opposition)

Dr. W. F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS., J.P.,

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B., (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of Industry and International Business)

Mr. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.), M.A., Ed., J.P.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S.

Mr. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in Session. The Minutes of the Meeting held on Tuesday, July 8, 2003.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes so cited be confirmed, subject to any observations, corrections and/or omissions.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following Bills:

1. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (Sunswept Incorporated) Order, 2003.
 2. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery) Order, 2003.
- 10.20 a.m.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to move the first reading of the Urban Development Commission (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2003.

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 8 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING UNDER THE SPECIAL LOANS ACT, CAP. 105 OF THE SUM OF EC\$4,167,000 FROM THE GOVERNMENT OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO FOR THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LIAT (1974) LIMITED

Hon. N A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, a few weeks ago we had an exercise in this Chamber that dealt with the guarantees of monies for LIAT (1974) Ltd. It was a guarantee of interest on an amount that was being borrowed but which was paid to LIAT the previous year and this exercise today seeks to bring some semblance of order to the same matter regarding LIAT. Sir, a lot has been spoken about these issues already so I do not intend to spend as much time as I did the last few weeks ago on this matter because a lot of those issues are as relevant now as they were then.

Mr. Speaker, the matter before us deals with a loan to LIAT of EC\$12.5 million of which the Barbados Government is borrowing one third or the equivalent of

EC\$4.167 million. The other two thirds is expected to be borrowed in two equal portions by the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and these Governments have already applied to the Government of Trinidad and Tobago to take up their portions of the loan. This loan being provided by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is free of interest with a moratorium of five years on the repayment of the principal.

Mr. Speaker, I want to bring the House up to date on a number of issues that would have brought us to this date. I will go over some of the pertinent matters as it relates to LIAT and its continued existence.

Mr. Speaker, the Heads of Government of Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Trinidad and Tobago met in Barbados on April 13, 2003 and discussed the issue of the financing of LIAT (1974) Limited. At that time, it was determined that immediate funding was required by LIAT to keep the airline in the air. Antigua and Barbuda pledged \$4 million. Barbados pledged EC\$3 million, Grenada \$3 million, St. Vincent & the Grenadines \$2.5 million and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago was going to make available to the shareholders in the Eastern Caribbean some EC\$12 million in the form of this loan, free of interest with a moratorium of five years. Other countries in the OECS including Grenada, St. Lucia, the Commonwealth of Dominica, St. Kitts and Nevis, were also invited to contribute to the loan.

It was proposed at that time that if the other Eastern Caribbean Governments did not pick up the portion of the loan that Barbados, Antigua, St. Vincent & the Grenadines would pick up the \$12.5 million extra as a loan from Trinidad in equal parts and this is what we are seeking to confirm today.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we go over a number of issues to bring the House up to date since we met last on this matter. First, LIAT continues to be very important to Barbados' economic existence and to any regional effort to continue the process of integration in the region. It is also important to Barbados from many standpoints because much of the traffic out of Barbados interregionally is taken by LIAT and it is imperative that we keep the airline in the air while it seeks to become more viable than it has been in the past.

Mr. Speaker, when last I spoke on this matter, I made it abundantly clear that many of LIAT's woes were precipitated by the fact that it has never been fully capitalised at any time in its existence and all efforts to recapitalise the airline have failed miserably simply because the major shareholders, the Governments of the Eastern Caribbean, either pledged money to the airline and failed to meet that commitment or, if the commitment was met, it

was done in such a protracted way that the money could not keep LIAT flowing in terms of a cash flow commitment and the airline went from one bad debt to the other. We are now seeking to put this situation behind us and create a basis for LIAT to be viable in the future.

Mr. Speaker, this money is only being pledged contingent upon the fact that LIAT must make the effort to get its house in order. Part of that effort speaks to their continued effort to be able to reduce the high levels of expenditure which the airline has and to be able to run a more efficient financial operation. This is the context in which the original guarantee was done.

In addition, efforts have been made at creating one regional airline for the Eastern Caribbean region by having an economic merger between LIAT and BWIA. Those efforts are ongoing as was stated in the last session when the Heads of Governments met in Trinidad and Tobago to discuss LIAT, June 22, 2003. Sir, the Prime Ministers of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the Deputy Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and the Minister of Tourism of Barbados attended that session and sought to create a basis for a merger between LIAT and BWIA.

A report on the financial state of LIAT and BWIA was presented at that meeting and the technical team appointed in April, chaired by the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs of Barbados reported to that meeting. Sir, at that time it was noted that only \$5.5 million was received of the sum committed. The sum received represented \$3 million from Barbados and \$2.5 million from St. Vincent and the Grenadines. There were further delays in receiving the balance of \$17.6 million which created more cash flow problems and issues for LIAT in terms of seeking to become viable.

10.30 a.m.

Sir, LIAT was able to source the EC\$23.1 million and they were able to go through the entire summer and fall periods leading into the winter period in a sound financial position. However, I am reporting today that our efforts of being able to secure the EC\$23.1 million have failed. Even as we seek to get this extra \$12.5 million, there is still money outstanding from the Government of Antigua and Barbuda. Sir, Antigua's \$4.8 million has not been paid up and this situation has put LIAT in a more precarious position than they were when I last spoke on this issue in this Honourable Chamber.

Sir, what is important, LIAT continues to show very sound booking patterns through the summer months, leading into the month of September. We believe that if they are able to go through these months in a sound position, LIAT could make it to the end of the year.

Sir, any other efforts beyond this point will only be backed by this administration if LIAT puts themselves in that sound financial position and continue to work at reducing their operation cost. Sir, more important, LIAT needs to get this money to be able to shore up their cash flows at this time.

Sir, when we last spoke, some of us continued to be very skeptical as to whether LIAT could really find its way, given the situation that LIAT is in. I made the point that LIAT continues to be important to Barbados for a number of serious strategic reasons and we need to persist with these. We cannot continue forever to pour money into LIAT. Mr. Speaker, LIAT has to show us by the end of this year that they have actually done what the Governments have called upon them to do, and that is to put themselves on a sound financial footing.

Mr. Speaker, there are some issues that are worthy of repetition and LIAT and the movement of Caribbean traffic is one such issue. We continue to show strong improvement in our tourism arrival figures over the past 12 months. A major cog in that wheel is that we have been able to go very well in terms on intra-regional travel, to which LIAT has contributed significantly.

Mr. Speaker, the onus is on this administration to continue to shore up our fortunes within the eastern Caribbean and regional travel because it has become very important to our viability in the long term. Sir, up to the end of June 2003, in terms of other CARICOM regions, excluding Trinidad and Tobago, we have had 3 268 more arrivals than the previous year, up by 12.5 per cent up to the end of June out of the Eastern Caribbean, and I think that is a very important point.

Sir, what is more heartening about this particular issue, CARICOM, in terms of their figures 29 469 arrivals out of CARICOM, excluding Trinidad and Tobago, is a figure that is higher than the Canadian arrivals during the first six months of this year. I think that it is important that we continue to be able to keep the arrivals out of the Caribbean going the way that they are going.

Mr. Speaker, it is interesting to note that when you add the Trinidad and Tobago figure to that of the other Caribbean arrivals, which is under 13 000, we would realise that the arrivals figure is approximately 40 000 arrivals out of the Eastern Caribbean. Mr. Speaker, this is a very substantial market for Barbados, both in terms of leisure and business travel and LIAT has contributed significantly to that number, and not only by transporting people. Sir, as a result of LIAT's continued advertising, promotion and general marketing, they continue to contribute to the welfare of this country. Mr. Speaker, it is important that we continue to look at LIAT seriously.

Sir, the other deals with the transportation of transit passengers out of Barbados. LIAT has 14 landings a day and carries approximately 1 000 people daily out of Barbados. Sir, 42 per cent of the people that are carried out of Barbados by LIAT is interline traffic. Sir, many of the people who come to Barbados by larger aircraft are then transported on LIAT. It is clear to us that if LIAT did not exist, the other player in the intra-regional cannot absorb LIAT traffic totally. Sir, this means that we may be possibly in jeopardy, particularly during the winter months of possibly putting some of the larger international airlines in trouble if we do not continue to have some smooth movement of air traffic.

In addition to that, 99 jobs at the Grantley Adams International Airport would be jeopardised and this has nothing to do with the ancillary services associated with the operation of LIAT. I do not think that there is anyone in this Chamber or Barbados who would like to see 100 people on the breadline.

Mr. Speaker, what continues to make this so important is the continued movement and integration of our region, particularly as we speak about the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. Sir, when we refer to communication, we are speaking of airlift and movement of people across the region.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, it is well known to Honourable Members in this Chamber that LIAT has contributed significantly over the years to this kind of movement across the region.

Sir, even more important, I think that Barbados has always shown a level of leadership at the regional level in terms of being able to pioneer and sustain movements as important as LIAT and their contribution to the rest of the region. I think that it is important that Barbados continue to show leadership in this area.

Sir, it is clear to me...
10.40 a.m.

Sir, I think it is important that we continue with this trend that Barbados continues to show leadership. It is clear to me that if LIAT did not exist, and the movements of the people, intra-regionally, were left only to strict commercial dealings and under strict commercial rules, that the private sector would not have been as willing, and as inclined to fly some of these more unprofitable routes, as an airline which has Government influence.

Sir, there are a number of routes that are flown by LIAT on a daily basis, which cannot be considered as viable. One of the things that it does, it keeps a measure of

communication and allows a number of our brothers and sisters to access air travel for their livelihood and survival.

Sir, it is important for us, as leaders in the region, to ensure that LIAT continues flying. Sir, I want to repeat. This situation cannot continue, day after day, if LIAT is not showing the type of serious business movement and making new arrangements to make them viable, in the long term.

Sir, it is clear that over the past two years, LIAT has actually been able to move in the direction of becoming more economically viable. Sir, LIAT has been able to cut some of its staff, reducing the existing number of personnel that they had in Antigua. LIAT has also started to move in the direction of partially locating a hub in Barbados. They have moved some of their planes and pilots from the north of the region and brought them to Barbados.

Sir, Barbados is a natural hub for the rest of the Eastern Caribbean, because of its geographic location, and the fact that it receives more international flights than any other territory in the Eastern Caribbean. It is important that the future of LIAT, and any sound intra-regional carrier, must be bound up in the fact that we are able to utilise the strength of Barbados as a regional hub because of both its geographic location and the economic stability of our country, in addition to the fact that more international flights fly into the Grantley Adams International Airport (GAIA) than any other territory in the Eastern Caribbean.

Sir, I think LIAT has more than proven that they are worthy of receiving this last effort to allow them to continue as the regional carrier of choice. I think, Sir, that the Government does have a serious role to play. The last time we spoke on this issue, I tabled the LIAT Business Plan 2001-2004 which is now a document of the House.

Sir, the plan assumes an immediate resolution of the financial restructuring requirements, assuming the Government shareholders accept the debt structuring proposal at the next shareholders' meeting. This immediately opens up a way to attract fresh equity.

In addition, it was said here that the only way LIAT is going to move forward, is by making a serious effort to create a more viable path for themselves, when this initial money is drawn down. Additionally, we spoke about the issue of being able to create a basis for one regional airline. At that time, we said that the first effort would be for LIAT and BWIA to form an economic merger.

Sir, at the meeting of June 21, in Trinidad and Tobago, it was determined that a holding company would be incorporated in Trinidad and Tobago, within 14 days of that meeting, which would eventually hold shares of both BWIA

and LIAT, in their restructured form. The name of the holding company would be the Caribbean Airlines Holdings Limited. This name was subjected to the approval of the Registrar of Companies in Trinidad and Tobago, also, a technical coordinator would have been appointed at a date, no later than July 15, to prepare and coordinate the implementation of a detailed plan for the establishment of the new company, and the restructuring and rationalisation of the operations of both BWIA and LIAT.

The work of the technical team that was put in place in April will continue, in conjunction with the technical coordinator. This technical team, Sir, would have had more of an oversight role, in terms of protecting the interest of all of the territories concerned. They would determine the strategic and operational issues for the new airline, and the equity requirements for the holding company.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago would have provided the initial funding for the retention of the services of the technical coordinator and all of the associated costs. In addition, any funds that they expended for this purpose, would have been converted into equity in the holding company.

BWIA and LIAT would have accelerated their own restructuring efforts towards viability, as a precondition for any further public sector participation in these two airlines. The holding company should provide corporate support services, in the initial stage. For example, financial, legal procurement, marketing and sales, and information technology, while the subsidiaries should continue as entities, with fully integrated flight and ground operations.

The new company would have commenced negotiations with BWIA and LIAT as soon as possible. An urgent independent evaluation was conducted of the respective carriers.

In addition, the Governments in the Eastern Caribbean, operating under one umbrella, would have sought to issue the status of Category One rating, with respect to aviation safety. A study would have been undertaken to determine the routes to be served, the equipment to be used and the persons to be employed by the new company.

Sir, since that meeting in Trinidad and Tobago, application was made to the Trinidad and Tobago Registrar of Companies to register the holding company, named the Caribbean Airlines Holdings Limited. The name did not meet with the approval of the Registrar of Companies and a new name, the Caribbean International Airlines Holdings Limited is being circulated to all the shareholders for approval. They are also being asked to nominate a Director to sit on the Board of the holding company.

In terms of the previous request for the loan, the Governments of Antigua and Barbuda, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, have formally requested their share from Trinidad and Tobago, for their portion of the \$12.5 million that we spoke about earlier.

At the meeting of June 3, the technical coordinator was received by the technical team. The approval of the Cabinet of Trinidad and Tobago has been sought, and we are awaiting their submission.

A provision of the Terms of Reference stated that the Coordinator and his team should complete the technical work by September 30, 2003.

Sir, I must also report that the technical coordinator, even though he has been approached, has not actually started working. It is intended that by August 1, this person will be in position, but the technical coordinator said that September 30, was too short a time to complete his task, if he starts to work on August 1.

Sir, at this rate this work would not be completed until the end of November of this year. At that time, all of the issues related to the merger should then be in place for implementing the establishing of this holdings company by January 1, 2004.
10.50 a.m.

It is therefore important that we in Barbados continue to support LIAT in all of its efforts. I must repeat that this is a last-ditch effort to save LIAT.

Sir, all we are seeking to do here today is to validate all that was presented earlier in terms of being able to draw our portion of the loan. Sir, it is clear to me that the scepticism of whether or not we should put money into LIAT would obviously continue for a long time.

Sir, I must repeat that many of the woes LIAT is experiencing have a lot to do with our own actions as regional governments. However, Barbados cannot be counted among those who have been delinquent or slow in terms of their commitment to LIAT or the regional airline effort.

Sir, it is clear to us in Barbados that many of the other territories, some of them out of necessity and being pushed in that direction, do not really have the resources available to be able to pay their portion to LIAT, and we can understand that. There are others who are in a much better financial position to support the region's efforts who, for whatever reason, have been slow to meet their commitments to the airline. However, they still continue to be beneficiaries of the airline that is moving people

everyday and is continuing to keep the integration movement sound and moving in the right direction. In addition to that, when they do pay up their dues to the airline, most of them have been slow to pay. That slowness has force LIAT into the position that it is in now.

This Administration is committed to the integration process and to strengthening serious concepts, platforms and mechanisms for the movement of people across the region. Sir, we will continue to support this effort, but it will be on condition that LIAT makes itself viable by year end once these monies are drawn.

Sir, there is the situation of, if all else fail, then what. This is something I believe all of us in this Chamber should be very cognisant of and it should be at the top of our minds. If other regional governments do not meet their commitment to LIAT, then what happens?

Sir, the technical experts have determined that if LIAT goes under tomorrow we may need in the region of four to five months to get our act together in order to be able to pick up the additional traffic. This would have to happen either by being able to disburse them across other regional carriers or another private sector player would have to come into the marketplace to take up the slack which LIAT has left off.

Sir, what is clear to us is that we do not have the luxury of having four or five months which may turn into six months which may put a lot of our own economic fortunes in jeopardy. So we have started dialogue with major private sector players because what is also clear to us is that a new model must emerge within the region.

