
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 1999 – 2003

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

RESUMPTION

MR. SPEAKER: This Honourable House is resumed.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise on this occasion to fully compliment the Right Honourable Prime Minister for his skillful, progressive and unprecedented management of the Barbadian economy up to this present point. I also complimented him for his continued excellent management as Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and further compliment him for his vision and foresight in the preparation of these Estimates of expenditure which were prepared against a backdrop of an unstable world economy with the likelihood of war which obviously will threaten the very existence of small island developing states like Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I first want to state that the Ministry of Social Transformation is committed to the timely and professional delivery of services to the most vulnerable groups in our island and that we will not compromise the service of these groups although we have now received a total of \$67.7 million compared to \$76.8 million last year, a difference of \$8.3 million.

Mr. Speaker, I want to use this occasion to assure all Barbadians that we will be administering stringent managerial prudence without reducing the value or the quality of the social services rendered to the poor, disadvantaged, disenfranchised, marginalised, the 'differently able' people and the elderly in Barbados. Sir, we will continue to focus on these target groups.

Mr. Speaker, additionally, we in the Ministry of Social Transformation have other budget mechanisms as enunciated by the Right Honourable Prime Minister

yesterday where funds can be drawn from the Poverty Eradication Committee and the Public Enterprise Investment Fund so that services rendered to the poor and needy will not be compromised nor will marginalised target groups be left to suffer. It brings me to the point that the development of this country should not be measured only in dollars and cents but on how best all of us in this country can contribute to the poor and other vulnerable groups in our midst. Every head of department within the Ministry of Social Transformation is quite aware of the role they have to play in terms of fast-tracking social development systems to those most vulnerable groups in this society of ours.

Mr. Speaker, this Government must be complimented for being the first in the history of this country to attempt and will eventually succeed in the eradication of poverty from this island. Our Ministry is very focus on the eradication of poverty programmes which we have put in place. I also want to use this occasion to enlighten those who bluntly refuse to acknowledge this like the Leader of the Opposition. I like to say that there is none so blind as those who do not want to see. Sir, my grandmother told me that sometimes we have to hold the light for the devil to see and that a word to the wise is sufficient.

Mr. Speaker, from the first day the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and I were appointed to the Ministry of Social Transformation, we were under serious attack from the Opposition and others because it was felt that the Honourable Member for St. Peter was doing us a favour. We were scoffed and ridiculed even in some sections of the Press but I have survived for four years and witnessed the considerable improvement in the delivery of social services to this country.

Mr. Speaker, I invite all Honourable Members in this Honourable Chamber to buckle their belts as I now take them on a journey which started in the 1999/2000 Estimates when this Ministry was created by the

Honourable Member for St. Peter. Sir, I usually say that it was started through divine intervention and I want to say to those detractors of our Ministry that it is a serious thing to fall into the hands of the living Lord and that those who God bless, let no man curse.

We at the Ministry of Social Transformation have been working to transform every aspects of the social services and to make the tax dollar work for the poor, disadvantaged, marginalised and the differently able. There are those who would want to make the public believe that this Ministry and the Poverty Committee are only about hand-outs as vociferously enunciated by the Leader of the Opposition yesterday. But, Sir, to the contrary because when families come to this Ministry for assistance, the Poverty Committee, which comprises of a group of professional person within this country, assesses the issues and take appropriate actions to bring about the necessary resolution. These include counseling services, advocacy and employment training.

As promised, this Ministry has already embarked on the process of intensifying our poverty alleviation initiative.

Consultations have commenced to create an adolescence mothers development programme that will be geared to reducing the birthrate to adolescence in Barbados. Our Ministry intends to enrol adolescence mothers in a developmental programme after the first child so that they will be better equipped to provide the necessary support when they are ready to have more children. This programme is another collaborative exercise involving principal stakeholders drawn from the public, private and NGOs sectors in Barbados like the Barbados Family Planning Association, the social services department of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Division of Youth Affairs, the Ministry of Education and PARADOS.

Sir, Barbados can rest assure that Government through the agencies of the Ministry of Social Transformation will do all in its power to ensure that a just and equitable society is created for the benefit of all in this country. Sir, the Leader of the Opposition was waxing warm yesterday. He was vociferous but there was not substance when he talked about the Welfare-to-Work programme. I got the notion that he was trying to say to the public that a programme like this does not exist or that it was only talk.

10.10 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, if the Honourable Leader of the Opposition knows me well, he can describe me as verb.

A verb is a doing word. The Ministry is always doing, Sir. I would use the occasion of these Estimates to put the Ministry of Social Transformation's record, for four years, to the public of Barbados and let them be the judge. I know that the public of Barbados would judge justly and not unjustly.

Sir, \$19.7 million have been allocated to the Welfare Department. I believe that it is our fault due to the lack of Public Relations that the people of Barbados are not aware of the function, programme and policies of this department.

The Mission of the Welfare Department is to provide professional social work services towards a resolution of solving problems, the enhancement of personal, social development and the alleviation of poverty

Sir, are you aware that the Welfare Department deals with marital problems, maintenance issues, custody and access to children, legal aid and care of the elderly? Sir, we are talking about handouts. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition and other persons whose minds are not clear, only see this Ministry in the form of a Ministry of handouts. This Ministry also deals with the provision of monetary welfare grants and various benefits such as the payment of water, electricity, house and land rent, education assistance, emergency food vouchers, spectacles, dentures and hearing aids.

Sir, any caring Government must provide a safety net for the disabled and marginalised persons. When we are talking about handouts let us, analyse, rationlise and think through the propaganda machine that has been enunciated many times by perpetrators who are out there working against the Ministry. When we are talking about handouts, with every successive Government there will be a level of handouts to persons in Barbados who cannot help themselves. We are only practicing hypocrisy when we sit back and listen to people talk about handouts. We must be able to help those who cannot help themselves.

Sir, there were approximately 7 000 in receipt of monetary assistance during the last financial year and it cost the taxpayers of Barbados almost \$200 000 weekly. During the upcoming financial year, the Welfare Department will continue its efforts in relation to two new programmes which were introduced in the last financial year, namely, the Welfare to Work Programme and the Fatherhood Initiative. Sir, listening to the Honourable Member for St. John one would believe that this was just a figment of one's imagination, that it cannot happen.

The Welfare to Work Programme has been established in an effort to focus on the challenges faced by individuals who receive national assistance, monetary grants. An examination of the records show that of the 7 000 persons who are on welfare, 3 900 are children under

the age of 16 years. These children were not receiving either maintenance from their fathers or support was minimal and sometimes very irregular. The mothers were either unemployed and dependent heavily on income benefits from our Welfare Department.

Mr. Speaker, the worrying aspect of all of this was the fact that in some cases, welfare grants have been given to three consecutive generations of women. The programme then targeted these women who received either national assistance grants on a long-term basis and are unemployed or depended on child maintenance, which is remitted through the Welfare Department.

Therefore, the drive seeks to address the challenges that women face in securing employment and seeks to assist them in changing their lives' circumstances and breaking their dependance on public assistance all of the time.

During the assessment process, the department realised that the women's livelihood of working was steadily decreasing because of a number of other social problems such as the level of education, job skills, work experience, transportation difficulties physical disorders, substance abuse and domestic violence. There is an increase of domestic violence in Barbados which is unprecedented and something that we are grappling with.

Sir, our Ministry has been accessing clients and recommending them for training where this was indicated. It was found that some individuals were successful in finding employment on their own while others need more time to acknowledge that they had difficulties and needed help. The workers of the Ministry have been acting as guides and advisors for the clients, seeking to motivate them towards employment so that they could overcome the various barriers.

Sir, to date 92 women have been involved in the programme 67 of whom have received training. Clients indicated interest in being employed in the hospitality industry. In the areas of training, 26 of these clients were trained in the fundamentals of dining service and 9 clients were introduced to dining service. Last Sunday 32 young mothers graduated in the Housekeeping Course.

Mr. Speaker, while these individuals were training, there was a tremendous demand for their services. The demand was so great that 20 of them are now employed. These individuals have now formed a unionised group.

Sir, 67 women have also received training and were assisted through our Relief 2000 Programme, to which I would speak to later in this debate. Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Community College is currently training an

additional 25 women in the area of textile, pattern making, needlework and cookery.

10.20 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE:

The Pinelands Creative Workshop will also facilitate training and this working with the NGOs and job placement where possible and where necessary, Sir, assist those clients who have problems with literacy.

Additionally, we have initiated a block to work programme. Basically, that Block-to-Work Programme speaks about young men and young women on the 'block'. There is a popular notion in Barbados that only young boys sit on the block.

Sir, most of these young people who are subject to deviant behaviour, have criminal records and this Block-to-Work Programme puts these people to work. You would realise that for a short period of time, we initiated that pilot programme which included nearly 40 young people and not one of them had to go before the law court.

The Government has to continue to look at new creative ways of getting our young people actively involved. Again, I remember listening to the Attorney-General and she was saying that the level of crime in urban Barbados, St. Michael particularly, has dropped. Sir, for a long time, we were saying to this Honourable Chamber that we are working towards that process, through the implementation of new and innovative programmes at the community level.

The only way we know that we could successfully tackle the problem of crime, et cetera, is by introducing programmes that are attractive to the youth and implementing them at base, which is the community.

Sir, I want to talk about the Fatherhood Initiative Programme because the Honourable Member for St. John spoke yesterday with a certain degree of authority. I believe that if the gallery was full and persons were looking on, they would believe that he is a Marlon Brandon or 'a big time star boy'. There is only one actor here, Sir, but this actor is off the stage.

Sir, I am putting in the record of the Ministry of Social Transformation to the public of Barbados and I am not going to use grandiose language that the public of Barbados cannot relate to, that the Fatherhood programme targets non-custodial fathers of children who, either receive welfare grants or are supported, Sir, through the department's Child Maintenance Programme.

Sir, the aim of this initiative is to provide fathers, particularly those who are young and unmarried, unemployed and underemployed with the support and skills to become active in their children's lives. Our Ministry, Sir, believes that a host of financial, social and moral problems, can arise when children have absentee fathers or fathers who are not in the home. I hope that the programme will in some way promote and support permanence for our children and encourage families' stability.

Sir, I want to talk about the welfare department for this moment. I also want to say that this year, we will be introducing a national family day. The family, Sir, is the basis and root of cohesion for the nation's stability.

Sir, when you really examine the Ministry of Social Transformation, it could basically be termed as a ministry of family services. All the departments under the Ministry relate to the family, in every aspect.

Sir, this National Family Day, we are hoping that every single person, all of the departments under the Ministry, all of the social departments under the Government, all of the NGOs, CBOs and all of civil society would join us in a unification of the Barbados family on this particular day.

Sir, I say that, because to us, the family is very important and we are basically working to concentrate on the family, so this whole notion about hand outs is totally ridiculous. It would just take someone to do their homework and examine the work and worth of the Ministry of Social Transformation in a most practical way.

I will be speaking later about the social policy that we are developing in the Ministry but it will be remiss of me, Sir, if I stood here, through this whole discourse this morning and did not put to the public of Barbados, the plans of our Welfare Department which has been renamed, the Department of Family Service. We are working every day to make sure that these happen.

Asides.

Hon. H.F. LASHLEY: It will be in the provisions for the year 2003-2004. For example, Sir, the provision of social work services, case work and counselling to individuals and families on a wide range of difficulties.

Sir, I want to speak on the proper rationalisation of the National Assistance grants. Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for St. John speak about persons being taken off the Welfare list. Sir, when you lead them on, they say that you supported a dependent system of mendicancy, and it is better to teach a man how to fish. They say all these things.

Sir, we do not arbitrarily take up persons. There are a lot of persons that are contravening the rules and the laws. Sir, what we are doing basically is to rationalise the entire programme and when these persons are taken off the welfare programme, we will be putting them into training programmes so that they could develop their skills and truly fish for themselves.

Sir, we are conducting special programmes with respect to domestic violence in Barbados, and responsible parenting for special persons, particularly fathers, who are being referred to the Department. Some men have come to me recently, and say too that the mothers are beating them and they are victims of domestic violence.

Sir, in order for us to keep up with the transition, rationalisation of the Ministry, we are conducting regularly in-house training. This is to keep abreast of new trends in social work approaches and the techniques. All of our staff members must now be equipped with these skills.

Additionally, Sir, we will be looking at the facilitation of all the social workers to attend more overseas training, to become compatible to what is happening overall in the world of social work.

Sir, the Welfare Department staff, has been doing an excellent job in my view. We want to start a national meals-on-wheels programme, this coming financial year, in collaboration with the Israel Lovell Foundation and the Pinelands Creative Workshop. We also want to work with the Salvation Army and all of those agencies which provide service for the very poor or needy on the streets. Sir, we want to nationalise it because when we examine it, we realise that this service is mainly given to people living in urban Barbados.

There are many other persons living in rural Barbados, Sir, who are in need of this assistance.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Hon. H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, this is a global problem and we want to continue with the programme, that any single Barbadian who cannot help himself should not be given a pauper's burial. We are increasing the funeral grant with the collaboration of the other churches, civil society, so that every person in Barbados, regardless of his economic income will always have a proper burial.

10.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, the Ministry of Social Transformation is contemplating providing a travel grant to

our senior citizens because we want to ensure that our senior citizens can have a choice of travel. We want to have it implemented probably in the next financial year because I am almost 100 per cent certain that this Government would regain the government.

Sir, we will continue to fund the Legionnaire Organisation. When we came to the Ministry of Social Transformation, we found the Legionnaire Organisation receiving \$5 000 as a grant. This Government, through its Ministry of Social Transformation, has increased that grant to \$55 000. Additionally, we have given them a golden handshake in that we have asked them to send their members to sit on some of the various boards in the Ministry. This shows that we are being innovative because we want to create an enabling environment for those persons that matters most in this society.

There is no Barbadian who can seriously say that the Ministry of Social Transformation has not made a serious impact on the social environment in this country.

I thank you, Sir, and I will come back later.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution in this second reading stage of this debate, first of all to congratulate the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter on presenting the Government's programme not just as represented by the numbers in these Estimates, essential though they be, but for taking the time to set these Estimates in context.

Unfortunately, the effort of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter was lost on the Honourable Member for St. John. He appeared, though in his seat, to have not been entirely there because he attempted to totally disregard the fact that Estimates in any given financial year cannot be taken as a stand-alone presentation.

These Estimates cannot be divorced from the Government's programme which it has executed over the past several years, neither can they be separated from the challenges which we face presently and which we will face in the future. This is essentially part of a continuum where we build on the successes of the past as we seek to transform the economy and the society such as would make it able to be successful into the future.

Therefore, these Estimates are intended to continue this Government's solemn commitment to building human and social capital which is one of the fundamental obligations of any Government, in my estimation, and our commitment to the eradication of poverty through increasing the range of opportunities which poor people have so as to be able to lift themselves out of poverty.

These Estimates are intended as well to encourage private sector development, which is not to be seen in the traditional mode of the private sector represented by business, but the private sector being any individuals or companies which are not part of the Government.

When one considers these Estimates, one has to consider that the Government does not represent 100 per cent of the economy or the society. In fact, if the tale of the numbers be told, as they say in boxing circles, the Government's contribution to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) averages just about 12.5 per cent. Government as an employer represents no more than 20 per cent of the employed workforce. Therefore, the role of Government and the way these Estimates have to be viewed, have to be within the framework of Government as a catalyst and Government as a leader that is charting the path towards the attainment of that vision.

Therefore, the Honourable Member for St. John's claim that the Estimates do not address this and address that really stands hollow. Sir, his suggestion that the reduction in the capital works programme, essential as it is in order to contain the deficit, would result in deleterious consequences for the economy really rings very hollow.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter was clear to point out that the range of public sector projects in the order of some \$300 million which is to be financed off-budget as well as a range of private sector investment activity would give the necessary stimulus to the economy.

This Government has a very proud record of achievement over the last eight years. It has been able to enunciate and implement policies in the areas of improved governance in our social sector for the protection of the environment and for the advancement of our economic well-being. It is, in my humble opinion, a very impressive record and one which we should not forget as we consider the programmes as set out for this year.

We have had under this administration the longest period of continuous economic growth which was interrupted only by the recession of 2001 which started in the United States of America and in the wider world which was further exacerbated by the events of September 11. In fact, when we compare the performance of Barbados' economy last year to the performance of major economies around the world, particularly those in the region of Latin America and the Caribbean, the performance of Barbados has been commendable in the circumstances.

In fact, there was a significant turnaround in the latter half of the year such that notwithstanding the very slow, weak performance in the first half of the year the overall figures for 2002 turned out to be encouraging. We were among the few countries in the Caribbean region

which were able to show growth in the productive trading sectors of our economy.

When you look at the regional tourism performance, the regional performance in the international business sector and the regional performance in the manufacturing sector, Barbados is listed among those countries which were able to show positive growth while several of our regional counterparts have not been so fortunate.

Sir, it is unknown and unusual in the course of economic activity for an economy to be in a recession and yet be still able to maintain an impressive employment record. We have been able to do so because from the very start of the crisis this Government made it very clear that its first priority was the preservation of employment for Barbadians. That was the essential plank of our emergency economic programme and it remains the essential plank of these Estimates.

We were able, because of the fundamental strength of the economy, to use what the economists refer to as a counter-cyclical policy, that is, that the Government spends in the face of a recession rather than cutting back to send a clear signal to the private sector that they too needed to follow our lead and maintain employment.

Sir, if one looks at the weekend newspapers out of New York City, one will see that businesses in New York City are sending home thousands of employees. This is also happening in other parts of the world. However, Barbados in the face of a recession has been able to maintain significant employment because of Government's effort and we plan to continue to do that.

Asides.

10.40 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Before this administration took over, we must not forget that in the deep dark days of the Democratic Labour Party, unemployment rose to as high as 27 per cent. For the first time in our recorded history, those figures were able to go into single digits. Notwithstanding the entire period of the recession, the figures, at the end of the year, stood at 10.3 per cent for unemployment.

Sir, during this administration, if we look at the other important indicators to which I am sure my Colleagues would speak during the course of this debate, home ownership is up substantially. That is to be contrasted with a period between 1991 and 1994 where the loss of homes were the norm.

By sharp contrast, hundreds of Barbadians are owners of homes. In fact, my Colleague, the Minister of Housing, would have indicated that large sums of money in mortgages have been provided by the Barbados Mortgage Finance Company. In addition to that, the preservation of the stock has been helped by the General Workers Loan Fund. Four thousand and fifty eight Barbadians have been able to do minor repairs and additions to their homes to the tune of \$53 million during the life of this administration.

In preparing for the future in the area of education, we have been able to allow for increased enrollment at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic; the University of the West Indies; the Barbados Community College and the Skills Training Programme, since we have come into Office.

What we need to do now and to which these Estimates will speak, is the matter of tackling the tertiary level education deficit if we are to compete with other partners in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. In the Free Trade Areas of the Americas and beyond, we need to have more highly trained persons. That is why I join with the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter in strongly condemning the ridiculous comments made by the President of the Democratic Labour Party, that education is over-rated and that qualifications do not matter, while he, at this time, is enhancing his own qualification by doing a Ph.D. but education must not be pursued by other persons. How selfish can we get? Education and qualification matter. We cannot compete in any economy without them.

Sir, I do not have to detain the House by citing the record of the Government on its infrastructural development, the Minister of Public Works will do that.

Sir, do you remember the time when there was a pothole competition in the Nation Newspaper? Let us consider the contrast. The Minister is being accused of doing too much. He is fixing too many roads all over Barbados, including residential communities such as Ealing Park; Gibbons; Balls; Breedy's Land; Parish Land; Coverly, where in front of people's home need the benefit of these good services of the Government's infrastructural programmes.

The Government has looked at the quality of life in other ways; in its parks and amenities. There has been improvement at the Silver Sands Park and the beautification of highways. There has been a total programme of development. These Estimates are part of the continuum of development. We have a responsibility to position this economy to take advantage of the new world. We have laid the foundation by a range of legislative, administrative and policy initiatives. This Parliament has been the place through which we have obtained approval for new e-commerce legislations; legislations relating to

fair competition; to telecommunication reform; small business development; reforms of the financial sector, all with the view of positioning us for the future. This House will shortly be considering a new Bill to deal with the realities of the new Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Mr. Speaker, amongst my Ministry's various responsibilities, including telecommunications; energy; industrial development; corporate affairs; intellectual property; economic planning; et cetera, it has responsibility for encouraging and facilitating private sector development.

The Caribbean Single Market and Economy will not be allowed by this administration to remain as a treaty, a series of protocols and legalistic arrangements. We will ensure that it becomes a reality that the people of Barbados are able to benefit from the implementation of a Single Market and Economy.

One of the major changes is the introduction of the liberalisation of trade and services. As you know, we import and export goods in CARICOM but there are times when our doctors, lawyers, engineers or other professionals who do a thriving business throughout CARICOM do encounter restrictions from time to time. That will be a thing of the past.

Beyond that, Sir, those opportunities are becoming available in the wider areas of the Americas through the Free Trade Area of the Americas. We need to work now to make sure that young, bright Barbadians artists; entertainers; land surveyors; accountants; refrigeration and air conditioning technicians; electricians; shop proprietors; doctors; lawyers; teachers; nurses, and the whole range of professions, are able to move freely and to capitalise on those opportunities.

This Government and certainly my Ministry, is working closely with the private sector in an initiative called the Coalition of Service Industries. We have been able, and sums have been provided in these Estimates, to have organisations such as, the Barbados Association of Professional Engineers; the Barbados Chamber of Commerce; the Barbados Association of Professional Architects; and various other professional groups, coming together with a programme which we will support by way of a financial grant, to make sure that Barbados service providers have their interest properly provided for in the new trading agreements. It will also promote competitiveness and strengthen the enterprises in these sectors, to make them ready to be able to do business internationally.

Some of these things are simple while others are complex. Sir, for example, a large part of the market in this

Hemisphere is English-speaking, we need to have a concerted programme in the private service, especially amongst service providers, to make sure they are able to converse in Spanish. That is where there is a large part of the market.

We have this unfortunate situation where, because of our history, we have been lulled into a false sense of security as a former English colony, that the whole world understands English and, therefore, we do not have to learn another language. We need to change that mindset. In fact, when persons who are not from this part of the world look at the map, they automatically assume that Barbados is a Spanish-speaking country.

10.50 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: because geographically speaking, we are a small island next to a large continent of Spanish-speaking persons. Those are the kinds of building capacity that we need to put in place in the private sector as well as a knowledge of how to do business in these international markets. Support in that area will provide opportunities for our young people in future and this will be a key part of arrangements this year.

Sir, the matter of small business support in this sector was also raised. I want to say to the Honourable Member for St. John that the Government's record in support of the small business sector is clear and impressive. I will cite the numbers for the Honourable Members because over the past seven years of the administration a number of these programmes were fully operational and Government, through the various funding agencies, Enterprise Growth Fund, Small Hotel Investment Fund, Tourism Loan Fund, the Agricultural Development Fund, the Industrial Employment and Investment fund, the Urban Development Commission, the Urban Enterprises Fund, the Rural Development Commission through the Rural Enterprises Fund and Fund Access, have injected some \$62 million in small business financing to 1387 entrepreneurs in this country.

This financing would not have otherwise been available because of the tendency of the commercial banking sector to be averse to risk and not to support new and emerging business. We know that success in these business endeavours will create for us a new entrepreneurial class who will take us into the future but if they are left by the wayside to die, there will be no one to take us into the future.

Sir, we are not sitting back on this record, impressive as it is. I have had several meetings and a working group was established because I was concerned that even though

we had lent a lot of money to a lot of people there were several others who for various reasons have not been able to tap into that pool and instructions have gone out to ensure there is a new regime for the application, evaluation and decision-making in respect of these enterprises.

Sir, every applicant must be provided with whatever technical assistance may be required to enable him to meet the application criteria. We are not talking only about providing finances but about building a new entrepreneurial class, filling in the gaps and working with them to bring them up to the required standard.

Further, the interest of the clients in this sector must be protected and all these agencies must sign agreements concerning the confidentiality of the applications before them.

The reality is that we have to protect these entrepreneurs because if they die today, there will be no one to take the country forward tomorrow. These Estimates are looking forward and building a new economy. We will also recapitalise the agencies to make sure there are adequate funds to meet the future needs. I will speak to that at a future debate.

Sir, I want to touch on the matter of energy. While we were in this Parliament yesterday conducting the people's business, a lot has transpired in the international community with the threat of war. Given that this involves the Middle East, there will be a concern about energy. I want to indicate that Barbados is both a producer and consumer of petroleum products. We are producers in that we drill crude oil and export to Trinidad & Tobago for refining.

In 2003, we will intensify our drilling programme to move from the point where we currently produce 1200 barrells of crude oil a day to the point where we produce 1600 barrells a day, and starting in May, we will drill the first of nine new wells in Woodbourne and Edgcombe area. It is expected that these wells will boost the production not only of crude oil but of natural gas.

