
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

THE SENATE

Monday, 24th March, 2003

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Monday, 24th March, 2003, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Fred GOLLOP, K.A.
(President)

His Honour Senator C. L. BOLDEN, C.B.E., Q.C.
(Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, FRCS (Edin.),
J.P. (Minister of Health) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator the Hon. G. S. H. MURRAY, B.A. (Hons.)
J.P. (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office and the
Civil Service)

Senator T. E. BARKER, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Econ.)
(Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic Develop-
ment)

Senator P. C. GODDARD

Senator Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, D.B.E.,
G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.), P.G.C.E., J.P.

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE, J.P.

Senator J. E. D. WILLIAMS, B.Sc., M.B.A, J.P.

Senator D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.) L.E.C.

Senator D. L. HAYNES, S.C.M.

Senator K. D. SYMMONDS, LL.B.

Senator C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.),
M.A. (Public Finance)

Senator LeR. H. McCLEAN, B.Sc. (Hons.)

Senator Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON, B.A. (Hons.),
M.P.H. (Harvard), S.R.N.

Senator C. K. LAURIE, D.I.C.T.A. (S.T.), FBSTA

Senator Sir John Stanley GODDARD, K.A.,
G.C.M., B.Com., F.C.A., Hon. LL.D. (U.W.I.)

Senator B. R. COLLYMORE, C.M.G.

Senator the Rev. L. W. B. ROCK, M.Div.

Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M., B.A.

(Spec. Hons.) M.A., LL.B. (Hons.) (U.W.I.) F.L.A. (Gt.
Brit.), L.E.C.

Prayers were led by Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr.
President, I beg to lay the following:

1. Report of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the Quarter ended December 31, 2002.
2. Report of the Social Investment Fund for the Quarter ended December 31, 2002.
3. Barbados Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2003-2004.
4. Schedules of Personal Emoluments 2003-2004.
5. Annual Report and Financial Statement of the National Conservation Commission for the period 1st April, 2000 to 31st March, 2001.
6. Annual Report of the National Sports Council for the period 1st April, 2001 to 31st March, 2002.
7. Annual Report of the National Cultural Foundation for the year 2000.
8. University of the West Indies (Guarantee of Bonds) Order, 2003.
9. Report of the Judicial Council, 2002.
10. Annual Report and Financial Statement of C. L. Limited for the Fiscal Year January 1 to December 31, 2001.

11. Annual Report and Financial Statement of Hotels and Resorts Limited for the Fiscal Year January 1 to December 31, 2000.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg that Standing Order No. 45(2) be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting.

The question that Standing Order No. 45(2) be suspended for today's Sitting was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the Appropriation Bill, 2003.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, the Appropriation Bill was read a first time.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 4 – THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 2003

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, as I rise to commence the debate on the Appropriation Bill, 2003, I take note of the importance of this Bill as is exercised every year, but I must reflect that this year's seems somehow to be unique. It will be a unique debate in several ways. It will be unique because if we are to listen to what we are hearing, especially from the Other Side, most definitely this will be the last Appropriation Bill for this Senate.

It is being presented with a war in progress with the Anglo American Coalition and the declared war on Iraq, which certainly will have global consequences, to which I will speak later.

It is unique also at a time when we are being threatened with the withholding of aid by the United States of America, all related to this war.

It is also unique in the fact that it is occurring at a time when we are emerging from a recession, a recession in which social services were not affected and we did not have any social dislocation to which we had been accustomed in the last recession of this kind in 1991.

Sir, it is unique because it is occurring at a time when,

throughout Barbados within the public sector, there seems to be a whole illness of strikes and work stoppages under the influence of the National Union of Public Workers. This seems to be occurring every week.

Finally, it is also unique because it occurs at a time in Barbados in which we traditionally refer to as the "silly season", a season when we suspect that elections might be near.

Sir, I would like to say this is no silly season. It is indeed a serious time and a sort of crossroads for Barbados as a nation where we have a constellation of issues with which we would have to deal and to tackle if we are to survive as a small developing country within the world as it is in 2003.

With regards to the war, my Government's position is quite clear. We see war as a last resort, something that should be gone to when negotiations and meetings have failed. Certainly in this case, the Government's position is that the United Securities Council process should have been allowed to continue. We are not saying that we support Saddam Hussein, but we are saying the process entered into with the United Nations Security Council should have been allowed to take its course.

War is not something to be taken lightly. In war there is suffering, death, destruction, devastation and, in fact, no winners at the end of the day.

Since the Second World War, there have been 86 million deaths in wars. This is something we should not at all take lightly. People who are worst affected are usually the innocent.

If I may even speak to the situation in Iraq, after the 1991 invasion, there were some 40 000 tons of depleted uranium which was left in Iraq. Figures from the United Nations for the 1991 to 1995 period showed there were a 700 per cent increase in the occurrence of cancer throughout Iraq, as a result of the spent uranium that was left.

I am speaking, not only of deaths that have occurred in the day-to-day battlefield activities, but of the potential consequences for years after and, will no doubt, have severe repercussions for years to come. Certainly, it will have effect on our economy. It can affect our tourism and our fuel cost, depending on the duration of this war.

I say this, especially at a time when we are emerging from a recession which has lasted from June 2001 to August last year. We are also emerging from a recession like other developed countries, for example, Japan, Singapore and many of the other Latin American countries. Again, I must reiterate that these are, indeed, serious times. This is not any silly season and, for these times, we need serious people to be in charge, to be leading, to be charting the course for us.

We need people who understand the intricacies of financial and economic management of small emerging economies. We need people who understand the issues of globalisation and trade liberalisation. We need people who understand what it is to take leadership roles within CARICOM.

These are not times for narcissistic, theoretical economists, who are subsumed by a rabid, though vacuous lust for power. Again this is a time for serious people.

Sir, in looking at the overview of the matter of economic issues, we need to display sound, financial and economic responsibility. Government is not necessarily looking at the short-term rewards but at the long-term interest of the country.

Certainly, from what I will be presenting at a later stage, one would see that we are not indulging in any pre-election excessive spending as has occurred before the 1991 election when a certain leader, at that time, said he would have never indulged in committing political suicide, then took the measures that were necessary and in another nine months, we had an 8 per cent wage cut and massive laying-off of persons. In all this, we are aiming to maintain our deficit at 4.7 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

Sir, if I may review the figures of 2002-2003. The original Budgetary Programme for the Fiscal Year 2002-2003, was designed to produce a deficit at 4.3 per cent of Gross Domestic Product. This was calculated on the basis that there would be a negative growth in Real Gross Domestic Product of 2.7 per cent, inflation would have been about 3.2 per cent, there would be a negative GDP growth of 15.9 per cent in tourism and, in the trading sector, a negative growth of 7.9 per cent.

This Fiscal Programme was approved by Parliament on March 15, 2002, and showed a current revenue of \$1 795.4 million and a current expenditure exclusive of amortisation, of \$1 661.4 million and a capital expenditure and lending of \$362 million, to produce a deficit of \$228 million, or 4.3 per cent of Nominal Gross Domestic Product, which was estimated at \$5 242.9 million.

Sir, however, this was not achieved. As I said, the original target revenue was \$1 795.4 million. Provisional data from the Accountant-General for the period April 1, 2002 to January 31, 2003, shows that Government collected current revenue of \$1 337.6 million, a decrease of \$28.6 million, or 2.1 per cent less than the current revenue for the same period in the fiscal year 2001 to 2002.

It is predicted that \$132.6 million would be collected for February and \$234.9 million would be collected for March this year. This will yield a revised current revenue of \$1 701 million. This will give an overall decrease of \$21.2 million, or 1.2 per cent less than the actual amount collected for the 2001 to 2002 fiscal year.

In the case of current expenditure, provisional data

from the Accountant-General for the period April 1, 2002, to January 31, 2003, indicates that Government has incurred current expenditure of \$1 597 million, an increase of \$83.6 million or 5.5 per cent over current expenditure for the same period in the fiscal year 2001 to 2002.

It is predicted that \$123.3 million and \$175.1 million will be spent during February and March this year to give a revised current expenditure, inclusive of amortisation of \$2 222.3 million.

Expenditure on wages and salaries is projected to be increased by \$32.9 million due to the arrears on salaries and the salaries increase paid last year. Expenditure on goods and services is expected to increase by \$14.1 million or 7 per cent over the 2001-2002 period, to \$213.9 million. This is primarily due to Supplementaries of \$10 million for the Barbados Drug Service and \$1.2 million for the Central Emergency Relief Organisation, to address the damages done by Hurricane Lili.

In the case of the revised capital expenditure for 2002-2003, it is expected to be decreased by some \$20 million or 5.8 per cent to \$326.8 million in 2002 to 2003. As a result, the current revenue of \$1 701 million, of which \$1 617.8 million is tax revenue and \$83.2 million is non-tax revenue and lending. It is expected the total expenditure is projected to be \$2 222.3 million, of which \$1 657.2 million is current expenditure and \$326.8 million is capital expenditure. The revised deficit would then be \$ 2 8 3 m i l l i o n r e p r e s e n t i n g 5.6 per cent of Gross Domestic Product as opposed to the 4.3 per cent which was the target set last year.

In looking at the fiscal framework for the financial year 2003 to 2004, it has been formulated to attain certain limits. We are setting a fiscal deficit limit of \$253.2 million or 4.7 per cent of Nominal Gross Domestic Product.

One of the major strategic focusses of the Government would be the minimisation of job losses. In other words, we are aiming to reduce the fiscal deficit without raising taxes and while ensuring the minimisation of job losses but also using a gradual structured control process to reduce this fiscal deficit.

We are aiming to reduce the level of tax arrears which are outstanding by the major revenue agencies and also enhancing such collections. In addition, we are looking to implement a stabilisation programme which would involve reducing discretionary expenditure in order to cope with the global recession. There would be measures to reduce cost and enhancing revenues. These would include the fact that there will be no new major expenditure but would be attempts to close the loopholes in the tax system.

11.25 a.m.

There will be introduction of alternative measures, for example, joint public/private sector arrangements. There will be rationalisation and restructuring of the State's enterprises and an overhaul for customers' valuation and reduction of the fiscal deficit at the Post Office.

The financial programme for 2003/2004 is targeted to generate a fiscal deficit of \$253.1 million or 4.7 per cent of nominal GDP at market prices.

The fiscal programme presumes revenue of \$1 780.4 million and a current expenditure of \$1 762.7 million and capital expenditure and lending of \$270.9 million to produce a fiscal deficit of \$253.1 million or 4.7 per cent of nominal GDP.

The next financial year current revenue is projected to increase by \$79.3 million or 4.7 per cent over the revised 2002/2003 level to \$1 780.4 million.

These Estimates have been constructed on the following economic assumptions. That there will be GDP growth of 1.3 per cent, that inflation will be at about 2.6 per cent, a tourism GDP growth of 4 per cent and a trading sector growth of 2.1 per cent.

The proposal is set for current revenue to be collected during the 2003-2004 fiscal year at around 33.2 per cent of GDP and this is in keeping with historical trends between revenue and Gross Domestic Product.

Taxes on profits and income are projected to increase marginally by \$2.7 million or 0.5 per cent to \$561.5 million. Income tax is expected to increase by \$6.7 million or 1.9 per cent to \$350 million.

On the other hand, corporation tax is projected to decline by \$7.5 million or 4 per cent to \$181.5 million due to reduction of the corporation tax rate.

Taxes on goods and services are expected to rise by \$39.8 million or 5.3 per cent to \$786.9 million. This is due to the VAT and excise duties which are expected to contribute \$525 million and \$150 million respectively in the next fiscal year.

In addition, import duties are expected to increase by \$6.4 million or 3.9 per cent to \$170.4 million.

In the case of current expenditure for the next financial year exclusive of amortization of \$311.5 million, this is expected to increase by \$105.4 million or 6.3 per cent over last year's revised figures.

Wages and salaries are expected to decrease by \$41 million or 6.7 per cent to \$582.6 million. Obviously, the

absence of arrears of salary payment and the removal of the personal emoluments from the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in this category of expenditure will be the major contributing factors to this decline, bearing in mind that these funds for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will now be transferred to the Board with effect from April 1, 2003.

Current transfers are expected to increase by \$188.9 million or 23.4 per cent to \$615.3 million and this increase is due to the fact that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will now be managed by a Board. Funds are being provided from the Consolidated Fund by way of a transfer.

Total debt payments in 2003-2004 are expected to increase by \$102.9 million or 19.8 per cent to \$622.2 million. This is due to the inclusion of payments on behalf of the BAMC.

In the case of capital expenditure for the year 2003-2004, this is projected to decline by \$55.9 million or 17.1 per cent to \$270.9 million. It is expected, as I said earlier, that there will be a deficit of \$253.2 million. This will give a deficit of 4.7 per cent of GDP.

It should be noted that to reduce the deficit there will be no raising of taxes but Government will be concentrating on a gradual plan, structured programme to reduce the deficit of GDP over the next few years.

Amidst this fiscal austerity, I give the assurance to this Honourable House that social services will not be affected and we will not have the situation as in 1991 when there was an unemployment rate of 27 per cent.

Throughout last year, in the face of recession, we managed to keep our unemployment rate below 10 per cent. With all the changes that have been occurring and with globalisation and trade liberalisation, we need in Barbados to place our economic sectors in a position to withstand the effects of the removal of protectionist barriers which are likely to occur in the next five years.

We need to look at re-engineering our economic productive sectors and pay close attention to reform of agricultural production in this country if we are going to be in a position to withstand these changes that are likely to occur. Sir, I should say that at present we are carrying 30 weeks in reserves and we are better off, in economic terms, than Singapore and Hong Kong.
11.35 a.m.

In the areas of education, health and social transformation you will see that in spite of the recession, the expenditure on the Ministry of Education in 2001-2002 was \$341.4 million; 2002-2003 in spite of the recession this was increased to \$375.3 million and in the Approved Estimates

for the next financial year is \$375.5 million. In the case of health, 2002-2003, this amount was increased to \$375.3 million.

In the last financial year, again in the face of a recession, there was no cut-back, \$318.1 million and in the coming financial year, \$310.3 million have been allocated. There is an apparent reduction but we must bear in mind that the South Coast Sewerage Project will be coming to an end this financial year and the amount of \$40 million which was allocated over the last year will be drastically reduced to \$8 million.

In the area of social security and welfare, in 2001-2002, \$200.9 million was expended and in the year 2002-2003, in the face of recession, the expenditure was \$204.2 million. In the coming financial year, \$214.5 million has been allocated.

Mr. President, you can clearly see that in spite of the recession, the Government has its commitment of maintaining the social services in this country.

Housing and community amenities: this was at \$44.5 million in 2001-2002. Last year this was increased to \$3.8 million and in the coming year it is projected to reach \$63 million. Again, the Government's commitment is being maintained.

This is important because it shows Government's commitment to providing health care and social services but especially providing education to the citizen of this country and education of the highest quality.

This is important especially at a time when so-called alleged leaders of other political parties are exhorting about the relevancies of qualifications at a time when these same people who referred to EduTech on the June 26, 2002, as a waste of time. On December 18, 2002 they said that if they had their way they would scrap EduTech and would give a computer to every house in Barbados, the alleged leader of the Democratic Labour Party, one of whose founding fathers allegedly created the concept of free universal education. It was basically his legacy and now we are hearing one of his grandchildren, so to speak, saying that qualifications are irrelevant and that qualification is a waste of time.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, this is a classic example of someone achieving success, ascending the ladder and once having achieved, he kicks it down so that no one else can follow the path which he travelled. These are the sort of people who are coming to talk about leadership in an era of globalisation and trade liberalisation, when we know that as a small developing country, we have real economic resources, we depend on tourism, we will depend

on services and our people have to be trained and be skilled.

I do not understand how we can have people who are parading, it is alleged, as political leaders on one hand, who claim to understand the intricacies of globalisation, and yet do not understand that you need to have people trained in various skills and areas so that they can benefit from these changes in the trading services. Sir, I suppose that this sort of behaviour is expected, but I must caution that it is selfish and dangerous behaviour.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: During the coming financial year, a number of major activities will be targeted. An amount of \$7.6 million has been included in this year's Estimates for the completion of the South Coast Sewerage Project. The Grantley Adams International Airport Expansion Project will continue, and a sum of \$14.8 million is to be provided in the Estimates to cover administrative costs while construction cost of \$53.7 million will be met from the project fund.

