
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 1999 – 2003

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, March 21, 2003

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, when the suspension was taken last night, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was deputising as Chairman of Committees. On this occasion, in the absence of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, I would like to respectfully propose that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central be permitted, if it be the will of the House, to deputise as Chairman of Committees for the next couple hours.

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

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

Mr. SPEAKER: When the last suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

Mr. D. T. GILL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (CONT'D)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. James North.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I am going to give way to the Honourable Member for St. John on condition that as soon as he finishes speaking, I will get to speak.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I know that my comments in these debates are never taken with the

charity with which I intend except by Christian persons like the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. I hope the Minister of Social Transformation would accept what I am saying as my interpretation of the reason for yesterday's debate.

In yesterday's debate about social transformation, many barbs were thrown and somebody got up and said that when I was Minister for Community Development I never did anything et cetera...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ... but I am not getting into that discussion. However, the Minister has failed to appreciate the fact that there is a perception of the concept of social transformation. When I say this, the Government is saying that is my perception. I never said it is my perception. I did not even say so in the Second Reading. I said there is public perception of social transformation in which people believe that it constitutes hand-outs. I said to the Minister that it is his responsibility to lift the concept out of that mire.

The Government has a great dilemma on its hands because it is fighting a non-existent battle. Honourable Members are jumping up in here, including the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You do not need the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central to justify the existence of social transformation and he does not have to come in here and remind us of his life history to do so.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is exactly the point. If you know it, you do not have to remind anybody of it and nobody else has to remind anybody of it in here.

The point I want to make is that since the Government never set from the outset the parameters of social transformation in a philosophical sense, then it will forever be defending a moving target. That is precisely what has been happening in this debate.

Every Honourable Member on that side had a different concept of what social transformation is. There is no common agreement over there on that side on what the parameters of the Government's social transformation programme is. What there may be an agreement on - and I will give this to the Minister - is that there are a lot of programmes. The Minister's presentation has always been highly programmatic in the sense that he outlines a list of programmes which the Ministry of Social Transformation is undertaking. What he does not do, to my mind, is to spend enough time identifying those broad parameters of social transformation.

You can only have mobility in a situation where a vacuum is created. There were people yesterday decrying the Democratic Labour Party for failing Barbados in terms of social transformation, but social transformation is a process. Let me give you an example of it, Sir. The Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act was passed in Barbados in the early 1980s. Since then the Barbados Labour Party has been in office for 14 of the 20 years since it was passed. They were in office between 1980 and 1986 and then again between 1994 and now, and yet they only now stumble, since 1999, on a way to get the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act to work in relation to urban tenancies. There is a reason for that. The Act was never intended to be a process in social transformation. It is only now being seen as a process in social transformation.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They can go back and read the debate of the 1980s if they doubt it. I was in here as a school boy then. The Government did not even know that the legislation it was passing was going to have such a profound effect on urban tenancies because the focus was on rural tenancies at that time.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Once they then stumbled on it - maybe it is to the credit of the current Minister - they then had to start to define it and people in retrospect are now saying that it was a process in social transformation. Therefore, if other people in Barbados do not believe that social transformation is taking place, they cannot blame what they call a weak Opposition for it. If Honourable

Members over there want to fight with themselves over it, that is fine, but they cannot blame a weak Opposition for it.

There are many elements of social transformation. What have some of them been in Barbados since independence? The overall objective is that people in Barbados should live fulfilling lives, free of want and essentially free of need, where their basic needs in the society are met and where those who have will surrender some of what they have for those who do not have. We achieved that through the Schools Meals programme, free education and we put in place a safety net in the National Insurance Scheme. All of these programmes have been built upon by successive governments.

The travesty of the debate is that young intellectuals in this Chamber cannot recognise that these are all part of the process of development in Barbados; Sir, people will tell you that social transformation started in 1994 and that poverty alleviation started in 1999, meanwhile, the statistics in Barbados tell you the complete opposite, that we have been building a middle class society in Barbados since the 1960s, not yesterday, and that the people who are today's middle class came out of yesterday's hardship and poverty.

It is wrong for someone to believe that all they need to do in the year 2003 is to identify a few social programmes to move people who are poor out of poverty. That is not going to solve the problem because there is - I put this challenge out to the Minister of Social Transformation - another tier of poverty occurring in Barbados. There are middle class Barbadians who cannot and who feel ashamed to ask for help from any of those institutions which are essentially targeted at the very poor in this country. I have nothing against that. That has always been the philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party, but if we do not pay attention to that there is no sense of community other than neighbourhood watches. That is essentially a reactionary element to the question of security, nothing else. There are very few neighbourhood watches. Fortunately, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North would recognise that the one that I belong to in Sandford, St. Philip is probably one of the best neighbourhood watches in Barbados if not the best neighbour watch.

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Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is because we do raise funds for the community and meet regularly at each other's homes. It generally goes through a process, and not because of me.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: On point of order, Sir. It is very rare that I would stand in this Chamber to reply to the Honourable Member from St. John. I wish to point out that the Honourable Member is misleading the House because the Fort George Neighbourhood Watch Programme is recognised as the best and the oldest neighbourhood watch programme. Therefore, the Honourable Member for St. John and St. Philip South will have to reverse.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Whenever new neighbourhood watches are being set up, the Police Department invites the Sandford Neighbourhood Watch to outline how that neighbourhood watch functions.

In any event, let us understand why they were formed. Some of them may grow into something else but I am concerned that we are forgetting, while we target our health programmes, our urban and rural development programmes, that by and large, there is that tier of Barbadians at the bottom who need help. There is also an element of Barbados and it constitutes a significant proportion of middle-class Barbadians who are not getting access. Let me say this. Pensioners in Barbados and even people who were trying to maintain the standard of living that they had when they were working, are finding it tough, in other words, middle-class pensioners in Barbados.

I heard an Honourable Member on that side attacking them some time ago but the attacks are not necessarily justified. When one looks at the question of maintaining a standard of living for people who were working as a civil servant and are now receiving two-thirds of their income while having medical expenses to pay, along with other kinds of obligations, it is tough.

Let us compare that issue to people who have left Barbados, very often with no certification but who have gained certification in the country which they are living and have worked. They then returned to Barbados, which is desirable, but look at what these people get from the respective governments for whom they had worked. Look at the standard of living that they are able to enjoy. For example, there are some returning nationals who live in Ruby, St. Philip and Kingsland, Christ Church. Compare and contrast. Yet at the same time, we constantly boast that we have created a safety net and a standard of living for our civil servants in Barbados that is very high. When that is being compared to what benefits those persons get, for example, gratuities, state pensions, health programme, et cetera, and the kinds of investments these persons are able to make in Barbados, one will see the contrasting difference.

I am saying to you that those are of concern because while Government may be creating the conditions for some persons to move up, they are also creating the conditions that are pushing some persons down the economic ladder.

If Government is interested in a programme of social transformation that is successful, Government has to address that whole issue, otherwise there would be the reversed situation where Government creates a working and retired poor but where programmes are only directed to those persons who Government perceives to be the most vulnerable.

Let us look at another aspect of social transformation. All kinds of things are happening in Barbados to develop the society. For example, the trade unions, political parties and economic diversity so that persons are not tied only to the sugar plantation.

Mr. Chairman, it is total nonsense now to behave as if social transformation started in 1999. Successive political parties have been in that enterprise for decades. Therefore, unless they are defining a new kind of social transformation - and as I say, Honourable Members on that Side seem to be divided as to what it is - we are going to have problems.

Mr. Chairman, there is nothing wrong with the Minister spending some time defining what are those elements of social transformation he thinks necessary and desirable to take us into the next decade. What the Government is now doing in relation to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act is essentially finishing an agenda that was left after the Act was passed and after the legal and other arrangements were not sufficiently advanced, to complete it. It started in the 1990s. There were a large number of persons left in the process and the Government is completing an aspect of that process, which it was not able to have completed on a previous occasion. Let us not overstate the sophistication of some of those programmes.

Sir, I know you are one who love literature. There is a poem by the late Hilton Vaughn of which I was reminded as I heard some of the speakers yesterday, not the Minister's, his was programmatic in content, even if he fell short of defining the objectives, he said: "These are the programmes". Sir, the poem goes like this:

"We love the people, Sir, You do?

You ought to; nay, indeed, you must:

Shouting their needs has brought a new

Elation to your fickle dust.

You have the keys of all their hearts,

Yet neither charity, good sense

Nor truth, nor tolerance imparts

One sparklet to your eloquence.

You prey, but not like beast of prey;

The cobblers fly too far to be

Your emblem; in a higgling way

You have a place in history;

Like black birds in their shining coats

Prinking and lifting spry, proud feet,

Bickering and picking sodden oats

From horses' offal in the street."

It was written in the 1960s, against a background, perhaps of sending a salutary warning to politicians who, as I say, picked up that empty rhetoric, which the Member for St. Peter speaks about so eloquently from time to time and which was so present in yesterday's debate. It failed to identify, not just those who are left behind by the previous social transformation but the next set of Barbadians who are most vulnerable by our failure, either to make resources available or to direct policies to advance their interest. That is what I think we need to get this debate focusing on today.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I had originally refrained from participating in this debate because I wanted to give way to my colleagues from urban Barbados, all of whom have a direct interest in social transformation programmes.

Mr. Chairman, I was driven to take part this morning through three events. The first was the excellent speech made by the Member for St. Philip North on the disabled. The second one was something I had been preparing in the way of researching disability law. The third was that, believe it or not, the place from where I came this morning is a place where, as soon as I came out, a disabled person was wheeling his chair for miles and miles and literally, as the traffic would have it, was like my outrider right down to this Parliament, unfortunately having lost the use of his legs.

Sir, let me start with the proposed programme for the disabled. There is no question that as has just been said, we human beings while given our tenure on this earthly plain, should seek to actualise ourselves. In a culture where human rights are emphasised, we can no longer go on, either ignoring the disabled or merely tolerating them. They have to be fully integrated within the entire Barbadian society.

Sir, as much as a Green Paper is in circulation to attract debate, I want to say that legislation is going to have to be the way, whenever we do come to improving conditions for the disabled.

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Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I found a piece of legislation written in 1944 called the Disabilities Persons Employment Act out of England but this Act did not really bring about a regime of equality of treatment for the disabled. However, it forced certain enterprises to reserve a quota, more or less in their discretion, of jobs for the disabled. Let us suppose we had ICI, a company in England in 1944, it would be up to them to reserve a 3 per cent quota in their workforce for the disabled.

Sir, it did not work because if it was left up to the absolute discretion of the employer to employ a disabled person, he is going to counter the argument by saying that the disabled person is not fit for the job.

Mr. Chairman, amazingly, the authorities suggest quite clearly that the Americans With Disabilities Act is the Act and that all the legislation in the Commonwealth would do well to follow because this Act apparently has enshrined constitutional provisions of an anti-discriminatory nature.

Mr. Chairman, fifteen minutes is not going to be enough but I am not going to be greedy because this is very much a debate for urban representation and even if I do not get to discussing the excellence of the Rural Enterprises Fund and how it has empowered urban entrepreneurs I will be satisfied with fifteen minutes.

Sir, in 1995 the British passed a disability discrimination Bill for the wrong reason. The Conservative Government was in power at that time and a member on the Backbench jumped up with a civil rights disabled persons Bill that was progressive but it was a Private Members' Bill making the Government look bad and Government, in an overnight fashion in England, passed the Disability Discrimination Bill 1995.

Sir, under existing British law if an employer is not an employer of more than 15 workers he is not bound to employ disabled persons so that is discriminatory in itself. Also, if he could justify leaving out disabled persons, he is free to avoid employing disabled persons.

I continued my search and found legislation from Canada, Australia and New Zealand but they are saying that the American With Disabilities Act is the model to follow for anti-discriminatory treatment.

Mr. Chairman, I am speaking on this matter but I have not yet accorded you the courtesy of the definition of discrimination against the disabled. When I was a boy, we used to talk in Barbados about handicap but I do not want to use that term anymore.

The current definition of discrimination against the disabled that is gaining currency worldwide is this:

“An employer discriminates against a disabled person if (a) for a reason which relates to that person disability he treats him less favourably than he treats other and he cannot show that the treatment in question is right.”

Sir, this is the definition now being used for discrimination against the disabled.

Mr. Chairman, I am advised, and I verily believe, that we cannot sensibly discuss discrimination without equality. We have had legislation the world over in terms of equality of gender, equal pay for equal work and such like. They are now also talking about equal treatment in terms of a person's sexual orientation and they are claiming that equality of gender is not the same thing as equality of sexual orientation. This is a fascinating area that is evolving and it is attracting a lot of attention.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to study the Green Paper in order to help my colleague, the Honourable Member St. Michael South East who has been my friend for at least 20 years. In the context of what the Ministry of Social Transformation is doing, this Ministry is an enormous one, well-managed with able workers and the vote of \$67.7 million is interesting because we are not in the best of economic times but still this amount was voted for this programme.

Mr. Chairman, you are a man with an understanding of people's need and you desire to see all people in Barbados but more particularly, people in a given enclave succeed. We have had a debate in this island for the last 30 years on the whole question of economic enfranchisement and empowerment. The debate emerged around 1990 in an intensified way but lost momentum between 1991 and 1994 for reasons that Honourable Members on this side know and for reasons that Honourable Members on the other side fear.

Mr. Chairman, I have seen an Urban Enterprise Fund set up within a department that falls under the wider umbrella of the Ministry of Social Transformation. The Urban Enterprise Fund has been tapped into by dozens of St. Michael folk whether they wanted to set up businesses as vendors or higher than vendors and, at the end of the day, people have been attracted to the fund because people are interested in self-employment, self-empowerment and being entrepreneurs. Sir, the amount of capital allowed for

business activity to the small business sector is \$62 million in recent times, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has already said but in the context of a peculiar culture where existing commercial institutions like to lend short for consumption and distribution, we have been forced on this side to establish institutions to provide venture capital for persons who ordinarily would have been disqualified by the commercial banking sector for loans to set up businesses.

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Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: Sir, I want to commend the Rural Enterprises Fund and the other programmes which became necessary out of a situation, especially out of the Barbados Development Bank which has become totally insolvent.

There are many things about social transformation that I can mention but depending on the number of speakers in this debate and the Members in this House at a given time, I may or may not venture again on this Head. There are times when the House is full and I will refrain from speaking and give way to persons with a more direct interest but if the House is not full of Members, like early this morning, then my enthusiasm to participate shall be bolstered.

With these remarks, Mr. Deputy Chairman, I thank you.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Chairman, I want to make a contribution to this debate. I believe that the Ministry of Social Transformation is, perhaps, the Ministry that urban Barbados can truly be identified with as a lot of work has been done in urban Barbados within the last five years.

I would not want to dwell with the Opposition because I do not think that they have a record which anybody can speak about. Sir, as far back as 1965, the then Government of the day identified the problems that faced Barbados. There were approximately 17 urban tenancies where nothing at all was done during that period. In 191 the owners of 373 houses received eviction notices because the land that they were living was not theirs. They could not afford to build a permanent structure because the landlords of the day were taking advantage of the tenants and they had to build houses that could be removed easily and transported to another location.

Sir, during that time there were several problems facing tenants who lived on plantation land. It took the Opposition 42 years to realise what the problems were and

that this Government has done something for urban and rural Barbados.

In 1961, people who lived on tenantry land suffered at the hands of the plantation owners and if there did not work for the plantation, they were faced with eviction notices and had to move. It took the Barbados Labour Party in 1982 to introduced what could be considered as the Tenantry Freehold Act which gave tenants the right to purchase the land on which they were living at ten cents a square foot. As a result of this action, tenants were now able to build stable houses.

Mr.D.St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. I do not like interrupting the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that it took the Barbados Labour Party, in 1981, to stop plantations from evicting workers off the plantation tenancies.

I want to remind the Honourable Member that the Tenantry Development Act that prevented the plantation owners from interfering with their workers and evicting them from the lands that they occupied.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Chairman, in 1965 the then Government introduced what was known as the Tenancies Control Development Bill. I am saying that Bill was introduced in 1965 but no action was taken.

I will continue to express the fact that as far back as 1982, the Tenancies Freehold Act was introduced and it gave those persons who lived on tenantry land on the estates to own the land at ten cent per square foot, Sir, that was 21 years after. I am saying that for a long time nothing was done to areas like Belfield Land and Dodson Land. I am not saying that the Opposition did not do anything. I am saying that they did not do enough for the time that they were in office.

Sir, we are seeing a Government that has taken over a situation where tenants were paying rents and did not know who their landlords were and in many cases were unable to improve their living conditions because they could not get permission to repair their homes. Under the Ministry of Social Transformation we have seen a situation where this kind of thing is becoming a thing of the past. People are now given the right to improve their living conditions.

Sir, it is a very unfortunate situation where a little child in these times to be attending a secondary school and that child cannot invite any of his school friends home at him because his surrounds do not have adequate bathroom facilities. This kind of situation can be very embarrassing. The day is coming when every household in Barbados will

have indoor bathroom facilities and will be able to enjoy the comfort of such facilities.

Sir, I said that I do not want to dwell on the Opposition because they do not a record as far as the improvement of the standard of living of people under the Ministry of Social Transformation is concerned and I am serious about this.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James

spoke earlier about the disabled persons being escorted by a police out rider to this Chamber. As far as I am concerned, the Ministry of Transformation has shown Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean that they have the disabled people at heart.

The Ministry of Social Transformation brought a White Paper and have introduced measures in order that the disabled in Barbados could have a better standard of living and be a part of the society.

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Continuation of: Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS:

Sir, let me show you the benefit as far as tourism is concerned. Daily we have tourist ships coming into Barbados, sometimes six, sometimes ten. The position there, Mr. Chairman, is a situation where there are disabled people on those tourists' ships as well. Those disabled people come on shore and they can only go as far as Bridgetown to shop. They can watch the water and the beautiful beaches from on board the ship but they cannot bathe.

Mr. Chairman, here is a position that if something like this is put in place, there is a possibility that you will not only be catering to the disabled people of Barbados, but you will be catering to the disabled persons from across the world, who will want to come and enjoy a holiday here in Barbados.

Sir, when you look the work that the Ministry of Social Transformation has been doing for the disabled people, they must be complimented but, Sir, there is a further step. Sir, the Ministry of Social Transformation has at least facilitated sports across Barbados. We know for a fact, Mr. Chairman, people like you and me, who have constituencies in urban Barbados, know that there were certain areas where young people were affected in terms of developing their sports. There were no facilities for them.

Apart from that, most of the lands in certain areas of urban Barbados were private. For example, there was an

area just where the desalination plant is built on the Spring Garden Highway that was used by cricket teams, but modern times have caused that land to be placed in a different situation.

You have to find some place for the young men and young girls at least to enjoy sports. When you look at what has happened in St. Michael North West, at least you have a situation where you have private grounds. There is Ellerslie School, which is private, there is Texaco which is private but under the Ministry of Social Transformation, they started to develop areas within St. Michael North West to give the young boys and young girls an opportunity to develop their sports. For example, behind the Royal Bank of Canada, there are beautiful, well lit hard courts provided for them. This gives the young boys and girls of lower Black Rock, the opportunity to develop their sports. They do not have to worry about having to ask for permission to use any of the private grounds.

Further up, Deacons Farm pasture could be considered as the sports area of urban Barbados. They have the best volleyball team. At one time they produced the best football team. They produced some of the best cricketers that you can think about, so Deacons has been able, in the area of sports to produce some of the top quality sportsmen in Barbados, but under hard conditions.

Today, there is a tremendous improvement in the Deacons area. Mr. Chairman, for 21 years under the Opposition, young men and young girls in the area of the Farm were asking for lights in order that they could be involved like any other area, to develop themselves. The Opposition seems not to understand the benefits of young people in a community and what they can do in terms of sports.

Today, I as stand before you, the young people of Deacons Farm can say thanks to the Ministry of Social Transformation and also thanks to the Sports Department for providing the lights on the Farm pasture, giving the Deacons Football Team, which is a professional team, an opportunity. I will now say in this Parliament, that they have just been invited to Boston next month because of the talent that exist within the community. We gave them an opportunity and they developed it.

Further, the hard court is a foresight of the Barbados Labour Party built when Vic Johnson was representing that constituency. No one had seen it, other than the Barbados Labour Party which built that hard court for playing tennis in Deacons Road. The young men took time out to put lights on it. Today, I can say that under the Ministry of Social Transformation, 21 years after, it is well lit and it has been resurfaced. This is what I consider to be a ministry which is working, not only for the senior citizens or the disabled but for the young people.

Further across in the area, is the Fernihurst pasture which this Government is accused of destroying, because they built the housing estate on it, actually, many people believe this. I am saying that is not so, based on the fact that when you take that pasture which has developed several players, and you look at what is happening now, Mr. Chairman, under the Ministry of Social Transformation again, that pasture is now being prepared for lights, not only for the young people to use, but the students of the Eagle Hall Infants' School. I must compliment the Ministry of Social Transformation for the work which they are doing within my constituency.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: You can come back again but I would like you to wind up.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Sir,

Mr. Chairman, under the Ministry of Social Transformation, you find that they have been giving names to various playing facilities within the communities. When I come back, I will show you the fairness of giving names to certain playing facilities within the communities.

I am not going to recommend names on one side only, I am going to recommend names on the other side as well because somewhere along the line, there are people who made a contribution. For example, we are seeing the development now of the Town Hall. I am wondering when the time comes with that Town Hall if you are going to forget the times and names of people who have made a substantial contribution to Barbados like the late, Ernest Deighton Mottley, the late Freddie Miller and the people from the Other Side like Lawson Weeks.

I am going to be fair to show you that as far as this Government is concerned, and as far as the Ministry of Social Transformation is concerned, one must understand that the Democratic Labour Party does not have a record.

I am going to say to you, cast your bread upon the water and do you know what the scripture says, it will come back to you. This Government under the Ministry of Social Transformation has made it good for the urban Barbados parliamentary representatives. I am sure, Mr. Chairman, that they would have seen what was, and what is now.