Sir, from a point of view of security of supply we do not source petroleum products from the Middle East. These are supplied by Trinidad and Tobago from their own production. Therefore, the matter of war in the Middle East will not have the supply impact on Barbados because of the source of our supply. Clearly, oil prices have already started to rise beyond how they rose earlier in the year and, therefore, Barbadians need to be cognisance of this fact. Notwithstanding that our supply is from Trinidad and Tobago we need in our individual homes, factories and other businesses, to use a conservation programme not only for diesel and gasoline but with electricity which is produced by the use of petroleum products as well, to

ensure that whatever is the nature of the uncertainty that exists that we are in a position to ride it out.

Sir, from the Government's point of view we have already put in place a contingency plan which will ensure that we have adequate storage for a full 38 days of gasoline supply, 60 days of diesel supply and 90 days of fuel oil.

Sir we should not become complacent in that regard and we need to recognise that the energy situation in the world affects us as well.

11.00 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: Sir, I should also let this House know that these Estimates and the energy policy of the Government, for the long-term as well, will see us during the course of this year and proceed with a sense of urgency the construction of new oil terminals and storage facilities to replace those which are currently at Needhams Point. This location would be cleared in time for the opening of the Hilton Hotel, and would be used for a more sensible highly productive activity in the tourism sector.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I fully support the Estimates as presented by the Right Honourable Prime Minister. They represent the continuing efforts of this Government to restructure and reposition the economy and they represent a continual commitment to the social development of Barbados. The fact that even in these tight times, a 30 per cent of total expenditure goes between health and education. This represents our commitment in carrying our people with us as we take this society forward.

These Estimates, therefore, represent an investment in the future and it is in that context that I am pleased to support these Estimates.

I thank you.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, as I make my contribution to this debate in support of the matter before the House I feel that I must begin *moreso* wearing my Foreign Affairs hat than my Foreign Trade hat, although in reality, for most of the time they are one and the same.

Prime Minister Arthur spoke plainly and resolutely to where Barbados stands on the question of war with Iraq yesterday. It is important that he would have made that statement when he did. This morning people all over the world are glued to their television sets watching Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom seeking the support of Parliament on this matter.

The CARICOM Heads of Government met a month ago in Port of Spain in their Intercessional Meeting. On that occasion they put out a very well considered statement which is the position of the CARICOM Leaders. The Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, holds fast to that position as, indeed, all other members of Caricom.

The statement is so all-encompassing and well considered in respect of our position. “

They were deeply troubled over the humanitarian tragedy that an outbreak of war would bring about and the disastrous effects which it would have on global economic stability. Heads of Government emphasised that no state should have the right to foster the development of weapons of mass destruction in any form, including chemical and biological agents. They recalled that the Security Council had compelled Iraq to cease the development and production of weapons of mass destruction and has obligated it to give total access to the United Nations Weapon Inspectors to verify its compliance with Security Council Resolutions. The Heads appealed to Iraq to cooperate fully with all the requirements of the UNMOVIC and the IAES Inspectors, and to fulfil its commitment to the United Nations and the international community in this regard. They were convinced that Iraq's full and transparent implementation of Security Council Resolution 1441 would contribute to the easing of tensions and would strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to bring about a peaceful resolution of the situation. The Heads reiterated that the United Nations, through its Security Council, has been charged with a responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. They were therefore deeply disturbed at the prospect of the use of military force in Iraq without the endorsement of the United Nations Security Council in the absence of a final conclusion by the United Nations Weapons Inspectors that Iraq is in material breach of Security Council Resolution 1441.

Heads were in total support of the position taken by the United Nations Secretary General.

“This is an issue not for any one state alone but for the international community as a whole.”

In this connection, they stressed that any unilateral action taken outside of a United Nations Security Council mandate, would undermine the integrity of the United

Nations and considerably weaken the multi-lateral system and its machinery for preserving peace and security.

Heads were firmly opposed to the use of armed force at a time when it is clear that diplomatic efforts have not yet been exhausted and the United Nations and its

Inspectors are reporting some progress and formally requesting more time to complete their work. They believed that it was essential for all states to support the work of the Inspectors and to create the conditions to allow them to fulfill their mandate.

The Heads urged the Government of the United States and its military allies on this issue to exercise restraint in their approach to this complex international crisis. They expressed particular anxiety at the consequences a war would have, not only for the region of the Middle East but for the entire world and the disproportionate burden that would be borne by small developing states, including those in the Caribbean, which are ill-prepared to cope with the impact of a global recession provoked by volatile oil prices, severe dislocation of their vital tourism and financial services sectors and falling levels of investment.

The Heads of Government reaffirmed the commitment of the Caribbean community to a just world order based on respect for the rule of law and social justice and guaranteeing peace, security and sustainable development for all. They remained committed to international efforts to combat terrorism. They also remained convinced that diplomacy and dialogue present the most enlightened approach to building understanding and resolving conflicts in a modern and inter-dependent world.”

Mr. Speaker, last night we heard the President of the United States of America on television and this morning we heard Prime Minister Blair of the United Kingdom talk about war in Iraq. This is a very critical moment at the beginning of this new century. What happens now in our Parliament, is going to generate greater uncertainty and as the Heads of Government pointed out in their statement, grave consequences for all and particular small developing states such as ours.

11.10 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER:

Sir, what is happening even as we speak now in our Parliament is going to generate even greater uncertainty and as the Heads pointed out in their statements, grave consequences for all of the world and particularly small developing states such as ours. The developed and the developing world will bear the brunt of some of it and the price for what is likely to happen, in a few hours from now.

What has happened now, in respect of the United Nations is that since the last world war, known as World War II, all the efforts of those states which are members of

the United Nations to bring about a system of multilateral diplomacy, through the United Nations, which as we were told then, some of us were not born then but we were told that the major aim was to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.

Now, we have come to a place where the United Nations and its Security Council, which is peopled, Mr. Speaker, mostly by the major developed countries of this world, small developing countries like ours, do not have a say in the permanent council. Some of us are trying to have a say in the non-permanent membership of that council, but what is happening now, is that the processes which the United Nations has put in place for peaceful settlement of disputes, a lot of which are enshrined in Constitutions across the world and in international legislation across the world, would appear to be overtaken by new principles and new concepts. Sir, as the Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter pointed out yesterday that in this little Barbados, even though we do not have a say in those councils, we have a point of view. We have the greatest difficulty and it cannot be overstated, with a concept of regime change, and of preemptive strike.

My question is, Sir, where will it end? Will it next be Palestine, where it is being suggested that this country should have a President, other than he who is now the President? Will it be Venezuela? Will it be Haiti, which is even closer to us? When in the future will it be suggested to us here in Barbados as to whom our Prime Minister and Government is to be? If you think it out to its natural and logical conclusion, Sir, where will it end? How will it be contained? This is why small states like ours, Sir, have to be very careful about unilateral military intervention.

Prime Minister Arthur quite rightly recalled yesterday the time he and I were barely sworn in as Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, when we were sitting down with the then United States Ambassador to this country, discussing the most important matter of intervention in Haiti.

Indeed, CARICOM is still very much engaged, all these years later. That was 1994, this is 2003, and CARICOM to this day, even as we speak, is still very much engaged in diplomatic effort to bring a democracy such as we enjoy in Barbados, to Haiti which is the only least developed country, UN designated, in this small sub-region in which we live and have our being.

We have boasted for all the years, Sir, about the quality of our governance, the participatory parliamentary democracy which we embrace and which we are a part of today. This freedom of speech which we have in here is not to be found in many countries of the world and we must not take it for granted because even now, it seems to me that it

could be threatened, if this is the way that the world will go.

Our adherence to the rule of law is most lauded and admired around the world and we are not going to depart from it now as a principle by which we live and by which we govern in Barbados. We cannot approbate and reprobate at one and the same time.

These developed countries are the ones who say to us time and time again that we must adhere to the tenets of the United Nations and many of the other institutions of governance which are multilateral. It cannot be now that we are going to be told that we must move away from it. Where will pre-emptive strike end? Who is to determine when the time has come for it? None of these things have been properly thought out to our satisfaction and that is why Barbados finds itself in a position where it cannot, and so do, perhaps, a majority of countries in the world, where it cannot support the premise on which entry into Iraq is now possible.

We are still on a path of seeking to fight terrorism in this world. We have brought before this Honourable Chamber several pieces of legislation since September 11, 2001 in that quest. Where does it put the United Nations now? How can you ask people to respect that institution and this whole impasse now, as it is, as coming from a country which is said to represent the leadership of the free world, and has shown no little disrespect for that institution in the past several years, so that there is cause for great concern.

We understand that this action is likely now to cause the entire nation of Islam to feel that it is under threat. Iraq is only one small component of that. It is a very dangerous time now in which we live, a very decisive time in world affairs, Mr. Speaker. It is a time when we have to think very carefully. It is a time when all denominations should be moved to prayer, including ourselves. It is a time, and I am glad to hear the statement made by the Honourable Member who spoke just before me, when we now have to divert slender and hard fought for resources to prepare ourselves for the damage which surely must come to us in an event that there is a war.

11.20 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. Miss. M. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, those of us who drive well know that when you are approaching a curve you have to slow down as you approach the curve and that you only begin to accelerate when you are in the curve and moving out of it.

We have to prepare ourselves not only in respect of our energy supplies, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has been pointing out, but we have to look to the matter of food security and we have to look to renewable energy sources perhaps to supplement and complement our own supplies.

We have now to upgrade security at both our air and sea ports. We have to upgrade security at all of our Missions abroad especially those in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Venezuela, Brussels and Geneva, where the alert is now, I gather, shining on orange but which will turn to red within hours. There are consequences for us too. We have to be very mindful of the safety and the security of our foreign service officers who are serving in those jurisdictions and naturally there is a cost to that.

The Minister of Tourism is not in his seat in this Chamber this morning but he is in this building. He is now deeply engrossed with his high officials looking to see what creative and obviously very highly innovative promotional programmes will now have to be put in place on a contingency basis in the event that there is actually going to be an outbreak of hostilities. Other ministries and other Ministers who would like to be more focused on the matter before the House have got to be turning their immediate attention and energies to what would be the Barbados contingency plan in the event that hostilities break out.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, war or no war, and that applies to wars because there are other wars in other parts of the world as well, negotiations are going to continue. A few years ago in Seattle, the Barbados delegation led by me had our share of pepper spray and other noxious substances on the street but we found a room in the hotel where we were staying and when all of that battle in Seattle was going on on the streets, the meetings were going on. We found a big room and Mr. Pascal Lamy of the European Commission met with the members of the AfricanCaribbeanPacific States to carry on the meetings, because as they say, 'come hell or high water', war or no war, these negotiations are going to continue.

I think that Barbadians by now are well aware that the Caribbean finds itself in a unique situation where in the face of all of these challenges... Yesterday, when the Leader of the Opposition spoke, it bothered me that he was so casual and almost belittling of the challenges that face us on an ongoing daily basis.

We are negotiating now in the Free Trade Area of the Americas and we were negotiating since January of this year with the Europeans together with the ACP States. As recently as two weeks ago, a weekend in St. Lucia, we had the opportunity as the Caribbean together to meet with Mr.

Pascal Lamy of the European Union on matters which are critical to how we are going to negotiate as a region with the European Union. We met with Mr. Lamy on the Saturday and on the Sunday he was taken on a tour to see what devastation was already occurring on the banana plantations in St. Lucia.

Last Monday at the request of the Canadian International Trade Minister, Pierre Pettigrew. I, together with all of the other Trade Ministers of CARICOM, was in Trinidad for the day to discuss with him a number of important matters in respect of the Free Trade Areas of the Americas as well as the World Trade Organisation.

We are hoping that toward the end of this month, war or no war, that the request by the United States Trade Representative, Mr. Robert Zoellick to meet with the CARICOM Trade Ministers will happen, preferably in the Caribbean. We prefer to meet on our own turf so that they can see for themselves what the consequences of actions that they take can have and with great immediacy in the Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is very important that we focus on these weighty matters of state, that we engage very carefully during the next several days of this debate of the Estimates of Expenditure... I intend to speak at some length when Head 32 in respect of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade comes before the House and I am serving notice of that now.

Mr. Speaker, in this second reading, I am deeply concerned about the severe implications of an outbreak of war on the trade negotiations themselves. In all of the theatres of negotiations they are going painfully slow but there are deadlines. We are to have a Free Trade Area of the Americas in place by the year 2005.

As the entire world knows, 2004 is the presidential election year in the United States of America. So we must not be in any doubt at all that the Americans bring a certain urgency to the negotiations of the Free Trade Area of the Americas because it is important for them to be able to say to their people that they have brought about such and be able to point out the advantages that it will bring to the United States of America.

We must not forget that the United States of America is the biggest and the most powerful of the partners within the Americas. It is clear to me and I believe it is clear to the rest of us in CARICOM as trade ministers, indeed it is clear to the Heads because we have communicated with the Heads, that there is going to be a Free Trade Area of the Americas by 2005 no matter what.

11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, many countries have considerations which they want to bring to bear on the negotiations. In the Caribbean, we are concerned with special and differential treatment for small, developing economies such as ours. We are making our case and it is not easy to persuade others. In Latin America, they bring other concerns to that process. There are some countries like Brazil, where there have just been a change of Government. It is not even clear as to where Brazil's new administration of President Lula da Silva, is going to be on a number of important issues within the Free Trade Areas of the Americas. The Argentinians are still very deep in financial quagmire.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear to us that either we are going to have to extend the period for bringing the Free Trade Areas of the Americas into being, or we are going to have to truncate the agenda. Since the Americas has a date which cannot be changed, it is clear that we are going to have to truncate the agenda, which might not be a bad thing for us. That is part of the case we are putting in the Free Trade Areas of the Americas for bringing closer a truncation of the agenda.

Mr. Speaker, there are matters in the Free Trade Areas of the Americas' agenda which we in CARICOM have not even had time to decide among ourselves on a position as CARICOM. There are items on the Free Trade Areas of the Americas' agenda which, even in the World Trade Organisation, have not yet been negotiated. These are important matters such as government procurement. This has very important implications for us.

Some of us do not properly understand the mergers that we are seeing and we must learn to understand the importance of them in world trade for the future. There are going to be more and more of them. What we have seen with the Barclays Bank and the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) coming together and what we are now seeing with the Barbados National Bank, is the way of the world in trade and, therefore, we have to learn how best to position ourselves in order to take advantage of what could be useful to us. So that, Mr. Speaker, it is very important that we are well focused on these things.

I am sorry that I have not been able to speak further on these issues but when my Head is called, I fully intent to expatiate on them because Barbadians need to understand very carefully. It is true, as has been said, that any outbreak in the Middle East could damage us in the immediate and would damage us in perhaps the short and medium term but if we do not get it right in respect of what we can negotiate to our best advantage, in all of these negotiations in which we are now involved and engaged, we might find ourselves in deep trouble for the longer term and generations to come

will not thank us if we make excuses now as to why we did not do the very best that we could have, in all of the circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged for this opportunity to have spoken on the Second Reading.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER assumed the Chair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Member for St. Philip North.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this Estimates Debate. I begin by saying that previous Prime Ministers have all played their part in this country's success. I think that Barbados has had Prime Ministers who were exceedingly right for their times. The Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, was right for his time. Mr. Tom Adams was right for his time. Let me say that we should not underestimate the depth and the quality of this present Prime Minister because he too is right for his time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, previous Prime Ministers have had serious domestic and regional issues with which to grapple and they dealt with them very well.

The world in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, was never in such turmoil as it is today. There was never any move towards globalisation and trade liberalisation as we know it. Therefore, leaders with a domestic mindset could not have survived in today's world. The international climate can be extremely unfriendly and hostile in today's world. Barbados now has to 'bob-and-weave' in order to survive and neither is the new world order favourable to developing countries. A minister of finance cannot now manage the economy as freely as they would like. One is now compelled to manage the economy according to the dictates of the new world order. Everything now has to be world-compliant. It must be done according to world requirements and must be done according to the requirements of the Free Trade Areas of the Americas; Organisation for Eastern Caribbean States; General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs and the World Trade Organisation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that we in this country are very lucky that our present Prime Minister has been able to step on that international stage and hold his own on our behalf and oftentimes too on the behalf of our neighbours. Mr. Deputy Speaker, our Prime Minister is extremely well-respected by his peers.

The other Party does not like us to say this about him. Whenever we say this, they tend to get the jitters for some reason but I have to say that we must give credit

wherever credit is due. Our Prime Minister understands these international and economic issues thoroughly and for him, good is not good enough, if better could be done.

11.40 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE: Sir, I speak for myself. I would not want to be a Prime Minister or Minister of Finance at this time. Any Prime Minister or Minister of Finance who can steer our economic ship away from the jagged rocks and the international whirlwinds at this time has to be commended, held in high esteem and high regard by the citizens of that country over whose fortunes he presides.

The Prime Minister said yesterday during his presentation that no other Estimates since independence was made against such a background of such tumultuous change. I sympathize with any Prime Minister or Minister of Finance in this region in this climate of uncertainty.

Mr. Speaker, these are not easy Estimates because regional economies will not be easy to manage this year or next year. Tomorrow we do not know if war, in a direct or indirect way, will decimate our region because it is a global problem. I am, therefore, convinced that these are very responsible Estimates.

We have known occasions when Prime Minister and Minister of Finances in the Caribbean have been known to splurge at elections time to regret it later. Some Ministers of Finances were advised to break the Treasury to make sure the elections were won. Sir, the temptation is here now to overspend.

Sir, listen to the words of the Honourable Member for St. Peter yesterday:

“This is time for prudence and for capable husbandry of our resources. The eve of elections is the worst possible time for fiscal excesses.”

He also said that at the last minute for electoral purposes in 1993, the Treasury was drained and left bankrupt. Sir, the temptation to overspend has to be curbed and there can be no reckless spending at this time. Sir, here is a Prime Minister managing an economy by putting his country first and himself and the election results second.

The largest chunk of these Estimates goes to education. Mr. Speaker, \$375 million is a lot of money but we in this Ministry wanted more because we did not get all that we wanted for EduTech. We only received \$30 million for the four components of EduTech.

Sir, the Minister of Finance has to look at the macro picture and he cannot concern himself with pleasing every ministry or statutory body. We in education accept our allocation at the level of the person who controls the purse strings. There is justification for this because the Prime Minister must decide whether the economy sinks or swim. He also made the point that whenever the turbulence settles that EduTech will have access to further funds as a matter of priority. I thank the Prime Minister for this undertaking because he realises that initiatives like the technological development must survive if we are to combat globalization. We must reeducate our people so that they can move from where there are now and EduTech and education must not lose momentum.

Mr. Speaker, EduTech is our preparation for the new world order. Everyone wants to have the latest model car and EduTech is giving our children the latest in education.

This \$375 million given to education is justifiable because it is going to inure to the benefit of generations to come. It sends the message that education is our most important social agency and it has the capacity for social mobility and can transform the entire society.

A few decades ago we were an agriculture society and education has transformed our society where today, the offspring of slaves can stand here in this Parliament. Mr. Speaker, there is nothing wrong with spending \$375 million on education.

Sir, EduTech leaves no one out. Today at Erdiston we have formed an alliance and partnership with Mount St. Vincent in Halifax Canada and we have done that to ensure that no one is left out. We are training 80 teachers in the special needs of our children. We did not want to leave anyone out so we had to deal with learning disabilities of the dumb and the deaf.

These teachers can stay here in Barbados and do the course. This course is not offered at the University of the West Indies and you would have to leave the country to do the course but we have brought the course to 80 teachers to do their bachelor's and master's degree. These teachers are drawn from Government and private schools. The course is going beautifully and we have had no complaints about it. We are linking with an international university to solve the problems which we could not do by ourselves. It is our first experiment at distance learning in this regard.

When this first batch is through, we will do the course again because we want a wider cadre of teachers trained to teach children with disabilities.

11.50 a.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE: Sir, students at Alexandra, Sharon and South District Schools are equipped with personal lap top computers. To date we have had no instances of children losing or destroying these computers. We have been able to ascertain that students with the lap top computers have improved in their learning and studying habits. There has also been an improvement in their behaviour.

Sir, before the end of the school year, we hope to have the students at St. Davids Primary School, St. Albans School and Princess Margaret School equipped with computers. Most of these students might not have been able to touch a computer were it not for the EduTech programme. Every day you look into the newspaper or listen to the radio, jobs are being advertised and it is clearly stated that only persons with computer skills need apply. We have to choose our education policies properly because they must be policies which matter. They must be policies which are relevant and current.

Sir, when we insisted that Spanish should be taught in primary school, I read an article in the newspaper where someone ridiculed the policy. I want to say that we are not teaching Spanish for Spanish sake. We are teaching Spanish because when persons leave Barbados and over overseas to work in hotels, they work alongside Mexicans and they serve people who speak Spanish only. We are doing that because when we send our students on scholarships they are taught in Spanish. We are doing this because when our students go to Santa Domingo and Cuba they are taught in Spanish. We are doing it because, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East said, a large part of our trading market is non-English and our business people have to learn from early how to deal in the international market. That is why we are teaching Spanish in schools from an early age.

Sir, every new measure that we introduce in education must have a reason. No subject should be added to our curriculum unless there is a reason for it.

The main reason why we are setting resource centres throughout Barbados is to ensure that those young people who do not have access to computers and the internet are able to learn and acquire such skills. We do not want to leave people behind because they do not have the means. We do not want our people to become lost in this very competitive world and we cannot continue to creep in education.

Our young people travel worldwide and they must not be left behind. I told the Honourable Member for St. John yesterday that they are more people who come from his constituency to the Blaze Hill Resource Centre to do the computer class on evening than there are people coming

from the St. Philip area. Sir, education must be the backbone of building our human resources.

We owe it to our people to get them ready for the world of work and if we do not do it for them, I think that we would have failed our people. That is why we were so annoyed when UNESCO published an article which said that 10 per cent of our people did not attend school because we know that we have gone all out as a country, regardless to which Government is in office, to ensure that all of our children have access to education and we, therefore, when people are ready to criticise that it is said that Barbados tries.

Sir, yesterday the Honourable Member for St. Peter spoke about the prospect of our having our own University College of Barbados. He mentioned it only in relation to space and to take some of the pressure off some of the tertiary institutions. I am of the view that the University College of Barbados will usher in scores of qualified students at a price that is cheaper than the University of the West Indies.

Sir, the qualifications that we will get from the University College of Barbados will be sub-degree qualifications. For example, certificates, diplomas and associate degrees. We may not have the large number of Bachelors of Arts degrees that will conflict with the University of the West Indies. In times like these, the temptation is always there for us to compare the cost of education. The cost of education, institution by institution can be very tempting.

Sir, currently it cost \$3 000 a year to educate a student at the Samuel Jackman Polytechnic, approximately \$5 000 to educate a student at the Barbados Community College and \$35 000 to educate a student at the University of the West Indies. Sir, when that graduate from the University of the West Indies leaves the university, he may not be contributing as much to Barbados as the student who attended the Samuel Jackman Polytechnic, for example, the welder, electrician, auto mechanic or refrigeration technician.

Sir, education is not about the image. We must ensure that our University College of Barbados meets the needs of our society when it comes on stream. We cannot allow the University College of Barbados to provide Barbadians with sub degrees which are worthless. We have to be very careful about this because it would be foolhardy for us to expand the number of graduates and have them piling up on each other.

12.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as policy makers, we have to respond to the demands of the labour market. We also need to have a change in mind-set when it comes to institutions such as the Polytechnic and where the courses offered by the Polytechnic are concerned.

It is a pity that there is something of a stigma that is attached to that institution. If we as policy makers, Sir, continue to see and to treat the Polytechnic as a second classed institution, it will never be seen by others as an option or an alternative to a university. Sir, we have to do something about that as policy makers.

Otherwise, it will always remain as somewhere where you do a little unimportant course here and there. It will always be seen as an institution which is substandard.

To this end, I am very pleased that the Erdiston Teachers Training College, the Barbados Community College and the Polytechnic will become part of the amalgam and form the University College of Barbados. I am equally pleased to say that there was a very exciting programme brought by the Polytechnic to us this year, where they asked us for \$700 000 to do a course in open and flexible learning. They will be offering courses now, Mr. Speaker, to people who cannot go to campus during the day. These are people who are working. These are working people but they will now have access to the e-mail and Internet, people who do not have to turn up at the Polytechnic to be taught, people who will not have to give up their jobs to study, people who will do the studying at a time and a place convenient to them. Occasionally, they will be called upon, as far as they were informing me, to do some face to face sessions. Part of the \$700 000 is going to be used to set up the office and so on to accommodate all of this.

Already, if you listen well on the television, and so on you will see that the Polytechnic has already started to advertise about five or six of the courses which will be done through this medium. As more and more people realise that they need further skills, I think that more and more people are going to utilise this particular medium, where you can virtually stay at home and you can study and you can get your qualifications.

Sir, there are many people who may want to study but they cannot afford to give up their work. I would advise people to get their qualifications, in spite of what was said by the President of the Democratic Labour Party. I know that qualifications are a passport to employment and promotion. I know that people need to know what is required for them to go from point A to point B. I know that life is about conditionalities, criteria and qualifications.

Qualifications simply say that you have met a basic level of training, you have met a basic level of competence to do a certain job. I was so shocked at the comment coming from the President of the Democratic Labour Party because I had known of previous occasions when there were others who were saying, oh, he has a good degree, oh, he is so well qualified, you know he has all these things about qualifications about him, and then suddenly, he comes and says, well that does not matter, those things are overrated.