The sum of \$2.4 million would be provided for the Justice Improvement Project and the coastal infrastructure programme will commence this year at a cost of \$6.3 million.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport will continue to carry out the road rehabilitation programme at a cost of \$7 million. The Scotland District Special Works Programme, which is being undertaken by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, has been provided with \$2.4 million. Work on the Bridgetown Bypass Road project will continue at a cost of \$10.4 million. Renovations and improvements to police stations will be undertaken at a cost of \$2.3 million.

The relocation of tenants at the Selah Tenantry will proceed at a cost of \$1.8 million. EduTech's civil works for phases 2 and 3, equipment procurement components for phase 2, design and provision works for phases 2, 3 and 4 are to be undertaken at a cost of \$30 million during the 2003-2004 fiscal year.

Sir, approximately \$11.5 million will be spent on HIV Aids Prevention and Control Project. The sum of \$57 million is provided for the University of the West Indies and a subvention of \$50 million will be provided to the Barbados Tourism Association to facilitate marketing and promotion.

In addition to this there will be a number of off Budget projects. The Port Expansion Project spoke to the Deep Water Harbour, the redevelopment of Needhams Point, the Hilton Project, which I will address later in this debate, the Barbados Tourism Investment projects, the Jubilee Gardens,

the Inner and Outer Careenage, the street-scaping of St. Lawrence Gap and phase 2 of St. Lawrence Gap, the Coast Guard Project, the Tamarind Hall Project, St. Joseph and the Housing Joint Venture Project.

Sir, all of these Projects will counteract the effects of the \$59 million reduction in capital projects.

Sir, I now turn my attention to an area of special interest to me, that is the Ministry of Health. For the next financial year, a sum of \$248 197 000 has been allocated, non-statutory expenditure. In the coming year in the area of primary health care services \$80.7 million has been allocated. In the area of hospital services, this not only includes the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a sum of \$166.9 million has been allocated in the Estimates. In the area of care of the disabled a sum of \$202.3 million has been allocated. A sum of \$34.9 million has been allocated to the Drug Service and \$11.8 million has been allocated for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control.

Sir, in the area of maternal and child care, the amount has been increased from \$16.5 million to \$17 million. We will be looking at providing water storage tanks and generators for the polyclinics in cases of emergencies. This is very important as part of a disaster programme which we entered into under the auspices of PAHO. We know that this is very important in the area of nutrition services.

The Ministry has been focusing on the promotion of healthy diets in an area where we have an increased incidence of non-communicable diseases. The amount allocated to this department has increased from \$700 000 to \$861 000 in the next financial year. I believe that this will play a more important part in the health care budget of this country as the years go by.

In the case of the South Coast Sewerage Project, the amount allocated last year was \$40.9 million and this year \$7.6 million is being allocated as this project winds down. I will deal with this subject later in this debate.

The amount allocated to the Sanitation Authority for the next financial year has increased from \$25.2 million to \$30.1 million.
11.45 a.m.

Sir, in the case of the Solid Waste Project, familiarly known as the Greenland project, the allocation has moved from \$4.5 million to \$8.6 million in the next financial year and this would provide for physical facilities to be constructed during the 2003-2004 period.

Sir, in the case of the Psychiatric Hospital, the amount allocated has also been increased and this will move from \$23.7 million to \$24.9 million.

Sir, in the Care of the Elderly Programme, which are basically the geriatric hospitals throughout the island, the allocation has also been increased from \$22.8 million to \$24 million, again, showing the Government's commitment to health care and the provision of care for the elderly in this country.

In the case of an alternative care of the elderly programme where provision is made for payments to private nursing homes in respect of elderly persons who were assigned to their care, the amount allocated will move from \$1.8 million last year to \$2.6 million for the next financial year.

As I said, in the case of the Barbados Drug Service, this remains at \$35 million.

Sir, that is, basically, an overview of the allocations to the Ministry of Health. You will note that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) remains the most important aspect, accounting for \$111 million. It has been extremely topical over the last couple of years.

Sir, I feel very strongly about this institution. It was constructed and built in 1964, that is, some 39 years ago. At that time it was seen as a sort of flagship for health care in the Eastern Caribbean. It was certainly a referral centre for many countries within the Eastern Caribbean.

Sir, over the years, the services were extended and modified so that they expanded to the state where they have open heart surgery, neurosurgery, pediatric intensive care, surgical intensive care and dialysis units.

Sir, throughout the years, this institution has suffered from a lack of middle management and also from deficiencies in preventive maintenance programmes. There has been a general deterioration in the physical plant and the quality of services which were offered at that institution.

There were a lot of criticisms and condemnations of what was going on at the hospital and the Government, in its wisdom, organised a Haynes' Commission, and I say of very dedicated individuals, three of whom are now Members of this Honourable Chamber, spent many long hours discussing, debating, researching. There were numerous town meetings held. Several individuals and groups made oral presentations and written submissions and numerous deliberations.

Sir, out of this came an interim report in which some immediate recommendations were made. When the final report was delivered, it spoke among other things, this is the Haynes' Commission Report, the need for a Board of Management to deal with the affairs of this institution.

It was felt that it was too complicated and for greater efficiency, it needed to be removed from the whole

control of the Ministry of Health and the Civil Service bureaucracy and it should be given some autonomy to improve its efficiency.

This is not a unique concept to Barbados, coming out of the Haynes' Report. I think the vast numbers of hospitals throughout the world are managed by boards, so this was just Barbados being suggested to fall in line. There was much discussion among the Members of the Committee and among the public, after the Haynes' Report became available.

There was some discussion about the proposed composition of the Board, how it would represent the different interest groups. At one stage within the Government there were concerns that you were setting up a board of management that would comprise of 10 individuals, and, that the Government should have, at least, five members being chosen by the Minister.

This was debated and disputed and the final composition that was agreed to, and was enacted in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act was that the Board would comprise of ten individuals. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman would be chosen by the Minister and one other member. In other words, the Minister of Health would be involved in the selection of three of these members out of ten.

Other interest groups would be represented. Provision is made for representatives from the two professional groups, the Barbados Registered Nurses Association and the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners. The trade union representation in the form of CTUSAB would also have membership. The Private Sector Organisation is represented, the Barbados Christian Council, the Barbados Association of Retired Persons (BARP) and the University of the West Indies (UWI). In other words, a 10-member board, coming from a cross-section of areas within the society and where the Minister was in a position to choose three of these.

I must say that this was of concern to some of the unions, especially the NUPW. Their main contention was that in this situation, you would have a board of management in which a minister would have absolute power and he would dictate to this Board what should and should not be done and who could be hired and who could be fired and they kept using examples of other statutory institutions where these things had occurred.

In spite of the fact that the Minister of Health would have three people assigned by him, it could only be an absurdity that he would have absolute control over the representatives from the BARP, CTUSAB or the Christian Council. I think the feeling is really absurd to believe that having a board with this sort of composition that the Minister would have absolute control.

This would be a board with a difference. I do believe that there is no other board with a similar composition in Barbados. This has really been an effort to show that you are going to try to make a quality administration to run the QEH by giving it over to the Board which will have the responsibility of seeing after the affairs of the QEH.

Sir, I became Minister of Health in October 2001. I immediately commenced discussions with CTUSAB and the union, as a way of getting the whole process of evolution towards a board of management and to get that started. We started having discussions to look at how we would move the process forward, how we would deal with the staff issues and staff concerns, how we would deal with the transition period, bearing in mind that we knew that you cannot just proclaim an Act, put a board in place and expect everything to be transferred the next day. We expected that there will be long periods of deliberations and discussions with the representative trade unions.

Sir, the NUPW launched their case against the Board early. They had a brochure, which I am not going to refer to, and they advised members of staff, in spite of everything I said, that they should not sign up to the Board, that they should not assign to any secondment to any board, that this was just a short term measure, and the plan of the Government was to privatise the QEH in conjunction with the IDB. This is what they circulated in their brochure.

Then, they went on to say, in spite of everything written into the Act, which I just went through, in their circular to the staff that the Minister would have ultimate power and he would be selecting five or more persons for the Board, although the Act made it pellucidly clear that only three people would be appointed by the Minister.

I do not know how an institution that is so cash struck, but they still had the money to print all sorts of brochures, advising all sorts of things.
11.55 a.m.

Sir, I find it curious that, as I was driving along, a piece of paper which was signed by a certain General Secretary, who shall remain nameless, blew into my car. On this paper, a person who is fundamentally opposed to a board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was saying:

"As the most represented workers' organisation in the public sector in general, and at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in particular, the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW) hereby makes representation to be included on the proposed Board of Management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

We await your favourable reply.

Yours faithfully

General Secretary."

So I am having some difficulty with that. On the one hand, I am hearing they are not in favour of a board, while on the other hand I can find a letter blowing across my desk which shows that they want to be included in this Board of Management. I really do not understand what is really going on. I am a bit confused.

As I said earlier, we always intended to work along with the trade unions. We figured that there would be transition period of one to two years during which time we would have meetings to work out the terms and conditions of service of members of staff, personnel regulations, the code of conduct, disciplinary procedures and all of the other issues which were outstanding, bearing in mind that the pension rights had to be guaranteed within the Act, and it was not our intention to put the workers at the Hospital at any disadvantage. The whole impetus was toward creating a very efficient system where there would be accountability.

The National Union of Public Workers (NUPW) has opted out of this discussion and they have gone public and said they were not in favour of any board and there will not be any board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. President, in all of this, I believe the Government has to govern. The National Union of Public Workers is not the only trade union which represents workers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Some are represented by the Barbados Registered Nurses' Association (BRNA) which is also a trade union. Some are represented by the Nurses Assistant Aides Association of Barbados (NAAAB) which is also a registered trade union. The founding President of that union sits in this Honourable Chamber. The doctors at the hospital are represented by the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners, which is also a registered trade union, and some are represented by the Barbados Workers Union (BWU), so the NUPW is not the only trade union which is representing workers at the Hospital.

Suffice it to say, based on what I have said in this presentation, funds for the running of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will be transferred into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board of Management with effect from April 1, 2003.

Hospitals have a role and a function which is to provide care and treatment for members of the population. They are built to care for the sick, which is their primary role. Hospitals are not created to create employment. They are created to look after those in the society who need care and attention. Therefore, there must be efficiency and accountability in the carrying out of the affairs of an institution such as a hospital.

A hospital is not like any other government department. It deals every day with matters of life and death. Again there must be absolute efficiency and accountability in this setting.

Sir, I will cite some examples of the problems that the hospital has had to deal with. Let us use one of the easiest scenarios, for example, the case of hiring medical staff. Doctors are on contract at the hospital. The contract comes to an end, say September 30. The procedure is that the doctor then has to go to the Executive Officer and indicate that he or she has an interest in continuing working at this hospital. He or she then has to sign a form.

The Executive Officer then sends that form to the head of his or her department. The head of the department then has to assess that individual and write on that form whether they recommend that this person be given another contract. That is then sent to the Chairman of the medical staff at the hospital who then has to look at everything that has been written on the form and then decides if he approves the recommendation or not. From there it is sent then to the Hospital Director. The Hospital Director then has to send that file to the Chief Medical Officer. The Chief Medical Officer then has to send that file, after she has seen it, back to the Hospital Director.

It goes from the Hospital Director back to the Executive Officer within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to be sent to the Chief Personnel Office. From the Chief Personnel Office, it passes to my colleague to my right. After he sees it, it goes on to the Prime Minister's Office. It then goes from the Prime Minister's Office back down through that same pathway to the CPO, back to the Executive Officer and back to the Hospital Director before that doctor, who was probably working five to 10 years in the system, can get a new appointment, sometimes only for a year or two years. That is the process that you have to deal with in order to appoint one doctor who was already in the service. That is some of the bureaucracy we are talking about in the present system.

Let us look at the issue of procurements. Finances are done by line items and budgets. We have a situation where you are short. You have a certain amount of money allocated, let us say, for dressing. In September you have already utilised the amount that was allocated and you need funds to get more dressing. This has not been reported by Stores. The Administrative Officer then has to start working on a supplemental paper. This has to be sent to the Financial Controller of the Hospital. It has to be relayed to the Hospital Director. It has then to be sent to the Chief Medical Officer. It is then sent to the Permanent Secretary and then it has to be sent to the Minister of Health for his approval. It then has to be sent to the Ministry of Finance for their comments.

It then comes back to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and it then has to go back to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to be formalised to be sent back to Cabinet. It has then to be discussed in Cabinet before it can

go to Parliament a week or two after. You then have to secure those funds from the Ministry of Finance. All you want to do is to buy a supply of dressing, but because your budget has been expended, you have to do all of that.

These are some of the issues you have to deal with in the present situation.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: The final stage is the issue of study and training leave where individuals within the hospital, the nurses, doctors, whoever want to apply for study leave. Again there is this long process of interviews and reviewing. In most cases people apply for study leave to go on programmes but when the decision comes through, the time has long past for them to have started the programme. Therefore, we are saying that these things need to be removed.

In the operation of a hospital you need to have, as I said over and over, greater efficiency. I really do not believe why people should still have some difficulty... If you believe there is a need for efficient health care at your only acute care institution, why are you trying to put obstacles in the way of having this done? As I said earlier, I feel very strongly about this issue.

Sir, no megalomaniac parading as any trade union leader, whatever the biblical derivation of his name, will determine how Government will run and manage the hospital. If this individual – I am not calling his name – is going to decide how the hospital is to be run, then he must be the latter day reincarnation of Louis the XIV who said that he is the State. This individual must be the State of Barbados that he will decide there will be no board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Asides.

12.05 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I do not understand how in the face of all that has been said in Barbados about the need for increasing care in the hospital, the need for us to address the issues, how the public is asking for a board, yet we can have an individual standing and saying there will not be a board and trying to lead a number of people with him. Sir, I do not understand. I would believe that he would be *non compus mentus*.

Sir, we keep hearing about the hospital and that all it needs is new management and proper allocation of funds for that institution to do what it has to do. In the year 1994, \$58.4 million was allocated to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In 1995, the figure was increased to \$67.1 million, an increase of over \$8 million. In 1996, we again increased it to \$70.4 million.

In 1997, it was increased to \$73.2 million. In 1998, it was increased to \$81 million. In 1999, it was increased to \$88.5 million. In 2000, it was increased to \$97.1 million. In 2001, it was increased to \$107.5 million. In 2002, it was increased to \$115 million. In 2003, we are allocating \$111 million – yet we are being told that all the hospital needs is money and that there is no need for a board.

I agree around the table that the problem is management. This is why we need a board to give it some autonomy to get the hospital going again. Therefore, I do not think that Government can be accused of neglecting the hospital. Government has shown its commitment. It has put its money where its mouth is. It is interested in health care and has continued putting the funds that it had thought necessary into that institution. Now that we have put the funds, it is time we move on and get real efficiency and improve accountability.

Sir, we have heard remarks such as “things have been deteriorating”; “things could be much better at the Hospital”, “nothing is happening”, “people who should be studying for exams that they have failed twice, have time to be walking up and down the corridors of the hospital, shadowing as Ministers of Health when they should be studying for mutual funds exams which they have failed over and over again,” *et cetera*. These are things we are hearing coming from people who do not even know the entrance or the exit of the hospital, even if they see it, but yet these people are talking about health care.

Sir, as part of its commitment, Government has made available \$6.5 million to the hospital for capitalisation in acquiring equipment to replace machinery and operating equipment that were obsolete, malfunctioning and had long past its life span.

Sir, the hospital purchased a Stealth Neuro-navigational System, which cost \$496 000 to be used in Neurosurgery. New operating theatres were acquired at a cost of \$800 000. Throughout all the departments of the hospital, new equipment and equipment have been ordered.

In the Accident and Emergency Department, we have purchased four new ECG machines. For several years, there was one only. New defibrillators have been purchased, new blood gas analysers, new ventilators, new beds, all purchased for the hospital, yet we hear that nothing is being done.

In the case of the Department of Medicine, a new Pentax video bronchoscope and a new Pentax video gastroscope have been acquired. Yet we hear nothing is being done. We have even replaced two out of the three refrigerators that were in the mortuary, and yet we are hearing that nothing has been done.