Governments, over the years – and this is on either side of the aisle – have been supporting large international carriers coming into Barbados and into the region. Every year we spend money in terms of marketing support with airlines and through the major tour operators. In recent times we have also been able to create a form of a seat guarantee coming into the region. If an airline wants to pioneer a new route into Barbados, they must tell us what basically is their break-even point in terms of their seat cost coming into Barbados. If they fly the airline into Barbados, we are willing to give them marketing support, because it puts in more marketing muscle.

If United Airline says tomorrow that there is a flight coming into Barbados, they have to advertise and promote strenuously the fact that they are flying into Barbados. What this does is to strengthen the pool of marketing resources available to Barbados. We will then say to them that if they fly the aeroplane into Barbados and their break-even point is 50 seats and they do not make the 50 seats, we will pick up every seat under 50. Sir, up to now we have not had to pay

out that guarantee because we have been able to give marketing support and do our own serious marketing in that particular gateway and even the gateways where there are major international flights.

What we are seeking to do in the future is to duplicate that type of formula across a regional carrier that is private sector led and own, but which Government is prepared, at the end of the day, to give similar concessions and benefits to create a basis for business relationships as we now do with American Airlines, BWIA and Virgin Atlantic.

What is clear to us, even though Government should have some measure of influence over how the regional airlines actually carry on their business, is that what has brought us to this stage is the fact that the governments of the region are the major shareholders in LIAT (1974) Limited.

It is our opinion, on This Side, that what must emerge is a different model that looks at creating a basis for government's support, government's endorsement, concessions and benefits in the same way in which we do for international carriers without us having to own the airline.

Sir, what is emerging in this debate is that we cannot continue in the same vein we have been going in terms of how we have related to LIAT in the past. Governments have been delinquent, but at the same time the model itself in terms of the ownership of the airline has not work and we have got to admit that.

Sir, you do not have to own something to have some measure of influence over its operations. I think that should be the model and the basis on which we proceed. This is just at a very preliminary stage in terms of our own dialogue and meetings with private sector interest who have been involved in regional air movement in the past and who are willing to look at the viability of creating another regional airline, but on the condition that they are given equal types of concessions and benefits as are given to international carriers. Sir, I believe this is the sensible and strategically best way to go.

Sir, this effort at the integration of the two airlines in the future, BWIA and LIAT, will proceed on the basis that it is not only LIAT and BWIA that should be in this mix, but eventually what we need to do in this region is to have all of the airlines which are struggling within the region. None of these small airlines can really boast at this time of being a viable enterprise, whether it be Bahamas Air, Cayman Air, Air Jamaica, BWIA, LIAT. None of them that is owned by governments seemingly has not done as well as was envisioned when it was initially set up.

Sir, what is clear is that this region is crying out for a new model and approach to the issue of airline service

within the region. Sir, when we make an effort to get LIAT and BWIA working together, it would not exclude in future Air Jamaica, Cayman Air or Bahamas Air. I think we should be including other airlines at least to start issues relating to functional co-operation between airlines.
11.00 a.m.

It makes no sense in having large airlines flying into Barbados when there are small regional airlines struggling to survive. It makes no sense an airline having its own counter, staff, baggage handling, buying its own fuel, *et cetera*. Even though there is some measure of functional cooperation, it would make sense to deepen that functional cooperation within the Eastern Caribbean, particularly among the two most dominant airlines, which are LIAT and BWIA.

Sir, I think that once that effort is put on the table and works, the next issue would be to further integrate the other players in the region.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I think competition would always be good in terms of any business and even if LIAT and BWIA did not go under, I think what would be important is that competition would not only redound to the benefit of the consumers in the region but that all regional players would be able to benefit from such sound and serious competition.

Sir, another thing I wish to mention is the issue relating to predatory pricing and the like. There is a school of thought that LIAT has been pushed into that situation in which it has been because other players have come into the region and have engaged in the practise of predatory pricing where they have been selling their services and seats below economic cost.

I know the Honourable Member for St. John prefers to travel on the airline on which he gets the best deal and there is nothing wrong with that. On the last occasion that LIAT (1974) Limited (Guarantee of Interest) Bill, 2003, was being discussed, the Honourable Member was not even here but was somewhere else watching cricket.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, what is clear is that this particular practice must be outlawed. What we in the region have begun to realise is that Barbados must ably start the movement in amending our laws to outlaw predatory pricing.

The other countries in the Eastern Caribbean are also seriously working towards this endeavour but what is interesting to note is that in recent times the airline that has

given LIAT the most competition in the region, has now started a process of rationalisation in terms of their own economic fortunes. In fact, a number of weeks ago they announced that they have begun to lay off personnel.

Sir, what is clear that there is nothing wrong with the consumer getting the best deal and no one should speak negatively about that but if one is going to offer the kinds of deals that we hear being offered to the consumers, then they should be sustainable in the long term.

Sir, we believe the best way to do that, as has been proven, for example in telecommunications, is that there should be sound competition. This is why it is important that we continue to keep the doors opened so that if the private sector so desires, they could be allowed, under a regime of concessions and benefits, to create a regional airline that gives the other airlines competition.

In addition, it is necessary for us to ensure that our brothers and sisters who cannot adequately look after themselves are being looked after. I believe it is important that we continue this effort for LIAT.

Sir, in closing, I would say that for all of LIAT's challenges over the years, it has continued to be an important economic plank for Barbados. It is important that we seek to do all we can to save this airline. This, however, cannot go on *ad infinitum*, and therefore this is that last effort.

I believe this is the way in which we must proceed if we are to create the best concept at integration in this region and also to give Barbados the best opportunity to be able to continue the path particularly in tourism and to be able to create the best standard of living for our people.

With those words, I ask that this Resolution do now pass.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put to the Honourable House and agreed to.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, first of all let me thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael South for that presentation and for reminding the House that when last he spoke on this issue, I was not present and therefore, if I raise any issues with which he is not familiar, I regret to do it on this occasion. I am certain that his presentation would have been fuller on the last occasion but less elliptical, in the sense that since the last occasion, he would have been informed by This Side. He is now seeking to put both his arguments and ours at the same time, thus leading me into a state of confusion.

Sir, in 1992, the same arguments that are being adduced now in 2003, were then being adduced and put forward at a margin meeting of the Commonwealth Finance Ministers in Bahamas. In those days, Mr. Ken Balley was the Trinidad Minister of Privatisation and other portfolios. The Trinidad and Tobago Government was anxious to take over the shares of all the other regional governments in LIAT. Suspicions arose in the Eastern Caribbean because there is always the view that when Trinidad and Tobago becomes involved, it is going to close down the enterprise and replace it with something else.

We had the same problem with the Arawak Cement Company. It is the most inane insular argument that is adduced. When we were selling Arawak, there were some very powerful arguments that Trinidad and Tobago was going to buy the Arawak Cement Plant and close it down because it was in competition with enterprises in Trinidad and Tobago.

We had the same argument in relation to LIAT. In fact, those arguments were even more persuasive in dealing with the problems because it was then argued that the Caribbean Development Bank had significant exposure in relation to its loans to LIAT and that as a result of the default by LIAT in the payment of its loan, the rating of the Caribbean Development Bank was going to be adjusted. There was then a big panic in the region to try and do something about LIAT but very little was done. Therefore, despite the arguments of the Minister of Tourism and International Transport today... He is a very bold man because today he said that this would be the last effort that would be made to support LIAT financially, that if this last-ditch effort fails, there is a contingency. Sir, I say all of that is nonsense. LIAT has to survive even if only for the sake of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and no Government, least of all a Barbadian Government that is responsible for establishing the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, should be adducing arguments in this House of Assembly that themselves will compromise the viability of LIAT. Sir, I have been in a LIAT plane and the engine failed but I had faith that it would reach the ground but there are people who walk around and 'bad-talk' LIAT, saying that the airline is cannibalising other airlines. How does a Government answer that? A Government would answer that by saying none of the things that the Minister of Tourism of Barbados said here today.
11.10 a.m.

We have to start from the point of view that there are businesses that will never be financially viable and that some businesses run by Government will never be financially viable but they are economically vital. If we start from that premise, the Minister's speech could have ended forty-five minutes ago. We on This Side would have agreed with the Minister 100 per cent and the debate would have ended. However, we have to respond because the Honourable

Member sought to demonstrate that this warning, which he has issued from this Chamber, will suddenly turn LIAT around. The Minister is dreaming if he believes that this warning will have an effect somewhere, other than in this Chamber.

Sir, we took a decision in Barbados that we needed the sugar industry and no one anywhere in the world said it would ever be financially viable. In fact, everyone said that it cannot ever be financially viable for Barbados but that it is ecologically correct for our country, environmentally desirable, helps rural prosperity during the crop time, it is economically relevant to our way of life and there is a reason for us to invest in it from the point of view of foreign exchange earnings in that these earnings come directly into the system.

Mr. Speaker, this is not the first time nor will it be the last time that on the question of LIAT, its impact on other financial institutions and its viability financially will be relevant. I asked the Minister to drop the word viability from his vocabulary because viability in the era of the current Transport Board, the National Housing Corporation or the GEMS Project does not exist and I do not want to talk about viability because it cannot be the relevant consideration in relation to this particular debate on LIAT just as it would not be when it comes to the Transport Board.

Sir, in 1991, the Barbados Labour Party argued that the Democratic Labour Party was wrong for raising issues of viability in relation to the Transport Board. We accepted the argument and decided not to do certain things that other people wanted us to do. We both agreed that there are things that Government must support but now in the year 2003 the accountants and other people who do not have to argued about the relevance of public institutions to anyone have convinced the Minister that the issue of financial viability should be at the top of his consideration in this particular debate.

First, do Barbadians believe that there should be a LIAT? Secondly, what is the price Barbadians, will pay to keep LIAT in the air? The Americans do not throw that into the debate but every time one of their major airlines is compromised, they bail it out and adduce all kinds of arguments but they have nothing to do with financial viability.

Sir, the Minister said that people are skeptical but my view is that they are not skeptical about keeping LIAT in the air because we recognise that we need regional carriers and that Government has to support even larger airlines than LIAT.

I know of no occasion that the Minister of International Transport of Barbados has come here to say how

much was given to American Airlines, US Airways or British Airways but we are terrorizing LIAT in this debate in relation to an interest-free loan from the Government of Trinidad and Tobago in the context of certain goals and obligations we have in relation to the Caribbean Community.

Sir, as policy makers we should not be grandstanding in this debate. We need to get the financial statements and let the persons who are competent to carry out the analysis say what is necessary to restructure the airline and attempt to restructure the airline. But, we always have to be cognisant of the fact that restructuring efforts in that regard are seldom succeed in the way that one anticipates.

Sir, the Minister should not assume that because he is skeptical that everyone else is skeptical. The Minister should assume that Barbadians are intelligent enough to understand that there is a cost we have to bear. If we want to go to British Virgin Islands, Anguilla or Nevis and the other countries with tiny airports, there is a cost to be borne for that.

Mr. Speaker, professionals who will participate in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy are going to need to get around the region and their net contribution by way of taxes alone cannot support an airline. There are vendors, students at the university and all kinds of people in the region who recognise that we need to have sensible arrangements for regional transport. Therefore, let us sit down and understand the practical reality in relation to this matter.

Is the Minister saying that we are paying too large a price by way of supporting this loan or is he saying that he fully supports the loan? I am not sure what the Minister is saying. Sir, is the Minister saying that he is supporting it but if five months later things have not improved he wants back the money immediately? What is he really saying? Work it out and tell us because you are the one who has to defend the public expenditure and the commitment that is being put into this process. You do not defend it, to my mind, by telling us all the woes that exist in LIAT without on the other hand telling us the contribution that we make to all of the other airlines, almost all of which are going through the exact same process, plagued by financial problems, inefficiencies and so on. I say that despite all of the criticism, I am satisfied that we need to have LIAT. Despite all the irritants, despite all the management problems, despite the condition of the seats in the plane and all of the other challenges that LIAT faces, we need to have LIAT.

11.20 a.m.

Sir, if you are arguing that it should not be located in Antigua, well, say so. If you say that a Government in the

region, where the airline is located will not meet its obligation, well say move it. Be bold enough to say that.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I do not have to say it. I am not the Minister of International Transport. I want to hear what Government's policy is.

Sir, as an Opposition we cannot have a policy in relation to that other than one that makes sense. You have the figures before you. You know what the management problems are and if you feel that it needs to be relocated elsewhere in the region, be bold enough to say so. Be bold enough to tell this Honourable House what are the restructuring plans that you will support. Are we putting the money up and waiting to hear what the restructuring plans will be? Tell us in advance or at the earliest opportunity what plans the Government of Barbados supports in relation to the restructuring of Leeward Islands Air Transport (LIAT), beyond the changing of a name and amalgamation of BWIA and LIAT.

Sir, those are the matters that were on the cards since 1992 and people were skeptical about them then because of the perception of the dominance of Trinidad. It is ironic that we are now coming here to guarantee a commitment by the Trinidad Government, which when you think about it, decisions could have been made ten years ago.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not saying that you are in anyway responsible for that. I am only trying to open your eyes to reality. The problem did not start last week and your declaration that it would end in five months is as worthless as considering that it would have started last week.

Sir, another argument is that the airline is not fully capitalised. We always hear this about public enterprises. It is a non-issue in relation to a public enterprise. Sir, people said that the Barbados National Bank (BNB) was never fully capitalised but the Act guarantees the obligation to Barbados National Bank by the Government of Barbados. A company is not fully capitalised but is supported by hefty financing from the Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) and is owned by the Governments in the region. Who could seriously be arguing that it is not fully capitalised?

Sir, there is that kind of page filling and padding that consultants get away with, just filling a page with another argument as to why something should be done. I am certain that Caribbean Star is not fully capitalised either. I am certain of that because the owner said that himself. He said

that he has to put another US\$5 million into it to ensure that the airline is fully capitalised. He said that about six or seven months ago. I am certain that American Airlines, even though it is a publicly listed company, is not fully capitalised. It does not have to be under those regulations. There are many ways that capital can be found unless we are talking of a particular manner of capitalisation. If we are saying that, that would tell us what is meant by being fully capitalised.

In other words, are you saying that the Governments have not put in enough equity in LIAT or is there something else that you are saying about LIAT? What is it that you are saying about it that you want us to understand in this debate that would make sense by arguing that we need to put this money in because it is not fully capitalised? Will this money fully capitalise it? Of course not, Sir, not based on the other elements of the financing of Leeward Islands Air Transport. I do not know that they are all public knowledge but it would not fully achieve that.

Sir, that argument also has to be dispensed with and I believe that at the end of the day, the concept that this particular Resolution passed by the Parliament of Barbados today, would put an end to the financial woes of LIAT, even though we would like it, even though we support the restructuring and even though we think that we have to give a commitment to LIAT, I do not think it will solve all the challenges that LIAT faces.

Sir, the second point that I want to make is, the Minister of Tourism would be arguing not just in relation to Barbados but in relation to the rest of the Caribbean, the importance of regional travel. There is a difference in the quality of regional travel to the respective destinations. It is regional travel that, to my mind, is more people-oriented, it supports the smaller hotels, smaller businesses like rum shops and discos in a way that non-regional travel does not.

Sir, if the St. Lucia Government were moving correctly at this time, they would be doing a lot more to attract regional travel. They would not have had all of those empty stands at cricket recently. There is a perception by us that regional travel is nickle-and-dime travel. Sir, every Barbadian who leaves Barbados and goes to St. Lucia ends up shopping in Castries buying clothes, baskets and even plastic ware items and brings back to Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Therefore, it does have a tremendous impact. People do not leave Barbados without spending money, some people would carry the same spending to St. Lucia that they would carry to New York.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I know that from the number of Barbadians to be found in lines in the banks changing money in order to go shopping in the malls. The Barbadians travel with empty suit cases and this has been happening for many years. When I was a student in Trinidad, I met people who travelled to Trinidad with empty suit cases. British Airways used to travel to Trinidad and people would leave Barbados, go to Trinidad and shop in Frederick Street, especially after the devaluation of the Trinidad dollar, and came back to Barbados with their purchases. So, it does have a positive impact.

Sir, we need in our own way to find a competitive method of attracting more regional travel to Barbados but we need to support it because it has an impact on a lot of smaller suppliers of tourism services in this country who must not be left out in the process.

Therefore, I hope that the Minister would promote it because it is people-oriented business and the ancillary services, in particular, and the informal sector benefit significantly from regional travel.