Sir, we on this side, do not believe in arbitrariness or anarchy and without qualifications, you are looking for arbitrary decisions to be made and you are looking for a lot of anarchy in the society.

I am not saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, do not get me wrong, that you are not going to find persons without qualifications who can operate as well or even better sometimes, than those with qualifications.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member your time is up.

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not saying that qualifications are the only criteria. I think, as I said, it is immature and reckless to say that qualifications are overrated.

Once again, Sir, let me say that I lend my wholehearted support to these Estimates and I lend my wholehearted support to the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Minister of Finance and the Prime Minister for bringing Estimates of this quality to this House in such very trying and such very challenging times. This is the best that anyone could do.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER, I am obliged to you.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too would like to make my contribution to the Estimates 2003-2004 as laid in this Honourable Chamber by the representative, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and Prime Minister a day ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to take a course in this address to show that this country is on the right track under the leadership and under the management of the Prime Minister and Government of today.

I listened carefully to the Deputy Prime Minister this morning as she spoke about the seriousness of war and the effect that it could have on Barbados. I could divert from that and say that I have also listened to the Leader of the Opposition, who seem to believe that war is the answer at this time, so it would stabilise the country to the benefit of the Opposition.

I am going to show you at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how serious it is, and Barbadians must take the Opposition for every pinch of salt that it issues. Because on a serious note, there are some of us in this Honourable Chamber who might have experiences of what might have been a war. There are some of us who might have read what war would have caused or what it would have done.

I do not believe at this time, that with the direct management of the Caribbean, and also in Barbados in general that it is fair for anyone to believe within themselves, even though they are in Opposition, that a war will mean the advantage for them to become the Government of the time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have listened carefully to the cries of the Parliamentary Representative for St. John and I have also listened to someone from the Other Chamber who is the Leader or the person who directs the Other Side, the Opposition.

I do not know if he really directs the Opposition and it is not my interest. I know what I have to direct and what I have to do on behalf of the people of St. Michael North West.

12.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: As far as I am concerned, this Government, over the last year has been able to produce many of its programmes, especially its road works programme that are now coming to an end, to the satisfaction of most Barbadians.

Last year's capital works expenditure was almost \$326 million, this year it is \$270 million which is almost \$55 million less than last year's. However, when you listen carefully to the Honourable Prime Minister you would understand clearly that there is still a projection and a way forward for Barbados as far as planning is concerned. Careful planning after September 11 has brought us to a point of satisfaction because we can relate to the fact that the Government and the planners have done well in order to bring Barbados forward out of that set back it found itself in after September 11.

We are seeing a situation where, even though war is on the horizon, this Government still finds it fit to direct money into the areas that are extremely important for the betterment of Barbados. For example, over \$110 million is to be spent on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to improve the level of health care in this country which is extremely important. There has also been a careful study to develop the EduTech Programme for the benefit of young Barbadians in the years to come.

The reverse of that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that you have someone who calls himself a leader and who has, in his opinion, the potential to become a leader at some later date - that is providing I give way to him, which I do not think will happen and the people of St. Michael North West will not be so foolish - who is walking around saying that diplomas and degrees are not important. When he was a Member of Parliament, I want this Honourable Chamber to remember this, he stood in this very Chamber and boasted that he was one of the most brilliant economists in the Caribbean and that as far as he is concerned others would have to look up to him. This is a man who seems to be operating like a former judge in this country who climbed the ladder and turn around and kicked it down.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, he is a product of St. Michael North West but there are other people in the constituency of St. Michael North West who I am proud of because those people have excelled as far as academics are concerned, so he is no more brilliant than them. He is no more brilliant than Professor Downes, Mr. Nurse, or Professor Linden Lewis who are from the constituency of St. Michael North West. So when he comes in here and boast that he is the most brilliant economist in Barbados, I want to let the people in this Chamber know that St. Michael North West has produced people who are more brilliant than the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party. Therefore, it is an insult to Errol Barrow's legend for him to come and tell people that diplomas and degrees do not make any difference especially since he told the people in St. Michael North West that he was writing exams for his Ph.D. which would mean a lot to him when he becomes the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party. People must be honest.

The Democratic Labour Party said that it was not possible to do everything that this Party, the Barbados Labour Party, has done for the development of Barbados over the years. They accused us of spending money on the GEMS Project but that money has been well spent and I will tell you why. That money spent on the GEMS Project is an investment and later down the road that investment will prove its worth.

When the Deep Water Harbour was built the Democratic Labour Party said that was a waste of money. Today the Deep Water Harbour is considered to be one of the most advanced harbours within the region. When the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was about to be built, they said that it was a waste of money as well. Today the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been able not only to produce excellent health care but also to acquire professors from within the ranks of Barbados to be working within the precincts of that Queen Elizabeth Hospital which means somewhere along the line, it is working for the betterment of Barbados and the Caribbean.

When the ABC Highway was being built, they condemned this Barbados Labour Party and said that the ABC Highway was a waste of money but when Prince Charles came here, the first person to drive on that open stretch between the Norman Niles Roundabout and the Frank Walcott Roundabout to get to Sandy Lane from the Airport was the then Prime Minister of Barbados. You know about whom I am speaking, Sir.

They also said that the Tom Adams Financial Centre was a waste of money. Today the Tom Adams Financial Centre is considered to be an icon in the Caribbean not only in its architecture but also in the work that it is doing.

I am just showing you the wickedness of the Opposition. Recently, the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party said that this Party was selling shares ...

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of Order, Sir. I am the only sitting Member of the Opposition and the Honourable Member said: "the wickedness of the Opposition" so by implication, Sir, he has to be referring to me, so I would like you to correct that for me, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can change that and say, the wickedness of the DLP, the Party in Opposition, both in the Upper Chamber and in the Lower Chamber.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you rephrase that please.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: The Democratic Labour Party, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party Leader is telling Barbadians that this Government is selling its shares in the Barbados National Bank for election money. I picked up the 1991 Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party and this is what it said on page 11, this is also a document of the House: "The Democratic Labour Party will also seek to diversify the financial systems by attracting other financial institutions and intermediaries such as merchant banks to deepen the financial service sector and increase the flow of investment finances."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party is critical of this Government for advancing. At this time there are a lot of international mergers going and in order to move the country forward you have to project your plans and your thoughts. To resort to such cheap politics shows

the mentality of the Opposition. They are trying to create a situation in this country to cause Barbadians to feel that this country is not on the right path, but it is on the right path. The international financial organisations know that Barbados is on the right path. They have given us the green light as far as the management of this economy is concerned.

The Leader of the Democratic Labour Party is going around this country making statements to create what we consider to be a national image but in so doing, he has not even resort to where that national image must begin. That national image must begin inside of the very constituency of which he is trying to run. In trying to be a national figure, he has to understand fully that it starts in St. Michael North West. So I am challenging him to prove to Barbadians if at anytime while he was in this Chamber and even now that he is trying to return, he has projected a cause for the constituency of St. Michael North West, because it is yet to be seen.

12.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: It is written in Hansard. He said he does not believe in parochial politics and that it is not for him. He said too that Trinidad should not lend Barbados any money. This is a man who is supposed to a potential leader who, in fact, has failed the young minds of Barbados because of his train of thought, which is not progressive. It is extremely destructive.

I compliment this Government and those Ministers who are responsible for the various Ministries that have given service to the St. Michael North West. We have benefitted from excellent road work programme. Where there were no roads before, there are now. There were houses in urban Barbados that were in squalor and all this was presided over by a Democratic Labour Party Government for 19 years. The Document I read showed that they had recognised the need for Freehold Tenantry Act since 1961 and had done nothing about it. It is now 42 years after and they never knew.

It was this Government, under the leadership of the then Prime Minister in 1982, who introduced the Freehold Purchase Tenantry Act.

The Leader of the Democratic Labour Party has not found it fit to mention the hardship some of the people in the various tenancies in the St. Michael North West such as persons in Straker's Tenantry who lived there for 50 years and do not know the owners of the land, or persons in Rock Gap who lived there for 75 years and who do not know the owners of the land, or people at Small Land,

Bridge Gap, an area that he walked daily going to the Eagle Hall Infants School.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one cannot become a national figure unless that person understands where they came from and the Honourable Member does not seem to understand from whence he came.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank this Government. The Democratic Labour Party is claiming that we should not have invested in the Gems of Barbados, nor in the Greenland Landfill but we have to project ourselves for the future. They have criticised the Pierhead Development Project but some of us might be around to see the benefits of that Project come to reality. They have criticised the road work that has been done in Baxters Road. They went behind the scene and called the call-in programmes from George Street, to try to pull this Government down.

I think Barbadians have started to understand fully that one cannot travel a smooth road if it is not smooth. It has to be prepared. All of the roads that they have been complaining about are now finished and they are now finding fault with simple things such as congestions at traffic lights. What does one expect? There has to be a congestion of traffic in Barbados because practically every home has at least two or three cars and people obviously leave home around the same time, which lends itself to the traffic congestion. Therefore, for the Opposition to use traffic congestion is to show the progress of Barbados and what Barbados has done over the last number of years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I remember one of the major car dealers in Barbados situated at Warrens, having a car sale and sold 100 cars, all for cash that day. This shows the progress and the development of Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, do you know why I said the Democratic Labour Party is evil and wicked?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think the Honourable Member should withdraw that statement.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: I will withdraw the statement but deep in my heart it is still there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not a nice thing today for some politicians to be doing what they are doing to the young people of Barbados. The young people are becoming disillusioned with some politicians. I am speaking seriously as to how the Opposition has portrayed themselves. The Democratic Labour Party portrays themselves as not being in the interest of Barbados but only themselves.

I am saying to the Democratic Labour Party that this is their country in the same way that it is mine and,

therefore, we have to be honest and sincere in our thinking. The day will come they might reign and the things that were said that were not possible, the Democratic Labour Party would then have to manage and manage correctly.

Sir, I am happy with what I am seeing in this country today, at a time when we had a very serious set back, September 11th, 2001. Barbadians today seem not to have felt the pinch of September 11th, 2001, because there were a number of measures that were put in place and, therefore, because of those measures, Barbadians continued their lifestyle in the same way.

I heard the Deputy Prime Minister speaking to the situation but I am going appeal to Barbadians to understand carefully what is ahead of them should a war break out. If that happens, it means that the free style of movement has got to be adjusted. People might have to leave any number of cars at home because they might be an energy crisis.

I am not speaking about the energy crisis that was self-imposed in 1975 because there was never an energy crisis. There was a self-imposed energy crisis because certain persons and their friends could have gone to service stations while others could not. I have suffered as a result of that self-imposed energy crisis, only to be told a year later that there was never an energy crisis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that Barbadians are satisfied with the running of this Government and have shown it in many ways. It is obvious that at all times everything cannot be right but to anyone who can admit to their mistakes, I am going to refer to a statement, do not throw stones at glass houses because they are liable to rebound and when they do, there will be serious consequences.

Mr. Speaker, we are all one Caribbean people and when one could use a statement saying that a particular group of persons from the Caribbean are benefitting, one must understand that Barbadians are spread all over the world. Between 1961 and 1965, over 25 000 Barbadians have emigrated to England. There are between 36 000 and 40 000 Barbadians across the United States of America, some having green cards, some without.

12.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, some Barbadians feel within themselves that they have a right to God's palace but nobody has a right to God's palace you have to live the life to get to God's palace.

Sir, Barbadians have to change their selfishness and stop trying to pull back Caribbean people. People do not

know that this Government made it possible for Caribbean entertainers to work in Barbados without work permits. Sometimes our performers go overseas and find it difficult to work but we have allowed entertainers from the region to work in this island without the challenge of a work permit. Today I am comfortable that this Government has done something to improve the conditions of Caribbean people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I close by warning the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party that he has to get serious about forming a Government. I am going to be political and say that the way candidates are being selected is a selfish approach and in St. Michael North West we believe in sharing. I grew up in that community and there was no selfishness and if it is being practised the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party will remain in Opposition for a long time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 1.45 p.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that.

The question that the House be suspended until 1.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Deputy Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

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

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to give my support to these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the upcoming year, thanks to the very good people of St. Philip North. I say that these Estimates are important for a number of reasons which are rooted in the uncertainty that pervades the international economy. The Honourable Member for St. Peter and other speaker would have alluded to the fact that this uncertainty is driven not only by the fear of war which appears to be imminent but also by the ongoing national trade negotiations and the general downturn in the international economy which is expected to continue. As alluded to by the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the national economy faces some challenges at the level of production, corporate governance and as a result of the curtailment of investment in certain countries by some major companies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in light of the uncertainty that characterizes the national economy and the challenges that lie ahead in an era of globalization and regionalisation, these times call for very skillful economic management.

Given the existing situation in the regional and international economy and what is to be expected down the road, it is very important that economic managers who are skillful be in charge of the economic affairs of this country. Hence, the management of the economic affairs of this country cannot and will not be placed in the hands of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, the record of the Democratic Labour Party in its stewardship of this economy is abysmal. This is a fact and I am not ashamed to say it. Sir, I have always said that you cannot take away a man's record. If it is a good one it will there for everyone to check and if it is bad it can also be checked.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us quickly recall the experience of the early 1990s. During that period we were literally at the mercies of the international monetary fund. This country was first taken through a stabilization programme that wreck havoc on unfortunate persons in this society and then a structural adjustment programme was undertaken.

There were massive layoffs and the unemployment rate soared to an astronomical height of 27 per cent. We functioned with very little foreign reserves, there was suffering on a scale in this country not experienced since we became independent in 1966. The level of repossession of homes and other consumer durables was alarming. Sir, these assets are extremely close to persons' heart and are indicators of material advancement. There was skepticism by those who lived in the OECS territories about the Barbadian currency. I know that very well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I was a university lecturer at the time and as part of my job I moved through the OECS giving lectures in economics and participating in various seminars so I was aware of the skepticism that existed amongst our colleagues in the OECS territories about the Barbados and its currency.

1.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Sir, Barbados was becoming the laughing stock of the Caribbean due to the mismanagement on the part of the Democratic Labour Party. I was part of a regional institution making the rounds through the regional economy and I know what we had to go through during that period. We will not let the Democratic Labour Party or the people in this country ever forget the level to which they brought this country to.

During the recession in 2001/2002, the Government used counter cyclical policies to ensure that there was still a high level of real activity in the economy. Instead of cutting Government's expenditure, as was the case with the Democratic Labour Party when they were directed by the International Monetary Fund, we took the other approach and we use counter cyclical policies because of the massive foreign reserves which we had accumulated. We did it because the Government had always said that we would continue to put people first and we would try our best to ensure that jobs in this country were maintained.

We had a national consultation in the aftermath of September 11th and the Government, led by the Prime Minister, gave a solemn pledge to all Barbadians that we would work together to see us through this very rough period. The Prime Minister gave an undertaking that there will be no job cuts in the civil service and he proceeded to fashion economic policies, with the help of the private sector, which ensured that an enabling and supportive environment were made available for the private sector to function.

Sir, on that occasion the appeal to the private sector was to follow the lead of the Government and to reduce, at best, not to have any job cuts but, at worst, reduce the incidents of such job cuts. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it worked wonderfully well.

During that period, the Government, by virtue of its country's cyclical policies, was able to maintain a very high level of employment. The employment level was maintained below double digit numbers. There were low inflation rates. We maintained very impressive levels of foreign reserves and there was a further promotion of social and economic justice in this country.

Sir, the genesis of the problem was created by the Democratic Labour Party in the early 1990s. The Prime Minister spoke to this yesterday very briefly and he reminded us of the famous political statement by a previous leader of the Democratic Labour Party in which he said that he was not going to commit political suicide. He said that he was not going to put his election chances at risk by operating with a high degree of financial prudence and avoiding fiscal excesses.

Therefore, there was a high degree of election spending. There is no wonder that the present leader of the Democratic Labour Party alluded to it sometime ago when he was talking about what would be the likely outcome of the proceeds of the shares of the Barbados National Bank's shares.

There is a theory in economics called the Political Business Cycle Theory. It is associated with Professor Willie Norris of Chicago University. Basically what the

Political Business Cycle Theory says is that economic fluctuations are synchronised with the calling of elections. There is a high degree of correlation at the timing of elections and economic fluctuations. In the period leading up to an election, the economy is made to look artificially good. In using the phrase of the Prime Minister, there is a 'pump priming' of the economy in the period leading up to the election or what we call fiscal expansionary policies.

Sir, the fiscal expansionary policies of an economy are made to appear as though it is performing well but in an artificial way. The policies that are put in place would be to 'overheat the economy'.

Sir, by the time that the economic policies take full effect, the elections would have past. That is exactly what happened in the early 1990s. The Prime Minister at the time ensured that he used the Government's coffers in such a way that an electoral victory was secured. In so doing, he totally disregarded the consequences of such ridiculous action.

Sir, at that time the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was Dr. Richie Haynes and he warned him. The Opposition Leader at the time, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, who is very knowledgeable of the Political Business Cycle Theory, warned him over and over.

Sir, the same thing happened in Jamaica recently and they are going to pay for it where they stoked up the economy, causing the economy to overheat in the period leading up to the election but they are going to pay for it after the elections.

Sir, it conventionally slows economic systems. The consequences of overheating the economy before an elections would lead to inflation. What would have happened in the context of the economy is the unleashing of

2.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. A.P. WOOD:

Sir, what would have happened in the context of those types of economies, is the unleashing of significant aggregate demand pressures on the economy and via a demand pull theory of inflation, the average price level has been upwards in order to have a new equilibrium where we have demand and an aggregate supply.

In our small open economies, the particular consequence of such ridiculous actions is not felt on the

inflation rate, it is felt on the balance of payments. That is precisely what happened in the case of the Democratic Labour Party over the years. They stoked the economy up to the period leading to the election, caused an erosion of our foreign reserves because they ran massive unsustainable fiscal deficits. Anyone who has an appreciation or knowledge about the workings of a small open economy would know that the likely consequence of what is unsustainable fiscal deficits in the presence of a weak economic base, would be an erosion, a destruction of your foreign exchange base.

We had it in the case of the Democratic Labour Party. We had it to a lesser extent under the Barbados Labour Party tenure in the early 1980s. We will have it in Jamaica as a result of their actions, a couple of months ago. Sir, if you review the work of economist namely Professor Michael Howard, Professor Clyde Thomas, and if Dr. Blackman was around, you would all see that there is a link between running fiscal deficits and the balance of payments.

When the Prime Minister told us that one of the things that he would not be doing, is perpetuating this type of ridiculous behaviour. He will not bow to the pressure generated from This Side or from those outside of this Honourable Chamber. He will not be engaging in fiscal excesses. He will not be using expansionary fiscal policies, notwithstanding they may be close to election, knows exactly what he is talking about. You know why he said it, because he is putting the medium and long term interests of this economy first, putting it over the likely interest of representatives on This Side and those who would want to support us on the outside.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think we all owe it to the Honourable Member for St. Peter for how he understands us on This Side and how much he has the interest of this economy at heart, to support him fully in that regard.

He also said yesterday that while he recognises that a more sustainable level of the fiscal deficit in Barbados would be somewhere in the neighbourhood of 2.5 per cent of GDP, because of the current circumstances, and what is likely to happen, we cannot move from a situation of 5.6 per cent of GDP per fiscal deficit, during this year in one fell swoop to the 2.5 per cent. We need to give the economy a chance to find its correct equilibrium path as we move to a point of 2.5 per cent of GDP as a sustainable fiscal deficit.

Sir, when we read in the newspapers comments attributed to the previous Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, that proceeds from the sale of the BNB shares will be used for electioneering purposes, we have to pass off that as foolishness and treat it with the contempt that it deserves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, any man who in this day and age could tell the public of Barbados that qualifications are not important and that degrees are overrated, as far as I am concerned, that man has taken leave of his senses, and all of what, not only Mr. Barrow and the others in the Democratic Labour Party stood for, but all of what certainly we on this side stand for, he would have made a mockery of that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for someone like myself, the statement is particularly disturbing because some of us, through patience and a lot of hard work, would have contributed to the good education that the Leader of the Opposition has. I certainly played my part in ensuring that this young man got a proper education. He was a very good student and he was a member of the first group I taught at the UWI. That class also included a former member of this House from the Democratic Labour Party, Harold Blackman and he would never make such a statement, were he still alive.

Sir, in making such a ridiculous statement, the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party is devaluing the teaching at the UWI. He said that the degree he has, a First Class Honours Degree is overrated. Do you understand what he is doing? He is devaluing the teaching of the UWI, Cave Hill Campus.

Do you know if he takes that to his logical conclusion what he is doing? He is actually bringing the teaching of the UWI into disrepute. Sir, you cannot get anymore disrespectful than that, and he should never be allowed to get out of this. He has opened a can of worms and here we are, those Honourable Members on the Other Side, and some of us are bemoaning the fact that large numbers of secondary school children leave school, without any form of certification.

We have taken it as our duty to the people of Barbados to make sure that those kids do not fall through the cracks and through the Ministry of Education and the TVET Council, they have made more room available at the SJPP. We have facilitated larger enrollments in the Skills Training Programme and at the end of it all, they are to be certified as solid proof that they would have completed a course of study. They would have satisfied the requirements to be awarded these certificates and they could use these certificates for whatever chosen field of endeavour.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, could you imagine, that in the context of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, notwithstanding what the fellow said about the lack of worthiness of the University degrees, we are facilitating free movement of skilled workers through the region.

There is another school of thought that this should be brought down to a lower level and where the real skills are the skills that reside with the artisans and we want them to move as well. How are we going to get it done without any order or standards? Are we going to just allow people who are uncertified to be moving through the length and breadth of region causing no end of chaos and disorderly behaviour?

2.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in reviewing the economy, we must remind ourselves that at the beginning of the current financial year we had set ourselves certain targets. I want to put the management of this economy over the last year in proper perspective. We had projected that there would have been negative growth in real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the order of 2.7 per cent, that there would have been an inflation rate of 3.2 per cent and we would have had an import cover of 29.4 weeks.

The anticipated figures which would out-turn indicate that real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth would have been in the order of minus 0.4 per cent as opposed to the 2.7 per cent reduction that we had anticipated but these things do not normally happen like that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. This is as a result of a consistent effort by all concerned to ensure that enlightened Government policies were implemented with effectiveness.

Sir, like the Prime Minister, I want to commend all persons who would have contributed in some way to us achieving a better than anticipated economic performance during the current financial year and to us recognising together where we have come from in June 2001 through June 2002 and through to the end of this financial year, so we must continue to work together.

These Estimates give us an opportunity to continue with minor modifications and with more nimbleness the implementation of those policies which we have put in place just a couple of months ago when the Prime Minister delivered the Economic Statement, which were brought over from previously to ensure that the economy rebounded and that we could achieve some level of positive growth as we are anticipating at the beginning of this programme period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is most unfortunate that I did not get to touch on the agricultural sector but I am certain that sometime during this week I would be given an opportunity to treat this House to a full exposition of what the Estimates contained for the agricultural sector and how

we would be seeking to reposition the sector to withstand the challenges which lie ahead.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to commend these Estimates to the House and to give my support to what is before us.

I thank you.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to make a contribution to the debate on the annual Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue.

I have come to the point, not only today, where I look at these annual presentations by the Honourable Minister of Finance, both at this time of the year and the latter part of the year, as have been the custom in recent times, not in their isolated instances but to view them as part of a cohesive vision which is being expressed and further detailed before the eyes of the Barbadian public and indeed the vision which understands that one must be able to adapt to the changing circumstances in which one is operating or is forced to operate. That is the kind of appreciation I bring to the presentation of yesterday, by the Honourable Minister of Finance.

I want to encourage Honourable Members on the other side to follow suit and see them as such because they are part of a vision which expresses a cohesive understanding of where we are in today's world terms and where we have the potential to go as a country in spite of the countervailing forces that work against our interest from time to time.

Therefore, whether we think in terms of the objective of restructuring the Barbadian economy, as was the theme of one of these recent presentations, whether we think in terms of repositioning the economy in today's global and very competitive environment, whether or not we consider the matter of facilitating capacity building or restraining the deficit as is the case with this current package or the matter of strengthening our institutions or changing the culture which attaches itself or have attached itself to some of our enterprises traditionally, I think we have come to the point where we understand that we have a Minister of Finance who is in full grasps of what his function is and what the reality is in which the Barbadian economy is anticipating to grow in a sustainable fashion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hold the view that if we are going to understand today's international political economy we have to move from a position where we realise that the real principles in today's world terms are no longer national sovereign states but super-national mechanisms and institutions which have been created and multinational corporations which in many instances are much more

viable entities than even small developing states such as Barbados.

Sir, the real and powerful actors and principals are those non-state actors on today's world scene. There is a view, and perhaps there is some degree of courtesy which attaches itself to that view, that what is happening right now with reference to Iraq for instance is not necessarily driven by national interest per se if you are speaking from a U.S. perspective or from a French perspective. On either side of the divide on that issue, the driving force, the view suggests, is the interest of multinational corporations which have an interest either to protect, as in the case with the French, or an interest to acquire as is the case with the United States of America. Perhaps there is a lot of courtesy which attaches itself to that view.