In the Ear, Nose and Throat Department, there are new flexible laryngoscopes, new Welch Allyn "lumiview" head mounts, new Midmark 491 power Otolaryngology chairs.

In the Laboratory, there is a new controlled bench top centrifuge machine. My Honourable Friend, the scientist in some regard, would know that a new Spectronic Genesys Spectro Photometer has been acquired in the Laboratory, so that he might be able to find something to do when he comes there. There is also a new Olympus Research Brightfield Microscope that has been acquired, a new Cryostat 220 voltage and accessories and a new auto retracting Rotary Microtome. All of this to help with the processing of samples within the Laboratory.

We have even addressed issues of equipment in the laundry. There is a new washer for \$198 000.

In the Department of Neurosurgery, new Z-plate 11 Anterior fixation supply systems to deal with skull fractures, *et cetera*, have been acquired.

In the area of patient care, there are new bedside chairs, new commodes, new mattresses, *et cetera*.

In the Ophthalmology Department, a new Mar. 1150 GS Ultra Slit Lamp has been acquired and a new Mar. 6400 Auto Chart Projector, yet nothing is changing.

In the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, there are new Datex Ohmeda Compact Monitors, yet nothing is being done.

Sir, in the Department of Physiotherapy, which I am certain a lot of Members will need after the upcoming events, a Lumbar Traction Table has been acquired. A Hydraulic three-sector Treatment Plinth RH, and a Continuous Pass Motor Limb Optiflex and accessories have been acquired.

In the Department of Radiotherapy, we have acquired new Gulmay Medical System equipment for cancer treatment at the cost of \$408 000.

In the Department of Surgery, we have acquired a new Steris Surgical Table and accessories and a new reusable Biopsy System.

Sir, this is a list of equipment that has been acquired over the last financial year at a cost of \$6.5 million. Yet we hear that nothing is being done.

Sir, I go further. In addition to the equipment that has been acquired, a lot of work is being done on the Hospital. In the year 2000, there were numerous problems with the aircondition system within the operating theatres, with fungal infestation and with patients and members of staff

complaining. It was found that the air-condition unit needed a complete refurbishment. Government took the wise decision at that time that the entire hospital suites should be refurbished. This is being done and is expected to be completed by the end of this month.

Apart from the retrofitting of the entire air-conditioning system, this would include installation of new theatre lights, new sterilizers, new intercom system, painting and replacement of windows.

Sir, when I speak about painting, I was criticised last year in this debate when I said that the hospital appeared like a national disgrace. I am pleased to say today that the Hospital has been painted. A temporary building has been erected to assist the University of the West Indies. There has been the refurbishment of the nurses' changing room, which was a sore point with the Nurses and Nursing Assistant Association of Barbados and the Barbados Registered Nurses' Association for several years. This has been done.

There has been the replacement of ceilings in Ward A5, A6, the "C" Floor and Medical Out-Patients Department, yet we are hearing that nothing is being done.

As part of the security, there has been the improvement of security done along the John Beckles Drive, yet we hear that nothing is being done. Sir, we know that Rome was not built in one day and the hospital that was built 39 years ago, cannot be refurbished in one year.

Sir, the roof of the laundry has been changed. There has been refurbishment of Wards B5, B4, C7, C8 and part of B1. Obviously, all of the wards cannot be refurbished in any one year because basic commonsense would dictate that the patients would have to be shifted from one ward to the next while the refurbishing is in effect.

In the case of the X-Ray Department, there has been the refurbishment of Room 5. The Reception area has been built. There is the installation of a new machine. New equipment is being installed in the Radiotherapy Department.

We had problems with the emergency generators at the hospital. One of them has been over 30 years old and was having problems supplying power to that institution. We have sent out tenders and are looking at quotations to get new generators. In the interim, we have put in place a temporary facility where we are renting a generator from the United States to maintain electrical capacity to that institution in case of any power shortages. Mr. President, yet we hear that nothing is being done. What else are we supposed to do?

12.15 p.m.

I do not understand what we are supposed to do because we can only do so much in any period of time and these Estimates tell what is being done.

Sir, Government has given the green light to the board in the next financial year to look at the amount that would be needed to recapitalise the hospital completely. I spoke to \$6.5 million but a figure given in 2000 was \$23.5 million. Government has given the board the green light to go ahead and secure the financial package to do a complete recapitalisation of the institution in the quickest possible time.

Sir, Government stands committed to the redevelopment and expansion of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The hospital is 39 years old and the services offered have increased over the years. We have expanded our services and the problem of overcrowding on many wards in the medical and surgical because there were constructed to accommodate 24 patients but some days there are 32 patients on the ward. There is obviously a shortage of space in the hospital. There are cramped conditions in the Outpatients' Department and Government said it was time to look at a comprehensive redevelopment plan for the hospital.

Sir, \$1 million has been committed in the Estimates for the consultants to look at the hospital to review the various rationalisation studies done, to look at reports from various heads of departments and come together with a comprehensive plan for the redevelopment of the hospital.

It will speak to the best place for this expansion to occur, how large the project should be and it will look at the general flow of resources within the hospital and the allocation of space. Government is committed to the hospital expansion project.

Recently, after negotiations with the European Union, there was the commitment to grant funds to assist us in the hospital in the area of computerisation and the development of a new state-of-the-art cardiac unit providing various angiographic facilities for cardiac investigation and making antipasto available in the public sector in Barbados because most outpatients for angioplasties had to be sent to Trinidad, Puerto Rico or North America to obtain these services.

I must comment at this point in time about the issue of nursing shortage and migration that is affecting us. The problem is an irritating one, but this must be taken in the context that throughout the world, there is an apparent shortage of nurses. There is the process of migration of nurses throughout the world. Nurses from the United Kingdom have been migrating to North America where it is more lucrative and nurses from Barbados have been migrating to the United Kingdom and the USA.

In the case of Barbados and the Caribbean, PAHO has done a study that shows that the remittances from nurses after migrating for five years are quite substantial. In the case of Barbados, we are working assiduously to address this problem. We had consultation with the nurses to look at a strategic plan for nursing within the context of health. There is a commitment that we should trade more nurses with the understanding that some will stay here but that a lot of them will leave. Sir, there is nothing wrong with that because we do not have natural resources so we can train people for export since we have a sound education system.

There are 163 people being trained in various nursing disciplines at the Barbados Community College. For the year 2002, at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital there were 23 resignation and 7 from the Psychiatric Hospital making a total of 30, and I assume that the majority of these nurses went overseas.

Sir, before nurses can practise, there is a regional nursing examination which they are expected to sit and pass and there will be two sittings of this examination this year. The first is scheduled for April 2 and 42 nurses will write that examination. The other sitting is in October and 30 nurses from the Barbados Community College will be expected to write the examination. Between now and November, there will be 65 new nurses in Barbados available to help alleviate the situation of nursing shortage. We are making inroads in that regard but we need to plan to train more nurses for the foreseeable future.

The allocation for the Psychiatric Hospital has increased again. Honourable Members should visit the hospital to see the work going on there, yet we are led to believe that nothing is being done in health care. A physical transformation is occurring. There is a new reception area and emergency wing. We have begun to move away from the old custodial cell block situation and there is an open, inviting atmosphere.

A new rehabilitation unit has been recently opened catering to 30 persons. This is the direction in which we are moving in mental care which is part of the mental health reform process which is universal.

Barbados led the world years ago in mental health but we somehow lost our way because the world is speaking about reducing the number of persons institutionalised which we had moved to in 1980 when we had out community mental health programme. We stopped the programme for some reason and the world is now moving towards community mental health and we are now trying to catch up. The physical transformation of this institution is in keeping with this feeling.

I must inform you that at least 250 people at the psychiatric hotel were not there because of any particular

psychotic problem but were admitted because their relatives were unwilling to look after them. We have to address this problem and we are transferring these individuals to half-way houses.

The Barbados Drug Service is a vexing problem that has generated all sorts of comments and queries. People are misinformed and misled and are discussing pharmaceuticals which they know little or nothing about. The Drug Service commenced in 1980. A user fee was charged on prescriptions and it was limited to people over 65 for specific categories of drugs and for children under five years old. 12.25 p.m.

Sir, in 1986 the Government, in its wisdom and revolutionary process, post May 1986, decided that the user fee should be abolished. At the same time that this was abolished they increased the number of categories of people who could benefit from the Drug Service.

Since then, the cost has been escalating yearly. We have expanded it. We have included a number of disease categories. We have increased the age from 5 to 16 for those who could benefit at the lower end and more expensive medicine available to Barbadians. The Drug Service, as it obtains in Barbados, is unequalled in this part of the world.

In the great United States of America, there is nothing comparable with the Barbados Drug Service. Unless you have Medical Aid, there is no way you can get access to this medication free of charge.

I think that Barbados has done very well for its 23 years of existence. Over the past 23 years cost has escalated and \$35 million has been allocated this year. In 1995-1996, the expenditure on the Drug Service was \$19.5 million. In the year 2000 it was \$30.4 million and last year it was \$35 million. Sir, this has nothing to do with the HIV budget. HIV is accounted for under the HIV Treatment and Control Programme under the Ministry of Health.

Mr. President, 23 years is adequate time for us to have a review of the Drug Service and this is what we have started to do. This is information for those who do not understand what is a prescription and a reimbursement form. A prescription is what the patient is given by the doctor to take to the pharmacist. The reimbursement form is what the pharmacist fills out after he has dispensed the drug to that prescription and submits to the Barbados Drug Service. To all those who are shadowing insurance and pretending to be health specialists, there is a difference between a prescription and a reimbursement form.

The reimbursement, as it is now, as is obtained until September 2003, the pharmacist is going to dispense the drug on that prescription and submit the reimbursement form to

the Barbados Drug Service. There was no way in checking to see what was prescribed on that prescription and what was being dispensed and the pharmacist was dispensing what was being dispensed.

The Auditor General has found serious fault with this and we have introduced a duplicate prescription as a means of dealing with this, so that three reimbursement forms will be submitted with copies of the prescription. This has caused consignment and we have been told that we are trying to change things unilaterally. We are trying to reform the system to make it efficient for all Barbadians. We cannot have the system running out of control.

In addition, we have started to computerise the public pharmacies by introducing a software programme which will allow us to look at monitoring drugs to determine whether or not the patients are using the drugs, *et cetera*. There is a lot of wastage of drugs in the society. Some patients go to the pharmacies and repeat drugs monthly and do not take the medication and they repeatedly go to the pharmacies and repeat their prescriptions.

We have had cases where pharmacists have reported that there are patients who have brought tablets to them trying to sell them to the pharmacists after they have obtained these tablets from the pharmacy and have accumulated them over time.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, pharmacists have reported this type of behaviour.

Sir, we are looking at an audit of the Government's pharmacies because this has not been done for several years. We are also looking at the whole system of computerisation of the Barbados Drug Service, which is absolutely necessary in order to control some of the losses and wastage in the system.

Mr. President, we can say that we are moving ahead trying to reform this service. At present, I am having negotiations with the private pharmacies. We have almost reached completion of a new agreement with them. The last one was drawn up in 1986 and this is 17 years later. We are pressing ahead with those discussions and we hope to reach an amicable settlement in the not too distant future, realising that we must work together with the private pharmacists and trying to encourage them to understand that the survival of the Barbados Drug Service is dependent on both Government and the private pharmacists in trying to reach a rational and realistic middle ground.

Sir, in the case of the South Coast Sewerage Project, the allocation has been drastically reduced. This Project is

due to come to an end by the end of March, 2003. The process is one that the Government has received a lot of criticism but it is a project that is vitally necessary. If we are moving ahead and we see ourselves as a tourism destination of note, there must be a need to protect our near shore water reserves, marine life, coral reefs, our ground water resources and sanitary conditions in general.

This Project was discussed and agreed to as far back as 1992. As a matter of fact, the first agreement was signed with the IADB and the European Investment in 1993. The actual supervision contract was signed in April, 1994 and in 1992 we agreed that the Project was scheduled to be completed by 1998. We discussed the Project in 1992, we signed contracts in 1993 and 1994 but we said in 1992 that the Project should be completed by 1998. However, two years had lapsed before it got started.

The Project was beset with problems with the first contractor and there were concerns that their bid was US\$22.1 million, this was US\$10 million less than the next lowest bid and it was US\$12.6 million lower than the average of the other bidders. It was obvious that this bid was not going to be a realistic one, but we were under the constraints of the IADB.

The work obviously involved the construction of a treatment plant, a 1.1 kilometre outflow, approximately 40 kilometres of main lines, 5 kilometres of micro tunnelling, 4 lift stations and the sewerage of 3 000 properties. This is not a task that is easily achieved, especially on the southern part of Barbados.

Sir, F & C were unable to cope with the contract and in 1998 their services were terminated. The contract with them is now in arbitration and we had to acquire the services of Soares da Costa to complete this Project. This took some time to complete and we have incurred increased charges. The Project was budgeted in 1992 at US \$73.1 million and this was later revised that year to US \$80 million. Sir, because of the problems which I mentioned, we have incurred increased charges.

In addition, there were problems with Soares da Costa. It took 18 months after the tenders had been discussed to get the paper work in place. We incurred another charge for these delays.

However, I am happy to say that the structural part of the Project is now nearing completion. This caused much disruption and hardship on the lives of many Barbadians but it was a process that needed to be carried out. I am certain we have learnt a lot from our mistakes in this Project and hope that they would not be repeated in the West Coast Sewerage Project. Sir, there will be an operation assistance programme over the next year and eventually this will be handed over to the Barbados Water Authority.

We are currently looking at a number of properties and businesses that were affected and a cadre of lawyers are having negotiations, and Government is committed to having realistic compensation being paid to these individuals, providing their claims are substantiated. We are working assiduously in trying to have a number of these matters resolved because they have been outstanding for a considerable period of time.

In the case of HIV/AIDS, the commitment of Government has been maintained. In June, 2002, we opened the Ladymeade Reference Unit which makes Barbados the first country in the entire Caribbean to offer CDC and viral loads and free anti retro viral therapy to all who need it.
12.35 p.m.

The main provision this year is \$1.2 million which is provided for the construction of a food bank and Drop-in Centre in the same Ladymeade area for the members of this community so that they could be counselled, indulge in social activities, have access to a nutritionist, learn how to cook, because nutrition is very important to the whole treatment of HIV/AIDS, have a room where they can have exercise, indulge in occupational therapy and they can have their own meeting room where they can meet and discuss issues, not only the individuals who are afflicted but also the relatives, and this is the whole purpose of this food bank and Drop-in Centre.

Sir, the intention is not to have segregation but to have their relatives and friends coming and socialising with them and other people who have been unfortunate enough to have been afflicted by this disease.

In the case of the Solid Waste Department, a lot has been said about \$30 million being wasted. I checked and found that it was \$21.5 million which was expended on Greenland. We all know that the tendering process was restarted in January 2000, and was suspended, pending a protest that was made by one of the proponents of the annulled tender.

The Government of Barbados received the Bank's, "No Objection" in June 2001, and the process was restarted. Fifty-seven firms expressed an interest and 22 of these purchased pre-qualification documents. Applications were received from five companies. These were evaluated and the evaluation report was submitted to the IDB in November 2001.

The firms failed to satisfy criteria and following discussions between the Solid Waste Department and the IDB, the criteria were readjusted and the process was revised. The 22 firms were given the opportunity, again, to submit applications. The revised applications were opened in April 2002 at which time submissions were received from six firms, including all of the five firms which had submitted in the previous process.

The review process was started in May last year and an evaluation report was submitted to the IDB in July 2002. The IDB's "No Objection" was received at the end of July 2002, and the four recommended firms, pre-qualified to submit technical proposals.

A "Request for Proposals" document was originally drafted in October 2002 and completed in draft in November 2002. This was submitted to the Solicitor General's chambers and to the Legal Adviser of the Project Unit for their review. The revised "Request for Proposals" document was submitted along with the revised cost estimate to the IDB and the Bank's "No Objection" at the beginning of this month. This is where we are with the tendering process for the solid waste utilisation of Greenland.

Sir, I mentioned that there is an increased allocation for the Sanitation Authority. This has to do with the construction of a new cell at Mangrove. It was understood, I believe, that two or three years ago, with the problems at Greenland and the whole process of tendering, we would need somewhere to collect the garbage for the next three to five years. A decision was made two or three years ago, I believe, to acquire an additional piece of land at Mangrove and to develop a cell.