Sir, I believe that having covered that ground, the Minister of Transport in his reply should probably 'wheel and come again', make a declaration on behalf of the people of Barbados that we are fully in support of the existence of a restructured LIAT, we do not place a premium on financial viability, though it would be nice if it were financially viable, but we believe that we should commit ourselves to making resources available to LIAT once they are spent wisely and prudently so that the airline can be supported in its efforts to cover that area of regional... travel that is important to us, and also to link up with the providers of international travel services.

Thank you, Sir.
11.30 a.m.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, we should not really be having this debate this morning, were it not for the capacity of the Minister of Tourism to provoke because, only two weeks ago, we engaged in a fairly extensive debate on LIAT, and the position of the Opposition is known.

There is one piece of new information that has come to this Parliament and it has to do with a loan of EC\$12.5 million that is being guaranteed by Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada and Barbados.

Sir, there is a possibility that Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and Dominica would not contribute to the financing requirements of LIAT at this time. Let me say that there is no way, in which we can expect Dominica to

contribute to this process of bailing LIAT out of its difficulties, given the current circumstances within the economy of Dominica.

There is no way that we can or should expect St. Kitts and Nevis to contribute to this loan requirement, at this stage. Sir, for me, this sends a very vital message to CARICOM at this stage and it is simply that if we are truly going to integrate within the region, then, we should not expect each country to pull its weight, because each country is not going to be in a position to pull its weight, in the process of integrating CARICOM at this time.

Therefore, we have to think in terms of how we can bring a family together, without expecting each and every member of the family to make an equal contribution to the sustainability of the family. I just want it to be made quite clear that I see this debate on LIAT, as a forerunner to the important issues in the establishment of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME).

This issue gives us an opportunity to identify, perhaps the most crucial issues in the integration process, and those relate to the question of equal responsibility, based on size, economy and population, that will not and cannot occur in an integration movement at this stage within CARICOM.

Suffice it to say, therefore, that we are really talking about how could the more able members, within CARICOM, carry the load in this process of the CSME. As I speak, there is a big battle in St. Kitts and Nevis on the question of secession, whether or not, there should be separation.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: There is a big battle in a country that is 36 square miles and has just more than 9 000 people. The question is, should they be going it alone at this time, and to what extent could they make an overall contribution to the process of integration within CARICOM. Then, you have Dominica which is almost four and a half times the size of Barbados, but has a population of just less than 70 000 people. In fact, Dominica is almost twice the size of Barbados. Barbados is four and a half times the size of Nevis, but Barbados has a population that is 26 times the size of Nevis' population.

Therefore, when you look at all the parameters in this integration movement, there is only one thing we need really to understand, that it is not about fairness and equity. It is not about giving an equal share in this process, because it cannot happen, given the economic circumstances within the region, so that LIAT gives us an opportunity to see some of the issues being played out before the CSME.

The Minister of Tourism is known for being rash and wild in his comments. Therefore, one can appreciate his lack of understanding, Sir, of the issues within CARICOM, because he certainly does not understand the politics of LIAT, or he would not have engaged in a debate today, having come to this Parliament already and brought the issue. He likes to hear himself speak so, therefore, he felt it necessary to engage in an unnecessary debate in this Chamber, this morning. He really does not understand the issues as he should and, therefore, comes now to 'pompa-set', as usual.

Sir, there is now the issue of LIAT being bailed out. Those of us that travel the region know and understand the obvious difficulties with size, the obvious difficulties with population movement, the obvious difficulties in the economies, and the obvious problems that some countries have had.

Dominica cannot find a flat piece of land to build an airport, as large as it is, as I said, it is almost twice the size of Barbados. Therefore, we cannot be expecting Dominica to make any kind of contribution at this stage.

Therefore, Sir, do not expect that Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis and Dominica will be in a position, in the foreseeable future, to make a major, significant or equitable contribution to the problems being experienced by LIAT.

Sir, a decision has been taken by the friends of the Caribbean, to come together because we recently had an initiative for Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago. What is this based on? It could only be an attempt to pressure the other CARICOM countries to move more quickly towards integration. It cannot be a question of seeking to form, at this stage, a smaller unit within CARICOM, because that would not make sense in the context of the integration movement, to form a smaller unit.

This is the sense in which even the Manning initiative that sought to bring the three southern MDCs together in 1992, looked at the matter. Manning felt that there needed to be a quicker pace towards integration. But, we now recognise that this effort would have left out the other major MDC in the region, Jamaica which is in the north.
11.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned – and I am going to sit now – I still feel that this debate should really not have taken place this morning since we devoted so much time to the issue of LIAT less than a month ago and since the only new piece of information that has come to this Chamber relates to the loan of \$12.5 million being advanced

by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the extent to which other countries that benefit from LIAT outside of Barbados, Antigua and Grenada, would be able to benefit.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is misleading the House. This information on the loan is not new information. This information in this form was presented to this Chamber the last time I spoke in here on the issue. He is repeating it now the second time and it would go abroad from this Chamber that we are seeking to bring some new information. This information and the proportions to which the loan would have been drawn down had been put on the Table the last time. So he is misleading the House.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, that therefore makes the debate even more unnecessary. If the Minister is now saying that this information was given in the original debate, we therefore have to ask the question, why do we have to come this morning to 'pompaset' on the issue of LIAT again when we have already been engaged in an extended debate on LIAT and the financial difficulties that it had been experiencing for the last couple of years. Therefore, to hear the Minister now saying that this information was in fact given in the previous debate makes my position even more forceful because the Minister...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please!

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Seeking to 'pompaset' on what? This is an issue that we discussed in detail when a position was taken by the Opposition. The Opposition agreed in principle that you cannot help but have LIAT flying. The Opposition went on to speak to the issue of the World Cup in 2007 and the necessity to have transportation because we need to integrate and to have a Caribbean Single Market and Economy. Therefore, transportation is foremost in the process of the free movement of labour and people across the region. We discussed this matter at length, *ad nauseam*, less than a month ago and now to hear discussions, I wonder why, Mr. Speaker, therefore I am taking my seat.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael South, please, let us hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on the amendment to the Special Loans Act, Cap. 105. I want to say from the outset that one would recognise that I have always accused this Government of adopting a piecemeal approach to everything it formulates. It is clear that these two

petitions could have been combined on the previous occasion when we spoke about LIAT so that this House could now be dealing with the changes in the immigration policy as it relates to the good flow and the good implementation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

I cannot understand, Mr. Speaker, why we will have to devote so much time today in this Parliament on LIAT when we have acknowledged already in this Parliament that it is important to refinance LIAT and that the importance of LIAT must be seen as the importance of the Transport Board to the local transportation system.

I honestly believe that the free movement of people within the Caribbean should be the subject of the day. So I am begging Government to recognise that in order for us to be able to achieve what we want, that they should bring the Immigration (Amendment) Bill to this Parliament soon.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South said that I am confused, but everybody knows that the only reason the Honourable Member for St. Michael South brought this Bill in two parts, or what I call his piecemeal approach to everything, is because he wants to get some information so that he could come back and have knowledge to present it to this Parliament on the second time.

It is well known in this Parliament that I have said on many occasions that if there is ever a photocopier in politics, it is the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. Every time I speak, he criticises my speech, but then he comes back less than three weeks after and rehashes everything I say. What happened today, is a good example of what I spoke about previously in this Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you saying then that all the unnecessary talk, as said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, that came from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South really originated with you, Sir?

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, as you are aware ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just proceed, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...I cannot pull you into this particular debate, but if you allow yourself to be pulled into this debate, my focus would have to change from St. Michael South to St. Michael Central.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You know that we will not want that in this Parliament today because...

Mr. SPEAKER: No, Sir, you proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...you as the ruler of the House, do not get involved in political doings of political parties and I would not get involved in that debate...

Mr. SPEAKER: No, I was only following on from what you have said...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ... because I would not allow you to do something like that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just proceed, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying, this particular minister has to understand that the seriousness of this particular debate cannot be stretched just because he seeks knowledge. He must use the officials within his Ministry to get the information he heed and it will be good for him to seek again the advice that has been given to him of the importance of getting the Attorney General to make that necessary adjustment so that these changes can positively affect the changes he would like to see within his ministry.

We cannot seriously expect to have independent countries within the Caribbean not taking part at this particular point in time. Every country within the Caribbean must come on board with this particular measure. It cannot be left to three or four countries alone because LIAT is not only important to four countries but is important to every country in the Caribbean and in the world by extension.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: We would expect the Minister of Tourism not to understand that particular point, that is why he said it as a joke.

What the Minister of Tourism does not understand is that as long as you are in the tourism industry, you cannot only think locally and regionally, but you must also think internationally, but that is far beyond his brain.

We also have to understand that there is a belief that airlines like LIAT and other public enterprises should be fully capitalised, but there is a good reason why these companies are not fully capitalised. One has to understand that if you do that, you have a tendency where you will

create wastage. In order to get good management coming out of the public sector, sometimes it is good – even though you have the Consolidated Fund as the backup – to keep the amount of money applied at a particular level in order to keep the particular management style in place and to get efficiency. I hope the Other Side understand what I am saying. I believe the Honourable Member for Christ Church East fully understands what I am saying.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The important thing is that even though it takes the Honourable Member for St. Michael South three weeks to understand what I speak, one thing for sure is that three weeks from now, he would repeat it in this Parliament as if it is a new point.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I am also hoping that Caribbean governments understand that they can no longer be playing around with local and regional travel. We have to understand, now that we are becoming one economy because of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, that one of the first things we have to put in place outside of our immigration policy is our transportation policy.

11.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, we must make sure that transportation policy is a very efficient one in order for it to become effective. If we are going to allow persons to move freely within the Caribbean, we have to understand that LIAT and BWIA must be able to operate on time and must have the necessary capital. That is, they must have the equipment to move people freely and effectively within the Caribbean region, so that they can connect with the international carriers and therefore, we would not have all the necessary down times.

We must also understand that we can no longer be guessing around. Opposition parties within the Caribbean must understand that they must first recognise they too have a role to play in the development and formulation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. They must understand that in the same way the Democratic Labour Party, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, were bold enough to come to this Parliament on the Caribbean Single Market and Economy suggestion, even though the Barbados Labour Party would have given us a lot of lashes we have to take the Caribbean and carry it forward. We cannot continue behaving as if we are not part thereof.

Sir, it was in this Parliament a number of months ago that we have recognised the importance of it and therefore, the Government can no longer continue to believe and to

behave as if the Opposition is keeping them back. Government has been given a full deck of cards with which to play and, therefore, any delay in the implementation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy by this Parliament cannot be the fault of the Opposition but would have to be that of Government. I do not want this Government and its writers to walk around giving the impression ...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please, I would prefer that you concentrate on the Resolution which is before the House. I know that other Honourable Members have mentioned the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. We do not want, nor would I allow you, to have any focus as a central point, the business of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would not do that and I would always accept your ruling. That is why I would also make sure that as LIAT relates to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, it will always be a part of my debate. As I have said in the last debate that in order for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy to survive within the Caribbean, LIAT and BWIA must play a major role in it.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, at this stage of my political life, it is difficult for me to speak without being able to tie LIAT, BWIA and the immigration policy into the Caribbean Single Market and Economy because they are the main planks of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, in my view. Therefore, we have to understand the importance of these things and in order to have a sensible discussion, we would have to continue discussing them at this level.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that we all must come together and work out the formula that is going to make it work within the Caribbean and the sooner we do it the better we would be. That is why it is not surprising that the ideas of the Opposition are now being propelled in this Parliament this morning by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, even though he has given the impression that he was bringing something new to Parliament. As he said, he is a Member of Government, we can talk and he will implement. I have no problem with that but I believe there is somewhere under the Intellectual Property Act, where the Opposition could deal with a Member of Government who takes the Opposition's ideas and brings them to a Parliament and does not have the decency to say, and I quote. That is the norm of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South; he rehashes these things from the Opposition but does not credit the Opposition for them.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the Honourable Members of this House would understand that we cannot be walking around

with a big stick, telling LIAT and BWIA that they must get their act together. As I have already said in this Parliament and which has been rehashed by the Honourable Member of St. Michael South this morning, that it is not only the profits to the shareholders that are important but what is also important is the profits to the Caribbean countries. If we are going to concentrate on LIAT and BWIA, we have to look at the contribution to the Caribbean and not necessarily the contribution to the shareholders. Instead, it is for the Governments to contribute to the shareholders because the shareholders are doing the job that Governments should be doing and, therefore, it is for Governments to compensate the shareholders. I thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: At this point, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to recognise the presence of the Lieutenant-Governor of the State of Maryland, Michael Steele. We are very pleased to have you, Sir. We noticed your experience is very wide and varied and it is really a delight to have you at our Parliament. We welcome you once again.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up this debate on this Resolution, first of all, there is a very good reason for Parliamentary procedure and why this Resolution is before us.

Sir, let me deal with a number of inaccuracies and nonsense that I have heard spoken here this morning.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, you will have to withdraw those words. You cannot refer to the speeches of Honourable Members as such.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I respectfully withdraw but the Honourable Member for St. John has made remarks to my comments as being nonsense and he was not asked to withdraw his statement.

Mr. SPEAKER: It was said in a completely different context.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, when we last spoke to the LIAT Bill, if the Honourable Member for St. John were in the House, he would have been privy to a lot of the information that was put on the Table regarding the enterprise and where we were seeking to go.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was here but still did not hear and what he heard, he did not understand, which is always his practice and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is totally lost, as is his practice.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by implying that I am always lost. If that is correct, it means that everything that he has repeated from me should be struck from the record.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Again, Mr. Speaker, a point of confusion as usual. Sir, let me deal with the facts of this matter as they are being presented.

Sir, in the context in which the Member for St. John has spoken in relation to whether or not Government should support public enterprises, no matter the cost, the Honourable Member has cited such entities as the Barbados Transport Board and the GEMS OF BARBADOS. Mr. Speaker, those are entities over which we, as a Government, have total control.

In the situation of LIAT, what is clear is that it is not only the Government of Barbados that is contributing to LIAT or is seeking to shore up LIAT's viability. The issue is, can we as a Government continue *ad infinitum* putting money behind an enterprise that is failing? The real issue is, can we continue as a Government, *ad infinitum*, to put money behind an enterprise which is failing and in which other Governments in the region do not meet their obligations, and benefit from LIAT being in the air. Sir, what is the cost that the Government of Barbados is willing to bear in relation to this enterprise?

12.00 noon

Sir, we cannot continue over time to put money into LIAT without any concept of how much money we are spending in terms of our other financial and economic priorities nor can we continue to endorse LIAT when other Governments in the region are not meeting their obligations in the way they should. I want to say that there must be a point where we seek to create a new model in terms of movement in the region.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of how much to spend is not to be determined by the politicians. I have said before that the technical coordinator and a team have been appointed which have undertaken to deal with LIAT's viability and how much money is necessary to create a basis for the airline to be viable over time which will allow us to determine whether we will continue with this issue.

Sir, the contribution of the Government of Barbados alone cannot keep LIAT in the air. Since we last spoke in this Chamber, LIAT has found itself in an even more precarious position because the other regional Governments have not met their obligations. Sir, Barbados is always in front with its contribution and there must be point at which this Government decides that this country is not getting back enough for what we are giving as a contribution. Sir, we are looking at additional models to create a basis for regional air travel.

Sir, I also spoke of what we do with American Airlines, Virgin Atlantic and British Airways and how we seek to subsidise their operations in some measure through concessions and benefits even though they are controlled by the private sector and if LIAT went under we would seek to create a similar model. It is clear to all of us that Government owing LIAT has not worked in the way it was intended. Sir, it is necessary that we look at a different model for regional airline movement which would allow us to give the same type of concessions and benefits that we give to large international carriers but which creates a more stable financially viable airline to continue the movement of people across the Caribbean.