I believe therefore that when we come to the planning and the management of the economy in a developing country context, such as Barbados is, that we have to move off from a perspective that we have to understand the dynamics which are at work and which arise out of the interest of super-national mechanisms and institutions and multinational non-state actors who have their own interest to serve and whose interest might not necessarily coincide with the interest of small national entities such as the Barbados economy.

We therefore come to an understanding of the fact that one who needs a modern economy in the developing country context must be aware of the potential for benefit to that economy and must also be equally aware of the threats to that economy which stemmed in both cases from the pursuit of their own interest by these non-state actors in our time.

2.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Certainly there is a positive benefit to be secured in facilitating strategic partnerships of the global environment of today, especially for one's indigenous enterprises which would be under-capitalised because of the scarcity of the resources at home. Therefore, there is the opportunity to capture and to exploit the possible benefit which exists through strategic partnerships such as the sort that a Government which is prudent in this day would want to encourage and to facilitate.

At the same time, while there are positive implications, there are also negative implications and potential negative impact of which one must be aware and must guard against in terms of financial planning and policy. Therefore, we would want to guard against the

negatives but to capture and exploit the positives which exist in the world's environment.

The feature of high capital movement in today's world terms can affect us both positively and negatively. We therefore, have to be careful that we are in a position to benefit from that movement in positive terms, to the extent that a developing country like ours is able to guard against the ravages of swift and frequent movement of capital away from our shores for investment elsewhere. Sir, the matter of the globalised production processes, which are a feature of today's international economy, is something of which we have to be aware. How can we facilitate that to benefit ourselves? How can we ensure that the movement is not away from us? How can we ensure we have the type of environment in place that would allow for us to attract some of this productive, though globalised, capacity, to contribute to the Barbadian economy at this time?

The feature of downsizing or more euphemistically put, rightsizing, is something that a country like Barbados would have to be concerned with in terms of the kind of dynamics that drive the pursuit of these multinational non state entities.

It is alright in a market such as a North American market and in some European centres, for large conglomerates and enterprise centres to move towards downsizing; rightsizing; mergers; acquisitions, resulting in downsizing or rightsizing. In those large production centres, there are sometimes ready alternatives for employment. In a country like Barbados, there is not that ready availability of alternate sources and means of employment. Therefore, whereas in large centres, the business of mergers and acquisitions resulting in rightsizing and downsizing, might not have a negative impact to the degree that it might have in Barbados, we have got to be very much concerned as to how those things can impact us here.

I am trying to suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when it comes to the business of fiscal monetary policy, we have to be prudent and have an appreciation of what is happening in our world so that we may get it right.

The contributions which emanate from inside this Chamber and outside, suggest that there is not as full an appreciation of these things as there ought to be. I think that at this time, this country is well served by the skills in the leadership in the Minister of Finance.

I think we have to be very appreciative of the financial packages in recent times and of this one as well. We must have an appreciation of the growth challenges which an economy such as ours would be faced. There are others countries not too far from us who have not been experiencing economic growth for sometime now. In fact,

there are some not too far from us who do not anticipated any level of economic growth in the foreseeable future.

We, in Barbados, have had an experience over the past several years of positive growth. We have some recessionary tendencies over last year and we are moving back to a path of growth. It is anticipated that growth in the Barbadian economy would continue, even though at a reduced or slower rate but it is important that we keep the dynamics of growth as a feature of what is happening in the Barbadian economy. It is not only growth because one must be very careful today has to differentiate when we talked about growth. We have not too far removed ourselves from those years when we talked about the spectre of jobless growth in Barbados. We are at the stage where we are talking about growth in spite of recessionary trends internationally and growth which is also attended by very high employment levels in this country.

There are particular challenges that are facing the Barbadian economy and the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure reflect this, especially so when considered as part of a cohesive package which has been brought before this Chamber twice every year.

There are particular challenges that are facing our agriculture and manufacturing sectors. There are challenges which have stemmed from the high cost of energy to a high energy import country such as Barbados. The spectre of war which seems very imminent, if not inevitable, suggests there might be further challenges with respect to the matter of energy in relation to the performance of our economy.

With regards to the challenges of high employment cost, Barbados is still perceived to be a place where labour cost, when compared with other centres far and near, are considered to be high. That is the reality,

There are challenges which are posed by the issues of sophistication in the matter of the production process. Barbados cannot necessarily boast, when compared with others, that we are so technologically endowed that we can compete at the level of production because we do not have the technological capacity some other centres might have.

In relation to agriculture, the question of the production and export of raw bulk sugar has come to the point where we have recognised that we are being faced with a situation where there must be a radical change in how we approach the business of the sugar industry and the business of the export of sugar.

We have spoken about sophistication and production. When it comes to agriculture, we are talking about refinement in the matter of manufacture and production of agricultural products. Therefore, we, on this side, must understand that we must move to more refined

products if we are going to remain in a place in the world's market as it relates to the growth of sugar in this country.

We are operating in a growing non-protectionist environment of which I believe everyone in Barbados is now. Though we would want to hold onto some of the traditional mechanisms that would support the reality of the world in which we live today suggest that we would be forced to move away from the protectionist mechanisms in which we have been operating for so long because they have been substantially dismantled and will continue to be further dismantled.

The Minister of Finance has spoken with some frequency about the potential loss of Government's revenue. We have come out of a situation where revenue is down and is being challenged and where potentially with the clicking in of the new non-protectionist regimes we see further challenges on the horizon to Government revenue.

If we think purely in terms of the loss of import duty which results from the inability to effect duty from imported goods, one would realise that we are being deprived of revenue which we could have used in this country, to ensure that we properly finance our national growth and development and that we properly finance the development and the availability of social services in this country. Therefore, it becomes a very important issue as to what one does when one loses \$100 million in revenue in the context of a small society such as ours. How is that replaced?

These are things that should occupy the mind of a prudent Minister of Finance. I get the sense that they do and I encourage others on the Other Side to come to this view. Therefore, that is impending further loss of revenue to Government which would have to be addressed in a serious fashion.

The new challenge, of course, is the challenge to growth and services in Barbados. It is not totally a new thrust for us but perhaps a thrust in this direction with a new zeal. These days having lost some of our traditional position in the world market with respect to goods, we are perhaps out of necessity, forced to develop our service market even more vibrantly. There are new challenges to this thrust in terms of this new development for us as well. These challenges might come as a result of a state's initiatives, like United States legislation, or might be from the position of international rating and branding institutions which exist in this world today, and I say branding in its most vulgar sense. The reality of Barbados is that we have had to face, and would continue to face, those challenges to develop a service-base economy in this country.

2.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

REV. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: The reality for Barbados has been that in recent years we continue to face those challenges to our efforts to develop a service-based economy in this country. We are trying to develop those services in the context of a competitive environment and this will become even more so when the Free Trade Area of the Americas becomes a much greater reality.

Sir, having been served with protectionist mechanisms in the past, we must now make our own way in the world in an environment which will continue to reflect the element of competition. We, therefore, are up against large population centres in Central and Latin America and we have to face the reality of the new hemispheric arrangement. The crux of the matter is that non- traditional services have already become part of the embrace of the negotiations in the context of the WTO and the current rules of international trade. Sir, the right of access and the right of establishment are precepts which are part of the reality we have to face.

Sir, I share the view espoused by the Minister of Finance that there is competition and although there is a challenge resulting from this reality Barbados, because of its skills base and traditional investment in education and its service-oriented infrastructure, stands a good opportunity of exploiting benefits, especially in the Commonwealth Caribbean region and further into the wider hemispheric area, to be derived from the exports of services and skills from our shores.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the management of the fiscal deficit and financing is always a very critical issue for any Government especially in our small economy. In Barbados, we are blessed as a country to have a Government of the day led by a Minister of Finance who understands the business of seriously and soberly managing the deficit ratio and financing and not using it as an electioneering mechanism, perhaps to the interest of the political party but to the detriment of the country and to the loss of gains that we have earned over time. Sir, there is a record of prudence.

The Estimates speaks to the prudent use of the deficit to ensure that the international recession did not take full ravish of the Barbadian economy. We have come out of a situation in the last year with a relatively high deficit in terms of this Government's management of that deficit but the Prime Minister gives the assurance in these Estimates of expenditure that he desires to reduce the deficit to sustainable level. We have moved from 5 per cent in the first instance by gradual reduction of 4.7 per cent for this year and we are on the way to a sustainable 2.5 per cent deficit ratio in due course.

I am speaking about this because the charge that was made that the finances of the country are being managed in such a way as to benefit the party in terms of elections does not stand up to scrutiny. It becomes a distasteful utterance when it escapes the lips of those on the other side who in 1991 splurged the country's finances while saying to the electorate that they never had it so good, only by March to be going cap in hand at the doors of the IMF and we all know that story.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this was done in context where there is no proposal to raise taxes but a resolve to reduce the deficit to sustainable levels. This is done in the context where we understand the need to seek to facilitate private sector investment so that any slack can be picked up by the private sector and to ensure that the quality of life and the high levels of employment which currently obtains can continue to exist in this country.

We have a private sector which traditionally postures itself not so much for productive capacity and services but for consumption and distribution. I share the view that the call must be heard that there needs to be a change in the enterprise culture in Barbados such that the private sector maximises the benefits being facilitated by Government's financial policy to ensure that they come to a place where on their own and in partnership with the state can come up with the kind of productive investment initiatives that will make the Barbadian economy sustainable and viable as well.

We have come through a recessionary period international that was felt at home and there were no increases in health services, bus fare, water rates et cetera and this is commendable. In spite of the recession of recent time the priority has already been to attach tremendous importance to the development of social and human capital in Barbados. These Estimates of expenditure reflect that \$1 billion will be spent on social and human development through education, health services, social security and welfare and other social services. Almost \$1 billion or 50 per cent of the expenditure budgeted here is allocated to the development of social and human capital in this country.

2.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: The new environment in which we live and the new era in which this economy operates are very important. I see EduTech as part of the new vision for the new era. Education opportunities have brought this country a long way economically and the quality of life for our people. We have never been a country known to have a high percentage of illiteracy but we are in danger in the new technological age of developing a generation of persons in this country who are,

unless that they can have access to modern technology and become familiar and benefit for the new technology, in danger of being marginalised and becoming part of an illiterate class in society. Therefore, programmes like EduTech are essential.

Sir, people might suggest that EduTech would be costing Barbados a lot over the years. It is not only expenditure, it is investment in preserving and enhancing our human capital stock and developing our people's skills so that we cannot only find our fit in this world but fulfill our purpose as a nation in this world.

Tourism infrastructure is a thing which has been criticised but the Prime Minister, the Honourable Minister of Finance, asked the question repeatedly which must be answered. Who or what would pay our bill five or ten years down the road? If we do not, today, ensure that we have in place the type of tourism infrastructure that will ensure that we have an enhanced place in the market. The enabling environment is also part of the vision for the new era. I speak only with reference to telecommunication which is ready to reflect itself. There must be a new vision for the new times; an enabling environment which would facilitate the development of private enterprise and the development of that new enterprise culture.

I believe that the presentation by the Honourable Prime Minister is to ensure that this Government can continue to deliver as have been given the mandate by the people, so resoundingly, to continue the objectives of our national development programme and social services to the point where we can continue to be justly proud and to do so in the context of fiscal discipline.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to give support to the Estimates of Expenditure laid in this Honourable House by the Honourable Member for St. Peter and to locate the role of the Ministry of Physical Development and Environment in the national developmental role and, indeed, in the policy framework which the Prime Minister outlined of projects which are off Budget and private sector investment rather than the traditional public sector investment, to give impetus to economic activity and to create new partnership and strategic alliances for development.

Sir, I think that the increase of our budget has to do with the role that my Ministry would have to play in terms of the preservation of the environment, the enhancement of our natural and built environment and the facilitation of ordered and regulated environment at both the private and public sector levels in order to ensure sustained economic growth; to ensure the environment on which our economic growth is predicated is not undermined or jeopardised and

help to ensure the diversification of the tourism product. Sir, in that context, our budget for this year has increased from \$39.9 million to \$44.9 million, showing an increase commensurate with the role that we are going to be playing.

In this regard I would wish to speak specifically to some of the projects which we are going to be undertaking. We all speak of the Singapore model, what a beautiful place Singapore is and how green and lush country is. People speak in terms of Singapore natural environment in which is located an environment for business and economic activity at a very high level.

Sir, Singapore did not always look like this. I believe that this is where we would want to take Barbados in making some determination of what Barbados in the future is to look like. We cannot only cast Barbados in economic terms. There has to be a perception of how Barbados' physical landscape is to be defined. What Barbados would look like in the future, what we are going to do in terms of, not only our natural environment to enhance what we have but what we are going to do in terms of physical environment. Lee Quan Yu's, who is regarded as the father of modern Singapore, autobiography 'From Third World to First' speaks about how Singapore was able to make the transition.

I would wish to pause to make the point that in bringing Estimates which are regarded by many as an election year, which reflects fiscal responsibility rather than fiscal irresponsibility and the kind of wild spending which have taken place in an election year in 1991, for instance, and in previous Budgets and Estimates, the Prime Minister must be commended for choosing that route and bringing us to a position where we are able to contain any of the damage that we might suffer from economic shock, given the climate internally, while at the same time ensuring that those gains which have been made are not lost and people are able to remain in jobs and to continue to enjoy a high quality of life.

In recognising that in making the transition from Third World to First, it was critical for Singapore to transform its physical landscape. The Government of Singapore, at the time, embarked on a deliberate and conscious redevelopment programme of the physical landscape of Singapore. Sir, Lee Quan Yu puts it this way, "to achieve first world standards in a third world region, we set out to transform Singapore into a tropical garden city. Greening raised the morale of people and gave them pride in their surroundings. We did not differentiate between middle class and working class areas."

There was a recognition in the Singapore administration at the time, that you could not have sustained economic development unless you were prepared

to create the correct physical environment, natural and built for that economic environment to take place. You had to work with your population to transform poor attitudes and practices that harmed the environment.

We have in the Ministry of Physical Development and Environment, in the Environmental Division, embarked on a programme which is aimed at making the average Barbadian more aware of his conduct and actions in respect of the environment and the implications of caring for the environment to aid his quality of life and to his financial well being.

2.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. Miss H.E. THOMPSON:

It is important if we are to succeed in ensuring that Barbados has a pristine environment and guaranteeing our long terms economic sustainability, that the man on the Wanstead ZR, the people who even at this minute are in agricultural activity in St. Joseph, the persons who may now be on Miami Beach, the person who is walking in Barbados now and dropping garbage on the road way understand that the things they do in relation to the environment, have an impact on their overall quality of life, somebody else's capacity to earn and the way Barbados looks.

Therefore, we have to transform these practices and attitudes which militate against Barbados being recognised as a beautiful place. It has to do with us and our behaviour. In this regard, the Ministry has launched a number of projects.

During the months of April, we will have the first ever national consultation on the environment, to increase and interest a wider range of stakeholders in the matter of environmental protection. We have embarked on a national botanical garden project to ensure the sustainability of our biodiversity, in terms of the country's flora, to have it as a place of scientific research, for recreation where people would come and enjoy a camp site setting, where children will participate in a safety village, where when you want to get away from it all, you can just go and relax.

We have already started to institute, the Beautify Barbados Project, evidence of which is now apparent if you drive all across Barbados, particularly along the ABC and other major Highways where you can already see flowering shrubs of plants, palm trees, frangipani and other species of plants which we have put in along the Highway to transform the physical landscape of the country.

We are shortly to embark on what we will call a greening project which is aimed at reducing waste and making people more conscious of what they throw away, how they use materials and resources. First, at the level of the public sector where we will initiate the project and then at the level of the private sector, not only for the sake of greening but what we will attempt to demonstrate is that a 'green/green' policy makes sense and cents. There can be economic benefits to greening your business because you can reduce your expenditure and your cost.

At a time when we are now embarking, it would appear, on a war that we should not be embarking on, which of course there will be consequential impacts on the Barbadian economy, we are promoting, in the new physical development plan, Sir, very strongly, the use of alternative energy sources.

We are going to go to wind farm generating projects at various sites in St. Lucy. We are going to continue our efforts in solar energy because we cannot continue as a world given the adverse impacts of climate change, except for President Bush and the United States, who do not seem to recognise that there is a nexus between fossil fuels, and the use of fossil fuels and climate change, and the adverse impacts on climate change.

We cannot continue our heavy reliance on fossil fuels, in a country where wind energy is readily available and where solar energy is readily available. Barbados has to have the science and the technology and the capability of leading the world in these spheres of research and application, because we cannot afford the increases in prices that will come as a result of the war, if in fact war is declared.

We cannot continue our reliance on petroleum products and other fossil fuels and therefore, it is important that we invest in alternative energy sources and the Ministry is very much involved in giving leadership to this process and ensuring that the opportunity and the sites are available for this investment in the new Physical Development Plan.

We have also sought, Sir, during the last financial year and will continue during the coming financial year, to give money to community groups who have presented projects to us that are worthy of support. Groups from Haynesville, the Israel Lovell Foundation, groups from Deacons, groups from St. George have all presented projects of the Ministry which have involved the beautification or the transformation of the physical landscape of their communities and we have given them financial and technical support from the Ministry to do this.

Sir, we believe that in greening communities and helping people to transform the appearance of their

communities and create spaces of recreation, where people want to go to and relax, it gives people pride in themselves, it helps to cause the community to unite behind a particular project or behind a particular focus and we can only benefit when Barbados is more beautiful. We can benefit at the community level and we can benefit at the national level.

Sir, it is important that we continue to encourage communities to establish these kinds of projects and we are going to be playing a significant role in giving financial and technical support to persons who come forward. They do not have to be an organised community group. Any group of people could get together who want to do a project in their community are free to apply to the Ministry for the support, as long as they can put a project document.

Now, we recognise that a number of people will have challenges in developing project documents and therefore, we are quite prepared to do it for them in order to assist them to access the funding. If they come in to us and explain what they want to do, we will create the project proposal necessary to get before the screen committee to give them the necessary support.

Central too, to our national development and to the continuation to the diversification of our tourism product and the enhancement of Barbados' environment are a number of initiatives which we will undertake, relative to the marine environment.

Barbados has had, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the longest running coastal coral reef protection projects in the region of the Americas. So much so, this project is now so widely regarded, that we have been able to give technical support to other Caribbean countries to copy the project that we have been carrying on here in Barbados.

With the new berths that are being built in the Deep Water Harbour, we recognise that coral reefs will be damaged and in consequence, the Coastal Zone Management Unit with its highly specialised staff, put on a project of transferring coral reef heads from the Deep Water Harbour site to other sites on the West Coast and have had a 98 per cent survival rate which is a fantastic record. Sir, that project has stimulated in the technical and scientific community a tremendous amount of interest.

Sir, moving from what some might call to be scientific, even though it has several beneficial impacts for the wider community, I want to spend just a little while talking about the coastal infrastructural project which is one of the major initiatives that the Ministry will undertake during the course of this year, and this is a project, if my memory serves me correctly, Sir, valued at US\$24 million, with the Barbados Government putting in \$7 million and the IDB \$17 million.

Sir, this project will be conducted along the coast and marine areas at the Crane, Little Bay and Woman's Bay. I would wish to remind the Honourable Member for St. Philip South who is sending forth reminders, that we still will, under the NCC provide him with his facility at Foul Bay.

The coastal infrastructure project will deal with areas from the Drill Hall to Rockley, at Holetown, Tent Bay, Walkers in St. Andrew and Welches in Christ Church. Therefore, large expanses of coastal areas are going to be improved and the quality of the marine life.

3.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: We are not seeking to impose a project on the coastal communities who make a living from the waters off these areas. We are integrating the communities along these coastlines into the project. We will teach them about sustainable use and practices, management practices, sustainable fishing practices and sustainable care of the coastal environment so that instead of seeing decreasing catches and reefs being damaged, we will see an improved marine environment with improved and increased catches and with the coastal communities being shown how to benefit and how to maximise the benefits from their particular industry and activity. This will have tremendous implications for the people involved in the fishing industry whether it is at the level of spare fishing, whether they are jet ski operators, water sports operators or whether they are fishing by other means other than spare fishing.

At the level of the built environment, the Prime Minister spoke at length to a number of projects for which applications are before the Town Planning Department, so even though Government's capital programme has been reduced, the reality is that we are increasing the number of projects in the private sector which are getting approval. We have been able to do that because at the level of town planning we are in the process of putting in an Information Technology system that would allow members of the public to come online and be able to track their planning applications.

We have moved the staff of the Town Planning Department into improved physical surroundings. We are upgrading their cataloguing and recording processes. We have increased the number of trained people working in the Town Planning Department. We have reorganised the structure of the Town Planning Department so as to expedite the planning process because we recognise that a planning decision or a planning approval has a financial implication for the householder or for the major investor.

Where there continues to be strong investor's confidence in Barbados, in this administration and in the people of Barbados, we would not wish to hold back or stymie investments by delaying Town Planning applications more than necessary. Sir, that is not to say that people can bring in a Town Planning application that is not comprehensive and get it approved within a month, we still have to do proper screening. Those persons who resist the environmental impact assessment must understand that this administration is not going to allow physical development that jeopardises our environment or that cannot be sustained economically. Therefore, it is critical for us to use environmental impact assessments which include a social impact survey and a traffic impact survey to make determination about how best to structure projects and what conditionality we need to attach to any planning approval that is given. We are allowing development but in an ordered way that speaks to our continued economic growth and our continued economic gain so that communities are not alienated or ostracised as the development process take place.

Therefore, it is going to be critical that we take very careful decisions relative to our physical planning. That is becoming even more important in the context of agriculture. I touch on this point last year but was unable to expand on it because I came to it towards the conclusion of my remarks. The sugar industry as we know it, and the Prime Minister said it in his opening remarks, does not have a future. It has to be redefined. We have to determine if we are going to produce sugar only for the local market and for some specialist boutique shops overseas. Because it is not economically viable to grow sugar, people, for instance, plantation owners, will tell you that even with a high degree of praedial larceny they will make more on their acreage of vegetables production than in sugar cane production, so increasingly more and more lands are being taken out of sugar cane production.

I have written to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and I hope that we would be able to get the technocrats of both our ministries together with those of the Ministry of Finance to make decisions about what is going to be a key component of our physical development planning, that is, what do we do with Barbados' lands when they come out of sugar production. Sugar has a certain aesthetic appeal. There is no doubt while driving through the country with cane fields on either side especially when the canes are in arrow that they have a certain beauty and charm. That is the Barbados we know and recognise. That is the Barbados we are accustomed seeing. When those lands come out of sugar what do we replace them with, what is the best economic use of Barbados's land? How do we redefined Barbados's physical landscape to ensure that it continues to be beautiful and continues to have a certain charm and appeal

while at the same time make determinations about the best agricultural use of the land?

I want to sound a warning. Many people who have lands now under sugar production are asking either for golf courses or houses to be built on the land. Barbados cannot become a nation of golf courses nor, even though houses give quick returns, can we allow all housing to go on lands that were formerly under sugar cultivation.

I want to suggest to people that rather than go to the easy way of cutting up the land to create some housing lots that they have to do the necessary research and make determinations as to whether there are other agricultural or other industrial uses or other areas of foreign exchange generation to which the land can be put. The lands cannot be for all houses neither can people believe that they are so naive as to leave the lands out of sugar production for one or two seasons, scrape off the top soil and then tell the Town Planning Department and the Ministry of Physical Development that they are rab lands; they are not.

The decision has to be made and we have, I believe, to put an incentive package in place that will make these owners start to engage in activity which can generate foreign exchange. If houses are built, yes that creates economic activity, it also gives a certain capital flow at the national level but foreign exchange is expended not earned because invariably many of the products, the tiles and the household fixtures, are imported. Entrepreneurs have to be encouraged to use the land in a way that can generate foreign exchange. This is part of the dialogue in my view that has to take place at the national level. After sugar cane, then what at the environmental and the aesthetic level and then what at the economic level?

3.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: These are very serious decisions that have to be made as Barbados now goes forward into the new global marketplace. We have spoken about creating a niche for ourselves in the new global environment. We have spoken about what globalisation means and these are some of the issues with which we have to grapple. What do we do with our physical landscape? What kind of physical planning decisions are we going to make? How do we preserve Barbados' beauty in a way that allows us to exploit it for economic gain, without over-exploiting that which we have?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, today I hope that the Press picks up that particular theme because it is something that we have to think about and to discuss. We cannot continue with what is an emotional attachment to sugar. At the time

when sugar was king we had to make decisions about diversification of the economy, now the time has come when further decisions about diversification has to be made. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are not going to seek to make those decisions without first engaging the public and the nation in dialogue because it is critical to our future planning.

Equally, Sir, we have to ensure the role of the individual. I see people going to the beaches on mornings and taking plastic bags with fruits, then to leave the bags on the beach which eventually get into the water. These persons do not recognise that single act would endanger the life of a turtle. They do not recognise it has an adverse impact on the marine environment. Therefore, in seeking to protect the environment, even in seeking to make economic decisions, the people element to our future planning is critical. We cannot leave out the people of Barbados people nor the role that they must play in terms of creating a new Barbados. We believe that these initiatives will beautify Barbados 2000 Project such as the Botanic Gardens or the greening concept. Many of these will help diversify the tourism product.