As I speak to you, this cell is being constructed and it is expected that it will be completed towards the end of this year. As I said, it was expected that we would not be able to store garbage there for the next three years, while the whole tendering process has been sorted out.

Sir, having said this, I must say that the Government is not putting all its eggs in one basket. We are looking at the technologies that are available in the management of solid waste, especially in a small country like ours which has limited land resources and who cannot just invest in landfills *ad nauseam*.

We certainly need to look at other issues. There has been a feasibility study done recently by a group looking at other methods. Of course, there is the whole issue of incinerators and there is an area of anaerobic digestion process that we all need to look at. Gasification is also an issue. Some of these technologies are extremely expensive but we certainly need to look at the whole area of anaerobic digestion, combined with recycling, although recycling is not as popular in the developed world as it was a few years ago.

We are also looking at the possibility of incinerators although I heard recently, the shadow Minister of insurance, speaking about the need to have 10 incinerators in Barbados. I do not know if that is the way for a country the size of Barbados to have 10 incinerators.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT:...a shadow minister of insurance who parades as a medical consultant from time to time, depending upon which script is written and by whom.

Sir, we will have 10 incinerators calling on the land of windmills but Barbados will have 10 incinerators, a new tourist attraction and this is what they want to tell us.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, I cannot spend all my time on health without commenting about some of the other Ministries. Certainly, the Ministry of Social Transformation is one Ministry that has come under a lot of unfair criticism.

Sir, the Ministry of Social Transformation is not about transforming a whole society, but about a number of other things. Certainly, it has a number of departments under its control. It deals with community development, welfare, national assistance, child care, poverty alleviation, gender affairs and urban development.

We need to look at some of these projects, especially in a time when we heard an alleged leader speak about quoting a Chinese proverb about not giving someone a fish but teach them to fish.

An ideal programme of the Ministry of Social Transformation is the community art programme which is offered in Speightstown and Bonnetts, coming under community development where 150 persons have been trained, 90 men and 60 women, in courses of drawing, illustrations, graphic arts, animation, computer graphics and they have done well. Many of them have found employment as a result of this and some have embarked on their own businesses.

This I believe, that the Honourable Member would agree with me is truly showing someone how to fish as opposed to giving them fish, or giving them a Weed Wacker and/or some pineapples or grapefruits and telling them to sell them. This is what I call empowering of the youth, teaching them how to become artists, utilising their skills which may not have been discovered. They might have been latent skills. As I said, this is what is called, teaching them how to fish.

In the community, the technological programme is another programme in which you will recognise the area of globalisation. You will recognise that as we move on in this world at this time, you need to offer trade in the area. There will be capital flows, labour and information and you are

making these things available to people in Barbados who might not otherwise have the opportunity to be exposed to computers and information technology.

This programme was launched in May 2001, and there are many centres that have been computed. There are, St. Marks, Bonnetts, Bush Hall, the Valley, Weston, St. Elizabeth, Black Bess and Speightstown. There are plans in the next year, to introduce this programme to Grazettes, Briar Hall and Gall Hill in St. John.

Over the years, a number of people, in addition to having the computers available, there are also training programmes which cover such areas of word processing, introduction to the Internet, Excel, Spread Sheets, introduction to Access. Sir, many people have benefitted. So far, 397 persons have successfully completed the programme. As I speak to you, some 660 are attending training programmes throughout the length and breadth of this country.

Apart from empowering the community, some community volunteers have come forward and are looking for these Centres on weekends and playing their part. 12.45 p.m.

This is another area in which you can clearly see Government's commitment to teaching people how to fish and encouraging them to have qualifications in Word Processing and these basic things as opposed to giving them weed whackers and telling them to go and cut bush or to sell fruits.

We have heard a lot about the Rural Development Commission. We have heard about squandermania. We have heard about contracts being given to contractors, but what is it. At one stage you are told that you are giving all your contracts to the larger businesses and that you are not empowering the small contractors, but then when you attempt to do that through the new Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission, you are criticised. What do they want you to do? Should you continue giving the contracts to the large contractors, should you try to give them to the small contractors or should you not do anything? Which is it?

Having said that, what is the record of the Democratic Labour Party on poverty in the urban areas of this country? What do they have to show? That is just a question.

The Urban Development Commission does not deal with houses only, it deals with a capital works programme where it deals with road resurfacing and the building of concrete roads. In this coming year, they propose to construct concrete roads at Simmons Land, Balsam's Gap, Akita Drive, Risk Gap, Northern Drive, Paynes Bay, Paddock Road, Seaman's Village, The Gulf and Thompson Gap.

In St. Michael North West work will be done on Hinkson's Gap and Moore's Gap. I do not know if those gaps are known to any member of this Honourable Chamber. In the case of the asphalt road programme, numerous roads have been done since the programme was started and numerous concrete roads have been completed.

Another aspect of the work of the Urban Development Commission is the transfer of titles in urban tenancies. This is also a very important process in this whole empowerment and this whole issue of poverty alleviation by making people feel a part and a sense and in the giving of value that they can have a piece of this rock. This programme will allow some 3 000 households living on over 200 identified tenancies to improve their standards of living by giving them the ability to acquire the piece of land on which they have been living for several years, in a situation where Government will pay the difference in cost between the \$2.50 per square foot to be paid by the tenants, and the market price of the land. This is really a very important process, especially when we say that owning a piece of land is very important in our psyche.

The Urban Development Commission has done a lot of work in the construction and repairs of houses. Some 681 houses have been repaired and 338 houses have been constructed. This has also empowered a number of small contractors who have been able to work in these programmes.

The Rural Development Commission plays a similar role in improving the quality of life of persons living in the rural areas. They have also been involved in the construction of houses, house repairs and improvements to roads.

In this year's Estimates, \$13 million has been allocated to it. It is expected that some \$350 000 of this would be expended on market facilities as Government planned to construct a new facility at Bathsheba to cater to the needs of the vendors in that area. Facilities at Redmans Village, St. Thomas, Jackson and Six Roads are also being contemplated in the new financial year.

The Rural Development Commission also assist in the installation of water and electricity for those who are unable to afford them. A number of asphalt roads are being targeted for the next financial year. These would be at King's Village, Belair, Pegwell Boggs, Exchange Hill and Byde Mill.

There is also the allocation of \$5 million to be spent on the concrete road programme. This will deal with roads at Mount Friendship A, Skeete's Road, Belle's Land, St. Patrick's A and B and Greenidge Road. This also shows, Mr. President, that the Rural Development Commission plays a very important role in the refurbishment and the rehabilitation of roads in the rural constituencies.

The Rural Development Commission received \$2 million from the Poverty Alleviation Fund to carry out improvements in housing. In the last financial year, some 24 new houses were built, 78 were extensively repaired and bathroom facilities were provided for 42 people. In addition, there were also electrical installation and water installation for 49 people, so the Rural Development Commission also plays its role in the alleviation of poverty in our community.

The Housing Credit Fund also plays a very important role. It has made 6 per cent interest on mortgages and 100 per cent mortgages available to homeowners whose household income does not exceed \$36 000 per year and who, prior to this, would not have been able to afford a mortgage or indeed to acquire their own home. This has been extremely useful to a large number of people across Barbados.

Government has also moved toward long-term mortgages. We have 40-year mortgages for the younger people. This encourages them to embark on owning their own homes. The 6 per cent interest on mortgages introduced by Government has now been followed by the private sector and numerous banking institutions are now offering rates at 6.9 per cent in trying to catch up, so to speak, with the Government's position. Government has introduced 100 per cent mortgages for low income borrowers and this is being followed now in the private sector with 95 per cent. CLICO Mortgage and Finance Corporation is offering 97 per cent mortgages.

In this area, Government has shown again its commitment to empowering the poor and the powerless in this society by showing them how they can get affordable homes. For the last financial year, the Housing Credit Fund disbursed some \$10.6 million in 129 loans to Barbadians to obtain their own homes, so there is no doubt about the role that is being played by the Housing Credit Fund under the auspices of the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

The National Housing Corporation (NHC) continues to acquire land to make lots available to the masses of Barbadians who continue to cry out for housing needs. It is the commitment of the National Housing Corporation (NHC) to continue to do so.

In addition, Government would be moving within the next year into the sale of rental units. This would be done in a number of phases. Phase 1 will involve the sale of 450 units which already have part walls. These are located throughout Barbados. There are 100 in Bonnetts and 69 at Rosemont, Deacons Road, St. Michael. There are also units at Haynesville, Maynards and Church Village. The Board has recommended that there will be a rebate up to a maximum of \$5 000 per unit in lieu of repairs and a concession of up to 40 per cent of paid rents. The selling price for these units would be about \$2.50 a square foot.

There will also be a phase 2 which would come on stream and the prices will vary. We are looking at the proposed selling price for the units at Bayville, the Pine, St. Stephens and Sayes Court. In phase 2 a three-bedroom unit would be \$5 000, a two-bedroom unit \$3 750 and a one-bedroom unit \$2 500. These proposed prices are aimed at allowing people to have their own houses. These prices would look at the number of years that individuals have been resident in these housing units.

Sir, in the area of Public Works and Transport, the Government continues to show its commitment to the development of a proper road network in Barbados. This year the sum of \$50 130 000 would be spent in the road works programme.
12.55 p.m.

Mr. President, \$34.6 million will be going towards programmes such as the construction of Highway W, which is Constant to Mapp Hill, Highway M, which is the Airport to the Crane, and Highway C, which is Trents to Orange Hill. Civil works would be undertaken at a number of areas such as Constant to Mapp Hill and the design work on the widening of the ABC roads.

In the area of residential road construction and maintenance service, \$1 million has been allocated to this area for roads in the various parts of St. Michael, St. Thomas, Christ Church, St Philip and various parts of the island.

The Bridgetown Bypass Road Project, to which I spoke earlier, has been divided into three sections: A, B and C and has 12 phases. Progress to date is as follows:

Section (A) University Drive to Eagle Hall is now completed. Sections (B) and (C), Welches to Garrison, Highway 7, is near completion. Out of the funds allocated, \$10.4 million for this next financial year, would be to complete the area of Dalkeith to Bush Hill; Bush Hill to Highway 7, President Kennedy Drive to Baxters Road, White Park Road to Roebuck Street. In spite of the recession, one can see that Government is maintaining its commitment to health and to the social services in this country.

We are at the crossroads where decisions have to be made. We do not know how long this war would go on. We do not know of the eventual repercussions to our economy but we are pressing ahead in the face of these challenges. In addition, we are faced with the negotiations in the Free Trade Area of the Americas, the World Trade Organisation and the European Union, moving towards globalisation.

Mr. President, bearing in mind that in these negotiations, we stand to lose as much as \$170 million in

duties when many of the protective barriers are removed as we sign onto these treaties, this is a time for serious people to be in charge of our economic and political destiny. It is not the time for those who are subsumed in the sense of their own importance, their unfulfilled desires and their theoretical economic theories.

It is a time for serious people to get together and to formulate plans for the development and the future of this country. It is not the time for unemployed economists, unemployed band leaders, unemployed former presidents of cricket associations, to be meeting in Paradise Heights, discussing the intricacies of this economy.

I beg to move this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for one hour to resume at 2.10 p.m.

The question that the Sitting be suspended was put to the Honourable Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

(Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT in the Chair)

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Senate is resumed. Senator Mascoll.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to make my contribution in this year's Estimates Debates, and it will be in every regard.

Mr. Deputy President, let me first state that the comments that were publicised about the deficit for the upcoming fiscal year being less than this year's is not true. The evidence is very much available in the Estimates that were presented to this House and to the Other House.

For the coming financial year, the fiscal deficit for Barbados is going to be 10.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, which is more than the 10.3 per cent estimated for the end of this fiscal year. In fact, an overall deficit of \$564.7 million is being projected for the coming fiscal year. This is, in fact, greater than the projected deficit for the end of this year.

What has to be explained here is that the deficit to which I speak, which is going to be larger, includes amortisation. That is the repayment of outstanding debt by

Government which, when looked at in an international financial institution way, is deducted. Let me state that one of the reasons for the substantial growth in amortisation is the direct borrowings of Government over the last number of years.

Sir, even though the international organisations subtract amortisation, it still has to be financed and Government would still have to find ways and means of raising the finance for the upcoming fiscal period. Therefore, we cannot say that the fiscal deficit, in an overall way, is going to be lower as projected by the Estimates 2003-2004. That is extremely instructive for the economy.

What has happened is that the Government, being forced by the International Monetary Fund, is attempting to reduce capital expenditure for the upcoming fiscal year. This is a direct consequence of the position taken by the International Monetary Fund in their recent report on Barbados. A figure of \$56 million for reduction in the Capital Expenditure has been identified.

Again, that is cosmetic because in reality, when one analyses all of the off-budget expenditure programmes of Government, we recognise that Government is still going to spend on capital projects, much more than in the previous year, except that the finance is not going to be captured in central Government data. That is again an important matter to recognise, that contrary to all that people are hearing about Government reducing its capital expenditure programmes, that is not true when the off-budget programmes of the Government are taken into consideration.

Sir, I am not going to be lured into believing that and, as a consequence, I know for a fact that what has triggered part of the inspiration here had to do with the expected election in the year 2002, when Government decided at the Urban Development Commission and in its major projects, to spend as much as it could, given that an October or November election was planned for last year.

Sir, having done that, what one recognises is that at the Urban Development Commission, that has caused all kinds of bother and worry when the Director was sent home by the Minister for Social Transformation and was then brought back by the Prime Minister, under the guise that he is the one who has to do the budget for that organisation.

What had happened is that six months into the fiscal year, the entire budget at the Urban Development Commission was exhausted. That is what has caused a major problem between the Minister of Social Transformation and the Director of the Urban Development Commission.

Sir, having said that, it is fair to say that this Government has been under severe pressure to find money to conduct its current account affairs and there is substantial evidence of that within the Estimates, so that Government has cleverly designed ways and means to hide that from Barbadians.

The reality is that when one investigates the actual data of this Administration, even to satisfy its current expenditure, the Government of Barbados, for the first time in many years, has struggled to meet its current expenditure from current revenues. That is a fact that has to be stated and, indeed, cannot be denied.

Mr. Deputy President, we are seeing substantial evidence of it across the length and breadth of the public sector. All of the concerns that we are hearing being raised within many different areas of the public sector are as a direct consequence of this shortage.

Sir, let me, therefore, put the Estimates in context by way of the economic circumstances and political realities in Barbados. From the early 1990s, this Administration has said one thing and has done another. On the question of taxation, in 1994 the then Opposition, now Prime Minister of Barbados, lambasted the Erskine Sandiford's Administration for excess taxation. That was at a time when the tax take out of every dollar was a mere 30 cents. As I speak to you today, and admitted on the Other Side in a previous Debate made by Senator Barker, the tax take out of every dollar in Barbados is 39.6 cents, when the Gross Domestic Product is used as factor cost.

2.15 p.m.

In fact, if you want to play with statistics then 39.6 cents is as close to 40 cents as you could get. It reminds me of a recent debate in which the Ministry of Agriculture, while seeking to defend the happenings at the Market said that the National Union of Public Workers was incorrect in saying that there are 16 posts to be filled but, in actual fact, there were only 15 posts. Sir, this is the kind of semantics this Administration plays with.

We now know for a fact that the tax take out of every dollar is 39.6 per cent as admitted by the Other Side when we use GDP at factor cost.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is saying something I did not say. I never talk about GDP at factor cost. I always talk about GDP at market price. While he was obtaining certification, he was taught that you cannot compare apples and oranges.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, not too long ago the Senator said that 39.6 cents out of every dollar and more importantly....

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member must tell us when I said this because if I said it, I would apologise to the Honourable Chamber. Sir, I cannot remember saying that it was 39.6 cents in every dollar. The Honourable Member has to be accurate. If he is quoting what I said, he has to bring it chapter and verse.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, this is a strategy that is evident from the last few years. Every time I speak in the Estimates, the Presiding Officer changes and I allow for individuals to frustrate me.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I will not have the Honourable Senator involving me in any strategy concerning when he speaks. As I understand it, Senator Barker is saying that if you want to quote him, he must be given the time and place when these statements were made. If you make open statements the Senator is entitled to challenge you, but do not include me in any strategy to frustrate you in your speech.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, this morning I sat quietly and listened to the Leader on the Other Side for two hours without interrupting him and it is a deliberate strategy that is very deliberate every year and I anticipated these interruptions this afternoon.