I will return.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I do not know, Sir, if the Honourable Member for St. John, goes to sleep with me on his mind, or rather, if he woke this morning with me on his mind.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: I do not know why, because we do not fight in the same arena or sleep in the same bed.

Mr. Chairman, some raw nerve was touched yesterday when, in my contribution I just reminisced a little about my past and I was able to tell this Chamber and the people of Barbados where I came from. The thing is, I know where I came from and where I am going. I will never forget my past, as I said yesterday, and I say it again today, I am from a chattel house, like most Honourable Members in here.

I do not ridicule people because they are from privileged backgrounds. I was not born in London and went to school in a limousine like the Honourable Member for St. John. I came, like most of us in here from a humble background and the important thing as I said, is to know where you are going.

My job, I believe as a politician, is to show people the way. I believe that I have achieved some measure of success by the dint of hard work. I believe that other people from a lower socioeconomic background can do the same thing and rise above where they came from.

I do not believe that because I made certain statements in here yesterday that the Honourable Member for St. John should come in here today...

Asides.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: I am just letting him know to keep his dogs off my lawn.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: I worked hard for it. It did not come from giving CLICO all kinds of concessions.

Mr. Chairman, as I just now said, when you touch a raw nerve...If I get into Parris now and deals all across the Caribbean and England, under the same blanket, I will hear something else but I am not going down that road today.

Mr. Chairman, I just want to say to you, Sir, that when the Minister of Social Transformation left the Democratic Labour Party, he was ridiculed by the Honourable Members of that Party because they did not believe that someone from his background should be a Minister of the Government of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, nobody on That Side will ever have the opportunity to offer him a ministry, that is, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. He was offered a ministry by the Right Honourable Prime Minister

and it is he who gave him the ministry and not the members of the Democratic Labour Party.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: Oh yes. He is doing a very good job and they know this.

10.50 a.m.

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Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: The Democratic Labour Party held the reins of power in this country and were responsible for all of the constituencies in St. Michael but they never did anything to raise the living standards of those people. We know that the Democratic Labour Party through the Right Excellent Errol Barrow was responsible for continuing the free education system in Barbados which was started by Grantley Adams. What I am trying to say is that they should not knock the Minister of Social Transformation because of where he came from.

I will go a bit further and say this. When one of the Members on that side got married, this same Minister gave him \$200 but when he left that party and came over to the Barbados Labour Party, he gave him back the \$200.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: The clown that ran against me.

Mr. Chairman, I want to congratulate the Minister of Social Transformation on the road works programme. The Ministry of Social Transformation has been working very hard through the Minister on the concrete road programme. The Ministry of Social Transformation works hand in hand with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. At the end of the day those roads that are built by the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Urban Development Commission are handed over to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport for surfacing, so these ministries must work together.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Social Transformation has been able to work with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to make sure that the disabled can use their wheelchairs on these roads especially on the sidewalks because the sidewalks are disabled friendly.

I want at this time to congratulate the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Urban Development Commission for the fine work they have done in the concrete road programme in St. Michael West Central. We have recently put in place a nice road at Carlington's Terrace at St. Stephen's, St. Michael. We did a concrete

road programme at Eckstein Village. We also did the road at Parkinson Road, Fairfield, St. Michael. At this moment, the Ministry of Social Transformation through the Urban Development Commission is constructing a new road at Roger's Quarry Gap which is being built by Brathwaite Construction.

Mr. Chairman, I am quite sure that when the work starts on the ABC Highway to move it from a two-lane highway into a four-lane highway, the Urban Development Commission will also have to play a part in that because the adjoining roads on the roadside that would have to be rehabilitated would have to be done in conjunction with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

I therefore want to congratulate the Minister and the Ministry of Social Transformation for the fine work they are doing in the concrete road programme.

I thank you.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I am inclined to agree with the Honourable Members on this side whose view is that for the first time we are seeing, not sporadic attempts at social transformation and not sporadic attempts at mobilising upwardly certain sections of the population, but the articulation of a comprehensive policy approach and the implementation of that policy to transforming the quality of life of the vulnerable groups and the vulnerable individuals within the society.

We are seeing too, an attempt to make the delivery of social services in Barbados far more expectant by identifying first and then reaching those persons who are truly in need and to transform the thinking of those persons by giving them opportunities to transform their own lives because that is the essence of what people have been talking about.

When the Honourable Members on the other side were speaking in terms of, do not give a man a fish, teach him to fish, essentially what they are saying is to create a network of opportunities that the person can effectively change what is happening in their own life. If one looks at the approach of the Ministry of Social Transformation, it seems to me that that is exactly what the Ministry has set about to do. It has developed a social safety network for those who are identified as vulnerable. It has determined those whose lives can be upwardly mobile by the provision of training, by the provision of housing or by effecting some sort of social change within their circumstances and it has gone about effectively creating that change.

Mr. Chairman, before I thank, through you, Sir, and through the Minister, the Urban Development Commission for some of the projects that we have seen in St. James South, I feel compel to say and to note that we have

submitted to the Urban Development Commission a long list of homes that are extremely in need of repairs particularly those of our aged citizens who do not have persons to assist them or whose children are not in a position to help their parents because they themselves are under extreme pressure and are trying to cope with their own social situation.

The Urban Development Commission has been far too slow to respond to that list of houses that we need to have repaired, refurbished or built totally from scratch. I want to remind them that although the list of the houses for St. James South that I need repair is long, I would wish them to get to it soon and in large numbers. However, I still must thank the Urban Development Commission for the change in the quality of life of many people in the communities of St. James South that they have been able to effect by putting roads into these communities.

The Urban Development Commission is doing a road at Upper Durants Village which was a grass and mud track before. Perhaps, the greatest road works going on in St. James South is in the community of Halls Village No 1 and No 2 where for generations...

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It is a village with several hundred houses and a couple thousand residents. At that level, the residents have lived without any kind of proper infrastructure for many year. There was no roadway and many of the residents did not have water-borne toilet or pipe water within their houses. Many had to walk with two or three pairs of shoes. Several of them bought motor cars but could not take the cars anywhere close to the places where they live. It was totally inaccessible to emergency and other vehicles.

11.00 a.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It has galvanised the community and has given them a greater sense of the quality of life.

Mr. Chairman, I make the point that several of the residents from Halls Village pass my house on mornings on their way to the Redman's Village intersection or the Welches Primary School and it is not easy seeing people walking with two or three pairs of shoes whenever it rains. These are the realities with which people were living. We do not like to face these realities but we must. When we put in a road or give someone a water-borne facility, it makes a tremendous difference to their quality of life.

Sir, I am thanking the Urban Development Commission. We have also done roads on the coast. With the assistance of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, we have built a new fishing market facility.

Mr. Chairman, I want to give a word of thanks to the Ministry of Social Transformation.

There is, however, a point I wish to make. I am particularly attracted to the gender mainstreaming programme which the Ministry of Social Transformation is pursuing, particularly because we have to recognise that men are facing challenges in today's world which need to be addressed if there is to be equality and equilibrium between the sexes and, in fact, not only in self-improvement but in contributing to the productivity and economic development of the country.

There is a concern which I would wish to share with this Honourable Chamber relative to women. It is a reality that no matter how high employment is, unemployment amongst women is always higher than that amongst men.

In my view, that is a matter of which we have to be gravely concerned about in a society that is still largely a matri-focal society; one where the majority of households are being led by single women, with generations of women living within the household who are themselves having children and who are responsible for the social and economic fortunes of the members of that family and that household.

Mr. Chairman, the last Central Bank Report, February, 2003, indicates that male unemployment stood at 8.9 per cent, while that amongst women was at 12.3 per cent and these are still women who are the primary income earners. They bear the burden of the social organisation and family responsibility.

I believe the Ministry of Social Transformation has to effect a conscious and deliberate strategic attempt to target unemployment amongst women. That is the only way in which families are going to be supported. That is the only way in which children will be brought up in comfortable financial circumstances, when we deliberately target women.

I note there are many programmes geared to training women as housekeepers, nurses and the in traditional skills but I think the time has now come when we must look at the kind of activity that we have in the economic sector of Barbados, where we must recognise that a lot of the activity is in the area of construction. We must recognise that instead of having women come every week seeking positions as maids, National Conservation Commission rangers, or in the School Meals Department, we now have to deliberately reach into these communities all over

Barbados and to pull these women out and give them training in the non-traditional skills. They cannot simply learn to become cake makers or seamstresses. We now have to start training them as carpenters, electricians, tile layers and as plumbers for jobs in the sector where those jobs exist. If we do not do that, we are going to perpetuate the problem of having large numbers of men going out to work while the women remain at home.

I am making the point that we have to devise deliberate strategies to ensure that there is income in the hands of women who are raising children and who have responsibility for the household, including the payment of bills. The only way we can do that is to equip them for the nature of the job market that we have at this time.

I want to see the Ministry of Social Transformation going the additional step of creating programmes in those areas of the economy where jobs exist. There cannot be a number of small programmes. It now has to be mobilised at the national level. Sir, despite high employment statistics and unprecedented employment levels even at a time when the economy is under some degree of stricture, the reality is that there are still a large number of unskilled women who are unemployed.

There are more men who can get jobs because they can get jobs as labourers on construction sites. I am happy to say that given the amount of Town Planning applications that have come across my desk and have been approved, there is going to be an even greater activity in the construction sector.

My experience as a Parliamentarian is that when a woman is given a job, because she has the bills to pay and children to support, she is far more likely to keep that job than a man, even if she does not consider the circumstances ideal.

I am simply making the point when one considers that 67 per cent of children in Barbados are born out of wedlock and Barbados is a matri-focal society, that the majority of household are led by women, then if we are going to be targeting unemployment and creating opportunities in the market for people who are looking for jobs, we have to look at the nature of the jobs being generated in the economy and to train women for them.

11.10 a.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you for giving me this opportunity to intervene at this time again. I have listened very attentively to all of the speeches made by Honourable Members and most of them are of a high social calibre.

I would like to examine the speech made by the Honourable Member for St. John. It was one of his best discourses in this Honourable Chamber as he examined some of the other problems associated with the process of social transformation.

We must begin at some point to tackle poverty in Barbados and we cannot make a leap without making the first step. Sir, we in the Ministry of Social Transformation target the most vulnerable sector in this country. We must break the cycle of poverty that exists among that targeted group of 13 per cent of this population who is currently living in poverty. Sir, I have experience poverty at that level and I know the trauma and effect on persons living in poverty.

Sir, a young man once told me that he came into this world naked and hungry and things became worse. He also told me that he knew what it was to leave school, go into Queen Park and collect food for his family.

Sir, nobody has to tell me about poverty because I know how people at the lower level of the socio-economic bracket of society fight and struggle on a daily basis and we must make the first step and then take a leap. I am very cognisant of the developing gap of poverty among middle-class persons and we are putting systems in place to deal with this.

The Honourable Member for St. John talked about broad social policies. We in the Ministry, from the inception, have devised broad social policies for the Ministry. The Ministry of Social Transformation must be programme-driven if we are to deal directly with poverty as it is in Barbados. Some members of the Barbadian society scoff at the idea that we cannot eradicate poverty but we are targeting the benchmarks laid by the UNDP so that persons could be put into that safety bracket.

I want to enlighten this Honourable Chamber that we have developed a broad-based social policy prepared by Professor Clyde Thomas of UNDP and we have also prepared a comprehensive strategic plan for the Ministry of Social Transformation designed by our Permanent Secretary and Deputy Permanent Secretary. We have also formulated a policy for the disabled and we are in the process of formulating a policy on gender.

Sir, I do not think we can physiologically eradicate the notion from some Barbadians that this is a Ministry of hand-outs. The Honourable Member for St. John said it was a perception. If we are to deal with this issue of poverty, it has to be bipartisan. The major problem that hinders the advancement of the Ministry of Social Transformation is basically because Barbados is divided between Bees on one side and Dems on the other side. This Ministry cannot progress only through the efforts of the

staff and the board and the persons that comprise the Ministry internally but there must be a collaborative approach between civil society, the NGOs, CBOs and the church.

Sir, throughout this entire debate no one has seen the importance of having the churches in Barbados play an equal role with the Ministry. So far the churches have been exonerated from their responsibility in this process of social transformation.

I will now deal with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy when he said it was a policy. Sir, if it is a policy then every person in this country should be pursuing that policy. When we look at it, all of us subconsciously want to bring about relief for the poor.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West last night enunciated a new policy of corporate responsibility as regards private business in Barbados sharing the responsibility. Can you imagine the enormous change that would happen in the community if we could get the private sector to give 50 per cent so that if the Government allocates \$17 million the private sector will put \$17 million.

1.20 a.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

H.F. LASHLEY: When I was a Member of the Democratic Labour Party the Honourable Member for St. John and I would always talk about changes at the community level. I believe that he understands what has to happen there but we cannot use this forum of Parliament where Shakespeare puts it very mildly that all the world is a stage and the people in it are merely players. I did not come into this Honourable Chamber to be an actor.

Asides.

H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, I want to assure the Honourable Member for St. James South with the homes of those persons who are under pressure, that we are seriously looking at them in the new financial year. We do not do things per constituency. We in the Ministry do things based on the whims and fancies of the politicians. They are persons in Barbados who come to the Ministry and are sincerely in need of assistance that we have to give priority to.

I must say that the Honourable Member for St. James South made the most valid point in here today, as far as I am concerned, as it relates to women contractors because the women in the labour force are developing a holistic programme targeting those marginalised women who have been the product of domestic violence and other

scourges of this society. What the Honourable Member is proposing is what we have already started in the Ministry through the department of the Urban Development Commission and we were ridiculed for this.

Sir, in Austria there is a programme called Habitat for Humanity and where women are involved in the construction industry. They are electricians, masons and carpenters. Sir, more than 15 such persons are currently involved as contractors with the Urban Development Commission.

In addition to that, we are encouraging more women from within the communities to become self-sustainable and we are offering them contracts to paint, build steps et cetera. We are taking women out of the traditional area of work and bringing them into the non traditional area of work, using their skills and becoming independent and supporting their families.

I always like to listen to the Honourable Member for St. John because sometimes he is extremely articulate in putting over a point. It is always good to listen because one of the basic things that drives every member of staff within the Ministry of Social Transformation is constructive criticism, where we can analyse it so that it can carry us forward to fight for the poor and disadvantaged.

Sir, one of these days we might have a bipartisan approach to the whole issue of social transformation, which is critical at this stage if we are to go forward. The churches must play their role. Almost every member in the Barbadian society is a member of a church. The church has an awesome responsibility to work with our Ministry to transform the social landscape of Barbados and help us to provide that safety net for the more vulnerable.

Sir, some people might scoff at me but we have started a journey and it is not an easy journey. We cannot wave a magic wand and poverty is going to disappear in Barbados. It is not an issue for the call-in programmes only for criticism but one for constructive criticism where we can use the advice and go forward.

Additionally, the ultimate goal for the Ministry of Social Transformation is our social development strategy which is to improve and enhance the quality of life of our people. It requires democratic institutions, respect for all human rights and fundamental freedom, increase equal economic opportunities, which is the rule of law, and education which is so critical for the poverty process, the promotion of respect of cultural diversity, the rights of persons belonging to the minority and an active involvement in civil society.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I am watching your finger.

Asides.

H.F. LASHLEY: I would like all Honourable Members to sit down at a special meeting because fifteen minutes is not enough to expand on issues.

Asides.

H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, you are asking me to sit now when I should be standing and I really should be standing all the time.

Asides.

H.F. LASHLEY: I thank you, Sir.

Mr.D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, in 1961 when the Democratic Labour Party took over the reins of Government, they understood the problems in Barbados. With an increase in revenue from \$23 million to \$26 million, the Democratic Labour Party was able to introduce free secondary education and the Parks and Beaches programme in order to help alleviate the suffering of poor people.

Sir, I said that to make this point. In 1994/1995, when the Barbados Labour Party came to office we did not hear anything about social transformation or poverty alleviation. At that time the revenue was over \$1 billion. By 1997/1998 when they started to talk about social transformation, the revenues were \$1.4 million and by the year 2000 when social transformation and poverty alleviation the revenues were \$1.7 million.

I also said that to make the point because the revenue in 2001/2002 was \$1.4 million and the expenditure was \$1.8 billion, an increase of 64 per cent. One would expect that a Government with increased revenue and expenditure would not have to come talking about poverty alleviation, especially when they claimed that they reduced unemployment from 30 per cent to under 10 per cent.

Sir, one would expect that in a period when we are talking about prosperity, poverty alleviation would not be a topic that any enlightened Government would have to talk about. One would expect that during that time, all of those problems would have been corrected because they would have had all the economic tools to correct the problems within that period.

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member said that no Government, does he limit it only to the Government of Barbados? The Honourable Member should be aware that poverty alleviation in the United States of America and Germany is part of the programme despite the budgets which they have. I am inviting the Honourable Member to let the House hear

him on why they would have programme despite the heavy budgets they have.

Mr.D.St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, when one can analyse figures of a government, one would find it very difficult why a country that is operating at a low unemployment rate should be talking about a social programme to alleviate poverty.

11.20 a.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

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

Sir, one would expect that with all those circumstances, the resources of the country would have been allocated in such a way that, the poor would have been able to feed the unemployable ones in their homes.

It is clear to me, Sir, that between 1994 and now, we have created such a great social divide between the family groupings, where families are no longer looking after families and that could be the only social assumption that you could come to.

Sir, there is another serious point. When the Ministry of Social Transformation was formed, which is very much public sector, with the revenues of Government and taxes coming from the private sector, the private sector would have been under the belief that with their taxes coming to the Budget of the Ministry of Social Transformation, they would no longer have an obligation to look after the poor in the country.

Sir, that is why I said, that social transformation should have been a policy and not a ministry because from the time you made it a ministry, you relieved the private sector of their obligation to the poor.

Asides.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Yes, that is a fact because their argument is that their taxes are now being paid into a ministry to look after those groupings of persons. Whereas, if it was a policy, the private sector and public sector would have had to go hand in hand to eliminate the particular problem.

I would understand why the others would have had a problem over there with this particular argument. Sir, not only that, I also want to answer another charge laid against the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, Honourable Members who do not understand social engineering, should keep their mouths closed.

Asides.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: In 1965, Sir, when the Democratic Labour Party passed the Tenancies Control Development Act, it was a piece of social engineering which allowed the tenants on the plantations to remain on the plantation without interference from the plantations. What was significant about that Act, not only did they allow the tenants to remain on the plantations but they controlled the rent that should have been charged by the plantation owners to the tenants.

If one looks at the rents that were being charged by the plantation owners to the tenants, one would recognise that the Land Tax Bill and the service cost to the plantation were greater than the rents paid by the tenants and received by the plantation owners.

Sir, in truth and in fact, the Barbados Labour Party in 1981 when they made the change allowed the tenants to own the land, but they also relieved the plantations of debt. Sir, if the rents were less than the taxes, it is obvious that they would have gained, when they relieved themselves of the land, Sir, also, the obligation to develop the land. That obligation then went to the Government of the day.

Sir, one must recognise that in order for the tenants to be able to buy the land, they must first have an Act of Parliament to protect them and keep them on the land. It was the Democratic Labour Party who caused the tenants to be on the land in order to be able to buy the land when the Barbados Labour Party passed the Act.

Asides.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, nobody can deny that because it is clear and simple.

Asides.

Sir HENRY FORDE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, obviously, was not near the House when that bit of legislation was passed. The reason why the Tenancies Development Control Act was passed and that was the objective of the Act at the time, was because people were being moved in mass, from areas like Hanshell Land. The idea was to strengthen the Security of Tenure Act which had existed since 1955. It certainly had nothing to do with owning the tenancies themselves.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I never said that the tenants owned the land. I said that they had a right that the plantation owners could not take from them. The main fact that they had a right to remain on the land, when the Barbados Labour Party made the necessary amendment and passed the particular Act, because the Democratic Labour Party did, and if they did not pass that Act, many of those persons who are now buying the land would not have

been on the land in the first place and that is the point I am making.

I also want Honourable Members to understand that as much as they talk about social transformation and alleviation of poverty, I want them to answer one question for me, if you are so interested in alleviating poverty, why is it that the revenues of the QEH will be increased by 60 per cent in these current Estimates. I want you to tell me if the poor will be paying the 60 per cent increase, or the rich.

I want to know who will be paying the court fine of 50 per cent that will increase. I also want to know who will pay for the stamps that will increase by 28 per cent. I want to know who are the people that can least afford to pay the increase in visas and passport costs that will now increase by 108.89 per cent. Sir, anyone who doubts me, only has to look at the revenues head in these Estimates and one would recognise that everything I have said here can be found in the Estimates.

I have done my homework. I am also aware of the engineering of the Democratic Labour Party. So I want to make this point, Sir, that social transformation and poverty alleviation can only come about, when you put your people in work. This is why if you said that we put our people out of work in 1991 and 1994, these Estimates bear out, Sir, that you had ten years of increased revenue to correct the problem.

The problem could not only be located if you are blaming the Democratic Labour Party, you cannot only know that after the 1999 election, you should have known that from 1991 to 1994 and when you took up the Government the first order of the day should have been poverty alleviation.

Sir, instead of that, the revenues of Government were slanted in such a direction that even though bounty was out there, the masses did not get the bounty. The 5 per cent got the bounty and the masses got crushed under the mills of the day.

I am saying, Sir, that when one wants to locate an argument about social transformation, you cannot do that, Sir, without first recognising that the Estimates here do not bear out what the Government side is saying. If the Government recognised poverty after 1997, they could only have recognised what they created after 1994 to 1997. It took them two or three years after, to put a programme to solve it, when that programme should have been in place a long time before that particular period.

