
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 24, 2003

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, June 24, 2003.

PRESENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of

Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

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

Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, M.B., B.S. (Edin.) F.R.C.S., J.P. (Minister of Health)

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

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

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

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

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.)

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

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

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

Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of the proceedings of the Honourable House of Assembly for Tuesday, June 17, 2003, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR HIS SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me inform you that this Session is being recorded by the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) television. We started

this practice in the last Session. It is not a direct broadcast. The reason for this is that the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, in their news, will use extracts of the session. The necessary permission was sought and was given for them to do this.

I am also announcing to this Honourable House that I am in receipt from the Accountant-General of the Accounts and Statements for the month of March, 2003.

PAPERS

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

The Insurance (Catastrophe Reserves) Fund (Amendment) Regulations, 2003.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Occupational Pension Benefits Bill, 2003 be read a first time

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

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: 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. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, I beg to second that.

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

ORDER NO. 1 – FIRST READING OF THE LIAT (1974) LIMITED GUARANTEE OF INTEREST BILL, 2003

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, this particular legislation speaks to the issue of guarantee of interest on a bond issue, issued by LIAT (1974) Limited, in which the Government of Barbados agreed to link its interest guarantee to the total shareholding, along with other member Governments, giving the guarantee of 9.4 per cent of US\$16 462.92 per month. The portion of our guarantee for this bond that was issued in 2001 to keep LIAT (1974) Limited viable during a very difficult period.

Sir, this Bill allows the Honourable House to consider issues not only relating to this particular guarantee but it also gives us the opportunity to speak broadly to some of the other issues relating to LIAT and its functioning. It also gives us the opportunity to speak to issues relating to civil aviation within the region and the viability of airline services throughout this region, particularly for tourism reasons, which has been the lifeblood of many of the territories in the Eastern Caribbean and wider Caribbean.

Sir, I propose to speak to the guarantee of the payment of this interest and to the history of LIAT, the concept of its operational rationalisation period throughout the region; its capitalisation efforts since 2002 and the importance of LIAT to Barbados and its economic fortunes; the regional efforts to rationalise air services and the importance of regional air travel to our own economic fortunes as it relates to the rest of the region.

Sir, those efforts can be summed up in looking at how air services in the region are being used to strengthen our tourism to the rest of the region and the world. It also looks at the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and communication, particularly in the air transport and how it widely influences the regional integration movement.

Sir, the Government of Barbados agreed in 2002 to guarantee a portion of the interest on a bond that was issued in the amount of EC\$27.7 million which was through the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, now FirstCaribbean Bank. Barbados agreed to guarantee 14 per cent of the interest on the bond and not any of the principal. This particular issue has taken some time to come to this stage of resolution today.

Mr. Speaker, the issue with LIAT and the intricate financial dealings must be seriously considered before we can take steps to guarantee this bond which is before this Honourable Chamber. It was necessary for the Government of Barbados to look seriously at LIAT and to link them to the issues relating to air transport in the region.

Sir, obviously, any intent to guarantee the future of LIAT could only be based upon some sensible rationalisation of all air services and to ensure that LIAT was on a viable footing before we continue to spend more money on LIAT.

Mr. Speaker, Government saw a need to continue to assist LIAT financially. The importance of regional airlift over and above the level of control which we must exhibit is important to the economic fortune of Barbados. However, there is also a need to assist LIAT because we saw it as having vibrant and fair competition in the region. Without the existence of LIAT there is only one other small commuter regional air carrier which is linked to international

carriers, Caribbean Star. Sir, if LIAT is allowed to close, apart from the other economic and social repercussions that might come from its closure, one of the interesting things is, the air services in the Eastern Caribbean would literally be left in the hands of only one entity. Therefore, a need for the concept of vibrant and fair competition is also necessary for our own survival, that is why Barbados agreed to go this route in terms of assisting LIAT.

Mr. Speaker, the concept of LIAT creates a platform for further economic development for the region. I believe that most Honourable Members will see that LIAT and air traffic is not only the centre of our tourism fortunes but interregional travel and trading in the region. It is important that we keep this fair and open competition alive.
10.25 a.m.

In addition to that, Sir, LIAT gets approximately 30 per cent of its passengers from the international airlifts that come into Barbados. One of the issues is, Sir, that any closure of LIAT in its immediacy puts international travel in some form of jeopardy.

Sir, approximately 30 per cent to 40 per cent of LIAT's traffic interlink traffic in Barbados. It means that this is being supplied to us, because Barbados is utilised as the largest regional hub in the Eastern Caribbean. It also means that the larger aircraft such as British Airways, American Airlines and all of the other large aircraft on either side of the Atlantic, transport passengers into Barbados, who are then taken on to the Eastern Caribbean.

Therefore, Sir, it is important to note that if there is an immediate closure of LIAT, there is a possibility that you could be looking at a reduction in airlift, from many of the major international carriers. In addition, I believe that many Honourable Members will be of the view that LIAT is not only a provider and a beneficiary to us, in terms of economic fortunes, but there are some social elements that also speak to the issue of an institution as important as LIAT.

Sir, I believe there are some regional institutions which have become part and parcel of our existence that need to be strengthened, particularly, as we look towards creating a better platform for regional integration, and LIAT is one of those institutions.

I also believe that the concept of the University of the West Indies having a regional cricket team, adds a social element to the concept of having a vibrant regional community. The importance of LIAT to that regional community cannot be underestimated or understated.

In addition, the commitment to assist other territories in the region, I believe that Barbados – apart from the fact that our Prime Minister has the lead responsibility for the formation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy – has always been a regional leader in the Eastern Caribbean, in terms of creating a better platform for our socio-economic existence.

One of the issues with LIAT is that it plies a number of routes that may be considered, in strict economic terms, as not the most viable economic routes possible. But one of the things that it is able to do, Sir, it helps to create a basis for any improvement that can come to some of the smaller economies within the Eastern Caribbean. I believe, Sir, this is our obligation, as a leader within this Eastern Caribbean region, and a country which has always been at the forefront of regionalism.

Sir, many of the commentators who claim to be visionaries will see the wisdom in being at the centre of keeping this vibrant Caribbean institution alive, because it also helps our partners in the region. Many of them are suffering at this time because of the difficult economic times. They are not able, very well, to pay the type of economic cost necessary to keep their economies going through the level of communication, particularly, airlift.

Sir, LIAT had a long history of operations, with much of that time fraught with economic difficulties. The issue is that when LIAT was first created, one must be true to say that LIAT was undercapitalised, and this has plagued many of our local institutions from the beginning. I believe, Sir, that caused LIAT to be going from problem to problem and from challenge to challenge.

Sir, unless the governments, which are the leading shareholders in this particular enterprise are willing to take on board, the issue of LIAT recapitalisation in a serious way, I believe that we will continue to see LIAT struggling, day by day, month by month and year by year.

Now, Sir, part of the issue is that in many instances, governments have tried some means of intervention, in terms of being able to create a better basis for the recapitalisation of LIAT. In many instances, where there have been pledges to the institution, many member governments and other entities have not kept their promise. In addition to that, Sir, is the issue of the private sector holding, within this particular entity.

Sir, in many instances, as well, even though Governments are the major shareholders, there are many private sector entities which also have shareholdings in LIAT. They have not assisted, particularly, when LIAT was going through their most difficult period.

Sir, in addition to that and what has happened to world travel after September 11, 2001, you can understand the issues that a small community airline, with a small passenger base to choose from within a small region, can encounter.

I believe, Sir, that when air travel started to decrease after the September 11, 2001 incident, we had already been seeing difficult times within the region with air travel, in terms of economies of scale, and in terms of the pool that we had to choose from to keep this airline vibrant, and other airlines in the Eastern Caribbean and the rest of the region.

Sir, when you consider that the weapons used in the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, were actually aircraft, it meant that for people who are already apprehensive about flying, this has certainly compounded the issue. Subsequently, we saw reduced air traffic and air movement, not only in this region but all across the world. I guess, Sir, when you add those issues and variables to an airline that was already struggling, you can imagine the nature of the problem that LIAT then was facing.

Sir, the most recent attempts have been aimed at privatisation of this airline, but with Governments decreasing their shareholding and looking to get, obviously, more private sector involvement in the airline this, Sir, was not at all forthcoming.

In April 2003, LIAT was faced with eminent closure. The basis of this eminent closure was basically, Sir, a lack of funding to meet payroll, aircraft lease arrangements, aircraft engines, spare parts and issues relating to their inability to service their debt in their home base, which is in Antigua.

In addition, Sir, the crisis was compounded by the issue of low yields, and the fact that they were being faced with less than break-even average fares. Obviously, their average fares were certainly not anywhere what was necessary to be able to meet their obligations.

Sir, LIAT produced a business plan for 2001-2004 which is already in practice. This has seen reductions to the tune of 20 per cent, in terms of their costs. LIAT has actively been working to reduce their costs and to put the airline on a more viable footing.

Sir, efforts will continue for them to reduce these costs and rationalise routes to put them on a much more viable and sound footing, than they have been in the past. The issue is, Sir, that moving, for example, an employee level of over eleven hundred (1 100) employees to the level that they have now come to which is just over five hundred (500) has been a herculean effort on behalf of the airline, but there is still a lot to be done. In addition to the efforts to reduce costs, cut staff, rationalise routes, *et cetera*, the issue of deepening functional cooperation that already exists, between LIAT and

some of the other airlines in the region, particularly, BWIA has been one of the efforts that they have used to be able to rationalise their air service and to reduce the cost. The probability of an economic merger with BWIA was also put on the table, which will see only one airline within the Eastern Caribbean, and the rationalisation of all airlift in the region.

10.35 a.m.

Sir, any effort to rationalise LIAT and its existence or to rationalise air transport in the region cannot only be left to two carriers alone, but must include all of the carriers in the region. There is an immediacy in being able to create a basis for us to rationalise within the Eastern Caribbean and then take it on to a wider regional level.

We also spoke about being able to create a single airline in the Eastern Caribbean. Those initial efforts are down to LIAT and BWIA to create this single entity. This does not mean that we are in any way seeking to eliminate or not cooperate with any of the other airline carriers in the region. We believe that any rationalisation, particularly for the Eastern Caribbean, must also include Caribbean Star and any other airline that wants to be a part of this rationalisation.

In terms of the efforts of LIAT, since September 2000, a writ issue of EC\$25.9 million was made by the shareholders of LIAT. Of that amount, only EC\$6.9 million was actually taken up, therefore, LIAT continues to struggle.

By December of 2001, the debt of \$22.9 million owed by LIAT to regional governments was converted into preference shares. In 2001/2002, EC\$27.7 million was raised by way of a bond issue through CIBC (Barbados) Limited. This is where we speak now today of this guarantee. Eighty-six per cent of that amount was guaranteed by Antigua and Barbuda. The interest was guaranteed by Antigua and Barbuda and St. Lucia in equal parts and 14 per cent was guaranteed by the Government of Barbados.

In November 2002, the shareholder governments were informed by LIAT that it had reached the stage under the new business plan where it needed to be recapitalised. That recapitalisation would have amounted to EC\$110 million which would have included all of the outstanding debts and the outstanding bond as well.

We were also told at the time that EC\$35 million was needed immediately. The governments of the region in trying to raise that amount, received an interim loan of \$10.3 million from the governments of Trinidad and Tobago and Antigua and Barbuda. Trinidad and Tobago lent \$4.3 million and Antigua and Barbuda \$6 million. Letters of Comfort were issued by Antigua and Barbuda

with \$2.1 million, Barbados, \$2.4 million, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, \$1.5 million and St. Kitts and Nevis \$100 000.

In March of 2003, Antigua and Barbuda took EC\$3 million in preference shares. A month later, the four shareholder governments, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, promised \$23.5 million in new equity to keep LIAT going to the end of June 2003. Of that amount, Antigua and Barbuda pledged \$4.8 million, Barbados, \$3 million, Grenada, \$0.3 million and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, \$2.5 million. Trinidad and Tobago put up a loan of EC\$12.5 million which is a five-year loan with no interest which was to be taken up by the member governments of Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis. If these territories did not take up the amount to be able to add up to the \$23.5 million, it was agreed that Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda and St. Vincent and the Grenadines would take up this amount in equal portions which amounted to \$4.1 million.

What happened during this exercise is that when LIAT needed the \$23.5 million to keep it going until the end of June, of the governments that pledged their money, Antigua and Barbuda, \$4.8 million, Barbados, \$3 million, Grenada, \$0.3 million and St. Vincent and the Grenadines \$2.5 million, only Barbados and St. Vincent and the Grenadines paid up the amount they had pledged to LIAT, which put LIAT in a more difficult situation than had been originally envisioned. Sir, this had been the story of LIAT over and over.

Many of the member governments and many of the shareholders pledge these monies to LIAT but these monies were never forthcoming. Even when these monies were forthcoming from many of the member governments, they came so late that LIAT had already committed itself and incurred other debts that it could not get out of. I will speak about the \$23.5 million which we pledged in April of 2003 later.

We had a meeting in Trinidad and Tobago last Sunday that included the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, the Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines who have lead responsibility for air transport within CARICOM, the Deputy Prime Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and myself representing Barbados. At that meeting, we agreed very clearly that the \$23.5 million, if it is paid up, will be able to carry LIAT, not only until the end of June 2003, but down to December 2003. The management of LIAT and their directors believe that if this money is forthcoming, it will be able to take them through to the end of the year. What is important about this particular effort is that LIAT is already showing strong booking patterns throughout the summer of this year.

Any further effort by the Government of Barbados is obviously contingent upon a number of issues being satisfied within LIAT and its future. Firstly, LIAT must continue its efforts at being able to reduce its expenditure and shore up its revenue so as put it on a viable and sound economic footing. Secondly, that the issue of the merger with BWIA continues and becomes a reality. Lastly, that they deepen the process of functional cooperation between themselves and BWIA. All of this was discussed at the meeting which was held in Trinidad and Tobago last Sunday. I will speak to some of the other issues that came out of that meeting later.

Our efforts to date, by the Government of Barbados, linked with the other three major shareholders in LIAT have borne some fruits in LIAT being able to substantially reduce their costs and to put it on a sounder, viable economic footing. Once LIAT is able to get this EC\$23.5 million we are sure that we will see a much more viable operation.

Sir, in addition to all that we have spoken to in terms of LIAT, I intend to speak to some of the other issues relating to the merger of LIAT. The importance of LIAT to Barbados cannot be underestimated, therefore, I think it is important that we continue our efforts to save this particular airline at this time.

The immediate impact of the closure of LIAT to Barbados would obviously see considerable airlift capacity being left very much open. There is no way that the existing carrier, Caribbean Star, can fill the void if LIAT was to go under tomorrow. The interline connections as well, contributes heavy capacity in terms of Barbados airport activity and employment.
10.45 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, when one considers the daily amount of landings of any one aircraft in Barbados, it says a lot about LIAT's importance to Barbados as a hub to our airport and to other economic activities that are a spin-off of LIAT being in Barbados.

As I said, LIAT averages 14 landings per day. It averages 1 724 daily arriving and departing passengers. It is also the primary carrier for connecting passengers in the region. LIAT has a 75 per cent market share in the interregional traffic in the Eastern Caribbean. The market share for the Eastern Caribbean states is 34.7 per cent of Caribbean passengers who pass through Barbados using LIAT. This is carried onto most of the other international airlines that fly into Barbados.

During the period January to June, 2002, LIAT has transported over 302 000 passengers into Barbados, with 150 000 passengers departing. Only 37 000 passengers or 12 per cent of those passengers were leisure passengers.

LIAT now operates ten aircraft per day into Barbados and if it were to close, these ten aircraft obviously would no longer exist. In terms of interline traffic in and out of Barbados, LIAT accounts for 30 per cent. The Barbados interline accounts for approximately 40 per cent of LIAT traffic within the region.

Sir, in terms of employment, LIAT directly employs 45 persons within reservation, management, engineering, the QuikPak Service and the crew. In addition, it accounts for another 54 persons who are not directly employed by LIAT but who would also be affected by its closure. Caribbean Aircraft Handlers employs 210 employees, 40 of whom would be seriously affected and could lose their jobs if there were an immediate closure of the airline. It means that almost 100 persons could easily be affected in terms of becoming unemployed if LIAT were to close.

I believe at this time this would not only have a ripple effect upon the economy but in terms of our economic and other activities, one could understand the type of risks that we would be enduring. Sir, one such issue would be that of regional tourism and international flights that would be coming into Barbados and how this exercise would impact upon that closure.

Sir, in relation to our business in Trinidad and Tobago, what has been determined is that there needs to be the concept of a large regional airline, serving both the north and south of this region. Initially, our efforts must be to conclude a merger between LIAT and BWIA for air services within the Eastern Caribbean.

In April when the Prime Ministers of Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Vincent and the Grenadines and Antigua and Barbuda met in Barbados, there was a technical team put in place which was to report to the wider heads on what should happen with the air services in the region. The technical team met and reported to the committee on Sunday last. What they determined was that:

1. There should be a holding company established initially for both LIAT and BWIA as operating entities.
2. There should only be one airline company in the region.
3. A report done by a technical expert should be made available to the committee of the possibility of deepening the merger and that the two officers of both LIAT and BWIA should continue to work upon deepening the functional co-operation that already exists between the two airlines.

Sir, there was an issue relating to predatory pricing in the region. There is the belief that LIAT has been suffering, apart from issues such as management, overstaffing, *et cetera*, many of the carriers in the region that are in direct competition with LIAT, have practised predatory pricing, that is being able to reduce their fares to that which do not speak to the economic conditions under which they are being plied. One of the things that has resulted from that is that LIAT has been forced to compete, has also been forced to reduce its tariffs, which has even more greatly compounded their problems.

There is another issue of being able to continue to create a Category One status which allows airlines from anywhere in the world that are already cleared by their respective Federal Aviation Authority, to fly into the United States, while declaring that everything regulatory and concerning safety is upright and operating in the best manner.

The Category One status has not yet been obtained by the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States or by Trinidad and Tobago but for any merger between the two airlines to be sensible and viable, one has to agree that what must happen to be able to create an airline with better opportunities is that:

- (a) We must be able to have a Category One status for both the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States and Trinidad and Tobago.
- (b) Independent valuations of LIAT and BWIA are required as a precursor to any concept in being able to put us on a sound economic footing.
- (c) Any new entity must be laid out and must be financially viable.
- (d) A determination must be made on the type of airline structure to be used, as well as the route to be flown.
- (e) The type of equipment to be used.
- (f) Where any government in the Southern Caribbean requires an economical route to be flown, government must pay for that effort.
- (g) The new company should seek to negotiate labour contracts.
- (h) Salaries should be on the basis of productivity.
- (i) Every effort should be made to have the debt which is owed by LIAT to the Canadian Government be written off.

- (j) Any other strategic alliance that LIAT or BWIA could put on the table should also be encouraged.

There is one larger airline that has already expressed interest in being able to purchase LIAT or to be part of any merger between LIAT and BWIA, a decision is to be taken on which government should take over the airlines and/or seek to have a strategic partner.

Sir, the meeting in Trinidad and Tobago last Sunday has taken note of the technical committee's progress and has agreed that a holding company, which would hold shares in both LIAT and BWIA in their restructured form, should be incorporated in Trinidad and Tobago within 14 days.

This is contingent that they move ahead as swiftly as possible with showing some level of viability between now and the end of the year and that:

- (a) The name of the company would be Caribbean Airlines (Holdings) Limited, subject to the approval of the Registrar of Companies of Trinidad and Tobago.
- (b) The technical coordinator would be appointed no later than July 15, 2003, to prepare and to coordinate the implementation of a detailed plan for the establishment of the new company and the restructuring and rationalisation of the operations of BWIA and LIAT.
- (c) The work of the technical team would continue in conjunction with the technical coordinator to determine the strategic and operational issues for the new airline and to determine the equity requirements for the holding company.
- (d) The Government of Trinidad and Tobago would provide the initial funding of the retention of the service of the technical coordinator and any associated cost in setting up the holding company.
- (e) The funds expended for this purpose would eventually be converted into equity in the holding company, Caribbean Airlines (Holdings) Limited.
- (f) The exploration of the possible involvement of the international finance corporation or any other entity in the establishment of a new company and BWIA and LIAT would accelerate their restructuring efforts towards viability as a precondition to any further public sector participation in these airlines.