I am saying that the level of taxation in Barbados is excessive and that it is now 40 cents out of every dollar and no one can dispute that. The Prime Minister had increased taxation in Barbados excessively over the last seven years and then we have the so-called international market and all of a sudden to be a politician in Barbados you have to know something about globalisation and trade liberalisation and you cannot be grassroots.

No wonder a good friend of his who sought to run for the seat in St. James Central, having heard those kinds of comments, decided to run from the political arena and other persons have now been elevated to the political process on the basis of that simple comment being made.

Sir, this Administration made it quite clear that it disagreed with the Incomes Protocol in the early days. This Administration also disagreed with the foreign borrowing strategy of the Sandiford Administration when he said that in any given fiscal year the Government intends to borrow up to the limit of the interest payments to be made on the foreign markets of that year and, therefore, that would limit Government's borrowing capacity every year.

Since then we have seen this Government borrowed ridiculously large amounts of money on the capital markets to the extent that over the last five years we have raised in excess of \$1 billion on the foreign capital markets both

private and institutional markets abroad. Sir, this Government knows all about borrowing.

Sir, nobody can blame anything that has happened internationally for the present economic circumstances in Barbados. Throughout the region with the implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy we have had stops and starts in that area but last year, in the Budget presentation, we heard that Government could only reduce income taxation by 2.5 per cent because it had to phase out its income tax in relation to what was happening regionally.

Sir, I am saying that having raised so much funds from the imposition of the VAT and the bound rates introduced, this Government owes it to the people of Barbados to reduce the level of income taxation and to do so rapidly. Therefore, the people of Barbados can look forward to such programmes, projects and policies being put in the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto for the upcoming elections.

Sir, it is a question of doing what is right because Barbadians are overtaxed and they need to be relieved of the level of taxation in Barbados and if the ruling party does not see it fit to go that route he can rest assured that the Democratic Labour Party is going to go that route and justify it.

On the question of the political environment, we have to be in a position where we can trust our leader and I must confess that over the last eight years several things have been done in the political environment such as calling an individual an indentured servant, the secret tax that was imposed to help fund cultural events and we have recently seen secret expenditure in the form of GEMS.

We had the FBI report that is yet to be reported on, supersession in the public service has not been dealt with, several work stoppages, the question of casual workers becoming permanent workers and there are thousands of civil servants who have not yet been appointed to permanent posts within the public service and several other areas in which we can identify this Administration politically.

Sir, this Administration has failed a number of people in failing to deliver what it should have delivered over the last eight years and only a certain kind of individual seems to benefit from the Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Sir, only this morning we heard that Barbados' credit rating abroad has plumaged significantly and one would never have thought they would hear this at this time in the history of Barbados, having heard that we are free to borrow as we like because the economic circumstances are good and we can borrow as heavily as we wish. Then to hear this morning that the credit rating of Barbados has plumaged

significantly since September last year is, to my mind, not to hear good years. I would like to know the explanation for this.

2.25 p.m.

I would like to know how all of a sudden Barbados' credit rating could have fallen so dramatically. Sir, I have a report in my hand by Bear Sterns dated March 12, 2003. I have no doubt that the others have it because they have a habit of walking next to my location and peeping to see what I have on the desk, so that they can anticipate what I am coming with.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, that has happened before and it is happening now too.

I am saying that this report from Bear Sterns which is dated March 12, 2003 contains information on the economy. It makes me wonder when Bear Sterns wrote this Report because I am asking how Barbados' credit rating could fall so significantly within the last six months and an organisation that is supposed to know was not privy to that reality.

How Barbados' credit rating could fall so significantly since last September and this organisation does not know? I can understand why because in this report at page 2 and I quote:

"Barbados's high standard of living (it ranks fifth among developing in the United Nations Human Development Index)..."

I have to repeat it. I quote:

"(It ranks fifth among developing countries in the United Nations Human Development Index)."

Sir, this is a report that was written on March 12, 2003. I have before me the Human Development Index of 2002. At page 157 Barbados ranks fifth among developing countries and you can have a reputable organisation writing a report this year and this kind of information is available to the public, the world and not knowing that Barbados has now lost its prime position of first among developing countries and ranks below Hong Kong, Singapore, Cyprus and the Republic of Korea.

Even an international organisation that should know better could have in a report dated March 12, 2003, that Barbados is still the number one ranking development country, according to the United Nations Developing Index and I have before me the United Nations Human Development Index of 2002.

Therefore, on the basis of that alone, I have to query the authenticity of such a report. This organisation should have known about the credit rating of Barbados as we speak. Since it is located somewhere in New York, it should have been up-to-date on Barbados' circumstances pertaining to credit ratings. We should not now be hearing this information.

Sir, we have to worry when an organisation which should be informing you about how the market is working and what is your credit rating says this.

I said in a debate in this August Chamber that you cannot evaluate whether or not a person receives a loan on the basis of what they currently earn. You have to look at their ability to pay in the future. It does not surprise me that Barbados' credit rating has fallen dramatically. Barbados has not been earning foreign exchange over the last four or five years. It has been borrowing foreign exchange, but the economy has not been generating foreign exchange of the capacity and type that could sustain it over the foreseeable future.

Therefore, this country must know that the capacity to pay in the future has been diminished because of the under performance of tourism, the international business sector, manufacturing sector, sugar and agriculture. Those are the four main foreign exchange earners in Barbados.

Therefore, it does not surprise me that the economic engine has run low of gas because we have been borrowing substantially over the last four to five years. When these organisations look at Barbados and look at Barbados' capacity to earn foreign exchange, and by extension its ability to repay loans, they must conclude that Barbados' credit rating is on the decline.

Sir, we borrowed \$300 million in 2001 and \$150 million in 2002 for a rainy day. Mr. Deputy President, what makes it worse is that when you check the information at the Central Bank of Barbados, we withdrew \$383 million from the Special Deposits of the Central Bank. Last year between January and December the Government of Barbados withdrew \$383 million from the Special Deposits that were set aside for a rainy day. Well, it rained very heavily last year and it rained every day last year.

In fact, I know that Barbadians are surprised to hear that we were in recession for such a long time and that we are still in recession. The only reason we have not seen part of the impact that we witnessed in the early 1990s is because of what we have been doing. We have been borrowing excessively and the time has come for Barbados to reevaluate.

This cannot be fair. You cannot have an organisation that is supposed to advise you about markets and your ability to go into the market and not know that you are now the fifth

ranking developing country in the world. This information is in a report that is available and nobody on the Other Side queries it.

Barbados has dropped to the 31st position in the Human Development Index. Barbados was under an International Monetary Fund (IMF) Programme and Barbados was ranked number one in the world among developing countries. It only goes to show that Barbados has not kept pace with the increases that have occurred in other developing countries across the world, either economically, educationally, socially or otherwise. We have been confusing ourselves about how great we have been managing the economy of Barbados. "How Great Thou Art" but I am not convinced about that. Last year, the Prime Minister of Barbados identified a target of 4 per cent growth in tourist arrivals for the tourism sector.

2.35 p.m.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The Prime Minister told the tourism sector last year that it has to grow by 4 per cent, in order to receive further assistance. He gave them money even though they under-performed, so when I hear now that they are doing so well and they had set a target of 4 per cent last year, and whether they grow, the tourism arrivals declined and they still got money.

Then, there is an abundance of money in Barbados. You can get money now for almost anything you want to do. You can get money at the UDC. You can get money for GEMS. You can get money at the Hilton. You can get money at Greenland. You can get money for Eastry House. You can get money at Dover. You can get money wherever you want it now, across the length and breadth of Barbados. This is all you need to do. Ask for some money and it will come and that is precisely what happened. There was a 4 per cent growth target for this sector and this sector did not even come close to achieving that.

Then, I criticised the appointment of some individuals at the BTA and there was no inconsistency. I am saying that some people that were appointed to marketing positions at the BTA never had the kind of qualifications in marketing they should have. They were doing customer service at the Barbados Water Authority and customer service is not like marketing. Customer service is just what it says, but marketing is a specialised area.

In fact, I am now informed that these top-ranking persons at the BTA now have to do correspondence courses in marketing and we are paying substantial amounts to these individuals.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: It is true that these individuals are now taking correspondence courses in marketing and that is true of the top-ranking staff at the BTA.

Sir, customer service, as done at the BTA, the Tourism Board or the Transport Board, cannot be compared with marketing.

Now, if you have a situation in which an individual is working in a job for a number of years, then you can say that someone with a particular level of qualification may, in fact, replace that individual. Sir, if you have a situation in which the person going to the job does not have experience in the area, neither does he have qualifications, we cannot justify his position.

Therefore that differs to a situation in which you have a woman or man working in a fish market for 20 years, being replaced by a young girl or boy with only four CXC's, of whatever grades, and you are telling me that four CXC's would be equivalent of a 20-year stint at a fish market.

Sir, when I made the comment that academic qualifications are overrated, I was to apologise? Me, apologise? I teach part-time at the UWI and, therefore, what hurt the Barbados Labour Party is that they never expected a comment like that to come from the so-called academic.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, to hear me under-rating the academic qualifications and then to try to use it against me, the Prime Minister goes into constituencies...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Apologise? I will not apologise for saying that academic qualifications are overrated. In fact, it may appear as though you have to get a degree now to be a fast bowler or an opening batsman in Barbados. Then, you are telling me that you need someone of that calibre to supervise a fish department.

You are not doing rocket sciences. You are not sending a rocket to the moon. You are not in surgery where these qualifications are highly necessary. You have to say that people who are on the job are learning and therefore, you have to reward them for learning on the job. It is called human capital accumulation. As people do more, they become more and that is what it is.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, that is what it is, human capital accumulation. You learn as you go. It means that you learn on the job but you cannot discount it, so to hear that kind of talk about how Mascoll said that academic qualifications are overrated and then to hear that he is now apparently signed up to do a Ph.D. and tell me that they are inconsistent.

They cannot be inconsistent. Never let it be done in this country where a person is able to go and learn on the job and acquire skills and then you feel that someone leaving school at age 18 can be put on top of them. It happened before.

I was a young boy at Combermere School in the Second Form when a young man of 16 years old left Combermere in Second Form and went straight to Plantations Limited on Broad Street and became an assistant manager. I do not have to say what colour he was. I do think that is important. He left the Combermere School where he could not reach the Second Form and the same year he came back and looked for us and he was the Assistant Manager at Plantations.

There is no wonder it closed because he was able to get a job as an assistant manager at Plantations Limited. He had nothing going for him except, of course, his social status.

Mr. Deputy President, on the question of tourism, we have to look closely at – and I am surprised that the Government chose this time to bring this report because now, I have in my hand, it was promised that this report would have been delivered 15 days after a programme in October of last year and it has now come to light.

This is the Hotel Resorts Limited Report for 2000. What is instructive about this, is that HRL incurred a loss of \$21.3 million in the year 2000 and up until the end of 2000, now has an accumulative loss of \$37.6 million. One can therefore extrapolate from this, that HRL now would have had losses up to last year, in excess of \$60 million and I know that for a fact, and when you look at the fact that you had share capital of only \$19 million, it tells you that this particular entity is insolvent, should have been and would have been written off if it were a private sector organisation.

While the debate was going on about HRL in Barbados, listen to the words of the Prime Minister at October 22 last year and he is talking about the GEMS Project at page 73 of the Budget speech,

“The Company is highly geared having been financed mainly by debt. The Government is therefore preparing the company for divestment and has taken the first step by restructuring the debt in an effort to eventually improve the debt to an equity ratio.”

Sir, the important word there is “has”. The Government has taken the first step to restructure this particular entity. Who could believe this? The word is ‘has’ but do you know what? While we were discussing this entire HRL GEMS debacle, the Minister who would have been recently appointed to be responsible for it, said that no cash was ever put in GEMS.

Only last week, in the Estimates Debates, the Prime Minister now admits that \$28 million went into GEMS out of the Public Enterprise Investment Funds. The Prime Minister of Barbados, after the Hon. R. R. Farley said not one cent in cash was put into the GEMS.

This is not the first time. He is always sent forward to take the licks and he loves to take licks. He rushed forward before, got a counter punch, retreated, and now the Prime Minister is stepping forward. Let me tell you something, not only did they put cash, but the Prime Minister of Barbados went into the Consolidated Fund as at July last year, and note these dates, and without Parliament approval, withdrew \$113 292 127.

When he said that the Government has taken steps, it meant that the Prime Minister knew all along that \$113.2 million were withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund of Barbados without the approval of Parliament.
2.45 p.m.

This is what the Prime Minister of Barbados did. So when he said that the Government has taken steps, it meant that the Prime Minister knew all along that \$113.2 million was withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund of Barbados without the approval of Parliament. Whenever I try to raise this matter, they dodge it. They are dodging it in the Press. They are dodging it on the radio. They are dodging it in *The Beacon*...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: They got a paper called *“The Beacon”*. *“The Advocate”* is *“the Beacon”* and then you got *“the Nation”*. All of them are trying to dodge this issue because it is very clear that this money came out of the Consolidated Fund. I have before me complete evidence of this at page 8 of the Accountant General’s Accounts and Statements for June, 2002. I said before that the money borrowed over the years for a rainy day would have been put in a special deposit at the Central Bank of Barbados. All revenues of Government plus borrowing except short-term borrowing go into the Consolidated Fund.

If you look at the Accountant General’s Report for June you will see – and I will go through this very slowly – that the special deposit of the Accountant General for June at the Central Bank of Barbados was \$385 365 774. At July, that special deposit, Accountant General’s deposit, fell

to \$272 073 647. If you subtract \$272 073 647 from \$385 365 774, it comes out to \$113 292 127. This is the same \$113 292 127, that was advanced, as stated in the Accountant General’s Report, to Hotels and Resorts Limited which was never debated in this Parliament of Barbados. It never came here.

Then to try to confuse this matter, the Prime Minister of Barbados went and got some technocrat to write some memo saying that it is a question of a charge to the Consolidated Fund as opposed to an advance from the Treasury Account; a bunch of rubbish.

The Consolidated Fund is established in law by Section 107 of the Constitution of Barbados. I do not understand how this could be confused. The money of the Consolidated Fund goes into something called a “Treasury Account” at the Central Bank of Barbados or at a commercial bank. It is just like I have an account in my business, but I have an account at CIBC. The only way in which the CIBC account that I owned can be withdrawn or can be increased is if I authorise it, so an advance from a Treasury Account and a charge to a Consolidated Fund does not matter. It is irrelevant. It has to be authorised by the Parliament of Barbados.

Section 107 of the Constitution of Barbados establishes a Consolidated Fund into which all revenues of Barbados shall be paid. Expenditure from the Consolidated Fund may be made only for the purposes of statutory expenditure and other expenditure.

If you look into the Estimates, any Estimates, you are going to see at the start of the Estimates and throughout the Estimates the use of the words “statutory and others”. What it says here is that by the provisions of Section 108, the Minister of Finance shall, before the end of the year, have an Appropriation Bill, which is what we are doing now, because come April 1 not one cent can be spent by a government department unless the Appropriation Bill comes to both Houses of Parliament. This is why we know and we knew that you could not have an election before April because you cannot spend one cent without coming to Parliament and having an Appropriation Bill which is what we are simply debating today.

In Section 109 (2) of the Constitution, the amounts voted in the Estimates and supplementary Estimates – by the way, in the event that you have a line item in the Estimates and you exceed the budget, you can come back to Parliament for a supplementary, but it has to be a line item within the Estimates, it cannot be adopted or adjusted over the course of the year – by the House of Assembly in respect of a financial year shall represent the limit and extent of the public expenditure for that financial year.

Section 110 provides that no amount shall be paid out of the Consolidated Fund except upon the authority of a warrant under the hand of the Minister, or under the hand of some person authorised by the Minister in writing. It then goes on to say that those provisions of the Constitution are re-enacted in Sections three to six inclusive of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. So you cannot take money out of the Consolidated Fund without having parliamentary approval. That is a fact.