I am saying, Sir, that if you are interested in social programmes, then you must encourage vending and you must not put anything in the way to impede the development of vendors in Barbados, because self-

employment, especially with vending is an avenue that will allow poor people to develop themselves and create employment for themselves, without Government intervention.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11.40 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, it is clear from the presentation of the Honourable Member who just took his seat, who is still talking, that the Democratic Labour Party did not have a Ministry of Social Transformation and it did not have a policy for poverty eradication. In fact, the records will show that the Democratic Labour Party has a very clear policy of poverty creation. Their Ministry for poverty creation was labelled the Ministry of Finance. It is clear that could only have been their very clear, definite policy when they actively and aggressively in the early 1990s caused people to lose their jobs and their homes, caused taxes to be increased and caused government expenditure to be slashed, all to the ends of creating poverty in the country.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is saying that poverty is created within the Ministry of Finance. Therefore, the Honourable Member is misleading the House because poverty is normally solved from within the Ministry of Finance.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: With prudent management of the economy, yes, it is.

However, the record would show that the contrast is as stark as night and day. The policy of the Democratic Labour Party in the early 1990s caused us to have a stabilisation tax and other taxes to extract money out of the pockets of taxpayers while at the same time slashing Government expenditure on essential services. This was seen in the number of abandoned projects across the country. One could look through the Estimates and see line by line how recurrent expenditure was slashed. One can see how the private sector lost confidence and did not invest, so there was no compensating increased investment from private sources. Sir, I do not want to spend too much time on that.

I am alarmed that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would want to suggest that the Government because of its impressive employment record - and I am glad that he is impressed, he said it, and we all agreed, the figures are there to show the massive job creation - and because of

increased Government revenue, that we should close our eyes to the fact that there is still poverty in this country.

Sir, the Human Development Report published by the United Nations in 2001 indicates that in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, the 29 richest countries in the world, 15 per cent of their adults are functionally illiterate. As we will say in Barbados, they cannot 'dance', they cannot 'handle themselves in the forms' and they cannot read and write. One hundred and thirty million people are living in poverty in the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, the richest countries in the world. Based on this United Nations Report, eight million of their people are malnourished and 15 million are living with HIV/AIDS. This Report is about the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development countries, the highest income countries in the world. There are 29 of them and Barbados ranks number 31 in the Human Development Index. We have to recognise that we have done well as compared with many developing countries but we must not benchmark ourselves against the worst.

We, the Barbados Labour Party, have made a solemn commitment to building strong families and communities, to eradicating poverty and to making sure that there is an effective safety net for the most vulnerable in the society because we feel that all persons must be able to participate in the life of this community. That is what the poverty alleviation strategy is about. That is what the work of the Ministry of Social Transformation is all about. It is about empowering people.

The mere fact that we have been able to turn the economy around and we have been able to create thousands of jobs, does not automatically reduce poverty. We have recognised that we also have the incident of the working poor and this Government through an enlightened tax strategy has introduced a reverse tax credit. You would know, Sir, that Barbadians earning less than \$15 000 a year not only do not pay any income tax but when they file their returns, they get \$500 in cash in their hands through an enlightened approach. So there is an aggressive tax policy which recognises that they are people who are the working poor. Yes, they are making the effort but the tax system and all other aspects of Government must help them along.

Sir, before I speak further about what the Government is doing, I want to salute the other partners in this effort of poverty alleviation. Clearly the Democratic Labour Party has not put its shoulder to the wheel, but a number of non-governmental organisations have been at it for a while. There are a number of groups in our society like the Salvation Army which is doing wonderful work with providing shelter and meals on their meals on wheels programme. The Pinelands Creative Workshop does substantial work in their geographic area. There is also the

Israel Lovell Foundation, a non-governmental organisation, which is doing good work at alleviating poverty. The Lions Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Rotary Club, many churches and youth and social groups are all partners in this effort.

The Government recognises though its responsibility and the Government has a range of economic, social, infrastructural and human resource strategies which are intended to give people the 'leg up' they need today while placing them on a trajectory for take off into that bright self-sustaining, self-sufficient tomorrow. It is not the intention of the Government to exploit people's situations by providing just enough to sustain them and to keep them in the mode of dependency.

I cannot say the same for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I was shocked that someone in this Parliament today should be preaching a philosophy which holds that workers in Barbados, the ordinary poor people, should be happy just to have the opportunity to live on some land and that it should never be their aspiration to own the land, that the Tenancies Development Act was enough to provide protection for poor people and that there is no need for them to own.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is deliberately misleading the House. I never question the right of the Barbados Labour Party to pass the law to allow people to own land. It is not for me to question them on their policies, it is for me to find alternative policies. I never said that. So the Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that I questioned them on how they amend the law to give people land.

11.50 a.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has previously declared his plantation origin. He comes from a land-owning group but should not begrudge those of us who grew up in Barbados in tenancies, from our legitimate aspirations to want to own. I did not live in any fear of being ejected from my tenantry when I was growing up but why should I have lived in suspended animation. I preferred the situation created by the Barbados Labour Party where families, friends and people who I know have been able to put themselves in the position of the "Kellmans" of this world, by being able to own land too.

All of us in Barbados are people and people who live on tenancies could not have been satisfied with what the Honourable Member is advancing. In fact, I wonder, were he in the House at that time, he would have probably voted for the retention of the Located Labourers Act, repealed in

1956. He would have supported the Located Labourers Act, where if a person does not work on the plantation, they could not have lived on the plantation land. He does not believe there should be a poverty alleviation strategy. He does not believe people should own land but thank God, he is over there and we are over here and long may it remain that way to help the poor tenants in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, this Barbados Labour Party could have rested on its laurels for having in the 1980s, taken care of plantation tenancies. We are not like that. There is always more to go. The tenancies programme that we now have, where the Government is fair to tenants and to landlords, where we make sure that in providing the opportunity for ownership of land, we have recognised that poor people might not be able to afford the cost and therefore, they pay \$2.50.

We have recognised as well that landlords were trapped for a long time with the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act but could not have realised a fair benefit for their land. Therefore, Government is making sure that where landlords are willing to sell, they can get a fair market price. The tenant pays \$2.50 and the Government pays the remainder. That is progressive legislation. It does not expropriate property. It recognises that the poor needs to play a full part and must own a piece of this rock like everyone else.

Sir, the Ministry of Social Transformation and its work does not cover urban Barbados alone. We have heard a lot of what is happening in urban Barbados and God bless the urban parishes and their Members of Parliament for it but the Ministry of Social Transformation is responsible for transforming the lives of Barbadians wherever they might be and that includes the rural constituencies, one of which I represent in Christ Church East.

There is an aggressive programme involving the creating of jobs at the community level. There is a programme of providing street lights for enhanced security and increasing the physical amenities in the area. There is a programme for the construction and repair of houses and the provision of water-borne facilities. There is a construction of tenancies roads to take people out of the muck and mud. There is the construction for the installation of water and electricity. The reason why these programmes are there is because the Government recognises, unlike the Member for St. Lucy, that although jobs have been created, although GDP has risen, that distribution is not automatic but that it requires active state intervention.

The Honourable Member sounds as though he is a right wing politician, like if he believes in small governments, he sounds like he believes that Government should not intervene to change the direction of society. We, on this side, believe that yes, the private sector and private

individuals would be involved in many areas of economic endeavours but that there continues to be a role for a strong Government. We believe there must continue the need for state intervention in order to advance the interest of the people of Barbados.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that it has always been the intention of the Barbados Labour Party to increase expenditure when everyone knows they came to Government, based on the premise that the private sector would have led the economy. That is why the first thing they did was to give the necessary impetus to the private sector to lead the economy. If the public sector is now doing it, it means that the Government would have reversed their position without first telling the public.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Let me say that the Honourable Member does not understand these things. One can only finance development out of economic growth. Where we part company with the right-wing, is that the right wing believes that economic growth is the be all and end all. To us, it is but a means to an end and that we take the benefits generated from economic growth and use them towards social ends. Therefore, that economic growth has allowed the Ministry of Social Transformation, through the Poverty Alleviation Fund, and implemented by the Rural Development Commission in the rural parts of the country, to be able during the last year alone, to do 98 house repairs; 47 bathroom facilities; 34 new houses; 126 wells and septic tanks; install 710 street lights; 15 water installation and 46 roads. I thank you.

SIR HENRY FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to enter this debate on this matter in order to correct some of the impressions which my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, might have left in the air.

Let me begin by saying I expect the Democratic Labour Party as part of its public relations in trying to regain the Government of this country, to indulge in a substantial amount of misrepresentation. One of the ministries that it has been unfairly attacking is the Ministry of Social Transformation and, in particular, has directed its barbs at the Urban Development Commission and, to some extent, the Rural Development Commission.

I am not surprised. The Democratic Labour Party maintained its electoral hold in Barbados for a long time by dominating St. Michael. St. Michael has the largest percentage of people to vote but it also has the largest percentage of poverty that exists in this country

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Sir HENRY FORDE: Thirty-eight per cent of people below the poverty line live in St. Michael and the Democratic Labour Party, having dominated St. Michael electorally, has never been able to deal with the problem of urban poverty in this country. Sir, if we answer the problem of poverty the Democratic Labour Party will never again be able to dominate St. Michael in the way it has done in the past. When you hear the attacks become personal at the level of the Minister people must keep on their thinking caps and realise that the Democratic Labour Party does not have a genuine interest in social transformation but in regaining political power. I have great difficulty with that because I came into public life at a time when I was criticised for not liking poor people or black people and all sorts of things by the Democratic Labour Party but the record will show that the Barbados Labour Party was able to bring measures to transformed the poorest of the poor.

The Minister of Housing spoke about the Tenancies Freehold Act and I want to put the records straight. Sir Grantley Adams and the labour party in 1950 when we got power introduced a Securities of Tenure and Smallholdings Act. It had two purposes, to give security of tenure to those people who lived on house spots and to give security of tenure to the large number of peasants and smallholdings who had only recently escaped from the Workers Act and wanted to hold half acre or one acre in order to cultivate it and get extra money to educate their children.

In 1965, the Democratic Labour Party passed the Tenancies Development Act which did not work because it did not have the machinery to make it work properly. Its principal aim was to stop people from being moved off 11 tenancies in St. Michael and Christ Church but these people were not able to build proper toilets or improve their condition.

When the Barbados Labour Party regained office in 1976, it brought revolutionary legislation in here in order to give people the right to purchase their land. I was the Attorney-General at the time and the Democratic Labour Party refused to vote for the legislation which would give people the right to own their lands. Sir, it is the best piece of revolutionary legislation that has come into this Parliament in the last 30 years. We also gave people the right to purchase this land at ten cents per square foot.

I live in the parish of St. John and I am pleased to see how the people of St. John have responded to that piece of legislation. I blame my party for one thing because when I go into Colleton, they believe that it is Errol Barrow who gave them the right to own the land and I have to educate the people because the Democratic Labour Party is so good at misrepresentation and, Sir, whatever Errol Barrow achieved, he never achieved that.

Today in Barbados people can still buy land at ten cents a square foot in these tenancies because of the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, they tried to do the same thing with land in Zimbabwe and there was bloodshed. We also passed legislation allowing people that had freehold agriculture land to purchase it because we recognise that people wanted to have kitchen gardens or to work their plot of land and we enable them to do that.

The Ministry of Housing tells me that close to 4 669 people have already purchased their house spots and another 2 000 will do so shortly. We have not moved fast enough because I believe that we have to put more resources for surveying so that people can get on with owning their land.

Sir, I represent suburban Barbados. We had a study done and the two worst areas for urban and suburban Barbados for housing was the City and Christ Church West because they compose so many tenancies. The Democratic Labour Party says that the members of Barbados Labour Party do not like black and they tell people that we have not done anything to help the man at the bottom and that there is no trickle down effect but, Sir, we brought legislation to this House to give poor people who live in the urban and suburban tenancies the right to purchase their lands by paying \$2.50 per square foot and the Government will pay the balance.

Sir, the people in Pleasant Hall Land in my constituency are very grateful to the Ministry of Housing for being able to own their houses. The Members of Democratic Labour Party attack everyone personally. They have also attacked me personally for 32 years but it only strengthened me. They are afraid of our programmes to enfranchise people and to give them land and home ownership in this country. I am asking the Prime Minister, despite war conditions that where he can find extra money, to use it for these poor people so that they do not have to take up their houses and walk with them.

Sir, we must transform Barbados into a society in which there is cohesiveness rather than destruction of the society that comes from the question of people race, colour and class.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party is always attacking us on the question of grass roots but I want to know which one of us in here is not grass roots. Like Mr. John Connell, I was told that my father was a carpenter and I am pleased because Jesus' father was also a carpenter. I heard all this on the platform of the Democratic Labour Party.

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Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE: Sir, which of us is not grass root? Which of us on Fridays did not have to take off our khaki suits and have them washed and pressed in order to wear them to Sunday School on the Sunday? I had to give my mother my khaki suit on Friday to have it washed and pressed so that I could have it ready to wear to Sunday School on the Sunday morning and then put it back on and wore it to school the following day.

Asides.

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE: Sir, when I hear the Democratic Labour Party trying to attack us, I must get very moved. I must congratulate the Minister. Do not divert Mr. Minister. Stick to principles and continue to do what you are doing. You are doing everything right and Barbadians would understand it.

I resent very strongly the attack on the Urban Development Commission. Obviously, the Democratic Labour Party is afraid of both the work of the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission. What is it going to do? They are going to look for some scandal. It is not unusual for them to do this.

Asides.

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE: Sir, I am saying to the officials of the various institutions that they have done an excellent job and I want to thank them on behalf of the constituents of Christ Church West. I am not asking for any votes.

Asides.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Order, please.

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE: I am thanking the staff of the Urban Development Commission and the Minister for the manner in which they have gone about, certainly in my constituency and other constituencies, making it possible for people to own part of the land of Barbados and the improvements they have done.

Sir, Let me start with my constituency. When I first went to Bonnetts in 1971, 50 per cent of the people in Bonnetts did not have utilities under the Democratic Labour Party. I saw people, like my mother's age, having to go into the backyard and hide to have a bath. You would not believe that the Democratic Labour Party is now coming into Bonnetts and behaving as though they own Bonnetts.

Asides.

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE: Sir, that is the condition that I found there. I came to this Honourable House and

moved a Resolution about Bonnetts, the Honourable Mr. Patsy Springer told me that I was not going to get it through because he tried once before and the Skipper did not let it go through.

I brought my Resolution and the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party, who is related to me through his father being married to my mother. The late Honourable Errol Barrow, got up and told his Minister that he would do nothing in my constituency to fix any roads or anything until he said that they had to be done.

Asides.

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE: You all can go and read the debates and you will find all of it there. I have to remind people about these things because I heard the Honourable Member for St. John saying that we are doing nothing in his constituency. It is not true. The whole of Society Tenantry has been done and we are now fixing Sealy Hall. You just have to go through St. John and see the work that the Barbados Labour Party has done in that parish in order to improve the position for the people of St. John. I am not going to tell any lies in here or anywhere else.

Asides.

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE: I want on behalf of the people of Christ Church West to thank the Government and Minister for making the changes that are so necessary if we are to make this society a society that can expand and people can have the opportunity to enjoy a high standard of living.

I want to mention a few of the things that have been done in my constituency, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I think that you should do that after lunch.

Hon. Sir. HENRY FORDE: Sir, I am going to finish on one point and then we will have lunch.

This Ministry is so conscious that it started a community technological programme in which the Ministry has managed to carry programmes for people ranging from the age of 7-75 in order to teach them how to use the internet and the computer. I want to say that programme started even before we had the Bonnetts Resource Centre. I am glad to see that the Ministry is carrying it on. I also want to make a plea for you too, Sir. We also want this Bonnetts Resource Centre expanded to Clapham Park. I also agree with the Minister that the church has to be more outward looking. The Methodist Church, located at Worthing View, would be a good place to use their facilities for this sort of programme and wherever you have

churches with facilities and I hope that when the Minister replies that he would tell the people of Barbados about it.

In the next election this party must forego replying to any lies and just tell the people the facts. The facts speak for themselves. There are over 1 000 people who would never have had the opportunity to go near a computer but they have the opportunity under this Government that is thinking for the future.

I am grateful to you for having extended the time for me, Sir. I thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Chairman, thank you for giving me this opportunity to make a contribution.

Mr. Chairman: We cannot hear the Honourable Member.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, I can agree with the Honourable Member that we are dealing with urban Barbados and as a Parliamentary Representatives for one of the constituencies in urban Barbados, I believe that if there is one constituency that has benefitted from the Urban Development Commission and the Ministry of Social Transformation, St. Michael North West is that constituency.

I would like to compliment the staff of Urban Development Commission because without, a lot of the things that we are standing and saying in this Chamber will not have been accomplished. The Minister can take his strength from Psalm 86. I am sure that if he takes his strength from Psalm 86, he does not have to worry about the Opposition because he has already done his work. He has bowed down his ears and he has listened to what has been said. He is reaping the benefits of what he set out to do.

I do not think that the Minister needs to worry at this time. The Psalm says, "Bow down thine ear Oh Lord, hear me for I am poor and needy."

Asides.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Chairman, it is extremely serious that we understand the role of social transformation and the Urban Development Commission. I must continue from where the Honourable Member for Christ Church West has left off.

The Democratic Labour Party has helped urban Barbados for a considerable number of years. They feel that they have a claim to urban Barbados. They have kept the people in urban Barbados in bondage, making them

believe that they were doing something for them while they were not doing anything.

For example, in St. Michael North West I have 14 tenantries where the titles to properties will now be turned over to the tenants. When one considers that some of these tenantries in urban Barbados, for example Dodson Land, where there was never a road to the homes of those residents. Sir, after living at that location for many years a road is now being built and they would soon have the title to the land. The residences of Brandon Beach will soon be receiving title to the land on which they live.

I heard a lot of talk that the residents of Brandon Beach support the Democratic Labour Party. The Democratic Labour Party does not have any support in St. Michael North West.

Asides.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Sir, it is a myth to walk around Barbados and make people believe that they have the parish of St. Michael up for grabs. They have done nothing for the people of Brandon. Today I can boast that Brandon has come alive, not only bus service or natural gas but they would soon have the title to their property.

Sir, I said it before and I am going to say it again. When we are talking about social transformation and developing, you cannot talk about the Democratic Labour Party. The Democratic Labour Party is non-existent. The only thing that they have done is to go into the areas of Wanstead and West Terrace in the early days and gave some of their friend lots of land.

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Continuation of: Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS:

Sir, I want the Democratic Labour Party to resort to the truth. It is obvious if they resort to the truth, they will have to fall on their knees and beg God for forgiveness for some of the wrong things they have done to the people in this country.

I am extremely proud, Mr. Chairman, of this Barbados Labour Party for the road work they have done in urban and rural Barbados. For example in my constituency in the UWI area, some of the students could not get to the university because they had to go through cart roads and bush. Some time back you, would have heard of girls getting raped and molested in that area. Today, I stand proud in this Chamber to say that we have not had that within the last four years.

Asides.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Sir, in the area of Pleasant View, Mr. Chairman, as soon as night fell, you could not even see your hands. There were people in Pleasant View who were landlords, renting apartments to students who attended the UWI, and those students were faced with being battered. Do you remember the case in the Fourth Avenue, University Drive, it will not happen again. I stand proud because there is a better road and it is well lit.

Asides.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Sir, I do not see how the Democratic Labour Party could tell anyone that they have transformed Barbados. Transformed Barbados, where? Sir, certain people have benefited from the Democratic Labour Party. Certain people have been able to walk with their pockets heavy, while poor people in this country were not able to receive anything.

Today, I am extremely proud of this Barbados Labour Party and I want to say thanks on behalf of all the people in St. Michael North West. Thanks from the people in Danesbury and Clarkes Road, who never had a road and they are proud today because they have roads. There is an 89-year-old lady who lives in Clarkes Road, Freehill. She said to me, "Mr. Williams, I have never seen this in my whole life and I am going back to God." She could now step out and feel comfortable walking on a proper road. Sir, she also said to me, "Mr. Williams, I want to talk to you about my son." I said, "What happened, is he giving you trouble?" She said, "No, but you know I am going and you know they are selling the land and I want you to talk to them so that my son could get it."

Aside.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Do you hear what she is saying? Thanks to the Ministry of Social Transformation from the people of Clarkes Land and the area of St. Stephens Hill, Millers Land and Small Land, Bridge Gap.

I want to say that my opponent walked through cart roads to go to Eagle Hall Infants' School. My opponent had the privilege of representing that constituency. He has not asked one question to date about what can be done for the people of Small Land, Bridge Gap. Sir, the people of Small Land, Bridge Gap are extremely proud because I as their representative under the Barbados Labour Party put in roads for those people.

Asides.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Sir, not only that, I am in a position to say here today, because it is in the book, under Urban Development, the titles for the people of Small

Land, Bridge Gap will soon be given, so they will be receiving their titles anytime now for the land that they have lived on for almost 70 or 80 years, without knowing exactly when the day will come for them to own it.

Asides.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Tell my opponent that when he walks into the area of Small Land, Bridge Gap, he must step down on the road and say thanks to Mark Williams before he begs for a vote.

Asides.

Mr. M.Z. WILLIAMS: Honourable Members, let me bring you some good news, as far as the kiosks are concerned. My opponent welcomed a galvanized hut and three ply woods. If and when it rained, those poor boys would not have had a kiosk. They would have had some old galvanize and weather-beaten wood but today, they have a beautiful set of kiosks. Mr. Chairman, they also built them. Sir, listen to this, the newspaper carried a report last week, that the kiosks are closed. I came in here to give you all this one this morning, because I was there with the fellows up to last night, so I know what is going on.

The kiosks are not closed my friends, let me explain to you what is happening. The barber shop and the little variety shop are opened. The Sip and Sup bar is opened but the food stall is closed, because too much food was being turned over and the cook could not handle it. If you check today's newspaper, you will see that there is an advertisement for a cook. Do you know what is the salary, \$375 a week?

The kiosk that certain people in Barbados said should not be built can pay a cook to work from 9.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. \$375 days a week. Sir, this is only the day time cook. They now have to put on a night cook who has to work from 3.00 p.m. until 11.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to thank the Ministry of Social Transformation for empowering the young men of the area of St. Michael North West around the kiosk.