10.55 a.m.

There is no way that you can seek to merge two or four

bankrupt companies because, in my opinion, two merged bankrupt companies make one big bankrupt company.

Sir, essentially LIAT and BWIA must show the Governments of the region that they are working toward their own viability if we are to continue to put taxpayers' moneys into these entities.

Sir, wind-up cost for LIAT has been approximated in the region of \$200 million and I am not speaking about the other issues that might come about. There must be viability and we must see that these airlines are able to stand on their own feet. Within the merger LIAT and BWIA do have some brand equity within the region and wider afield. They will hold on to their brand names because this evokes the level of consumer support and confidence needed for these airlines.

We must also be sure that these entities have Category One status and can fly into the United States of America and this is why we could not go into a merger that got rid of the old LIAT and BWIA because rights cannot be passed from one airline to another. It is necessary that these two entities continue to exist but there must be some level of viability. Sir, many may argue that airlift in the region should be dictated by market forces but even within the larger global context, many countries dependent on airlift have already seen the light in being able to create a subsidy for airlift, whether it be United States of America and what they have done with United Airlines or what the British Government is prepared to do for British Airways.

Sir, those of us dependent on airlift for our survival in the region must have viable airlift and a competitive environment in which we exercise some measure of control. This Government is not inclined to speak to the issue of having only one airline in the Eastern Caribbean over which we do not exhibit some measure of control in terms of decision-making. We cannot leave it up to a level of small subsidisation to the airline but we must have a vibrant airlift and competition within the region and an airline over which we exert some level of policy control in terms of its directions.

Sir, the decision to pursue this effort was based on a number of reasons. When we look at the tourism challenges after September 11 and the shifts that have occurred in this dynamic sector over the period September 2001 to now, it is clear that a new normalcy exists within tourism sectors across the world which is characterised by issues relating to niche markets. There are now new niches giving people a concept of why they have to fly and relating to booking patterns, which are now coming late, and also issues relating to economic viability of hotels.

Sir, I want to speak about niche marketing. In Barbados, the concept of the regional effort to our tourism fortune has become even more important after September 2001. Even though growth has been shown for the last year, this effort will only continue if a number of these niche market opportunities are exploited to the maximum. Therefore, it is important that we continue our efforts to keep regional tourism and travel at the point where it continues to exert that level of influence on Barbados.

Sir, over the past ten years the regional effort and the market share for Barbados has continued to show serious growth and the year 2002 saw the most arrivals from the region in Barbados as tourist traffic. The market share increased to 7.9 per cent overall and speaks to why it is important to have vibrant competition in the region.

We believe that if the tourism fortunes of the region were left to one airline we would be looking at an economic situation which might see increases in tariffs and in many of the cost elements related to this airline and this would prohibit a number of persons who have been patronising Barbados in recent times from coming to our island.

Sir, I do not believe there is any territory in the region that can boast the increases in airlift that Barbados boasted after the incident of September 11. We have produced a formula that has seen increased airlift and it was done on a basis that we believe would be sustainable in the future. While others may own an airline, we have worked with existing global air carriers to increase our airlift capacity into Barbados. We have negotiated with airlines to find their break-even points coming into Barbados and told them that we would pay a seat subsidy if it falls below a certain threshold.

Sir, we have not had to pay any money for these seat costs into Barbados but we have partnered with existing airlines across the world, gave them marketing support, helped them to market their particular product behind gateways and this has increased airlift into Barbados. For example, with Condor out of Germany bringing US AIR into Barbados. These efforts have worked for Barbados in the recent past to improve our airlift during a period when very few airlines were willing to increase their airlift to any destination anywhere in the world. As a matter of fact, when people were closing down their routes and stopping their planes from flying we were actually increasing more airlift into Barbados at a high rate.

Sir, we boast as many as eight new services coming to Barbados since September 2001. This year alone we have had increases up to 8.9 per cent to the end of May up over

last year. This says something about the work done to create a better basis for Barbados' tourism to thrive. Sir, I believe that principle of being able to subsidise airlift because there are many people who would say that the concept of subsidising airlift is not a principle that we should hold on to – I believe that it has been proven that it is fundamental to our economic survival to ensure that viable airlift is coming into the region.

11.05 a.m.

Sir, we have been able to create a formula to help airlines to come into Barbados through their marketing support. In addition to that, they were able to guarantee a subsidy if the seats on the aircraft fall below a certain threshold. The formula has worked for Barbados and it is a formula that many of the territories in the region would like to follow. The concept is to ensure that there is viable airlift in the region, it is our belief that governments intervene in the exercise, particularly to keep those airlines viable and to be able to offer the type of economic fares that the people in the Eastern Caribbean should enjoy. I believe Barbados will continue in its efforts to see LIAT through this period and to create a regional airline in the Eastern Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, the concept that must be foremost in our minds is trying to create one regional airline. I think that however we create the basis for that airline, whether be it through a full economic merger between existing partners in the region or the functional cooperation that exists, we want to see that all of our fortunes must be to create one sound socio-economic community for the region and that airlift is at the centre of it. Mr. Speaker, we are too close as neighbours in the region not to be able to have viable airlift that we can depend upon and over which we can exert some level of policy direction.

I believe this must be the principle on which we go forward. It does not mean that any private entity cannot be part and parcel of this exercise. It is a principle that we must hold on to and we must have one viable airline for the region. Therefore, this Government will continue in its efforts to create a basis for that airline and this is the basis upon which this guarantee has been brought to this Honourable Chamber.

Sir, with those few words, I thank you.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Bill because in all fairness there is no need for objection from the Opposition Party in this matter. Sir, while we understand the importance of LIAT to the region, it would be a good thing to have been able to read the business plan for 2001-2004 for LIAT. The question that we have to ask is, would LIAT be viable in the short-term? Even though we

know that the answer is no, it has to be kept in operation beyond the financial shortcomings for political, social and economic reasons.

Sir, LIAT has been in trouble for many years. There is no time in LIAT's history when it was a profitable organisation. Having said that, its importance and relevance to the region is unmistakable. This region cannot do without LIAT.

In the area of business there are several businessmen and women who use LIAT on a daily basis to conduct work across this region and it will remain so once it is in operation. Sir, it is important in the area of tourism because there are several small islands in the region that cannot accommodate large aircraft and in any case do not have the airlift or the capacity to be able to sustain large aircraft. Therefore, LIAT, from that standpoint, is of viable importance to regional tourism.

Sir, LIAT is crucial in the area of education and sports. Over the last several years there are several persons who would have gone to St. Lucia or Antigua on a Saturday morning and returned on the Saturday evening after having taught economics or some other course to members at LIAT, in Antigua. Mr. Speaker, some years ago I was engaged to deliver such a service to the staff of LIAT and it was made abundantly clear that LIAT was in difficulty and continues to be in difficulty.

Sir, in the area of the integration of regional sports and the involvement of clubs and communities travelling throughout the region and understanding the culture, mores and the values of regional people, LIAT remains critical air transportation within the region. Sir, from every standpoint, whether it is political, social or economic, LIAT remains vital to the region. Mr. Speaker, LIAT's importance is going to be exaggerated by the pending World Cup in 2007. In fact, to even contemplate at this stage of not supporting LIAT is to undermine an entire culture within the Caribbean. If the World Cup is to be successful, we would need to have transportation to accommodate this venture. Even with the existing airlines in the region, BWIA, LIAT and Air Jamaica, we can begin to question our capacity to handle the airlift that is going to be required in 2007.

Mr. Speaker, if at this stage we wanted to contemplate delivering a hard blow to LIAT, it would be to our own detriment years from now. It would be impossible to consider not giving support to this Bill in light of the circumstances that prevail, not only in the short-term but in the long-term.

Sir, LIAT gets even more important when one looks at the whole question of bringing the region together in the

establishment of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy. It becomes even more critical when it is identified that of the nine Protocols seeking to establish the Caribbean Community, Protocol 6 deals with transport policy in the region.

Mr. Speaker, for the integration movement to begin to be successful, there must be the free flow of labour, capital and all other resources across the region. Therefore, transport is, perhaps, the most essential requirement for the integration movement to take place.

Sir, in that context, I wish to suggest that while we are looking at the whole question of air transportation and while we have virtually abandoned sea transport across the region, perhaps, it is time for the regional Governments to reconsider the role that sea transportation can play in the region.

Sir, I recall as a youngster, at Combermere, travelling to Dominica on the Federal Maple.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, I am suggesting that technology has reached the stage where it may be necessary for us to consider the relevance of sea transport in our transportation system.

Mr. Speaker, it may be relevant sooner rather than later to put a system in place that allows for persons to board some form of sea transportation or aircraft and go swiftly to St. Lucia or St. Vincent in a cost-effective way and in a way that is sustainable.
11.15 a.m.

In fact, I can see no reason why a business prospect cannot look at the potential of introducing cruise ship passenger transportation, within the region, that permits individuals to move freely from one country to another. In fact, the question of alternative modes of transportation becomes extremely important, in looking at the overall transport policy within the protocols of seeking to establish the Caribbean community.

We also have to look beyond LIAT, at the integration of other regional airlines and ask, whether or not there is the capacity to carry, not necessarily a single airline in the region, but a system of air transport that is efficient and cost effective. Therefore, one does not have to integrate or merge the airlines, within the region, to bring about efficiency and effectiveness in the transport system but one has to effectively coordinate the transportation system within the region.

Sir, it has been said by the person, on the Other Side who introduced the Bill that if you merge two non-profit making organisations, you could only get one non-profit making organisation. Therefore, it is not a question of merging the airlines within the region but, more important, rationalising the transportation system, and then effectively allocating airlines across different routes, in order to give some kind of viability to the airlines within the region.

Sir, the issue of pricing policy then becomes extremely important. What kind of pricing policy do you employ? Can it be subsidised? I say, no, because what is really taking place here, is contrary to the grain of not only the regional thrust but the international thrust as well. You have to be careful that in this new global environment, where there is an increasing tendency to reduce the involvement of Government and the public sector in the economic affair, you are not now finding justification for increasing the role of the participation of Government, in an entity that has no real financial future.

Sir, I heard some delivery on the question of Government's role in the decision-making process of airlines across the region. What I am saying is that perhaps the Government may need to recognise that there is little potential for profitability within this particular industry. Therefore, rather than seek to become involved at the level of decision-making, to further compound the problems within the region, maybe, the Government can seek to make the contribution, based on the need for subsidies such as this, and the need for public sector support financially, but not necessarily public sector involvement in decision-making.

I think that the Minister of Tourism would be very much inclined to that position – if my ears are still tuned – since I have been listening to his pronouncements, over the last couple of months, on the relationship between private/public sector entities, even within local tourism. Therefore, while it may appear that the Government should get involved in the decision-making process, it may best serve the interest of not only our local Government but the regional Governments to reduce the level of participation of Government in the decision-making process, but provide the kind of necessary support in some areas.

I am saying that to the extent, therefore, that there is need for accountability and transparency, that the Parliaments of the region ought to be given an opportunity to fully participate in debates, with respect to the future of transportation across the region.

It is in that context, therefore, that the business plan for 2001 to 2004 of LIAT should have been made available to this Parliament, and all the Parliaments across the region that are involved in the LIAT business.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It was alluded to but there is no way in which the Opposition is privy to any of the financial data that has been put forward in this debate. Therefore, our support is out of faith and not necessarily out of knowledge.

It is to that extent, therefore, we are suggesting that it does not have to be the case that Governments go directly on the behalf of decision-making, but provide the Parliaments of the region with the opportunity to discuss the viability of these entities that are so necessary for the future of the Caribbean or the future of the region.

This is the extent to which I think that Governments' involvement is necessary because, in this definition of Government, I am not restricting Government to the Party in power, I am suggesting that the Opposition should be given an opportunity to participate in this decision-making. If it is the case that you have to sit on a board, it means that an Opposition member or an Opposition Party will never be able to participate in the process. This is the sense to which I am suggesting that it is more to do with the involvement of Parliaments within the region, rather than simply Governments within the region.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I am not talking inclusion because I am not about inclusion. I am talking about broadening the base of decision-making among Parliamentarians and among people who have political power. I am not talking about inclusion, which is a narrow concept defined for its own purpose.

Sir, on the question of ensuring that there is some accountability and transparency, again we on This Side need to be informed of not only these kinds of decisions, but the other more fundamental decisions that will be made, in bringing either BWIA and LIAT together, or in seeking to rationalise the transport policy across the region.

Sir, let me say it is no accident that LIAT's Head Office is located in Antigua. I think, we well recall where it used to be located. I would also say that there is some suspicion, as per usual, when we look at the state of affairs in Antigua and see the overall conduct of that Government, we have to be somewhat suspicious about the affairs of LIAT.

11.25 a.m.

I cannot say it, but having gone there frequently to teach and having been told about the circumstances existing,

particularly at LIAT, I very much understand the need for some suspicion with respect to the whole question of the management and the affairs of LIAT.

On the issue of undercapitalisation, for a long time governments in the region have become involved in areas of business without being futuristic. There is a tendency on the part of governments to want to score political points and to want something to be achieved. Therefore, it is more important to make contact with the cosmetics rather than be concerned with the viability of the particular entity, the corporation or the company over a life cycle rather than at the point of time.

In this regard, it is not surprising to hear that LIAT was undercapitalised because for a long time it would have been about simply establishing an airline but not looking to the future and not trying to see whether or not it would have been viable.

What would have ensued then is that as it becomes more and more unprofitable, it becomes more and more difficult to get out of the investment. We have been told this morning that it would require almost EC\$200 million to wind-up LIAT. If that is true, since I am not privy to the data, then that is almost comforting and satisfying to a politician, because if it is true that you require such to get out of LIAT, then the additional \$5 million or \$10 million which is put into it can be justified on that basis alone. Therefore, it creates to some extent a problem for governments even though they recognise the lack of viability of the entity. From a political standpoint, decision-making becomes easier for governments within the region.

The question of size is always going to be a constraint to regional airlines. However, being small does not mean that you have to be inefficient. In fact, if it is accepted that the larger you become, the more efficient and profitable you become, then we need to question what globalisation is really resting on because what we have been becoming accustomed to is downsizing. We are becoming smaller and more efficient, so size is no longer a constraint because technology can now be used to replace whatever was responsible for increasing costs because of reduced size. Therefore, technology becomes exceedingly more important in this new global era. We can see that across the length and breadth of businesses.

In fact, one of the greatest opportunities for developing countries in this new world is the fact that technology now is becoming obsolete so quickly. For example, in the area of video production versus DVDs, if you travel to North America you would notice that less than 20 per cent of the population of North America is using videos, but when you travel south and come to developing countries you recognise

that videos are still in vogue. Because of technology, videos are becoming cheaper and cheaper in North America. This means, therefore, that the manufacturers of videos can now seek to relocate because of the changes or the obsolete nature of technology which in itself provides developing countries with greater opportunities in this global era.

So in a very twisted way, the improvements or the quick changes to technology would give developing countries some advantage in terms of attracting investments of that type south of the border. That is a very twisted line of argument, but DVDs are not in vogue in the developing countries. Therefore, companies now may seek to relocate to developing countries in order to set up and establish more efficient and more profitable institutions or businesses.

The point to be made, therefore, is that if we accept that we are going to be competing in this new global order, then the use of technology, especially for small companies as in the airline industry, becomes even more imperative. That is the point that has to be made. That is why it is not surprising to hear that LIAT's first order of business was to downsize in terms of its labour force to move from 1 100 to almost 500 staff members.

On this question of salaries based on productivity, the truth on this matter is that it is almost tiring to listen to these debates on linking salaries to productivity. We have established here in Barbados a National Productivity Council for a number of years but the reality is that we find it extremely difficult to link wages to productivity. While it sounds highfalutin and almost as if it is today's language, the reality of the situation is that it becomes increasingly difficult for us to achieve this objective in spite of its theoretical merit, because it has little practical value.

Justifying big salaries on the basis of productivity or on the basis that some manager brings a particular expertise is at variance with the reality, because no longer is the case that you can only find a neurosurgeon or some special group isolated in some corner of the world because that is contrary to what we are seeing in this new world where we have everything in abundance. You cannot now isolate an individual on the basis of a particular expertise because if he is still so regarded in today's world, he is almost God-like because we are seeing increasing competition even for jobs at the highest level of corporations and companies not only locally but across the region. So what really should be happening, and we have to recognise this, is that we should not continue to think in terms of widening the gap between management and workers in today's world.

While I am a great admirer of the former Central Bank Governor, Dr. Courtney Blackman, I think that perhaps he

needs to revisit his thesis which states that in order to attract larger or bigger managers that you need to pay them handsome salaries way beyond what the actual workers within the corporation or the entity are getting.

I am suggesting, therefore, that we must not think in terms of simply finding big chief executive officers (CEOs) to run these entities within the region because we are going to become somewhat like North America where we are neglecting the actual persons who do the work in these companies by simply hiring individuals who carry some false identities and relevance and who appear to be so important in the scheme of things, but when you check the actual performance, they are not that critical to the process or the processes. We have reached the stage where we have convinced ourselves of the importance of paying these big CEOs these large chunks to the disadvantage of the persons in the lower ranks of the organisation who actually do all the work.

I hope that little exposition would serve to inform the Other Side that there is no need to make the kinds of errors that were made at the Barbados Tourism Authority and the potential error that would have been made at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

11.35 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to carry this debate as wide as the representative for St. Michael South has done because he sought to go into all that is happening locally for tourism when, in fact, he should be avoiding that subject at this stage because there is no need for any 'pompasetting'. On the question of tourism, it was tendentious and should remain because there is no need for the Honourable Member for St. Michael South to be on any excursion in tourism. The evidence is suggesting that what was suspected all along in tourism is now becoming a reality. Therefore, we are seeing the closure of large hotel plants such as Rockley Resorts Limited and Sam Lords Castle and are concerned, unlike the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, that tourism is becoming a source of major heartache for our workers in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, we would not want to get into a general discussion of tourism. If you can, relate your points to the substantive motion.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I would hope to relate my point to the principle, as I was before directed and not get into details because it was a major source of concern that I should have been sticking to principles of bills and not get into details. I am still to deal with it at this stage.

Nevertheless, the question of the need for equity in the airline business is, in fact, a source of concern because if we have a situation which we are having where there is lack of profitability within the airline business, then how is it going to be the case that we are going to seek to attract equity to these small businesses? We have started out on the premise that they are making losses; that LIAT is not viable; that BWIA is under pressure and has not been viable for many years but yet we are asking for major chunks of equity to be put into these businesses. I think we have reached a stage where it is necessary to understand that we can no longer make decisions in this industry simply on the basis of financial data.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to suggest that, for the future, when we make decisions on air transport in the region, we be honest in terms of our considerations and not become side-tracked by the financial data. We must recognise that we are making more of a political decision more than anything else because the financial data simply indicates that those areas of economic involvement are no longer viable or profitable.

I, therefore, would wish to support this Bill, because at this juncture we have no choice but to support the maintenance of LIAT. We have no choice but to get BWIA to continue to fly if not, our major industry tourism is going to be under even more pressure than it has been for the last five to ten years.

Therefore, on that score, LIAT is a must in both the short-term and the long-term. LIAT cannot come out of the sky until after 2007 in any case and, therefore, this debate is simply about agreeing with a position that was taken by Government to support LIAT at this stage. It has nothing to do with any financial data, nor with any viability of LIAT on the basis of profitability. It has nothing to do with turnover, average rate, reduction in cost but it all has to do with recognising that in the absence of LIAT, there would hardly be a tourism and, in the absence of BWIA, there would certainly be no tourism and, in the absence of tourism, there would be no region. That is the simple logic that has to be applied.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to support this Bill because it is the only thing that could be done.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Before I go into my discourse in any meaningful way, since this is my first opportunity to speak during this new term, I think I owe my constituents the gratitude and I would wish to thank them once again for sending me back to this Honourable House in such a handsome way. I pledge to them that during this term I would even be more assiduous, both in and outside of this Honourable Chamber, as I seek to represent their interest in a most vigorous way.