Sir, the new technical team and coordinator will tell us how far we can go as regional Governments in terms of shoring up this airline. Also, LIAT's Business Plan for 2001/2004, which I have made a document of the House, speaks to the issue of economic viability for the airline as a precondition for any other monies to be put into the operation of the airline.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John said it does not make a difference whether the airline is viable or not and it is the most reckless statement I have ever heard. The reason we are here today is because when we spoke about the Guarantee of Interest Bill for LIAT at that time there was still a window of opportunity for the other Governments in the Eastern Caribbean to put up monies in relation to this loan. We are simply taking up this loan because the other Governments have not met their obligation. Whether we believe that St. Kitts, Dominica or St. Lucia can take up their portion is a non-point. The point is that they made the commitment to put up their portion but we are now taking up the slack because they have failed to put up their monies. Sir, LIAT needs the money and the three Governments of the region are now invoking the loan.

The Honourable Member for St. John said I came here to create a debate because I like to hear myself but, Mr. Speaker, that is nonsense. This Government's commitment to LIAT is clear because we have led the process in terms of keeping LIAT going. We understand the importance of LIAT to the regional integration process, to our own financial and economic fortunes but the Honourable Member for St. John was not here when the last Bill was debated so he is now taking the opportunity to grandstand and talk. He was at cricket in St. Lucia instead of being here on the island to do the people's business. He now comes in here to put in his piece and now I am caught up in a leadership struggle because as long as the Honourable Member for St. John speaks the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West will have to speak as well because one has to show-up the other, then, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy must get in it too because of the leadership struggle that is going on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to give you the facts. The fact is that I am caught in this one-upmanship of trying to show up who is brighter than who and who should be leader over whom. The real issue is that at this time the Government of Barbados has made a commitment while the technical team is working out all of the other facts in relation to how we can make this airline more viable and how to seek a merger between LIAT and BWIA. While it is being worked out, it is necessary for LIAT and BWIA to shore up their own viability by seeking to cut expenditure, rationalise their operations and to have functional cooperation between the two airlines.

While they are doing that, we have an obligation as the lead Government for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy to ensure that in the interim we continue to have sustained, sensible, viable airlift across the region.

This effort today seeks to create a basis for us to do that into December 2003. After the technical coordinator and his team put the facts on the table we, as an administration and Government including the Opposition who have endorsed the last Bill, will then determine the extent to which the Government of Barbados is prepared to go further with the airline.

Sir, I want to make the point again that the Government of Barbados cannot and will not continue to put money into a failing enterprise, *ad infinitum*, to satisfy the whims and fancies of the Honourable Member for St. John, when there are other options available to us as a Government. Mr. Speaker, it is the type of reckless talk and financial management that took us to where we were in 1992. 12.10 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: On what point do you rise, Sir?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that we came here today to guarantee \$14 million, when the Governments within the regions think that the airline is going to fail. If the Honourable Member wants to say that it might happen for the other shareholders, I might accept...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your point of order must relate to the statements of the Honourable Member who was speaking.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael South. Please proceed. That is no point of order.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, we understand that LIAT is important. The Honourable Members on the Other Side, when the Honourable Member for St. John was jet-setting around the world, they had already endorsed, as an Opposition, the issue of LIAT, the money to be spent and why we need to keep LIAT flying. There was no need for me to go into that. All I wanted to do was to refresh the memories of Members of the Government and the Opposition about LIAT and put the new issues, since we last spoke on the table and that is what I have done.

Sir, if the Opposition wants to come in this Honourable House and engage themselves in a struggle, as I have said before, the quality of an Opposition has nothing to do with numbers. It has to do with the quality of intellect of the Honourable Members who occupy the seats on the Other Side.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South indicated that the major new piece of information brought to the debate has to do with a \$12.5 million, an interest-free loan. Therefore, it means that for some considerable time, since we do not have the details, because I do not know if there is a moratorium within the loan agreement, for some considerable time, the Governments that have guaranteed the loans would not have to make any commitment to the loan because it is an interest free loan. It has a five-year moratorium basically.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Therefore, it is an interest-free loan and you do not have to make any payment on interest or principal for the next five years.

Therefore, how can the Honourable Member for St. Michael South suggest that we do not understand the issues. We are simply saying that, perhaps, the other countries that have to contribute to LIAT may be in a position or condition to do so but for the next five years they do not have to. Therefore, we are simply holding the weight for these countries for the next five years.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has again missed the

point. The Honourable Member does not have a clue of what he is speaking.

Sir, let me explain to him and for the education and the rest of the Chamber. Mr. Speaker, in April 2003, four Governments met in the region and pledged an amount of \$23.1 million to shore up LIAT. Barbados was supposed to contribute \$3 million, Antigua \$4.8 million, St. Vincent and the Grenadines \$2.5 million. Mr. Speaker, we did not reach \$23.1 million, there was an outstanding amount of \$12.5 million. Sir, it was communicated to some of the other territories in the Eastern Caribbean that they should take up the outstanding amount of \$12.5 million. However, they did not have cash to put up, therefore the Government of Trinidad and Tobago offered a loan and they were supposed to notify us by the end of June 2003, whether they were in a position to take up the loan. We agreed that if they did not take it up, we, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, would then the other three countries would share the loan equally among ourselves.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, the time has come and LIAT needs the money, these territories have done nothing to take up their portion of the loan, therefore, we, the other three countries, are now invoking that provision for us to take up the \$12.5 million.

Sir, I do not know what it is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West does not understand.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, we are seeking under the Special Loans Act, Cap. 105 to invoke our provision to take up this portion of the loan.

Sir, the loan is interest-free with a moratorium of five years. Sir, this was put on the table before. This is nothing new. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was listening and digesting and the Honourable Member for St. John was in his seat rather than jet-setting around the globe, we would have been able to get this matter resolved a long time ago.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, the point is, we have already committed the Government of Barbados to take up this portion of the loan. We are going to ensure that we at least pay up our portion so that LIAT gets an

opportunity through the end of the year to be financially viable. Mr. Speaker, after that, under the technical team and the technical coordinator's reports, we would determine what else we may be able to do with this airline.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Barbados understands LIAT's importance to the region. We understand its importance to our financial and economic fortune in the future. The Honourable Member for St. John said one thing that made sense. The Honourable Member said that the issue of regional travel and the shoring up of regional travel is going to become more important as we deepen the integration movement, and that is a fact.

Sir, in the future we will continue to support LIAT but it cannot be done *ad infinitum* to an enterprise where we cannot see some level of economic viability at the end of the tunnel.

Sir, with those words and that explanation, I ask that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
SALE OF A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATED
AT TOP ROCK IN THE PARISH
OF CHRIST CHURCH TO
Mr. VICTOR REID

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the matter before the House is the moving of a Resolution to sell a parcel of land at Top Rock to a Mr. Victor Reid. The circumstances in which this sale occurs, Sir, are that the land in this area was acquired for road works, some considerable time ago. As a result of the acquisition and road development, a small parcel of land of approximately 1 600 square feet, remained that was not in use by the crown.
12.20 p.m.

The lands of Mr. Victor Reid, surround this parcel of 1 600 square feet and since they were of no use to the Government, Sir, Mr. Reid applied to purchase the lands from the Government. There is legislative provision that where there is surplus land, or where there is land for which Government has no use, it will be lawful for those lands to be sold to a person who wants to purchase them.

It was determined, Sir, that the price which Mr. Reid offered to the Government for the land, which he is

hoping to develop for his own purposes, and he has consistently maintained and landscaped since 1987, was certainly well above the market price, estimated for the value of land in that area.

It was therefore agreed, Sir, by the Cabinet, to accept the offer made to the Ministry of Housing and Lands, and by extension the Government of Barbados, for the purchase of 1 600 square feet of land. The land has been surveyed and has gone through all of the proper regulatory authorities. The land has been valued and it has been determined that the price being offered is fair.

In those circumstances, Sir, I beg that the Resolution do now pass.

Sir, the survey of the land is attached for those who are interested in reviewing the title.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, there are some vital pieces of information that I would like to know about this particular sale. I would like to know how much it is to be sold for, also, if my memory serves me correctly, Sir, when you have land that has been compulsorily acquired and you need to get rid of it, the first person you have to offer that land to would have been the previous person from whom you compulsorily acquired the land. I would like to know, if this particular procedure was followed.

Sir, I am aware that the Minister is new to the portfolio and this might have been something that was before her time. The Honourable Member might have to seek information on this particular matter but, I would like to know those two vital pieces of information.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, there is no legislative requirement that where one compulsorily acquired, that one is under a duty to resell, to the person from whom one purchased. As far as I am aware, there is no legislative requirement but, in any event, I can certainly put the facts before the House.

The land was originally acquired from an estate belonging to Doris Carter. What was left after the development of the land, the road construction and road works, were a mere 1 600 square feet. This is not a large parcel of land and does not constitute what we call in Barbados, a house spot. As it turns out, because of the road works that were done in the area, the parcel that was left was too small to build on, and is surrounded now by lands of this man Victor Reid, so they have a value to him, which they do not have to anybody else, not even to the Crown. It is such a small parcel remaining that it was of no further use to the estate of the original owner.

In the circumstances when he made the offer, because since the land was surrounded by his own lands, he started

maintaining it. He landscaped it for aesthetic benefits, since the look of it would enhance his own property. When he therefore approached the Government to buy it, a decision was made to sell it to him.

The Commissioner of Land Tax, Sir, advised that in May of 2001, land in that area was being sold in the region of \$6.50 to \$8.00 a square foot. Mr. Reid has agreed to pay \$15.00 a square foot for the land, so that the Government is getting for this 1 600 square feet of land, which is of no use to the Government or anyone else other than Mr. Reid himself, the sum of \$25 850 which is a fair and reasonable price.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It is far above and beyond the market value. In the same circumstances since the Government was not using the land, it was too small a parcel to be of benefit to anyone, we accepted an offer of the purchase from Mr. Reid which was, in all circumstances, very fair to the taxpayers of Barbados. At that price, nobody can say that they are being deprived.

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

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

ORDER NO. 4 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE
COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN
OF A PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT
REDMAN'S VILLAGE IN THE PARISH
OF SAINT THOMAS FOR THE PUBLIC
PURPOSE OF PROVIDING VENDING
FACILITIES AND A PARK-
ING AREA FOR PUBLIC
SERVICE VEHICLES

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, you will recall that the corner at Redman's Village is a very busy corner and there have already been some acquisitions of lands at that particular junction and indeed, along the car park and main road, to facilitate road development and expansion, the provision of street lights and other improvement works and amenities in that area.

Sir, that Redman's Village junction, since this is a Chamber in which politicians sit, if I could locate it politically, it is the point of convergence of three constituencies, the constituency of St. Thomas, the constituency of St. James South and the constituency of St. James Central.

The constituency of St. James South, Sir, is serviced almost exclusively by public transportation, because now we do have some private buses running into the area. The

majority of the service to this area is provided by ZR vans and the route brings them along Black Rock and other highly populated areas.

They terminate, Sir, at the Redman's Village junction. They should go on and turn on the eastern side of the junction, but it has become very popular for them to turn in the gas station, because there is really no adequate turning bay. The entrance to the gas station often becomes impassable, as they try to outdo one another and jockey for positions.

Sir, the road leading up to the traffic lights is often blocked. The traffic light had to be placed there to regulate traffic at that very busy junction, because it accommodated traffic on the ABC Highway, Highway 2A, traffic coming out of Prior Park, and out of the coastal communities, seeking to link onto the Highways, as well as traffic coming out of the Redman's Village itself and the Bagatelle area, trying to get onto the coast or to Bridgetown or onto ABC Highway or Highway 2A.

This is a very busy area, not only in terms of vehicular traffic but also in terms of pedestrian traffic because it services a range of residential communities, middle income, lower income and some upper middle income as well. A number of people in the area, single women and so on, use the public transportation system.
12.30 p.m.

Government is of the view that just as we have upgraded other bus terminals across the country and we continue to promote and advocate opportunities for entrepreneurship on the part of the small man, as we like to call them in Barbados, that we should at this particular juncture make provisions for the adequate turning of the ZR vans, adequate provision for parking and adequate bathroom facilities for them. Currently, there are no bathroom facilities and one has to be subjected to all kinds of visuals during the day and night as people seek to relieve themselves in various places. That has become part of the reality of this culture. Living in the area I have had one or two visitors myself, but I would not comment on the quality of the visitors.

The reality is that there is a pressing need for proper parking facilities for the ZR vans in that area. There is also a need to regulate them so that they do not continue to be a nuisance to the people who conduct business in the gas station or be a traffic hazard. I have actually seen them, as they try to get passengers, stopping other vans from getting out of the gas station. They park across the entrance of the gas station making it impossible for anybody to get in or out of it while they hustle as many passengers aboard their van

and stop other ZR drivers from getting out of the gas station onto the road before them.

So in trying to regulate that kind of behaviour we will make provision for the improvement of facilities which such public transportation drivers and conductors use and occupy. We will also enhance the quality of the facilities made available to the public who access public transportation. Without the provision of an adequate parking space for the ZR vans, passengers are forced to take the vans in the road by that junction and depending on the point at which the van stop, it can be quite precarious as other drivers seek to go by the ZR vans. This is very much a risk to them.

There is a need for proper bathroom facilities, proper parking facilities, some improvement of the visual landscape and some greening of the area. In addition to that, since we are going to be acquiring land and making these kinds of facilities available, Government is going to go the additional length of providing vending facilities of the type now being provided at Deacons and at the Glebe, St. George where there are vendor markets. So there will be vendors' stations or vendors' kiosks there that will accompany the van stand and would allow passengers while they are waiting for the vans or the ZR drivers themselves to get something to eat. Sometimes people leave home early in the mornings without being able to have breakfast and they get hungry while waiting for the vans and they need to access somewhere to get something to eat or as people wait for the van they can pick up a snack. Therefore, we wanted to provide opportunities for vending and for some entrepreneurship for the people from the communities surrounding this particular facility, so vending kiosks would form part of the facility which is being proposed.

Mr. Speaker, there was more than one acquisition in respect of this parcel of land. There were previously acquisitions relative to the road expansion and road works, so there are residual lands from that. In respect of the matter before the House today we are seeking to compulsorily acquire approximately 13 000 square feet of land to complement the land already held by the Government to accommodate the facility of which I have spoken.

Initially, we were attempting to do this negotiation and resolve this matter by private treaty, but the landowner in this instance was unable to produce title deeds and there were some difficulties with the negotiations, therefore we have to go by compulsory acquisition.

I am advised, however, that no one is going to be disadvantaged by this particular proposal. The Resolution has been certified by the Attorney General as being in order for the consideration of the House and the survey plans are attached.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, without prejudice to the participation by other Honourable Members in this debate affecting item number 4, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 1.45 p.m.

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

The question that the House do now suspend until 1.45 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.40 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this acquisition and to say that I have some fundamental problems with the location because if one approaches this location coming from the north, one has to make a left turn, then a right. Sir, there are many people who would believe that this looks like a good location but in fact when one tries to operate it, there are particular problems with it.

Sir, I cannot see anyone travelling towards the south and turning off to their left to get to this location but if one is living to the west of the location and has to travel north to acquire produce, then turning through the lights to get there is in a way a bottleneck. Not only that, I honestly believe that in order to make this workable, along with the other problems of putting vendors in a particular location, one would now have to link back with the old roads when leaving the vending location. One would have to go towards Welches area and then come back onto the highway to get out but if one tries to operate this location with the ZR vans and other vehicles turning around there, I do not believe there is enough space to do it. I want the House to look at the location and the amount of traffic coming to this particular location and at what we are proposing and tell me if it is workable because in my mind it is not.

1.50 p.m.

Sir, it reminds me of Andrews Sugar Factory. Although it is in a better location, the same argument I used against relocating it, is the same one I will use for this vending location. Sir, when people travel on the highway they do not want to come off to go to a particular place. When one looks at the location one can clearly see the problems that will be created. We will have to change the lights or go back to the roundabout system and this will create a bigger problem

because more land will have to be allocated for this site. Sir, people should not only think about the process of vending but about how workable it would be, considering that the ZR vans would also be put in the same location as well.

Sir, when this situation is analysed, it is not as realistic as it sounds. I hope these particular points would be considered and people would understand that although it sounds plausible, that it is not workable. People who want to get involve as vendors might find themselves having a big wish but are not able to achieve what they thought they could from this particular project.