Finally, one of the things that I must say at this time, is that the young boys and girls would also like to thank this Ministry and this Government because we will soon be having a new centre built at the corner of Deacons Farm. The one that is there now does not serve the purpose. I checked the Estimates and found out that only one centre will be built in this financial year. Praise the Lord, thank God, it will be St. Michael North West, the centre at the corner of Deacons Farm. This money has been voted under community development, in the same Ministry of Social Transformation.

Sir, tell the Democratic Labour Party that I have a message from St. Michael North West for them on the floor of Parliament that is, as far this candidate for the Barbados Labour Party is concerned, I have worked every day, every night, I have delivered and I am honest. If you plant your seed, you will reap the fruit you planted. I planted a good seed so I am going to reap an excellent poll. I am going to take the poll there from anyone who comes from That Side.

Thank you, Sir.

On the motion of Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE, seconded by Hon. R.C. EASTMOND, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and begged for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be now suspended until 1.45 p.m. this afternoon.

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

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

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RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY (CONT'D)

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

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a contribution to the continuing debate on Head 24, Ministry of Social Transformation.

The very extensive treatment of this Head today leaves none of us with any doubt of the importance which this administration attaches to the work and the worth of the Ministry of Social Transformation.

On this occasion, I sincerely hope that I would get through three issues by way of responses to what emanated from the other side. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy made a very correct statement at the end of his discourse. All of us on this side are agreed that if it is one thing that is of substance and that is truthful that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have said certainly for the time he was in the House for this year, was that any administration that is serious about alleviating poverty must focus on creating employment opportunities.

Of course that does not stop there because we over here know that poverty is multifaceted and multidimensional and that you must use a multi-pronged approach in order to deal effectively with it, so we are resigned to that. That is precisely one area that this administration has placed tremendous emphasis on its efforts at alleviating poverty.

Mr. Chairman, in 1993/1994, before the general election in September of 1994, we all know given the way the Democratic Labour Party had looked after the affairs of this country in the post 1991 period that the unemployment level had skyrocketed to a very astronomical level somewhere in the order of 27 per cent. Sir, we knew that once we had taken over the management of the affairs of this country that if we were to deal effectively with the onslaught that was unleashed by the Democratic Labour Party during the period 1991-1994 that we had to get people back to work. You would recall that the Prime Minister made extremely bold to say that one of the things that we would be doing is seeking the creation of 30 000 jobs, notwithstanding the fact that at the time it was an extremely bold statement. We have lived to see that in excess of 30 000 jobs have been created. Of course most of those jobs would not have gone to the middle class, the upper middle class, the high income class or the university graduates, but would have gone to those people who lie within the lesser income category. Indeed, significant attention would have been paid to the creation of self employment. This Government since 1994 has had a very proud record in how it has looked after the small business sector in Barbados. So the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is right when he says that we should pay some attention to employment, but that is not the only thing that we should pay attention to. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East said there is such a class of persons called the employed poor and he reminded this Honourable Chamber that those people would still need help notwithstanding the fact that they are income earners. He reminded this House that those people who earn up to \$15 000 per year do not pay income tax and that they get back \$500 from this Government when they file the reverse tax credit.

Mr. Chairman, I will go quickly to give you an indication of how this Government has been looking after

the small business sector. The Government has been doing this by way of the establishment of various institutions and funds to offer them technical and financial assistance. Those that come to mind are the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited; the Urban Enterprise Loan Fund - we have been talking a lot about the Urban Development Commission today - the Rural Enterprise Fund; the Livestock Development Fund, which is administered by the Rural Development Commission; we also have now an Orchard Development Fund; Fund Access; the Youth Enterprise Scheme; the Tourism Loan Fund and the Agriculture Development Fund.

Mr. Chairman, let me give you some indication as to the types of projects that this administration has been looking after by way of these loans. In the case of Fund Access, 377 loans valuing just under \$5 million were disbursed. With the Urban Enterprise Loan Fund, 350 loans valuing \$2.2 million were disbursed and through the Rural Development Commission, 496 loans valuing \$4.1 million were disbursed. The number of jobs created through these three Funds alone total 1 110.

Mr. Chairman, the funds from the Rural Development Commission would have gone for activities like vegetable production because farming - I am talking about farming on small plots - would have accounted for the lion share of the loans from the Rural Development Commission. We have lent for catering, for little cosmetology businesses and fishing related activities. If you had a breakdown of those loans, you would see the size and the type of activities which are supported by the Urban Development Commission.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy well knows, he alluded to it somewhere along the line without realising it, that we need to get back to thinking seriously about developing communities. So we need to use our best efforts to foster an enterprise culture within those communities, but we need to do it in such a way that those who live in the communities can support the enterprises that spring up in those communities. Let me tell you what I mean, Mr. Chairman. Let us look at the mission of the Rural Development Commission.

The Rural Development Commission is to inter alia promote the comprehensive and sustainable development of rural people and their communities so that immediate and future aspirations of both the individuals and the communities may be fulfilled. So we are seeking to achieve the simultaneous fulfilment of individuals and the communities. The Rural Development Commission's programme is made up of four elements, economic, social, infrastructural and human resources.

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Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, earlier when the Honourable Member for St. John spoke, he sought to give the impression that the Ministry of Social Transformation and its associated agencies do not have a philosophy for the alleviation of poverty and to transform this society socially.

Mr. Chairman, I have just read to you a Mission Statement of one of the agencies. Let me read to you the Mission Statement of the Urban Development Commission. You will see the intention of Government and the philosophy of this administration, though the Rural Development Commission can be summed up in this Mission Statement in a fairly comprehensive way, in the same way it can be found in the Urban Development Commission's. The Mission of the Urban Development reads:

"Committed to the delivery of quality, timely and effective services to those to whom we are responsible,

The upliftment and enhancement of the physical and human capital and the eradication of poverty from the

urban landscape." It then sets out the various activities through which it will seek to do this.

Mr. Chairman, the utterances from the Honourable Member for St. John are to be treated with the highest form of contempt. We have also helped the small business class which, includes those person at the lower rung, via legislations and the recently enacted Small Business Development Act which is geared towards the incorporating of units in that sector, as well as to reducing the incumbrances and the cost of doing business through corporate tax concessions and other considerations.

Mr. Chairman, we have recognised that if emphasis is going to be put on employment and in the creation of the necessary finance to facilitate the start and, in some cases, the expansion of businesses in the communities, then emphasis has to be put on training. Therefore, we have placed emphasis on training and will continue to do so. Mr. Chairman, there are other ways in which we have sought to help those at the bottom. We have created, through the various programmes at the Rural Development and Urban Development Commissions, the opportunity for projects to be taken into the communities. For example, the road works project. This Government has taken the decision to demonstrate, in a tangible way, that we care about those persons who otherwise might think that the administration do not care about their welfare.

As a matter of fact, when I became involved in elective politics a number of years ago, whenever I go into a remote area, the people would remark that they only see a

politician one in every five years and therefore, the things that they wanted done could not have been done. I had constantly to tell them not to judge me by the lack of performance of the previous Democratic Labour Party but that they needed to give me a chance.

Mr. Chairman, I have made it my business and as fortune would have it, I am the Minister of Rural Development Commission and the persons to whom attention was paid was those persons living in those remote areas. One could now see that the asphalt and concrete road programmes have now gone into those remote areas and have done a tremendous job in increasing the lighting in those areas as well. We want to show those persons living in those remote areas that there is a major difference in the philosophy and in the action on the part of the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party. The record is clear. When one goes into the constituency of St. Philip South, people will say that they know the Member of Parliament who cares about them.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has made mention of vending and that the vending class plays a very important role in the economic activity of Barbados. This administration in the year 2001 needed to do two things. We needed to improve and to expand the market infrastructure in Barbados. Do you know who vend in those markets? Those persons from the lower end. Those persons to whom we should be creating the employment opportunities for them to be given an opportunity to participate in the mainstream economic activities.

Mr. Chairman, we have a vendors market at the Glebe, which followed that at the Aberdeen Jones Centre at Gall Hill, Deacons Market, Paynes Bay, Tent Bay and Oistins.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: on point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that we are discussing the Rural Development Commission when, in truth and in fact, we should be discussing the Urban Development Commission.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, in case the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not know, some of the funds used by the Rural Development Commission comes through the Ministry of Social Transformation. This is all about poverty alleviation through employment activities into the communities to facilitate community empowerment and improving the quality of life of those who are allowed to participate.

There are other facilities under construction such as Speightstown, Redman's Village, Jackson, Bush Hall and Bathsheba.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I believe you can come again. The Honourable Member for St. George North.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman it seems to me that this batting order is very long. I have to wait a very long time. I believe this Head is well represented and all Members want to speak to social transformation.

Mr. Chairman, I believe social transformation is the business, not only of urban Barbados but of everyone. It is about giving poor people a chance in society. People must know they have a right to service. They must have a right to know which institution to go to for welfare, for child care development, or for housing. This is important, Mr. Chairman.

2.05 p.m.

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Hon. G.A. CLARKE: In Barbados we have seen the Ministry of Social Transformation touched the urban area, where there is the most poverty, and the rural area. The people in the rural area have been getting assistance from the Ministry of Social Transformation.

I visited an old gentleman in my constituency who appeared to be dying. His house has no floor and he slept on a dilapidated bed. I asked the Ministry of Social Transformation through the Poverty Alleviation Fund to fix his home. The house was fixed in January and when I returned to house in February to see the gentlemen, there seem to have been a miracle and he was skipping and running all over the place.

Mr. Chairman, when things like these happen there is transformation and people feel better about themselves. We have noticed throughout urban and rural Barbados that more and more people know where to go because they know a fund exists to help the people of Barbados.

It is importance to look at the whole context of what social transformation is all about. Every Friday a programme is undertaken in my area by the Ministry of Social Transformation for the elderly and craft is taught. A number of senior citizens have also done craft and some are selling this craft and others are exhibiting it and a lot is happening at the Valley Complex.

The Ministry also has a programme for the youngsters on the block as more has to be done for these youngsters who go to the block to 'lime' and sometimes to do other things. I call on the technocrats in the Ministry to devise programmes to help those persons who lime and do not have a cause in life. I believe that the Minister and

technocrats will find a way within the next term to eliminate the problems on 'the block'.

Mr. Chairman, through this department help is being given to the Thelma Vaughn Home again. When the Honourable Member for St. John was the Minister of Finance he cut the funds of the Thelma Vaughn Home and when we became the Government in 1994, I asked the Honourable Member for St. Philip North to ensure that the home receive some funds and in the 1995 fund were given to the home and \$300 000 is allocated to them in this year's Estimates.

The Honourable Member for St. John asked the question why the tenantry programme is taking so long after 1981. It has taken long because of the problems that exists in surveying. I want him to know so far over 6 358 were surveyed and over 4 000 persons have received conveyances. The remaining 2 000 persons within the plantation tenantry have not come forward because of fear or because they say that they have to pay taxes as soon as they receive the conveyance and some people do not want to own property.

Mr. Chairman, since the amendment of the tenantry's programme, where persons now get the land at \$2.50 and Government pays the difference between the market price and the \$2.50, a number of persons will qualify in rural and urban Barbados and we estimate over time that more than 40 000 people will enjoy the right to title.

It has also taken long because during the time of the Democratic Labour Party there was a short decline in the ownership of land and the emphasis was placed on giving back the landlords some say in their estate. We recognise there was a problem and we amended the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act to ensure that landlords were not disadvantaged. When the Democratic Labour Party amended the Act in 1991 the onus was on moving the tenantry from two back to five and more and it also protected the landlord. We followed through by allowing landlords to get the fair market price and this is why it has taken so long.

We envisage that over the next two to five years through the back-tracking programme we now have and through revisiting tenancies that more persons will own the land.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

A study was just done by one of our officers in the Ministry, Mr. Timothy Maynards, and published weeks ago entitled "Land Reform and a Search for Security of Tenure, the Barbados Experience", which points out that at the turn

of the century less than 30 families owned 80 per cent of the land in Barbados. Today and according to the 2000 Census, 56 per cent of the population acknowledges being owners of their land. He concludes by saying that by the year 2000 at least 56 per cent of lands were owned privately. Sir, Government owns less than 2 per cent of land in Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Maynard is making the point that a lot of land is still owned by foreign concerns but that the majority of Barbadians own their land.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

2.15 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to speak again on this Head. I thought that yesterday when I made my first intervention, I would have made myself very clear, this administration's philosophy as it relates to social transformation.

I was, certainly, astonished to hear the Honourable Member for St. John's approach to the level and development of social transformation and what it was all about. There is no person on this side of the aisle that would ever deny that under successive administrations in Barbados that they have been policy decisions which have contributed to a level of social transformation, upliftment or development of the country. Sir, that has never been in dispute, whether it was the Democratic Labour Party or the Barbados Labour Party. Obviously, when the Democratic Labour Party was in Government there were initiatives taken that would have contributed to the transforming the society.

Sir, the issue is, never before have actions relating to transforming the society which were placed under one agency and which has an overarching philosophy and policy to look after dealing with the most vulnerable in our society. That is the issue and the philosophy and that is why it has nothing to do with Parks and Beaches and School Meals Department as mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. All those things are fundamentally important to transforming a social situation.

The Ministry of Social Transformation has as its primary focus, the provision of assistance of vulnerable groups in the society and the empowerment of individuals and groups in our society.

If you create a Parks and Beaches programme or a school meals programme, it not only helps the vulnerable

in our society, many other people benefited from it. Sir, for the first time an administration has taken upon itself to capture all of these programmes as they relate to dealing with the most vulnerable in our society under one agency in a place where they can be overseen, directed and managed in a sensible way to capture those who are the most vulnerable.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, I thought that the philosophy, as outlined by the Minister, was well understood. I sat in this Chamber and heard a lot of the negativity coming from the Democratic Labour Party relating to this particular initiative, the creation of the Ministry of Social Transformation. I was here and I heard when each of them spoke in the objection of the establishment of the Ministry of the Ministry of Social Transformation.

I believe that there is some negativity in our society about the concept of social transformation. I believe that a lot of it has been sown by the Democratic Labour Party in the first place and encouraged people to jump on the band wagon with the slogans about mendicancy and all of the other things that I have been hearing.

How do you start to deal with the concept of poverty alleviation? I believe there are fundamental issues that deal with the alleviation of poverty overtime, whether it is empowering them or creating job. How do you attack the problem at its root? How do you deal with a situation where people have been disadvantaged for so long, how do you start to deal with them? While you are going through the education process or doing all the nice things of creating new enterprises, what happens to them? What is the platform by which you start to create all these initiatives?

For example, if the Ministry fixes a house for an old lady who worked for many years, a grandmother who looks after her grandchildren, are you telling me that we are creating beggars in our society if we begin to look after their most basic needs of this old lady? If we do this, are we creating a society of mendicants? I believe that is political twaddle at the highest level.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party knows why they attacked the issue of social transformation and the creation of a Ministry of Social Transformation in the first place. We have never disputed that the Democratic Labour Party made a contribution to the development of social transformation. We have created a new school of thought as it relates to developing people.

For example, if you tell me that the Ministry of Tourism has as its philosophy to develop tourism at its highest level, building community tourism, I do not see why within the Ministry of Tourism we cannot allocate a portion of our budget for that project.

I believe that the people in our society now have a reference point in terms of their development. If you are a person who had slipped through the cracks or a person who has not done as well as you should have done, you now have a place where you can symbolically call yours in terms of getting help. They are people who are going to say that there were other agencies that in the past and that have contributed to people's development.

2.25 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. N. A. LYNCH:

Sir, the point is that I think it is symbolic and it accelerates the programme.

There was a National Assistance Board (NAB) and a Child Care Board and all that but, Mr. Chairman, the issue is that it has to deal with a lot of the management matters related to duplication of effort. It also helps with the acceleration of programmes and I believe that is important, in terms of its development.

Sir, I also believe, that in addition to what actually happens to a person every day, in terms of changing them socially, must be the psychological upliftment that comes to people as well. I do not buy into this belief that the Ministry of Social Transformation creates these people in our society who will continue to be mendicant.

I believe, Sir, that an administration which centres this under this particular banner and dedicates its specific resources to helping people, creates a platform for a level of psychological upliftment for many members of our society. I also believe that if this is the way in which it is approached on both sides of the isle, you will see a transformation in people's behaviour over time and a difference in the way they relate to the whole issue of social transformation.

I believe that if there is one travesty that has been committed, it is this constant beating by the Democratic Labour Party on the whole issue of the concept of social transformation.

Mr. Chairman, none of us on This Side of the isle has ever talked about the whole issue of free education or the concept of education. We tried to own it and to say that we were the first to do it and that we gave out school books. Sir, when they started to claim it under the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow, we had already made inroads into free education.

Sir, nobody has ever tried to beat up on the concept. Their leader is now beating up on the whole concept of it,

but the issue is that everybody on This Side has stated very clearly, what education has been able to do for a succession of Barbadians and how it has moved our society along.

Sir, I think it is shameful, particularly for people who have never thought of the idea and who have never tried to put it in any set way and never really said it to the people.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Mr. Chairman, I represent an urban constituency that was represented by a Prime Minister and there are no enduring monuments to his representation in that constituency, in terms of changing people's lives in that constituency and these are not my words, you can get them from the people themselves.

Sir, you should stop dealing with the programmes and start to deal with what happens to individual pockets of people. I deal, Sir, with the issues of empowerment, commercialism and all these nice things that people like to hear. I can tell you, Sir, that in my constituency alone, I have been able to witness what the efforts are, in terms of dealing with people's specific circumstances...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: ...of housing and as it relates to everything that you are doing for them to change their circumstances. Mr. Chairman, not only change their physical circumstances but I have seen what it has done for those people, in terms of creating for them, what they believe to be a better state for them in Barbados, and that is what this is about.

I do not have to come in here and jump up and down and talk about houses that were fixed in the Bayland and in Brittons Hill and added some water toilets. I am dealing, Sir, with the overall velocity of this thing which is something that needs to go through to the public, in terms of changing people's attitudes and their minds, in terms of creating a basis for their social upliftment, allowing them, Sir, to have a sense of pride in whom they are.

Sir, I believe that any socio-economic gains that we make in the future are tied to our entire understanding of whom we are as people, to take us to the next level.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I always assumed this Estimates debate was a debate in which members backbenchers and members of the Opposition were supposed to ask questions of Honourable Member of the frontbench.

Therefore, Sir, I resent it when, in such an incorrigible way, Honourable Members like the Honourable Member for St. Michael South gave the impression that persons who ask questions about the nature of programmes or about the design of a ministry or whatever, are doing some kind of disservice, either to the existence of the Ministry, or to the Government as a whole, because that is not what the Estates debate, at the end of the day, is all about.

Mr. Chairman, that is why I believe, you can dismiss the last speech as a clanging symbol, signifying nothing but much sound and fury. There is nothing you can put your finger on, once that speech was over, that has contributed to the sum total of knowledge about the work of the Ministry of Social Transformation.

What the Honourable Member for St. Michael South sought to do, was to justify that you have such a ministry, but you could call the ministry anything. You can call a ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture, but it could still carry out social transformation. That was the very point the Honourable Member for St. Philip South was making, that is, nobody had to call his Ministry, the Ministry of Social Transformation for him to carry out social transformation in rural Barbados.

Therefore, when people ask about the overall concept of social transformation, this is perhaps why they ask it, but a Prime Minister is free to call a ministry whatever he wants to call it. If the Minister was lazy and wanted to do nothing, despite the fact that the ministry had a particular name, he would still do nothing. This is why in debates like this, the objective is to draw out of the Ministers, what they are doing, not relative to the name of the ministry, but to the programmes that exists and the overall philosophy of development that we have. This is all Honourable Members on This Side are doing.

If, as the Honourable Member on That Side says, this is such a weak Opposition, how are we so successful, apparently, in causing people to believe that what is happening in their lives is not really happening.

Now, I am hearing about all these wonderful things that are happening, people are getting roads, houses, money, street lights and everything, but this Opposition that is supposed to be the worst in the history of Barbados, had the ability to fool those people that what they are getting, they are not really getting. And, the Opposition is to be blamed for the fact that the Government cannot deliver their programme in such a sensitive and sensible way, as to help Barbadians as a whole, bite into them.

Sir, that is not our fault. It has nothing to do with us. There has never been a statutory corporation in the history of Barbados that has done as much advertising as the Urban

Development Commission. In today's paper, you can see a before-and-after picture of a house, somewhere in Barbados, when it was dilapidated and when it was fixed. I do not know if it was the gentleman from St. George whose house was fixed, I am not sure.

Every business magazine in the Advocate carries stories about the loans lent out by the Urban Development Commission. Despite all of those millions of dollars spent by the Government on promoting its agenda, there are people in here, some of whom have been in here for decades, who would say that the Democratic Labour Party is responsible for the fact that they cannot get their message across to the public.

2.35 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: All we have to do is to say one thing and our one statement is more impactful than the statement of the 26 people on that side. That must tell you, Sir, that something is missing. Is it creditability? Is it integrity? What is it that is missing on that side that makes it so difficult to get those views across to people? I have to ask the question, because apparently we are to be blamed.

It is the Democratic Labour Party that is stopping the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act from operating? It is the Democratic Labour Party that is stopping the Urban Development Commission from making people understand that they are socially transforming them? We are not stopping anybody from anything. We would like to see Barbados transformed whether it is done through an Urban Development Commission or whatever, but we are entitled to call for accountability. We are entitled to call for a balance and fairness in the way resources are disbursed.

I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church West saying that a road in Sealy Hall is being done and then he says that he does not mislead the House. I want him to tell me which road in Sealy Hall is being done now.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: On a point of order. There is a scope of work being done right in Society, right in College Bottom when you come down by Codrington College to the left.

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: Well, if that was a slip of the tongue... Ask the Honourable Member for St. John if work is not being done right down to the...

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: You agreed with me.

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: Is the Honourable Member for St. John telling the House that we are not doing roads in St. John at the moment?