Sir, I rise to give my support to this Bill this morning and would want to start at the point where the Leader of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has left off.

Sir, like the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, we should best seek to add our support to this Bill by placing it within the context of the airline industry versus the tourism industry in the region.

Sir, when one looks at the importance of tourism to Barbados, one has to identify all of the avenues of support in order to keep this economy functioning properly. Yes, we recognise there are difficulties with LIAT at this point and there have been difficulties with LIAT for sometime now but we must also understand how vital an airline like LIAT is to this tourism industry and to the region and, hence, to our economic fortunes.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South has also made mention of the fact that in supporting a regional entity like LIAT, this country is signalling in a positive way to its commitment to the regional integration process.

Sir, I want to assure this House that this Administration – and I think I am speaking for the Opposition at this juncture – is fully supportive of a regional integration movement and of any opportunity, while recognising and preserving our interest in the process, that we would be signaling and continue to signal in a our positive way, our commitment to the process.

Sir, at this point, I want to issue a word of advice because it seems to me that while we all recognise the importance of tourism to this region's economic fortunes, there are other regional institutions which were established to propel the transformation of other strategic aspects of our development process which are not getting the same attention or vigour in the discussions, which would eventually lead to necessary high and viable turn-around in their fortunes.

Sir, the particular institution to which I speak is CARDI. I am not seeking to move the discussion away from airline and tourism but am seeking to show the importance of other strategic interests in the region and how important regional institutions should be supported, as we seek to take forward the development process in a cohesive and coherent manner.

11.45 a.m.

A few years ago the regional Governments took a decision that in order to effect a transformation of the agricultural sector they would recommit themselves to an

institution like CARDI. A road map was started for the transformation of the agricultural sector and CARDI was given a definitive role.

Over the last years I have had the good fortune to be Chairman of the Board of Governors of CARDI and we have been trying our utmost to deal with the institution in the same way that at this stage they are trying to rescue LIAT to further our developmental efforts in the region. I hope that one of the lessons we would learn from the discussions to date with LIAT, where shareholder Government and high level technicians in the international transport sector have also been engaged in discussions, is that this type of approach could be taken in the case of CARDI because I feel that this institution has a role to play to develop the agricultural sector.

Sir, while I am in full support of the Government's effort to save LIAT and make it a better functioning entity in airline industry, it would be remiss of me if I did not say that I have reservation about the performance of LIAT into the future. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was looking four years ahead which is a laudable date because we would not want anything that we could do now, not to be done which would jeopardize our chances to stage a highly successful World Cup in 2007.

We must seek to put all of our infrastructural development in place now and remain committed over the next three or four years to make sure that the necessary infrastructure is in place, at the level of physical accommodation, airlines, how the airports function and the type of service that we give to all our visitors. We must make sure that all the necessary arrangements are put in place so that this region is held up as one that could stage a highly successful event like the World Cup 2007.

Mr. Speaker, there are a series of short periods which must be gone through before we get to 2007. We heard of Trinidad's intentions to deal with the problems of BWIA to give financial commitment to their creditors and give them time to effect a change to the management process.

We applaud their efforts to establish this holding company to look after the affairs of BWIA and LIAT over the next six months and to put together the plan for the merger of the two airlines to help deal with the problems that exist in both.

I am anxious to know what the form and function of BWIA and LIAT would be in January next year. These two entities are not functioning properly and this Government's financial commitment for the airline industry cannot be provided in an unconditional manner.

Sir, the Minister of International Transport and this Administration will do everything humanly possible to make sure that whatever rationalisation is to take place in the airline industry is not restricted to what is required to get BWIA and LIAT functioning better. We should be looking for a full rationalisation in the region that will see Caribbean Star, Bahamas Air and any other airline presently involved in moving persons throughout the region participating in the discussion because this will redound to the best for the region.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West touched on this point but I want to expand on it. We have to introduce efforts not seen before in the region which will see a massive increase of passengers coming to the region.

Sir, with the introduction of Caribbean Star which focus on interregional travel, LIAT's fortunes have got worse. While this has been going on and we have not seen massive increase in the numbers coming into the region, the overheads and the spending to keep the current airlines going have gone up notwithstanding the efforts of the management of LIAT and BWIA to introduce cost cutting measures.

Sir, Caribbean Star lost loads of money in its first year. LIAT and BWIA continue to bleed and we only heard that there is a need for rationalisation and for LIAT to sit and talk to BWIA. We know that this has to happen ultimately but people need to become more serious and strive for nothing less than a full rationalisation of the industry because all we have heard so far is that an effort is being made for rationalisation. We have not heard how effective a partial or full merger can be of these two airlines and we do not recognise that even if they are not able to pass that small hurdle they still have to deal with the bigger issue of competition that is still occasioned by the presence of Caribbean Star and the possible introduction of small airlines owned by American Airlines and any other airlines that want to come into the region. Sir, LIAT might want to increase its presence in the region by bringing some planes in the region. While we may get past this first hurdle with BWIA and LIAT, if we are looking beyond 2007, our focus should really be on receiving achieving full rationalisation of the industry as soon as possible.
11.55 a.m.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: While we look forward to the outcome of the discussions which were held in Trinidad recently, at which the Honourable Member for St. Peter represented the Government and people of Barbados, I am submitting that while those discussions continue, that parallel

to this there should be other discussions involving all the others on a full rationalisation of the industry.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West made mention of the fact that we may have to move to the point where there is an assignment of routes to particular airlines so as to give LIAT an opportunity to survive. Sir, that may be true, perhaps, for the lack of the evidence. Sir, that may not be the answer because the minimum cost of operating some of these airlines, however small they might be, may require a straight assignment of routes.

Mr. Speaker, that issue may best be dealt within the context of a full rationalisation of the industry. We would want to know how many airlines we want, the size airlines, how regular we would want the aircraft to be moving within the region. We would know how to assign routes, which airlines would be getting which routes and how many routes they should get on a daily basis to assure some level of profitability. If we agree, and I do not think that anybody in this Honourable House has any difficulty with agreeing, there must be some element of subsidisation in this industry, outside of Dominica, and that element would even have to be greater if we do not have a full rationalisation of the industry.

Sir, for example LIAT, when you look at the type of service to Dominica, we know that left alone the competitive forces and the private sector having to make decisions about where to send aircraft, we know that those countries like Dominica can least afford to own an aircraft and their chances of building some type of tourism industry would be significantly reduced because the consideration that is social in nature, to get aircraft into Dominica, those things might not figure prominently in any objective functioning of the principles of these companies.

Sir, let me draw an analogy here in Barbados where we have the Transport Board. Some people will continue to argue that the buses owned by the Transport Board should be sent to the most remote places in this country, and I would agree with that, but that is a very heavy social consideration.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Sir, I agree that there should be some level of subsidisation in the airline industry, consistent with our efforts at the strengthening and deepening of the immigration process, for example, the interest of Dominica should be served. Sir, what Barbados does in respect of providing financial support to LIAT, implicit in that is our commitment to a country like Dominica.

Mr. Speaker, I am using an analogy because we can sit here and agree but I am glad that the Honourable Member

for St. Michael North West started in that vein. We can all agree that the Transport Board buses that are heavily subsidised by the Government should go into the most remote areas to service the needs of our constituents. Those of us who live and represent areas in rural and rustic environments know the importance of that.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Sir, if we could agree to that analogy, we could all agree that there should be some level of support for LIAT so as to help our neighbours in the region as we strive to strengthen and deepen the integration of the region.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close by giving my support to this Bill. I recognise the importance of the airline industry to Barbados' tourism product. I also recognise that the only way that this tourism product will succeed is if the airlift is assured and it can only be assured by one of two ways or a combination of them.

Sir, we are either going to own the airlines or going to lease the airlines and run them by ourselves, similar to what we did when we tried the experiment of the Caribbean Airways. Sir, this is a route that we would not go because we had that experience before. The other option is that if we are to continue to promote tourism, we would have to create the most facilitating and enabling environment for those who own the airlines to bring the people to Barbados or a combination of both.

Sir, if we are of the belief that the experiment that of the Caribbean Airways is not one that we would want to replicate, then, consistent with our efforts to drive our tourism industry, we have to exercise the other option. The other option would have us supporting various airlines, strengthening our bargaining efforts or continuing to provide some level of subsidisation so that the airlines could continue to come into Barbados.

12.05 p.m.

Sir, if this is the route that we intend to go and the option we intend to exercise, then, there should be a unanimous position on this Bill that we are here discussing today. If this is the only option, let us see how best we can make it work for our tourism industry, and the tourism industry in the region.

Let me close by saying that while I fully support what is happening, as I said earlier, those who are engaged in the discussions in the islands – I imagine that they are very delicate discussions – what they need to strive for is a full rationalisation of the industry. Sir, nothing short of a full

rationalisation of the industry, will result in the individual airlines doing the best that they possibly can.

Yes, we should not lose sight of the importance of the airlines to the region, but we also have to recognise that the pockets of the respective Governments are not deep, and the resources are not limitless. In the process of time, we are going to have more strategic decisions on how the resources are used. So while we recognise that, we need to make sure that whatever rationalisation must take place at the level of the individual entities, and whatever rationalisation must take place at the level of the regional industry, that those things are done.

No longer can procrastination be evident on this particular matter, because of the future of this region. It may sound simple, but the future of the developmental prospects of this region, could hinge on how we are able to deal with the problems that characterise the tourism industry.

Mr. Speaker, we must all be engaged in the discussions. We must support the Minister of International Transport fully. We must support the Government fully. We must support the other governments in the region that are working fairly assiduously to see this matter is sorted out, but we must also tell them that while we laud their efforts to deal with the problem that LIAT and BWIA face, they must have a parallel track for discussions on affecting a full rationalisation of the airline industry.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise also to speak on this Bill. I want to start by saying that in order for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) to operate, it is important for the social cost as it relates to LIAT, to be shared among the Caribbean Governments.

It is impossible, Sir, for the CSME to be viable, if we cannot sort out our transportation problem within the Caribbean. I want to say that in measuring the importance of LIAT and BWIA, one first has to look at the opportunity costs of operating these airlines.

It is also very important, Sir, to recognise that within the Caribbean at this time of development, one cannot only look at the profit line. One must look at the total effects of the economy, for one to reasonably understand what we are speaking about at this time.

In this globalised world, Sir, it is not the amount of profit that will be shared among the shareholders, but it is the contribution to the GDP that will be important. That is why we cannot continue any longer to look at LIAT and BWIA as airlines to be owned by individual Governments, but they

must be seen in the same light as we see the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

We have to understand that the entire Caribbean must be involved and that we must come up with a ratio to share the costs. Sir, in the same way we see the Transport Board as a social cost for the masses of people in Barbados, we must see the airline industry, within the Caribbean, as a social cost to the Caribbean.

We must also understand, Sir, that we cannot continue any longer to depend on the outside forces to develop the Caribbean for us. We, as a combined group, must be able to put our heads together, and put our money where we have our mouths to develop a relationship, within the Caribbean, and to carry forward the Caribbean.

I want to say, Sir, that we can no longer see the Caribbean as a place where LIAT will fly in and fly out but we must understand that we must come back to this Parliament...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: let us go back to the debate of June 1996 where I objected, Sir, and I want to repeat.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, as I said, in this Parliament of Barbados, we brought an immigration Bill, which a majority of the Parliamentarians supported. Mr. Speaker, the records will show that I objected to that, and it can be found in June 1996, when there was a situation where this Parliament felt that the only people who could move within the Caribbean are people of a particular level.

I made the point, and I will continue to make the point that if we are serious about Caribbean integration, Sir, we must start with the mass base of the country, and we must allow that mass base to be able to move freely.

In order to make this particular debate relevant, Mr. Speaker, we must first revisit that particular position and understand that we have to change our immigration policy first, in order to make airlines like LIAT and BWIA profitable, if not, we will be wasting our time.

We cannot limit the market, Mr. Speaker, with our immigration policy and expect to make...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that the immigration policy which was brought to

this Parliament by the Other Side, five to seven years later, we have now come to recognise that it was foolishness. It should never have been brought to this Parliament in the form that it was brought; it is wrong and it needs changing.

It is because of that immigration policy that we now have to come to this Parliament to back money for LIAT. We, as a Government, have limited the market for LIAT and BWIA by stopping Caribbean people from moving freely within the Caribbean and increasing the marketplace for airlines like LIAT and BWIA.

Some people might disagree with that point because they do not understand what I am saying.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member does this House, this Government and this country a disservice by seeking to suggest that the immigration policy of the Barbados Government has in anyway stopped persons from coming into Barbados. In fact, the converse is true. The Barbados Government has led the most liberal immigration policy existing currently in the Caribbean.

Asides.
12.15 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members on that Side can clap and do whatever they like, but we cannot at this stage be talking about a Caribbean Single Market and Economy and still have an immigration policy that stops the free movement of people within the Caribbean. We have to decide...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please!

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, do not get involved in this.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Honourable Member, there is nothing wrong with making a reference in order to prove a point on the substantive motion. Therefore, I will not allow you to proceed on any matter that does not relate to the substantive motion, please. This debate is not about an immigration policy. Could you continue, please?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, any discussions on LIAT and its viability would have to deal with the expansion of the marketplace and the increase in the numbers. It is impossible for LIAT to be viable when you do not have a proper immigration policy within the Caribbean. If we are going to limit this debate to this thing, then it means

that there is no room in this Parliament for expansionary ideas. In order for us as a Parliament to debate certain issues, this Parliament must be allowed to expand on issues, that we can only see on a short-term basis. We must also be allowed to go into the future and we must be prepared not only to look at things today, but five years down the road.

I am saying that in order for us to solve the problems with LIAT and BWIA that the first thing we must do is to look at the marketplace. Any reasonable and rational businessman always looks to see where he can locate the particular business and the particular clientèle that he wants to target. I am saying that LIAT must be able to source. We cannot, as Caribbean people, limit LIAT from sourcing the clients they have especially when they have to compete in a globalised world where people are allowed to move freely at a different level. We cannot limit LIAT to the 'too-few' within the Caribbean.

I am saying that the Caribbean must be seen as a total marketplace and that the immigration policies must be changed by the governments within the Caribbean in order to free up the movement of people within the Caribbean.

Once we can have people moving freely within the Caribbean place, there is a possibility that LIAT, instead of operating with a 50 per cent load, would be able to move from that to a 75 per cent or 100 per cent load. This is where policies must be put in place. The policies that I speak of must be a social policy, an immigration policy and a financing policy as it relates to the financing of capital for LIAT. On top of that...

Asides.

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

Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of order, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: There is a point of order, please.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I really hate to intervene but the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is appearing to be...

Mr. SPEAKER: Just make your point of order, please.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that there is any immigration policy that is practised by this Government that prevents the movement of people. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is either deliberately attempting to mislead the House or he is deliberately withholding an explanation on the aspect of the immigration policy on which he is basing his argument. If he could

enlighten the Honourable Members on This Side to the particular aspect of the immigration policy he is speaking about, that would be a good thing. Mr. Speaker, I think it is grossly unfair to this House for him to continue to make such a statement that is linking the structure and the practice of our immigration policy to precisely the movement of people in the region. It is unfair to do so, and unless he can tell me which aspect of the policy he is speaking to, I think he should desist from making that statement in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is rather interesting that the Honourable Member sat at that particular time because what we are also observing is that we are having a piecemeal approach to social engineering within the Caribbean. No better person could have spoken to that other than the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, when he said that we seem to have a solution to the airline problem but we seem not to have a solution to the agricultural problem and when he was a Minister, he wanted the Government to have the same approach on the Caribbean Agriculture and Research Development Institute (CARDI) and they refused to have the approach on CARDI but now they are having one on LIAT, so I can understand his problem.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we also have to understand, because we believe airlines are the 'in thing', that we cannot limit ourselves to basically speaking about airlines. We also have to understand that the world has changed and understand that in the same way people can send cruise liners into our territory and remove large sums of money, that the governments – as I have said already in this Parliament – in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy must come together and find the possibility of at least starting with one cruise liner to move through the Caribbean region, but in order to do these things, one must look at the opportunity cost.

It is alright to talk about not wanting to finance LIAT at a particular cost. The big question that must be asked is, if we do not finance LIAT or BWIA what would be the social fallout and the revenue fallout for us within this Caribbean region.

We must understand that we are very much tourism-oriented. We have to understand that tourism speaks loudly as it is associated to our revenues within the Caribbean and we must find out what effect it would have on our trade, especially on the agricultural industry, if we do not have these things, so it is not just looking at how much money LIAT is losing. The cost to the various governments must be totalled and if the total costs of the various governments are

greater than the losses of LIAT, then when one looks at the opportunity cost, in truth and fact, LIAT or BWIA is not making a loss.

When I say that a certain Honourable Member pushed up his head, but this is what you call higher levels of financing and a higher knowledge of economics as I was able to explain in this Parliament already as I did with the sugar industry. Sir, when the Government came and said that they wanted to reduce the sugar quota by 10 000 tonnes, I was able to show, using the opportunity cost...

On that particular occasion, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, I must admit, agreed with me. One thing he has in his cap is that he never totally agreed with reducing the sugar quota.

12.25 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has asked me to inform this House what I meant when I made mention of the Immigration (Amendment) Bill, June, 1996. At page 32 (80), the Honourable Member can see the position that was taken at that time and the position by which I still stand.

Sir, I believe that in order for the Caribbean to work, there must be total movement of persons. It cannot be a class act, as is common to the Other Side. I believe Caribbean people are all one and so should be treated. I will continue making the point that, in order for capital to operate, labour must too operate.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, the time being 12.30 p.m., I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 1.30 p.m. this afternoon.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, one has to understand that this matter cannot only be seen at a micro level but also at a macro level and that profitability cannot be the only reason for this matter to be discussed. The total opportunity cost of this issue must be discussed.

When the Caribbean Governments meet, they must understand this is a matter on the agenda. If we are to operate in a globalised world, we, in the Caribbean, cannot believe that matters such as these are simple but must be treated with the utmost importance. We must recognise the significance of them to the economies within the Caribbean. We must understand that we can no longer behave as if the world can wait on us but that we are serious players within the world and that our airline industry is a very important factor as it relates to globalisation. We must treat it as important. We have to understand that though we are over ten years late in putting forward certain proposals within the Caribbean, we must, as priority, make sure those things that were not done ten years ago must now be done in order for us to be major players in the world.

I have already said that though we are small countries, we must stop believing that we do not have a significant role to play in world affairs. Our roles are so important that with a small airline like LIAT, we need to set the example and make sure that the problems relating to LIAT could be solved before we could even think of attacking the problems relating to Air Jamaica or BWIA.

Mr. Speaker, it is a waste of time for us in the Caribbean to be speaking about three or four airlines, we should be speaking of one airline and that is a Caribbean airline. We must bring them all together because as I have before said, it is foolishness to speak of profitability in the light in which people would want us to speak. Sir, I will make the bold statement that all airlines in the Caribbean are profitable.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, we have to understand that in the same way that every year we use estimates to justify the spending within the thirty constituencies, we, as Caribbean leaders, must be able to come together and justify the spendings of the various Caribbean airlines.

Sir, we must understand that social engineering must not only be done with the Barbados Transport Board but with both the airline and the agricultural industries, because they are all related to the tourism industry. For example, can anyone tell me the profits made by the Barbados Tourism Authority on a daily basis?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please do not go down that route.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, if we are going to equate the importance of LIAT and BWIA, we must understand the important linkages with LIAT, BWIA and the various tourism authorities within the Caribbean. As I have

said before, it cannot only be done based on profits but it has to be done with social engineering and the social services being provided by these various entities, in order to increase the capacities of the various economies within the Caribbean. It is like saying that the agricultural industry has no significance within the Caribbean because those players do not make any profits. Sir, LIAT and BWIA must be seen in the same light, they must be seen for the expanding product they provide.

Sir, unless we could understand that point, we as a Parliament would not be going anywhere, neither would we be able to compete in this new globalised economy. We would be failing those persons we seek to represent if we continue to look at matters that only relate to the micro side and not look to the macro side. That is why Caribbean leaders cannot continue to meet every year and come up with conclusions without finding solutions to the conclusions. 1.35 p.m.