Sir, how can we speak of globalisation, trade liberalisation and free movement of people but we want to tie vendors to a particular location. If we are going to be seriously competitive in Barbados, we must give vendors free movement. Instead of putting vendors in buildings, we must give them the capacity to move freely throughout Barbados to vend their products. We cannot give free access to people coming to Barbados but limit our own to a particular location and not empower them with the capacity to move freely through Barbados to sell their goods and wares. If we want to give our farmers and fishermen the capacity to sell their produce throughout Barbados, we cannot limit the capacity of vendors. Sir, if vendors were able to take the catch of fishermen throughout Barbados, the fishermen would not return to shore at two o'clock. They would come in much later with a bigger catch because they know they would not be providing for a limited market. Sir, if we are truly going to be competitive, we have to give people the tools to work with.

If a farmer creates a scarcity, he knows that he will get a higher price for his produce. This is in the interest of the farmer but we have to think about the interest of Barbados. We must encourage farmers by giving them the right type of machinery so that he can sell any part of the island where the demand for his produce is. We cannot continue to limit our country because we want to have a place as a showpiece but it does not create the capacity we need. We need a system in place to create the capacity that will help everyone.

Mr. Speaker, as long as we limit our capacity in Barbados, we will also limit the social earnings. I have already said in this Parliament that people believe that to mechanise is the best thing in the world but it cannot be the best thing if we are not producing that particular piece of equipment.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have been using the word limit so much that I thought you would understand your limit. Please get back to the Resolution about compulsory acquisition.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, my purpose is to explain this matter to the House. Mr. Speaker, how can we speak about globalisation, trade liberalisation and free movement but we want to limit the debate that goes on in this House. The world is expanding and yet we want to limit ourselves. Mr. Speaker, we do not need to change the Speaker but we have to change our Standing Orders because we are robbing ourselves of creativity and ability. We cannot continue to limit ourselves to what we can see on paper because if we are going to be truly competitive we must allow ourselves to be expansive.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please make your point as it relates to the Resolution.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I hope the point made about this particular location in Redman's Village and the policy of Government would be taken back to Cabinet to be looked at again and the particular point focused on. Sir, maybe 30 or 60 years ago I can understand why we would want vending locations in a country like Barbados but not in this day and age. Vendors cannot be treated like a car because we believe a car is for a garage. A vendor cannot be for a particular location. A vendor must be seen for what they can do and they must be allowed to fully exploit their profession. Sir, because some of us do not think too highly of them, we want not only to limit them to a location but to the amount of money they can make and the area that they can traverse. 2.00 p.m.

Sir, in this modern age we cannot do that. We have to see vendors as persons who are going to move the manufacturing products, the produce from the land and the sea. We have to make sure that they are not limited to one location but they must be given the impetus so that they can use their skills and take their produce across Barbados. We have to maximise everything that we enter into and we cannot limit anything, not even freedom of speech.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make a small intervention and to lend my support to this resolution. I want to say thanks to the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the speedy process it has used to come to a settlement of an activity that was in the making for approximately three years. Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. James South speak of all of the efforts that were being made in the past through private treaty as well as other discussions, eventually, since they were no owners to be identified, and as a result the compulsory acquisition of land. Sir, I am happy for this opportunity even though the Redman's Village area is now located in the St. James Central constituency, the people in that area deserve every opportunity to be able to improve themselves.

Sir, the vendors mall in that area has been promised for many months and the vendors are all ready to set up stalls. I have a difficulty with the comments being made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I would have thought that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have wanted to make a request for something similar to what is happening in Redman's Village, Deacon's Farm and The Valley, St. George because the people of St. Lucy have those needs as well.

Therefore, as I speak to you, I know of the request of the locals in Redman's Village for a vendors mall, because I was their representative until May 21, 2003, Sir, they have excellent skills. The residents are very good at sewing, making craft and cooking and they are all waiting for the vendors mall to be set up so that they can get on with their lives and do more important things.

Mr. Speaker, the Ministry of Social Transformation is working assiduously at bringing people who are on welfare into the workforce. There are many individuals who, even though they have skills, are unemployed and many of them are waiting for this opportunity to improve themselves. I am happy for this opportunity to lend my wholehearted support to this Resolution because I know that the establishment of the vendors mall will make a difference in that general area.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this Government, as should be the case with any other Government, should make every effort to ensure that there is a high respect for law and order. The Honourable Member for St. James South spoke earlier of the tremendous challenges that one experiences in that general area of the Shell gas station at Redman's Village.

Sir, the public service drivers prefer to make their exits and entrances at that location while other motorists are driving in and out of the gas station and the area is very congested. Again, I want to lend my support to the creative idea of ensuring that there is some turning bay in that area; and, more particularly, washroom facilities are established to accommodate those individuals who are working on the ZR vehicles and other public service vehicles that ply that route.

Mr. Speaker, the Wanstead ZR vehicles are the vehicles that make their turn in that area. This is a very popular route, therefore, to come up with the idea of providing parking and toilet facilities in that area is very important.

Sir, we all know that location where the vendors mall will be established, before the Highway 2A was built, was once a gas station. Therefore, that area is vacant except for one stall. This stall is a very popular stall where people purchase pork chops and pudding and souse on weekends.

Mr. Speaker, there is a need for more of that type of activity in that area. I am happy to know that the folk from Arthur Seat and the surrounding areas will get an opportunity to go to Redman's Village to ply their trade. These residents are going to be more self-reliant, hence they will be able to look after their families and offer them a better quality of life.

Sir, I will continue to say that the Barbados Labour Party continues to listen to the cause of the people. The people want the vendors mall, they have skills and produce to offer and they want to be independent. Therefore, we are giving them the facilities that they can look after their own needs. I know that this vendors mall is going to make a difference in the lives of the residents in that area. The community in Redman's Village is becoming separated because the people have challenges and issues. They have communicated with the Honourable Member for St. James Central and myself that they want us to continue to keep their needs in the forefront at all times.

Therefore, we are willing to work along with the Government agencies and the private sector to ensure that the vendors mall that is to be erected will be well prepared, properly utilised and that the Government's money will be properly accounted for.

Sir, I want to take this opportunity to encourage the Ministry of Housing to let us pay more attention to the vendor malls. The Rio Grande, Jackson, needs to be looked at. It is not quite true to say that the fellows 'on the block' do not want to work and that they are waiting on welfare. Sir, it is people cannot find employment in a small society in a way that they would like to. Therefore, these opportunities help to generate employment. I am sure that when the opportunity comes, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would want to add her support to the request for more action on the vendors mall for the Rio Grande, Jackson, area.

Mr. Speaker, the young people are waiting to show many of us, including the representatives in here, that if you give them an opportunity, they can take good advantage of it and take it to the next level.

Sir, with those comments, I wish to thank the Ministry of Housing and Lands and the Honourable Minister for the opportunity to bring a measure of comfort to the residents of Redman's Village, Bagatelle, Padmore Village and the other surrounding areas for the vendors mall which we have been waiting patiently for and one that would make the difference in the lives of the residents and the shaping of the landscape in the general Redman's Village area.

I wish to thank you, Sir...
2.10 p.m.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I would want to begin my contribution by echoing the praising remarks of my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and to extend my heartfelt congratulations and most sincere thanks to the Honourable Member for St. James South, the Minister of Housing and Lands and Environment for her speedy and efficacious settlement of this troublesome issue. Sir, this is an issue which is very near and dear to the hearts of all those people who understand the area. I think, this is an area of concern for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, who is a resident of the immediate neighbourhood, and he would want to associate himself with this issue in a positive and an enlightened manner.

Sir, I think the point has to be made that when one is in the process of the early days of reconstituting Government, it is an example, of the way in which this Government has hit the ground running, in a very constructive and purposeful way, by bringing one of the most critical Resolution to come before this Chamber in recent times, and I would explain, Sir, why this Resolution is so critical.

Sir, we have to conceptualise this in a very serious setting. I am on my feet because, I believe that this Resolution speaks to the effort to move previously marginalised people into the economic mainstream of Barbadian society. I will say it again for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. It is particularly painful that he does not grasp that this is an opportunity to move marginalised people into the economic mainstream of Barbadian society.

Sir, there are two very creative ways in which this Government came to the people, in the last general election campaign, and articulated from the platforms of the Barbados Labour Party, an interest in developing that kind of movement of marginalised people into the mainstream of economic society.

One way, Sir, was the creation and development of community-based enterprises, whereby we would take land and rent it to tradesmen and craft persons, so that they would be in a position to market their skills, in the full glare of the public, and with greater accessibility to the public.

The second way, Sir, was that we wanted to ensure that there was a continued decentralisation of markets. It began as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas indicated, in the Glebe, Speightstown and in Oistins. We are constructing vending facilities for the people. Sir, this brings us, sharply to the point where we immediately recognise the philosophical divide, between This Side and That Side.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy speaks to the question or to the suggestion of a mecca for vending. Gone, Sir, are the days – and hopefully for evermore and the hereafter – when we can simply sit down and talk about one central place in Barbados being a mecca for vending.

Aside.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: If that is not what he is suggesting, then, the only other sensible alternative that one could put, by way of interpretation of what is really a garbled communication to the House, is that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is suggesting that there would be widespread vending, up and down Barbados, in no structured and cohesive manner and, Sir, that is even more frighteningly horrendous to the eye of my imagination.

Therefore, what we are trying to bring and what we are trying to commence, via this Resolution, is a continued process of market decentralisation, so as to ensure that at Redman's Village, there is a facility in existence, working to the benefit of the people in the area.

Sir, I want to speak to the sociology of it, because when I speak to the marginalised people, I am speaking of persons from Redman's Village, Kew Land, Bagatelle and, I am going to suggest, Sir, that we go further afield in Padmore Village to the working-class rural Barbados. They are the backbone of the rural community. They have trade skills and are able to demonstrate significant amounts of craft ability.

The Honourable Member for St. Thomas and I, on March 1, 2003 held a community trade extravaganza at Bagatelle Pavilion and there were people there from the surrounding areas, including Welches. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, Sir, did not condescend to come out with the poor people, but had he been so minded, he would have recognised that there were people from the area, some of who know him, but whom he does not care to admit that he knows, who were there, Sir, selling their crafts, food, clothing, jewelry and cutting hair.

This, Sir, is what convinced the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and I that there must be no pause for breath in the unrelenting effort to try to bring to that community, that which it deserves which is an opportunity for these people, not only to showcase their talents and skills but to move marginalised poor people into the economic mainstream of this society. This is what the Honourable Member for St. Lucy comes in here and tries to say and it is rubbish. This is part of the new found philosophy that so divides and misguides the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, I want to go further. The Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party spoke also to the question of creating training programmes for small entrepreneurs. This stands and must walk hand in hand with this concept, because what we are saying is that this is only a first step. The Honourable Member for St. James South has come to Parliament to move this Resolution. In effect, Sir, the gestation process has now

come to an end. Sir, once the people have an opportunity to develop themselves, and to begin to market their crafts and skills, then the training process to make sure that the entrepreneur is able to manage his or her small business, in the most effective and efficacious manner possible.

Sir, this is what this Resolution is about, so it is not a stand-alone exercise. Perhaps the petty bourgeoisie, over there, who cannot and will not attempt to bend their minds to this social developmental process, who do not understand and will not try to understand the social significance of what we are doing, would be enlightened.

Sir, I particularly want to speak to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, because we are not finished. We committed ourselves and said that the market decentralisation programme would extend to Gemswick and Gall Hill, St. John, Belleplaine and Bathsheba. The whole process, Sir, is to ensure, not in the language of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, that there is a breakdown of this so-called mecca of vending and creating a whole new ambiance and a raft of opportunities for persons who have interests in this kind of business.

Sir, I challenge them because it must not lay in mouths of Honourable Members on That Side to approbate and reprobate at the same time. Sir, if the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and the Honourable Member for St. Philip North are prepared to stand in the House today, and say that they should not have any vending facilities up at Gemswick, then, Sir, let them stand up and say so, but we cannot have this convenient act of approbating and reprobating all at once.

There is a clear message coming from the utterances of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy for the whole day, Sir, and to describe it simply, he now stands as a thorn in the side of the progress of the people of Barbados. He has to be seen for what he is, and even as he says that, Sir, he is an entrepreneur. He is a businessman who benefits from this Government's broad process of economic progress.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, he benefits from Moon Town and a climate which has encouraged investment. He benefits from a climate which has encouraged the diversification of cultural activity. At the same time, even as he has enriched himself, he is sufficiently offensive in his approach to the people by saying implicitly that they do not deserve a chance to benefit as well. I feel very strongly about that. I think that is a deplorable and horrendous departure from that which that Party once stood for.
2.20 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please, order.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I would go further. This exercise has to be understood to be about the upgrading of the rural poor. It is but a first step but it is a necessary step. I do not know how a man could live next door to a project...

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Admittedly, nobody knows him, but nobody wants to know him. Having said that, the Honourable Member does not seem to know that every Friday and Saturday night fried chicken, pork and fish are being sold from the same site, so he complains that it would never work for vending.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: We are trying to legitimize the activities of these marginalised people and bring them into the mainstream of the society. Coconut vending takes place there every Saturday and Sunday as well. The Honourable Member may not want to accept that or identify with that. He certainly does not buy from that spot, but he must come to the Christian understanding that those people must live in Barbados too.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I would wager a bet that we would not hear the Honourable Member for St. John speaking in those condescending terms. I would go further and say neither would the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West because he understands the transformation that has taken place in Deacons.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point that this Resolution is not only about the vending exercise. We have to think in terms of the whole question, as the Honourable Member for St. Thomas said, of the orderly management of that which is taking place insofar as public transportation is concerned in the area.

I want to begin by making a plea that what we have to recognise is that there is not only public transportation in the form of the ZRs and the taxis, but there is also the Transport Board. It is necessary for us to remember at all times that many of the persons who get off the buses in the vicinity of that junction at Redman's Village have to carry two or three bags from there over to Kew Land.

I want to use this opportunity to implore the Ministry of Transport and Works to see it fit to explore the possibility of having the bus route into Redman's Village extended up the hill. I have identified an area which they can use...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please!

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: It is a discourtesy the Honourable Member for St. Lucy shows to everybody who lives around him. I have come to realise that is his nature, Sir.

Sir, I believe this opportunity should be used to extend a plea to the Ministry of Transport and Works to extend the bus service into Redman's Village so as to facilitate and accommodate those persons who need to get into the higher reaches of Welches, Kew Land and Bagatelle.

Above and beyond that, it is necessary that we realise that part of the pith and substance of this Resolution is the opportunity that we now have to properly police and supervise that which the ZRs do at Redman's Village. We should not turn a blind eye to the fact that we are really waiting for a bad accident to happen there. There have been lots of accidents there and many people have been injured there, so we must try to intervene and intercede before something really tumultuous takes place at that junction.

I think that the opportunity must therefore be seized to have a properly ordered turning bay and parking facility for those ZRs and public service vehicles which use the area. The general well-being of the people is at stake and the general order and efficiency in the way in which that particular form of business is conducted is also at stake.

I believe that this Resolution in its totality can only augur well for the development of the area in general and the economic opportunities and social well-being of the people. Therefore, Sir, I support it wholeheartedly.

I will close by thanking the Honourable Member for St. James South for her cooperation and speedy response in this matter. I also want to extend a small but solemn prayer that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, even if only in a spirit of neighbourliness, tries to find within his breast a sense of compassion for the rural poor on whom he looks down from his mansion at Welches.

I thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, my intervention in this matter is going to be very short.

I want to start from the perspective that I heartedly support the acquisition of this land at Redman's Village to be able to establish a wayside market there. This is part, as you have already heard in this debate, of an overall policy of this Government, that we must seek to build capacity to allow persons to be able to pursue the legitimate interest of vending in communities without offending public order and the capacity to maintain public order.

We have had a checkered history in this country as it relates to the practices of vending. Vending has truly been the mother of black economic enfranchisement. That has been most appropriately stated by some of the vendors themselves. There have been layers of people who have gone on to higher and better things having started initially as wayside vendors.

We, in this Government, have a distinguished record as it relates to the issue of vending and market facilities. Bridgetown, in this 375th year of its existence, has seen more damage being done to vendors than previously. We are determined as a Government, largely through the guidance of the Honourable Member for the City, that the vending facilities in our capital city must be appropriate to allow people to legitimately pursue their economic activity. We made sure, right here in the back of this Parliament, within the first two or three years of being the Government, to put for the first time, proper facilities to accommodate the range of vendors, to provide for proper sanitary facilities and to ensure, in so taking that first step, that we commit ourselves also to the redevelopment of the Cheapside market as well as ultimately Fairchild Street market. We stand today with Cheapside completed and the Government is fully on the way to the redevelopment of the Fairchild Street market.