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member knows that the Society road was done partly by the Democratic Labour Party and partly finished by the Barbados Labour Party. It is finished by Brathwaite, the one on the other side, not on the Honourable Member side. The one on the Honourable Member side which was recently done was to facilitate the new Diocesan Regional Office. Of course, I do not go around the constituency, so I would not know.

Now down the Hill, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South through the Rural Development Commission started and did the first and only concrete road which has been done in Sargeant Street which is completed.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There is a small road at Foster Hall in St. John which was also done by the Rural Development Commission, but the rest of Foster Hall Tenantry needs to be done.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North is saying that he only got one road done and he is a member of the Government.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I am so hurt to think that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, my parliamentary representative, only got two roads done in St. Philip North since 1999. It hurts me because he knows how much I want to see where I live develop. I am very disappointed but I am not sticking on that.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Success for the Honourable Member for St. Philip North would be retirement, so I would like that as well.

Sir, you cannot blame us. You set up a Ministry and the Minister starts to defend his policies. There is nothing wrong with that. We do not create perceptions in Barbados. We do not have that ability because as you all say we are the weakest and worst Opposition ever in the history of this country, so how come we are so powerful that we can erase

the truth and supplant in its place a perception that there is no social transformation taking place in this country when the Government is also saying that it has done so much.

I want to move on to some other issues. I challenge the Minister again to get the Government to place substantial resources in the area of family life in this country particularly in the area of helping people with parenting. Nowadays I have noticed renewed interest. I was very happy the other day to go to one of those form level meetings and see a large number of young men participating actively and the teachers were explaining to them what their children are doing, but it needs to be extended.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I praise the Ministry of Education, if the Ministry was responsible for it. I got the impression that it was the teachers, but if the Minister wants praise as well I am happy to give it to him, but I will now give praise to the men and the parents generally for participating and showing a high level of interest.

When I was leaving secondary school was when Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs) were now starting up. In my days at school there were no PTAs and parents only came to school when you were either suspended or the headmaster sent for them or the games teachers said that you were not turning up in gear. Invariably, if a parent was seen at the school people knew it was trouble not that the parent was there to find out how the student was doing. There is a lot more that needs to be done in Barbados like the question of tackling teenage pregnancies.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, get some more resources for that because it is almost criminal in this country and I agree with you.

I think the Honourable Member for St. Lucy pointed out something that Honourable Members on that side do not accept. Even in relation to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act the owners of those tenancies escaped entirely scot-free at the end of the day. They put the people on the tenancies. They put in no infrastructure. The Government subsidised the purchase of the tenancies lots and then had to put in the physical infrastructure including streetlights, water, roads and everything.

The persons who live and work on those tenancies, and build up the profits either of the sugar plantations or in some cases the enterprises of powerful white families in this country, had to pay twice. They paid the 10 cents per square foot or whatever they now pay and then they pay through their taxation. That is the problem that I would say

is very clear about the way in which development takes place in this country. It always had a cost to Government and in that respect the Minister is right, but then at the same time the Government does not go out there and seek out people who are doing things in the community and try to assist them, but I am not going to any Government cap in hand. In my own constituency, we have a premier league football team, a third division football team, two basketball teams...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You get a lot a money from the private sector. I do not get a cent from them or from Government, so do not compare.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: .. a netball team, a pool team and a leading BCA and BCL cricket team...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: All of these are sponsored by or assisted through a charity called 'Families First'. The Government funds all kinds of organisations which springs up overnight but nobody from any department of Government has ever come to find out how we have survived.

We ran a computer camp for three summers. We lent out chairs to community groups and the Government borrowed the chairs too. Different departments of Government with activities up there borrowed the chairs and the sound equipment from us free of cost. It is community work. The Honourable Member better go and check because he sat in one of the chairs and he did not even know.

Asides.

2.45 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, even though the people in the community should know what is happening and come and partner the activity with you, there is no one going out seeking those organisations. It never happens. I go and watch football practice three evenings per week and I do not see anybody from the National Sports Council watching any of the premier league teams there.

Some time ago I came through the airport and was stopped because the balls I had were pressurised air and Immigration personnel wanted to know what they were. I

had to go overseas to bring back footballs because of the cost of them here.

I gave an example to boost what has been happening there because there are other Members of Parliament who would do the same thing but with the amount of resources that are being made available to departments which, as I say have desk-bound individuals who are not getting out into the community and finding out what people are doing and supplementing the resources and assisting them in carrying out their work, at the end of the day, community programmes and volunteerism is going to die. I make that bold prediction here today.

Sir, there are only so many persons who are going to be involved. Already older Barbadians have stopped going out to those activities. They are afraid that as soon as they see six youngsters coming down the road with their hair twisted up, they believe that is trouble, that a fight is going to start. Therefore, they do not participate in the clubs or cricket anymore for whatever reason, and family life in Barbados is dying.

As I said, the substitute in the new developments is neighbourhood watches and I suspect there is also a considerable decline in urban Barbados in community activities as well.

What is going to be done about that? Yes, there are churches but that alone cannot suffice because the church has a particular agenda. Not everybody is going to be inclined to that agenda. The football and cricket associations cannot even get their members to attend anniversary services. The only persons who go are the committee of management and probably the captains.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Because they may feel alienated from the church. Some of them have been to Sunday School but when they can make that decision for themselves, a lot of them have decided to finish with it, unless there is a wedding or a funeral.

Therefore, what we need to do is to respond to how we can effectively mobilise the resources to assist those persons who are doing volunteer work in Barbados and start to build community life in this country once again.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I am tempted to reply to the Honourable Member for St. John in a way I would like to but I would not do that. What I will say is that I have realised he has spoken about the decline in family life in Barbados. Indeed, he has mentioned what wonderful work Families First is doing. I was, however, shocked a few months ago when I read in the newspaper:

“Dear son, I can’t find you. You don’t seem to have any time for me and, therefore, the only way I can contact you is through the newspaper.”

Mr. Chairman, I will not go down that road. Earlier today the Honourable Member for St. Lucy also made the point that families are no longer looking after families. I am very moved by what I see very often in my constituency. Everyday we hear that people are living longer. We hear it so very often, it has virtually become a cliché in Barbados, that putting our old relatives in a nursing home is not the way to go.

I believe we have more old relatives alive today than ever before. In fact, the attitude of a lot of our senior citizens is, “leave me here to die here.” The geriatric hospital is not an automatic choice any longer for the older persons.

Mr. Chairman, this shift from institution and to family is also taking its toll on certain persons in the community, particularly middle-aged women and the young single women. I believe that one out of every 15 households in Barbados has at least someone at home who is engaged in the care of an elderly relative. Old age obviously has no barriers, it affects everybody. I feel that these people who stay at home to take care of their relatives, should be honoured. They regard what they are doing as the circle of life; these older persons have brought them into this world and now the older persons are dependent, it is their turn to give back that care which the older person has given them. They see it as an emotional obligation.

Mr. Chairman, this group of which I am speaking, exists independently of Government’s support, which is crucial. The dilemma I am faced with is whether or not it is Government’s responsibility to support those persons who stay at home to look after the elderly. The dilemma is whether looking after one’s grandparents, should be seen as a profit-making venture or should it be seen as work to be paid for, or is it the duty of other relatives who are working and are better off financially, to ensure that person who is caring for that grandparent, should be compensated.

2.55 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE: Sir, people who do this work are saints and decent human beings. Their only aim is to keep one more dependent older person out of an institution. I fear that the more materialistic we get in Barbados that our old people will be abandon in the evening of their days.

If we had to translate the contribution which this particular section who stays home to look after the elderly makes in dollars and cents, it would be worth thousands of dollars because their day's work goes beyond the standard eight hours. They take care of them from the time they wake up in the morning and put them to bed at night as well as doing so much in between. If we compare the wages of the caregivers who work with the National Assistance Board and the pay that live-in caregivers receive, you will see that these people are worth thousands of dollars.

For many of them the strain is showing because they do not know what it means to have a vacation or own anything of their own. They do not own a television, car or house and they do not have the best clothes while the part of the family who works are driving cars and wearing the best clothes. Their lives are characterised by stress, anxiety and grief and they eke out a lonely existence. They often wonder what is going to happen when they become older because they are busy living someone else's life and tend to forget their own and do very little for themselves.

Mr. Chairman, it is as if they are being penalised for caring for the elderly at home. I know of a dozen such persons in my constituency who carry out the function of caregivers. Some of them gave up their jobs to care for an older relative. I also have to say that combining caring with paid work in Barbados is a very demanding exercise.

Some persons still work and have to perform the function of caring for an elderly relative or a sick relative and some employers are extremely insensitive to their situation. I have come across a case recently and this is how I am able to speak about it. Some employers would prefer to dismiss the person so as to avoid having to give the person time off from work at short notice. I know that the person should work to make up for time given but very often the employer is not sensitive to the situation and simply wants to get rid of the person because he feels he is being short-changed.

Mr. Chairman, employers must try to come to grips with an evolving workforce increasingly touched and affected by the concerns of old age because people in Barbados are indeed living longer.

Mr. Chairman, I will close at this particular point but I want to say that it is within my knowledge that at the University of the West Indies there is a gerontology desk and immediate research should be carried out on the effects of the wear and tear of this kind of caregiving which our people give to their dependent relatives so as to be able to come to some determination as to what degree of stress it is having on these persons.

Mr. Chairman, I am obliged to you.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Mr. Chairman, thanks very much for the opportunity to speak on Head 24. I will not be contentious, although I was wondering if my turn came as a consequence of some form of pecking order in this Honourable Chamber and it goes against the grain of all that I and this Ministry stand for because we feel very strong about social justice. I thought it was a clear exercise and, pardon me for any misinterpretation of the motive of not having the same privilege as those who stood long on their feet asking for your ears and eyes.

3.05 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, other institutions like the Pinelands Creative Workshop, the Israel Lovell Foundation and the Deacons Group are a collective body of improvised individuals coming together to form grass root organisations. Sometimes we are not treated with the respect as some of the more traditional institutions that are usually headed by special elitist core.

I remember on occasion when attempting to cast a felonious charge on the Israel Foundation and its fellow organisation, the Pinelands Creative Workshop, the impression was given that we were not administrated to by the kind of educated elitist group in the society. Therefore, those institutions were worthy and we were not worthy of government funding.

Today these institutions are well respected across the Caribbean as good models. In the month of December the Minister and I were on a journey to Trinidad to meet with different groups in that island to give assistance and to work in collaboration with other groups across the Caribbean.

The models that you are seeing mirrored inside the resource centres across the Caribbean are the very models that have emerged out of the experiences of the Israel Lovell Foundation and the Pineland Creative Workshop. These are models that are well conceptualised and models that work successfully. Those persons who are beneficiaries or recipients of the different services offered by those institutions, today can boast proudly that they have made a substantial contribution towards the enrichment of the quality of the people in the community. They did not empower individuals with money. We impart special characteristics that were responsible for bringing some stability and self-respect to the young people in those communities.

Deacons Group and Bonnetts also adopted that particular model and those model are now being used across Barbados. That is why we have the conversion from the culture of the community centre to a new culture of a

resource centre which is now a learning institution. In previous times when it was in its emerging stage, a lot of these centres were used for social activities such as parties, dances and some basic things that added recreation for people in the society.

We felt that we should go a little further in expanding the programme and be more scientific in doing things that could help us to enrich the communities at the grass root level. Those persons who fell through the social and economic cracks in the early stages of life were given the opportunity after leaving school to interact with some people who were still in school and who belonged to different social groupings, because we crossed class and age borders.

In these community centres you will now see young men and women and old men and old women at the Israel Lovell Foundation and the Pinelands Creative Workshop having an opportunity to become efficient in information technology. We have a very educational and skill training programme.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, I took the Honourable Member for St. John to the Israel Lovell Foundation to witness and to give him an opportunity to see that your charges were so false at the time when you accused us of being the recipient of Government's patronage and not having any genuine motive for offering the service to the people in the community.

I took you there and you witnessed that there were 15 computers at the Israel Lovell Foundation.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: I took him there about two months ago.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: It is part of St. Michael East and how we are working not only as a private institution in a culture which divorces the NGOs from the state but working in collaboration with the state to ensure that we reach the masses of people who normally would not have been serviced as a result of the programmes within the Government through the community development.

We have also put a remedial education programme in place to assist those who are experiencing a number of difficulties with reading, writing and basic arithmetic. We not only offer academic classes, like what we do on Saturdays, assisting children who are preparing themselves for the Common Entrance Examination and the

prerequisites to be successful at the CXC level. We have put in place a cultural programme which includes a community theatre and a steel orchestra, which is the first steel orchestra coming out of a community that won a gold award at NIFCA. For two years the Israel Lovell Foundation Dancers were placed at NIFCA receiving silver awards.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: We are doing all that we can to cultivate in that community progressive young people.

Sir, we have not isolated the senior citizen. We have started recreational programmes. However, they have not been appealing to the males as we would like. We are still trying to come up with a method to attract males to these programmes. The reality is, every Monday morning at

10.00 a.m. over 50 or 60 senior citizens from Licorish Village, The Ivy, Belle Gully, St. Barnabas, Martinique Road, Bridge Road and Carrington Village come to the Israel Lovell Foundation to attend a well-structured programme. We have expanded the programme and we are using an additional building.

Sir, we have senior citizens coming from the constituencies of St. Michael South East, Str. George South and St. Lucy's constituency and journeying to the urban community to attend that programme.

3.15 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. T.A. PRESCOD:

Sir, every year, we take those senior citizens to other Caribbean islands. Last year, we were in Grenada and the year before, we were in St. Lucia. In December, we took more than 60 young people from St. Michael East to Trinidad and Tobago and that was the time I saw the Honourable Minister involved in helping to assist other NGO organisations shape their programmes.

Sir, we are not only involved in pulling together the Barbadian community, but we are now stretching and extending our arms throughout the region, in helping other NGO organisations with the same objectives to do the work that all of them ought to do. I think this is a credible programme that I had to highlight to you.

I would like to be able to talk longer on the urban development programme. I want to speak to you about the contribution that has been made by the Urban Development Commission and the road across St. Michael East, in Barkers Road, where we have a new road.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, I am sorry you could not give me an extended period in order to accommodate the physical and mentally challenged in this society because I want to speak on that particular area with some level of specifics.

Sir, I want to say to the people of my constituency, St. Michael East, that I am grateful for the opportunity to serve them. No amount of words can express how I feel. I also know that to whom much is given, much is expected and I wish I could serve and give them all that they need. It will take more than five years to do all that needs to be done in the depressed communities across Barbados.

Even those who are immediately close to me, I was unable to accommodate them in the 32 houses that I built and repaired across that constituency. Sir, the roads that were built in Tichbourne, in Barkers, in St. Barnabas and throughout the constituency, and natural gas was put into places like Rowans Village and Tichbourne.

I have not been able to serve them the way I would like, especially the people who live in the zone 1 area. Sir, I want them to be assured that my life will not be totally fulfilled, unless I pay my debt to them. I will keep my commitment to them and I will never leave thee or forsake thee.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I heard many Honourable Members refer to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and his contributions earlier. I want to say that unlike them, I do not rely on the Treasury of Barbados to create the social transformation for St. Lucy.

Sir, instead of doing that, we lead by example, for the rest of Barbados to follow. As you know, Sir, North Stars is very much a part of St. Lucy and we have developed a project there which we were hoping would have been an example for the Ministry of Social Transformation to use.

Sir, we did not wait on the Ministry of Social Transformation or the Ministry of Sports or any other ministry to develop that project for us. We started that project and we made sure that it was very much community oriented. Sir, it is amazing that when we spoke about that project, and told the rest of Barbados where we were going to take it, everybody thought it was one big joke. Earlier this year, Sir, the joke was not played on me. It was played on those who criticised me for having the foresight. Sir, we built something that we wanted and in the end, the Government assisted with some money to complete the project. This is why you will find the name of the

Honourable Member for St. Philip North on the plaque at North Stars.

I want to say, Sir, that what was also recognisable and appreciated by the residents is that when that cricket match was played at North Stars, the people from the surrounding areas were allowed to come and set up businesses and they were given the first lesson in operating a business.

We did not put out tenders to the highest bidder. We recognised that the people who built or contributed to the construction of the project should be the first persons to have been offered the opportunity to get some of the gains from the success of that project, the people who were around and helped to contribute to the particular project.

I would have thought, Sir, that people within the rest of Barbados would have recognised what occurred at North Stars and if you allow the community to use its resources, blended with the resources of the Government, how you can get a project that can be appreciated by the community.

I feel, Sir, the same way that project can be respected by the people in the surrounding areas and, especially, the people of St. Lucy, this example should be taken and carried throughout Barbados. In other words, the project should not be seen only as a Government project but it should be seen as a project where the community and the Government come together to deliver in the interest of all.

I also want to make this point that we are not stopping there. This has occurred within the cricket circle, but we want to take community development a step further. This is why at Checker Hall, we would hope that the Minister understands that there has to be interactions, not only with the commercial sector, but in sports. Sportsmen and sportswomen should be given an opportunity to excel in their talents and exploit them, so that they could bring the older folk within the communities to see what they are doing to help bring the communities closer.

Sir, this is why I honestly believe that the same privileges given to North Stars, even though the Youth Milan Football Club might not have done the same thing, that they should be given permission in the Checker Hall area to take that project to a higher step. I believe that if there is another area within St. Lucy where you can bring the community together as one, that you should allow the Youth Milan Football Club to take football in Barbados to a higher height.

Sir, I think that is the first Football Club which might be going professional where they have a relationship with clubs from Trinidad. I believe that the resources of the Government and the community should be blended

together, so that we can have the first professional football club in Barbados.

Sir, we create ideas and we offer those ideas to the rest of Barbados and we hope that jealousy would not stop them from achieving what they need.

Asides.

Mr. D.St.E. KELLMAN: As you know, Sir, we did not stop there. In the Pie Corner area, we had a centre called the Rock Field Social Centre. It was regarded as one of the derelict buildings of Barbados. If you go to Rockfield Social Centre, Sir, you will see the combinations of the Parliamentarian and the people in the area where that building was brought back to its usefulness. It shows, Sir, that when you give latitude to communities. The independence that I spoke about earlier is displayed in St. Lucy, at a level which is much higher than anywhere else.

Sir, when one goes through St. Lucy, one will recognise that the housing stock in St. Lucy is not Government driven but it is very much community driven, and that the housing stock of St. Lucy belongs very much to the people of St. Lucy. This is why I said to the Minister of Housing that when you are looking after the social needs of the people in St. Lucy, we do not need you to build houses for us, we just want to have the opportunity to have house lots and we will do the rest.

3.25 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: We believe very much in community building. On weekends we do not mind putting our hands or our resources together and helping one another to build homes. This system was practised very much by the people of St. Lucy especially in the years of the 1980s and it was exploited further within the years.

What we did under the Democratic Labour Party and what we will continue to do is to keep the independence of people, that is very important. I am not one of those who believes in the dependency syndrome. I am a strong believer in independence and I have no right to move from that seeing that I am a product of the constituency St. Lucy.

Over the years, Government did not have to use the Treasury of Barbados to put large sums of money into St. Lucy to develop it. St. Lucy is one of the most developed constituencies in Barbados and it is like that because of its independence. That is why when I come to this Parliament and I ask the Minister of Housing and Lands for house lots, roads and better transportation system within the constituency of St. Lucy. No one should deny the good people of St. Lucy because they do not impact on the

Treasury like the other parishes of Barbados. They have an independence about them that should be used throughout Barbados to show that once given an opportunity you can exploit that opportunity in order to help others.

I have said in one of my columns in the newspaper - I believe the Minister of Social Transformation would have read that column - that I do not believe in continuous benefits. I believe in current benefits and not capital benefits. I believe that if you give someone something, you should not have to continue giving them. When you give it to them they should be able to take that opportunity and run with it, so that you can bring other people into the loop. I speak about independence not dependency. If you give the impression that every time someone has a problem, you are going to be throwing resource after resource at them, you will not solve the problem. Those who criticise the Democratic Labour Party for its social policy in the 1960s just do not understand what is social engineering at the highest level. They will never understand it for the simple reason we believe in empowering people and not making people dependent on us.

As a parliamentarian, when I hear that my constituents have to be dependent upon me, then I will know that I would have failed my constituents. That is why you will not hear me saying that I did this for 'X' or 'Y' because I am not interested for whom I am doing the work within my constituency. I have been sent to Parliament to serve every single soul in my constituency and I do not want names because I am there to represent the interest of all. So Government must understand that any social programme must not be seen as a programme to get votes because once you do good, you will be compensated. They must not tie social engineering to votes, they should tie it to the upliftment of the people.

I will continue to make the point in this Parliament that poor people have worked too hard in this country for us as parliamentarians to believe that we must make them dependent on us. We as parliamentarians must make our constituents independent of us. When we do that we would have achieved what we set about to do. The day that poor people must continue to believe that social engineering is part of gathering votes for elections, we would have failed this whole country. Black people cannot be the ones to be seen linking a vote to social engineering because we would not have understood what happened in those dark early ages. We are about relieving people of oppression not oppressing them. Politicians are not the ones for handing out the largesse for votes. Politicians are people for social engineering and uplifting the people in this country.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I want to speak to something that is of a concern to me,

something which the Honourable Member for St. Joseph in his very excellent speech yesterday alluded to and something about which I think we have to be watchful and mindful of as a society. That something is national attitude and the extent to which the society is, even as we observed it today, being transformed, not necessarily for the better, and the extent to which we must use attitudes as part of the transformation process that we are seeking to effect.

I grew up in a Barbados where every morning women, mothers and grandmothers, will get up and with their coconut brooms and would sweep and clean around their homes. It was not the era of illegal dumping. People did not trim their hedges and dumped them in the gully or at the next door neighbour nor did they wait for the Government to come and clean up around them. That is unlike what is happening today and if the Government do not come quickly enough, they do not even telephone the appropriate government department, they telephone the Press and says 'come and look at the conditions I live in, and this is not good enough and what is the Government doing about it.'