We expect Caribbean leaders, when they meet a few months from today, to be able to come to conclusions at a macro level to help solve the problems within the Caribbean and understand the importance of freeing up the immigration policies within the Caribbean so that the people can move freely. Sir, it should not only relate to people at the University of the West Indies and a few others but it should relate to the masses of people in the Caribbean. Once there is free movement among the masses of people in the Caribbean then we can speak about the viability of LIAT and BWIA.

Sir, we are actually limiting free movement and then asking the players and managers within the industry to do something they have no control over. As politicians we come to Parliament and make fancy speeches but we are actually limiting the people in the Caribbean. Sir, the time for hot air is over and the time for action is here.

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to speak on this important subject. The movement of people is an important development of our region and this Government is seeking to provide the opportunity to LIAT and other airlines of the region to make them viable to provide the opportunity for movement of our people.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke about the opportunity costs of the airlines but I do not know what he was speaking about because opportunity costs have to do with what you have given up to get something. I believe the Honourable Member was mixing up the immigration policy

where we are looking at skilled labour in the Caribbean with the movement of people generally.

Sir, I do not know that either the Barbados Labour Party Government or the Democratic Labour Party Government has ever tried to stop the movement of people in the Caribbean because as far as I know, there has always been free movement in the Caribbean by LIAT, BWIA and other airlines.

Sir, the point which needs to be stressed is that today all airlines are having problems. Only yesterday I read that the British Government is putting tremendous amounts of funds behind British Airways and all major airlines are getting some support from central Government.

We are promoting tourism as a major industry and we have tremendous growth in arrivals from the Caribbean and other parts of the world and the Ministry of Tourism, the Barbados Tourism Authority and other players in the industry are doing much work in this regard. Sir, we are happy that the Minister can bring this Bill here today.

Mr. Speaker, all Governments today are putting support behind the airlines of the world because it is the right thing to do if we are to concentrate on tourism. Sir, tourism is the number one industry and we must give support to the various airlines or else they will have to increase fares. If fares are to remain as low as they can, then Government will have to give the necessary support. The Government of Trinidad has put money behind BWIA and the Government of Jamaica has put money behind Air Jamaica and we will continue to put our support behind LIAT.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to keep Barbados as a hub for activity because it is the financial centre of the Caribbean and people come to Barbados for all types of activity, for recreation, business and entertainment and we have to continue to provide the support for LIAT.

Mr. Speaker, we are living in troublesome times and there are many financial problems in the region. We are hearing about budgetary constraints throughout the entire Caribbean and it is no idle boast that Barbados is continuing to do well as a country. We continue to do well because of the policies that we enunciated and provided in this country over the last eight years. Therefore, the support for LIAT is for the tourism industry and has nothing to do with our immigration policies.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that we have created more opportunities because people like to travel for Crop Over, Carnival and activities of that nature. Sir, the Ministry of Tourism and the players in that industry must create

innovative business ideas and come up with new strategies in order to encourage people to travel.

Sir, there is no restriction that I know of because people do not require a visa to move throughout the region.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I am making the point that if we want to encourage people to travel we must come up with innovative ideas because people travel for the various festivals throughout the region. Sir, all countries in the world have been supporting the airline industry because we all need the tourist dollar. Sir, until we can find an alternative to tourism, we will have to continue to help the industry which provides a lot of employment for our people.
1.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is an important concept in helping to support the airline industry. Every year the Ministry of Tourism provides some financial support to the airlines and from time to time we will have to do so as a matter of policy in helping the industry and encouraging the people to come to Barbados.

Sir, I do not agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that there are any impediments to our Immigration laws. I think that there is free movement of labour but there must be some restrictions to professionals coming to Barbados and working in Barbados. There must be some degree of reciprocity where we allow trained professionals from Guyana and Trinidad.

However, we as a nation cannot encourage people to come to Barbados and remain in Barbados outside the time allowed by the Immigration Department. Our country must still retain its sovereignty and maintain our laws. If a person comes to Barbados to work that person must get the relevant documentation to allow that person to work.

Mr. Speaker, if you are a professional, a university graduate or possess certain skills, and there is a job available within the region then you may apply. If you are accepted, then the relevant documentation would be finalised.

Mr. Speaker, I do not see anything wrong with our Immigration laws as they stand. I think that there is a free movement of people but I believe that there should be more innovative programmes to encourage people to want to travel across the region.

I thank you.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to join in the contributions relating to the Bill before the House. This Bill before the Honourable House is enjoying the support of the Opposition, so there is no need to be unnecessarily contentious.

However, the debate has benefitted from some very worthwhile observations and insights from This Side of the House. I see my role here is just to amplify and supplement and in some cases reiterate, whichever one is relevant.

Sir, we have heard from a number of different Members on the historical importance that LIAT (1974) Limited has played in the lives of so many Barbadians as well as people from the region. Mr. Speaker, allow me a little latitude here. This is my first presentation and let me thank those Barbadians who reside within the constituency of St. Michael South Central for allowing me to represent them in this Honourable House.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are looking at 2008. It seems that you are ahead of yourself.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Sir, I am getting a little ahead of myself here. I think that it would be remiss of me, since we are carried on radio, not to thank all of those Barbadians who have offered me support and who deemed that I have something to offer this Chamber, I thank them as well.

Sir, the historic importance of LIAT has been noted. The movement of persons within the region, for example several industries in this island and service providers, rely heavily on LIAT as the only scheduled carrier to most of the Eastern Caribbean. I can speak of this because my engineering practice does rely on clients from the islands and without LIAT we would be out to sea. It is as simple as that, Sir.

I think that the centrality of LIAT in regional transport has been noted and cannot be stated enough. Perhaps, that is the reason we feel compelled to support this Bill before the House. We have to couch this support in reality.

Sir, the Bill speaks to a loan in the amount of US\$23 million to be used in the financial restructuring of LIAT. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South is aware that LIAT has been a litany of woes. Almost from the time that LIAT was structured it was restructuring. There has always been a restructuring exercise. If it is not the aircraft that is deemed inadequate, it is the hub system that has been altered. There has been a time when they tried the twin-hub

system in Antigua and Barbados. They abandoned the Avro fleet and we did not know where we were. LIAT has been going through this exercise for some time. Therefore, we would hope that what is about to take place would perhaps depart from that and we would see some results this time around. Sir, I think that the people of the Caribbean are demanding it and we cannot shirk from that responsibility.

Mr. Speaker, when I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip South say that he is waiting with bated breath to see what form and function this new regional structure with LIAT and BWIA will take, I too share that view.

Mr. Speaker, I think that rationalising the regional airport system, including Bahamas Air and Air Jamaica might be just a little unrealistic. Sir, let us be frank. Certainly, Bahamas Air and possibly Air Jamaica, their concern and focus is not the movement between the Windward and Leeward islands. They make their money from the Nassau/Miami route and they are not interested, so to speak. Sir, let us understand the realities with which we are dealing and move forward from there. The role that LIAT has to play in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy cannot be understated as well. In fact, as far back in the 1960s and 1970s, scholars like William Demas and Sir Arthur Lewis recognised the importance of air travel to any serious regional development. Naturally, as we try to take it to another level, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and LIAT, if LIAT is not financially viable, it should be operational and providing as efficient as possible a service to all of the Caribbean citizens.

In that regard, I think that the point that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy was making, and I know that he has a unique way in putting his point, is a fundamental point.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Sir, the freedom of movement of labour is important. The very early proponents for regionalism and we are talking as far back as Marryshaw, who said that we cannot be serious about developing the region if there are any impediments to the movement of labour. Sir, to the extent that this would help in making LIAT more viable, it is a point worthwhile and a point that the Minister of International Transport should take on board. I hope that it is taken on board because in so doing, and putting these Protocols in place, then your leader would not have to be a self-confessed conspirator to breaking the law. Freedom of the movement of labour is a good point and a fundamental point and one that needs to be taken on board. Sir, it could help in terms of our regional air travel as well.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Sir, it is interesting that the Minister responsible is also the Minister of Tourism and you cannot escape the fact that a lot has been made that we are trying to promote the region as well, in terms of our attracting tourists to our shores. If that is the case, let us understand that LIAT must play a key role in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, when we speak to the apparent lack of viability of so many entities, we are relying on our tourism product and that is something to take on board. LIAT is struggling and a lot of our hotel plants are struggling as well. What does that say about our tourism product? If we are, indeed, a high destination, these are the real points. I think all Barbadians want to know what intervention has taken place on the part of the Ministry of Tourism for the past nine years that have addressed this issue.

1.55 p.m.

The Barbados Tourism Authority is responsible for marketing. We can understand that, but this is a fundamental problem that we must confront in our tourism and it links to the whole LIAT situation. Can you continue to rely on entities that are clearly not viable for our most important industry?

Put yourself for a moment, Mr. Speaker, in the place of someone in some capital, in some far-flung part of this world, be it Washington or London, planning a vacation and the Barbados auction comes up. Barbados is a high-priced destination. What is to stop them from not going to some other place? There are other places that are more affordable.

All I am saying is that if you have so many entities, that you are relying on that are not viable, where does that leave us? This is really what should be engaging the attention of the Ministry of Tourism and the Minister of Tourism, for that matter. Sir, the chest thumping, the braggadocio and the brouhaha of the Minister, we need to see through that please.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please, for the sake of the records, please, could you please use parliamentary language.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: I will take your guidance on that. I withdraw those remarks and I will find something more appropriate.

Should I say, the utterances?

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, in all honesty, it is not an exercise in browbeating here. Sir, understand these are just observations that are worthwhile because we are, in

essence, supporting the Government in this one. We want to see that, indeed, LIAT at least does not hemorrhage to the extent that it did before.

We know the Government is very quick to remind us of the troubling times that are ahead, in terms of the liberal trade environment, *et cetera*. The consolidation of global capital, the way in which it will move and the speed at which it moves, means that the same LIAT could have tougher times ahead.

The one, two or three routes that might grow profitably, might find themselves having to compete against the American Eagles and the such like, which could mean that times could be even harder for LIAT or the challenges that they present with, are even harder.

Mr. Speaker, I just felt compelled to join with my colleagues in offering support for the Government in this initiative, and critical support, if you would, and at the same time giving them the benefit of some of these insights. These insights that I think not only you, Mr. Speaker, but all Barbados expect us to do.

We had some presentation in here, you cannot reflect on previous debates, I know, but I am just saying there was a thinking that if you did not understand the meaning of a word, you went and you rented a movie and watched the movie.

Now, none of us here has ever referred to ourselves as the 'magnificent seven' however, when I do not understand a word, I look up the word.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have given such an outstanding first speech. Why do you seek now to divert from the matter before the House? How is this connected with the matter before the House? You were asking a rhetorical question. I will allow you to continue. You know that the rule clearly says, as you did say, matters which are not in this session cannot be referred to. Could you make your point by continuing to ask your rhetorical question without referring to that particular matter.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, magnificent means excellence and striving for excellence is what we on This Side will continue to do, in the interest of the people of Barbados, whether we are opposing the Government or, as in the case here, we are supporting them.

I thank you.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: I want, Mr. Speaker, to associate myself with this measure currently before the Chamber and I would want, Sir, to couch my remarks within

the context of what I consider to be one of the critical issues raised by the Minister of Tourism, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, in his presentation. That, Sir, was the reference that he made to the question of the real concern that there is some case to be made in the context of LIAT's ability to compete, and that there is some concern about the question of predatory pricing.

I would want to say, Mr. Speaker, that we are here in large measure, in a non-contentious atmosphere, trying to lend some sort of intellectual weight to the essential issue which has been perplexing the Caribbean, in terms of regional air transport. Where do we go from here? As the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central said, it was an issue which has plagued us, Sir, virtually from the time there was a LIAT.

In an effort to try to deal adequately with this question, I think we would be in danger of doing a disservice to this debate, Sir, if we did not seek to put it in the context of some of the economic realities facing the Caribbean.
2.05 p.m.

I am of the view that one of those critical economic realities must be the question of our ability to deal with anti-competitive business practices in the region. Why do I say that? In the same way that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South makes the point that a genuine case can be made in favour of LIAT that there is the case of predatory pricing, I believe that the competitors with LIAT, those in the private sector in particular, may make a case on the basis of subsidies and on what they may perceive to be irregularities which operate to their detriment within the marketplace.

We as a region have to recognise soon that the Caribbean cannot speak in the context, as we have done in this House today, about building a Pan Caribbean Financial institution, a PAN Caribbean Aviation Enterprise, a Pan Caribbean Cruise Enterprise or any form of Pan Caribbean business without speaking also in the context of what is in the best interest of the investor and how the investor protects his efforts at investing and what is in the best interest of the consumer and how we can most effectively and adequately protect the consumer. That is why I believe it would be remiss for us to conduct this debate in the context of an anti-competitive business practice and looking at the effect of anti-competitive business practices within the Caribbean.

Sir, Protocol 8 speaks to this issue. Regional competition policy is something which has been suggested as the ideal solution, and I wholeheartedly agree with that. But the reality of the Caribbean today, as I stand before you, is that Jamaica has its own national legislation in that regard.

We only passed ours last year. St. Vincent and the Grenadines, if I remember correctly, has such legislation, but outside of that, the Caribbean is bereft of that kind of protective legislation. The question then is, how does the investor operating within the regional environment gain adequate measures of protection and comfort? How does he know that he would not be subjected to the same issues which are now being raised in aid on behalf of LIAT? Then there is the question of the consumer. How is the consumer to be made satisfied that his own interest when he is aggrieved can be redressed?

Therefore, we come back to the question of the need for us even as we now speak in the context of lending more money to that vital institution... I do not think any of us in here will shy away from the urgency behind protecting LIAT and its operations. I think that we have all recognised that LIAT, like BWIA, has a brand name and a reputation which is critical not only within the region but also outside of the region. Even as we think in terms of what happens tomorrow, I think that we must be contextualising what we do and how we approach it within the framework of a regional competition policy in order to more effectively balance and promote the rights and interests of those who we want to invest and those who are ultimately the consumers, who really and truly in large measure when we speak of LIAT are going to be the Caribbean people. I am, therefore, concerned that some attention has to be given at an early stage to the provision of technical assistance where necessary to help to get...

The Europeans refer to some of their countries as "The Sick Men of Europe" when they were trying to build their union, I do not know if we want to use that kind of terminology, but we need to make sure that we lend as much technical assistance as possible to those countries that really need that type of assistance in order to get the critical pieces of legislation in place. Not only do we speak then of the legislation but there must be some assistance also in the context of administering and investigating and ultimately enforcing so that all those critical areas of administration, investigation and enforcement are effectively buttressed by an effort which is aimed at promoting the best possible competition practice within the region.

I do not think that we can ever escape the fact that the Caribbean today, when one speaks in the context of promoting broad-based enterprises such as LIAT, must speak in the context of protecting the investor from persons, groups or entities which will be trying to do a similar thing, but which can perhaps have a larger capital base and greater international reach in the context of the aviation industry which can then virtually submerge and knock that which we are trying to develop out of the marketplace. It will do the region no good if we close our eyes to it for much longer.

Mr. Speaker, I am rising really to register what I think is a pressing concern. There can be no real resuscitation of the regional air transport initiative, it does not matter how much money we put into it and how much goodwill, unless we do so within the context of an effective framework of a regional competition policy. I think that Europe sets an example in this regard. It aimed, at its outset, at protecting the union from anti-competitive practices. The United States of America obviously has done excellent work in this field. We have draft legislation at the CARICOM level, and even if it does not come to pass at a national level, in the same way that we have our fair competition legislation here – that all of the islands of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) did not speedily get theirs implemented – then at least at the national level, there must be a greater degree of vigour and vitality lent to the whole issue, otherwise the reality is that the world will overtake us.

Even as we are entering into a number of multilateral and even bilateral arrangements of a trading nature, this competition policy issue continues to raise its head. For some strange reason, we in the Caribbean are not paying the kind of critical attention that we need to pay to what is really one of the most fundamental of issues when we are talking about building the kind of business and commercial framework that we are trying to urge and to lend financial support to.

I think Barbados has to be prepared to play a leading role in this regard not only from a financial perspective, but from the perspective of our strategic interest. At its core is the fact that LIAT is essential to our strategic interest insofar as a tourism-based economy is concerned. We cannot continue forevermore hereafter to allow that strategic interest to be toyed with lightly by persons who may or may not be seized of the urgency of getting ahead in the best possible and the most efficacious nature. Therefore, I think that we have to try to lend as much assistance and leadership as possible within the region in this regard.

I made the point about assistance again because I think that assistance of a technical nature has been advanced by this Government to other countries within the OECS. I do not think I am wrong in saying that the impact of that effort has not resonated as adequately as it should within either the region or here at home.

When we try to create a regional stabilisation fund to help Dominica, it is to be juxtaposed with the kind of lamentations one hears when people complained, even here in Barbados, about the prevalence of persons from Guyana coming to work here or wherever else. We have to recognise that Barbados has a vested interest in making sure that the OECS is as strong as possible because we have been and are and will continue to be the principal beneficiaries of the

exportation of services. I think that is the point the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central made. 2.15 p.m.

In addition to that, we also have to recognise that Barbados is the natural hub and as far as the mind's eye could see, it will continue to be the real hub within the region because in the context of air travel, we provide the linkages to all of the other islands within the Eastern Caribbean. Therefore, I think we have to be prepared to leave no stones unturned in an effort to drive the process or to make sure we have an effective regional competition policy in place as soon as possible.

Sir, I would want to speak to the question of subsidising those routes which are deemed to be less financially beneficial. There is a significant weakness that certain islands of the Caribbean would have, insofar as their capacity to attract air travel is concerned. There is no doubt in my mind that someone leaving Dominica, with a view to come into Barbados to do a job interview, would have to try to get here and perhaps, in most legitimate ways, would be seeking to get here. There is no doubt in my mind that persons who ply their trade would leave Dominica and Grenada and try to get here because of the fact that this is the nature of our economy and they could do better if they come here to ply their trade.

Sir, the reality is that the island of Dominica does not have the ability to command the same kind of international air transport that Barbados does and the route Barbados/Dominica might, therefore, be less profitable than the route Barbados/Trinidad and Tobago. What then do we do? We have to make sure there is an ease and adequate measure of access to the island of Dominica and to other countries that are similarly affected. Therefore, within CARICOM, I think it is necessary in the same way that we are prepared to be subsidising LIAT's operation and lending assistance of various nature to BWIA and when necessary to Air Jamaica, we must be prepared to subsidise those routes which are deemed to be less commercially viable. I think that is the vision that the Minister of Tourism has. I think it is a good and useful approach because, at the end of the day, we have to recognise that no stone should be left unturned in an effort to make sure that the region's economic effort in a Pan-Caribbean business endeavour is promoted collectively. Therefore, I think the question of subsidies is one which ought not to attract any criticism.

Sir, the issue of immigration policy has raised its head. I am not so sure to what extent that was raised because the issue of that policy in this debate seems to be more a reflection of a semi-circular form of thinking than anything else. It cannot be a straight form of thinking and leads one nowhere.

The fact of the matter is that we are not seeking to provide any impediments to the movement of labour and it is hard to understand how that view could have been arrived at in this context. At the time, the regional climate simply did not accommodate full liberalisation in the context of movement of labour.

There is no other Government in the Caribbean that has the proud record that this Barbados Labour Party Government has, of trying to advance that principle of liberalisation and enforcement of the protocols and the advancement of the whole concept of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy. The reality that we cannot escape from is that when we speak of the movement of labour, it is not going to be a one-way route. Equally, it is the route of operation with which we can only comply, at the speed at which our partners are prepared to embrace. In a real sense, one's hands are tied.

We have to make sure that Jamaica is fully on board. We have to make sure that Guyana is on board. We have to make sure that there are a lot of people who have their own vested domestic interest to protect are on board. They must understand that, in the same way, we as Barbadian people must come to understand there is a lot of good for us when we go into the region in the same way we should open our doors and our minds to the idea of free movement. There equally are similar benefits to be found in other countries and in other ways.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps that is the problem, that as practical persons of public affairs, many people did not embrace the reality involved in the free movement of people. Again, as practical persons in public affairs, we have to try to promote the benefits.