Sir, even as I speak of tourism, we have to import the national economic sustainable ethics as part of the economic culture of Barbados. When people are making business decisions at the tourism level, we have to teach our hotels how to become green hotels. They can have hiking as part of their product but more than that, I am concerned that too many hotels in Barbados still encourage guests to change linens and towels everyday.

When one travels to Europe or to the United States, that does not happen. Management leaves a note asking guests to help them to protect the environment by indicating whether or not they want clean towels by either by putting them in the hamper or on the floor, or hang them up if they do not want them changed.

Sir, that has several implications for business. It not only helps to preserve and to protect the environment by reducing the number of phosphates and other chemical that are flushed into the environment, but it also helps to reduce cost since management is now cutting down on the amount of laundry. Therefore, there are elements of greening which could be imported into all businesses.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Could the Honourable Member please wind up?

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir. At the level of sustainable tourism, Barbados is an ecosystem which could be threatened and, therefore, has to be preserved. We have spoken about having more and more tourists but more and more tourists result in the increase of traffic, increase in garbage and increase in pressure on the

ecosystem. How do we have sustainable tourism numbers while ensuring high tourism revenues and yield but, at the same time, protecting the ecosystem which is Barbados?

Sir, during the course of my comments, I will try to speak to the role that the Ministry of Physical Development and Environment has to play in terms of policy development and implementation in the decisions that we have to take to underpin the physical and natural development of Barbados.

I believe that a review of these Estimates will show that is a very important role and I trust that the issues to which I have spoken are able to touch Barbadians in relation to the role that they have to play in helping this Ministry to achieve its goals. I am happy, Sir, to give support to these highly responsible and very creative Estimates.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much for accommodating me at this point in this debate. Sir, I have heard the perspectives of many in their interpretations of the Estimates.

I want to give you my perspective of the Estimates. I have heard part of the perspective of the Opposition. I believe that I clearly understand the perspective of the Honourable Prime Minister and, therefore, it is only right for me to give my interpretation of the meaning of the Estimates as they are.

I am not going to dwell much in the aggregate figures of what they were, what the Expenditure is at present or whether or not we will reach targets. I am not a prophet, some economists are but I am giving a perspective which is the reflection of the voice of the people at the lower level of the country, called the grass roots.

I would like to believe that my perspective is that of the man in the Ivy; Tichbourne; St. Barnabas; Licorish Village; My Lords Hill; Martinique Road; the Pine Housing area and Carrington's Village. Therefore, it is not going to be wrapped up in the arithmetic analysis of the contributions. I am going to go as wide as I can within my limitations to look at it within the context of a multifaceted approach to the various disciplines which I believe were used and fused in order to arrive at the contribution which the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Honourable Prime Minister, has made in terms of formulating the Estimates.

I am going to try to put the policy within the context of an evolutionary history because in this society, history seems to play a very secondary and backward role to all other areas of science or art. The reality is that the same people who have dismissed historic analysis will also speak to you about Nebuchadnezzar, Moses, the Egyptians and

the Israelites and I know those people live within the environment of mythology.

Sir, the Honourable Prime Minister has looked at this matter from many different aspects. He has recognised that he is not just making an analysis of economics but is looking at real life and, therefore, has to take into consideration the sociology of the environment or its history. In other words, he embraces it within the whole political economy of the analysis. That kind of leadership must be commended. It is an admirable leadership because it is a leadership in a small post-plantation economy, 166 square miles, trying to find a niche within the global trade market at a time when the metropolitan countries are using all types of economic forms of impositions to ensure that they recolonise these environments. These are the hard facts, Sir.

They have given legitimacy and noble titles to themselves in all types of institutions where countries have been forced to give up their sovereign rights because of the coercive approach in dictating to us what adjustments we must make. Therefore, we had to give up all protectionist approaches to managing the economy. The reality is that it is now calling for a new mechanism and a new political formation in order to take the country forward.

Sir, in his analysis, the Prime Minister also had to take into consideration the pending external factors that are likely to impact on the local political economy, as a consequence of the dictates of persons in the metropolitan world having these private arrangements that have been given and sanctioned by big states.

3.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Therefore, we have to face provisions that are imposed upon us with little flexibility. The Free Trade Area of the Americas and the WTO now determine what type of governance we must have and we are forced to develop new formation. I am not absolutely sure that the Caribbean people fully understand it because it will call for fundamental sacrifice in the Caribbean for us to have the collective strength in order to develop a form of resistance or to create new formations that are required so that we will be able to compete on the world market.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister said that we are going to have to make amendments to 400 pieces of legislation in order to get the Caribbean Single Market and Economy in place. This is why I say that the analysis is not only about the economy but it is also about other aspects that relates to governance because it means that there will new legislation, new institutions and methodology in order for us to have any impact. These small dependent economies

were developed for the purpose of primary products and for exploiting black labour whether African or Asian.

Sir, I have to touch on history because we must understand the trends that brought us to this point. The reality is that this new corporate sector, the descendants of the plantation period as the biggest corporate body was the plantation and the business sector are the sons of the plantation with a kind of fixed culture and psyche exclusively concern with themselves and making maximum profit. I know it will call for a miraculous change in their cultural behaviour for them to respond to the changes now requested that are imperative if this country is to go forward.

Sir, we must never forget that in the agriculture sector wherever wealth was accumulated in the 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th century, it was never for the common use of the society. It was used exclusively for a specific type. Those funds were never reinvested into the economy. A small amount of the wealth was paid out to the labour class but it was repatriated because Barbados was one of the most vibrant economies in the 17th century coming from sugar and agriculture which was our main export. Sir, the wealth was repatriated to Liverpool and Bristol, it was not reinvested here.

I am expressing these concerns because I hope they will recognise that this calls for a cultural corporate revolution in their thinking and the Prime Minister is asking them to respond based on proper analysis.

Sir, these men masquerade that they understand economy as good as a Prime Minister. They took the money and send it back to the absentee plantation owner in Great Britain who hardly ever spent one day on the soil of Barbados and they invested it into ships in order to transport slave from Africa to the Caribbean. Sir, these are the realities that black people who come to Parliament must face.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: The white people will understand it but the black people have to face reality because they do not understand it. I hope that in this call by the Prime Minister they recognise that if they continue to rake off the cream of the wealth, we will continue to experience social tension in the Caribbean and it may lead to the kind of social disorder we have experienced in the 1930s.

In order to achieve that, we have to bring the entire labour force into the mainstream of the development of the society and make them feel a part of it. This is why I am talking about the new formation that people who were on

the periphery must be brought into the mainstream of the society.

Sir, this is not a simple task. The situation is very complex and people do not like to face reality. A Prime Minister in a small economy has to wrestle with all these dynamics and try to create new ways in order to cut a small percentage out of world trade to bring back some of the money into the economy.

There should be no difficulty in understanding why sometimes we take assets out of the state as a consequence of selling some of the enterprise and reinvest it into various areas of the society.

There is no crime in taking money from those sales, putting it into an investment fund and investing that money back into the Urban Development Commission in order to grant loans to small people. These indigneous black people we talk about are the people who over the years made a major sacrifice in this society.

Sir, we are taking those and creating a new form by distributing the wealth in an equitable way.

3.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, when we recognised the creativity and talent of ordinary indigenous people, the talent was always deceived because of the value judgement in this society, there was always a view that ordinary people had no ability to get involved in largess or anything that would bring profit. They were always preserved as weeds labourers. Nobody new because the educational system would not let you know that trade existed long before the 16th century when ships sailed across to the Caribbean, that there was vibrant trade in West Africa, that people were involved in buying and selling in a more complex and sophisticated way than what we witness in the western world. Nobody would tell us that.

Sir, they made us believe that we were brainless and only had muscle. Therefore, we boast about how strong we were, how fast we could run and how sweet we could sing. Nobody attributed intelligence to black people.

Sir, recent and contemporary experience have give a lie to that myth. Education has enabled us , not only primary education but secondary and tertiary education, to mirror that intelligence in a very broad way.

Sir, the other myth is, that intelligent people who can get involved in business were people who wee borned with those endowments; that too was made to be a lie because

we have seen differently. Education is used as a tool for opportunities in the marketplace

Sir, it is very unfortunate that recipients of that opportunity in the 1960s as a result of the expansion of universal education can now tell us that education is not important. Someone who purports to be intelligent and just repeating what he sees in text books but has the kind of ability to make an analysis of all that is happening around him is living and is blindfolded, visually impaired and not recognising that he is who is because of education.

Sir, I do not know the reason for him saying that because he is hoping that all other people would refuse to become educated, so that he would have an opportunity to become the Prime Minister in this country.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, at least we have other people in Barbados including the real Leader of the Opposition.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: We have people in here who I believe hold the view which is completely different from the view that is expressed by the Member in the other House.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, that gives us some level of satisfaction.

That it makes it very difficult for me to tell you what the perception of the Opposition is on this particular subject of the Estimate because there are so many different perspectives that are exclusively individualists, to say that this is the common view of the Opposition. Traditionally, the Democratic Labour Party speaks with a sense of glee and pride under the late Right Errol Walton Barrow, who was a Prime Minister of this country and an outstanding leader in the Caribbean. I am saying this without any reservation regardless to which side I represent. He was one of the best leaders in the Eastern Caribbean.

Sir, we now have a man expressing the view that is a total somersault, diametrically opposite to the very fundamental point that the Democratic Labour Party stand on over the years as political dispensation of any area of credit. All of a sudden we are hearing a lot of foolishness being espouse in this society.

I am happy that this Government understands that education must be constantly modernised. Nobody that is born of a woman will ever believe that information

technology is not important to the modern world. How can a modern society, where everybody in the world recognise the importance of modern technology, communicating by FAX and internet system can tell people who boast of education that information technology and computers are not relevant and that it is a waste of money? How can you tell people that and believe it unless you have perception of them that the majority of them are ignorant.

Sir, the reason that we are in here is because there are some of us who see ourselves as intelligent persons. I also want to make a very important point, Sir. I have been enduring a lot of pain for a long time. Ordinary men in here are of grass root origin. All of them are of grass root origin, even those who came from a plantation background, because they are the sons of bare-foot slaves but they are wrapped up in phobia that they do not understand who we are.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: All of us are of grass root origin. The word grass root has taken a static meaning. Unchangeable in a world that is dynamic and even English language itself is dynamic. Language changes and a word does not remain independent of other words. You will see this in a dictionary but the dictionary always explains it. A word is always interpreted within the context in which it is used. When we use the word grass root in the 16th or 17th centuries, we were talking about an ordinary man who was denied an education. When we use the word grass root in the 21st century, we are talking about an ordinary man who has been given the privilege of education but still remain true to his origin and his orientation. Sir, he does not abandon it.

Sir, he can walk with the people any time, sit on shop steps and relate to them in either standard English or dialect. In other words, you can walk the walk or talk the talk. This is what a grass root man in the 21st century is. This analysis is a grass root analysis, very unlike the elitist type. The elitist type would have come with a stereotype presentation and say how you take the revenue and subtract the expenditure from the revenue and if the expenditure exceeds the revenue, they can tell you if it is a deficit or not.

3.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

Everybody feels a sense of pride. The person who spoke before me, spoke about self-esteem, from a different perspective, looking at the physical environment. If you bring everybody into the decision-making process, into the

areas of development, let them have an opportunity to see themselves reflected in the things that they do, not feeling like a piece of utility, but respected as a human being, making a contribution to the development of this society.

I believe that black people in this society who worked hard over the years want to have the opportunity to be able to walk with a sense of pride and dignity and to be able to say, this country is mine. It is something worthwhile standing up for. If they do not have it, Sir, and you push a certain section of the community off the mainstream into the periphery, you are going to have social deviance. You going to have to expand the prisons or put barbwire around the entire country and call it one large prison.

Sir, we are coming to grips with reality within the Ministry of Social Transformation, and I want to come back to a specific department. I want to come back to that department because the kind of programme which that department is implementing at this time is a programme that caters to the concerns of the people whom I classify as the indigenous poor in this society.

The people who did not reap the rewards of the distribution of the lands that were repatriated, the state is now taking a new road in finding a way of ensuring that they enjoy some of the benefits. They have done it in education, under the Democratic Labour Party and under this administration. We are not going to abandon it because of some misguided leadership.

We have tried to make available to ordinary people, who have indigenous skills that the values of this society never embraced, people who make leather craft, people who make small crafts out of wood, vendors, what we call micro business enterprises, who have been making a special effort, cognizant of their displacement over the years.

We have actually made available to them funds through a micro loan through the Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission, the Fund Access and other agencies, so that these people can now borrow money at small interest rates, get all the required training and advice to make them competent enough to function within a troubled and competitive commercial market.

This is what is happening through the Urban Development Commission and that is a fundamental area of social and economic transformation. Not only that but we believe that all people, especially those who sacrifice so much through blood, sweat and tears, old women who received humpbacks as a consequence of the boiling sun and rain in the Neils Plantation, the Belle Plantation, the Pine Plantation, Buckeley Plantation, Drax Hall Plantation,

these people's children now have an opportunity to live with a sense of national pride and dignity, living in houses that are suitable for human beings.

Sir, we have demolished hundreds of houses across Barbados. It is a major social revolution. Never before have you ever seen a fight on behalf of the poor where we have actually focussed our attention on a policy targeting the eradication of poverty across Barbados. Have you ever heard about it, Sir, the evidence was there long ago.

People knew that poor people were suffering. The Moyne Commission report, the Deans Commission report, analysis made by great Parliaments in the early days, regret the sovereignty of the people. Sir Arthur Lewis' Industrialisation by Invitation, finding means to create employment for people. We have had people in this country who never lived a life without being accompanied by rodents, morning, noon and night in something called houses. There are very depressed conditions in this country and we sought to change those conditions. We are charged for using and abusing funds coming out of the assets of different states and enterprises.

We had actually, Sir, transformed those people. That is what you call social transformation. I have not had the chance to speak to you about the 'Relief 2000 and Beyond' programme. I am not going to touch on the role of the Welfare Department, but I want you to know that my perspective, the perspective of the man in the street, is that these Estimates, is a living expression of hope that we will be able to sustain the quality of development and continue to enhance the quality of life for the people of Barbados with a special focus and emphasis on eradicating the poverty of poor in this country and these Estimates are a reflection of just this.

Thank you very much.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, let me begin my presentation in this year's Estimates by thanking the good people of St. Michael South who sent me to this Chamber and for the confidence that they reposed in me to represent their interest in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, as a Minister and a steward of an economic Ministry, I believe that the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance set the perfect stage for this economic debate. He also set the perfect stage for any steward of a productive sector to speak to the specific exposition of the sector during this debate.

I want, Sir, like most Honourable Member who have spoken on This Side to compliment and commend the

Minister of Finance for a most edifying presentation again this year. His message has been consistent over the years. One of sound fiscal prudence of the economy which is the trademark of this party and the Honourable Member on This Side. It was a speech which spoke again of the sound macro fundamentals that we must have if we are to continue to look after, in an effective way, the fortunes of the people of this country.

I believe, Sir, that the presentation, once again showed a level of responsibility and a commitment to ensuring that the future development of our people is secure.

In his presentation, Sir, the Minister of Finance outlines the context in which these Estimates were prepared. He commented on the past year's difficulties and a recession that was not of our making, not of policy failures on our part but by other exogenous factors that created an environment of hostility for the Barbados economy and for other small economies on the face of this earth. He spoke to the future in an environment of economic uncertainty, advocating again, caution and prudence as we continue to manage the affairs of this country.

3.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: He spoke to the future in an environment of uncertainty advocating caution and prudence as we continue to manage the affairs of this country. He also spoke of a programme of recovery that was home-grown. Even though international agencies have commented upon the state of the economy and where we need to go, the fact is nothing that was said in here by the Honourable Minister of Finance or by any other Honourable Members on this side could be taken as something that we had to get or a direction carved and created by any international agency.

I believe it was very much a part of our home-grown programme to earn out of the difficult circumstances that we face. So the productive sectors particularly tourism will continue to have the bulk of our resources. I believe that the prudent use of our earned resources when the environment was much more positive between 1994 and the year 2000 is what has really set the platform for what we were able to do last year and what we would continue to do in this fiscal year.

I believe, unlike the Honourable Members on the other side, that we calculated our circumstances well, that we borrowed sensibly and we had the creditably as a Government and as an administration to do so. The amazing thing about this particular era in which we now

live is that this period is very similar to the early 1990s when the Democratic Labour Party was the principal steward of our economy. The Democratic Labour Party, like us, had a large majority in 1986 and between 1986 and 1989 they had periods of good economic growth as well. The slow-down in our economy started in 1990. They spent badly in 1991 to win an election. The administration at that time had all the warnings that we now have. There were legendary battles that went on between the Minister of Finance and the Democratic Labour Party at the time and these are documented. They came and they painted a better picture than it really was and when the slide came they were not able to withstand it particularly not with any home-grown solutions to the problem.

By contrast, our approach is one borne out of respect for people and a commitment to our citizens unlike what they would have gone through at the time. This is a perfect platform and preparation for any economic sector to set a programme in a similar fashion. We predicted that revenues would be constrained. There is obviously a cut in terms of expenditure but we did that without losing sight of the objective of our core socio-economic programme. We need to find creative means out of the socio-economic problems that we have. This must also be the way of the future. We must continue to grow the economy by building the productive sectors and building productive capacity through off-budget and private sector activity which has got to be the way of the future.

We also set in context a number of variables that are going to affect us in the future. There was, when these Estimates were prepared, the concept that we might be facing a war. This war is now inevitable. If this war does take place in the way that we think it would and last as long as we think it would, I believe we may need to go back in many instances not only to the general body of the Estimates but to also look individually at the sectors to see how we can come up with the necessary contingencies.

Sir, if the environment holds as it is, large projects obviously would come to an end but many other large projects would continue and new ones would come on stream. Many of those projects will be concentrated within the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport and some of the ones that are going on will continue. I speak of the projects that are intended to create an effective capacity for earning in the future for all Barbadians. Those projects are, the Grantley Adams International Airport which will continue this year, the seaport, the Hilton Hotel and the new Sugar Hill project and some other projects, specifically private sector projects which I will speak to later on in this presentation.

Sir, the tourism Estimates have been prepared against this backdrop of uncertainty and also being very cognisant of what we need to do to build more productive

capacity for the future of the tourism industry and by extension the wider economy. With tourism as the centre piece of this new service driven economy, this strategy commits us or permits Barbados to take advantage of the global economy for our socioeconomic development. We live in a very highly competitive global environment now in which we must be unique, we must be faster and we must be more complete in every aspect of our development simply to survive and we must be better overall if we want to continue to thrive in this new global economy.

Tourism as well must be unique in its offerings if Barbados is to take its rightful place among the intense global competition that tourism now creates. We must as a matter of course continue to reinvent the tourism industry in this region over the long term if we are to optimise the benefits that can be derived from a tourism industry that has become increasingly competitive.

The existing short-term volatility of the industry as demonstrated by the structural changes that we have had in the past decade or so, must be answered in addition to the imminent military crisis that threatens. We must confront the realities of the maturity of an industry that is now over 40 years old in this region except for a few players that have come on stream in the last decade or so. We must look at issues that relate to terrorism and the like.

As steward of the tourism ministry over the last three years, I have listened to some strange mouthings emanating from people who are totally ignorant of the development of this industry and how it is structured. No other tourism administration in the history of this country has ever had to deal with the issues that this tourism administration has had to deal with within the past two years. We have had to deal with issues relating to September 11 and the fall off in global travel since September 11, people's fear of flying and the open volatility in airline industry that in itself brings other measures and other circumstances with it. We have to deal now with the spectre of terrorism as a deterrent to people travelling. We have had to deal with stepped up security issue that people have never had to deal within this industry that are in themselves deterrents to people travelling and then to compound it all we have now to deal with the issue of another war which is not necessarily going to be over even after the conflict in Iraq is over.

4.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Sir, this is against the backdrop with which we have had to operate within the past year but these Estimates are intended to address the long-term issue as it relates to reinventing the industry and the short-term issue which can be addressed in great measure through our

short-term to medium-term planning in most our marketing.

Sir, the reinvention effort pays attention to and addresses many of the traditional development variables of the tourism industry such as, product and institutional development; human resource development; marketing; research and information; and linkages to other sectors. These are ongoing programmes in the Ministry of Tourism and persons in the Ministry of Tourism go to work every day to create better ways of handling these traditional variables.

Greater emphasis this year and in the coming years, will be placed on product development and this is an area which has not been given the very careful attention that it has needed over the years. As tourism developers in this region, we have spent sometime in focusing mostly on the concepts of marketing and how we can get more people to come to the island, while, in my opinion and in the opinion of many experts, neglecting the product development issues that are central to getting more people and sustaining growth in the industry.

These elements of which I speak are both soft and hard elements but, Sir, the effort must begin with a more people-centred, inward-looking approach to how every destination in this region deals with the development of tourism. In the first place, we must sensitise Barbadians to the critical role of the sector in their daily lives and continue to make hospitality the first nature for Barbados. We must be hospitable one to another first, this is the only way in which we can create the perfect platform for us to be able to deal with the other issues to which I speak this afternoon.

Mr. Chairman, these hard developmental issues continue to be issues relating to the environment; the carrying capacity of a country; how much space is needed on a beach for someone to be physically comfortable; the impact it has upon our water resources; the disposal of our solid waste; the concept of infrastructure, which would be the catalyst of future development in the industry; a specific investment strategy that continues to fuel local regional and international investment in the country and a number of other critical issues. These are issues that the tourism industry and its stewards look after every day.

Sir, in terms of the short-term to medium-term marketing issues that are mostly handled by the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporation, we intend to look at better strategic alliances; better and greater use of technology in our daily work; issues relating to better private/public sector collaboration in an industry that needs public/private sector collaboration, because the private sector drives most of the product issues while the public

sector has traditionally driven the regulatory and marketing issues.

We need to look at a better airline and airlift strategy than we have had in the past; a better structured advertising and public relations programme; more emphasis on consumer research and research in tourism industry, because this industry must be run, not by gut feelings or by the 'seat of the pants' of its players but by sound consumer and developmental research as it affect the industry.

We need to bring a better academic approach to the development of tourism in the future if we are ever to create the type of industry that we need to create, no matter what the Leader for the Democratic Labour Party says.

We also need better governance at the Barbados Tourism Authority and we are embarking upon such a programme to better governance to that authority. We need better financial management; more accountability; a new incentive and reward scheme and even more fundamentally important, to be the catalyst for the concept of a regional strategy to the development of tourism which our administration is driving most of the time.

Sir, I want to paint a picture of the challenges that might occur if we do encounter this war and if it lasts for as long as we think it might. Sir, I believe that people who have found themselves here by the collective will of the people need to speak to issues that relate and contribute to the popular pool of thought in terms of the things that are going to affect our most fundamental ways of living every day.

Therefore, Sir, I believe that any representative in a parliament or any steward of the people need to let history remember them in terms of how we speak of a war that is about to take place, which can have devastating effects as to where we go tomorrow.

Sir, first of all, can we contain this war to only Iraq and in the Gulf? I am of the opinion that this war is going to be seen as an attack upon the Muslim world and might not only be contained in the Gulf but might reach wherever Americans, British or whoever travel. Would that be the end of the conflict or would this conflict continue for months or maybe years in terms of how it would affect the rest of the world? Are the Americans or British safe anywhere in the world once this war has started?

Sir, we remember Bali or Monbassa, Kenya. We are dependent fundamentally on those two countries for our source of living through the tourism industry. Will the conflict do irreparable damage to the airline industry, an industry that is already tottering, an industry that does not have the resources to keep it afloat and with so many large

airlines in this world that are already under Chapter 11 or some other Chapter.

Sir, the issue of the travel industry being done irreparable damage by what would happen to the airline industry and, by extension, doing specific damage to the global economy. These are issues and questions that must be answered because there is no way that I believe this war is going to be over soon. I believe it could go on and on. Therefore, how are going to deal with it?

The Air Transport Association, the umbrella body for United States airlines has reported that since 11th September, 2001, which has made Americans very shy of flying, airlines have lost \$18 billion since. Even before the open hostility in Iraq, losses were projected for 2003 at US\$6.7 billion, not only less traffic but higher cost for fuel as the war prospects in the Middle East will obviously push oil prices up. In February, fuel prices for United States carriers have reached \$1.20 per gallon which is over 100 per cent of what they were at a comparable time last year. This situation drives the whole economy into jeopardy.

The first Gulf War, if we could use that as a comparison, caused serious economic consequences for the airline industry. Let me say, Sir, by way of comment, that first Gulf War actually saw an increase in movement to this region and the Caribbean benefitted from it because nobody was traveling east. However, that war did not have in it one of the variables, which is terrorism. The issue is that though people are not able to travel to that side of the world, would they still be comfortable and safe?

Without Government intervention, bankruptcies and liquidations will be the order of the day for the airline industry and though people might claim that new airlines would emerge, what happens in the interim to all travellers and to our people coming in.

During the last Gulf War, between 1989 and 1994, net profits of the industry had actually been \$3.9 billion. There were adequate reserves and access to capital markets. After the war, the traffic plummeted, causing the industry to shrink considerably. It then took the airline industry four years to recover from what was at that time, a fifty-day war at the beginning of the 1990s.