This is not only manifested in our treatment of the environment. There was a culture of behaviour which was manifested in the sayings. There was a philosophy in which Barbadians attitudes were grounded that emanated from everyday sayings that Barbadians had, like, "Do not hang your hat higher than you can reach it," which means not to necessarily go after all of those things you know you cannot afford. We spoke in terms of champagne taste and mauby pockets. We would say to people, "One smart die at too smart door," which is a reminder not to use trickery with your brother because the chances are that you would be caught out and not only caught out but in fact you would have outsmarted yourself. We would say to people, "If you sell all you got, you 'gine' got to buy all you want." Essentially what we were saying to people in the biblical sense, is to cast your bread upon the waters and be generous with your brother because goodness and kindness as a matter of course will return to you even if you cannot identify the source of the beneficence that will come to you. That is what people were saying. There was a way that we behave. When I left Barbados to go to Trinidad and Tobago to law school in 1985 which is becoming now a long time ago - and I recognise now as I look into the mirror on mornings and see an increasing number of greys around the hairline, they say that at 41 you are on the wrong side of 40 - I was amazed to find in Trinidad and Tobago something that I had taken for granted as part of our social culture, the way we would pass routinely and say good morning to our elders and to people we passed on the street whether it was in Bridgetown or in our community we you are in the country. You did not have to know them or you did not have to know their families, all you were doing is affording a simple courtesy and greeting to them; good morning.

3.35 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, as a matter of course, I would see young people move out of the way for their elders to pass, for pregnant women to pass, or to stand in the bus for the elderly to sit. We had a food culture that was uniquely ours - fish cakes and bakes, cou cou and salt fish, conkies and pone. It is not possible to get conkies or pone anymore with great ease because people say that it is too much trouble to cook. As for cou cou, people now prefer to run into Chefette or Kentucky restaurants. In many instances, our young people are not eating Barbadian foods or they cannot cook. Neither the young men nor women can cook and I am amazed that there are some professional persons would say, as a matter of course, that they do not know how to cook and that they can eat out nightly.

I remember living in a Barbados where there was the extended family structure existing and where we not only cared for our elders but our elders cared for us. That was critical to the extended family structure. It was not only providing a place for the older person but the fact was then when that young people go to work, the older person would have helped looked after the children. The older person would have helped with the passing on of values, changing of pampers, et cetera.

We dealt with conflict in a different way. When a person threatens to strike another with a stone, that person would have picked up the stone but would not have thrown it. Today, we will say to people, and mean it, while using such profanities, that we would kill a person and not spend one day in prison. So often I am walk the streets and hear young men quarrelling over the simplest of things. There is zero tolerance towards each other. We live in housing developments and do not know our neighbours. If we see a stranger in the neighbourhood, we cannot identify that person because we do not know our neighbours families.

In consequence, when our children are doing wrong, in the same way we are not going to speak to our neighbours, similarly when our children are doing wrong, our neighbours are not going to stop or to correct them. It is not only that we do not know our neighbours, we do not want to know who are our neighbours. That is why we have to resort to the neighbourhood watch programme. If we do not formalise these relationships, it is impossible to call over to one's next door neighbour and inform them as to certain things that are taking place. We have changed all our values and not necessarily for the better.

I grew up in a family. My parents are 79 and 78 years old respectively in August and in September, 2003. All my life I have known my father and mother working

from morning to night because they, as many other Barbadians have said, "By the sweat of thou brow, thou shall eat bread." Today, we want to eat everybody else's cake without working for ourselves. People prefer to 'lime' on 'the blocks' or to do nothing. I know people say it is hard to get jobs but part of my experience as a Parliamentarian is that people want jobs but do not want to work. They want the salary or the benefit of the job but not the effort. That is why in every sector, one would find a different working attitude where people turn up for late for work and would leave earlier than the normal closing time or where they would take longer lunch hours, et cetera. It is a problem that permeates the entire society. It is a problem of our attitude.

We have a problem too because we are unable to find and to establish the distinction between service and servitude. We do not know what it is to give value for money in the workplace. We do not know about an honest day's labour for an honest day's pay. We do not know how to give service to the customer. One goes into business places and nobody gets up to greet the customer. The staff do not interrupt their personal conversations to assist the customer. The customer has to wait until the staff have finished their personal business then to turn their attention to them.

The point I am making is that whether or not we want to admit it, at every level of the society - and this problem is not confined to the lower income sector only as we like to think but to all social groups - where we all are aspiring for a higher standard of life but are not developing the attitude or effort to give us that standard of life.

Mr. Chairman, another thing is the taking of things from the work place. If one works in a restaurant, certainly some of the supplies belong to him or her. If one works in the public sector, it is expected that his or her home is to be stocked out of the business.

Mr. Chairman, everybody is talking about having money, et cetera, and this is manifesting itself in the frequent wildcat strikes that we are seeing. It is part of the whole problem in the society, being unable to deal with conflict and with problems. Workers go to work today and encounter problems, then walk out the next day and have a wildcat strike without even having the problem addressed through the correct channels.

Mr. Chairman, today we see the young people walking about looking vexed. It is now part of the common language to say to others that a person is 'screwed' or is 'vexed'. Nowadays, it is 'the thing' to look untidy. Some people do not like natural hairstyles and since I have been one of the longest proponents of natural hair styles, I am not going to speak to them but natural hair styles, like any other, can look tidy or untidy. 3.45 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon. H. E. THOMPSON: Some of us are very untidy in our dress and our demeanor is intended to put people off. Once I upset a constituent very badly. She was a very pretty young girl with nine CXC certificates, excellent grades and she came to me because she could not find a job and wanted me to help her. She came to me on a business interview yet he was dressed in a midriff top, pants on her hips, nine earrings in one ear, four in the next, tattoos exposed and her boyfriend, a ZR conductor was 'wrapped around' her. I said to her that if she were to find a job she would first have to get rid of the boyfriend because no one would want him lurking around their business place all day while she was inside working as his appearance was very 'off-putting'.

Then I walked her to the bathroom and put her in front of the mirror, asked her to look at herself and asked her if she thought a bank or business place on Broad Street would be willing to hire her since she did not fit the standard of the office.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, you have one minute to wind up.

Hon. H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, I am simply making the point that it should have occurred to someone with such good qualifications, that there is a certain standard of dress and deportment when going for an interview. It was clear that she was not making this connection and, therefore, could not then determine why she was not getting a job.

Sir, I never saw her again because I think I spoke in terms that were too frank. I told her the truth as I saw it and as I knew other people would see it.

Sir, we have an attitudinal problem in Barbados in the way we interface with each other and the way in which we do not say good morning to each other. People now do not believe that Barbados is a place that has worth because we do not understand nor know what it means to be Bajan. People do not understand and do not know what it means to sacrifice for country or community and this is why the level of volunteerism is dropping.

It has marginally to do with crime but it is a fact that we are on a path of individualism where it is about me and my family. We are not looking at the attitudes which can harm us as individuals and as a society. Unless we address the problem of core national attitudes in the work place, the community and the homes we are not going to be able to effect national transition from Third World to First World.

Mr. Chairman, I am much obliged to you.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I was very fortunate to listen to an excellent discourse by the Honourable Member for St. James South who basically gave an enlightening view of behavioural problems at it relates primarily to our youthful population. Her presentation was an excellent one which speaks to the continuing standard in this debate on social transformation.

The Honourable Member for St. John who is not in his chair at the moment gave one of the better discourses in this Honourable Chamber. He intrigued my thoughts when he spoke of community development and what is basically taking place in his constituency of St. John, which is not unique to other Honourable Member.

Sir, I find it strange that politicians do not talk about the contribution they make as individual to the social development of Barbados. Sometimes they are reserved because they believe that the public of Barbados expects that they have a reservoir of money at their disposal and whenever they go to them the money is to be disposed of.

Sir, politicians contribute in no mean way to the social development of this country because, in essence, some of the first persons who come to politicians for assistance are poor persons at the community level. Sir, we cannot underscore the importance of the role that politicians play to the social development of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, this brings me this whole issue of community development raised by the Honourable Member for St. John. There is a changing role for the community development officer and that department in Barbados. The Community Development Department must now be seen as an empowered institution for those community-based organisations across Barbados and the NGOs across Barbados.

The Honourable Member for St. John also spoke of the closure of the community centre because it was difficult to get a community development officer to do the work.

We in the Ministry of Social Transformation will be working toward a policy of the empowerment of community-based organisation and giving them the right to manage community centres across Barbados.

Sir, to answer the Honourable Member for St. John, a community enrichment programme will undertake a total evaluation and assessment of the needs of community and prepare the appropriate response. This initiative will involve several departments within the Ministry as well as other Government agencies. The formal participation and inclusion of the NGO sector within a framework of governance and national development will be articulated through the drafting of appropriate NGO legislation.

This is timely as we respond to the challenges of social and economic integration at the global level. We must recognise that we are in a changing global economic climate and that civil society is very important to the advancement of our social and economic programme at the community level. Therefore strategic partnerships and alliances within this sector will ensure that the appropriate safety net is in place and that those targeted for assistance benefits directly.

3.55 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon H.F. LASHLEY: In this respect, we must also continue to promote and implement all forms of community education, particularly what I call compensatory education. It is education that will harmonise our communities and our political system. Education particularly at the community level will close the gap between our system and social institution framework. Education will break the back of poverty and hopelessness and to govern is to educate. Likewise, to educate is to govern.

Our goal within the Ministry of Social Transformation is to build bridges across which solutions will flow to solve social problems that confront each one of us in this society.

We live in a world that is changing constantly with integrated economies and social policies and very soon we will have to implement changes and responses that are necessary to fit into this new global economy.

I was listening to the Honourable Member for St. John because sometimes he challenges Ministers. I believe we in the Ministry of Social Transformation are very much focused and intent on breaking the back of poverty. I want to give Barbadians the background to what we are dealing with. The average per capita annual poverty

line in Barbados is about \$ 503, which is a mean value for an entire population. This poverty line represents their per capita yearly income below which Barbadians can be considered poor. Thus, the estimated poverty in Barbados can be said to affect 8.7 per cent of the total households in this country. That is to say that there is an average of

7 000 households that live below the poverty line. The total number of people living in those households is approximately 35 000 or 13.99 per cent.

Sir, considering the size of Barbados, the parish of St. Michael has 38 per cent of persons living in total poverty and another 25 per cent live between the parishes

of Christ Church and St. Philip and an additional 20 per cent comprise, St. John, St. Joseph, St. Andrew, St. Peter and St. Lucy.

There are some other social demographic characteristics that I believe I should let this Honourable House know. I am quoting figures from the Poverty and Income Distribution in Barbados 1996/1997.

“The difference in household composition is very revealing. The document says that larger household sizes are closely linked to poverty. This is common in other countries but is especially striking in Barbados where nuclear and extended families are emerging, characteristics for poverty stricken homes. While poor households have approximately five persons, the non poor family households have two. Also most poor households are headed by females, almost 59 per cent, while 42 per cent of non poor families are headed by females. Within the female head household, 11.5 per cent are poor, whereas, within the male head household, that rate falls to 6.5 per cent. Larger size households and the importance of female headed households are related to a larger number of children. In poor households, the number of members below the age of 5 is moved more than two times that of non poor households and the same gap between the ages of 5 and 14 is strikingly high; 1.3 in poor households and 0.4 in a non poor household.”

Sir, I am giving these statistics because I want Barbadians and Members of the Honourable House to know that when we sit down and begin to plan in the Ministry of Social Transformation, we are not doing guesswork, or whims, fancies and emotions. We have set everything against the backdrop and framework of research of the statistics and facts. We know who are targeting. We are targeting the poorest of the poor, Sir.

A lot of discussion in this debate has been targeted at the National Assistance Board. It hurts me when I hear of the abandonment of the elderly and the treatment of the elderly in Barbados. We are developing a Senior Citizen Protection Act within the Ministry to deal with this problem.

Sir, when I look at the achievements of the National Assistance Board in the less than four years, we have increased the three-day work week of the home helpers to five days. We have also increased the day care of the elderly from five days to seven days.

I want to state that even though there is a reduction of our budget of \$4 million, these areas will not be affected and the home helpers will continue to enjoy a benefit unlike the hardship that they experienced in 1991.

We have relocated the offices of the National Assistance Board from terrible surrounding in Culloden Road to new modern facilities in Country Road.

3.55 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. H.F. LASHLEY:

We have also relocated the offices of the National Assistance Board (NAB) from terrible surroundings in Culloden Road to new modern facilities in Country Road. We have increased our Day Care Programme for our senior citizens. When we took up the Ministry, there were seven day care centres, now, Sir, we have 13 day care centres for the elderly.

We started the Vauxhall Senior Citizen Village. Additionally, we introduced a Smart Clean Team Programme which would beautify the inside and outside of the senior citizens' homes. We also introduced the Bereavement Programme. We funded the Soroptomist Senior Citizens Village. We refurbished the Sir Clyde Gollop Shelter for the homeless and now, we are into exploratory talks to make a 24-hour shelter for the homeless. We expanded the services at the George Tunnel Home and the Black Rock Hostel and we have also assisted the Legionaries by raising their subvention from \$5 000 to \$55 000.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to come back on this same Head of the National Assistance Board.

Mr. D.T. GILL: Sir, I would like to make yet another contribution to this debate but this time, I would not be concentrating on the tenancies freehold or the house repairs and home building part of this Ministry, rather, I would like to acknowledge the contribution of the National Assistance Board and the Disabilities Unit to persons who are disabled which is often taken for granted.

Sir, I must admit that before I did the stint some weeks ago as Minister of Social Transformation, I saw the work of the NAB as confined to the home help care for the elderly and prior to that, the repairs of houses for the elderly.

Sir, they play a very significant role, both the NAB and the Disability Unit, with respect to persons, young or old, who fall prey to any disability. Sir, be the disability one of genetic origin, whether it is Down's Syndrome, whether it is one through an accident, spinal cord injury, whether, Sir, it is in the case of an amputee - and we know that there is need for concern about the number of amputees in our society - whether the amputation came as a direct result of diabetes, poor circulation or, Sir, the cases

of autoimmune diseases, multiple sclerosis, in recent times. I have known some two or three persons who would have gone to school with you and would have fallen to the disease of multiple sclerosis. This is a disease which causes great pain and mental anguish, not only to the sufferer but to families and friends.

Sir, the NAB and the Disability Unit supply ramps and wheelchairs to these sufferers. Sir, without these facilities life is extremely difficult for persons who have to spend most of their day in a wheelchair or confined to a bed.

Sir, it brings a certain amount of delight and relief to persons, irrespective of age, when you could supply them with a ramp and a wheelchair. It is not just taking a person and putting them in a wheelchair, there are other factors which have to be addressed. This is where officers of the Disability Unit come into response.

Sir, the wheelchair must be of a specific size and fit. The cushions and all of the other specifications must be correct or else, life could just be as discomfort for the sufferer, as if they were without the facility of a chair.

To date, listed with our Barbados Disability Unit, are some 16 categories of disabilities. These are wide and varied. In the USA there are some 27 categories of disabilities. Sir, with the visual impaired, there are some three classes of disabilities. There the absolute blind, the partially blind and those who have problems as they approach the object, picking it up early and then fading, and conditions of this order.

Sir, it is only, as I said, when we fall prey or are afflicted, or close relatives or friends are afflicted, that it comes home, the need and the usefulness of the Disabilities Unit or the NAB and the services which they offer.

I must confess that I have learnt a lot in the last few years, as the President of the Paralympics Association, which is the umbrella body for persons with disabilities, for those who are still interested and want to be active and participate in some sort of activity.

Sir, just two days ago, you should have seen the number of people flocking to Queens Park, just to get a view of what was going on with the blind cricket matches which were held there. Barbadians must be very aware and concerned and try to equip themselves with as much knowledge as possible, particularly, Sir, when it comes to blindness.

There is a high incidence of two types of glaucoma in Barbados. There is not a family which does not have a member, whether it is two or three generations away,

whether it is three or four cousins away, who has not been afflicted or who has not suffered from glaucoma.

Earlier this year, I learnt of a very good friend who is now totally blind and he has to be going for some kind of corrective surgery to see if some percentage of his vision could be restored. Sir, as I said, there are other injuries such as spinal cord injury, blindness and cerebral palsy.

Asides.

Mr. D.T. GILL: Sir, as I said, I learned a lot from being associated with this Paralympics Association and they are doing quite a bit of work, but there is still this inertia holding back people from freeing up their children. It is not as bad as it used to be, but there is a lot of work going on, internationally.

Recently, we were blessed with the presence of a coaching group from Australia who came here and did a workshop for one week. They offered sports such as wheelchair rugby, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair volleyball and this is important. The NGO organisations must be encouraged to get involved. Sir, as the Honourable Minister often speaks about community organisation, these must also get involved because, we do not know when we will be afflicted or we will fall prey to such diseases.

4.15 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Mr. D. T. GILL: We speak a lot about cancer and HIVAIDS. Yes, they have their telling effects but consider your sister, your daughter or your wife who just turn 25 or 30 years old and is diagnosed with multiple sclerosis. The whole family outlook changes. This disease strikes more among the females than the males. It hampers the entire household. It hampers the ability to care for the children. It hampers your ability being able to be at work as often as you would like and therefore income falls and progressively you get weaker and weaker and it can stretch for a long period of time.

I lost two to three friends last year who were all in their 40s or very early 50s who succumbed to this disease. We know that sufferers of multiple sclerosis can have a very costly medical bill. However, all is not lost because within its very limited resources - these things must be said - the Government of Barbados through the Barbados Drug Service has been making available medication for these sufferers. It is not a sneeze. It is not a three-cents medication. Medication which cost as much as \$2 556 per phial is being made available to these sufferers. Others, not as costly, are at \$143 per phial. Between July of last year and January of this year, the Barbados Drug Service would

have spent some \$38 880 in one class of medication and \$30 800 on another class for sufferers of multiple sclerosis.

Sir, one must therefore begin to think of a whole way of preparing although you can never be fully prepared. Maybe there will come the time when we will have to be insured from at birth for diseases of this sort so as to make life compatible and enjoyable in its own way.

I have only alluded to the ramps and the wheelchairs but there are other intangible services which make life a lot easier, a lot more comforting and a lot more comfortable. For instance, the Unit supplies or makes available a telephone support group. As I said earlier, it caused a lot of anxiety, depression and a mixture of both on the whole mental state on those persons who are newly afflicted. The purpose of this service is to allow persons who have been suffering the ailment to speak and to comfort those who are newly afflicted.

Sir, there is also the transport facility of a special type of bus. From my position as president of the Paralympics Association, I think that service has to be extended a lot more either by having a pool of drivers who could supply their service day round or week long because you would find that come weekends these persons want to get out and sight visit because it is not all the time comfortable to be at home with others who are able and who may not have the time, the patience and the care; sometimes enough space is not available, so the common tendency would be to get out of the house.

Sir, there are recreational programmes, picnics and sightseeing available to persons not only to those with multiple sclerosis but I have chosen that one because it is a disease which has caused me great concern in recent times.

There is the provision of physiotherapy and occupational therapy for the sufferers. All in all, although I would like to see it widened I know that the supplying of services and various mechanical devices is extremely expensive but if we are supposed to be moving and to be in a modern world and we want to be there where the developed world is and we want to aspire towards that level of development, then provision must be made in some form or fashion for persons suffering from gross disabilities.

Right now as I speak, the Paralympics Association is getting itself ready to send some participants to the London Marathon for the wheelchair athletes. That is a hefty cost. You would see early in the mornings, my friend Wesley Worrell, who has grown to achieve quite a popularity with his cycling, going through Waterford Bottom and going out to the Valley, St. George. Sir, I must confess that his early activity is the one which made me, within the last two years, when possible to get out there and exercise because if he can do it, I should be able to do it.

As I said at the opening, we must not take these services for granted. We must not look down on them or fail to acknowledge them because they may not be the foreign exchange earners of the country or they may not be of the high-flying ministries, but they make a significant contribution and if our people's social life whether able or disabled is not of a certain level of comfort, then we the legislators and we the politicians would have failed them.

Sir, I am most obliged.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Chairman, there cannot be any gainsaying of the fact that the efforts of the Ministry of Social Transformation especially through the Urban Development Commission is transforming the physical landscape of urban Barbados.

The Honourable Member for the City spoke very much in detail to this last night and took us on a tour through the constituency of the City of Bridgetown and its environs and gave us a clear picture of what is happening in areas traditionally regarded as slum areas. She made reference in her brief contribution to what is taking place at Baxters Road and I want to bring us back to that for just a moment because here is where the constituencies of the City of Bridgetown and St. Michael West find their convergence.

I am just as proud as she is though my sojourn here has been of a much shorter duration thus far than hers has proven to be, but we hope to change that. Baxters Road corner is certainly beginning to come alive again and the improvements there are very obvious. We look forward to that space being allocated to vendors who ply their trade along the Baxters Road junction and that permanent site after a while would in fact now be located upon the St. Michael West corner of that junction.

We hope, as we have said in this Chamber before, for further improvements to the recreational areas at the space just adjacent to that on the Passage Road Barbarees Hill site by the installation of lights there so that we can have some night time activities there on the pasture both in terms of sports and entertainment which would provide additional economic opportunity for those who have been making their living from the selling of fish.

4.25 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Chairman, these days you might be aware of the fact that it is much more than simply fried fish. A person can get a full meal, if that person is so inclined, from the corner at Baxters Road.

In addition to the work of the Urban Development Commission in terms of infrastructural improvement in St. Michael West, there is evidence across the constituency from its most easterly point from the Hindsbury Road through to its northerly at Spring Gardens/Deacons Road areas. Places for example, as Reeds Land, the west side of Goodlands, which has never had road before but now knows of the existence of one, and to the delight of those number of persons who live down this hundred metre stretch of concrete road. Hinkson Land, Nurse Land, Lower Greaves Land, Richmonds Land are all areas which have benefitted from the road rehabilitation programme, through the Urban Development Programme as part of this Government's national policy.

Additionally, Government has spent an additional

\$700 000 to put in a new road for the first time at Yearwoods Land and Peterkins Land. I would want to take this moment to thank the Ministers responsible for being so kind as to bear us in mind. We are delighted that this type of utility is now available.