Sir, I do not think it gets us very far when we go back to a discussion in 1996 which, comparatively speaking, is in the early days of this initiative to resuscitate the regional movement with urgency. There were sleepy, tired, boring and dull days in CARICOM in the 1980s and 1990s. That we must not forget. It was the Prime Minister of Barbados who made an overture which had caused eyes to be opened and breaths to be drawn agape because of the new vigour and vitality which he was seeking to bring to the question of regional integration in both an economic and political sense within the region. Therefore, like I said, it is semi-circular thinking which does not get us very far. It is an ill-conceived form of criticism and is not discerning of the well and high intellectual fibre of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Sir, I would like to reiterate that it would seem to me that we are doing ourselves an injustice if we do not seek to approach the question of the region's air travel and air

transport within the context of its broader economic framework and within the context of a modern and progressive framework for competition policy.

Sir, I am of the view that competition policy within the Caribbean is something that we should approach with urgency and vigour because, to my way of thinking, it is the core to which we have to go in the future. We must ensure that we must protect the interest of our consumers and equally, we must ensure that the interest of those who are our investors and would-be investors, more particularly those who are competitors within the marketplace, could all feel a sense of certainty that their interest and well-being are safely guarded. With those words, I thank you.

Mr. M. L. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this august Chamber to lend my voice to this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, before I present my arguments, I would wish to express my sincere gratitude to the people of St. Philip North for giving me the opportunity to rise in this august Chamber to speak on the behalf of their interest. I believe that this debate is, indeed, central to the issue of regional integration. I believe it is also central to the survival of our tourism industry.

It is my humble submission that the tourist product and the movement towards regional integration depend on a strong financial and well-operated regional airline. That is the premise on which I would want to start.

Mr. Speaker, I have heard Honourable Members mention the fact that the regional airline is also central to the movement of labour in the Caribbean and that too, I must support.
2.25 p.m.

Sir, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy with its principles of the movement of labour is important to the development of the various economies in the Caribbean. I must also say that this debate must not be devoid of any sentiments of our immigration laws because for there to be total movement of labour in the Caribbean, I respectfully submit that there must be some harmonisation of the immigration laws throughout the region.

It is against that background that other countries have stressed harmonisation of immigration law. I join hand in hand with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and other Honourable Members on This Side and beg to differ with Honourable Members on the Other Side that harmonisation of immigration law is not central to this debate and the development of the tourism product.

Sir, I prefaced the opening of my presentation by saying this Bill and debate is vital for the existence of the survival of the tourism product. The two are interrelated because for a regional airline to survive the region must have a strong tourism product and there must be a strong commitment to the development of the tourism industry in the various countries.

I will not oppose everything that my learned friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South said because this Bill is important. There are social ramifications that will result if the regional airline had collapsed and if the Government had not rushed like a good Samaritan and lent a helping hand to the survival of it.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South said that any immediate closure of the airline would impact on employment in this country and that we certainly do not want any social problems of employment at this stage of our development or for unemployment to rise to any level.

Sir, there must be a vision in relation to the tourism product. We on This Side believe that the best brains must be found to assist in the survival and development of the tourism product throughout the region.

Sir, I want to move away from the Bill for a while because there are some students who have graduated in specialities in the area of tourism and hospitality and many of them have complaints that they have not been able to participate in this industry even though they have the expertise and the specialities to assist in the development of this industry. I am saying respectfully that if this product is developed it will redound to the benefit of the regional airlines.

I want to say further that there must be intense marketing of the tourism product both at the regional and local level. There is a view that there should be a marriage between Caribbean tourism organisations and other private sector led initiatives so that we can market our product.

Sir, management and standards of service must also be stressed. The Leader of the Opposition earlier in his presentation mentioned sports tourism. He mentioned the Cricket World Cup to be held in 2007 and that sports tourism has benefitted a number of economies. A great deal of money can be earned to benefit the various regional economies and we on This Side will not oppose any attempt to sustain a regional institution like LIAT because, philosophically, we on This Side are in the forefront of Caribbean integration and we have a duty and responsibility to make sure that there is no attempt to weaken the process of regional integration.

I finally submit that we must look at other areas because we do not know what will happen in the future. I agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he mentioned other areas that the Ministry of Tourism should look at but, Sir, we are not here to do the job of the Minister of Tourism but are willing to give the Minister alternatives because at some point in time there must be the politics of cooperation. Sir, if we have an alternative that redounds to the benefit to the economy, as an Opposition party and as a responsible party we will lend that alternative to the Other Side, particularly to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

2.35 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, I will also lend some ideas to the Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, finally, there is some relationship between what we are discussing and the tourism product. We must put initiatives in place so that the tourism climate could be one of peace and would give the employee some confidence so that they will have some incentive to be productive because there is an indirect relationship between the productivity of the worker and the development of regional tourism.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that this is my maiden speech and in closing, I side with the Opposition in support of this Bill.

I thank you.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, we are discussing a Bill, which has generally gained the affirmation of This Side. I would not rise to change that particular momentum to what is being said.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Sir, as a young person within the Caribbean, I am somewhat dissatisfied by the inertia and the inaction of the Governments of the Caribbean when dealing with issues such as the one before us here today.

Sir, LIAT (1974) Limited is a fatality to some great degree to the inertia of Caribbean Governments, not Caribbean people, Caribbean Governments who by and large want to maintain their own yam field in the wider Caribbean area. The failure of LIAT to emerge as a viable entity is also the failure of Caribbean governance. I do not want to be caught up in any great nostalgic attachment to LIAT because

that will not get us anywhere, all it does is link us to some elements of inefficiencies and ineffectiveness and as a result that brings failure before us.

Mr. Speaker, I would have been pleased if the Honourable Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, had before him the business plan or strategic plan for the rationalisation of LIAT. Even though the sums being called on from the people of Barbados for the guarantee is relatively small, it is the kind of pocket change that the Honourable Member for St. James Central carries around on his person in unknown places, it is still an important piece of money for the people of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Sir, when we urge the people of Barbados to place money into any entity, be it a national or regional entity, we have to give them sufficient basis to do so.

There was a lot of hue and cry and persons who took diversion views to that of my friend and colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, when he sought to espouse on the issue of immigration as integral to certain entities in the Caribbean being viable. Persons got up and spoke and tried to suggest that he was trekking a path that was basically irrational.

I would hope, even as I trek this path a bit, and I align myself to the comments of Honourable Members on This Side who also trekked that path, that it would not be determined as rational, but that persons would see the connectivity or the nexus and the synergies of the movement of people. Airlines move people from point to point and the more we can free up the movement of people, the better for airlines such as LIAT, the small regional airline, with their financial underpinnings, *et cetera*.

Sir, it must be stated that we need the freedom of movement of people within the Caribbean. I am not talking about the total dismantling of structures at your gate to sift out those bringing behaviours that we do not want in Barbados, St. Vincent, Dominica or Jamaica, because we are not talking about dismantling our security systems.

Sir, somehow, I got the impression that when some persons spoke on immigration, they got the view that we were talking about dismantling the security systems of these individual states, and that is not the point we are making. The more fundamental point that we are making is that, in order for the viability of the regional airline, by and large, to carry Caribbean people to and fro, there must be that clearing house for Caribbean people to move freely.

I administer a voluntary organisation in Barbados, and the cost of moving 25 young men or women from Barbados to Antigua, is just as much as moving them from Barbados to Miami. Sir, we also have to look at the cost of moving our people. We have to determine if the airline can be viable by mass volume movement of people, making Caribbean people contact with each other more and more, or create the kind of isolation tactics that regional Governments want to keep our people separate and divided, because they want to manage their own bailiwick, each and every time.

These are the issues that we have to face, rather than discussing a LIAT in isolation from the wider and broader issues of Caribbean integration. This inertia is really destroying the airline in itself. Sir, I do not know the attitudes, skills, abilities, talents, financial know-how or social orientation of anybody who manages LIAT, but I am going to say to you, Mr. Speaker, that if an institution continues to implode after implosion, there must be something wrong.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: It has to be and I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South would tell us, if we have the kind of quality that is essential at this time to make the airline viable. I am told by the Honourable Minister who introduced the Bill that some time some issue was quoted and the people bought only \$9 million, then, we had to go to the Caribbean Bank (Barbados) Limited, or whatever, and get \$22 million. People get away from investing and putting their resources in an airline. Why? When we keep away from things, it is because we are scared and there is lack of confidence in what is going on.
2.45 p.m.

I think it is the duty or responsibility of the Minister who introduced this Bill, to give us further explanations. We are not discussing the persons. I do not know any of them and I do not care to know one. What I care about is that a regional institution such as LIAT, which is so eloquently spoken about, can have the kind of intellectual, managerial administrative confidence and ability to carry the process forward, on behalf of Caribbean people.

It is not the soup kitchen of any Honourable House, or any individual Parliament that we are discussing. We are discussing an institution that dates back almost twenty-nine years which should have grown up long ago.

I know of the issues of September 11, 2001, that is the linchpin on which all of our arguments are based. It becomes like an excuse for failure. Therefore, we need to move away from using September 11, 2001 as an excuse for failure and look for more promising descriptions to best satisfy the agenda of Caribbean people at this point and at this stage.

We have to search our minds to see if we need, within the Caribbean, particularly within Barbados and the OECS, competitive airline relationships or complimentary airline relationships, which, yes, must make some profit or break even. The profit factor is an important factor in mobilising resources and in making some people assumably work better. That might be a 'no-no', in some instances, but we have to see if we need a complimentary or competitive relationship, within the region for our airlines.

If LIAT is to work within a complimentary framework, then the business plan must be structured in such a way. If it is to work within a competitive framework, then another business plan must be structured, in order to deal with that reality.

Inter-island tourism is a point I alluded to, when I talked about moving the young players. The Leader of the Opposition spoke about moving the young people from island to island. How does that fit into LIAT's business plan? How does that fit into the whole notion of the integrating of Caribbean people?

We are caught up in what I call the greatest Caribbean dilemma, and that is talk. There is a lot of talk but then we get delayed action, if any action at all is taken.

The Caribbean Single Market and Economy and, I know he is not in the Chamber but since he made those comments, I would have to reflect on them, that what he called, the freshman Leader of Barbados, in 1994, took on the challenge of leading the CSME.

Sir, beyond certain limited structures, the CSME is basically moribund, because we seem to have to drag people screaming into some sense of the Caribbean's current reality. That is what is happening so there is no need to elevate anyone in this matter.

What I am seeing and what I am perceiving to some extent, is a whole atmosphere of laziness and people who do not care. Something will buck up on us and, therefore, that will cause it to happen. When something bucks up on us, we topple. We are not using policies developed in other places. We are not refashioning them quickly enough to meet the needs of Caribbean people. LIAT is not being rationalised quickly enough, neither is BWIA.

I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South loves to travel and sit among those whom he considers to be his own. His natural inclination is to be among Prime Ministers and Deputy Prime Ministers discussing matters of this type.

Sir, I want when he returns – and I am very serious about this, as I am not a man known for smiling – that he brings to this Honourable Chamber and to the people of Barbados, not the ‘flack’ that is discussed, but the substance which will guide Barbadian people and Caribbean people to some common pursuit and common purpose. This is simple. That is all we ask for, not the *hors d’oeuvres* that they might eat and drink, from time to time.

What I am doing from my vantage point, Mr. Speaker, is really encouraging sensible pursuit of policy, sensible systems to make Caribbean institutions viable and sensible to Caribbean people.

LIAT must not be discarded but at the same time, it cannot continue to be an albatross on the financial purses of the people of Barbados. I will suggest that this current effort must be one which must be rigorously and vigorously pursued. I would not want to see in another six months or in another year or two, that the Honourable Minister or somebody else, comes back to this Honourable House with the cries and lamentations that LIAT has not done anything to improve its particular viability.

These cries really become burdensome and annoying. Let us seriously analyse, and I want the Honourable Member and those persons who are in charge at LIAT to know that we are serious when we commit our monies and resources to Caribbean entities.

I do not want to wax too far but, Mr. Speaker, as has been said by my friend and colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, the Democratic Labour Party was in the forefront of integral integration, that is why, even as we discuss this LIAT Bill, I am concerned and frustrated that a lot of the regional systems are being denied.

We do not have a common policy or protocol on fishing within the Caribbean. We have nothing at all, and discussing LIAT is only tangential to the Caribbean reality that unless we move, and move quickly, we are going to be like lost sheep in a wide pasture that has already been grazed by somebody else, whether they are South Koreans or Japanese.

2.55 p.m.

Therefore, I want to hear the Government speak loudly and fervently. Occasionally, a threat must be used because regardless of what the others say in the wider Caribbean region, this little 166 square miles rock is integral to the viability of the entire Caribbean.

We, on This Side, support this Bill, we will vote ‘Yea’, not because we have to but because we recognise the importance of LIAT within this whole situation.

I want the voices to be strident and loud because even though we are regionalists, we are first nationalists. One cannot be a regionalist without first being a nationalist. Barbados comes first and when my brothers and sisters in parts of Barbados scream from being jailed and abused, then we have to stand up as men and women and say that our brothers and sisters bleed and whether you are in Antigua and Barbuda, or Trinidad and Tobago, you cannot have it your way. That must be our message.

Therefore, just like all the other Honourable Members on This Side who have spoken, I too, support this Bill, not because the whip is on – because I have been known, Mr. Speaker, just like you have, to use the whip for necessary correction, order and discipline – but this is my fervent and heartfelt feeling that we must support LIAT, but we must not come back here again begging because LIAT has once again failed.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, first of all let me thank all of the Honourable Members who spoke in this debate. I appreciate the willingness across the political divide to aid in helping this regional institution, such a necessary enterprise as it is, through this very difficult time.

Sir, I think some of the Honourable Members of the Opposition either did not listen, as is the practice of most Opposition Members that enter this Chamber, or that the matters that we spoke about went through one ear and came out of the other, or went above their heads.

I will reiterate for the benefit of them so that they understand the issues that we dealt with and the issues that were outlined because they clearly were not listening.

First of all, I want to reiterate the principle and why we are seeking at this time as a Government to back LIAT. LIAT is an important regional institution that is above simple economic issues and has a level of social fulfilment to deal with in terms of the people of the region.

In addition to that, LIAT is central to our economic fortunes. That is marked by the contributions that LIAT has made thus far to the fortunes of the people of this region and will continue to make in the future.

It is important that Barbados, as a leader within the integration movement in the region, continues to show the level of leadership that is needed at this time. Therefore, it is important, as some of the Honourable Members on That Side have said, that we help our brothers and sisters in the region because, at this time, some of them are not able to

help themselves. This particular enterprise, LIAT (1974) Limited, is fundamental to helping them through their most difficult times.

At the centre of any good relationship, there must be sound communication. In this particular regard, if you consider the partnership that we forge with the members in CARICOM to be a serious relationship for the rest of us and for the rest of the region, then LIAT must be a viable regional airline that we have some measure of control over as the people representatives and must be at the centre of being able to forge a greater partnership for us in the region. I do not have anymore nostalgic leanings toward LIAT than any other person in this Chamber. The fundamental point is that at this time we need to step to the crease and bat on the behalf of the people of the region.

It is vital to our strategic interest in Barbados particularly our strategic economic interest that we help LIAT at this time. The Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) is the only grouping within the region with which we have a positive trade balance at this time, so it is important from a fundamental trade standpoint as well that we seek to keep this entity viable.

The other important issue is the question of simple arithmetic. We are one of the major shareholders of LIAT with a substantial shareholding. It would cost us in the region of EC\$200 million to wrap up LIAT at this time. We can either continue at this time to seek to put up this small portion of money and seek to ensure LIAT's viability, or we can wrap up the enterprise and then pay our portion of the \$200 million which is going to be substantially burdensome on us as an economy. Beyond that, there will be severe repercussions – the Honourable Member for St. Philip North outlined this – of having 100 people unemployed at this time.

Sir, I have outlined the conditions for the continued support of LIAT. There are conditionalities under which we will continue to support LIAT. We cannot continue to support a LIAT that is not viable for ever and ever. Therefore, LIAT must prove within a specific period of time, by the end of this year, that it is on a sound and viable footing. That is contingent upon the Government and the other shareholders meeting the obligation that was pledged to LIAT in the first place.

Mr. Speaker, the problem with LIAT is that it has always been undercapitalised from the beginning, over and above that, every time there was an attempt to recapitalise LIAT, the shareholders did not meet their obligations, or if they did meet them, they did not meet them in a timely fashion that would have ensured LIAT's viability. Regional governments have not been meeting their obligation to this

particular entity which we like to boast about when we talk about regional institutions and which we like to fly about on. When it comes down to the 'nitty-gritty' of putting your hand in your pocket and putting your money where your mouth is, that has been the failing.

3.05 p.m.

The reason we have reached this stage, is that LIAT has found itself in the state in which it is because of the state of international and regional airlines and the only way that we are able to get over this particular area is if we are going to be able, for the first time, to put our hands in our pockets and to pay what is owed and to seek to create a basis for its viability.

Mr. Speaker, LIAT has already proven that it could be put on a very viable footing. In addition, I want to make LIAT's Business Plan, 2001 to 2004, a document of the House. The Business Plan is sub-headed, "Cooperation: The Key to Survival". Sir, if you would indulge me just to say that in the beginning of the document, the last paragraph reads:

"The plan assumes an immediate resolution of the financial restructuring requirement of the airline."

Sir, anywhere else that we go with this airline we must first assume that all of the issues in relation to its restructuring and the paying of those monies owed, must be put on the table.

"It assumes that the Government shareholders accept the debt restructuring proposals at the next shareholders meeting. This immediately opens up the way to attracting fresh equity capital into the company, which is desperately needed to address the fleet situation and the working capital need."

This is the issue, one cannot start the ball rolling towards viability, unless we are prepared to meet our obligations. In Barbados' case, it is easier for us to be able to do it because of our financial situation as a country but when one considers some of the other shareholders in the region and their own problems, one would understand why LIAT is being faced with this problem.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to that, the rationalisation effort in the region must continue and the idea that we are seeking to ferment is that of having ultimately one 'airline' for the region. This means a total economic union between all of the entities in the region. I heard mention of other airlines such as Bahamas Air and Cayman Air and one wonders whether these are actually dreams or practical. The issue is that these operating airlines are all struggling and if

there could be some concept of rationalisation. Sir, for example, if most of their baggage handling come into the airport under one company, where they could share their resources, purchase fuel, *et cetera*, which could all be done in a collective way. It also creates a basis for one airline, which necessarily does not have to have the name Caribbean Airline but there could be a holding entity that holds these airlines, allows them to continue to trade under their old trading names, which already has equity within the marketplace and that creates a basis for rationalisation of the action within the airline pool, which is the objective.

Sir, the point is that as small commuting airlines which make money across the world, we are those that are connected to larger fleets of airlines.

Sir, there is another important principle that must be adhered to and that is the concept of subsidisation. There is no way in this region where we are going to have a viable commercial entity, particularly so within the Eastern and South Eastern Caribbean, unless we are prepared to subsidise, in some way, that component of the development of the airline.

Sir, for the first time Sunday last, governments have taken a serious initiative to create that one airline, that was when the meeting agreed in Trinidad and Tobago to form the holding company in that country and to have it incorporated within 14 days. Sir, the next step is to name the technical coordinator who, along with the technical committee for oversight reasons, would seek to create the concept of a new regional airline.

Sir, I believe these determine the requirements for the holding company and that we would explore the possibility of a relationship with a financial equity like that of the International Financial Corporation to be able to get the ball rolling.

Sir, the point is that we are not seeking to eliminate anyone from the pool of efforts to create that one airline but there must be a first step that sees regional governments putting their money where their mouths are to start the ball rolling.

Sir, I believe the initiative that we took in Trinidad and Tobago on Sunday is the first time, in my experience, that I have seen a positive, structured move to create this airline for the region. I think this is worthy of support by everyone else. We have started the ball rolling by being able to create a holding company and to put someone in place to be able to move us to the next step of creating a regional airline.