We also felt that simply to have large markets in your capital city does not satisfy the natural need of persons to be able to vend across Barbados. In those circumstances, the Government has committed itself to a number of community market facilities such that people should have the opportunity to be able to sell in various communities. We have already seen the one at Deacons Farm. This one at Redman's Village follows the one which is being constructed in Speightstown.

Indeed, I am anxious for the Ministry of Housing and Lands to satisfy my own peculiar concern and to ensure that the market at Bush Hall Yard Gap and the one at Jackson commonly referred to as Rio Grande are completed because I truly believe that people can only get out of poverty in two ways. They must acquire an education and work themselves out of poverty by reason of the knowledge they have acquired or go into forms of self-employment and in our culture most of that self-employment relates to vending as a form of activity.
2.30 p.m.

We believe that not only should we create the facility but when we established both the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, we fought hard to let people know that there must be an enterprise capacity in respect of both Commissions. We cannot talk about urban renewal or rural development without giving persons the opportunity to lift themselves out

of any circumstances that might have led them to poverty, such that they could provide for themselves.

Sir, one cannot speak about community development unless we understand that there must always be at least three or four entrepreneurs in the community who could help to carry along the others because the access to state welfare or benefits are not as simple as we would always like them to be. Therefore, in the same way that one could credit from the shop to be able to feed one's children until one receives cash or is paid, we also feel that we must make sure that every community in this country has at least three or four entrepreneurs in it so that they could help to carry along the others in the community.

Sir, I see it from a different perspective because the absence of that entrepreneurial capacity in the community leaves a void such that those persons who practise and benefit from illegal activities are then capable of playing that welfare role to the most vulnerable in the community, rather than the legitimate entrepreneurs in each community.

Sir, it is for this reason that separate from the physical buildings we have established in the manifesto, at the community level this term, we have committed 50 per cent of the resources of both the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission towards the building of enterprises. As I normally say, very often these persons are unable to go into banks and borrow money. If one understands how they live, then one would understand why that cash flow is urgent, for example, someone who is supporting his or her family is going to buy stock two or three times a year and therefore on each occasion has to look for a lump sum of money.

Sir, there are different types of vending, there are those who specialise in selling two or three times a year and live on the profits that is made from these high points. We therefore felt that it is important for Government to provide the financing mechanism to allow these persons to have access to capital at concessional rates, in circumstances where they would otherwise not be able to finance their economic activity.

In addition to that, we also felt that where the vending takes place in market-type facilities, we must move to a programme of community divestment and management of these facilities. Very often when the facilities are most needed, the persons who are the public servants are unable to be there to help manage them. For example, if I am responsible for taking care of the building that allows me to make my living, there would be that level of care and responsibility being exercised that goes beyond someone who is simply doing it as part of a job – not that persons do not carry out their jobs properly. I strongly believe that in

the process of deepening democracy and ownership in this country that the community divestment of market and community facilities is the *sine qua non* for the further enfranchisement of Barbadian people.

Mr. Speaker, in these circumstances, I trust and hope that the Honourable Minister of Housing would bring all of the various acquisitions to allow the two Commissions and the Ministry of Agriculture, to expedite the construction of these facilities because that informal sector of our economy, in my view, is the safety-valve that stops us from seeing some of the other social problems from which some of the other countries in this region suffer.

I truly hope that Government's cooperative approach towards the vending in Barbados would see a greater level of entrepreneurial activity taking root across the Barbadian communities. We cannot talk about integrating into a Caribbean Single Market and Economy or into a Free Trade Area of the Americas, unless we understand that over the next 20 years the level of private sector activity in this country must increase beyond that of Governmental activity. In other words, the ratios of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) must change and in those circumstances, it requires from us, not an understanding of unlimited concept of private sector being a plantocratic mercantile community but one that embraces all forms of economic endeavour in this country, from the smallest vendor to the largest multinational.

Mr. Speaker, at the end of the day, governments do not compete, it is enterprises that compete and one cannot, therefore, stifle the entrepreneurial information of poor people and then hope to build large enterprises in the future. To do this, one would be killing off the culture that is necessary to make the transition from where we are, in terms of the structure of our economy, to where we need to be over the course of the next 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, I want to end off by saying that cognizant of this, one of the first tasks that I undertook on the re-election of this Government in May, 2003, was to meet with the Barbados Association of Vendors. We have had two meetings so far and have involved not just the Office of the Attorney General but that of the Ministry of Agriculture, the lead ministry in relation to market facilities. We have also involved the Ministry of Public Works because we believe that before the end of this year, there must be put on the table, a holistic programme for the continued development of vending in this country which speaks to the expansion of that entrepreneurial activity that we want to see but we want it done in circumstances where we cease to stigmatise people for selling illegally. We, therefore, would want to bring to an end 300 years of unfortunate history while, at the same time, being committed to the maintenance of law and public order,

such that there is no irregular or haphazard development that offends the rights of others in the practice of the vending.

We feel that there is a medium ground that we can reach, that is being able to decriminalise but at the same time, ensure that there are regulation and civil order in the practice and pursuit of both outdoor and indoor vending in this country.

We feel that at the same time we do that, we must ensure that capacity is expanded to be able to give them the opportunity to be part of a regulated environment. We feel that at the same time we do that, there must be improved lines of credit that are available to them, hence the commitment of the 50 per cent of both the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission resources.

We feel that they must also be given the opportunity, if they so wish, to be integrated into organisations such as the Small Business Association (SBA), to be able to benefit from technical assistance and mentoring that are available throughout Government.

Sir, there are those who would wish to rise above the levels that there are, while there are others who are happy vending in that particular way for the remainder of their lives, and we must be able to accommodate all.
2.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am supportive of this Resolution and for the sake of those who ask me every week in Bush Hall Yard Gap when the market is going to start, I hope I would be able to stand shortly in this House again to see the acquisition of that land as well as the Rio Grande which is in the hand of the receivers, the bank. We need urgently to complete that acquisition so as to allow the residents of Jackson and Arthur Seat to be able to properly pursue economic activity in an area that has now become exceptionally commercial and where people want a large number of goods and services on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a contribution to this debate and it would be remiss of me if I did not seek to do so.

Sir, I stand here a proud member of an administration that has been very supportive of the efforts of small business persons. I know that the Resolution at hand speaks to providing opportunities and facilities to the vending class so as to allow them to become more empowered. If I look at in a more holistic way, I can assure you that this Barbados Labour Party Administration has done a tremendous job in

looking after the small business sector. We have had the legislation to cover small businesses and this administration created a number of funds to facilitate the establishment and the expansion of small businesses in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, at the level of provision of training and technical assistance, once again, this Barbados Labour Party Administration has been very supportive of the small business sector in that regard.

I had the good fortune as the Minister of Agriculture being responsible for the Rural Development Commission, when this administration took a policy in relation to vending in Barbados. Sir, in an effort to encourage small businesses as it relates to vending, we needed to do a number of things. We needed to significantly improve the marketing infrastructure in Barbados and we also recognised that we needed to decentralise the marketing and distribution system which relates to agricultural and other commodities which were produced in Barbados.

Sir, we did not arrive at the policy by happenstance because we decided to look at strategic locations in Barbados where the traffic is reasonably high and where large numbers of persons congregate with a view to procuring things

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Sir, all we are doing is allowing persons who have the talent in particular areas, that might otherwise remain hidden, an opportunity to bring it to the fore.

Sir, for example, over the last four years my political office has made a contribution to the Independence activities at the level of the parish of St. Philip. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North contributes in a minor way and we will expect that he will be contributing in a more significant way from now on.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Sir, one of the contributions of my political office to our Independence activities in St. Philip for the last four years, was an arts and craft exhibition. This exhibition started small and I did not know that so much talent in the area of craft and the arts resided in St. Philip until we carried out that experiment.

Sir, after the first year, the interest that was generated was a massive one, so we had to open up the exhibition from a St. Philip South exhibition to a parish level exhibition. This exhibition grew bigger and it got national recognition and I was able to use that effort to convince my colleagues that Six Roads is deserving of a craft market to allow those young persons in the constituency with such talent to get an

opportunity to display and sell their products from a location that is extremely conspicuous. Sir, this administration has agreed that Six Roads should be the location for a craft market for those young business persons in St. Philip.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration has gone further by replicating what is planned for St. Philip, funds permitting, for other parts of Barbados. At present a lot of work is being done at Belleplaine, St. Andrew, within the landless project there. The job will be undone if we did not marry efforts to increase agriculture production with opportunities for the farmers to display and sell the increased agriculture production from a location that is conspicuous. Sir, this Government has a plan for a market to be located at Belleplaine, St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, we were told recently that the crafts persons and vendors at Bathsheba experience difficulty because they do not have a well-appointed facility and as a result they have to display their merchandise at the community centre there, and when it rains they have to seek shelter elsewhere.

Sir, this Government has decreed that their problems will be a thing of the past. In the not too distant future, the Rural Development Commission would be looking after the construction of a community facility for those vendors in the Bathsheba area.

Sir, this Government has a plan for the construction of a public recreation facility at Gemswick, St. Philip, near Oldbury Woods. We said, yes, we have the interest of the small business class at heart. We have created lots of funds for them but one of the things that was missing was the provision of training opportunities for these persons.
3.00 p.m.

Sir, they are also functioning in an environment that is competitive. We recognised that it would get more and more competitive as the system becomes more and more opened, so we have to provide them with the requisite level of training.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, the Rural Development Commission joined hands with the Small Business Association and started a training programme for active small business persons, and perspective small business persons in rural Barbados.

This programme was delivered in the most decentralised fashion. We used no fewer than 18 centres throughout Barbados, as a way of taking the training to the

vendors, as opposed to forcing them to stop what they are doing to travel long distances, at considerable expense to get to the training.

I am happy to report that the training for the small business persons would have reached Six Cross Roads at the Princess Margaret Secondary School. A large number of aspiring and active small business persons from St. Philip would have availed themselves of that training, because it was at no cost to them. Once again, the responsible Government is giving them the opportunity for training, free of cost, because we understand the importance of training for small business persons.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to finish on a point that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East touched on because, when I hear the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speaks, it is true that most of the things which come out of his mouth are the product of a confused mind. We have to be extremely careful with some of the things that he is promoting, because sometimes he seeks to give the impression that on the one hand, he is in favour of the small business person, and he is the champion of the cause of the small business person, he can further such a thought by encouraging the system to operate without any real order.

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

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Sir, this Government is on track with what it is doing to have vending done along very structured and organised lines in Barbados. The record of the provision of the facilities cannot be questioned, because it is ongoing. The project will reach Crab Hill in St. Lucy and Gall Hill in St. John. These plans are enshrined in our Manifesto which we have made a document of the House. Sir, all the benefits that have been derived for the small business persons in communities elsewhere in Barbados, will go to St. John, St. Lucy and they will keep going, funds permitted.

The Government, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said, is committed to bringing, in the not too distant future, a comprehensive policy for vending throughout Barbados, one that will speak to the burning issue of outdoor vending. Sir, this outdoor vending will not only be done here in Bridgetown. This is a very sensitive issue, and some persons would want us to move at a greater pace with determining the policy as regards outdoor vending as it relates to Bridgetown. We want to have Bridgetown functioning in a manner that is similar to what obtains in cities elsewhere.

Sir, that work got started in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development when I was Minister there, so I am

encouraging them to bring that work to conclusion fairly quickly. There must be opportunities created for everyone who have an interest in vending, but it must be done in a very organised and structured way that no vendors would be seen as running afoul of the law in an effort to ply their trade and to generate some income to look after themselves and their families.

Mr. Speaker, the record of this Government in respect of the small business class is a proud one. We have taken on board the small vending class. We know that they play a very important role in this economy and we will continue to support them via trading and finance. We will continue to ensure that the legislation is modern and flexible enough so as to allow them the proper enabling environment that they can function. Sir, it is very important to note that we would support the vending class via the production of the comprehensive policy for vending in Barbados.

I thank you.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I rise basically to make my contribution to this debate. I will start off by saying that I do not believe that any Honourable Member of the Democratic Labour Party has a fundamental problem with the provision of facilities for vending development in Barbados.

I believe very strongly that it is, and has always been, the policy of the Democratic Labour Party to allow for the development of all individuals of all walks of life, those individuals who are not blessed with the capacities to attain tertiary education and specifically those individuals who have had to work in the area of agriculture and other small business type activities so that they can sell to Barbadians in general.

My concern with respect to this particular type of development is that I do not believe that the Government has any spectacular record that demonstrates that they clearly understand the provisions that are required for the development of any such entities such as vending in Barbados.

I believe that a vendor does not care anything about whether there is economic capacity or building capacity. Vendors simply care about whether they can earn enough money in Barbados to feed themselves and to pay their electricity, telephone and water bills. Ultimately, when one looks at the development of vending in Barbados, one must first look at what it is that we are trying to accomplish, whether or not we want that vendor to be able to retain as much of the monies that he earns from his activities to support himself and his family. It is from that perspective that I rise to suggest that what is necessary in Barbados is a comprehensive review of the whole concept of vending in

Barbados whether it is vending from a kiosk, from around a street corner or from a fancy mall. The final interpretation must necessarily be how much money you make and whether or not you can take care of your family.

It is from that perspective that I join with my colleagues with the submission that it is about time that we look at removing any encumbrances to a particular vendor being able to practise and ply his trade at any particular point in Barbados. It is from that perspective also that I accept that no vendor in Barbados should have to apply for a licence to vend in Barbados. I do not believe that it makes any sense in Barbados to go and build fancy kiosks here and there. I have seen that attempt in St. Philip. I have seen about nine kiosks in St. Philip that have been built next door to sand, grit, marl and tar that are now only residences for termites. I question how they got a licence in the first place to establish a vending facility there.

I will re-emphasize my position that it is not a matter of whether you vend in a fancy kiosk or from a tray, but whether or not you provide the facilities for that particular vendor to be able to retain their earnings and to provide for themselves in this country. That is what this debate should be about.

Unless we start to tag vending in Barbados to other industrial developments in Barbados, we are going to have difficulties. I do not know of any vendor in Barbados who has been able to develop a supermarket. I do not know of any vendor in Barbados who has been able to establish a business entity that rivals any of the produce that is marketed in Super Centre or at JB's Supermarket. I do not know of any of those developments in Barbados. One of the reasons why that probably does not exist is simply because the larger entities have access to duty-free bonds in this country, but a vendor has to pay his money up front when he passes through the port or the airport.

I am saying that until we sit down and look very carefully at the fact that we are providing an unfair advantage for other entities and are disenfranchising a vendor who may have to bring in \$5 000 in fruits and vegetables but has to pay all of his duty up front whereas another individual has a right in Barbados to go and put it in a duty-free bond and only pay duty on that particular item when it is purchased, we are missing the boat in Barbados and we will never be able to get vending develop in the ways that we are thinking of.

Most of these facilities become derelict within a matter of a year-and-a-half to a two-year span, that has been my observation, because the rental charges for most of these vendor stalls are too high. If one speaks to most of these vendors who ply their trades in most of these markets, one

would recognise that if they earn \$100 per week or \$400 per month they have to spend at least a quarter or more of it paying rent. When you speak to them with respect to the monies they have to pay for their licence, they have nothing left to carry home to their children, so I do not know what it is that the Honourable Member for St. James Central is talking about when he talks about bringing them into the mainstream of economic development in Barbados. That has never happened in Barbados and I cannot see how it is going to happen under this particular dispensation at this time.

If we are serious about developing vendors in Barbados, we should subdivide their capacities into two areas, those that whether they are importing the produce or whether that are growing the produce in Barbados. If you are growing the produce in Barbados the way you are dealt with in terms of having access to Government entities purchase your produce from you should be very different from if you are importing those produce and selling them.

If this Government claims that they are so interested in the development of vendors in Barbados who are selling cucumbers, yams and eddoes, I cannot see any good reason why these individuals could not be given some quota system to supply the Queen Elizabeth Hospital with vegetables. There must be opportunities to move at a greater pace in determining the policy as it relates to vending, along with some functions, in a manner that is similar to what obtains in cities elsewhere as it relates to outdoor vending.
3.10 p.m.