Mr. Chairman, the point I would wish to make is this. Last night before suspension, while eyes were a bit heavy and perhaps ears were inattentive, I was trying to make the point that the Ministry of Social Transformation, in my view, cannot fully embrace its mandate if that mandate does not include an appreciation of the fact that social transformation in Barbados must be about the transformation of social relations in Barbados. The history now in the making of demographic pattern in about transformation. Even family structure is the story about transformation of social relations.

I was making the point that to transform St. Michael socially, we must address the issue of social relations around the issue of urban housing. The issue of landlord and tenant relations is a principal focus of social relation surrounding housing in Barbados. The business of standards to be pursued within the context or rental arrangement must be properly addressed, else many who live in St. Michael would continue to see and to experience misery and then those of us who seek earnestly to try and represent them would also have to try to bear their pains if they persist.

The stories of evictions are legendary and continue to be numerous. The matter of houses being in disrepair for which sizeable amounts of rents are being charged weekly and monthly and the inability to access utility services such as natural gas, can sometimes become an issue between landlord and tenant in urban Barbados. Then, of course, to be fair, on the other side there are those tenants who are delinquent in making their payments to the landlord for rents they legitimately owe.

Mr. Chairman, I am trying to suggest to the Ministry of Social Transformation that if we are going to be serious about social transformation, we must also address the matter of social relations as they have to do with the business of housing.

I want to be very loud in commendation to the Ministry of Social Transformation and this Government for its policy with reference to making the privilege of land-ownership, which is much more widely enjoyed in urban Barbados. We are talking about the transfer of title under urban tenancies programme. That is a matter which has given evidence to the need to bring about change in the social relations existing in the St. Michael area as they relate to land.

Therefore, I am calling for a continuance and an expansion of the programme to make it possible so that we could see positive changes taking place in the social relations, in urban Barbados around the business of land-ownership. This is of special importance for St. Michael West. Mr. Chairman, you spoke earlier of 15 tenancies in St. Michael North West but I want to inform you that there are 32 such tenancies in St. Michael West, from Hindsbury on the east, through to Deacons and Parris Gap to the north. Almost the entire constituency of St. Michael West is urban tenancies, therefore, this programme is of tremendous significance for those who live there.

Under the current programme there are close to one thousand families who would be having the benefit of owning their lands. If this happens alone in St. Michael West, then in the whole of St. Michael area, it would significantly change the social relations in urban Barbados.

We have large tenancies such as the Garden Land with 129 spots. We have smaller areas of 8 spots along Small's Land, Mottley's Land, Headley's Land, Taylor's Land and some medium ones along Eagle Hall and the Richmond area.

While commending ourselves, we need to ensure that there are no obstacles left in the way of ensuring that those who live on these lands, come into ownership so that we might change the social relationship existing around that. It is important as it relates to the security of tenure. It is important for the enhancement of the capital assets of poor working class persons in urban Barbados. It is important for the business of endowment for one's posterity and there are those who stand to benefit significantly because of this tremendous piece of social policy. It is a just, right and needed policy at this time and I commend the Government for that.

I want to commend the Ministry and again the Government for its policy because in terms of social transformation, we are also addressing the manner of

transforming social relations as it has to do with the business culture in Barbados. I am speaking about the creation of a small business enterprise culture which is taking place all across Barbados. I can only speak for St. Michael West but I know there are those Members who have benefitted from assistance through the policies of the Ministry of Social Transformation, the Urban Development Commission and other agencies and who have been able to get small businesses off the ground.

4.35 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

REV. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: There are people in St. Michael West who have had loans to help them to establish their own businesses. Across the constituency you can identify a number of those who are coming into their own businesses.

Mr. Chairman, when I was a young boy going to school my mother often told me to learn well so that I would not have to work on the plantation picking pond grass. The ambition instilled in our mind was to get a white colour job in Bridgetown. I am glad that this Government's policy is to bring young people in Barbados to a place where they not only think of a collar-and-tie job in Bridgetown but in developing their own business. It does not have to be one of the traditional large scale business but small scale enterprise that create a small business culture.

Sir, many are getting into small business construction services. This development has been much decried by the other side but this is being done legitimately as a result of this Government's policy and developing their own business. I can think of several businesses in St. Michael West that are employing other young men and women in small scale construction companies.

Mr. Chairman, I want to make the final point before I sit. There is an area of social relations in this country traditionally which must be addressed. I call upon the Ministry of Social Transformation to put its attention on this issue. It is the business of social relations in the context of females in Barbados who find themselves trapped in relationship characterised by economic dependency. Therefore, they are forced to live in circumstances which otherwise they would abandon but are dependent on men because they are locked into a situation financially and economically and an institution has been developed in this country in which the young women see no hope of escape unless to another instance of the same.

I believe the matter of addressing poverty at the level of our unskilled females and their plight with reference to economic dependent relationships must not be a function of an economy that is performing well but should be part of a

business of a purposeful and deliberate approach by the Ministry of Social Transformation to address the particular issue with respect to the business of gender affairs.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I want to make a few comments and to thank the Honourable Member for St. James South for the comments expressed so eloquently this morning in this particular debate. I believe that Ministry of Social Transformation is the saviour of poor people in Barbados. This Government has always had social plans in its various manifestoes over the past 60 years that worked towards social upliftment, upward social mobility of people and it is simply a continuation of what the Barbados Labour Party has been doing by the Ministry of Social Transformation.

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak about women who remain in community to look after children, their ailing parents, grandparents and others. For many decades there were women in the community who never worked and never received any money but because of commitment to family life, have given up their entire life looking after their own. We need more of these women in Barbados.

I want to make a plug for those women and make a recommendation to the Honourable Member responsible for social transformation and his staff to have a look at the policy of including payment and some form of programme that will cater to the needs of those women.

Mr. Chairman, these women cannot pay a life policy because they have no salary and the most they can rely on is the pension of the senior citizens who they supervise. When they reach the age of 65, they will only receive a non-contributory pension but meantime they have to live and unless they have children who grow up and attend to their needs they will be left out in the cold. Therefore, I want to make a plug for these women in the community who help to transfer the values and morale standard that we need in this aging society.

Mr. Chairman, this takes me to the next stage of day care centres for seniors. For many years Governments have been concentrating on the establishment of day care centres for babies which are very importance. I understand that the facility being built at Warrens has a daycare centre and that the London Bourne Towers has a facility for one as well. Sir, I would love for this to be replicated across Barbados because more women want to get into the work place and unfortunately, they cannot find enough day care centres and when they do, a lot of them are not up to the standard that Government has set. I wish to ask those person operating day care centres to come forward and make the necessary application to the Child Care Board to ensure

they get the license to look after our children to give them the quality care.

4.45 p.m.

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Continuation of Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE Sir, I also want to see an upsurge in the establishment of day care centres for senior citizens. I say this because we know of the problems that people are experiencing with families who have to go to work but have no one to look after their parents or grand parents who are beginning to go senile and have other diseases.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon us as a Government to ensure that as we plan towards a society of ageing people, I would wish to recommend them we offer more concessions to individuals or groups to establish more day care centres across the country to help alleviate some of the problems where senior citizens are left alone. Some of these senior citizens sometimes go to turn off the stove and this could cause fires and may end in tragedy. Some of these old persons are targeted and robbed them of their pensions and any valuables that they may have. Sir, some of the senior citizens are taken to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and are abandoned there, creating a burden for the health services and other social services. I would wish for an extension of services to cater to the needs of Barbadians.

I have been focusing on the creation of a

day care centre for the past two years. The location which I identified is the Cane Garden, St. Thomas area. There is a community in my constituency which had approximately five houses in 2001 and there are now 50 houses in that community. Therefore, if our communities are expanding, there must be somewhere that senior citizens could be left from at least 7.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., ensuring that these people are getting quality care the same as in the other nursing homes. We do not want to lead our senior citizens in facilities where they develop bed sores and deteriorate at a faster rate.

Sir, there should also be therapy for them to become involved in conversation, making of craft. My father at the age of 84 made excellent coconut brooms. That is how he spent his time and it brought in a source of income and kept his mind occupied. I am sure that if we get those kinds of activities and therapists coming into those day care centres, they would go a long way in keeping our senior citizens occupied. I am making an appeal for a day care centre at Cane Garden,

St. Thomas, for senior citizens in the surrounding communities.

There are thousands of people who live in Shop Hill, Bridgefield, Hopewell, Arthur Seat, Jackson and Cane Garden. As a result of Sharon School which is one of the schools with the EduTech programme, children are allowed to take home their lap top computers to do work but they parents are not capable of working with them because they are lacking in technological skills. Sir, with the resources available at a day care centre at Cane Garden, this would help the parents, guardians and people in the surrounding communities to be trained with technological skills. I know that there are plans for a day care centre and people are already volunteering their services to assist with training.

The Barbados Labour Party has set goals and the most important one is to remove people from the poverty-stricken level and empower them. Over the past few days we heard about the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act and the opportunity for individuals to own land. We all know that land ownership is extremely important. I do not want to repeat what was said by other Honourable Members but I have to say that the people in rural Barbados have benefitted from social transformation in a number of ways. Many persons have benefitted from homes repairs, the home-help and bereavement services.

Mr. Deputy Chairman, like the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central can speak of poverty. We all know what is poverty and that is the reason why we all can appreciate it and put forward a good case to Government to help uplift our people from the squalor. Our parents were able to use the small plots of land which they rented from the plantation to further empower themselves by planting pigeon peas, carrots, lettuce and cabbages. Those who did not plant vegetables raised animals and that is where the money for Christmas came from in order for their children to get shoes and clothes to go to the exhibition in Queen's Park. Sir, we know what ownership of land can do to change people's lives.

Sir, when I visit Hopewell and Dunscombe and I see the quality of life of the people now compared to 20 years ago, it blesses my heart and I too sing the chorus, 'Thank God for the Barbados Labour Party' and the people in the rural communities because they have remained faithful to the Barbados Labour Party knowing that the programmes that party put in place help to give them a sense of ownership, authority and power to be able to be other people in Barbados.

We know that the Democratic Labour Party focused on the seats in St. Michael and there were privileges for those people living in the St. Michael area but the programmes that they had did not filter down adequately to the man in the street. The Barbados Labour Party has made the difference. The man in the street is now feeling the impact of the social programmes that the Ministry of Social

Transformation and other Ministries that work closely with them have been making.

Residents of the rural districts are benefiting from the social programmes because they are building their homes in wall and some are building from the back and coming forward in stages. They throw a 'meeting turn' to ensure that their children were educated and got the best quality education, even though a lot of them did not get it for free. However, children were encouraged to take advantage of the opportunities that were given and these children are now enjoying a rich quality of life.

The road infrastructure has made us in the rural communities very proud. New concrete roads have been constructed in Grand View and the road that runs from Jackson to Padmore Village. That is part of the social programme. Street lights have been installed and recreational facilities. Funds have been allocated in these Estimates to have lights installed at playing fields across Barbados so that the people of Barbados can extend their sporting activities into the night.

The Government is working to reduce unemployment by providing the necessary funding for those who want to become self-employed. The Rural Development Commission has been training in excess of 400 people at a time in skills that they can become young entrepreneurs. Mr. Deputy Chairman, this is what I call empowerment of the people. Moving people from the poverty, to arm them with the skills that would give them the opportunity to rub shoulders with other Barbadians. This opportunity has been made available by this Government under the leadership of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Sir, with those words, our goal is to eradicate poverty. We know that it cannot happen at one time but the longest journey starts with the first step and this Barbados Labour Party continues to make strides to ensure that our people are empowered and we would wish to lend our support to this particular Head.

I thank you.

4.55 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. G.A. CLARKE:

Mr. Chairman, I must say that I enjoyed the speech of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas. It was very enlightening and I believe she spoke from the heart.

Sir, when we became the Government in 1994. We were reminded that when we looked at Barbados while we were in Opposition, we recognise that it seems like there were two Barbadoses. One in which there was very much on one hand and on the other hand, one in which there was few, and poverty stricken. It reminded us of the notion of economic dualism, in which one side was industrially developed and one side was backward and poverty stricken.

We, as a Government, sought to eradicate poverty to some extent. I recall the by-election in the constituency of St. Michael North West. When we went through that constituency, we were reminded that we had to do something even quicker than we had planned. Therefore, we sought, in that constituency, to eliminate poverty and do a number of things to improve the poor street lighting in villages and uplift education. We also found that vending facilities were badly needed at the time.

It is important also to note that we established, not only the Rural Development Commission but the Urban Development Commission. The two of these commissions were supposed to help to alleviate poverty in rural Barbados as well as urban Barbados.

I made the point early today, Sir, that the Ministry of Social Transformation must not only be seen as helping and aiding constituencies in urban Barbados but throughout Barbados. We want to have an egalitarian society in which everybody will have a decent slice of the cake.

Sir, the Minister of Social Transformation, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East today related some statistics which I would like to comment on. He said that according to a document which was written on poverty and income distribution of Barbados 1996-1997, there were about 38 per cent of 7 000 households that were below the poverty line. According to him, the national figure was 13.9 per cent and that represents 7 000 households in Barbados which are below the poverty line. Sir, out of that figure 38 per cent of these live in the St. Michael's area. In 1996, there were about 2 660 households in St. Michael below the poverty line.

Now, it seems to me that there must be a concerted effort to continue the programme of providing housing for the people in St. Michael. Even though the Democratic Labour Party would say to us that we are giving hands-outs and so on, we must continue that programme. We must continue, Mr. Chairman, to provide opportunities for those 2 660 who are below the poverty line.

Sir, we looked at the income group which was also contained in the document and noticed that persons were working for an annual income of up to \$5 503, which works out at \$105 per week. Mr. Chairman, persons

working for \$105 a week cannot buy anything and if they have two or three children, what can they do.

The point is that the Government will have to come in and help. Despite this, the Opposition would have us to believe that these people have to be independent. They cannot be independent. A man working for \$105 per week cannot be independent and the Government will have to help him. We have introduced many ways to help those low income persons. We have introduced a tax reverse credit to help those persons whose income fall into this group but more has to be done.

Sir, I believe that the Ministry of Social Transformation must continue to work to alleviate poverty. That is why in these Estimates, Mr. Chairman, you will notice that the Government has put in \$9 million in the Poverty Alleviation Fund and a further \$8.5 million will go to the UDC to help alleviate those poor cases of which we speak.

Sir, another point that was raised in the document which I got from the Minister of Social Transformation, is the question of overcrowding. This is indeed a big problem. We have gone into some houses and found that there were about 12 persons living in one house. In some cases in the Pine area, I have counted as many as 24 person living in one house. It is not widespread because the document states that there is less than 5 per cent of the households of Barbados that can be considered to be overcrowded, but, Sir, 5 per cent is a bit high for our standards.

Sir, as far as the United Nations' document is concerned, 5 per cent is not considered to be very high, according to international standards, but 5 per cent in Barbados is quite high. We believe that we have to do something about that and this is why a number of persons - we do not like it but it is happening - within the National Housing units are now expanding the units, in order to accommodate the large families.

Asides.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Sir, in many cases in St. Michael, it seems as if the extended family is back with us again. More and more persons are now living in crowded conditions with five to eight persons living in one unit. This is of concern to the Government and we will have to look at how we can provide opportunities for the persons who are now considered to be living under those dreaded situations.

Mr. Chairman, it is important also for us to talk about security of tenure and This Side has exhausted the subject. Everybody knows the Barbados Labour Party's policy. We have a proud record as far as security of tenure

and the tenantry programme is concerned, both rural and urban.

Sir, what about these people who work for under \$5 000. They cannot buy land and these are the points that need to be stressed. Sometimes persons would like to own the land but they just cannot buy and I know that the Urban Development Commission and the Ministry of Housing and Lands have been constantly reminding people that they have to buy the tenantry land. A lot of them cannot buy because they cannot find the \$2.50 per square foot to buy the land.

Therefore, the Government is looking at a recommendation. The Ministry of Housing and Lands is now studying the proposal where persons can get long leases, for 30 or more years. These leases would allow the persons to build their own homes, a wall structure if they prefer. With security of tenure, persons can have a water toilet and they can improve their homes. We believe that this is the way to go where people can improve themselves by having water toilets, electricity and so on. The long lease will be able to be passed on from one generation to another. This would be mainly for those persons about whom the Minister spoke today, who are very poor. The condition will be that the poorest of the poor will be able to do so and, I think, that is really the right way to go.

Sir, another point which needs to be stressed is that there needs to be continuous assessment of poverty because since this document was done in 1997, I wonder what has happened since that time. Sir, since 1997, according to what the Urban Development Commission, statistics suggest, they would have built in excess of 300 houses.

5.05 p.m.

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Hon. G. A. CLARKE: They want an up-to-date figure to compare what is happening today with what has happened in 1996 or there about.

There need to be continuous training for the households. The need to be training for the job market. There need to be the training of people to use the resources. I heard the Honourable Member for St. James South this afternoon speaking about the values that existed a couple years ago where people were self-reliant. We need to have these things again. I know there are a number of householders today who even though they are poor, they go into the stores and the shops and buy all types of expensive brand names things from abroad. People should be educated and trained to use their resources wisely. So training is essential and I believe this may be the only way to go. Too many mothers and fathers are sending their children to school nowadays with a lot of imported stuff in

their bags. Too many parents are sending to school their children, not like when I was going to school with some lemonade and some fish cakes and bakes, but with corn curls and all the stuff that they buy from the shops.

The Ministry of Social Transformation must continue its training policy and programmes to uplift and to empower those persons who are at the lower end of the ladder. I know that a lot of them have gone back to school through the technology programme both in St. Michael and in the rural areas, so we have to continue this programme.

We have to encourage those people to go to the Skills Training Board to learn a skill. We have to encourage them to go to the hotel school. We have to encourage the boys on 'the block' which we spoke about today. We have to encourage all of these youngsters, both men and women, to get involved in some training programme in order to help to uplift themselves because in the final analysis it is through education and training that these people will be better off.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute left.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, it is the intention of the Ministry Housing and Lands to provide opportunities in terms of housing for the poor. In St. Michael we have looked in your constituency at Brandons and we have looked at areas in Fernihurst to see where we can have extended units for the people. We have also looked at Johnson Land in the Green Hill area to see where we could provide opportunities for persons. We hope that we could give them this land at \$2.50 a square foot.

We are also looking at lands in the Lower Burney's and Haggatt Hall areas to provide opportunities for the very poor in our society. We believe that this is the way to go in order to provide the household with a total package of social transformation as well as opportunities for work in this country.

I thank you.

On the motion of the Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and asked for leave to sit again and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.27 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.27 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

5.12 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

RESUMPTION

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, before we resume, I would ask that we revert to the Order Paper on the matter of Papers and Notices.

Mr. SPEAKER: With the House's permission, we will now revert to Papers and Government Notices.

PAPERS

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I beg to lay:

1. The National Insurance and Social Security Employment Injury Benefit (Amendment) Regulations, 2003.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay:

1. The Annual Report and Financial Statement of CRL Limited for the fiscal year, January 1st to December 31st 2001.
2. The Annual Report and Financial Statement of Hotel and Resorts Limited for the fiscal year January 1st to December 31st, 2000.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of:

1. The Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Bill, 2003.
2. Resolution to grant sum of \$10 314 016 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of the Government to supplement the Estimates 2002 to 2003, as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 15 of 2002 to 2003, which forms the Schedule to the Resolution and that the Explanatory Note to Heads 23 and 28 be amended as set out in Schedule 11 to this Resolution.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Bill, 2003, be read a first time.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, before we move to beg you to allow the House to revert to Committee of Supply, I wish to say that once the Debate on the Estimates 2003/2004 is completed, it is the intention of Government to do the Resolution of which I just gave notice, the Supplementary, this evening. I would, therefore, wish the Opposition to know that because we do not intend meet next week.

Mr. SPEAKER: When the suspension was taken the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will so revert.

Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS assumed the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is in Committee of Supply. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

In winding up Head 24, first of all, let me use this occasion to say a few words on the behalf of the Speaker of the House, who is the representative for St. Michael Central.

Sir, as you know, Mr. Speaker has been placed in the position where he could not have put on record his representation before this Honourable Chamber during the length of this debate.

As we were talking about letting justice be done throughout this debate, I feel it is important at least I speak to the developments that have happened in St. Michael Central and the necessary representation that the Speaker of this Honourable Chamber made on the behalf of his constituents.

Sir, on numerous occasions the Honourable Member came to the Office of the Ministry of Social Transformation or would have met me in the court yard of Parliament to discuss developments and programmes that he would have liked to see happening in his constituency. Sir, we can talk about the hard court at Hill Road, Bank Hall; the new roads at areas such as Pasture Road; Quarry Road; Bedford; Walcott Avenue, Kew Road; Waterford; Happy Cot; Nurse Land and Sealy Land, a host of these roads now have asphalt or concrete roads.

Sir, throughout the constituency, through the Urban Development Commission, a number of elderly persons were assisted with the repairs and replacement of their houses. I must say that this programme, particularly in St. Michael Central, will continue because it is one of those constituencies in urban Barbados that needs a lot of attention.

The Speaker certainly has been speaking to and addressing these matters within his constituency on a very regular basis. I want to assure him that the number of requests he has made to the Ministry of Social Transformation, although we might not be able to honour them all, we would pursue as vigorously as possible to assist him in any way possible and to continue the development in his constituency.

Sir, through our programme, we will also continue to help in the development of Snagg Land and the various areas in his constituency. I want the Speaker to rest assured that his proposals, plans and programmes he has submitted, particularly for the young people in his constituency, will continue to assist, not only through the Urban Development Commission but throughout all the other departments that are under the Ministry of Social Transformation.

I would also want to reassure him that his request, through the Child Care Board, for a day-care facility in his constituency is being carefully looked at so that, in the not too distant future, it could become a reality.

Sir, in winding up this debate, first of all I would like to pay tribute to all Honourable Members who would have contributed fiercely and intensely to this debate. Members spoke on a wide range of issues relating to the Ministry of Social Transformation. I thought the debate coming from both sides was very inspiring, interesting and more so, very informative.