There was also the issue that no one could have guaranteed that because the ball has begun to roll, everyone would pay their money. We have always asked the question, if all else fails, then what? Sir, if all else fails, we would work towards encouraging the private sector interest to invest in a new airline entity which, in some way, Government would support and subsidise as we now do for the large international carriers. Sir, we must give this effort our best shot and there is no time like the present to be able to start the ball rolling on these things.

The Cabinet of Barbados has taken a decision that we would engage private entities in this region, particularly as it relates to our own economic fortunes, to start the ball rolling in order to create a private sector lending entity. In addition to that, Honourable Members have raised issues such as business plans.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has raised the issue of sports tourism and the World Cup 2007. Let me say that I do believe it is important that a viable regional airline is going to be important in any decision that we make to hosting the World Cup 2007. Let me also say that this goes beyond any regional airline, there are some deep considerations in this particular exercise that we, as the principals involved, have not come close to addressing. We have had meetings with the Barbados Cricket Association but I believe there are some very broad issues that we have not taken into consideration in relation to hosting a World Cup in 2007 in this region.
3.15 p.m.

Sir, I take the point that a viable regional airline must be fundamental to the issue of being able to hold an effective World Cup in 2007.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West made the most matured speech I have ever heard him make and we on This Side agree with him. He raised the issue relating to hotels and tourism. Sir, this Government of Barbados has been most proactive in seeking to shore up tourism but if anyone wants to hold the Government responsible for the viability of hotels, they must be aware that Governments do not manage any hotels.

The Government of Barbados made \$10 million available to hotels in Barbados after September 2001. We have tabled a new Tourism Development Act and it was the first time in 40 years that any Administration had sought to alter the legislative and regulatory framework under which the industry operates, therefore, creating a basis for viability.

Mr. Speaker, entities must also work to help themselves to shore up their own fortunes. This Government has opened

the doors to the private sector in the way they were never opened before because in 40 years, under both Administrations, nothing was ever done.

Sir, it is laughable when people blame the Government for places like Rockley Hotel and Sam Lord's Castle because Government's job is to put mechanisms in place for people to come to the country but I want to make it very clear that the Government does not run hotels or airlines.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South said that all airlines should increase their marketing efforts because LIAT is of fundamental importance to the region and we on This Side also believe that too. Sir, there is a regional marketing movement going on but it is not working in the way we envisioned because of private sector involvement but I want to assure the Chamber that our commitment to the marketing movement will be shored up.

Sir, there is a clause in our Act that for the first time allows entities to be able to claim a tax benefit for ownership plan of different entities within the tourism sector. This is the first time that any Administration has sought to push owners to create a basis for ownership and to get more productivity from their owners as outlined in the New Tourism Development Act. It is one of the initiatives that the Opposition criticises although they cannot give any new ideas because they suffer from a terrible illness called newness.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South also raised the issue in relation to legislation to deal with predatory pricing and people believe that one of the reasons LIAT has been forced in this position is because of the system of predatory pricing by its main competitors within the region. As a matter of fact, two airlines which were also in competition with LIAT also suffered from the malaise of predatory prices and had to exit the market before LIAT.

Sir, Antigua and Barbuda and Barbados already have legal drafts to create a basis in the New Civil Aviation Act to deal with the issue of predatory pricing and any other unfair business practices as it relates to airlines for the region. The point I want to make is that we are working to create a basis in law to harmonise the legislation across the region to deal with all issues relating to unfair competition and at the centre is the issue of predatory pricing.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central raised the issue of inertia of the Caribbean Governments to deal with regional institutions like LIAT but, as the Honourable Member said, LIAT's failure is the failure of regional Governments to do their job. I have said earlier that one of the problems is that shareholders have not met their obligations over time to shore up the airline. I believe we are now on the right road.

The Honourable Member also spoke about the cost of moving people through the region and we can now understand why we need LIAT and competition because if we left the fortunes of the region to one airline in a monopoly situation, a ticket might cost more than one to go to New York or Miami. This is why we need to be able to exercise some control or guidance over our fortune. The twenty-five boys and girls which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central spoke about who are now finding it difficult to get across the region might find it more difficult in the future to do so.

Sir, like the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, I was once charged with carrying teams across the region and I know the problems that can be encountered. No one wants to put up the money to help but yet they criticise you for the amount of members of the team you are able to take overseas. Sir, this institution can now chart a new path. We are now able to put up our money to ensure viability across the region and seek to create the basis for a merger. Sir, the quality is there to take LIAT to another level but we must meet our obligations. In this regard, the Government and the people of Barbados must show leadership.

With those few words I beg that this Bill be read a second time.

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

3.25 p.m.

COMMITTEE

On the motion of Hon. N. A. LYNCH, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

Clauses 1 to 6 were called and passed.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: I beg to move, Sir, that the Schedule be the Schedule to the Bill.

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. N. A. LYNCH seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. N. A. LYNCH, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the Bill was read a third

time and passed and cited as the *LIAT (1974) Limited (Guarantee of Interest) Bill, 2003*.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – RESOLUTION THAT THE HONOUR- ABLE HOUSE CONGRATULATE THE GOVERN- MENT FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE AND PROGRESSIVE NATURE OF GOVERN- MENT'S PROGRAMME AS OUTLINED IN THE SPEECH OF HIS EXCELLENCY

WHEREAS the Throne Speech of His Excellency the Governor-General outlining the Government's Programme for this Parliamentary Session 2003-2008 was delivered on 6 June, 2003:

AND WHEREAS in an increasingly borderless world and one of heightened concern for global peace and security the Parliament of Barbados will have to introduce and manage the most complex and far-reaching changes to our economy and society since Barbados has become an Independent Nation:

AND WHEREAS the Government reaffirms its commitment to the full development of our nation as a prosperous, stable and well-ordered democracy, governed by the rule of law, and exemplified by the effective participation of all sectors, classes and creeds in aspects of our political, social and economic affairs:

AND WHEREAS the Government reaffirms that our people, their gainful employment, the meeting of their needs and aspirations and the full engagement of their creativity and enterprise, constitute our chief and highest purpose:

AND WHEREAS the Government accepts the responsibility to ensure that our nation functions in the global economy and wider international society on terms of our own choosing and in a manner that reflects and preserves our Barbadian identity, and that reinforces the standing of Barbados as a nation whose voice is heard and respected among the community of nations:

AND WHEREAS the Government recommit itself to working in harmony with our neighbours in the Caribbean for the full and successful integration and upliftment of our region in all of its endeavours:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House take note of the Speech of His Excellency and of the determination of the Government to implement the provisions referred to therein.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this Honourable House congratulate the Government for the

comprehensive and aggressive nature of the Government's programme for this Parliamentary Session as outlined in the Speech of His Excellency.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, this is a very historic moment for me. It makes me reflect on one of the tireless liberators of the 1930s who said; 'Today is a funny night.' Today a Pan-Africanist stands in this Parliament leading a debate commenting on a Throne Speech in a sovereign black state.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, Her Majesty would be in a state of glee to witness the irony of this special event. Sir, although the task falls upon me under Private Members' Business, it is a resolution of a sense of sadness and a sense of joy but my task is to represent the people of Barbados.

Sir, the onus falls upon me today to give my perspective of the mission ahead of the Barbados Government.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if I would bat with the consistency of a Campbell, who no longer plays for the West Indies, or if I would bat with the inconsistency of Lara, who still remains on the team. My speech might not be judged for its quantitative content but I hope that it has some qualitative merit in the presentation.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I want to pause because I have been guilty of a very serious offence. To the people who are very special to my heart found it fit, once more, to send me to these Chambers to represent their interest, I want to express my gratitude.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I want to express my gratitude and profound thanks to the people of my community, St. Michael East.

Mr. Speaker, the party has had a long history of struggle and tough times to this political dispensation. This dispensation was born out of a history of struggle of the 1930s and being a small entity of a population of over 95 per cent of people of African decent we have always shown that great resilience as a people. This party has always shown the capability and the commitment to the good people of Barbados, especially the people from whom this party emerged.

Sir, we have had battles out of the great depression and the struggles of the 1930s, we have fought through the unfortunate situation of the West Indian Federation, we have fought through the difficulties of 1930s and this party survived and is one of the oldest parties in the Eastern Caribbean. I do not believe that I would be deterred in any way by the major challenges that stand before us as a consequence or the externalities from within the international arena. We recognise that it is going to be a tough fight but I believe that we have the capability and the kind of acumen in the leadership of this political party to deal with the difficulties that are ahead.

Sir, I would hope that the Opposition, which stands today, and I want to be very objective in my view, representing the people who have supported them, would also possess great qualities and would be able to bring quality dialogue and suggestions to the national debate that will emerge from these august Chambers.
3.35 p.m.

The economic affairs of this country, Sir, as I indicated, have been managed prudently and up to the mid-1990s, we were seeing an average economic growth of 3 per cent. I believe that we are capable of putting the economy back to that same average again.

This national charter which we have, Sir, must be grounded in a strong sense of nation building and national consciousness that clearly allows us to understand that we are a unique people, and we ought to chart a path for ourselves in the dynamics of world affairs.

Sir, for quite a long time, the Caribbean has suffered as a consequence of policies designed and structured in the metropolitan world. Today, we have institutions such as the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Free Trade Areas of the Americas (FTAA) and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).

These institutions with their chosen groups, sit down and plan the destiny of small independent states in the western world. They use different methodologies, from time to time, to carry out the expansionist programme that has always been in the forefront of the imperialists of the world.

Sir, for example, in 1984 black people were not given any choice during the divisions and partition of the African Continent, and the resources of the African continent. At the Berlin Conference, Bismark sat down and sliced up the territory and gave it to whom he wanted to give it, and they gave it to the European people.

There was a man called Monroe, a former President of the United States of America, with a doctrine known as the

Monroe Doctrine, which was an expansionist programme. When the United States wanted to extend its political and economic powers beyond the 13 seaboard states, Monroe's Doctrine allowed them to reach as far as they pleased, in order to exploit the natural resources and the human resources of the people of the western world.

As I said before, Sir, they did not do it just in the western world, they went as far as Africa and divided up the lands, over and over again. The strip around the Cape of Good Hope was part of an expansionist policy, in search of silk. All of these were examples of an international group of gangsters, designing programmes to further colonise and even modernise a form of slavery.

It is against those complexities that a Government in a small state like Barbados, with limited natural resources and no minerals or anything, have to design a pragmatic programme, in order to sustain a high quality of life for the people of Barbados.

It is almost like playing Houdini, or playing God, to take our limited resources and a population of more than 260 000, and design a programme, with all of the difficulties and the kind of impact that come from the recolonisation process, and still allow us to be able to sustain the high level quality of life which we maintain.

Sir, I want to go this far because it does not make sense speaking about all the components of the Throne Speech, unless we put it within a global context. Although the Throne Speech might make reference to agriculture, it might make reference to labour, it might make reference to education, it might make reference to all of the social services, these programmes will come to zero, if we do not understand the difficulties and the kind of assertiveness of the powers in the international arena which seek to deny our place within the sun. We must understand that clearly.

I want us to be aware when lobbying on the international arena, not to take for granted the provisions in any agreement by the FTAA, with their own private arrangements with the international bandits, in the form of the multinationals who, in a marriage with the different Governments in the Americas, come together and say, this is how we will carry out this subtle attack on the people in the western world.

This is what it is, because they are looking for markets to dump their goods. As a consequence of the new discoveries in technology and science, as they produce more, they look for markets in the western world to dump their goods. I heard the point made that, as a result of the radical and quick changes in technology, we can have industries coming to the region, Latin America and the Caribbean, because they have outlived their usefulness in the metropol.

This may be true but the reality is that when these industries come to the third world countries, they are short-lived because of the technology itself and the dynamics of science itself, sooner or later, when the markets are saturated within the third world, for example, the phonographic record was a major thing on one occasion. When the factories were sold to black ownership, by the white business people in this country, within a short while, although the equipment was still good and functioning efficiently, the reality was that the stereo sets that they used before were changing.

Sir, although you could produce the records, with the new equipment that was coming in – and I want to cite this example – the demand for the actual phonographic record declined rapidly. So although it may have brought profit in the short run, in the long run, the increase and improvement in technology has made that kind of equipment obsolete.

I want to make this point, Sir, because I believe that for any Government's programme within the dynamics of the present world order, which has been able to sustain itself, credit must be given to the persons who are responsible for the governance of that state. Any Government which can preserve the sovereignty of these states, in these difficult times, must be credited.

I do not know if the Caribbean remains in the state of insularity, in the medium or long term, if you will be able to boast and come back here and speak of sovereign states, because, the Caribbean has a number of leaders who are still very selfish with their egos, so to speak, and who do not want to give up the power which is vested in their hands. 3.45 p.m.

We cannot have Caribbean integration or a union within the region unless each individual State is prepared to make that compromise and give up some aspect of its political power.

One of the unfortunate things is that many people and leaders in the Caribbean seem not to have learnt any lessons from the past. One would believe that as a consequence of the experience of the Federation that Caribbean leaders would have drawn something from the experience of the past and would have made all attempts to ensure that we do not suffer the same fate.

Obviously, the long struggle in order to bring together the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, clearly indicates that there are a number of difficulties in these balkanized states across the region. Because the emphasis is only placed on economics, they do not understand the importance of having a more profound philosophy, thus undermining why it is imperative for the Caribbean countries to come together as one entity.

There must be some understanding of our historic past and we must understand our blood relations. I remember a former leader, I think it was his last speech of the CARICOM Heads of Government, who spoke of those relationships which we have and stated that we ought not to be bound by the concept of guava jelly and hot sauce, but that we should go beyond the linkages that exist because of trade and economics and that we have a responsibility as a people coming from one destiny, one historic experience, to be able to establish a deeper form of integration based on strong philosophical principles of humanity that goes beyond the confinements of economics and trade.

I believe that if Caribbean leaders had an ideology that guided them, then the path to integration would have been much easier and malleable and we would have been able to bring the Caribbean countries together.

In the circumstance, their only interest in uniting is because of the impact of globalisation on the region itself because they were dragging their feet for a long, long time. It is only the impact of globalisation that seems to be pushing them towards an integration, but their selfishness serves as an encumbrance to the success of the formation of an integration.

Sir, the Government of Barbados has a task, as others on the Other Side said before, and rightfully so, to remain at the head of the leadership of this Caribbean integration. It is going to be a very difficult one, but we have to keep on fighting.

I am not going into your territory, Sir, or the Leader of the Opposition's and other persons whose specialty is economics, but this whole doctrine of economics has always been a consistent path as it manifested itself in the Monroe Doctrine and some of the other theories which I spoke about.

This whole concept of the invisible hands and market forces have never been of any great help to small dependant states coming out of slavery. If the State did not play a meaningful role, the Caribbean islands would be in a state of chaos today. The State always had to assert itself in a meaningful way, not in a way that is secondary to the free enterprise system. The lessons of the 1930s tell you why the states had to play a meaningful role. This is not Great Britain.

I do not believe that we should, in a wholesale way, accept the doctrines coming from the metropolitan world that we must open up our markets and allow market forces to determine price and support any trickle down effect on our economy. We have to find a balance somewhere between the radical socialist path of what one might describe as the extremist Marxist and an economy that is flexible enough to accommodate both.

What we need in the Caribbean is a businessman with a social conscience. I know that is a strange philosophy because people believe that business people cannot have a social conscience, but this is contrary to the Ujama principles espoused by Julius Nyerere of Tanzania that a millionaire can have a social conscience, and a poor man can have aspirations of becoming a millionaire with no intention of sharing his wealth with his fellow man even if he wins it through the Lotto, because it is a psychological thing as well. This is the selfishness of some people within the society. We have to transform this society radically. I have been told that I am constrained by 30 minutes, so I want to make a leap.

Sir, one thing that we must admire, and I have said it before, is that with all the challenges ahead, people who are marginalised in the system can still look to a Government, who is humanistic, to ensure that the right social planks are in place as we go through the transition period. Normally, when you want to move from one economic order to another, there is always a lot of trauma and displacement in the society, but we have been very fortunate to have been able to ride it relatively well.

What is most important is that we have elevated the social policies in this country on an equal status, in our mind, with the economic policies. We recognise that we have many people in the society who have been made paupers as a consequence of the conditions of history, not because they are inferior, but because the struggle of history left a number of our people in a state of poverty. The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) report speaks about 35 000 persons who live below the poverty line which is over 7 000 households in Barbados. We have been able to introduce new formations in the system in the form of the Urban Development Commission (UDC) and the Rural Development Commission (RDC) in order to respond to the needs and to address and redress the concerns of those persons.

We have had to put in place a housing programme to make sure that those persons who live in dilapidated houses, and in some cases no houses at all, can now live with a sense of dignity. I have made that point more than once and I will make it a thousand times because it is an attempt to address the needs of the vulnerable in the system because we believe, as socialists, that those persons should be able to enjoy equal status and equal benefits in a society like this. These are people who are in this state not because they were cursed by God, and certainly not because this Government believes that a person ought to live in that state because it is a divine assignment.

3.55 p.m.

In most cases, the persons living in these conditions are the hardest workers in the society. Some persons who

attribute to them that there are persons who use their muscular power but one cannot only use one's muscular power and disengage it from the brain. These persons work in the cane fields of Barbados for a long time and, in some cases, because of the struggles of large families trying to cater to extended families or of families sticking together... The reality is that capitalism cannot work unless it has a repository and reservoir of cheap labour from which to draw and so the system was never made to produce any level of equality and equity with the human capital. We always must, even if it is within the design of education or within the manner of which we stratify because of our values in the society itself, there is always a need to have a broad base at the bottom of the pyramid from which one could draw in order to keep those at the top of capitalism enjoying the sweets in society. Therefore, radical changes must be made.

Sir, I want to speak to issues such as in-borne water toilets, the land for the landless, the ordinary persons who were once labourers on plantations, to persons such as Ras lley and Ras Alcindor, who have been able to move vertically to the status of being entrepreneurs. I would also like to speak to entities such as the Pinelands Creative Workshop and the Israel Lovell Foundation. I would like to thank the former Minister of Agriculture for having the vision to understand the importance of giving an opportunity to the sons of the labour-class for them to come into the mainstream of the economy as a consequence of a modernised and progressive policy.

Sir, the programme speaks to many aspects of the eradication of poverty and to the transformation of the quality of life of the people. It speaks to the Cats Castle Redevelopment Programme, the programme in the Barracks and other places across Barbados that are normally classified by elitists in the society as ghettos. We have over 2 000 derelict buildings in Barbados and in some cases the owners of these lands are unknown and some of them are living overseas. We, therefore, need to put in a very active way, a programme in place to transfer the titles of these lands to ordinary persons who are landless and who have no where to construct their houses.

I know it is because the Minister responsible for administering the programme, based on his historic experiences can empathise with these struggles and have not attempted to alienate himself from the concerns of persons who have passed through the same struggles of survival. The Honourable Member has always been willing to change the demographics of this society and to give an opportunity to the people of Barbados, especially the poor, to be able to live with a sense of pride and dignity. Therefore, I want to compliment him for his unswerving commitment to transforming this society.

Sir, there are other elements of the social policy that we can touch such as increase in pensions and the manner in which it could respond to the destitute in this society. The elderly are the fountains of wisdom and one of the programmes within the Ministry of Social Transformation that is admirable is that of record keeping. Since they were classified as such and since we believe they have something of value to offer, I am looking forward to having records so that in the future, people in this society could go to that memory bank and could learn from the experiences of those of the past.

Sir, I hope that we would never again rise in these Chambers to speak on a Resolution on a Throne Speech and that Both Sides would work harmoniously to establishing Barbados as a republic. Sir, I hope the parameters that I have covered are relatively wide but I know the parameters of this debate are almost universal and, therefore, persons have the flexibility to ramble if they so feel.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Chair for entertaining me. I thank you, Sir.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this Resolution and, in doing so, I must congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Michael East for setting this debate in such a proper philosophical context. The Honourable Member was able to recognise that as we proceed with matters of public administration and in the determination of public policies, we do so, not as an instant generation but we have a history and that we also have a future, a vision and a programme and set of policies which would take us into that future. The Honourable Member has also cast the matter in its proper context that those of us on This Side who were part and parcel of the development of the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto Agenda, 2003 to 2008, did so in a very deliberate and conscious manner. We recognise that in our hands were placed the public's trust and we have respected and accepted this as a contract with the people. We respect that it is to be our guidepost or beacon to help us to chart our path over these next few years.