The recovery that was staged was wiped out by 11th September, 2001. The worst-case scenario for this war if it drags on for three weeks, is that the airline industry could lose an additional \$13 billion, 3 800 daily flights and job losses in the region of one hundred thousand.

4.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: It will cost massive commercial aviation damage and will severely affect the economy because experts believe that for every job lost in the airlines industry another four jobs are lost in the travel and tourism industries overall.

We are looking at a weak and bleak scenario but I am happy to report that we in the Ministry of Tourism have set our estimates for this year in the context of spending \$62.1 million of which the Ministry itself will get \$2.7 million, the Barbados Tourism Authority \$49.8 million, the Barbados Tourism Investment \$7.6, the Barbados Conference Services \$1.2 million, HIV/AIDS programme \$61 000, Barbados National Trust \$120 000 and the CTO \$112 000.

We projected that our tourism industry would have grown by 5 per cent this year and this was without the issue relating to the war. I am pleased to report that every month after July this year there has been growth for the tourism industry including January when we recorded 2.1 per cent and February when we recorded growth of 6.8 per cent and March is expected to grow substantially.

Sir, this was one of the worse years for tourism development in the region Barbados and as a result Barbados was 1.8 per cent down from the previous year. There is no mature tourism destination in the region that gets over 200 000 passengers that did not show negative growth last year and Barbados was the lowest of them all.

Sir, I have a contingency plan prepared by the Barbados Tourism Authority in the event of a war. It contains five parts:

(a) What if there was a war. (b) The potential impact on international arrivals to Barbados. (c) Redirecting of communications effort. (d) Crisis management and crisis management training. (e) A market recovery plan for Barbados if the event of a war.

This document will be implemented once it goes to Cabinet in terms of where we go in the next few months if this war is started.

Sir, I spent the last few years of my life listening to people talk about development of tourism in Barbados and I have heard many unenlightened comments about the industry, its management and the future of the industry. Yesterday, I heard the Honourable Member for St. John speaking specifically on some area because he heard a newspaper commentator spoke about jobs in the industry and the Honourable Member felt that I should, therefore, skip and jump. Sir, most of these people comment without doing research or having the facts as they relate to the tourism industry.

I would like people to tell me about the people who have studied tourism development where they can be found in Barbados and how many of them are not working. This document in my hands shows the number of people between 1997 and 2000 who received a Master's degree from the University of Surrey, Florida International University, the University of Birmingham, Canterbury University, New York University and the University of the West Indies. They have qualified with a Master's degree in areas relating to tourism development but the document does not say that these people are unemployed. Sir, a person may visit a friend's home and hears that his daughter studied overseas but cannot get a job and hell breaks loose.

Sir, a lot of these degrees are in tourism development but when we speak of specific areas in the industry, chefs and the like, people are not studying those particular aspects of the development of the industry. You will find that many people will study tourism development planning, marketing and hospitality management but these areas, even though they speak to the overall institutional development and project development of the industry, do not speak to specific hospitality areas and this is where our people need to go.

There has been a lot of criticism about this Barbados Labour Party administration but, Sir, no other administration in the history of Barbados has had as many positive accomplishments in the tourism industry as we have had.

Sir, I want to conclude by listing our accomplishments:

We have had eight new airlift services since September 11th. We have taken the public/private sector to a new level in this industry. We have produced a New Tourism Development Act for Barbados that is considered by all of our partners in competition to be the most revolutionary Act in the region.

We have created standards enhancements.

A small hotel co-op.

A small hotel investment fund.

We have taken product investment through the Barbados Tourism Investment to a new level. We have created a tourism awareness programme that was never done and a community programme that never existed before.

We have created an urban rehabilitation programme.

The Hilton, the airport and the seaport are ongoing projects. We have trained more people in this industry in terms of taxi men, policemen, custom officers and immigration officers than any other administration. We have created the most creative advertising programme and the Best of Barbados programme that saw us being successful last year. We have created a research level that has been upgraded. We have open our doors and that meant improving the lot of every single ancillary player, taxi worker, watersports vendors and community groups. We have started to restructure the Barbados Tourism Authority. We have created a cruise sector relationship like none other that has ever existed in Barbados.

Sir, the time for accountability is very soon formally upon us and it is time for the gurus to 'put up or shut up'. We are going to have a wonderful time in the next few months telling the people of Barbados how we have looked after our stewardship.

I want to say that I commend these Estimates to this Honourable House. We have set the best example as a Government and offered Barbados a way of life that is better than they have ever had in the past and this is because we put the highest regard on the welfare of our citizens. We hope that by so doing that other would be driven to work not only in their own self-interest but in the interest of their fellow Barbadians.

Sir, I thank you.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I too rise in support of these Estimates of 2003/3004. I want to first congratulate the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for the management of this country's affairs over the last eight years. He has taken us safely through some good years and, only last year, this country began to feel the effect of a recession but nonetheless although we were small fish in a big pond we swam successfully with the sharks.

Barbadians have enjoyed good years of plenty. We had a good harvest and we can safely look forward to this Barbados Labour Party being the first Government, post-independence, to have three successive terms of running the country.

4.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: Barbadians can say that they have enjoyed good years, there were years of plenty and we had a good harvest.

This Barbados Labour Party Government is the only Government in post-Independence to have three successive

terms of running this country. We are in recession but I am quite sure that many people did not feel that we were in recession. If we compare what happened in 1991 and what happened during the recession of 2002, we can safely say that we did not see the job losses, loss of homes and persons cashing in their policies.

Mr. Speaker, we as a Government did very well without having to come back to the people of this country and impose taxes on them.

The Ministry of Transport and Works is responsible for the maintenance of roads, drivers' licences, vehicle permits and the water of this country. We did not come back to the people of this country and increase fees. Road taxes, learners' permits, bus fares nor water have been increased in the last 10 years. We have not imposed any burden of taxation of the good people of Barbados for 10 years.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke glowingly on the situation of tourism. The Honourable Member for the City spoke about what we can expect if and when this war comes about. This war can spell many negatives for Barbados. Barbados is a country that imports almost everything that it uses. We depend on tourism as our number one foreign exchange earner. Our fuel is imported from overseas and with a war, fuel prices could rise and this would impact negatively on this country.

Sir, the major players in the war are the Americans and the British. We depend on most of our tourists from Britain.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: Sir, these are the things that we are talking about.

I want to comment on a statement attributed of the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party. I am sure that the late Errol Barrow is probably rolling in his watery bed.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: The late Sir Grantley Adams and Errol Barrow led education in Barbados. Sir Grantley Adams was the first person to agitate for free secondary education. Then under the late Errol Barrow we had an advancement of free secondary education in this island. Many Barbadians have been able to benefit from free secondary education. The Leader of the Democratic Labour Party also benefited from free secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, I have constituents who come to me and many of them who left school under-qualified but educated themselves by way of attending various

institutions including Benskin Hospitality School and trained in hospitality studies. They are also people who come to me and say, Minister, I have a certificate in caring for the elderly or children and I am looking for a job. Sir, for this statement to come from someone who is talking about leading Barbados and projecting himself as a future Prime Minister of Barbados, Mr. Speaker, it is the worst statement that was ever made in this country since the famous cane blade statement.

Sir, it is said to know that he is still pursuing studies, perhaps, a doctorate. He has a nephew, a decent young man, who recently returned from England doing a Master degree. The statement that he made implies that one should do as he says but not as does.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Honourable Member for St. John spoke about the road works in Barbados and he mentioned that there was a lot of congestion on our roads. Yes, we have congestion but we have over 97 000 vehicles operating on the roads of Barbados today. Vehicles are not used for joy riding. They are serving as transportation for people to get to work and school. Some of these vehicles are transporting materials and workers to construction sites. Large equipment is being transported daily so we cannot say that the roads are congested. They have a valid reason to be on the roads. 4.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. R.D. MARSHALL:

GEO Construction is taking people and material to work sites. They are working. They are cranes on the road every day transporting heavy equipment. We cannot say the roads are congested without saying, Sir, there is some valid reason for having congestion on the roads in Barbados. We have 1 600 kilometers of road. The roads are not getting any better.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot say that we are not going to let people import cars. They are people who say that you should stop importing cars but ask them if they are willing to give up their motor car. The answer is no. People are enjoying a better standard of living and when a young man or woman starts to work in a country, the first thing they want is a little motor car. The next thing they get is a little house. We are doing things that will improve the lives of people.

Sir, GEO Construction is now concentrating on building the CLICO project. There are putting up town houses in the Clermont area. As I said, construction is going on in this area so you must have congestions on the roads of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, last year, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport came here and voted some \$118 209.56 for the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to carry out the Government's mandate. Over that period, we were able to achieve almost everything we set out to do. Barbadian people can see what has happened and how the money has been spent.

You too, Mr. Speaker, can feel and see in your constituency what is happening. Just two weeks ago, Sealy Land was paved and refurbished out of those same funds. No other Government, and I can speak here for the whole of Barbados to hear, be it a Barbados Labour Party Government or a Democratic Labour Party Government has ever done so much road work in this country.

Mr. Speaker, some 20 residential roads were done in this country last year out of the \$118 million that were voted here. We did Greenland Village Numbers 1 and 2. We did Nicholls Road, Maxwell Plains, Windsor, Fairview Heights and Valley Development. Sir, just two weeks ago we did Arthur Seat that was in a very bad state of disrepair. We did Gibbons Terrace, Coverley Terrace, Pegwell Gardens, Locust Hall Terrace, Ealing Park South, Thorpes Cottage, Boyce Gap, Datetree Hill, Pentecostal Church Road, Wavell Avenue, Long Gap, Bibby Lane, First Avenue Goodland in the residential programme.

We also were spending part of that money, some \$5 million in the Road Graduation Programme and we went to Fairview Phase II, Kirtons, Phase II, President Kennedy Drive, Deacons Road that was in a very bad state, Goodland Road, Baxters Road, in the constituency of the present Deputy Prime Minister. I am quite sure she is very happy.

Mr. Speaker, I can say to you that Frere Pilgrim will be paved by the end of this financial year. We completed some work at Bucks in, St. Thomas. We are paving Bath in St. John. Christie Village is continuing, Blackmans in St. Joseph and Lower Park in St. Joseph.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John is asking for area but I understand that very soon he would not have an interest in those areas unless he is going to the country to get some breadfruits.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have spent the money and we can leave a record from last year's Estimates of which we can be very proud.

In the maintenance of the drains to prevent flooding, Headleys Land was completed. The Seaview dam is in progress. The Mount Brevitor dam is in progress and the Richmond Hill dam is in progress.

Mr. Speaker, improvement to traffic management is ongoing and we will complete the Oistins foot path in the Christ Church area. As I said, the money was well spent and the Ministry can go ahead and now talk about the \$100 million that we will be asking this Parliament to vote for the Ministry to continue the programme that we have been elected to do.

Sir, we will be looking to implement next year out of this money, a street works Act. On many occasions utility companies working on the road, sometimes indiscriminately digging, that will be a thing of the past because they will have to coordinate all their efforts with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport before any work is done.

Sir, out of the money we are asking for this year, we are looking at enacting a building authority in this country, the mandatory use of a building code, the registration of building practitioners and the charging of certain fees.

Under our network programme, Sir, we know and can say to you safely that we will also do major projects. We will be looking at the rehabilitation of the Hindsbury Road but there will be no other large programme for the Hindsbury Road and the Martindales Road. Sir, we know these need attention, but these will not start until the Bridgetown bypass road programme is out of the way. We cannot put more pressure on the travelling public.

Mr. Speaker, those who were criticising the road programme, I have heard some of them saying now, what a good programme it is. The Leader of the Opposition yesterday, did not attack the programme. All he spoke about was that they are building roads and about congestion.

Mr. Speaker, the contractors have promised us that by June this year the Bridgetown bypass road will be finished. We have finished the Eagle Hall road. We have finished the Pine Road and Culloden Road. We have just put on the base coat on the road between Dalkeith and Beckles roads. We have gone over to Paddock Road and the section to be done on that area to Highway 7 will be the road between Bush Hill and the Garrison.

We have also paved Baxters Road. I am quite sure that the Honourable Member for the City will be happy to know that the Baxters Road junction is paved and as far across Westbury Road to the Sixth Avenue, New Orleans. They are working now at the junction of President Kennedy Drive to finish that junction, up to St. Leonard's Church and I am quite sure that the people in that area will be happy.

Mr. Speaker, it is going to make travel time for Barbadian less because they will be able now to come

across that side quite freely. The roads are 22 feet wide and in some area, the side-walks are three metres wide. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East will be happy to know that these roads and side-walks are user friendly for the disabled, whereas people can use wheelchairs.

You will also see, Mr. Speaker, that some roads will have traffic lights operating for the first time. The Country road junction, Westbury road junction and the Roebuck Street junction.

4.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Previously people were complaining about the roads and the inconvenience they encountered, but now the people are happy with the road works programme. Sir, when I walk the road on a daily basis, they stop me and say, Mr. Minister, you are doing a very good job, tell the Prime Minister I say so.

We had some teething problems with the public relations but that has been corrected. When you dig up the road, you must get dust. It is like baking in your kitchen at Christmas time where the flour will blow all over the place but when you are finished, you clean up the flour and you will have your bread on the table. It is same thing with the roads. At the end of the day when all the dust settles, you will have a good road that would last 15 or 20 years to drive on. We had to move all of the utility services out of the middle of the road and put them at the side of the road so it was not just going in and paving in roads that would take you a week or two.

People were asking why the roads were taking so long to complete, so we had to go for a PR programme and explain to the people that we were not just paving the road, we were rehabilitating or rebuilding the road. Building a road is not like repairing a house where you change two boards and it is done in a hurry, you have to dig down to put in new foundation which is going to take time. This is what we have been doing, so every opportunity I get, I always apologise to the people of Barbados for the inconvenience that they are having but at the end of the day when all is finished it is a product that Barbados would have to help improve its infrastructure. Beside that, this Government has said that no major project is complete until the feeder roads and the marl-bound roads off these projects are completed.

Recently, we came here and voted for \$893 000 to spend on ten roads in the Black Rock and Eagle Hall area. Those roads which are off the Danesbury area, are Spring Garden 1 and 2, Dobson Land, Jones Land, Melvin's Avenue and the Gap by the market. Mr. Speaker, by the

end of this financial year that money would have been spent in those areas. Some of those roads are not completed as yet because we are awaiting the installation of natural gas services in some of these areas, so the money that we are voting for here today will be spent. It is \$80 million less than what we got last year but, as the Prime Minister said, we have to watch the deficit. We have this \$100 million and we are going to spend it wisely. There are areas off Carrington Village that have some roads that took a beating like the Black Rock Road but those roads too will be taken care of.

The Honourable Member for the City talks about Man's Gap off Passage Road. That gap along with the gaps off Westbury Road and New Orleans will be rehabilitated. We have to look at roads like Union Road and Kirtons No. 3 in St. Philip. Ealing Park South Road and Gibbons Terrace in Christ Church have to be worked on. First and second Avenue Bank Hall, St. Michael are to be done as well as Allen View in St. Thomas. When the South Coast Project is completed, the south coast road between Oistins and the Top Road Roundabout on Highway 7 has to be rehabilitated also.

In next year's residential programme, we have to work at Wildey Gardens; Water Hall Land; Pipers Avenue in Bayville and Fortescue Development. We have started work at River Plantation which is to be completed in this financial year. Christie Village in St. Thomas is almost complete. We are looking at Pegwell Gardens and Waldron to Charnocks in Christ Church and Rock Development in St. Joseph.

Martindales Road will be a special project because like Hindsbury Road it lies on the Constitution River-bed and it takes about some 20 000 vehicles on a daily basis. Martindales Road is a road that is built on silt and mud and underneath it lies a spring and sometimes the road gives away. Martindales Road and Hindsbury Road are two major arteries in and out of Bridgetown and when the Bridgetown Bypass Road is completed by June we will probably look at working on Hindsbury Road first and then later down we can go and look at rehabilitating Martindales Road. I want to let the Barbadians know that this is going to be a major job because as I said we are rehabilitating and not repaving. When we rehabilitate the road, we have to move the utility services and put in sidewalks. We want to make sure those roads are just as good as the Bridgetown Bypass Road with the possibility of lasting us 15 or 20 years.

The money we are asking for will be spent on the drainage services as well. We have to continue working at Pillersdorf Development, Jackson Tenantry Road and parts of the ABC Highway. These are areas that a lot of drainage work has to be done. We have many low-lying areas in St. Michael especially and we have to concentrate on working

on them. We have to carry out work at Woodbourne, in St. Philip and Newbury, St. George. In Christ Church we have to work on Magic Isle Highway, Sheraton to Warners, Bright Hill and Peronne Gap because as soon as the rain sets up Peronne Gap starts to flood.

In the area of the Scotland District we will be continuing improvements to the roads at Bath to Newcastle, the Greenland River Course and Tent Bay. We have to provide gabions for all of these projects. We are working at Blackmans St. Joseph where the road has collapsed. Many of those roads in the Scotland District are built on oceanic, clay, silt and coral stones and they are prone to land slippage. We are still working on Chapman Village in St. Thomas which gave way. The Scotland District is a very worrisome area and it will probably take a vote for a special fund to be spent on the Scotland District.

We also have to carry out refurbishment to the government buildings. We have civil servants working in government buildings who are doing a very good job on a daily basis and we have to make sure that they have good facilities in which they can work.

We have to do some improvements at the Licensing Authority because we are looking at giving Barbadians the opportunity of going to any facility of the Licensing Authority to pay for their driver's licence or their road taxes.

We are also looking at producing a driver's licence in the format like our credit cards. I went overseas to Miami sometime ago and when the lady at the car rental company asked me for my driver's licence, I gave her the little book I have and she said no, I ask for your driver's licence and it was a little embarrassing. These are things that we will be spending this \$118 million on to make sure that we do what we have to do.

Mr. Speaker, at this time I want to thank all of the staff of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, from the Chief Technical officers down to the crew to name a few, for the work they have done because as Mr. Tudor said the other day we have done a lot of work for this country.

4.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, in wrapping up, I want to say that people are measured by the contributions they make.

The late Right Excellent Errol Barrow, Sir Grantley Adams and Tom Adams, are remembered for the contribution they have made. Persons such as Martin

Luther King and Mother Theresa are also remembered for their contribution. I am quite sure that when Kofi Annan dies, he too would be remembered for his contribution.

Mr. Speaker, there are others whose contributions would have been so small when they were alive, that when they go to the great beyond, they would not be, at all, remembered. I thank you.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I first must congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister for very skillfully and cogently putting together a set of Estimates. Before I get to the meat of my presentation, I would like to remind the Honourable Member who has just taken his seat that I think it is now time for other areas to be tackled.

We have long passed Tweedside and Pine Roads and I think it is now time that those side roads which for months, have taken a beating, should be looked at because, once there is a shower, long before it comes, these side roads are flooded. I could accept the Honourable Member's explanation for Hindsbury and Martindales Roads but I cannot understand why resurfacing has not been done at Harrisons, Chadderton, Huntles and St. Hill Roads. I would hope that in the financial year, those areas would be tackled.

Sir, I was acknowledging the current world economic climate and the contra-tone which prevails between the big world states, I am sure the Honourable Minister of Finance was able to put together these Estimates while looking back, appreciating what currently prevails and doing some sort of forecasting and hedging as to what might just ensue with the war having been embarked upon by the United States.

Sir, there are certain pointers which one would imagine, would determine the good governance of a country. Pointers such as good fiscal policies, meaningful balance of payments and sustainable foreign reserves, are those pointers which a country and a minister of finance would like to achieve or would set out to achieve and therefore, are rather desirable. If the foregoing are only achieved but the value added towards the standard of living or one's level of expectancy throughout life is not reached or aspired towards, then the good and healthy balance of payments, the balance of payments position and the good foreign reserves would all be at a stage of futility.

Yesterday we saw the Right Honourable Prime Minister delivered his Estimates and, at all times, his projections, budgeting and the rationale so associated, were well researched and crystal clear. At all times, he had his eyes fixed on the Balance of Payments and so his feet were well planted as to where and what he would like to see added to the human capital value over the next financial year.

The past two to four years have not been the best worldwide. World economies have taken their beatings and Barbados is no exception. Prior to the inferno of the World Trade Towers, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, delivered his Budgetary Proposals and Financial Statement. In my opinion, they were very exciting, well-thought out and very scientific but alas, there was the terrorist attack and most of what we would have projected or would have hoped to have achieved, we had to reposition ourselves and to rethink as the ricocheting effect of that terrorist attack took a toll upon all small countries, especially the countries like Barbados which are tourist destinations.

Sir, the repositioning and rethinking with the assistance of various interest groups were, indeed, a major task which had to be carried out. The Prime Minister, at that time, had to embark on a new model, taking into account that already the economy was in recession.

Sir, one was supposed to look at it as a model whereby there was fixed economic activity but the volume of economic activity was being decreased, not because of any local untoward effect but primarily by exogenous factors. Sir, superimpose upon that was the terrorist attack in America. Therefore, what was left to be done? The model, as I see it, would have started to shrink

even more and, therefore, some kind of economic energy had to be injected into that model so as to decrease that shrinkage of volume. Sir, that is the term which the Prime Minister calls his counter-cyclical action to help to sustain the economy.

Sir, there was a similar situation in the early 1990s under a Democratic Labour Party's administration but, in my opinion, it was not as severe. What the DLP were able to achieve over a period of time, was a reduction of fiscal deficit as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product but, at the same time, they were not able to resuscitate the economy. That is the major difference between a Barbados Labour Party in the year 2002 to 2003 and a Democratic Labour Party administration some 10 years ago.

Sir, a similar thing was experienced in Kenya. They did all the right things but were not cognizant of the fact of how they were supposed to come out of this vortex. That is why the term counter-cycle is so meaningful in a situation like this. Sir, very cleverly, methodically and well-thought out were the actions to rescue the state of the economy.

Sir, in recent months, as we try to bring ourselves out of the depression, the Democratic Labour Party wagged their tongues. They rubbed their hands and the soles of their feet and said, we have them now, we have them now, only to realise that this was not so. Now with the impending war, I think they are saying, we really have them now.

Sir, I would like the good people of Barbados to sit back because within a matter of months, they would be asked which is the preferred party or administration worthy of taking the country into these perilous times into the year 2004 and beyond.

Sir, they wished that we would have jettisoned our Manifesto just as they would have done at that time but the opposite has happened. We have embraced it and can show you all our promises and performances. We shall continue to perform until the bell is rung.

5.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Mr. D.T. GILL: Sir, as the intrinsic energy of the model began to pick up and as we came out of recession the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance will astutely take away that additional monetary funding to the economy. We could not have rebounded without pushing up our fiscal deficit in the region of 5.9 per cent and now is the time to do things that will take our deficit back to 4.6 per cent and I am positive that once given the opportunity we will return to those levels as experience in 2001. In those 'bad old days' for the Dems to achieve the desired deficit as a percentage of GDP many things had to be done which were painful. We can remember how the Child Care Board and homes were forgotten and old people were crying out for repairs to their houses and how they too were forgotten. Sir, families were plunged into a morass which was never seen before.

Sir, this gives a clear picture of how the Dems dealt with the recession as opposed to how it is being dealt with by this current administration. Sir, nothing will be a better gauge for saying who will be returned when the next elections comes.

Sir, I want to look at the social side of the Estimates. If we look at the Ministry of Social Transformation, which carries the brunt of our social activity you will see that everything done over the past year was done against the background of a certain amount of economic activity. Nonetheless the activity of the Urban Development Commission, which I had the honour and pleasure of chairing for three years, provided meaningful employment in construction for mason, carpenters, painters and tilers and also for engineers, architects and surveyor. This area brought comfort to the poorest of the poor to improve their lifestyle but at the same time it provided meaningful employment to the other socioeconomic class.

Each time we visit one of these abject poor houses I am reminded of the verse which says: "Foxes have holes, birds have nests but the son of man hath no way to lay his head." Mr. Speaker, to counter the good work which this

administration had done in this area, the detractors call in day in and out talking about contractors but, Sir, a contractor does not have to know the difference between a spirit level and a square. We have CEOs of airlines who do not know the difference between a Hercules and a Concorde but they know about projecting and forecasting and they have a feel for the climate. Sir, indeed if the contractor is knowledgeable, he will execute a better job but people want to be contractor, mason, tiler, everything in one and they foul the whole thing up because they do not know when to step aside and allow the artisan to do his work.

Sir, they say that you should teach a man to fish but if a man is hungry he cannot fish until you give him a fish to get his mental capacity up in order to think. All the red herrings dragged across the trail should be put under the microscope and judged for what they really are. Sir, the Ministry of Social Transformation will continue to do good work in the various agencies be it gender affairs, welfare or the National Assistance Board. I had the privilege to be the Acting Minister for seven weeks and I could not believe that such meaningful work is being done daily. People would like the work to happen faster but in some instances the nature of the cases are such that it must be done slowly.