Do not then come and confuse the argument and the debate by telling me and the rest of Barbados that if it is a below-the-line item, that it is okay. That is true, but the concept of a below-the-line item is clearly stated in the Consolidated Fund. In this Consolidated Fund here there is a very thick black line. Any item or account below this line does not have to require parliamentary approval. It is like the Public Enterprise Fund that was raped of \$28 million to put into the GEMS Project. Government did not have to seek parliamentary approval to do that.

2.55 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, any account above this line has to have parliamentary approval. The \$130 million that went to the GEMS of Barbados Project came out of an above-the-line account and should have required parliamentary approval but none was ever sought. It is a grave breach of the Law and differs substantially to what has happened in the early 1990s. That I will explain.

At the beginning of every financial year, as we are doing now, the Government estimates revenue. The estimated current revenue of Government for the forthcoming fiscal year is \$1.78 billion. The overdraft facility at the Central Bank, which is called the Ways and Means, is a percentage of this estimated revenue. It is now 10 per cent of this estimated revenue. Therefore, the overdraft facility at the Central Bank that the Government has, would now have a limit of \$178 million for the forthcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Deputy President, under the Erskine Sandiford Administration, that percentage was raised to 17.5 per cent and then brought down to 10 per cent by the Owen Arthur Administration. Sir, the thing that has to be recognised is that whereas we came to Parliament and determined the overdraft limit, like any other business or individual, can one exceed one's overdraft facility and the commercial bank would still honour the debt. It happens every day to corporate individuals and individuals. In a similar vein, the Central Bank would have honoured the excessive finance of Government in the early 1990s. That is completely different in principle to what has happened to the GEMS of Barbados Project.

The Prime Minister went into the Consolidated Fund and took up \$113 million to do what? At page 73 of this Report, this is what it says:

"The Government is, therefore, preparing the company for divestment and has taken the further step by restructuring the debt in an effort to eventually improve the debt to an equity ratio."

Mr. Deputy President, all that we are now hearing about GEMS of Barbados on this new Report, the Government still went and took the taxpayers' money and put into the GEMS of Barbados to make the debt equity look like 1.5 to 1, which is a 60/40 per cent ratio, so as to be able to divest then. It is now currently 10 to 1 ratio. It would have been insolvent in any other circumstance but this Government took the money that we had put aside for a rainy day and spent \$113 million of it on GEMS of Barbados alone last year during the heated debate when the Minister had said that no cash was ever put in and the Prime Minister came and backed him on it.

I am saying we have to have some degree of trust in this country. Whom can we trust, when a Prime Minister can do this, by preaching the Law and then conspired to hire illegal immigrants? There is a pattern of behaviour.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. The Prime Minister has never hired illegal immigrants. That has been stated and I do not think it should go into the records of this Chamber.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The Prime Minister conspired to hire illegal immigrants. That is what he said, then went on to justify it by saying that he is facilitating the free flow of labour within CARICOM.

Sir, how could a man make a decision in 1991 and justify it by a phenomenon in 1994? He is a giant. He is really God to have seen three years into the future. The Prime Minister of Barbados is really God to have made a decision in 1991 but justify it by an action that was taken in 1994.

Mr. Deputy President, we then have a situation in which this same Consolidated Fund has been entered into. In the October, 2002 Report of the Accountant General, \$25 million was taken out of the Consolidated Fund to put into the Needhams Point Development.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I cannot recall ever debating or discussing the Needhams Point Development in this Chamber. Mr. Deputy President, there is now a situation

where the Consolidated Fund, the Government has withdrawn \$25 million to put into the Needhams Point Development. This Project worries me. This Project is supposed to cost, according to the Annual Report of Needhams Point Development, US \$90.4 million or BDS \$180.8 million. The construction is supposed to cost \$54.8 million. To date, the Government has put in \$18 million because of the cost of the land. They took up \$25 million out of the Consolidated Fund, which I do not think was ever discussed in Parliament. To date, overall the Government has put in excess of \$60 million into the Hilton Hotel.

I am worried about this Project for this reason. On page 5 of the Annual Report, 2001, it says equity of US \$38.6 million or BDS \$77 million, will be raised. Quasi equity is BDS \$24 million, interest capitalisation, BDS \$4.5 million, senior debt BDS \$75 million.

Sir, remember that the GEMS Project started out like this, where it was expected that people would have invested into it. It has never happened. Then Government had to carry the entire show in relation to the GEMS Project.

The Hilton Hotel requires \$77 million in equity. From where is it going to come? How is it going to invest in the Hilton Hotel to raise \$77 million? In fact, we were told that one of the problems with the Barbados National Bank is that sufficient liquidity does not exist in the system for corporate or individuals to invest that kind of money in the Barbados National Bank.
3.05 p.m.

Sir, when Government cannot raise this equity, the taxpayers will have to raise \$180 million to build the Hilton Hotel because the Hilton International is going to manage the hotel and use their name but they will not invest any money in the hotel.

Sir, no one seems prepared to invest in the Hilton Hotel at this stage or else we would have heard about it. The Government will take the taxpayers' money and invest in the Hilton and this is where the selling of the Barbados National Bank comes into play. There is no doubt in my mind that the sale of Barbados National Bank shares will go substantially to the building of the Hilton Hotel and this worries me.

Sir, throughout my constituency, and in all parts of Barbados, I have heard that the Government is using the fact that it has built one or two roads as a major means of regaining the Government in Barbados. Therefore, if the sale of Barbados National Bank shares will put money into the coffers of the Government which will then go into the Public Enterprise Investment Fund which is a below-the-line item, it means that Government can spend this money without recourse to Parliament and this also worries me.

Sir, the proceeds from privatisation of any Government asset will go into the Public Enterprise Investment Fund which is a below-the-line item and will be used without seeking parliamentary approval. I thought that the Barbados National Bank had 1 020 million shares at one stage and we were told the credit unions and all other Barbadians would have been allowed to invest in the shares of the Barbados National Bank. In fact, it happened that these shares are now being bought by the Republican Bank of Trinidad & Tobago.

There are 96 million shares and the Government intends to hold on to 20 million of them and they will sell the shares to the Republican Bank of Trinidad & Tobago (RBTT) with the justification that this will now allow the commercial banks to bring new products. Sir, but all the commercial banks offer the same products and what special products can the Republican Bank of Trinidad & Tobago bring into Barbados when the same products are being offered by First Caribbean Bank, the Royal Bank and the Bank of Nova Scotia.

Sir, suddenly we are hearing about new products when we were told that we wanted Barbadians to be involved in the ownership of the Barbados National Bank. Sir, suddenly we are willing to sell our shares to RBTT when they are offering \$3.45 per unit value up from \$1.80 in less than one year and a half. Sir, I wonder what is in the deal.

Sir, RBTT has offered more than the estimated value of the shares and the reason why the Barbados National Bank rushed into the market at that value was because the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and BWIA were in the market at that time. Sir, these same shares that came into the market to compete with the Insurance Corporation of Barbados shares are almost in value doubled the amount now and there has not been any major increase across the commercial banking system.

I have not seen a commensurate growth in the shares of Barclays, CIBC, the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Royal Bank of Canada or the Mutual Bank of that magnitude over the same year and a half. Sir, what is so special now about the Barbados National Bank that all of a sudden the shares are valued at \$3.45. What did Barbados National Bank do in the last year and a half because we have not seen commensurate growth in the business of the other commercial banks in spite of the fact that the other commercial banks have outperformed the Barbados National Bank.

There is a recent report by the IMF on the financial sector of Barbados in which they sought to castigate the credit unions when they said that our credit unions had non-performing loans of 22 per cent. Sir, it was a very clever lie because they added all the credit unions in Barbados

together and came up with 22 per cent non-performing loan criteria. It is a lie because you cannot add all the commercial banks together and divide by 41 because the City of Bridgetown and the Barbados Public Workers' Credit Union represent almost 70 per cent of the assets and loans of the credit unions? The Barbados Public Workers' Credit Union has a non-performing loan ratio of 4 per cent and if they constitute almost 60 per cent a weighted average could not bring the non performing loans for the entire sector to 22 per cent.

Sir, someone took this 22 per cent and used it to discredit the credit union because all of a sudden there is an attack on them because I happen to serve on the Board of Directors of the Barbados Public Workers' Credit Union.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I do not mind that talk about not paying back money because I have never been dishonest in my life as it relates to money and I would like the Prime Minister to say so in Parliament. The Prime Minister uses Parliament to cover himself and whenever he wants to attack citizens of Barbados he uses his privileges in Parliament.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator, you must withdraw that statement about the Prime Minister using the privilege of Parliament to attack people in Barbados. It is not good parliamentary language.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, I withdraw the remarks.

Certain remarks made by SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL were expunged from the record.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I want the Prime Minister to make his remark outside of Parliament and we can go to the court. Sir, this means that there are people at GEMS who should pay back a lot of money to the taxpayers of Barbados. I do not want to get cruel in this Debate or I will go across the Table because there are people who get \$15 000 monthly to play golf daily because they are supposed to be consultants.

Sir, we had individuals at GEMS who were supposed to be CEO but still had their names down as being contractors at the Urban Development Commission. They also got settlement out of GEMS of \$0.5 million. The same individuals recently purchased 25 new cars cash and 13 hire purchase.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Yes, it is a lot of money.
3.15 p.m.

Sir, play with me. There were 25 new cars, 12 were purchased cash and 13 were leased. Do not talk about the houses that were refurbished, the new houses that were built at Gibbes, Eastry House and a lot of other places. Do not let me have to get back to GEMS and all who benefitted from GEMS in this Debate.

The main construction firm, the individual was in a fraud case for telecommunications. Recently he went to court for throwing some licks. The main man involved in Kitchener Construction Company Limited was involved in telecommunication fraud and recently he went to court for sharing some blows.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, when the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission were debated in this Chamber, we had a difference of opinion but I can say that the concept of the Urban Development Commission is not a bad concept. It is just that you had a situation in which it was poorly managed.

The recent episode of the Minister sending home the Director was the occasion that this happened. It happened in 2001 as well but that one was not made public. The Minister of Social Transformation had sent home the Director in 2001, he did it in 2002 and he was sent on leave. He was asked to go to the United States of America and take a vacation. He was not sick because when he returned to Barbados he was seen on television in the Pine ...

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy President, the Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. If the Honorable Minister says that he is sick and is seen in public, I am sure that the Honourable Member has knowledge or skills, even without certification, that he can tell us here that the Minister was not sick. I think that it is an abuse of privilege of this Chamber.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, all I know is that according to the Constitution of Barbados, you could not have a Minister and an acting Minister in Barbados at the same time unless the substantive Minister was ill. All that we are saying is that the substantive Minister, during that period, was seen on television in the Pine, St. Michael, at a cricket match advertising cricket for ladies. Sir, all we are saying is that if he were not out of the island, we had two Ministers in the same post at the same time. That is all that we are saying. The Minister had to be either sick or not sick. If he was not sick, he would have to be absent from the island.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. Deputy President, the Honourable Member is misleading the

Chamber when he says that the Constitution says that you cannot have two Ministers of a particular portfolio in Barbados at the same time. I recall just before 1994, that the Democratic Labour Party had two Ministers of Agriculture.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, I would not rest on that case. We are beyond that.

The concept of the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission were designed to deliver some largesse and what we have seen was a lot of largesse being delivered in certain parts of Barbados. The objective is good but the method is bad. I have had reasons to go to the public with Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission is just as bad.

Sir, I did not decide to bring the information here today but the Rural Development Commission has all kinds of things happening at it. There are all forms of mismanagement. There are things that have gone to court and are presently being discussed in the courts of Barbados. Therefore, I would withdraw from that but to say that we have had some very strange things happening.

We had a Member of Parliament being called a consultant to report on the affairs of the Urban Development Commission and we have not yet seen any report. We then had the former Chairman acting as Minister. We then had the Minister returning and not being sure whether or not he was still Minister. Therefore, we had confusion at the Urban Development Commission.

I want to speak to the Attorney General's portfolio because I am asking for a bigger budget to investigate the conspiracy of individuals hiring illegal immigrants. Given the existing budget, it means that the Minister has to be given a bigger budget to be able to carry out that investigation.

Sir, when the FBI's report was raised in public, sometime last year, we were told that within three months we would have the breaking of ground for the new Judicial Court. That has not happened and we are almost six months past. I want to know what has happened to the courts that were supposed to be built three months after the FBI's report was leaked.

Sir, I know that there are several persons on the Other Side that are concerned about the contents of the FBI's report. At one stage we were told that it would be fully ventilated among the four walls of justice. Then we were told that there was only one person involved. We then heard from New York that there were 32 persons involved. We heard that someone was sent on special leave, only to return to say that if he is attacked he will attack. We have long had scud missiles in our presence before the Iraq war.

Mr. Deputy President, that was said by the individual. I am saying that we need to know now what are the real contents of the FBI's Report, whether or not there is any legitimacy to what we were hearing on the streets of Barbados in terms of the involvement of certain persons in Barbados.

Sir, this Report was supposed to be on the desk of the Prime Minister to be read. The Prime Minister said that the FBI's Report was on his desk to be read. All I am doing in this Debate is asking for a larger budget to allow for the investigation to take place in relation to the FBI's Report and the conspiracy to hire illegal immigrants.

Mr. Deputy President, I, therefore, have to look at these Estimates within the context of what we are seeing in Barbados as I speak to you. Barbadians need tax relief and this was admitted in last year's Budget. We need relief in income taxation. We need relief in land and property taxes. We need some relief in VAT and we definitely need relief in the area of corporate taxation.
3.25 p.m.

Now, the overall basis for this relief is rooted in the fact that no other Caribbean country has as high a tax take as Barbados. Barbados takes 40 cents out of the dollar. I may be wrong but I cannot think of any other Caribbean country that takes as much as 40 cents out of the dollar.

What the Democratic Labour Party is proposing to do is to ease the level of taxation over the next five years to bring that tax take down to 35 cents out of the dollar, over a five-year period. It cannot be done immediately because of the impact on the fiscal deficit. It cannot be done immediately because of the impact on financing. It cannot be done immediately because of the expenditure requirements by the Government.

It can be done systematically, over a five-year period and this is where the Democratic Labour Party intends to bring the tax take from 40 cents out of the dollar to 35 cents out of the dollar. This must not be confused with the Income Tax. The tax take to which I speak is the total taxes of Barbados, divided by GDP.

If we seek to do that, we will effectively put in the hands of Barbadians and the corporate community, about \$210 million over a five-year period, or \$40 million per year. We are not proposing either to put \$40 million per year willy-nilly into the economy. We have to determine which areas of the economy first require the greatest relief and then proceed from there.

Sir, it is a fact that local companies in Barbados have now been going to Trinidad to establish head offices.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: This is a fact. There are several companies in Barbados that have relocated their head offices to Trinidad and they are now managing Barbadian entities out of Trinidad because of the cost of operation in Barbados.

Sir, do not let us get fooled because there are some serious connections. We need therefore to look at how we can best reposition Barbados to bring about the kind of change that is necessary. Our first proposal is to reduce the level of taxation on individuals as well as the corporate community. This is a must.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, we can do this. I just outlined for you, the wastage at GEMS. I can now outline for you, the wastage at Greenland. There is also wastage in the South Coast Sewerage Project. There is wastage at the National Housing Corporation. There is wastage at the Warren's offices. There is wastage at Southern Meats and there is wastage all across the length and breadth of Barbados.

Therefore, it is quite possible for us to take that wastage and stop the hemorrhaging and then proceed to reorganise the Government's finances and revenues, in the interest of Barbadians and not to do as we are doing, take good money and spend looking for bad money.

This is what we are doing in the GEMS Project. There is no-good evidence that the GEMS situation in the foreseeable future can become profitable and that is why we had to waste so many funds, in order to reposition the GEMS Project.

The other thing we need to do is to try and prepare Barbados for a future that has to do with globalisation. Yes, we spoke to this on several occasions, but the real issue here is how do we cope with efficiency, in a new global era. How do you make Barbados more competitive, and there is a link.

In order for Barbados to become more competitive, it has to become more efficient. In order for Barbados to become more efficient, which really means a reduced cost to business, it has to become more productive. In order for Barbados to become more productive, it has to either invest in greater use of technology or retrain and retool its existing workforce.