Sir, that work got started when I was Minister of Agriculture and I would encourage them to bring it to a conclusion very quickly because there must be opportunities being created for everyone who has an interest in vending but it must be done in a very organised and structured way that no vendors would be seen as running afoul of the law when plying their trades and when generating incomes to look after themselves and their families.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I would say that the record of this Government in respect of the small business class is a proud one. We have taken on board the small vending class. We know that they play a very important role in this economy and we would continue to support them via training, finance, and ensuring that the legislation is flexible enough so as to allow them the proper enabling environment to function. Sir, also very importantly, we will support the vending class via the production of the comprehensive policy engaged in Barbados.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. I want to start off by saying that I do not believe that any member of the Democratic Labour Party has a fundamental problem with the provision of vending facilities in Barbados.

I believe very strongly that it is and has always been the policy of the Democratic Labour Party to allow for the development of individuals of all walks of life, those individuals who are not blessed with the capacities to attain tertiary education and specifically, those individuals who have had to work in the area of agriculture and other small business activities where they can sell to Barbadians in general.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member might be innocently or otherwise misleading the House but it is to my certain knowledge that Government institutions, in fact, procure vegetables from small vendors in this country. I can speak about the ones under my Ministry, for example, the Glendairy Prison. I know it is being done at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and at the School Meals Programme, so that they do, in fact, purchase from small vendors.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member might be a bit innocent at this stage, and therefore, I would not want him to continue to mislead the House.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I would want to suggest, and would hold very firmly to the statement that there is a difference between the size of the vending to which they are referring. I do not believe that 60 per cent of agricultural products in Barbados is sold by vendors located at Deacons Road or anywhere in St. Philip West. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East can bring to this Honourable House one vendor who sells alongside the road, who supplies any hotel or the School Meals Department, then I would rest my case.

Mr. Speaker, my interest in this debate is that I do not believe there is any strategy that has been developed by this administration that looks at developing a plan for the integration of vending in any serious way, into any economic activity in Barbados. Sir, it is all talk and I do not believe that Government can bring any such structured plan in writing or otherwise demonstrate that what I am saying is not accurate.

Mr. Speaker, I would only want to ask the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, why Gemswick, why not Six Roads for the establishment for this new vending market? If Six Roads is supposed to be the hub of activities...

Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of elucidation. I do not know if the Honourable Member for St. Philip West dozed for a couple of minutes but I was very explicit and said two areas in St. Philip were identified and were contained in the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto. At page 42 of the Manifesto, it said "we will continue the market utilisation programme by constructing vending facilities at Six Roads, Redman's Village, Jackman, Gemswick."

Sir, we have identify what is going to be established at Six Roads, would complement what is already there. We would be putting a craft market at Six Roads, whereas at Gemswick, we would establish a public park, which would create opportunities for small business persons in those areas, who have already contacted me about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, you have made your point.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I do not sleep with my eyes open. Sir, I would categorically suggest to the Honourable Member that vending is successful where there is a market. I would suggest one of the reasons why one might be very careful about expanding the concept of decentralisation of markets in Barbados and why it is a necessary foolhardy concept if it is extended to its maximum, is that the numbers are in Bridgetown, people go there daily. The majority of the kiosks have failed in Barbados simply because they do not have the traffic to support them. If the decentralising concept of the markets continues and they are not in areas where there are quite a number of persons, it would be a fundamental mistake and is prone to fail.

How many kiosks in Bridgetown have been closed within the last ten years? How many vendors have left Bridgetown within the last five years? Sir, I can tell you how many have left Six Roads and the other areas of St. Philip.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, a number of concerns have arisen out of the comments of Honourable Members during the course of the debate but one of the most glaring is perhaps the comparison between the approach of the Government and the Opposition.
3.20 p.m.

At page 42 of the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto we commit to continuing the market decentralisation programme by constructing vending facilities at Six Cross Roads, Redman's Village, Belleplaine, Bathsheba, Jackson, Crab Hill, Gemswick and Gall Hill in St. John. Sir, within roughly eight weeks of election and within six weeks of the House being reopened, I come to Parliament as a Member of this Government in pursuit of our Manifesto's commitment made to the people of these particular areas. Within that same time frame the Honourable Member for St. Lucy comes to the House in repudiation of his own Party's Manifesto and this is consistent with him refusing to support the Honourable Member for St. John on the matter of the Public Accounts Committee.

Sir, I must confess, like the majority of Barbadians, that I read the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party but

that I did not pay much attention to it and it is now clear to me that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy did not read it at all because, had he done so, he would not have so strongly repudiated his own Party's approach to vending in Barbados.

At page 51 of the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto the Honourable Members on the Other Side said that vendors would be able to sell but not just anywhere and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy was saying that the vendors should be able to sell anywhere and that the idea for having a fixed place for vending is foolishness. It goes on to say that it will provide more markets and more designated areas for selling and this is exactly what the Barbados Labour Party is now doing.

Sir, it is clear that other Honourable Members on That Side, even if not the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, accept the approach of the Barbados Labour Party of bringing this Bill to the House today. Sir, it is also clear that there continues to be a big divide within the Democratic Labour Party and they are going to have to address the issue because if this is happening on a small matter on the location of vending facilities, I do not know what will happen when it comes to a major issue.

Sir, on This Side today we heard several members spoke but particular the Honourable Member St. Michael North East and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South spoke about the economic and social philosophy governing our establishment of vending facilities. It is no accident that over the course of nine years at thirteen locations all over Barbados ranging from urban to rural Barbados, the Barbados Labour Party has establishment vending facilities for micro-enterprises and for up-and-coming entrepreneurs.

Sir, I want to return to the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy because in speaking and supporting only itinerant vending, the reality is that in that statement what the Honourable Member for St. Lucy was espousing today, militates against the cultural and historical experience of Barbadians. It has been part of our pattern of vending that people have a site which is theirs, whether a location in the market or on a street. It is not roving around that allows you to get business because no one would know where to find you and it is by establishing yourself in a particular location that people get to know you are there.

I know, for instance, Sir, that a man at Hothersal Turning sells wonderful brown nuts the way I like them so when I want dark-brown nuts, I go there. On the bridge there is a man who sells wonderful fruit and if I want a particular type of fruit, I go there. Sir, this is how people build up a location. Sir, they are not itinerant vendors but they operate from particular and specified locations over time. Sir, in his

enthusiasm to criticise us, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy rejected what has been our cultural and historical experience.

Sir, that is not to say that there is no room for itinerant vending because there are persons who go around communities and sell vegetables, fish, food and so on but there are other persons who prefer to be in a fixed location.

It is significant that under the Ministry of Agriculture, the entity charged with the development of markets, over a nine-year period was able to develop almost one market a year of varying sizes at particular locations in urban and rural Barbados thereby providing economic activity for a large number of persons which will benefit families.

What is also significant about this, Sir, is not only the opportunity available to the individual but the fact that the presence of these facilities often transform communities as there was a time in Barbados if you wanted goods of a particular ilk, you had to travel a far way from home because there was not a place in your community you could go.

When the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke about vending not being successful at the Redman's Village corner, it suggested to me that even though he might be well-rooted in St. Lucy, that outside of St. Lucy he is not familiar with what is happening in Barbados because Redman's Village corner is an established vending site for coconut vendors and for people who sell food and, the people who sell from there already have an established clientele. In fact, I would argue that with the upgrading of the facilities, benches and proper sanitary facilities for the vendors, more people will be inclined, not only to sell from that location but to visit that location.

3.40 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, one has to see the development of these markets and community facilities how they are referred to in the Barbados Labour Party's document, "Barbados Renewed". Sir, in this document you would see that street lights have been installed and other facilities have been developed in rural Barbados. There were 5 658 lights installed in Barbados and a \$40 million concrete road project in addition to other asphalt roads were completed.

Sir, I want to refer to the comment made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West in respect of the economic opportunities provided by these types of facilities. I would wish to remind the Honourable Member that approximately 980 entrepreneurs have been provided with training at 13 locations across rural Barbados. Over

the course of the last five years, 505 loans totalling \$4 148 906.76 were lent to people specifically for people to take part in micro-enterprises and to establish micro-enterprises, at interest rates of between 4 and 6 per cent, which are far below the market standard and the commercial rate. Sir, these loans did not go to large businesses. These loans went to small businesses. These loans went to the salt of the earth Barbadians. The person who did not want to come to Bridgetown and establish a business but wanted to be able to sell something from his home by building an extra kitchen to operate as a caterer in their community. Some people wanted to establish businesses by raising and selling chickens from their homes.

Sir, I admit that while there are some bureaucratic difficulties in accessing the funding which the Government at its policy level has conceived, it would be dishonest of me if I were to say that everybody who wanted to obtain a loan has been able to access one. Sir, it is not the Government that seeks to put impediments in the way. It is the bureaucrats who feel that they do not have to deliver on the policy in the way that it was conceived. It is the intention of the Government for every individual who wants to establish a micro-enterprise, to be able to do so and to be able to have the funding at concessionary rates to do exactly that.

Sir, you will recall, during the last term a number of meetings were held with the Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) and a committee was set with some of the people who were seeking to access funding to establish mechanism to make sure that bureaucratic barriers were broken down and that quicker access to the funding could be allowed. While it is true that some people have experienced difficulty, both at the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, there has been at least \$20 million in loans made available specifically for micro-enterprises in Barbados. Sir, you can see the results of these micro-enterprises throughout Barbados where varying kinds of businesses are set up.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East rose on a point of order and made the point that at the level of policy the Government sought to make sure that where Government is procuring agricultural produce, whether vegetable, milk or meat, that at least 60 per cent has to come from the small producers.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West said that the man vending in a booth does not supply that amount of produce. He cannot say that because the truth is, a man selling in a vending booth may have two objectives.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I know that some of them only want to have that particular type of enterprise. We must not fool ourselves that because it is a physically small operation that these people are not making a lot of money. The people who sell fish in Oistins will tell you how much money they make. A lot of them bring home more money than professionals make. Sir, they pay very little taxes and their expenses are very little. Mr. Speaker, the notion that these people are not making money is false. A lot of them are making as much money as the Honourable Member in his capacity as a Member of Parliament.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, the notion that they are not doing well is false. Some of these people do not necessarily have the desire to be bigger because the business is doing well, set in that particular context.

However, they are some of them whose operations, as we see are only part of a general entrepreneurial activity. Therefore, when you see a woman selling fish at night, the reality is that could very well be a family enterprise and her son is working the fishing boats during the daytime. In addition to that, some of the fish is being sold to the School Meals Department, at Oistins and Bridgetown.

Therefore, when you see someone operating as a small vendor alongside the road or from a kiosk, do not believe that person is poor and that things are hard with him and he cannot pay his bills. We must not delude ourselves that these are mini-enterprises or hand to mouth enterprises. A lot of these people do have capital and the reality is, these people turn over their capital to other activities that are highly profit generating.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, when a person starts by frying fish and owns a fishing boat and her son can operate the boat, she can then sell fish to large enterprises, including supermarkets, there is nothing small about that operation. Sir, that enterprise has now become mainstream economic activity and we cannot tell ourselves that there are no small businesses or people operating from vendors' kiosks or facilities of that type, who are not contributing significantly to mainstream economic activity in Barbados. Sir, insofar as we are seeking to do so, it is either self-delusionary or misleading. It may simply be misleading out of ignorance.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, not only have communities and vending enterprises been built by the

market, at the level of the National Conservation Commission, we have also sought to ensure that vending opportunities exist on beaches all over Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, at Accra Beach, before the end of the last term, I was able to...

Mr. SPEAKER: Members, please stick to the Bill before the House. There is too much crosstalk. I have to hear and Other Members must hear, please. Honourable Member continue, please.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I was making the point that at Accra there is a slew of vending facilities and they are successful and well-patronised. We have observed a problem at Accra beach. The problem is, every vendor sells the same thing.

Sir, if you have a group of tourists ready as your purchasers at your location and there are ten vending booths and everybody sells the same thing, your sales cannot be high. There is no single individual who has decided that at his/her facility he/she should sell local craft, paintings, pottery and indigenous products. Everybody sells beach wraps and tee-shirts and little dresses made from tie-dye. So that if there are 50 people on the beach, the chances are, you are going to buy from the first person you get to, or you will walk up and down.
3.50 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: If you are a man, you will buy from the first person you get to and if you are a woman, you would walk up and down and look at all, and then make a decision from whom to buy, because that is what makes the difference how men and women shop.

However, if you are on the beach with money and you come to a vending stall and somebody has an attractive tee-shirt and you are looking for a gift to take back, you will buy the tee-shirt. If the person next to them has pottery, you may not have intended to spend any more money, but if you see a nice pottery ashtray or ornament, you may say, hey, this may make a nice gift for a friend and you would buy it. But when you walk next door and see exactly the same tee-shirt that you have just seen at the stall from which you have come, you are not going to buy anymore. I have tried to explain to the vendors that they need to diversify the range of products that they are selling at these kiosks to make them more attractive to the potential clientele.

Sir, these are some of the problems, therefore, when the Honourable Member for St. Philip West speaks about not

making money, you have to look at the particular locations and see what may be the reasons. I agree that they may be one or two of the facilities that did not go into an ideal location, but by and large, the facilities have been well located. The reality is that there is a long list of people applying for space at all the markets in Barbados, no matter how large the size of the facility, there are still more applicants than there is space to accommodate. The Government has to be commended for its attempts to regularise vending.

Sir, there was a time when itinerant workers, whether they were taxi drivers or minibus operators who were affected by this, or just vendors, who always had to sell without having the dignity of bathroom facilities.

The Government has sought to say to vendors that we neither want to stigmatise nor criminalise you. We want to bring you into an environment where you can ply your trade with protection from the elements. When there is hot sun, you do not have to get burnt and when it is rainy season, you do not have to get wet or sit with an umbrella over your head. We can put you in proper shelter, give you proper washroom facilities and give you an established place of sale, so that your clientele can identify with you at that location.

I think that the Government must be commended for seeking to put a regime in place that not only seeks to transform economic opportunities for individuals, but for communities and to give people an environment in which they can sell, of which they can be proud. The face of vending is going to continue to change. I agree that we will continue to have itinerant vendors, particularly those who sell food. At the same time, I strongly support the continuation of the efforts, by Government, through agencies, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Rural Development Commission (RDC), the Urban Development Commission (UDC) and the National Conservation Commission (NCC).

Sir, through the NCC, we have installed new vendors' kiosks and a new beach facility at Worthing. We must continue, island wide, with this programme which provides opportunities for all Barbadians but, particularly, for those in the lower economic classes. This gives them, not only proper opportunities to earn, but a change to be spared the harshness of the elements and to have access to proper facilities, and to create a business place.

Sir, we are creating a business place for them to operate from, and I believe that if these seeds are planted, that many of these vendors will get into larger enterprises. They will divest from these initial investment into other opportunities and have new businesses created by partnering with others.

Sir, I look forward to continuing to give support to initiatives of this sort, and I am very please so soon after the election to have this before the House. I know that I would deeply upset the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, but I can promise to bring many more acquisitions of this type to create opportunities for the small black man that he purports to represent.

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

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

ORDER NO. 5 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING
IN THE BARBADOS TOURISM INVESTMENT INC. OF
THE PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT LOWER
BAY STREET AND THE PIERHEAD
BRIDGETOWN, ST. MICHAEL TO
BE USED IN THE PIERHEAD
DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Government has embarked on a programme of the rehabilitation and redevelopment of Bridgetown, including its greening and the Resolution is seeking the approval of the House of the vesting of 4 824 square metres, roughly 42 000 square feet of roadway situate at Farnells Alley, Cavans Lane, Pierhead, and part of the Wharf Road to vest this in the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTII) which has been an engine for tourism development and diversification of the tourism product.

The vesting of these abandoned roads at the Pierhead, in the BTII is necessary to facilitate the expansion of the Pierhead Development Project, particularly on the northern side. You are aware, Sir, that part of the Wharf and new Boardwalk has already been constructed with periodic lighting as part of the general beautification effort.