The other programme which brings great pleasure and satisfaction is the transfer of legal title programme. Mr. Speaker, you have quite a few of these areas in your constituency like Alleynes Land, Skeetes Land, Alkins Lands et cetera and each one represents a tenantry where successive generations have lived for hundreds of years but they never had title to their land and therefore, cannot effect repairs or put up permanent structures.

Sir, between April 2002 and January 2003, seventy-six titles were transferred to qualified urban tenants at a cost \$547 251 00 and, the Commission referred 232 qualified tenants to the Barbados National Bank.

5.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Mr. D.T. GILL: Sir, the Commission referred approximately 232 qualified tenants to the Barbados National Bank. Let me explain what a subsidy is. If a piece of land in one of these tenancies is valued and sold at \$5, the tenant pays \$2.50 and the Government pay \$2.50. If the land is at \$6, \$3 would constitute the subsidy. This has nothing to do with the surveyor's fees which cost approximately \$1 500 to survey.

Mr. Speaker, as I speak there are several tenancies in my constituency that are being surveyed. There are Jordan's Tenantry, Florence Simpson Tenantry, Scotts Land Tenantry, Rouse Tenancies. Bannister Land

Tenancies, Campaign Land Tenantry, and Crick Land. We were unable to locate the owner of the Crick Land Tenantry but recently someone came forward with evidence that shows that he is the agent for this land. Mr. Speaker, everyday somebody goes into the Urban Development Commission with information regarding additional tenancies. It is a very exciting programme.

Sir, much has been said about the housing programme and I can say that with authority because I was the Chairman at the time. Sir, over 900 houses in a four-year period have been repaired or built and about 600 are virtually new houses.

Sir, when Storm Lili passed Barbados, there was not one report of any of the houses that were built coming down. Although you hear every day how inferior the structure and craftsmanship are and I saw houses that had expensive roofs suffer a battering during the passage of the storm.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I heard that the Urban Housing Loan Fund will be replaced. That fund helped hundreds of people with small sums of money to do various repairs to their houses. Sir, that is what we call real social transformation. Never before has so much been done to so many people in so short a time.

I want to reflect in a capsule how the Ministry of Social Transformation has functioned viz-a-viz what transpired 10 years ago. In the period 1992/1993 \$2.8 million were allocated as grants to the public by the National Assistance Board (NAB), today it stands at \$7.7 million, four times the amount. I do not see anything in 1992/1993 Estimates, no wonder their structures went to ruins. Today the administration is spending \$598 000 on structures for The Child Care Board. Sir, the Opposition would make one believe that this administration has abandoned the poor in our country.

In 1992/1993 \$40 000 were spent in the maintenance of their property as opposed to \$236 000. In 1993/1994 \$30 000 was spent as opposed to \$205 000, almost nine times as much money. Sir, in terms of structures, they would have budgeted \$40 000 between 1993/1994 and this administration would have budgeted \$125 000.

Sir, I remember in the days when you could not get a Panadol in the early 1990s but today \$30 906 000 is budgeted for the drug service as opposed to \$14 million. Sir, when you compare what is happening today to the pain and suffering which was endured 10 years ago, what the Democratic Labour Party administration did make what we have done look like a storm in a teacup as far as bringing hardship, pain and grief to the people of Barbados.

I close by saying that there not a street in urban Barbados which has not been the recipient of some kind of assistance, whether by way of a street light, septic tank, picket fence or concrete structure. I challenge anyone to take me and show me a district which has not been a recipient or has not been touched by the long arm of the Ministry of Social Transformation.

Sir, as I am about to take my seat, I am, indeed, pleased with these Estimates and it reassures the population of Barbados that the country is in good hands and I would ask the good people of Barbados to sit down and to return it to good hands. Could you trust the affairs of a country in the hands of an administration or a party where the senior members do not speak to each other? Sir, we see it every Thursday in this Honourable House. They drop arms, left arm against right arm and they fail to exchange words with each other. Is this the kind of administration that this country should subject itself to? Should the good people of Barbados be sent back again to the IMF and should we have to sell off the 'family silver' and put the people of Barbados into a state of recoil?

Sir, I am most obliged.

5.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 5.40 p.m. this afternoon.

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

The question that the House be now suspended until 5.40 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

5.22 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is resumed.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. This wonderful privilege has been offered to me by the people of St. Thomas to make my contribution regarding the Estimates for the year 2003-2004.

I first want to thank the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for these comprehensive Estimates that I know will greatly

enhance the continuation of the programmes and projects that this Government started in 1999.

Mr. Speaker, every day we hear from people, locally, regionally, internationally, of the performance of Barbados, under the astute leadership of our Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. The Barbadians are not the ones who are speaking of our good fortune, but indeed, people all over the world. They ask the question, how does Barbados get it done with only limited resources. Sir, that speaks of a leader with a team which has vision.

Mr. Speaker, we know of the impact any war will have on economies, Barbados first, as we are speaking to the issue now, but indeed, globally, we know what impact any war can have on those people as well. This little dot, Barbados on the map, will fair no differently from other countries in the world but it is still the duty of this Barbados Labour Party Government to continue to chart the course for our people to develop and to enjoy the benefits that the rest of the world, sometimes envy us because they do not have the kind of vision within their Governments as us.

Mr. Speaker, we in Barbados had great leaders in the past and I have no doubt that we will continue to have great leaders coming to the fore and, therefore, I do not want to discredit anyone because that is not my role here. I just want to say that Barbadians have a preference, when they look at the management of the last administration, the Democratic Labour Party, and they indeed compare it with the management of this administration, the Barbados Labour Party, Sir, there is no connection at all. We are light-years ahead in this Barbados Labour Party compared to what happened in the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, the people of St. Thomas are happy. Everything is not comfortable with them, because there are still roads that need to be fixed. Sir, some of them still experience water problems, especially now in the crop season. Some of them still have houses to be repaired. Many of them are relying on the Poverty Alleviation Fund in order for them to be able to continue to exist. They rely on the use of the health services and all the facilities, but they are grateful.

Sir, they are extremely happy to know that the Barbados Labour Party is still the Party of choice which has brought the affairs of Barbados, over the last nine years, to a level that makes the environment of Barbados safe.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to St. Thomas a little more because they are the people that have sought to put me here and I have to represent their cause as I would, the cause of many other Barbadians. And so, to the people of Bibby Lane, reaching all the way to Warren's Terrace, for

those of Padmore Village going all the way to Mount Hillaby, indeed those at Bloomsbury leading onto Airy Cot and all the other districts in the Centre, including Welches Terrace, where the Honourable Member for St. Lucy resides, Mr. Speaker, I want to say sincere thanks to them for putting their confidence in the Barbados Labour Party and indeed, in me, to be able to fight for their cause, because they also receive the benefits.

It gives me privilege to thank this Barbados Labour Party Government for assistance first and foremost in roads. Sir, Duke Tenantry Road is one, that for 60 years nothing was done and that road has been completed. It is now a nylon road. Sir, I want to thank the Ministry of Public Works not only for that but for the road at Christie Village, the road from Jackson leading to Chancery and Rock Hampton.

Mr. Speaker, as I speak to you, the people in Shop Hill, as well as Grand View are extremely pleased with the Rural Development Commission for the concrete road that they have now.

We all, as Barbadians speak about people who suffer as a result of the roads that need to be properly surfaced, where they walk with two pairs of shoes, in order to get to work, church or wherever they want to go. The people of those districts are happy and singing praises of the Barbados Labour Party for the recognition and opportunity to have roads.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank the Ministry of Rural Development Commission for the Exchange road that is now to be put in effect. There are other areas where the Rural Development Commission continues to work assiduously to ensure that our senior citizens get a better cover over their heads.

I support the effort in any country for senior citizens to be given an opportunity to live well in their old age. Most of them have made a contribution to the country but because of circumstances, perhaps, they could not fix the odd board, change the galvanise on the roof and did not have the proper water borne facility...The Rural Development Commission has been giving that assistance in the parish of St. Thomas and I am indeed grateful. There is still more to be done but I always use my favorite phrase, Rome was not built in a day. Therefore, we will be patient but we know that the Rural Development Commission will deliver the goods for our people.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Transport Board for the bus that goes through Arch Hall. This alleviates some of the challenges of the people there, when they have to go for their groceries, go in late from work and so on. This is an extension to the Wanstead route.

Mr. Speaker, only this past Sunday, the people of Rock Hall, St. Thomas had a better opportunity, since many of them are robbed and challenged at night, when they exit the buses at the St. Thomas Parish Church. Thankfully, the officers at the Transport Board have reorganised the schedules from 7.00 p.m. going to St. Andrews Church. This bus is now exiting at Content and going through Rock Hall to ensure those workers from Rock Hall that they can get to their houses safely. Despite whatever lighting you put there, it is a lonesome road between the Parish Church and the Rock Hall Village, so those people now have a little more confidence in what is happening in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all. The Rock Hall Freedom Village has taken off with a bang. I am happy, Sir, that the residents of Rock Hall have come up with excellent creative ideas which are going to help to impact on the whole project. They have gone into it with consultation, Sir, which speaks volumes where the Barbados Labour Party is concerned and we will continue to consult with locals to get their opinions and work with them in projects.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John spoke yesterday about the Barbados Labour Party members and said that their speeches are full of emptiness. Mr. Speaker, this is not all, street lights have been put up in St. Thomas. The Training Unit has been responding to our requests, not to mention the Town Planning Department. Sir, some people seem to think that they can dump garbage and dump trees and so on in illegal dumps because they have other places for parks and houses and so on. The Town Planning Department has been very responsive to our requests to ensure that such illegal practices are stamped out. Sir, I want to thank that department as well, for looking after the needs and interests in the parish of St. Thomas.

I want to go a little further, because it is important that we say things and we reinforce them so that the public continues to understand that it is in their interests that these large sums of money are allocated to ensure that they get the benefit.

Sir, benefits do not only belong to the politicians or to the middle class person, but indeed, the working class people get benefits as well. It is across the board for everybody to be able to develop.

Mr. Speaker, the Sharon Primary School has been repaired. The refurbishment programme for EduTech has taken over that project. The Holy Innocents School has been refurbished to bring a measure of comfort to those children, while they are on the school's compound. The Welches Primary School that much was talked about in the by-election, was being fixed then and continued to be

refurbished to accommodate the needs of the individuals in those communities.

Mr. Speaker, playing fields have also benefited. We now have lights in the pavilions so that our people can play cricket, basketball and football at night. Some of them get free tokens because our young people do not work, so in order for us to keep them busy using their energies in a worthwhile manner, we ensure that their needs are met.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on and on but the final thing that I want to speak about in St. Thomas is that there are no less than four community groups that have developed over the last year and a half. Sir, that was my pledge, to work with people in the community to ensure that they enjoy community life. Sir, community life is about voluntary service. It is about developing people and it is about giving back.

5.45 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: The people of Redman's Village, Welches and Bagatelle can speak of the involvement that they had on the 1st of March. They continue to work in close association with the youth commissioners for the parish to help develop themselves and their skills and to acquire an awareness about AIDS, diabetes and the country in which they live and to learn about matters to do with physical fear. Therefore, I am eternally grateful for this opportunity to be able to serve this parish.

I want to go a little further to deal with the Estimates because we heard about pre-election propaganda and large amounts of money that is going towards expenditure for an election. Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party's performance speaks volume as to what our commitment is because we see our Manifesto as a social contract. Therefore, every programme we plan or every project that is conceived is tied in with this document to ensure that we continue to give high quality leadership and service to the people of Barbados. Therefore, we will continue to work on projects to ensure that the post offices, the airport project, the Caves of Barbados and all of those other institutions that can generate revenue will be able to do so, so that the people of Barbados can benefit from whatever results are going to be taking place. These Estimates are laid down through prudent management by this Government.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the civil servants who have been working with the Ministers and the Permanent Secretaries to ensure that the programmes and plans set out can be pursued with vigour because the benefits must trickle down to the man in the street. The initiatives that the

Government has undergone are there for any person to see and even the blind man can hear and know of what this Government has been doing.

Mr. Speaker, the programmes will continue to help to uplift the people. We can talk about education here for the next five days and not be able to stop because of the reform that is taking place and the interest that this Barbados Labour Party Government has played towards education.

Mr. Speaker, many people have dealt with what was said by the President of the Democratic Labour Party over the last few days, so I would not deal with that issue right now. A time is coming soon when I will really get a chance to prance up in St. Thomas to deal with that whole issue of education and about the talk that there is no need for certificates and things of that nature.

Mr. Speaker, the expansion of projects such as the community resource centres are integral to Barbados so that the ordinary working class people can have access to the computer. That technology will speak volumes for us not only now in the year 2003 but indeed 20 or 50 years from now. Fifty years from now people are going to talk about how they have benefited from the community resource centres which gave them a further hope of being able to exist in this society and in the world, so we must be on the cutting edge when it comes to technology.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party cannot speak about housing solutions. They could not even determine how much money individuals should be charged in rent for the few houses they built in Church Village, St. Philip when the Government changed in 1994.

This Barbados Labour Party administration has been able to develop housing projects across the length and breadth of Barbados. However, we do not think that the Government alone has to do it, so we are working in association with the private sector to provide these solutions.

The housing project that is now at Rock Hall just below Content - I am not talking about the one where the former police station was, I am talking about the one to the left side of the road - is a public sector/private sector project. There are also many more of these types of projects across the length and breadth of Barbados. There is one at Hopewell. There is one in Shop Hill. When you go through the various parishes in Barbados you can see housing solutions all over. Individuals are coming to us saying that when that project at Arch Hall is ready they need to get a house. These are young people and young couples who all want to get a piece of the rock.

The Democratic Labour Party did not give my son that hope Mr. Speaker, but he now has a hope under this Barbados Labour Party Government to own a piece of land, to own a little house and indeed to own a motorcar because he never thought that his mother would have been able to buy one furthermore him. There are opportunities out there for employment so that people can be able to work, to achieve, to save and to invest. This is the hope that the Barbadian people wanted and that is why they voted so resoundingly in 1994 and again in 1999.

Mr. Speaker, I have every confidence that with the quality service that this Barbados Labour Party administration has been offering that whenever the bell is rung, the people of Barbados would want to give their support to the Barbados Labour Party because there is little or no alternative because the Democratic Labour Party still does not have a leader. The people of Barbados cannot vote for a party that does not have a leader. Where would the hope be? To vote for the Democratic Labour Party would be like going to war in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, these Estimates are not framed with a backdrop of raising taxes, raising bus fares, raising house rents, cutting salaries and things of that nature. That is what happened to us during 1991 to 1994. Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party has the ingredients. The Members of the Barbados Labour Party have the intelligence and the vision that God has given them to organise, to create, to recreate, to assure and to do all of the things that are necessary for the people of Barbados to get the true picture as to what is happening in the economy and what we have to do to make sure that the confidence remains there and to make sure that we delivered the goods to them to make them more comfortable and safe in the various environment.

Mr. Speaker, these things include the upgrading and expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital; the building of new roads; the upgrading and refurbishment of existing roads; the construction of the new justice project; the refurbishment of schools; the packages in education for curriculum reform and for teachers training; the projects under the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission for the repairs of houses and giving access to the people who are living in private tenancies so that they can purchase the spots for a maximum of \$2.50 per square foot where the Government will subsidise the rest of it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about the increase in the employment which gave people an opportunity to earn and move forward. I want to commend the Ministry of Social Transformation for the excellent efforts to move people out of those poverty-stricken environments and helping them to move from welfare to work thus giving them that strong feeling of being a Barbadian who can

work and achieve honestly for whatever little they can acquire.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to be a part of this Barbados Labour Party that is promoting entrepreneurship among our people. That land for the landless farmers is one of the most progressive projects that I have been made aware of in a long time where people who have no land can be able now to lease some property, to raise their animals, to plant their crops and to be able to do so many other things. Mr. Speaker, I want to laud the Barbados Labour Party for that initiative again and to encourage more Barbadians to become self-reliant. I want to urge Barbadians who do not have a job or who might not be qualified for a particular job that while they are waiting to get a job and an opportunity like that comes along to take advantage of it.

5.55 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, we know of generations of parents, who, because of a plot on a plantation land, were able to raise and to feed large families, to make an income and to generate employment.

Indeed, when my parents had a little plot of land, they had to employ people to help reap the sugar cane. We also received the benefits because we too worked, to be able to help develop skills and to cut down on some of the expenditure that would have gone into it. Therefore, I encourage Barbadians to take advantage of the opportunities that are available so that they can become self-reliant and achieve the goals that are set.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation that this Barbados Labour Party has been able to implement, is a profound example of what the Labour Party Government is capable of doing. We know of such legislations as the Fair Trading Commission Act; the Utilities Regulations Act; the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act and the Money Laundering Act, et cetera. We know of the White Paper that was introduced by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, where we are looking to offer assistance and to integrate persons with disabilities into the working environment. We want to ensure those persons get the facility that are to be meted out to them so that they can be counted. They are important to us and we have to look after their needs.

Mr. Speaker, we know about the HIV/AIDS pandemic where this Government has taken millions of dollars and has set up a special unit to ensure those persons among us who have contracted the AIDS virus are getting the necessary treatment so that there could be an extension to their lives. Many of the developing countries across the

world have not, in any way, sought to pursue tackling the HIV/AIDS pandemic like this Barbados Labour Party Government. The people of Barbados must be commended for the support they are giving. There are persons out in communities who are doing dramatisations; discussions; seeking information; joining clubs and are doing excellent things as a part of the promotion and sensitisation of Barbadians about HIV/AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, we have the vending facilities that this Government has begun to develop across the length and breadth of Barbados. There is one at the Glebe, St. George; Aberdeen Centre, Gall Hill and, as I speak, I know there are plans for centres at Redmans Village and Jackson.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Honourable Minister for St. John said that we are presenting prepared speeches which bear no relation with the reality or with the future. I do not want to deal with their past. Their past was so unfortunate and I would wish to say something more positive before I conclude.

Mr. Speaker, during 1994, when we came in as a Government, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College were functioning with smaller numbers than could have matched their capacity. The Barbados Labour Party, because of measures that were implemented today see those institutions growing to such an extent that hundreds of individuals, particularly young persons, are turned away every year.

It is our vision to ensure that individuals receive tertiary training that is necessary and, therefore, these Estimates will speak to the Barbados Community College and the Erdiston Training College where, during the Democratic Labour Party's period, no teachers were being trained. There is now in-service training, pre-service training and continued training for teachers at Erdiston Teachers Training College. It is now back on stream with the position it had before 1986.

Mr. Speaker, the Urban Development Commission is now organised. We are looking forward for that project to take on some of those individuals who are turned away every September because of an insufficiency to facilitate them within our tertiary institutions.

I can speak of the continuing testing of students for impairments. There are children in schools who suffer from disabilities such as hearing, speech and vision. This Labour Party is continuing with that project and that is how the money is being spent. That is the plan for the future so that when those children reach class four, their disabilities would have been corrected by then and if not, then corrective surgery would be taken into consideration.

Mr. Speaker, there is the expansion within the Ministry of Education where a senior psychologist, a social worker and a psychology officer, are now on board to ensure that the myriad of problems that our children experience are being tackled at that level.

There is a social service area for waiver of fees, bursaries and a number of other areas. There is also a bereavement session. Some persons are of the view that if someone dies, they would be able to forget it in a number of weeks' time but that is not so. Therefore, the bereavement session is put in place and is working in association with the network services such as those at the hospital. All this is extremely important for our children to be able to overcome the trauma that they experience.

Mr. Speaker, there is the summer school for children who have deferred writing the Common Entrance Examination. The money is to ensure that those children get a second chance to be able to stay longer in primary school; upgrade their skills in Mathematics, English, Spelling and Reading, or to perform much better by the time they are able to be transferred to the secondary level.

Mr. Speaker, there is the CHECK Programme that is run by Punka, Ifie and the Barbados Landship. We need to focus on our cultural activities. We not only need educational activities but there must be a combination of the cultural, social, educational and many others and therefore, that programme is going.

The Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) programme is an integral part. There is the YES Junior Programme, which is able to show children how to do accounting and how to market their products. That is the only way in which we could develop a culture of young people who, 10 to 15 years from now, would be able to become managers or to manage their own businesses. The Youth Development Programme, run by the Youth Affairs Department, is spreading sporting activities, cultural activities and physical activities across the length and breadth of Barbados and that is what our future will hold for these young persons who need opportunities.

I cannot forget the Youth Achievement Programme where young persons who have the potential can do music or visual arts. Mr. Speaker, we will give you an invitation to come to see what those young persons produce as a result of those systematic programmes. They have the innate abilities but are only waiting for them to be tapped into so that they can deliver what they have to offer. We must not always feel our young people are negative. Some of them are positive but need the opportunities that this Barbados Labour Party has brought to them over the years, to ensure that we have a quality product in our young people that will continue for years to come, to carry that legacy they have developed, as a result of persons who had

an understanding and an appreciation for their country and who knew they had to give something back to their country. 6.05 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I am in agreement with the Estimates offered to us and I want to continue to pledge my support for all the wonderful programmes being offered within the Ministry because at the end of the day Barbadians are the one who will benefit from the services of health, education, poverty alleviation, rural development and those things that happen in the Ministry of Environment, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and the Attorney-General and Home Affairs Office.

Sir, I am happy to lend my support to these Estimates of 2003/2004 and I know I will get many more opportunities where I can speak to the excellent work being done.

I want to encourage the Democratic Labour Party and its members to take a leaf out the book of the Barbados Labour Party in order for them to present a proper programme for the people of Barbados ten years from now because I can see them being in the red if they continue to be disorganised, miserable and unprofessional in their statements and actions and especially what happens in this Honourable House every day with the two Honourable Members of the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful for this opportunity to speak in this debate. I must confess that this year's debate is an achievement because over the last years we have seen a lot of interesting features which this Government has put in place through the usual Estimates of Expenditure. In this year we are seeing for the first time that the capital expenditure has been cut and when one looks at what is happening in the economy outside of these Estimates of Expenditure, one will find a lot of work being done in other areas like the National Housing Corporation in terms of the joint venture programme, the airport project and other projects to come on stream like the justice centre and a number of other programmes which the Government will put in place and will be done off budget.

Mr. Speaker, I have every expectation that employment will continue to improve over the next year. Right now it is estimated that unemployment level is about 10.2 per cent and I am hopeful that in the next year the activities which this Government is putting through these measures would stimulate growth in the economy.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Peter who has run this country

over the last eight years with great success. Everyone in this country and the Caribbean has hailed him as a great and successful leader and we in Barbados, especially on this side, recognise that we have a leader with tremendous ability and that he works extremely hard and long hours on behalf of the people of this country. Sir, when we heard the opposite side with negative criticism one wonders where they live. This country has done well for the past eight years in the midst of recession of rumors of wars and we must continue on a cautious path. The Democratic Labour Party in their pronouncement in here and outside want the people of this country to believe that we can give away lavishly as they have done in a previous term even though they know the situation that we are likely to face a war in the not too distant future.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party wants us to believe that they can give away anything in this country in order to buy an election. Therefore, in my presentation I want to caution the people of Barbados not to listen to the empty rhetoric as they seek to destabilise this country and get the voters on their side.

Sir, we know that Barbadians are wise so they understand what they went through in the recession of 1991 and every wise-thinking Barbadian will not want to go through that period again. This period is one of caution and one in which the Government wants people in Barbados to understand that we are on the road to recovery and for it to be sustainable, it must be done with caution.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to congratulate the Prime Minister as the manager of the economy for the time taken in ensuring that our country remains the number one in the Caribbean. Wherever you go in the world and the Caribbean people will say that Barbados is a beacon of activity and really the star of the Caribbean. Some of our neighbours are having a serious time and we do not want to find ourselves in the same situation as them. When we look at this economy there are no major lay-offs, there is job creation, the social services, health, education and all community service are intact. Water rates, house rents and bus fares have not been increased and we are doing a number of things to uplift the poor in this country.

A number of houses belonging to the elderly have been repaired and we have done a number of things under the social transformation and the rural development to help poor people of the country to provide opportunity for person to own homes and improve themselves.

When we look at what is happening in this country today we do not want to boast or brag, we want to continue on a path that is sustainable.

6.15 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, when I woke this morning someone called me and told me that they notice that I have kept my word. I do not know this person sir. When I looked at what is happening in this country today, it could be said that the Barbados Labour Party has kept its word or that the Honourable Member for St. Peter has kept his word or the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has kept his word.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has kept its promise and all of us in this Honourable House must share in that glory because all of us have kept our word. We have done this in the face of adversity and criticism from the Opposition Democratic Labour Party. The writer of the article in the newspaper has been keeping the Government of Barbados on its toes. The writer of the article has been looking at the problems in this society and has been highlighting them.

Therefore, I am very thankful that the people of St. George have recognised that since 1956, previous Governments have tried and have done a lot but the people of St. George are thankful tonight that they are getting services that they deserve. I am sure that all Honourable Members can say the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, when you look at what is happening in St. Michael Central, the constituency that you represent, I know that you have been asking since 1994 for roads at Hill Road and house spots at Kew Road and Sealy Land Nos. 1 and 2. Sir, you have even asked for a housing development at Bank Hall. These are things that the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central has asked for and has kept his promise.