Sir, it is one of the few occasions in this Honourable Chamber that I have sat and witnessed the level of debate and the contributions towards the development of Barbados from the social perspective.

Sir, because of that level of debate that came out during that entire discourse and since more or less there is still doubt in some persons minds as it relates to the broader policies of the Ministry of Social Transformation, I would now like to reiterate on this Floor what we have planned as it relates to the Ministry of Social Transformation and our poverty eradication strategy, which speaks to our ultimate goal, to our social development strategy within our Ministry, which is basically to improve and to enhance the quality of life of all people which requires democratic institutions; respect for our human rights and fundamental freedom; increase in equal economic opportunities; the rule of law; the promotion of

respect for cultural diversity; and the right of persons belonging to minority groups.

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Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: I would want to say that it is a transformed social landscape that engenders and improves an equal opportunity for all citizens allowing them to achieve sustainability, an acceptable standard of living and quality of life according every individual the right to fully participate in the social and economic life of this country.

In order to ensure that a comprehensive strategy is in place to facilitate our programme and delivery of it, the Ministry of Social Transformation has begun to embark on the framing of a set of policies to guide our work. Policies are being developed for the elderly, disabled and there is also a policy on gender, also a draft social policy paper is currently being studied by the Ministry which encompasses a matrix of the social sectors in Barbados.

When this paper is carried to Cabinet, this paper will be introduced to various sectors of the public for wider discussion and for their input. This process will be monitored through the establishment of a social sector coordinating committee that will include all relevant Ministries, the private sector and civil society organisations. Specific social policies of poverty reduction programme will be managed through a technical committee already established under the Ministry that includes educational institutions, international agencies, trade unions, CBOs, the private sector agencies and public sector persons.

This strategy will ensure that policies and programme developed for social policy and poverty eradication in Barbados are transparent, inclusive and very well managed.

Sir, the Ministry of Social Transformation will continue to develop programmes to effect the reduction of poverty and eventually eradication of poverty. Through the Poverty Alleviation Fund support will continue to be allocated to the various community development initiatives within those most heavily populated community and housing areas.

We have a poverty fund in place which is administered by a group of professional people and there is a poverty bureau that assesses all the individual applications. After that process is completed, it is then sent to the poverty secretariat and then to the poverty committee. Disbursement of the poverty fund is done by

the Welfare Department which disburses all funds from the poverty eradication fund.

We also pay arrears of rental rates for the poorest of the poor and those who are really in need of assistance. We also repair houses and do training programmes through the fund. This is one the better success stories of Government.

Sir, the poverty fund in Jamaica, St. Lucia and other countries are funded by external agencies but the Government of Barbados is the only one that has funded the poverty fund initiative on its own without any external assistance. This is a commendable achievement because when we examine the other funds in the Caribbean most of them run into trouble because of basic mismanagement of those funds. The Ministry of Social Transformation, cognisant of this fact, is running a programme for the poor in Barbados with the highest level of transparency.

We are introducing a programme call GADS, the Geriatric Adolescence Development programme. We have been talking about inter-generational links for the entire day. It was raised by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the Honourable Member for St. James South and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East and we are working on the GADS and the theme is "Yesterday's Children Meeting Today's Children". This programme will be developed against the background of the new Vauxhall Senior Citizens Village and other such facilities. Government will also be embarking on building other such facilities.

Discussion will be held with the National Assistance Board, the National Disabilities Unit, the Ministry of Education and the Geriatric Hospital. This initiative will also seek to make the inter-generational linkages that are necessary to rebuild our communities and families in Barbados.

You will realise that throughout the entire debate the family was at the core of discussion and most members realise that in the whole social transformation process that families must be at the centre and must play an integral part in this process.

The Honourable Member for St. John was correct when he said that we talked a lot about programmes to bring the necessary relief and remedies to get things done in the various communities across Barbados.

We are also looking at a programme called RED, the Retired Experts for Development. Barbados is a very aging society and a lot of our experts are force to retire at the legal age limit of 65 and have to go home. We are developing a retired persons skills bank which will be used to develop the Ministry's social development programme.

These retired experts will work with the Ministry and we will also target retired returning nationals.

In order to learn from our neighbours and build partnership in the region, our Ministry will pursue the networking of Ministries responsible for social development within the region.

This is very critical and later this year we will be hosting in Jamaica, along with the counterpart Minister in Jamaica, a regional summit for all Ministers in the Caribbean that deal with disabilities.

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H.F. LASHLEY: We are of the opinion that the region should have one policy as it relates to persons with disabilities. This meeting will be held in Kingston, Jamaica and will be known as The Kingston Accord. This came about as the result of our visit to Jamaica in December when we sat with the Minister and looked at all the various facilities in Jamaica that deal with persons with disabilities.

Under this particular theme, our Ministry will support the reciprocity of social workers, fellowship and intern programmes on social development concepts.

We also will be working another programme for women. During the debate women made a great contribution under this Head. This empowerment programme for women will support the linking of training and development and will require the direct support of the private sector. I believe that it is critical that the private sector play a more meaningful role in the policy that we are developing as it relates to social development.

Sir, we are developing a national policy on gender which will look at gender mainstreaming, gender balancing and equity. We once had the National Organisation of Women which dealt specifically with women's Issues and we have MESA, which deals with men's issue, which is doing a very good job and rallying around the men. However, this Ministry's focus is on gender, both men and women. Barbados has an ageing population and I would like to see a department to deal exclusively with matters of the elderly.

I would like to invite all Honourable Members to attend the second Senior Citizens Games at the National Stadium on March 29, 2003 to witness these games. Sir, 15 000 tickets have been printed and they are all gone. I believe that Honourable Members should come and see what aging activities are all about. We are trying to create a new environment of activities for our senior citizens.

Mr. Chairman, next year for the first time in Barbados, following the Senior Citizens Games, we will be putting on The National Disabilities Game which will bring the disabled into focus.

The staff of the Ministry of Social Transformation has been working extremely hard. They have gone beyond the call of duty and work sometimes up to 11.00 p.m. and 12.00 a.m. in order to get things done. I would like to remind Honourable Members that it is the Honourable Prime Minister who came up with the concept of this Ministry where all of the social agencies would be placed under one Ministry for the proper coordination of faster delivery of service to Barbadians who need it most. This is in keeping with the Copenhagen Accord of 1995 and the Port of Spain Accord. The Prime Minister must be congratulated for forming this Ministry.

Sir, for the first time in the history of Barbados this country is concentrating on the delivery of service to the poor and the eventual eradication of poverty in Barbados.

The Ministry of Social Transformation has received kudos from as far as the Pope, Canada and throughout the Caribbean. The idea of this Ministry is a fantastic one and the Prime Minister must be congratulated.

Finally, the Ministry of Social Transformation will continue to advocate for the investment in people and the building of social capital. We will continue to ensure that there is better housing in Barbados; compensation measures will be put in place for groups who are vulnerable and the initiatives to create social integration.

Sir, it is our partnership with civil society and the private sector that permits a design and implementation of an integral programme aimed at the alleviation and the eventual eradication of poverty in Barbados. I want all of us to continue to focus on the poor and disadvantaged in Barbados and help those who cannot help themselves. Let us give back to society. Let us to be the best role models.

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Continuation of: Hon. H.F. LASHLEY:

Let us develop our mentorship programmes and let us, Sir, help those who cannot help themselves.

Finally, Sir, I will now say that there is a theme of the Ministry of Social Transformation which every member of staff must repeat. I hope it would be the theme of each and every Honourable Member here today, that is, "let no obstacle be greater than the cause."

Mr. Chairman, I thank you very much.

Sir, I now ask that Head 25, Ministry of Social Transformation stand part.

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

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

HEAD 10 - GOVERNOR-GENERAL IN THE AMOUNT \$945 864

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 10 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 12 - PARLIAMENT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7 362 714

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 12 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE, AS AMENDED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$50 750 559

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 13, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 14 - MINISTRY OF FINANCE IN THE AMOUNT

OF \$48 689 463

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 14 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 15 - CABINET OFFICE, AS AMENDED, IN THE

AMOUNT OF \$7 952 332

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 15 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 16 - MINISTRY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7 455 219

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 16 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 17 - OMBUDSMAN IN THE AMOUNT \$286 504

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 17 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 18 - AUDIT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$528 630

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 18 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 20 - MINISTRY OF COMMERCE, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AS AMENDED IN THE

AMOUNT OF \$7 351 680

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 20, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 22 - MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AS AMENDED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$27 887 736

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: I beg to move that Head 22, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 23 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH AS AMENDED IN THE

AMOUNT OF \$248 397 003

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 23, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 25 - MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AS AMENDED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$33 864 333

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 25, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 27 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT AS AMENDED IN THE AMOUNT \$93 148 378

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 27, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS IN THE AMOUNT

OF \$25 980 451

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I beg to move that Head 28 stand part, Sir.

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

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

HEAD 29 - DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS IN THE

AMOUNT OF \$223 799

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I beg to move that Head 29 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY GENERAL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$51 639 333

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 31 - MINISTRY OF PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT AS AMENDED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$49 948 923

Hon. Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 31, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 37 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT IN THE AMOUNT OF \$61 057 047

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 37 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 38 - MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND LANDS AS AMENDED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$38 752 917

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 38, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 43 - MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS AS AMENDED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$245 953 369

Hon. R.N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 43, as amended, stand part.

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

HEAD 44 - MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY AS AMENDED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$28 093 947

Hon. R.C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 44, as amended, stand part.

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

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

HEAD 50 - POST OFFICE AS AMENDED IN THE AMOUNT

\$9 731 638

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 50, as amended, stand part.

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

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

Clauses 1, 2, 3 as amended, and clause 4 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule, as amended, became the Schedules to the Bill.

6.05 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, seconded by Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2003.

ORDER NO. 10 – RESOLUTION TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee of Supply.

(a) RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$10 314 016 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2002-2003 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO.15, 2002-2003 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 23 AND 28 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE II TO THIS RESOLUTION

HEAD 13 - PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

\$816 000

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the amount of \$816 000 which is being asked of this Committee is to be able to provide a new Chamber more commonly known as The Benz for the Barbados Defence Force which would treat people who have experienced difficulties when diving and persons who have burns or other types of medical conditions.

It is my understanding that the machine which the Barbados Defence Force has is 19 years old. This machine does not only give service Barbados, but give service to the entire eastern Caribbean and in some instances the north-eastern Caribbean.

It is a matter of grave concern that we should have a machine such as this not working to its maximum efficiency and hence a decision has been taken that this is a

genuine emergency for which a supplementary is needed so as to ensure that no one's life is lost by reason of the inability to access this Chamber.

With that, I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

The question that Head 13 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 23 - MINISTRY OF HEALTH

\$4 539 955

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I am briefed that the amounts which are before us are required essentially for the South Coast Sewerage Project in respect of maintenance of property and structures.

The amount of \$231 244 is required for insurance premiums due on the outfall on the old sewerage collection system left by Fomento Y Cubiertas who were the old contractors. In addition, the sum is also required to insure the newly built part of the system which was completed in August 2002. So all of this money is for insurance premiums for both the old and new parts of the system.

The amount of \$4 308 711 is required as additional funds to meet the contractual payments to the contractors Soares DaCostas for the construction works up to the end of the financial year which as you know, Mr. Chairman, comes to an end in ten days. Therefore, these bills will have to be paid now if we are not to carry the liability into a new financial year.

The work on the project has generally been coming to an end. There are a number of things which they are trying to tidy up now because we do know that it has caused significant dislocation for persons either living on the south coast or utilising the south coast. The Government is mindful of this and is seeking to put in place all things that would allow this project to come to an efficient and complete closure not just in terms of the capital works but in terms of how it has been executed and its impact upon the people of the area.

With those remarks, I beg to move that Head 23 stand part.

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

The question that Head 23 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 28 - MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

\$180 854

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, the amount that is required under Head 28 is to ensure that we can meet expenditure in respect of the Barbados Fire Service, the CANACBU Project and the Government Industrial School.

In relation to the Barbados Fire Service there is an issue of \$29 531 for utilities and \$3 000 for supplies and materials. In relation to the CANACBU Project the sum of \$35 000 is in relation to professional services. The Government has a commitment to be able to provide headquarters for the CBU and we have been working towards this. We found a cheaper alternative to the one that was originally contemplated but we are short by this amount in relation to the Estimates for the preparation of the accommodation for them.

In respect of the Government Industrial School the roof which was being replaced took a little longer than we had anticipated. I believe my colleague, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, would have done the receiving and the handing over some two weeks ago. However, because there was a delay in the completion of the construction and we had to extend the security services of the security firm for some time longer than we had originally contemplated at the beginning of the financial year. Therefore, the amount in these Estimates is to supplement the amount that is needed in that respect.

With those words, I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

The question that Head 28 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

6.15 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003.

HEAD NO: 37

IN THE AMOUNT OF 4 612 973

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, in April, 1997, Rayside Construction Limited was awarded a contract to carry out major rehabilitation works on Highway 6, starting at Searles, Christ Church and going as far as Six Roads, St. Philip. This contract was in the amount of \$9 161 550.07 and the contractor was required to complete the work on this Highway in October, 1998.

The project involved the widening of the existing roads to approximately 7 metres. There was also the provision of box drains, footpaths and shoulders along the Highway. Incorporated into the works were footpaths and drainage improvement in the Woodland area, an area that is prone to much flooding.

The project involved the relocation of a number of houses. The work was eventually completed and Rayside Construction Limited has submitted a claim for \$4 601 582 for the completion of the work.

Mr. Chairman, in the Supplemental, we are asking this Honourable House to vote \$10 791, to pay the construction firm C. O. Williams Construction Limited for work done on the overlay padding programme at Orange Hill.

In these circumstance, Mr. Chairman, I beg that Head No. 37 stand part.

HEAD NO:44

THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND SOCIAL SECURITY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$123 654

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, the total amount required is after we had done our annual tidying up exercise, due to cover the cost of matters of items such as acting allowances, payment for persons acting as substitutes, and the consequential expenses and deductions normally associated with these things.

I ask that Head No. 44 stand part.

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

HEAD NO: 50

THE POST OFFICE IN THE AMOUNT OF \$41 180

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, this amount is simply to supplement National Insurance contributions and travel allowances for the Post Office in the sum of \$24 480 for National Insurance contributions and \$16 700 for the travel contributions of the travel allowances of the Post Office.

With that, I beg to move that Head No. 50 stand part.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Amendments to the Explanatory Notes in Head No. 23 be reflected as circulated amongst Members.

There are a series of them relating to the Ministry of Health, the general Ministry; the technical services; the primary health care services; the HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Project - all under Head No. 28.

There is also a further amendment under this Head for professional services for the Central Emergency Response Organisation. These are all contained in Schedule No. 2. I, therefore, beg that these amendments stand part as being circulated to all Members.

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

On the motions of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. Chairman reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one money Resolution in Committee in Supply. Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the Resolution was read a third time and agreed to.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of this week's Business, which has been a long and tiring week. In many respects, the Debate on the Annual Revenue and Expenditure constitutes one of the more intense periods of work for Parliamentarians and those who have serviced Parliament, ranging from the police officers to the clerical officers, the technicians, staff, the media and indeed, the public of Barbados, whose patience we must also crave in discussing their business.

I, therefore, want to take this opportunity to thank all who have worked assiduously in the preparation for this, as well as during the course of this week, in ensuring that we could have done the people's business with such dispatch and efficiency during the course of the week.

As was said earlier, this Debate stood out, if only because on Wednesday morning we had three farewell speeches from persons who claim that they would never have the opportunity of participating in an Annual Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue again; namely, the Honourable Members for Christ Church West, Christ Church South and St. Joseph.

There is also the suggestion that four Members spoke on that day but I would leave that for another time.

Suffice to say that this week has been historic that it would bring to an end that period of participation for Honourable Members who cumulatively have served more than 100 years among the three of them and for whom we have a debt of gratitude for guiding us, generally, in the Debates of the Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

I think it is only fair that the record reflects our gratitude towards them, not only for this week's Debate, but generally for contributing to the process of the evolution of Governance in this country and in particular to this Parliament, as it relates to this particular process of the Debate on the Annual Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

I am sure that all Honourable Member would wish to join me today in thanking them for what, as I said, is the highpoint of a Parliamentarian's life in terms of the Debates during the course of the year.

Sir, with that, I would simply want to move the adjournment of the House. We will not meet next week because the Other Place will be meeting from Monday to Wednesday, debating the same Appropriation Bill, 2003, but we will meet on Tuesday, 1st April, 2003.

6.25 p.m.

Friday, March 21, 2003

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: . . .

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: I beg to second that.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I want to thank the presiding officers, the clerks at the table, the staff of Parliament, the police, caterers and all of the other persons who have made this week of intense activity by our Parliament conducive to the work that we were required to do.

I enjoyed the debate this year. I will miss those persons who officially will be speaking in their last Estimates and I will also miss those persons who may not know that this is their last Estimates.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: In other words, I will miss everyone who will not be given the opportunity to participate in future Estimates debates.

Sir, even though we dealt with two heads, I compliment the Chairman for the latitude extended to us to cover the ground that would not easily have been covered were that latitude not granted. I believe that was in the spirit of the debate as sometimes we have to be frank and we do not always have the necessary time to cover that ground.

On my own behalf and on the behalf of my colleagues I want to express our appreciation to the persons who facilitate our work during the course of this week.

ADJOURNMENT

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, April 1, 2003 at 11 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and MR. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

6.30 p.m.

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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. Committee of Supply, Head 37 (Supplementary Estimates). The heading gives Head 37 as 'IN THE AMOUNT OF 4 612 973', but the Minister's two items (\$4 601 582 and \$10 791) total \$4 612 373, and only the lower figure makes the six Heads add up to the \$10 314 016 in the Resolution. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Committee of Supply, close of Hon. H. F. Lashley's speech. The Minister winds up 'Head 24' and then asks that 'Head 25, Ministry of Social Transformation stand part'; later in the sitting Head 25 is the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, moved by Hon. A. P. Wood. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Committee of Supply, Mr. D. St. E. Kellman. The Member gives revenue as 'over \$1 billion' in 1994/1995 and then as '\$1.4 million' and '\$1.7 million' for later years, with expenditure of '\$1.8 billion'; 'million' appears to be meant as 'billion'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Supplementary Resolution, explanatory notes. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley moves that the amendments to the Explanatory Notes in 'Head No. 23' be reflected, then says they are 'all under Head No. 28' (the notice refers to Heads 23 and 28). The same speech has the misprint 'mokev'. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Supplementary Resolution, Heads 37 and 44. No question is recorded as put on Head 37 or Head 44, and Head 37 has no seconder, before the Chairman reports the Resolution. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Take-slip about 6.25 p.m.. After the take-slip the speech of Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley consists only of '...'; the rest of her moving of the adjournment appears to be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q9. Adjournment. The closing procedural sentence reads 'resolved in the resolved in affirmative'. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed its sitting on Friday, 21st March, 2003, in Committee of Supply on the Estimates 2003/2004. On the motion of Hon. R. C. Eastmond, Mr. D. T. Gill took the Chair of Committee; Mr. M. Z. Williams presided later in the day. The debate on Head 24, Ministry of Social Transformation, occupied most of the sitting.

Mr. D. J. H. Thompson argued that the Government had never set the philosophical parameters of social transformation and was 'defending a moving target', that the process had begun long before 1994, and that some people were being pushed down the economic ladder. Hon. R. C. Eastmond spoke on legislation for the disabled, citing English and American Acts. Mr. M. Z. Williams and Mr. D. St. E. Kellman exchanged points of order on the tenancies legislation of 1965 and 1982. Mr. Kellman contrasted rising Government revenue with the talk of poverty alleviation and was answered by Hon. R. R. Farley, who recalled the stabilisation tax of the early 1990s. Sir Henry Forde said that 38 per cent of people below the poverty line lived in St. Michael. Hon. R. D. Marshall and Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson also spoke before the House suspended until 1.45 p.m.

In the afternoon Hon. A. P. Wood read the mission statement of the Urban Development Commission and described support for small business. He was followed by Hon. G. A. Clarke, Hon. N. A. Lynch, Mr. D. J. H. Thompson (with interjections from Sir Henry Forde about roads in St. John), Hon. R. N. Greenidge on care of the elderly, Mr. T. A. Prescod on the Pinelands Creative Workshop and the Israel Lovell Foundation, Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, Mr. D. T. Gill on the National Assistance Board and the Disabilities Unit, Rev. J. J. S. Atherley, and Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde on women caring for relatives and day care for seniors.

After a further suspension the House reverted to Papers: Hon. R. C. Eastmond laid the National Insurance and Social Security Employment Injury Benefit (Amendment) Regulations, 2003, and Hon. R. R. Farley the reports of CRL Limited and Hotel and Resorts Limited. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley gave notice of the Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Bill, 2003, which was read a first time, and of a supplementary Resolution.

Hon. H. F. Lashley wound up for his Ministry, speaking for the Speaker's constituency of St. Michael Central and on the Retired Experts for Development

programme, a regional summit on disabilities to be known as the Kingston Accord, and a national gender policy. The remaining Heads, from Head 10 to Head 50, were agreed to without division, and the Bill was read a third time and passed as the Appropriation Act, 2003.

Under Order No. 10 the House went into Committee on the Resolution to grant \$10 314 016 under the Supplementary Estimates No. 15, 2002-2003. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley explained \$816 000 under Head 13 for a new chamber for the Barbados Defence Force, \$4 539 955 under Head 23 for the South Coast Sewerage Project and

\$180 854 under Head 28; Hon. R. D. Marshall explained Head 37, chiefly a claim of \$4 601 582 by Rayside Construction Limited for Highway 6. The Resolution was agreed to.

Moving the adjournment, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley thanked the staff and paid tribute to the Members for Christ Church West, Christ Church South and St. Joseph, who had made farewell speeches; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson added his thanks. The House adjourned until Tuesday, 1st April, 2003 at 11 o'clock.