It therefore means that like in the 1960s, Barbados is at the stage where there is need for an education revolution. This revolution must come in the form of not just preparing for the education of young children and adolescents, but by retraining and retooling the existing workforce of Barbados.

It is the only way in which there could be a quick response to the requirements of globalisation.

Sir, if you put only 800 persons into the workforce every year, a workforce that has in excess of 100 000 people then, you cannot adequately transform the productivity requirements for Barbados that can make us more competitive. A major focus outside of educating at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels is for the establishment of a major institution that will serve to retool and retrain the existing workforce. Sir, that is the focus.

It cannot be about a university college of Barbados because the University College of Barbados, as I understand it, is simply about upgrading the Polytechnic and doing one or two other little things.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I am saying that the focus cannot be on the non-working population. It has to be on the working population of Barbados for there to be a revolution required to make us more productive and consequently, more competitive. It is not about just training persons in the early stages of their lives but about re-tooling and re-equipping people who are now in the workforce.

I am therefore saying that rather than having a university college of Barbados that we need to have an extension and elaboration of, say, the Public Workers' Union College but with a greater focus. The Social Partnership now has to be on retraining and retooling on a massive scale.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I teach at the highest institution here in Barbados, so I am saying to you that I know about it. You taught there across the bridge. I am talking about retooling and retraining people at adult stage.

Therefore, I am saying that the question of retooling and retraining has to be the major undertaking and that the Social Partnership of Barbados, so it has to reposition itself and, Sir, to think that the Social Partnership of Barbados recently refused to give 26 000 public sector workers additional \$1.5 million per year which translated into \$6 more per month...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The leader of the trade union said that the Government could have afforded to give the public sector workers more money. It has nothing to do with affordability. This was said in this Chamber. All I am saying is, how can you justify not giving 26 000 public

sector workers an additional \$6 per month, but you could have been thinking about giving the Airport Manager as much as \$300 000 a year to manage an airport.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I have not offered anybody anything.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Not you, Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Well, say what you mean. 3.35 p.m.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The Government of Barbados was thinking in terms of giving an airport...

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is once again misleading the Chamber when he tries to establish that Government had been considering giving an individual over \$300 000 as a salary. That never came to Cabinet. That was never considered. It was never on the Agenda and it was never discussed, so he is misleading the Chamber again and again.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The Permanent Secretary sits on the Board of the Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporated.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, you should be very careful when you are making these statements because everybody seems to be basing their information on a newspaper report, and then you cannot base it on one newspaper report you have to base it on all the newspaper reports dealing with the same matter. At the same time, we should appreciate that these debates are being carried live over the airwaves. Therefore, you should try to avoid using words which people will take to be slanderous at this time.

I am therefore asking Honourable Senators to be rather careful in presenting their arguments in the Chamber.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: It is now common knowledge that the Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporated approached a Canadian and offered him in excess of \$300 000 per year to manage the Airport that has traffic of less than two million per year. The individual that manages the Airport in Miami, which has 37 million persons coming through it, gets US\$101 000, so for little Barbados to have been thinking in terms of paying an individual US\$150 000 to manage the Grantley Adams International Airport is highly ridiculous.

Therefore, what we are saying here is that when you look at it and you look at the fact that the Minister responsible for the Grantley Adams International Airport said he did not know, how could he not know, when a Permanent Secretary sits on the Board who reports to the Minister? A letter was written on behalf of the Board. The Chairman of the Board, Colin Brewer, went on a call-in programme on *Voice of Barbados (VOB)* two weeks ago and justified it and said that he is supportive of paying that kind of salary to such an individual for managing an entity that is going into this new global environment in which the focus has to be on revenue earning. That is what Colin Brewer, Chairman of the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. said.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, it is quite clear that the Chairman of the Board of the Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporated knew about the advances to the Canadian to manage the Grantley Adams International Airport. We are not satisfied...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: We have to be concerned about how our funds have been spent by this Administration because no one can convince me that given the limits that are obvious at the Airport in terms of the size of the entity, and in terms of the limited infrastructure of Barbados, even if you were able to triple the passage of travellers through that Airport to 6 million, how would you accommodate them in Barbados and where? So there is a limit to what we can do at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

The other thing is this. Who would you be commercialising the Grantley Adams International Airport for and who will purchase all of these additional goods and services that you would be providing? Who? The tourists? When you travel from the United Kingdom to Barbados, when you get at the Airport, all you want to see is a bed. You do not want to linger around the Airport to spend money. So you got now to cater to them when they are going back out, but when they are going back out, what do they wish to take from expensive Barbados?

What is it that they wish to take? Have you thought about this? What it is you are commercialising at the Grantley Adams International Airport? People are not being encouraged to spend money in Barbados. Even the cruise passengers were told to spend their money in St. Maarten and when they come to Barbados, take a little taxi drive around the island, but not to spend any money here.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: That is true, so I do not see why we have to deny it. That is what happens down there at the seaport. That is what the taximen told me.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: So all of a sudden now you cannot criticise Barbados because this Administration is in office. Barbados is too expensive. What it is that we are going to provide at the Grantley Adams International Airport to allow for a manager to get that breed of money? What is it that he is going to do? What is it that he can do that the current manager does not do? That is the question I need to ask.

This attitude pervades the entire environment of Barbados where you are simply given money on the basis of who you are or whether or not you are affiliated to the Barbados Labour Party. We have a very obvious example of that here in this Chamber where we have individuals who were given, as I said before, \$15 000 per month, but to do what. I do not know what they were given that breed of money to do. They wanted more cars duty free. They have houses in Barbados but they are still given allowances to pay for rent for six months and all kinds of things.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: On a point of order. I deem it most unfortunate that the Honourable Senator is using the Floor of this Honourable Senate and August Chamber to attack a fellow Senator by impugning all kinds of unsavoury motives and activities. I do not think it is fair and I wish the Honourable Senator would restrain from doing so, otherwise we will have to do the same thing over here too. I will have to talk about "Peanuts" and all of that kind of stuff, but believe me I do not want to get into that.
3.45 p.m.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, I do not have anything to hide. Anyone on that Side who has anything to say about me should say it. That is the problem with this Administration. This Administration cannot find anything to talk about pertaining to me. What it could now do is to hold onto foolish comments that I have made and try to make it into a big issue.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. Is the Honourable Member denying that the Registrar of Co-operatives has said that he should pay back the credit union's money? Is he denying that?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Senators, we are moving the quality of debate of this Chamber out under the street lights. Let us bring it back to the Senate.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, with the few minutes that are available to me, I will unveil the Democratic Labour Party's programme for the future.

I will be leading the Democratic Labour Party in the next election and that is a known and approved fact. If, on the basis of my pigmentation, I do not satisfy the criteria over there, I satisfy it over here. There is nothing else that could stop me from being the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party. It has been determined. Look forward to it in the upcoming election. On that basis, I will be speaking to issues such as over-taxation, squandermania, corruption, incompetence, *et cetera*.

On the question of taxation, we propose to ensure that Barbadians have more money in their pockets. They deserve it, especially the public sector workers. We are going to take care of the disabled, the pensioners, homeowners.

We are going to give persons an opportunity to become businessmen. We are going to make sure that housing becomes affordable to Barbadians. We are going to effectively manage the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and I am not talking about painting the Hospital's walls as a major accomplishment. We are talking about delivering health services, commensurate with those that were delivered in the early 1960s, 1970s and 1980s, under the Democratic Labour Party. It is about putting systems in place for persons to know when to come to work. There are operational research programmes where we could actually design schedules for working, to know how we could input labour and technology to give maximum outcome.

Those are simple, straightforward things that have been done across the length and breadth of the United States. It is about having the computer software to do such and knowing the absenteeism and how to accommodate that within the work schedule. All of that can be effectively done.

Sir, the most important thing is to make sure that there are proper Heads because the three Heads were separated from the Hospital a number of years ago and have not yet received any compensation.

In the area of tourism, there is the need to make tourism more competitive. What was done under the Owen Arthur Administration to increase the hotel accommodation from 5 per cent to 7.5 per cent was disastrous. The tax was not reduced but was increased. The restaurant tax was 5 per cent. It was increased to 15 per cent. It does explain why Barbados is in a position where it can no longer compete with many other destinations in the Caribbean.

There was then the escalation of property values that have fooled the sectors into believing that it was doing something heroic or major, in that every year its assets on the Balance Sheets look better because of property valuation.

It has happened to Paradise Beach Hotel where, without driving one nail into the building, the Paradise Beach Hotel's property has appreciated substantially. The parros are now living there. Would you believe it is of even greater interest and more financial rewarding for Sandals to have parros living in the Paradise Beach Hotel, than to have it into a tourism entity because the land and property value has more than quadrupled over the last 8 years?

That also explains why St. James Beach Hotel, under Ray Horney, was able to sell off its property, having said that he would not leave Barbados. When he recognised that the land and property values had skyrocketed, it was in his interest to get the capital gains. He did and sold to Elegant Resorts Limited. That explains further why there was a problem across the length and breadth of Barbados because of this land and property value re-evaluation, which also happened at Heywoods Hotel.

Contrary to what was said, the reason why Heywoods appeared to have been the "give way" to Barbados Shipping and Trading had to do with the re-evaluation of the land and property. Therefore, it made the assets and working capital ratio of that entity look much better.

I am happy to say that at least Heywoods was sold to a local entity. There was a hue and cry that the Barbados Government was giving away the family silver to an organisation that now has its connection and tentacles within the bosom of this Administration. In fact, it is believed that the Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados is really the Managing Director of Barbados Shipping and Trading Limited. It is in the public's domain.

Therefore to have a situation in which the Heywoods Property was sold to Barbados Shipping and Trading, to now recognise there is a merger between the Barbados Shipping and Trading and the Government in every respect, it is really surprising.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy President, again I must rise on this masquerader who is parading before us. I think it is quite unbecoming for the Honourable Member to associate the Deputy Prime Minister with activities which are illegal. Being a minister, one is prohibited by law from occupying any position, other than that of a minister. Therefore, to give that impression is just his way of getting his message across. I think I must deprecate this tendency for him to use the Floor of this Chamber to attack fellow parliamentarians.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: As I have said before, I am very worried about these statements being made under the cloak of privilege, but going out on the airwaves of the public. I do not think it goes well. Therefore, I would like Members to desist from this kind of behaviour.

For a number of years, we have been talking about broadcasting these debates and if this is what it is going to be, I know the public will not be happy with what they are hearing today.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, I will now summarise and come home. There is no doubt that the Estimates before us do not conform to the objectives of the Press Release that was issued on the Estimates. It was said here that the Estimates are intended to reduce the fiscal deficit to a more sustainable level but what we have seen is that rather than bring certain projects on budget, they have gone off budget. What we have seen is that this Government has, over the last eight years, skillfully found a way to establish private companies which are owned by Government, to use expenditure. There was a private company that was owned by Government before. We admit to that but Government has now proliferated it.

This Administration has used it very skillfully at the Caves of Barbados, the GEMS of Barbados, the Grantley Adams International Airport, which they intend to privatise. They said it is going to be commercialised but again, the Chairman of the Grantley Adams International Airport said that it is going to be privatised.

What we are saying is that for the last several years Government has found very skillful ways of taking monies outside of the central government, using it to spend on several projects and then not to have it accounted for within central government data. This is exactly what is happening this year.
3.55 p.m.

I am not fooled by the reduction of capital expenditure of \$55.9 million because I know that the Hilton Hotel is going to cost much more than that and that the proceeds from the Barbados National Bank shares of \$198 million will be spent loosely over the next fiscal year. Sir, there is every evidence to show that this money will be spent loosely over the next fiscal year.

Sir, there is a strategy on the part of the Owen Arthur Administration. They established private companies that will not report to Parliament in any reliable time period like the GEMS and now two years later we do not know what has happened over the last two fiscal periods and we can only guess about the losses at GEMS and, we are also going to have to guess about what is happening at the Hilton Hotel.

By the way, less than 50 Barbadians work on the project at the Hilton Hotel and I am reliably informed that the contract for the tiles was given to an American firm at 0 v e r \$7 per tile when a local company made a bid for the same contract at \$2.25 per tile. The local company informed me that the price of \$2.25 was after 100 per cent mark-up

was put on the prices. Sir, that smacks of suspicion that a contract for the delivery of tiles to the Hilton Hotel has gone to an American company for over \$7.00 per tile when the exact tile was identified by a local company and offered at a price of \$2.25. The local company was offered the opportunity to lay the tiles and they refused because of the money in giving the contract.

Sir, the distributor in Miami blocked the sale of that specific tile to Barbados because the American asked the distributor not to sell the tile to any Barbadian entity. It is remarkable that the Barbadian company had gone to Italy to identify the tile sold to the American company which was then sold to Barbados when we could have gone directly to the suppliers in Italy and received a better price.

Sir, I want to know if it is true that only one contract to date has gone to a local company of the several contracts given out in the Hilton Hotel project. I am not in favour of establishing private companies under the guise that they become more efficient or they do not need to have the red tape of the bureaucracy of the Government sector, that these functions will be performed more effectively and efficiency only to discover a few years later that we are putting money in a hole, as has happened in the GEMS Project.

Sir, Greenland is a disaster. The only good thing that came out of Greenland is that St. Andrew got good roads as a result of the Project.

Sir, we have an opportunity as a country now to look to the difficult times ahead. I have heard the Leader of the Senate say that an unemployed economist and theoretician is looking to become a leader of Barbados...

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. I never said theoretician, I distinctly said a theoretical economist.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, a theoretical economist is the same as theoretician in economics. I heard that Barbados needs someone who can deal and handle crisis and who is serious about the future.

What amazes me is that I am the person who is labelled as the chief architect of this Administration of the 1991/92 IMF programme. If I am labelled as the architect of that programme which turned out to be the most successful IMF programme ever in the history of the IMF, and in Barbados, then it gives me all I need in terms of recommendation to handle any circumstances that may ensue in the not too distant future as it relates to the economy management of Barbados.

I am adequately qualified on the basis of what the Barbados Labour Party says about me to handle any eventuality in relation to the economy of Barbados and I have been prepared soundly for any critical crisis in

Barbados in terms of management and on that basis alone I have all it takes to carry the country forward.

Sir, contrary to the so-called theoretical examination, if it is admitted that I am the person to take the country forward, it means I have the background that is needed to do what is required.

Sir, on the basis of the criticism of the Other Side, the Democratic Labour Party is imminently placed because this is the first time that the Owen Arthur Administration would have encountered difficulties and as far as I can see over the last year and a half, has not handled the crisis in Barbados well, confuses itself every year talking about institutional capacity. Every year we hear about the re-organisation of various entities in Barbados, about whether we should reduce tax and about globalisation.

Sir, we hear about this man who was the kind to lead the international business sector and who went off to the OECD meetings to resolve the issue, but the international business sector has suffered under this Administration after the Prime Minister was labelled as the person who argued the case on behalf of the developing countries.

We heard about him being the guru in CARICOM and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy has stalled and there has been no major advancement. We heard about the fishing agreement but, to date, we have not come to any official position and, Sir, there is still a need for a Protocol within CARICOM in the area of utilisation of the sea resource.

These Estimates will not do anything meaningful for advancing the economic or social circumstances of Barbados over the next fiscal year. In this regard, it is just the typical Estimates seen in this Chamber over the last four to five years. It has no basis in either the context it was supposed to design nor will it deliver anything to the average man in the street in Barbados. It will be another session of mistakes, excuses and secrecy on the part of this Administration.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: I beg to move that this sitting be suspended for 15 minutes.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
4.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

(Mr. PRESIDENT in the Chair)

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Sir, this Debate is taking place when mankind is in very troubled times. There is a serious breakdown with established alliances between nations leading up to the American led invasion of Iraq early in the morning of March 20, 2003, before all inspections and diplomatic efforts have been exhausted. That breakdown was highly publicised during recent televised debates in the United Nations Security Council. I am sure that many of us saw those debates.

The invasion of Iraq has created cynicism and pessimism. It has also created more alienation and uncertainty. It has aggravated alienation among countries in the United Nations, NATO, European Union, the African Union, the Arab League, people of different nationalities, religion, culture, race and classes.