Sir, I do not want to attempt to match the very high standard of philosophical discourse in which the Honourable Member engaged, I want to speak to the way in which the policies and programmes of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, would contribute to the achievement and to the attainment of the vision and objectives which the Honourable Member has set out.

First of all, the Ministry is charged with the responsibility of preparing our young people to be an active and a productive part of the new economy and society, clearly having set ourselves the objectives of becoming a

fully developed society early in this century, we need to focus on these areas of education, youth affairs and sports.
4.05 p.m.

Therefore, a full transformation and expansion within the education system of Barbados is a fundamental prerequisite for the attainment of those objectives set.

I want to speak to some of those objectives. First, what are we trying to achieve? Obviously, we need to ensure that we create and facilitate the development of individuals that are creative and independent thinkers and who will ask, what, why, how, when and where. It is that spirit of creativity and the willingness to question that has given the world so many wonderful scientific and cultural developments. Sir, we want to ensure that our young people possess and display good communication skills. We cannot forget the wonderful story in the old testament of the tower of Babel of how development in that great place was brought to a halt when the ability to communicate was taken away from them and they ended up speaking different languages.

For the future we need to have our people fully and completely technologically competent, trainable and retrainable because in the future the rate and pace of change will be extremely rapid and the size of the change will be dramatic. One of the necessary skills people of the future will need to have is the ability to retrain themselves to benefit from changes, knowledge and techniques. We need to continue to produce a generation of confident people who are able to understand the social and civic responsibilities.

Sir, key to the attainment of our objectives is the expansion of access to tertiary level education. In Barbados we have an excellent record when compared to the rest of the region and 28 per cent of our school leavers go on to pursue tertiary level education. However, when taken in the context of the developed countries around the world, the United States of America, Canada and Europe for the new services economy we are far behind because it is in the region of 60 per cent and beyond of the school leaving population who are able to pursue tertiary level education.

Sir, our objective is ultimately that we are able to provide opportunities for there to be at least one university graduate in every household by way of expanding access to tertiary level education. We will support the expansion programmes of the University of the West Indies (UWI) particularly those at the Cave Hill campus.

One of the major initiatives we will take in tertiary education in this term will be the establishment of the University College of Barbados which will be a school of applied arts and sciences to offer opportunity for tertiary

education in those areas which are not currently offered at UWI. Sir, it will not be a matter of duplication but will complement and expand opportunities particularly in the area of applied arts and sciences.

We propose a programme for the University College of Barbados which will provide and offer 32 Bachelor Degree programmes, 100 Associate Degree programmes and 22 certificate programmes ranging from hospitality, trade, electronics and things of that nature.

What is more profound is that there will be clear articulation and recognition of the relative programme offered in all levels of the education system. The amalgamation and reconstitution of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Barbados Community College and Erdiston Teachers' Training College as the University College of Barbados, will all usher in a rationalisation in the provision of certification at the post-secondary level which will allow for a smooth transition from institution to institution and from level to level.

The situation that we have inherited, for example, in which someone goes through the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic as his first point of entry into the post-secondary education system will not find it as a dead-end because there is a clear identifiable path which will take him from there to an Associate Degree programme to a Bachelor programme either at the University College of Barbados or UWI or elsewhere in the world. These programmes will provide that opportunity for thousands of Barbadians to benefit from post-secondary education.

This brings us to another major programme. There will be a need to establish an accreditation council because as it stands a number of things happen. In addition to the recognised certificates and other documents offered by CXC, Oxford, Cambridge and UWI and Barbados Community College, we have a number of private institutions offering a range of certification like computer applications, customs procedures and the like. We have to rationalise that and also recognise that with the introduction of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and Article 35(e) of Protocol II dealing with the right of establishment, provision of services and the movement of capital we are obligated to ensure that we do not put any obstacles in the way of movement of people. We are to facilitate them but we also need to have the movement of Barbadians facilitated as well. Therefore, one of the key things that is required is a procedure by which qualifications can be evaluated and identified. It is important for us to make sure that if someone from another member of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy comes to Barbados to offer himself as an electrician or a dentist, we

are able to check to see whether the certification that he holds as being his qualification to perform that task is valid. 4.15 p.m.

Similarly, it will be important for us where Barbadians go to other countries to ply their trade that we are able to say to all who ask the question regarding their qualification that the Accreditation Council of Barbados states that this certification in the relevant profession is, indeed, true and valid and recognised around the world. Therefore, that opens opportunities for Barbadians. This is an important part of the things that need to be done to fully establish the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and make it truly functional.

Sir, another major part of our programme is the completion of the Education Sector Reform Programme known as EduTech. I must remind this Honourable House that the key components of that programme were curriculum reform, the modernisation of the school plant, institutionalisation of the educational sector and the introduction of technology to schools. There were four major components.

Mr. Speaker, I can report that there has been progress on all fronts and that there will be accelerated promotion on these fronts as well. Those persons who are curious can go and see the difference that has been made in terms of the modernisation of schools. Some of these schools have been dilapidated or suffering from neglect under the past Administration.

Mr. Speaker, children were labouring and trying to improve themselves under very trying circumstances and teachers were working under very trying circumstances. Sir, for each school there will be structure and roof issues to be dealt with. There will be repairs and renovation of the structure, plastering, replacing of roof, paint *et cetera*. Mr. Speaker, there will be upgrading of bathrooms, bringing them up to health standards, improvement in safety, ensuring that windows and doors are secure, both for the children and the equipment; ventilation and making the schools accessible, the control of dust, heat, light and preparing the cables for information technology.

Sir, in terms of where we are now, when the schools reopen in September 2003, there will be 21 schools fully fitted displaying all the positive features and benefits in those four broad areas that I have identified. The repairs and renovations will be done on the school plant, the teacher training would have been done, the curriculum reform programme would have been introduced and during the school holiday the technology would have been installed.

Sir, those who would want to take a trip to the schools in September 2003 to see, they can visit St. Mary's Primary,

Westbury Primary, Deacons Primary, Sharon Primary, St. Joseph Primary, Cuthbert Moore Primary, South District Primary, Christ Church Primary, Irvine Wilson Primary, Alexandra Secondary, St. James Secondary, Ellerslie Secondary, Combermere, Metropolitan Secondary, St. Gabriel's, Grazettes Primary, St. Matthew's Primary, St. Luke's Primary, Pine Primary, St. Paul's Primary and St. Jude's Primary.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, in September 2003 when the doors are swung open on the first day of the term, you can go into those schools and see EduTech in action.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, there will be 10 000 to 15 000 children who will benefit. There are 21 schools that are completed.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, if the Opposition Democratic Labour Party had its way, they would want to go and pull the plug but I urge them to stay far away from these schools. Please, do not go and pull the plug and stop the children from working.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, that is education reform. That is building tomorrow, today. Sir, we are not finished. There are 12 schools that are completed except for one component. We are waiting for the technology component to be completed but they would have had the refurbishment, curriculum reform and the institutional strengthening. These schools are St. Andrew's Primary, St. Bernards Primary, St. Alban's Primary, Carrington's Primary, Alleyne School, Louis Lynch Secondary, St. Lucy's Secondary, Queen's College, Princess Margaret Secondary, Coleridge and Parry, Lester Vaughan Secondary and the Barbados Seventh Day Adventists Secondary School.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, this is education reform in action, building tomorrow today.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, the thousands of children who will be embarking on a completely new approach, working in appropriate comfort and will be given every facilitation to get their job done rather than spend time

overcoming the physical and other discomforts which can hamper their job. Therefore, we need to support this programme.

Mr. Speaker, by next year another eight schools will be completed. We have an active programme of the education sector reform. This is not about any computers, this is about education reform and educational strengthening. In fact, the teacher training is 80 per cent complete. You have to train the people before you can put things in place. Mr. Speaker, the civil works is 20 per cent complete. This is about enhancing the ability of the system.

Sir, for example, we are currently in negotiations with Harvard University to have a joint programme, where they have a special programme for leadership at the school level, where our principals will be able to pursue a joint Harvard/Erdiston programme for leadership development. Erdiston and Mount St. Vincent University offers Special Education Bachelors Degree and Masters Degree in Curriculum Reform and those are the kinds of initiatives that we would take, Sir.
4.25 p.m.

Sir, on special needs in education, we are concerned, not only about those issues vented on education sector reform but we are also in the process, and will effect during this term, a programme of expanded special needs education, not only based in schools because we do have a number of centres for special education and they are doing well.

There are many persons who, because of the severity of the physical or psychological impediment are not in schools, estimates of around 40, and we are determined to work with the Child Care Board and the other agencies in the Ministry of Social Transformation to ensure that an adequately devised education programme is delivered to all the children of Barbados, wherever they may be located.

Education cannot be limited to the school alone, because the reality is that those young persons eventually become adults. Their parents and caretakers die, and if we do not put them in a position where they are able to function in the world, we are denying them a basic human right.

Sir, the reality today is that even if you are going on holiday, you have to be able to function. There are immigration forms, health forms and customs forms to be filled out. If somebody dies and leaves something in the Will for you, you have to be able to sign for it, and there are various ways that you have to function. Sir, those physically and mentally challenged persons who are not in the school system must be given an opportunity to function through our Special Needs Education Programme.

Universal education coverage, Sir, not only at the tertiary level, but again, Operation Head Start gives that much needed boost at the pre-primary stage. In fact, Sir, that is important, not only from an educational perspective but from a social perspective, because it is not the children from the upper class, or the middle class who are deficient in that area, since those people can afford to find a good nursery to put their children in. It is the persons who are struggling on the poverty line and below the poverty line, who are not in a position to access pre-primary education for their children.

When they enter the primary school at age five, they are not at the level of socialisation, language development, or skills development. They have not done the preparatory work which others have done and, therefore, provide a point of disconnection immediately. Sir, there is one set of children entering your primary school system with the prerequisite skills and others who are not prepared.

We are, therefore, committed to Operation Head Start where we will provide, 100 per cent, pre-primary education through public/private sector partnerships. We will not necessarily be opening new nurseries to cover everyone, but where there are people who are not able to afford the cost for this service, we will be looking at supporting their capacity through the use of the neighbourhood nursery school to get their children some exposure, where we do not have the capacity in the public primary system to do this.

Sir, I want in the limited time that is available to me to touch on the youth affairs and sports programmes as well. We have before us, a number of major activities to pursue. In the area of sports, first of all, one of the most massive undertakings that we have ever, and perhaps will ever undertake, will be the hosting of the Cricket World Cup in 2007. This is not very far away in planning terms.

The Cricket World Cup, Sir, is akin to the Olympic Games, in terms of its global scope and in terms of the logistics and arrangements which are to be undertaken. It is akin to the Olympics as well, in that the arrangements for the Cricket World Cup are made, not so much with the sporting authorities in the country but with the host Government. So that it will be the Government of Barbados that will be required to sign a host country agreement with the ICC, the West Indies Cricket Board or who has the franchise to operate in this part of the world.

We will work with, and through the Barbados Cricket Association and the commercial entity that it will establish, to ensure that we are able to provide Kensington Oval, given its history and legacy, as a well known major cricket venue in the world, where that ground is redeveloped to become the premier location for the West Indies Cricket World Cup 2007.

The proposal, Sir, is to expand the seating capacity of Kensington Oval from the current 10 000 to a new permanent level of around 13 500, but a temporary capacity for World Cup purposes, of some 25 000 to 30 000. The preliminary designs have already been made, various changes have been discussed and we have set ourselves on the task already, to put certain preliminary works in place. This, obviously has to be accelerated.

Sir, the reality is that the issue of the preparation goes beyond the game. It speaks to our ability, as a country, to be able to handle a massive influx of visitors and yet give them the traditional warm Barbadian welcome and the jolly good time which they will have in Barbados.

At the end of this activity, we will either benefit from massive exposure, by way of international marketing that we could never afford to pay for, in many countries around the world, such as would encourage thousands of people to want to come to Barbados, or we could end up with so many testimonials of persons, not having a good time and things not going smoothly, that we will have to spend millions and millions of dollars to overcome that. We, on This Side, are determined to make sure it is the former, so that we will come out with a net benefit.

Therefore, Sir, matters relating to the functioning of our immigration, customs and smooth passage through the airport and matters relating to law, order and security are important. Let us not fool ourselves, as with the Olympics, we have many and diverse nations participating. We have many security concerns and security threats and we have countries which, through their armed forces have been on different sides of conflict, recent and not so recent. Therefore, Sir, we have to be mindful of those persons in the world whose sole purpose and intention is to cause disruption, confusion, madness and mayhem so that we need to ensure that they do not rain on our parade.

Therefore, Sir, you could rest assured that every possible avenue of co-operation will be taken with agencies and Governments around the world to enable us to enhance our security, and to be aware of what the threats are and divert them.

Of course, Sir, there will be the matter of parking, transportation, traffic control, media facilitation, accommodation for the visitors and players who will be attending. We therefore will, Sir, be devoting a considerable amount of time and money because it will not come free or cheap. The benefits far outweigh the investment which we will make, and the example of what has happened in South Africa and other locations which have hosted this Cricket World Cup in the past, all indicate that there is a net, positive benefit accruing to those countries which have been able to do the necessary hosting.

Sir, we will create a dedicated project unit within the Government to deal with Government's responsibilities and to act as Government's point of contact with the Barbados Cricket Association and their project unit which will be concentrating primarily on the redevelopment of the physical infrastructure, and on the cricketing issues associated with the World Cup.

In addition, Sir, sports at the community level also forms an important part of the development plan for this country. We recognise that sports provides an opportunity for our ordinary citizens to transform themselves into world citizens to make their mark on the international stage.

It brings credit to this nation of Barbados and, therefore, it is only proper that we, as a country, should invest in such a thing as would bring us credit. Only yesterday, Sir, I believe it was, we would have had Brian Sealy – a special olympian, participating in the Special Olympics in Ireland – who won a gold medal in his event.

We have the world champion Suki King, presently playing against another Barbadian, Jack Francis in Heroes Square, two Heroes, Sir.

Sir, we have the newest world sports and we have to make sure they are properly registered and that Barbados gets the credit. Sir, we also need to make sure that we invest in road tennis, such as would ensure that Barbados is associated with it, whenever road tennis is popularised around the world.
4.35 p.m.

There is also the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers and Sir Everton Weekes. We have seen how we have benefitted from sports before. In the same way that the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers started playing cricket at the Bay Pasture which was only a little track in a gully at the time, we need today to ensure that we provide, at the community level, community facilities in easy access such as would allow the Gary Sobers among the youth today to emerge.

Therefore, the programme of the provision of hard courts and playing fields, and the lighting of playing fields to allow for darkness no longer to be the curtailing factor in sporting events, is an important part of that investment of the youth of the future.

I see you are signalling, Sir, that my time has run away from me and you are not making sport in the matter.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have a little more time.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: This portfolio, the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, is one of the key components which provides us with an opportunity to build tomorrow, today. In fact, I consider my position to be an interesting one where, having spent almost the last decade building investment capital, creating the conditions for private sector growth and development to provide for jobs and entrepreneurial activity and investment and putting the country on a path of growth as far as foreign exchange earnings are concerned, I will now have the honour and privilege of building social capital which is so essential as a complementing factor with investment capital for total development and making sure that the benefits of that development are able to empower poor people to participate and to enable them to benefit and come out of poverty. It is, therefore, an honour and a privilege to have mentioned some of the programmes of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports as they relate to the implementation of His Excellency's speech from the Throne.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you leading the debate on behalf of the Opposition?

Mr. R. D. JONES: No, Mr. Speaker, I am not leading, I am responding.

Mr. Speaker, I am not known to take any secondary role to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. In fact, you would well know that at the place which you once provided some guidance in intellectual pursuits, he was viewed as my junior. Even though he is on the Other Side, I would want to still regard him as my junior and provide him with some understanding of matters relevant to education, youth affairs and sports.

I know that at one time he professed to being a good teacher of technical drawing at a school not far removed from here that has produced excellent products for Barbados and a school that at one time, under possibly independent thought, allowed persons such as myself to serve on the Board. Sometime ago I asked for the professional record of the colleague to find that the record was truncated because of his early exit from education. I was not so unfortunate because it was only a few short weeks ago that I took a short break from education being a member of the staff of the Christ Church Boys' School. Therefore, I believe I am ideally placed to address many of the issues raised by the Honourable Member.

However, before I do that, since education, sports and culture is contained in possibly what all should consider as one of the best put together agendas for the people of

Barbados, the Democratic Labour Party 2003 Manifesto “A Fair Share for All” which I want to present to this House...

I know the political platform and the hubris which engaged the minds of persons as they try to capture the populace imagination might persuade them not to focus on the reality that is. Contrary to the view put out, the Honourable Members of the Opposition have never, being sensible people, made any claim that they would get rid of EduTech, the short term for the Education Sector Enhancement Programme. Far from that, if one remembers the history of this matter and one checks the various documents or manifestos of the Democratic Labour Party, one would find that one aspect of the Education Sector Enhancement Programme has continued over time being centre to what the Democratic Labour Party wants it to do relative to education, that is, the full integration of technology within the whole pedagogical framework of education in Barbados.

One should recognise as well that as a member of that great Party, I would never be in collusion with anyone for the dismantling of technology, since I can consider myself as one of the leading proponents of such an agenda. I want to salute all of those information technology coordinators who stood on the frontline in the delivery of the technological product to these schools, the 15 Phase One schools in Barbados.

Asides.

4.45 p.m.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I would like to go on record as being one of those persons who have taught teachers to integrate or to infuse. I am one of those persons who understand the dynamic reality of the present times and would, therefore, dismiss anyone who would want to truncate the delivery of education possibly in a new dynamic. Therefore, I applaud those teachers who have accessed education after 3.00 p.m. daily, in order to benefit from my teaching and that of others, in order to ensure that they would want to deliver education.

Aside.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I believe the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is being modest, for he has not told the House that he was part of the design team for the Information Technology Coordinating Unit and, therefore, must take responsibility, as well as praise, for the excellent work which is being done in that regard.

Mr. R. D. JONES: I would have been pleased, Mr. Speaker, if in the hustle and bustle of the debate over the last

number of weeks, that the Honourable Member who has last spoken, would have told the people of Barbados, thus making it possible for me not to occupy this seat – even though I am proud – but to occupy the seat now being held by a friend and colleague of mine on the Other Side, who is carrying forward an agenda that he truly understands would have been better put and placed than in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, when you say that you would have preferred to be on This Side...

Mr. R. D. JONES: I applaud the sharpness of the Speaker but I am sure he would fully understand that since I would never be an included being, I mean that I would have sat over there with my colleagues to carry on the mandate of the people of Barbados and not, in fact, wear a robe that is spotted.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party recognises that we have had to put education on a more firm footing. There is one social issue that must be raised and that we need to struggle over. Maybe we need to have different points emerging from the circle to make it relevant and sensible to the people of Barbados. I have pledged to myself not to get into any divisive debate when it relates to issues such as education which should benefit the whole of Barbados.

I believe that education, like health and the other social agencies, must be focussed for the delivery of a given audit for the people of Barbados. That is why I am now saying to the Honourable Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, not to bury his head in the sand and to believe that one sector of the Barbadian society has all that it takes to take education forward. Therefore, he should rely on my guidance and service and those elements that are contained in the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party and to use them in such a way that, at the end of the day, he might be able to thump his chest and pretend that all was his but we, in this Honourable Chamber, would know better. The Honourable Minister joined me last Saturday and I was able to provide him with a road map for certain aspects of sports delivery in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say that outside of the young people with whom we deal, there is one other very important resource in education and that is our teachers. I feel that teachers, as a group, has been marginalised and held back from truly making their mark on education in Barbados.

We have certain systems and processes being put in place to chart the path of teacher appraisal in Barbados and to the stage where the efforts of the Ministry of Education and the other agencies involved today, I would say, are at a stalemate. I do not know how we would emerge from that stalemate.