We can also look at what has happened across Barbados. The Honourable Member for St. James North has kept his promise in terms of Trents. The Honourable Member for The City has kept her promise in terms of asking for a housing development at Pond Side and London Bourne. She has also asked for a hard court at London Bourne and she has kept her promise to her constituents. Mr. Speaker, it could be said that the Barbados Labour Party has kept its promise.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: The point that I am making is, this side has kept its word. Therefore, I want to compliment the writer of that article. I want to say that the Barbados Labour Party has kept pace with the people of this country. The journalists of this country must be able to call a spade a spade. If we have done well, come out and say that we have done well.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has been asking the Ministry for a road to relieve those people at Charnocks. He has been asking for a housing development at Coverley and the Honourable Member for St. James South has been asking for the removal of asbestos roofs from units at Haynesville. Sir, all the things that the Honourable Members have asked for were given to them.

Sir, this morning an old lady told me that the article in the paper is praising me. She said that the article should have said 'promises made promise kept' by the Barbados Labour Party.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy must not trivalise this because it is very important. I have a job to do and I will continue to serve my constituency.

I want to take issue with all those persons who believe that poor people are getting too much. Some time ago it was said that the people of St. George were getting too much. Every time someone is employed from St. George there is a problem with that. I want to make the point that I was born in St. George and I still live in St. George, I intend to live in St. George and will continue to make St. George the best constituency in Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: I will continue to do the job for the people of Barbados but St., George comes first.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, when you look at what is happening in this economy, we have not only kept our word for roads and sporting development, we told the people of this country that we will provide them with a housing solution. We saw the need for housing in 1994 and between 1994 and 2003 and we have acquired more than 1 000 acres of land. We have given and provided more opportunities for loans than the previous Government has done. We have developed more than 300 acres of land and in the last five years we have provided more than 1 500 house spots. Sir, we have provided loans totaling \$44 million at the General Workers Loan Fund.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John said that we do not have a low income programme. Do you know that since 1998 the Housing Credit Fund has on lend to 611 persons more than \$49.9 million at 6 per cent? The Democratic Labour Party has criticised that institution.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, we have to understand that this Government not only provided opportunities for persons to own spots, we also adjusted the interest rate to ensure that persons in the lower income group get opportunities to own their homes.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at what is happening in the building industry today you will find that there is a mortgage market boom. Persons are now borrowing for housing more so than for cars and other vehicles.

6.25 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

People are borrowing to buy land. People are borrowing to repair homes. People are borrowing to buy homes. The banks have now realised this and have reduced their lending rates from 9 per cent.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: No. They have followed the Government. In 1998, the Government adjusted the rate to 6 per cent. They have now reduced, Bank of Nova Scotia, Barclays, Royal Bank of Canada to 6.7 per cent, and they are now lending up to 90 per cent of the loan. They are following the Government's lead and I envisage that very soon they will be lending 100 per cent loans as well.

Mr. Speaker, if you notice what is happening in the United States of America, surely in Miami, the interest rate has now been dropped to 4 per cent for mortgages. This is not because the banks are liquid. They know the banks are liquid but there is now a trend where people in the world realise that it is better to borrow money for long term things than for short terms gain. More people are borrowing for housing, land and those sorts of things.

Mr. Speaker, certainly in Barbados, we consider persons earning up to \$3 000 to be low income and we estimate that a number of persons will continue to borrow to do their housing adjustments, in terms of mortgages in that bracket.

It is envisaged, Mr. Speaker, that in the next two or three years, based on the housing outlook that more than 8 000 will be able to get housing solutions, based on our records so far. I want to repeat this. In the next two or three years, more than 8 000 Barbadians will find housing solutions, based on what we have achieved so far.

Sir, this will cost the Government, either low income earners or the middle income earners that we are also looking at, more than \$250 million in mortgages and we

have to be able to adjust the demand for housing by using the Housing Credit Fund as an instrument to lend to the credit unions and the various financial houses.

It is also important to note that when we look at the Tenancies programme, we noticed that just over 4 000 persons have bought land. There is still another 2 000 to buy land at 10 cents per square foot. We are ongoing and backtracking is being done. We are hopeful that within the next two or three years, the people will be able to take up that offer. It is a fact that many persons have not come forward because of the system but we want to be more aggressive in ensuring those persons who have a right to buy the land at 10 cents per square foot do so.

The land in the urban area at \$2.50 per square foot is going very well. We recognise that the urban area has gone ahead of the rural area. We are hopeful that this would be completed, within another three or four years, because it is going to take some time and we have to do more public relation exercise, we have to go out there and be more aggressive to get the persons in the rural districts to buy the land at \$2.50 per square foot.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: The total number of persons that will benefit from this programme, Sir, is estimated at more than 40 000 people from the Tenancies programme in Barbados. This will be either from the \$2.50 per square foot or the 10 cents per square foot land that we have in Barbados, so that every person in Barbados will be able to say that he/she has a family, mother, brother, sister, who lived on the plantation tenantry, who live in an urban tenantry and who have benefited from this programme that the Government has offered.

Sir, we have also introduced a number of housing programmes that will help, not only our tenantry programme, as I said we have created lots but we are now looking at another system, where persons who cannot buy, could have the option of a long lease programme. Persons will be able to lease the land for 30 or 40 years. The person would be able to move the lease from family to family, a mother to a daughter, a father to a son and these can go on and on. On this lease, persons will be able to build their own homes, wall structures. The person will be able to transfer the lease, and of course the person will be able to break that lease at any time, if they so desire to buy the land from the Government.

All these are things that the Government has put in place for the persons that they consider to be in the lowest income bracket. We have not left out the middle income earners. We are also creating lots, Mr. Speaker, in the middle income areas for those persons earning more than \$5 000 a month, or a joint income between \$5 000 and \$7

000. We are satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that many things are being done to help the low and middle income earners. We have also sought to adjust what is happening in the land registry system.

We are now in a position, through the back filing system, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that persons get their mortgages, titles, conveyances or whatever in a quicker time. When the bank filing is completed and the system is fully set up and established through using modern technology, searches will be done in Barbados quicker. It should also reduce the cost.

We have even gone a stage further in the Government. I heard the Democratic Labour Party speaking about the legal cost. We do not think it is a big problem but the Government through the National Housing Corporation has insisted that tenants can get all the legal work done through the National Housing Corporation. Sir, not only this but the 100 per cent mortgage rate also includes legal fees, so that if a person is buying a house for under \$100 000, it could also include the legal fees. Most of the banks are now lending for legal fees as well. The banks are now including all the fees that persons had to pay up front in the mortgages.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the way forward is quite secure. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Thomas speaking about hope. There is hope for all those Barbadians who have the dream in house ownership or property ownership. We have done much better than the other side. The records of this Government have shown and continue to show that more Barbadians earned more during our period and that more Barbadians owned property during our period. They have also shown that Barbadians look to the Barbados Labour Party when they want property.

They have looked to us when property is to be bought. They look to us when they realised that things are down but we want to ensure that we spread the news that there is hope under the Barbados Labour Party Government. We will continue to provide opportunities for all Barbadians to own their homes especially those at the lower end of the economic scale.

6.35 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: It is important for us to keep the faith. It is important for us to spread the message to all Barbadians that there is hope under this Barbados Labour Party Government because this administration is mindful and continues to be mindful of what is happening out there. We would have to adjust from time to time to ensure that every Barbadian has access to affordable houses, that they can have houses in which they have security of tenure and

to ensure that our programme as far as housing is concerned is sustainable.

I thank you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, the quality of the contributions coming from this side has indeed been commendable. However, permit me to reflect first on the contributions made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. They both looked at the record of the Democratic Labour Party between the years 1986 and 1994 in particular. Perhaps, you would want me, Mr. Speaker, to clarify my own approach by coming to the point immediately.

At some point during his contribution, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South talked about a circumstance in which the national aggregate demand exceeded aggregate national supply in an economy. I want to develop his point stronger by saying that in a closed economy where total production matches total consumption, the problem of aggregate demand exceeding aggregate supply would immediately lead to demand full inflation.

However, in the context of an economy that is structured the way the Barbados economy has been founded - Barbados' economy is an open economy - where there is galloping demand outstripping supply, because the economy is open, it means that a proliferation of imports was so coming as to require payment in foreign exchange. When a Government already has a high fiscal deficit and the Government does not do anything to control it and there is a proliferation and augmentation of imports coming into the country, then as the Honourable Member for St. Philip South said, there will be a balance of payment problem and pressure would be exerted on the foreign reserves.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central said that in the context of that occurrence in Barbados between the years 1989 and 1994 that it would have been important to consider the response of the Government of that time. Before, I come to that though there is no question that the year 2002 in Barbados was a year where the national income in Barbados did not grow. At the same time there would have been a projection at the start of the year that there would have been a decline of over two per cent but the decline that occurred in our national income was 0.3 per cent which is less than one per cent.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central said that when the Democratic Labour Party was faced with a recession between the years 1991 and 1993, their policies contrasted strikingly from ours. Let me look at those policies. We had a blend of fiscal and monetary

responses to the crisis facing Barbados' economy between 1991 and 1993. We saw taxation increase including the introduction of a stabilisation tax. We saw taxation on the productive sectors which acted as a powerful disincentive to production. We also saw a monetary policy which was informed by an escalation of interest rates by an increase in the liquidity reserves ratio that the Central Bank required of commercial banks. The effect of all of that was that there was a contraction in spending and at the same time money became very scarce, the productive sectors were hurting in that they were taxed and all told, the most generous thing that could be said about the Democratic Labour Party's response to the recessions of 1991-1993 was that it was a defensive response designed to contract economic activity.

There was a former Honourable Member of St. Michael South Central who is no longer in this Honourable House, Dr. Richie Haynes, who always argued that whatever the economic health of an economy there was a certain minimum level of spending in an economy, whatever its nature, below which you should not go. I will repeat that.

Dr. Richie Haynes always argued that whatever the structure of an economy whether a closed economy or an open economy that even in recessionary times there is a certain minimum level of spending below which you do not go, notwithstanding considerations to do with the country's balance of payments and the foreign reserves.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East made that point well and I will come to that at some point during my contribution. The Honourable Member for St. Peter addressed the issue in this fashion. The Honourable Member for St. Peter using the full advantage of his professional expertise as an economist made bold to say that in circumstances of declining production and declining economic activity, he committed the Government to a level of spending to keep the economy afloat. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South addressed that issue as well.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the Democratic Labour Party's record when it last governed the affairs of this country and when we looked at what they did when faced with a recession, we recognise they increased taxes and they introduced a stabilisation tax. In fact, in 1991 they came to this Parliament three times to make adjustments to the structure of the finances. Mr. Speaker, they not only increase taxes, they decrease the money supply, they cut by increasing the liquidity reserves ratio the Central Bank had for commercial banks and by increasing the interest rate they put a dampening effect on the economy by contracting economic activity to save the foreign reserves, with the premise being that if there is less spending, there will be less importation and then there would be less pressure on the foreign reserves.

However, the Barbados Labour Party embarked to spend at a certain prudent level. At the same time, unlike the Democratic Labour Party, this Government nursed and cared for the productive sectors by giving them the necessary support to keep economic activity to a certain level.

If you have a manufacturing sector, an agricultural sector and a tourism sector and things are bad and your response, in a situation where these sectors earn foreign exchange and employ people, to a crisis in the economy is to cut off the supply of capital to these sectors as was done between 1989 and 1994, then the recessions will not be eased that way especially when your other policies are not enlightened enough to get the economy off to a good start.

6.45 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, where the divide lies is in the fact that this enlightened Barbados Labour Party Government did its utmost to protect the productive sectors. We have seen results where we are confident, holding all things being equal tonight and there is no turbulence, Barbados economy can actually recover.

I was heartened when the Honourable Member for Christ Church East was able to report to this Honourable House that taking into account the performance of economies in Latin America and the Caribbean, Barbados economy has outperformed a number of large economies, perhaps with more diversity in them, to such a degree that manufacturing, which suffered in a signal way under the Democratic Labour Party's misrule of 1991 to 1994, was able in recent times to show signs of a restoration of economic health to that sector.

Mr. Speaker, we heard one Member on the Other Side spoke and he was critical of where Government is taking our people. He made a pejorative comment about the absence of a clear human resource policy. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, you will permit me a few moments to reflect on the human resources position in Barbados.

Any new policy that has to do with the further development of our human resources must first begin by assessing where our people are in terms of the job market; by assessing what contributions would make an institution prepare our people for the world of work; look to see what threats there are to our human resources, what opportunities there are and where our people are compared in the region and beyond.

The truth about it, Mr. Speaker, is that a Committee made up of public officers from the Ministry of Education and Labour, have produced a first draft of a document

looking at the question of further human resource development. We could not have proceeded with the implementation unless we had engaged all the stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, there is a writer of a newspaper who objects to the word stakeholders but in management practice and in recent publication of literature on development and finance, the word stakeholder is an acceptable term.

We have to engage all the relevant stakeholders and in a situation where we have encouraged tripartism and where the Ministry of Labour does not normally proceed unless it engages the employer's and employee's representatives, we are still at a stage where more consultation has to be done on this important document. We need to reassess the document. We need to look at where the document would stand in light of an economic plan for Barbados in the next 15 years.

There are Members of this House who are aware of the existence of that document and so we are not sitting idly by. It is better to take one's time and to implement as one would want, than to rush headlong into a programme or policy and implement it prematurely. Sometimes it is better to wait rather than to rush.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of human resources, one of our Honourable Members has made reference to the fact of the movement of skills in CARICOM. Mr. Speaker, there are Honourable Members in this House who are sufficiently seized of regional affairs and regional information in the last 15 years, who will remember that Article 35 of Chapter 3 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas pronounces as follows:

"The Member States shall establish or employ, as the case may be, appropriate mechanisms to establish common standards to determine equivalency or accord accreditation to diplomas, certificates and other evidence of qualifications secured by nationals of other Member States."

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding - and I must confess through hearsay - that a person who parades as the leader of a political entity, in recent times made bold to declare that qualifications do not matter and that there is a misplaced emphasis on qualifications.

Mr. Speaker, prior to my hearing that through hearsay, I was of the view that person had been qualified in a field of endeavor which could redound to the national development effort. I thought that he had a training out of education that would enure to the development of Barbados. Sir, having delivered himself of such a reckless and unwarranted statement, made only to secure political capital, I have my doubts as to whether those who have

sought to give him training would necessarily want to admit that, at some point, he had sat at their feet.

Mr. Speaker, one of the difficulties that young people say they ... I must be honest, a lot of young people who go to the labour market come back and say that the employer is insisting on experience. Sir, my heart goes out to those young people.

Mr. Speaker, the second complaint young people make is that, based on the job description, they can do the work but do not have the necessary qualification.

Mr. Speaker, it hurts my heart to tell Members of this Honourable House how I recently encountered a man who is very skilled in carpentry and joinery. There were the best kitchen cupboards that I have ever seen, done by this man. I recommended him for a job tutoring in those skills at a tertiary level institution in Barbados. When he applied for the job of teaching joinery and carpentry, he was told that certificates were a requirement and, therefore, he could not teach.

6.55 p.m.

Tuesday, March 18, 2003

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: I responded by asking if the first man who taught at the first university had a degree. Sir, the answer to that question cannot be yes.

Mr. Speaker, having said for the benefit of Honourable Members that member states should employ mechanisms to establish common standards, I want to say that consistent with Article 35 of Chapter 3 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, some years ago the Barbados Technical and Vocational Education & Training Council was established now familiarly known as TVET. Sir, TVET is an institution that funds training. If the Honourable Member for St. Lucy was an employer with a workforce of 15 people and he wanted them trained or he needed assistance in funding their training and was employing them within one of the approved categories, he would be able to access training.

In recent times the TVET training fund has been exploited in the area of information technology and informatics. The sugar industry, cash strapped and constrained as it is, had factory mechanics trained out of the TVET training fund. It is not for me to discuss the pros and cons of the sugar industry of tomorrow but I will say what has actually happened in the real world. There was need for factory mechanics to be trained in the sugar industry and TVET funded the training for these factory mechanics.

In the context of manufacturing where an employer finds that he wants to modernise his operations, TVET funds training to have that manufacturer upgrade his or her technology. In addition, in a culture where customer service is critical in the restaurant and hotel business, TVET also funds training for customer service in those businesses.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes it is good to give a demonstration through a concrete example rather than by abstract talk. Honourable Members would have seen in this country, tiles being made from pep bottles. Sir, the training for the skill in converting those pep bottles from their state into tiles was funded by TVET. In the last three and a half years TVET has funded training for 636 persons.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West will tell you that CARICOM, in the context of the free movement of skills, encouraged members states to set up TVET type councils and in the context where we are ultimately moving towards the free movement of skills, we now have to move to the next stage. I want to plea to my colleagues in Barbados not to be xenophobic about this matter.

I started this aspect of my contribution by saying that there are those who can demonstrate a skill but who have no paper qualification. We are now moving to national vocational qualifications where persons trained by TVET will be accredited as they do their training on the job and develop skill.

Sir, CARICOM wants that if a person goes to learn tiling and he moves from one territory to another, the receiving territory cannot turn him down because he has no qualification. CARICOM is saying, that the time has clearly come for the Vocational Education & Training Councils, which are found in every member states, to come to the position where persons trained out of funding provided by the states are going to be equipped.

Mr. Speaker, some experts from Scotland came to Barbados to help us set up this system and one of the conditionalities is not simply to show us how to develop the system but they would also transfer any technical expertise and technology necessary to get the process to consumation.

Mr. Speaker, I endorse the efforts of those responsible persons for having the foresight to encourage people, especially young people, to become qualify and for young persons to become be multiskilled to make themselves more marketable because in a situation where the world economy and regional economy will see the free movement of skills, the more skills young people have the better it is for them.

Mr. Speaker, I want to return to the budgetary side of the Estimates. When this country was in recession between 1991 and 1994 and when there were cuts, social services took a battering. Nothing in these Estimates shows that social services are declining. It is true that Government is not going to spend to the same degree as it would have hoped but it is also true that these Estimates are informed by a desire to achieve social justice to such a degree that social services have not suffered. When the Democratic Labour Party under their misrule of 1991 to 1994, had to embark on reducing spending and making cuts, social services took a battering and thousands of people in this country suffered.

Mr. Speaker, even though we are not going to engage in excessive investment in capital projects, we will ensure that the major capital projects approved will be taken care of during the coming financial year.

When the Democratic Labour Party embarked on cuts in capital projects, the building for the Ministry of Education was stopped. Sir, the proposed Post Office for Oistins was stopped between 1989 and 1994. The St. John Polyclinic and the St. Thomas Secondary School were started and aborted.

Sir, Sherbourne was also stopped but there is no evidence before this Honourable House that we are aborting any of our capital projects. Where capital projects have been approved, they will continue in any event.

The Estimates before this House must have been informed by a wisdom that is indeed enormous. They were informed by prudence, great skill and a great amount of thought would have gone into bringing these Estimates together. Sir, the state of the economy, being what it is, calls for statesmanship. The Honourable Member for St. Peter has been enough of a statesman not to embark on spending for elections but has done what he knows is the best for Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until Wednesday, March 19, 2003 at 10.00 a.m.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that.

The question that the House be suspended until Wednesday, 19, 2003 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

7.05 p.m.

CONTENTS

RESUMPTION

Hon. H. F. Lashley, 1, 2, 4; Hon. R. R. Farley, 5, 6, 7, 8; Hon. Miss B.A. Miller, 8, 12; Hon. Miss. M. A. Miller, 10; Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 12, 13, 14, 15; Mr. M. Z. Williams, 15, 16, 17, 18; Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, 17.

RESUMPTION

Hon. A.P. Wood, 19, 22; Rev. J. J. S. Atherley, 22, 23, 25; Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, 26, 28, 29, 30; Mr. T.A. Prescod, 30, 31, 32, 33; Hon. N.A. Lynch, 34, 35, 37; Hon. R.D. Marshall, 38, 39, 41, 42; Mr. D.T. Gill, 42, 43, 44.

RESUMPTION

Hon. Miss C.Y. Forde, 45, 47, 48, 50; Hon. G.A. Clarke, 50, 51, 52, 53; Hon. R. C. Eastmond, 53, 54, 55.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ATHERLEY, Rev. J. J. S.
CLARKE, Hon. G.A.
EASTMOND, Hon. R. C.
FARLEY, Hon. R. R.
FORDE, Hon. Miss C.Y.
GILL, Mr. D.T.
GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N.
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St.E.
LASHLEY, Hon. H. F.
LYNCH, Hon. N.A.
MARSHALL, Hon. R.D.
MILLER, Hon. Miss B.A.
MILLER, Hon. Miss. M. A.
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M.A.
PRESCOD, Mr. T.A.
THOMPSON, Hon. Miss H. E.
WILLIAMS, Mr. M. Z.
WOOD, Hon. A.P.

DISCLAIMER. *This transcript was prepared with the assistance of artificial intelligence tools and is provided for reference only. It has not been reviewed, verified or approved by the Hansard Department of the Parliament of Barbados and does not constitute an official parliamentary record. It may contain errors or omissions, including inaccuracies in wording or speaker identification. For authoritative quotations or confirmation of proceedings, consult the official Hansard record when available.*

EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Opening. The source opens without the convening sentence (Pursuant to the adjournment ... met at ...). The date is taken from the heading of the source.

Q3. Hon. H. F. Lashley, opening speech. The Member gives the Ministry of Social Transformation's allocation as '\$67.7 million compared to \$76.8 million last year, a difference of \$8.3 million'; the two figures differ by \$9.1 million. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Take-slip after Hon. H. F. Lashley's speech. One take-slip reads '10.30 p.m.', between slips for 10.20 a.m. and 10.40 a.m.; presumably 10.30 a.m. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Hon. R. R. Farley, take-slip 10.50 a.m.. The speech resumes after the take-slip in mid-sentence ('because geographically speaking, we are a small island...'), which suggests that some words may be missing at the change of take. Please confirm.

Q6. Speech labels, Hon. Miss B. A. Miller. The Member's second speech is labelled 'Hon. Miss. M. A. MILLER'; her other speeches are labelled 'Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER'. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Mr. T. A. Prescod, opening words. Mr. Prescod addresses the Chair as 'Mr. Chairman', although the House was sitting with Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Hon. R. D. Marshall; Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde. The Estimates are referred to as 'Estimates of 2003/3004' and 'the Estimates for the year 2003-3004', presumably 2003-2004. Hon. R. D. Marshall also gives last year's vote for his Ministry as '\$118 209.56' and later as '\$118 million'. Printed as in the source.

Q9. Final suspension. The procedural sentence reads 'suspended until Wednesday, 19, 2003 at 10.00 a.m.', omitting the month; the motion gives Wednesday, March 19, 2003. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Tuesday, 18th March, 2003 with Mr. Speaker in the Chair to continue the debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2003-2004, laid the previous day by the Prime Minister, the Member for St. Peter. Mr. Deputy Speaker presided from late morning until the afternoon. No papers were laid and the Estimates debate occupied the whole sitting.

Hon. H. F. Lashley opened for the Ministry of Social Transformation, which had received \$67.7 million against \$76.8 million the year before; he said about 7 000 people received welfare assistance, 3 900 of them children under 16, and spoke of an increased funeral grant and a proposed travel grant for senior citizens. Hon. R. R. Farley recalled unemployment of 27 per cent under the Democratic Labour Party and said oil production would rise from 1 200 to 1 600 barrels a day. Hon. Miss B. A. Miller spoke on the prospect of war in Iraq, Haiti and the Free Trade Area of the Americas due by 2005. Hon. R. N. Greenidge defended the \$375 million for education, of which EduTech received \$30 million.

Mr. M. Z. Williams noted capital works falling from about \$326 million to \$270 million. Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, who said he was the only sitting Member of the Opposition, objected on a point of order to the phrase 'the wickedness of the Opposition'; Mr. Deputy Speaker asked Mr. Williams to rephrase it, and later to withdraw another statement, which he did.

After the luncheon suspension, Hon. A. P. Wood, Member for St. Philip North, said real GDP had fallen about 0.4 per cent against a projected 2.7 per cent. Rev. J. J. S. Atherley said almost \$1 billion, or 50 per cent of spending, went to social and human development. Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson said the budget of the Ministry of Physical Development and Environment rose from \$39.9 million to \$44.9 million and spoke on coastal zone management. Mr. T. A. Prescod spoke on the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and the 400 pieces of legislation it would require amending.

Hon. N. A. Lynch, Member for St. Michael South, set tourism estimates of \$62.1 million against airline losses and the threat of war, reporting growth of 2.1 per cent in January and 6.8 per cent in February. Hon. R. D. Marshall described the road works programme, and Mr. D. T. Gill said 76 titles had been transferred to urban tenants and National Assistance Board grants had risen from \$2.8 million in 1992/1993 to \$7.7 million.

After a further suspension, Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde spoke for the people of St. Thomas. Hon. G. A. Clarke said the Housing Credit Fund had lent more than \$49.9 million to 611 persons at 6 per cent and that over 4 000 tenants had bought land. Hon. R. C. Eastmond contrasted the

Government's response to the 2002 downturn with the Democratic Labour Party's cuts of 1991 to 1994. On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, seconded by Hon. R. N. Greenidge, the House was suspended at 7.05 p.m. until Wednesday, 19th March, 2003 at 10.00 a.m.