We are vesting in the BTII, rather than central Government, because the BTII will have equity, Sir, in the Pierhead Development Project and part of these roadways which are being vested in them today will be part of the BTII's equity in the whole Pierhead Development Project.

These, together with facilities at the Dry Dock, as you are aware, Sir, that there will be a rehabilitation of the old Screw Dock which I am advised is the only one of its kind left in the world, and the whole area will become a historical exhibition site. Outside of a historical exhibition site, Sir, there will be at that location, new malls, shops, upmarket housing with views across the Carlisle Bay, hotel and tourism facilities and I think, new facilities as well, for the Barbados Defence Force.

Sir, the whole of that south western tip of Bridgetown will be completely redeveloped and you have already seen the work that we have started in respect of the transformation of Bridgetown, the pedestrianisation of Swan Street, the greening of Broad Street, by putting plants at both Broad Street and Swan Street by putting plants at both locations, the upgrading of the Lower Green Bus Stand and the Fairchild Street market which is about to start and the greening of what was the old Lower Green which had become all hard stand, run-down and dingy. So there will be a whole transformation of Bridgetown for which there are several stakeholders, corporate stakeholders in private sector Barbados, stakeholders in Government and in Government owned entities.

4.00 p.m.

The Attorney General has certified that the Resolution is in order for submission to the Cabinet. We are acting in accordance with Section 5 of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225 and I am seeking parliamentary approval as is required.

I draw attention to the fact that there will be a maritime museum at the particular location. Sir, I am asking the House to note that this Resolution is intended for the redevelopment of Bridgetown to facilitate the expansion of the Pierhead Development Project.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, in this day and age one would have to support this particular Resolution. One must also consider that anything which deals with the increase capacity of Barbados is very vital at this time.

We as a people and as parliamentarians cannot afford to support one venture against other ventures. We have to appreciate that this is a new part of our tourism plant. We also have to expect that in the same way we give support to this one that we will have to do everything in our power to make sure that no sector of our tourism industry is interfered with or depleted.

I know that statement alone even without hearing anything more would cause the Honourable Member for St. Philip South to support that statement. One would have thought that instead of the speech coming from me, it would have come from him because he would have recognised the importance of a hotel plant in his constituency especially when that hotel plant speaks to the main heritage tourism of Barbados. That is why This Side have supported the Pierhead Development Project because we understand the importance of building capacity. However, in building this

capacity, we are not going to allow the Government to decrease capacity in another sector that has stand the test already.

We are saying that wherever there are hotel plants that we have to keep them in operation especially at this critical time in our tourism development. It is rather interesting to note that the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated can form a relationship with a company in Barbados and companies outside of Barbados but cannot understand the importance of forming that same relationship with other locations in Barbados.

One would have expected the Honourable Member for St. Philip South to put forward this argument on behalf of his constituents who work there and also for the corporate citizens who locate their businesses in that particular location. I hope that he would know how to support me on this particular matter. Therefore, I have nothing further to say on this particular matter.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to lend my support to this very important Resolution. However, I am constantly amazed at how the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has developed this unique skill to be constantly incoherent in everything he says in this Chamber because up to now I cannot really understand anything that he has said in relation to this particular Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution speaks to a very important part of Barbados' tourism development. Because of the unique challenges that the industry now faces and of where Barbados is positioned within its make-up internationally in terms of its appeal to markets, we must constantly be seeking to distinguish ourselves very clearly from all of the other product offerings within the region. We have been doing that pretty successfully over time, but Barbados does not want to be in the mass market of tourism development. We are not a mass market destination, we have never been and we never will be.

Sir, for example, this Administration does not desire casino gambling in Barbados, that is not our appeal. We have pitched ourselves at middle to higher level type of tourism for which we make no excuses in Barbados.

In addition to that what is important is the input cost to our industry. Because of some elements that we cannot easily control, for example, the issue of labour, labour cost and related costing which are the highest components of any tourism enterprise in Barbados, we are actually at times paying developed countries wages within the tourism sector. This means that we have moved into a totally different realm in terms of where our tourism product is positioned. Sir, because of that, we have got to do two things. We have to

constantly look at diversifying our product and we have to constantly seek to diversify our markets in terms of where we derive our tourists.

This particular initiative and the issue of the Pierhead Development Project and what is going to be done to Bridgetown adds another very important element to our tourism make-up. We already know that when you start talking about marinas and yachts that you are appealing to a very select set of people globally who, in other words, have money. At the end of the day, the people we must attract to Barbados in the future must be the people who can help us to pay our bills.

Sir, this particular project is seeking to create that next level of tourism development for Barbados. Tourism would be called upon, like at no other time in the past, to fund the prosperity of Barbados into the future. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy likes to refer to globalisation. He has called all of these big terms that he does not understand anything about...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, Honourable Member, there is no need for that, please. You must be aware of the rules, you would have to withdraw that, please.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: I respectfully withdraw that, Sir.

The issue is that because of the new global trading arrangements, tourism is going to be called upon to fund our prosperity like never in the past. A number of the other traditional areas of earning for Barbados are coming under severe pressure and some of them may be non-existent in the next two decades. However, tourism in terms of the lead service industry will continue to fund our prosperity and will be called upon to do even more than it has done in the past. To be able to do that effectively given all the other challenges that we now face, airline challenges, safety and security challenges, we would have to find a brand of tourism that distinguishes us much from the rest of the region, so enterprises and initiatives like this need to be coming even more fast and furious to Barbados.

This particular issue of the marina for Barbados will allow us to leverage our geographical location as the first point across the Atlantic for seafarers, boatmen and yachtsmen to come to Barbados. In addition, Sir, the area we are speaking about has maybe one of the best beaches, if not the best beach in Barbados. Sir, along that Bay Street strip, there were warehouses, a police station, car dealerships, *et cetera*, but that area is prime property for tourism development. What this Administration is seeking to do is to create more of a basis, first of all, for people to invest in that part of Bridgetown and more effectively, to market that to the rest of the world.

4.10 p.m.

Sir, this particular initiative becomes strategically important to Barbados' future, therefore, it is important that we lend support to initiatives like these. This is the type of initiative that is going to change the face of tourism in Barbados for the future. There are a number of other initiatives which I would have an opportunity to speak to in the future such as not only considering the issue of the traditional beach areas in Barbados but what could be done through inland or community tourism; what could be done through the cultural, heritage or sports tourism, retirement homes, spas, *et cetera*.

Sir, this initiative seeks to create a basis for that diversification that Barbados so much needs at this time. I am, therefore, pleased to add my support, which would not only help tourism but help to bring Bridgetown, a city now celebrating its 375th anniversary, even more alive. It is a city which we all love but we need to bring more activities into and this would help to complete the city. With those words, I lend my endorsement to this Resolution.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, one of the things that particularly attracts me to this development is the fact that there would be housing, as part of it, even though it would be up-market housing. I do not know what the price of the units would be.

Sir, as part of growing up in the city, it had a far larger number of residences than it does today and along Baxters Road, Roebuck Street, Reed Street and other areas, there were a number of properties where businesses were carried on on the ground floor and families lived on the top floor. One could have seen at Baxters Road but particularly at Roebuck Street, beautiful architectural details in the old balconies and verandas and the fret-work in the wood that was part of the skills of the carpenters of that era.

I believe that, as a matter of deliberate policy, and certainly an initiative to which I am going to pursue, we have to ensure that we have mixed housing in the city again. There will always be some component of low income housing because in cities all over the world, one does find low income housing. There is also room in the city for middle income housing or upper income and also town houses, *et cetera*, and Bridgetown, in my view, has to be a living city.

In my view, it is not desirable to have a city where as soon as businesses close for the evening, people only use it as a transit point for vehicles and pedestrians to traverse. There has to be commercial activities that go beyond 4.30 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. There has to be social and recreational activities that go beyond those hours and there has to be residential properties because once there are residences, persons would have reasons to be in town after businesses close.

Therefore, as part of the redevelopment of Bridgetown, a number of bandstands and places for cultural activities where persons could relax, have a drink or listen to music is all planned. Therefore, what we are seeing here today is only one component of the commercial activity which would take place but there are other social, cultural and residential plans as part of the Bridgetown Rehabilitation Programme.

As you are aware, Sir, some of the lands at the Pierhead are owned by the Barbados Shipping and Trading (BS&T) Group of Companies and, therefore the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated (BTII) will partner with the Barbados Shipping and Trading (BS&T) Group of Companies in the development of that project.

With these remarks, I beg that the Resolution do now pass.

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY seconded by Hon. A. P. WOOD, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply. Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is now in Committee of Supply.

ORDER NO. 6 – RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$5 209 992 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2003-2004 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 1, 2003-2004

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to withdraw the Schedule that was previously circulated and to indicate to you that a new one has been circulated late yesterday afternoon.

HEAD 14 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE – \$3 100 000

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Chairman, this matter relates to the borrowing of EC\$4.1 million as part of the LIAT's loan of which we previously spoke in this Chamber. I would like to remind the House that this makes up part of

the \$23.1 million that was pledged to LIAT in April, 2003, by the four heads of government. Our portion of that \$23.1 million was to provide EC\$3 million, which we provided.

In addition, the \$12.5 million that was put up as a loan by the Trinidad and Tobago Government was supposed to have been drawn down by a number of countries within the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. They did not, within the window of opportunity, state that they were going to take up the loan and, therefore, it was left to the three Governments, Antigua and Barbuda, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Barbados, to borrow this \$4.167 million. That amount translates to BDS\$3.1 million and we are seeking Parliament's permission to draw down this portion of BDS\$3.1 million in terms of the loans to come from Trinidad and Tobago.

4.20 p.m.

With those words I ask that Head 14 stand part.

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

HEAD 15 – CABINET OFFICE – \$2,109,992

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman the amount of money being requested of this Committee is to be able to accommodate expenditure incurred as a result of the determination of the people of this country in respect of the recent elections. The sum requested is \$100 000 in relation to provisions of arrangements post elections and \$2 009 992 is required to supplement the amount which was provided of \$165 520 to cover the cost of conducting the recently held General Elections in Barbados.

These sums are broken down in respect of the payment of \$1.149 million for election officers, \$65 000 for police and island constables, \$139 000 for transport and traveling, \$240 000 for clerical assistance, \$69 000 for rental of buildings, \$137 000 for publication of notices as required under the electoral legislation. There were sundry other expenses also, coming to a total of \$2 009 992, a sum that I believe in the context of \$2.4 billion budget is a small amount to be paid every five years to preserving the democracy we have and giving people the right to exercise their choice.

I believe this is a non-contentious matter because it is the spending of this money that has resulted in the current composition of this Parliament today.

With those few words, I respectfully beg that Head 15 stand part.

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Money Resolution to Mr. SPEAKER and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Resolution was read a second and third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 2 – FINAL APPROPRIATION (2002-2003) BILL, 2003

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this is one of the matters required in the context of our parliamentary procedure and laws at the end of the financial year. What we just debated was in respect of the supplementary form to the Schedule of the Act but, having amended the Schedule over a period of time, we must now ensure that the amendment to the substantive Act, which is the Appropriation Act, and hence we are now engaged in the exercise of bringing to book the Final Appropriation Act for the last financial year 2002-2003. It is customary that this be taken without debate but I have used this opportunity to appraise new Members of the tradition of the Chamber.

With those few words, I beg to move that the Final Appropriation (2002-2003) Bill, 2003 be read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 4 were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill to Mr. SPEAKER and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Final Appropriation (2002-2003) Bill, 2003.
4.30 p.m.

ORDER NO. 7 – THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT
COMMISSION (AMENDMENT AND
VALIDATION) BILL, 2003

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce this Bill before the Chamber largely because the nature of the amendments being requested of this Chamber is more technical and require the resolution of matters which should have been performed earlier. It is referred to as the Urban Development Commission Validation Bill because when the original Chapter 241 was passed, the Urban Development Commission Act, it referred to the Minister, simply as the Minister of Housing. Sir, the circumstances of the appointment of the last parliamentary term were such that it was the Minister of Social Transformation and not the Minister of Housing who had the responsibility for urban renewal and, hence, also the statutory responsibility for Urban Development Commission.

Therefore, this is a matter that is not unknown to this Chamber and we, therefore, seek to make wrong things right by ensuring that we validate any actions which the law would have required to be taken by the Minister, as such that there is now a perfect compliance with the law and that the mischief which would have been created by the creation of a different ministry, to have the responsibility for the Urban Development Commission, can be removed. Mr. Speaker, what is clear, is that in Section 2 of the Bill, we have completely deleted the definition of minister, as such that no future Cabinet should be bound and have those difficulties again in how they designate the various responsibilities under the various portfolios.

Sir, we are also seeking in this Bill to appropriately reflect what, in my view, the process of urban renewal is about. Therefore, we are taking the opportunity to get rid of the use of the words slum clearance and to speak about redevelopment in its proper sense. I believe that it is a term that is more befitting of our times, philosophy and our perspective and, therefore, the legislation seeks to remove the words “slum-clearance” and refer specifically only to the word of “redevelopment”.

Sir, Clause 5 of the Bill, seeks to deal with the issue that where the Commissioner is satisfied that housing conditions in an urban area are dangerous or injurious or likely to be so to the health and welfare of inhabitants because of the state of the dwelling houses or the bad arrangement. We would have seen recently the most unfortunate fire off Martindales Road, and there has been a lot of haphazard development throughout the parish of St. Michael. We are trying to correct, for future generations, that type of haphazard development and to minimise the chances of it causing greater injury to the persons who are forced to live in these areas. Sir, those persons who are

forced to live there, their conditions can be remedied by the Commission going into those areas and causing the area to be redefined for redevelopment in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

Mr. Speaker, we are also seeking to amend the schedule to deal with the composition of the Board and to ensure that the Commission shall now comprise a Chairman, a Deputy Chairman, the Chief Town Planner and the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry which is responsible for urban development. Sir, we are now correcting the composition of the Board to ensure that we do not limit it by referring to any specific ministry but simply the ministry responsible for urban planning. In addition, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing or his nominee and seven other members. Sir, the legislation as is, provides for five members but we are ensuring that we can add two other members to that Commission so that there is a broader range of skills available to the persons responsible for the management of the corporation, to be able to effectively carry out the mandate and policy of the Government.

Finally, the Bill seeks to validate the Act, as I indicated in my opening statements, and to ensure that we can now put this matter to rest in a way that is not compounded by the vacuum that would have existed over the past few years. I regret that the matter has taken as long as this to be resolved but I do believe that it was not brought to the attention of the appropriate officers until sometime late in the last parliamentary term and hence, it is here today. Sir, it was not a case of wilful defiance but one that took place without reference to what the legislation would have specifically stated.

Sir, in those circumstances, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 10 were called and passed.
4.40 p.m.

Clause 11 was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill without amendment, in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Urban Development Commission (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2003.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government's Business for today's Sitting and, indeed, it is intended at this stage that the House should rise for its Summer break.

Members of Parliament, as well as those servicing Parliament in both the management, administrative, clerical and security areas have all had a very harrowing first seven months of this year.

In those circumstances, Mr. Speaker, it is determined that we take the full Summer recess this year of two months and that we should return ready to do work on Tuesday, October 7, 2003, the first Tuesday of October, taking the traditional two months of Summer. We anticipate, Sir, at that stage, that we will have a packed and aggressive legislative agenda, demanding of the Honourable Members their complete attention and focus.

I want to use this opportunity to thank all of the persons working in Parliament, in particular, the staff of Parliament and also those who have responsibility for guarding Parliament, who are very often not remembered, the police and the security guards.

I want to thank the various caterers, because we have been in a period of transition, and until the matters are appropriately resolved by the Management Commission, it means that we have had to rely on a more *ad hoc* arrangement in the circumstances.

With those few words, Sir, I beg to move that this Sitting be now adjourned to Tuesday, October 7, 2003 and wish all Honourable Members and persons serving Parliament, a very restful and happy holiday. Just to remind you that we will be resuming, as has been the case since the opening of this Parliament at 10 o'clock in the morning.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Before I move the adjournment, just let me thank Honourable Members once again for their cooperation and to thank the members of the staff and to say, on behalf of the staff of Parliament how pleasing it was to serve, and we look forward to everybody having a good rest.

The question that this Honourable House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 7, 2003 at 10 o'clock was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
4.44 p.m.

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