Sir, my view is that it is not a system of appraisal but one of challenge. We have – and the Minister can correct me if I am wrong – a situation at our secondary school level where between 30 per cent to 35 per cent of students who do the Caribbean Examination Council examinations or an equivalent examination, are able to pass four or more qualifications at any one sitting. The challenge is not teachers appraisal, the challenge is to raise the bar and say to teachers that they must now satisfy the raising of that bar, in the same way that we ask students who take the Associate Degree or Advanced level qualifications to reach levels that we have raised. I want to see the same thing happening to teachers rather than creating draconian structures, then asking teachers to function under those draconian structures. Perhaps this raising of the bar could be done over a two-year or three-year period where I would like to see teachers so challenged and empowered that they recognise their true worth and commit that worth to the elevation and edification of the minds of students, to make them meet higher heights in education.

I also want to encourage parents and those who provide detraction or distraction to teachers, to let us now operate within a holistic framework to ensure that education is targeted and that it meets those who essentially need it, which means the whole of Barbados. Sometimes we believe we only argue for those who are captured within a school or within a formal educational structure but I want to see a greater diffusion of education, to tap into those persons who we euphemistically called ‘the boys and girls on the block’ because, as is rightly stated, they will not survive in the times that we are in or in the times to come.

Sir, we spoke of competency as we seek to insert ourselves into the wider world and that we recognise technological competency. We are gradually beginning to gain momentum. I believe we have to even speed up that process and to eliminate some of the errors that we are making, as we seek to ingrain technological competency into the minds, skills and intelligence of our people.

Sir, I hope the Honourable Member for St. James Central would desist from speaking and would focus on this point. It is also relevant to them in order to understand what must be done in the wider Barbados. The notion of spiritual and emotional competencies which must be at the heart of whatever we do in education, are important within the whole process of what we want to achieve. If they cannot understand that nothing else would happen unless spiritual and emotional intelligence underpin whatever we do in the school system, then we are going to fail technologically, communicatively, mathematically and in all of the other competencies in education of which we speak.
4.55 p.m.

Therefore, there must be an agenda being forcefully carried by trained and competent persons either in the Ministry of Education or from the school system to carry this out just as music and culture was carried out at the level of the school. They must also take on board the notion of spiritual and emotional intelligence to the highest level and underpin it to whatever we do within the school system. Sir, there must be a clear articulation across the entire system.

I am disturbed and I know that many persons in the school system are disturbed but nonetheless they are silent about what they call the intrusion of the Ministry of Education into what they do in the classroom. Therefore, I would want to see a system moving away from what we currently have at the primary and secondary school level to a more developed local management of school systems here in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, when we moved away from the School Leaving Certificate we were told that a new certificate was going to be put in its place that would demonstrate the extent to which a person would claim to have gone through the education system. The certificate would show to an employer the skills, knowledge, aptitude and competencies of anyone who left the secondary school system in Barbados. Sir, I urge its acceleration and delivery on behalf of the thousands of persons who leave school with one or two certificates or without any at all.

I had difficulties with certain segments of the document of 1995, “Each One Matters”. It contains certain elements which must still be pursued especially if they are linked to what is happening now in a most dynamic fashion but once they are linked we would be able to get a better product.

The 11-plus examination is not fully analysed but, Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment all of the young people under the age of eleven who every year trek to some foreign place to write the examination. I hope the Honourable Minister would recognise that it is time to get out of the process of trekking to a foreign environment because he knows the psychological danger and impact which it causes. If we could shift teachers across schools, it should be an easy exercise to ensure that the viability and integrity of this examination is protected and, therefore, that one element of stress should be removed.

Sir, we have a strange process in Barbados where we seek only to recognise those who score at the top of the pole, when schools do so, it creates a dichotomy. We do not recognise at the primary or secondary school level when a child gets 40 marks but in five years time emerges with six certificates at Grade One but we recognise a child who

moves into a secondary school with 90 marks and comes out with the same six certificates. We do ourselves a disservice in this country when we do not understand that we need to move persons through all the necessary stages to ensure they benefit from education.

Sir, we should have been by now at the technology component of the EduTech programme. The Minister has stated that this summer we will be putting the hardware in the other twelve schools. I believe there is too significant a time lag between the decision and the time of implementation and I want to see the time lag become smaller. I hope the new Minister of Education would take this matter on board and urge all the parties involved so that there is a reduction in the time relative to the placing of these resources in the schools.

The sourcing and adapting of courseware in the classroom are issues that have been problematic. I am pleased that teachers in the various institutions have been able to use whatever resources are available such as the internet to ensure that they continue to work with students. It is important that we work towards getting the courseware to impact on the school and linking between the pedagogy and technology within the school.

One area that bothers me is how we deal with the notion of obsolescence in relation to the technology. I believe that schools now to be outfitted will have the latest hardware. I am urging the Minister to look at the new process and put this in place and also build it into any contractual arrangement with suppliers of the hardware so that they can come up with a type of model as long as the technology changes.

5.05 p.m.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Sir, it might have been better to purchase the product wholesale rather than go into a leasing arrangement, so that when obsolescence steps in, they could remove the hardware and put new products in its place rather than having a direct purchasing arrangement. I believe that would serve the process better. Therefore, I would like to see such an arrangement in place.

Sir, there are thousands of persons who are turned away every year from the Barbados Community College (BCC) and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. They are turned away, not because they do not have adequate qualifications but because there is inadequate capacity. Therefore, we have a capacity problem and the Government of the day has to address this situation.

Sir, the University of the West Indies (UWI) is into distant and online education, even though on a basic level, where we might be able to sell some of that product to others

in the OECS, but there is nothing wrong in setting up the systems and structures to ensure online education and distant education within the Barbados framework. We should move at a pace to ensure that online education helps with the issue of capacity. I think we might need some expertise and skill in that area.

I am sure I would not be averse, for a reasonable price, to provide some guidance and knowledge in that department. I am sure that my fees would not be as harsh as those that are brought in to provide that guidance. There are also others who understand the dynamics to guide persons in that direction.

Sir, last Saturday I had an occasion to meet with the Minister of Youth Affairs, Education and Sports and to speak to him on some of these issues. The Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto, already a document of the House, Page 39 refers to important elements for the creation and the delivery of sports products in Barbados.

The Democratic Labour Party believes strongly that sports and the cultural product must stand as the open arena for the employment of people and for the generation of income for Barbados. Therefore, we have to move speedily to make them integral and central to the delivery of other economic benefits for the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, though I am a lover of cricket, I would like to see athletics being placed at the top of the pole. I would like to see volleyball, football, netball, draughts and chess but more particularly, I would like to see a system of providing what I call the categorisation of sports; some are master sports, team sports and individual sports but all sporting activities should benefit in some way from the Government.

Sir, I detect that there is a lack of regard for the volunteer sports persons in Barbados, the kind of disrespect, which needs to be removed, that is thrown at those persons who manage and who administer sports in Barbados but if I know the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, he would work to dispel that disrespect which is held for these persons.

Mr. Speaker, for example, out of my own experience, in 2002 when the Barbados team was doing well at soccer, for the first time in its history, the Government and the people of Barbados provided to the Barbados Football Association a reasonable sum of \$200 000. We were able to play that year and the Barbados Football Association had a budget of \$1.4 million. The Government of Barbados provided \$200 000 of the people's money and it was money that we never saw. It is money that moved straight from the National Sports Council to the providers of our travel. We

did not have any problem with that because it satisfied the payment of our travel. The private sector provided funding so that our people were able to travel to bring honour and glory not only to themselves but to the people of Barbados.

Sir, I was disheartened when some persons in the hustings thought it necessary to suggest that when we travel that we carry our wives and girlfriends with us. I keep saying that facts are like truths, they cannot be disputed. I never thought that I would have this opportunity to rise in any place to speak and to address these issues. I felt hurt. As a guardian of truth, honesty, integrity and decency, I will never ever condone such behaviour. Sir, the records are there and I am saying that when these persons who give up their time, knowledge and skills to administer and manage sports in Barbados, they must be treated with decency and integrity and I hope that these kinds of things would never happen again because volunteers in this country are few and far between. Therefore, let us applaud them for their sterling contributions and work.

I look forward, as this young Minister, impressionable though he might be, would take on the true impressions of those who understand sports. I am sure that he would get numerous pieces of clearly articulated correspondences on his desk, pointing out the path and the direction. I hope that he would have discussions with those persons and that he would speak to his colleagues in Cabinet on behalf of all the sports in Barbados because we bring a new freshness and dynamism to sports management in general.

Mr. Speaker, let me applaud all those young men and women who rush from work to volunteer their services.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: I must also applaud the Honourable Member for St. Thomas who was a teacher and I am told a good teacher.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: I have always applauded the Honourable Mr. Speaker for his intellect and guidance to those teachers who have sat at his feet and have learnt well. I am sure that he has already been recognised for his contribution to education.

Aside.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Sir, I speak not of you, because I recognise your sterling efforts and all those who come after you will never be able to walk in your footsteps.

Sir, let me say that I have no interest in impressive management or leadership where we produce glossy documents, as I now see emanating from the Ministry of Education, which do not sufficiently explain to the people what is happening. Sir, let us move away from the impressive management and leadership structures and bring substance which would impact upon the people of Barbados, particularly the young.

5.15 p.m.

I believe that one of the two Ministers in the Ministry of Education Youth Affairs and Sports can take this under his or her charge, and gallop forward, to have indigenous tests developed in Barbados and indigenous software developed in Barbados.

The Ministry of Education must be in a position to facilitate such a process. I urge that there is too much curriculum ingenious material that is abandoned across the length and breadth of Barbados because persons do not even understand how useful it can be.

A simple example, Mr. Speaker, is that every year at Sharon Primary, a school located in St. Thomas, and from which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has gained a lot of support, both in the by-election and 2003, the teachers there produce excellent curriculum material in the form of the tests and text that they use, but then they are discarded, also at Christ Church Girls' School and Luther Thorne Memorial Primary School, Erdiston Primary and at every primary school. How we can collate this material to impact on future generations is a challenge for the two ministers in the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports.

All I am doing, Mr. Speaker, as I pledge to those who have departed before me and those who are currently with me, is to provide, not only the talk but the dance as well and for those who are out of sync or out of step with the dance, I do not mind leading them, holding them and guiding them properly in making the right type of movement, because it is what I know well. Mr. Speaker, after 27 years and you do not know it well, you had better become a divorcee from the process.

I want all persons to truly understand that there is nothing wrong with policy borrowing, and implementing the ideas of others to create the hybrid that we truly want to create. I, therefore, urge the Honourable Members on the Other Side, more particularly those Members to whom I have addressed the basis or the majority of my remarks, to take these ideas on board, to give sports persons an opportunity, not to pay their taxes. Sir, we should not have to wait six months in organisations where there are limited resources, then, to have to ask the Ministry of Finance to give back the money where there is a situation, such as in the Barbados

Football Association, where we are a registered entity, and cannot get our books audited, after almost four years.

Therefore, Sir, we have to beg for the more than \$100 000 we surely need to play sports. These are issues, Mr. Speaker, that impact on the viability and the functioning and efficacy of sporting and cultural organisations in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, this is only a small portion of the intellectual resource which I possess for the guidance...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. R. D. JONES: This is only a small part of the resource which the Members of the Opposition possess that would want to guide...and I could understand the frustration, Mr. Speaker, of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas because I am sure that she has not heard a more lucid comment from a Shadow Minister, speaking on the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports and she might want me, Sir, to be her minister.

Thank you, very much.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to support this Resolution of the Throne Speech, because it is a tremendous developmental policy of this Government. This is a policy, not only to develop the infrastructure of Barbados, but also to develop the people of Barbados. It is a policy to develop every community of this country, be it Christ Church West or St. Lucy.

Mr. Speaker, This Side is a caring Side. This Side is one that supports and understands the development of all of our people, because This Side is going to make every Barbadian a winner.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech spoke about developing an infrastructure like roads, natural gas and telecommunications and enhancing all of these utilities, making Barbados an entity to be reckoned with, and making Barbados the best it can be. This is, of course, an essential part and that is why I must support the Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East speak admirably on education, sports and strengthening our educational policies and services.

I must commend him, as well as this Government on the EduTech Programme, which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, I understand, benefitted from, and we appreciate that and we are happy that he was able to

benefit from that programme. He brought lots of information about that programme, and I am sure he will continue in his dynamic way, Sir, bringing more and more of the policies of the EduTech to this great Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, although education is an integral pillar of this society, the other integral pillar of this society is health. I have been a member and a health care provider to this great country for 11 years and, Sir, it is health that I will speak most to in this discourse.

This Side sees access to health care in this country as a fundamental right of every Barbadian and insists that it should be funded principally through the public finances, as an investment in our country's social capital.

Mr. Speaker, this speaks mainly to our public health clinics, our hospital, our mental health facilities, and all of the health care provisions that we have in this country.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), Mr. Speaker, will be given a new beginning. A key objective will be to improve the capacity of the QEH to deliver the most efficient and highest quality of health service in this country.

The QEH, Mr. Speaker, has remained in its essential, physical form for the last 40 years and it will now be substantially transformed, upgraded and modernised. The upgrading will include the whole physical structure of the QEH.

We will increase the number of beds to reduce overcrowding on a number of wards. We will build a new and spacious Outpatient Department, so that all Barbadians can benefit from this integrated and better QEH.

We will go further, Mr. Speaker, and upgrade Cardiology, Oncology, Pediatrics and Neurosurgical services. Sir, also one that is close to my heart, we will establish a Department of Oral and Maxillo-facial Surgery.

Mr. Speaker, I must say, I have been asking for this for 11 years and I am happy to see that now, the Government will be establishing a Department of Oral and Maxillo-facial Surgery.

Mr. Speaker, this is very important because if there is an accident and the victim's jaw, facial structures or bones in the face have been disturbed or disfigured in some way, the only specialty that contains within its remit, the bones of the facial structure, is oral and maxillo-facial surgery.

Sir, since the QEH has been established, there has never been an Oral and Maxilla Facial Department and it fell

to the ear, nose and throat surgeons and the general surgeons to provide oral and maxillo-facial services for the people of this country.
5.25 p.m.

I must also go further and say that before the seatbelt law there were lots more maxillo-facial injuries because when you are not wearing a seat belt restraint you get facial injuries from going forward and hitting your face. With the advent of the seatbelt law, the amount of oral and maxillo-facial injuries have been reduced, but we can still benefit from those services because we can get a higher level of expertise in that speciality.

I must congratulate this Government on recognising this need and coming forward and providing for it in the Throne Speech and also in our Manifesto. This is commendable and I look forward to the day when I would be going to the opening of that new department of the hospital, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, This Side will move immediately in 2003 to enable the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to acquire all the equipment necessary so as to allow it to replace the obsolete and non-functioning equipment and to provide for new emergency generators and a new incinerator.

These are great policies that can only add value to the services the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can provide not only to Barbados, but to our neighbours in the eastern Caribbean. Our neighbours can come and benefit from the fantastic services provided at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and from the improved benefits that we would now be instituting at that wonderful facility.

Mr. Speaker, we all know that a facility is but a building with bricks and walls without the people within it. The greatest asset of Barbados is our nurses. Our nursing community has provided nursing services not only in Barbados, but as far afield as the United States of America, Canada and even Saudi Arabia. This shows the calibre of nurses that this small island has produced. On This Side we appreciate the work that the nurses are doing. The nursing profession in Barbados has made tremendous strides over the years. However, changes within the health care environment have made restructuring of nursing services necessary to meet the needs of the population.

This Barbados Labour Party Government will have greater empathy for our nurses. They will be a high priority in this Administration. Mr. Speaker, This Side intends to train nurses in sufficient numbers to fully meet local needs, cognisant of the fact that the global demand for such services is great. We will expand specialist training of our nurses into the neuro-sciences, neo-natal intensive care and medical and

surgical intensive care. We will establish a Department of Nursing Research. We will deploy more nursing personnel within the Polyclinics to facilitate the public health nurses visiting and providing care within their districts. These are all sound workable policies with their genesis on This Side, showing a Government that cares for all of its people, be it in education or in health. These are the two things that touch every single citizen within this society.

The Polyclinics are vital to Barbados because they are important facilities at which health care interface directly with the community. The Government will make the Polyclinics more amenable to the public by first extending their opening hours. We will then introduce a men's health clinic through all the polyclinics. Of course, we will complete the construction of the new Gall Hill Polyclinic and Community Services Centre.

Mr. Speaker, I now move to dental health care which is very close to my heart.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, this Government will develop and implement a National Oral Health Policy within the next five years. I must commend this because we know that the most popular disease in the world with the highest prevalence is oral disease, be it Gingivitis or Caries. Almost every single person in the world has suffered from some form of dental disease, be it periodontal disease or Caries, because of that, this Government has decided to structure and form a new National Oral Health Policy to be able to restrict the progression of this disease and to help in the delivery of all the services of the dental health services in this country. In addition to that, this Government would strengthen dental care in our polyclinics by the acquisition of new dental equipment and the recruitment of additional dental officers.

I commend this, Mr. Speaker, I think it is admirable and it speaks volume to the necessity and the reasons this Government will move forward in providing on all aspects not only in the hospital for your general health but also for your oral and dental health as well. This is absolutely commendable and is something that this Government must be commended for.

We then go further to talk about care of the elderly. We all know that Barbados has an ageing population and the care of the elderly would become more and more important. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West will agree with me as this is his area of speciality. The care of the elderly will continue to become increasingly more important as the population ages.

We will establish the Alternative Care of the Elderly Programme by contracting services for the elderly from private nursing homes. We will undertake a phased refurbishment of the Geriatric Hospital and construct a modern rehabilitation unit, a day-care centre, an administration block and a food service area.

These are fantastic ideas from a forward-thinking Government – a Government that will take care of you and that will be there for you from birth all the way through the stages right through to old age. This is an amazing approach that the Government has taken and I must commend them for it. The Government did not stop there, it goes further to state that it will complete the refurbishment of the District Hospitals as well.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, not only must we take care of our young people and our elderly, we must also take care of our disabled as well and we will do so through the Children's Development Centre. The purpose of this project is to protect the rights and enhance the quality of life of the physically and mentally challenged.

None of the Honourable Members on the Other Side is physically and mentally challenged, Mr. Speaker, although sometimes one wonders.

We will coordinate services for disabled persons on a national basis and will gradually introduce community-based programmes for these persons.
5.35 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to providing for the elderly and the disabled, we have also provided and have programmes for those afflicted by the deadly disease of HIV/AIDS. Sir, HIV/AIDS is not only a health concern but a significant developmental issue. We have, therefore, adopted a multi-sectoral and multi-dimensional strategy to deal with HIV/AIDS.

Barbados' HIV/AIDS programme embraces treatment, care, support and counselling for those persons who are infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, as well as its prevention. In the first year of the programme, the deaths in clinic patients for AIDS has been reduced by 56 per cent and the total hospital days have fallen by 59 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, This Side will intensify its programme of prevention, treatment and care, while focussing on converting the current discrimination against persons infected and affected by HIV/AIDS, to a positive, caring

support from the entire national community. This will include:

- (a) Developing an HIV/AIDS education train-the-trainer, policies and programmes for private sector organisation,
- (b) Continuing prevention campaigns which target the most vulnerable groups of our society;
- (c) Continuing the successful mother to child transmission prevention programme.

Mr. Speaker, these are the fantastic, admirable and dynamic policies of a caring Government, one which understands and appreciates the needs of its people; a Government that is willing, ready and able to stand and to be able to provide for its people from birth through to old age; a Government that provides not only for its able-bodied people but also for the disabled or the mentally challenged; a Government which will continue to do great work in this country; a Government which has done well and will continue to make every Barbadian a winner. I thank you very much.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, that brings us to the end of Government Business for today. It is proposed that there would be other opportunities for those Honourable Members who would wish to speak to the Resolution on the Throne Speech.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Debate be deferred for further consideration.

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

The question that the Debate on the Throne Speech be deferred for further consideration was put to the Honourable House and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now adjourned until Tuesday, July 8, 2003, at 10.00 a.m. in the morning.

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

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, July 8, 2003, at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
5.40 p.m.

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