Sir, it has created more economic uncertainty about the future. What would be the price of oil? All of us depend upon energy. The price of oil went up and down. No one knows where it would be settled. Here in Barbados we are dependent on oil imports. It has created uncertainty about travel. It certainly would affect the hospitality industry. People would be nervous about travel and hope that they would be safer in their own homes rather than destinations abroad. Sir, it certainly will increase the cost of insurance and it affects employment.

Mr. President, it has increased alarm over terrorism, terrorist attacks, heightened concerns over developments in Iraq and North Korea, two of the countries aligned with Iraq. Sir, by aligned I mean what the President of the United States of America referred to as "Axis of Evil". Of course, there are Israel, Palestine and the unresolved problems in that part of the world.

Mr. President, that breakdown has created deeper concerns about life as we know it on planet earth. With the proliferation of biological, chemical, radiological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction, we now refer to as WMD. Most important, that breakdown has diminished the hopes of mankind for the future.

Sir, I say that as a background of the Estimates. Before I comment on the Estimates, I would like to commend the Leader of Government Business for the way he reviewed the Estimate document earlier today. I thought he did it very thoroughly and I was particularly pleased with the attention which he paid to the Ministry of Health, the Ministry for which he is responsible and, obviously by training and experience, he is definitely qualified to talk about it.

I certainly learnt a lot and I thank him for it because we just refer to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as a "dump hole". He explained very carefully what is being done and what plans there are to improve it because it is a national asset and

it has to be considered as such. Sir, through you, I would like to thank him.

Barbados with approximately 270 000 people living on only 166 square miles cannot escape from the increased alienation, uncertainty and the other challenges that face over 6 billion people across the face of the earth, that is why I referred to these times as troubled times.

The big question for Barbados is this. How do we deal with those challenges constructively and yet within our resources? Fiscal prudence is needed more now than ever before. I have to say, after looking at the Estimates, I believe an honest attempt has been made to do just that, to live within our limited resources.

There is an administrative increase of the revenue of \$79.3 million or 4.7 per cent. There is an anticipated increase of the current expenditure of 9.4 per cent due mainly to increases of \$220 million in current transfers and debt service.

Sir, the capital expenditure is expected to decrease by \$55.9 million or 17.1 per cent. As Senator Mascoll pointed out, that is about the line of capital expenditure. The total expenditure for 2003-2004 is expected to increase to \$22.8 million or 5.5 per cent.

The fiscal deficit is one figure which everyone focusses on because it indicates the financial health of a country. It is calculated on an international financial institution basis to be 4.7 per cent of GDP in the year ahead. It is expected that the fiscal deficit for the year would be about 5.6 per cent of the GDP, so that is a reduction.

The Honourable Minister of Finance has indicated that he wants to bring that fiscal deficit down to 2.5 per cent as soon as possible and I support him on that. That is a sustainable level. Once you get above that, you are heading for trouble. To reduce this fiscal deficit, we have to see how we increase revenue, which in the current economic climate would be challenging.

In view of the war in Iraq, and its expected negative impact on the local and international economies, the estimated revenue may not be realised. Therefore, total expenditure may have to be reduced further to keep the fiscal deficit at a manageable level. The fact that we approve an amount for expenditure does not mean that expenditure has to be met. A lesser amount could be disbursed.

More serious attention would be needed to implement the recommendation of the Auditor General's Report on the accounts of the Ministries and Government of Barbados. That should contribute in a meaningful way towards

reducing further the level of the fiscal deficit. I will return to the report of the Auditor General a little later in this debate.

Sir, I would like to review certain Heads. I do not plan to do this in detail because I would be repeating much of what has been said already.

Head 16 – Public Sector Reform: There is an estimated expenditure of \$1.3 million. I am asking if that is adequate to accelerate this reform programme for which the public can expect so much. It appears to me that much attention is being paid to computerising and improving procedures. That is good and important, but is equal attention being paid to the human resource development of persons in the public sector in such matters as punctuality, discipline, courtesy and respect to be shown to customers and colleagues?

We hear a lot about Public Sector Reform but, in my opinion, private sector reform is just as important. In this age, trade liberalisation and economic globalisation, increasing competition places a high premium on positive work attitudes to support the essential services.

We also hear a lot about productivity, but productivity must be more than just a word that we throw around on television, radio and the Press.
4.35 p.m.

Productivity has to be a national attitude that is internalised and demonstrated and consistently at work, in every aspect of service, in both the private sector and the public sector.

The Ministry of Economic Development has been assigned \$33 million. I submit that an appealing educational programme is needed to remove the negative connotations attached to the word, “profit”, and I stress it, profit, that still exists in some parts of the Barbadian society.

I know that I came from a private sector background and I do not have to apologise for that. Those connotations are obsolete in an age of international competitiveness. Legitimate profit has to be equated with progress in economic and social development. Profit only has significance when it is related to a level of risk and return on investment. The word, “profit”, in isolation is completely meaningless by itself, but it is a word that is so easily exploited.

The Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, \$409 million represents \$17.5 per cent of total expenditure. I want to ask this question. Is sufficient attention paid by this Ministry to deal with the harmful effects on youths of the use of illegal drugs, the abuse of alcohol, slack lyrics as opposed to the positive conscious lyrics in dub music, pornography, improper language, dress and deportment, indiscipline, low

spiritual and family values?

Asides.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Maybe, a lot of attention is being paid to those areas. I do not know and I know there are many others. Somehow, I believe the public needs some assurance and we are not just looking at higher academic attainment, we are dealing with essential values.

There is an important role for mentoring in the schools. Approximately a year ago, I, along with two or three other retired men, performed that function at St. Cyprian's Primary Boys' School. Every Friday morning, one of us would go there for half an hour to 40 minutes. We attended prayers with the boys and then talked to them on questions like the family, responsibility, home and beauty.

The feedback I had from those boys was very positive. The feedback I had from many of the mothers of those boys was a wonderful surprise to me. Many of them I did not know, but they would meet me in various places and thank me. I am sure they thanked the others who are performing the same function, for spending time with these youngsters.

These are the boys in the two classes at the end of primary school and here it is, retired persons, sharing their life experiences. Most of us are certainly fathers and grandfathers, with these youngsters, treating them as though they were their own grandsons, and trying to share values with them, based on our own experiences.

It was not continued but I still have a very high opinion of that programme and I certainly would recommend that it is taken, only if on a trial basis, with retired men speaking to young boys and retired older ladies speaking to the young girls.

We must not keep blaming the youth, if we are not prepared to do more to assist them. The battle is for the minds of the youth and that battle starts in the homes, then in the schools and then in the churches. We have to recognise this.

Sir, there are other issues requiring attention, sooner or later, which are not necessarily reflected in the Estimates but which will have an impact on Barbados. One is, what is the future of the sugar industry? How much longer can it be subsidised by the Government, at existing levels? I do not know the exact figures, but I understand it is subsidised by Government, between \$500 and \$600 per tonne of sugar produced. If we are producing 45 000 tonnes of sugar, that is somewhere between \$20 million and \$25 million a year.

I understand it may be as high as \$30 million. How much longer can that be sustained? I know, agronomically speaking, we need a grass crop and sugar has always been the best grass crop to protect our shallow top soil, but this requires some serious study.

We have to look at the improved maintenance of public buildings. Too often we hear about buildings being closed for good reasons. For example, the air-conditioning not working, foul odours or whatever, where people have to leave the office for one, two or three days. This downtime has a cost and we have to be very mindful of that, so more attention needs to be paid to the maintenance of public buildings.

Recently, Sir, we had an upsurge of walkouts or wild cat strikes. The President of the Employees Confederation of Public Workers gave some figures only last week which were staggering, the amount of man hours of production that had been lost. I do not pretend to know the reasons but it seems to be happening on construction sites. It has happened recently in the Customs Department, in the Auditor General's Office, Cable and Wireless/BARTEL Limited and other places.

There has been some talk about this Employment Rights Bill and I do not know whether or not that will address this problem but it is a problem that has to be addressed. Union leadership has responsibility to control and direct its membership, whether it is unions in the private sector or the public sector. The impression is being created that leadership has lost or is losing control of their membership. This is a serious situation which has to be addressed.

Sir, another suggestion that I would like to make, if it has not been done already, is that some cost benefit analysis is undertaken on gambling. I am referring particularly to gaming machines and lotteries. Let me say, up front, that I am not against gambling, although I am not a gambler but we hear so much about the benefits.

Gambling provides money for sports, for development of cultural events and they are both important. Have we ever stopped to think of the social costs? What has made me conscious of this, are two things. I used to occasionally buy a quick pick lotto ticket, when I filled up on gas. This may happen once a month, \$10 the most, but when I saw persons in there who were spending between \$50 and \$100 on Lotto tickets and I could assess that they would have a hard time to really afford it and it worried me.

Secondly, when it comes to the gaming machines, what system of inspection is there for those machines putting out a fair return? There are standards across the world. Wherever there are gaming machines, a certain percentage of

that money, the operators can keep to cover their expenses, but the rest has to be paid out. Unless those machines are inspected regularly, and there is a special accounting and auditing of those accounts, those operators can do as they like, and the same thing would apply to lotteries. If we are going to have that type of gambling, it has to be controlled very carefully.

Another point I would like to make, Sir, and I am sure that we are all conscious of this, is the congestion on our highways and roads. I do not pretend to know the answer but some study needs to be undertaken to deal with that congestion in the years ahead. The Government recently spent a lot of money on improving the roads. I heard talk today of widening the highway.

Sir, I am speaking from my own experience. I live in St. Philip and if I leave home before 7.00 a.m., I could get into town by 7.30 a.m. If I leave home at 7.30 a.m. I can get into town at 8.30 a.m. This is twice the length of time and I hear this complaint all over the place, so we have to pay more attention to the traffic flows in the future.

Next, Sir, I come to the completion of Sherbourne Conference Centre. I believe it is running profitably now, rather, I hope so but, when you leave steel beams exposed, you may just cover them with wood, but if they are still exposed to the elements, they will rust. I think a decision has to be taken. Should Sherbourne be completed or should that steel be inspected and dismantled? I am talking about the steel beams that do not bear any weight.

Mr. President, we have heard today the talk of waste management. Money is put in the Estimates for the Greenland landfill, other cells at Mangrove, incineration and other means of waste disposal are being investigated. I am very pleased to hear that because solid waste management is very important and it is a problem.

4.45 p.m.

I come now to the development or the disposal of the St. Joseph Hospital. The St. Joseph Hospital has been lying there for years. In its present state, it is a wasting asset. Right now its only value is probably in its land. Maybe some of those buildings can be used. Can we develop it or can we sell it? I probably favour selling it.

The same applies to Paradise Beach Hotel. It is a very valuable asset on the beach. Do we redevelop it or do we sell it? I believe it is bound up in certain litigation right now, so maybe this is not the time.

I come now to Hotels and Resorts Limited which was covered very fully by the previous speaker. Today we have these reports which show, as we know, that in the first three years of its operation, it has accumulated losses of

\$37.5 million. It has a share capital of \$19.7 million. Technically, this is a bankrupt company. However, the Government was there to provide loan funds or guarantees for loan funds.

In the private sector this entity would not be existing because it is technically bankrupt. It has \$35 million in losses for the first three years. The first year was \$5 million, the second was \$10 million and the third was \$20 million. I think it is fair to project that that loss at the end of 2002 would be closer to \$60 million. This little island cannot afford that.

Finally, and this is very topical, I come to the World Cup. The Caribbean will be hosting the Cricket World Cup in 2007. We have seen the extraordinary event, if I may describe it that way, of the recent World Cup in South Africa. It seems to be very well organised and we certainly saw magnificent facilities. At the final on Sunday, 31 000 persons were in attendance. What are we doing as a nation? I think Government has to be involved in this. I do not see the private sector having the capital by itself to provide facilities for this World Cup.

Mr. President, this list is not exhaustive, but in view of the economic climate, I realise the Government may have to tread very cautiously in proceeding with some or all of these items.

I would like now to turn to the Report of the Auditor General. I have the reports for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002. It is an annual recital of deficiency. If we are looking to maximise revenue in the Estimates, there is unrealised revenue in the system. If we are looking to reduce expenditure, there are opportunities existing. All of these have been highlighted by the Auditor-General, but it seems to me that this report is just tabled but serious attention is not paid to it.

Section 113(3) of the Constitution and Section 28(3) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act requires the Auditor General to lay his reports in Parliament annually, which he does. His transmittal letter to the Speaker of the House of Assembly is always dated in January. His annual reports indicate that many ministries and departments of government are failing to implement his recommendations year after year after year.

Mr. President, I would just like to read from a few of the sections to highlight what he has reported and what I have been saying. First of all, the Mission Statement of the Audit Office is to strengthen public accountability by providing fair and independent reports after careful examination of accounting records and use of resources. That could not be clearer.

Secondly, the goal of the Audit Office is to promote staff development, ensure achievement and maintenance of a high standard of auditing and accounting in the public sector, and contribute to the general efficiency and effectiveness of public service financial management. That too could not be clearer.

Before going to what he has to report, I probably should look in the Estimates at the auditing services. Across the other side from page 34 in the Estimates of 2003-2004 under subprogramme 100, it states that the subprogramme provides for the following. This is instructive:

- “1. Audit and inspection of all public accounts with regard to revenue and expenditure of the Consolidated Fund, Special Funds, Departmental and other accounts.
2. Examination of public accounts to enable the expression of an opinion on whether the accounts are kept on a correct system, they are punctually posted and checks against irregularity and fraud are adequate and effective.
3. Determination of the level of compliance with, or observance of laws, regulations, rules, orders and other instructions.
4. Examination and certification in accordance with the outcome of the examination, the several statements, accounts and forms required by law to be submitted to the Auditor General.
5. Audit of the accounts and statements of statutory bodies and other organisations as required.
6. The conducting of value for money audits.”

The cost to the taxpayers is \$3 million per year to run the Audit Department.

Here it is we are looking to maximise revenue and we have a section here dealing with the management of arrears. Before I get to the management of arrears, let me deal with the general audit issues. These are general but they seem to apply across the board. This is not just for 2002. The same comments have been made as regards 2000 and 2001 and I have no doubt prior to that.

4.55 p.m.

“Prompt financial reporting is a problem for some Ministries, departments and statutory boards. Annual financial statements were not received from several ministries and departments during the course of the year. In addition, there are some statutory boards which have not had audit reports issued on their financial statements for several years.”

Mr. Deputy President, this is an area of concern.

Section 116:

“In accordance with Rule 41 of the Financial Rules, officers charged with the collection of revenues are to furnish to the Auditor General with returns showing the state of arrears at the end of September and March in each year. Such returns are not being submitted as required.”

In my last Annual Report it was recorded that returns submitted showed arrears and revenue in excess of \$341 million. Audit investigation continues to reveal that the outstanding amounts continue to rise. This high level suggests that there continues to be major problems with arrears management and it is considered that the focus of this issue should be given higher priority.

“The problems highlighted in previous reports concerning bank reconciliations persist. Accounts of several government ministries and departments have not been reconciled for some time. It is noted that, as a result of overspending and contrary to the Financial Rules, some accounts attracted overdrafts and interest charges.”

Mr. Deputy President, years ago I have been trained as an auditor. This is the most fundamental thing. Cash is the easiest thing to latch onto sticky fingers. Unless bank accounts are reconciled regularly, at least once a month, the door is wide opened for manipulation.

“Inventory management continues to be deficient. The audit reveals that accounting personnel in several departments have not exercised the due care and diligence necessary in respect for certification on claims for payments.”

Sir, we can pay but we have to make sure that all the “i’s” are dotted and the “t’s” are crossed, otherwise the door is wide open for collusion. I am not suggesting that it happens. I am saying the potential for that is very great.

Management of Arrears:

“The issue relating to the management of arrears were addressed to some extent in my 2001 Annual Report. Audit investigation, however, reveals that there was little improvement in this area of activity.”

It was \$342 million, March 31, 2002, approximately the same as it was the year before. Those arrears are made up of \$83 million from the Customs and Excise Department; \$96 million in Land Tax; \$18 million in International Transport; \$126 million in Inland Revenue; \$19 million in the Treasury Department.

The biggest single one in the Treasury Department is the one owed by the Barbados Turf Club. I have reason to believe that for some years, they have been trying to come to some arrangement with Government how that debt can be paid off. Racing is a very important activity in this island.

An independent study done by one of the professional firms in 1997 has estimated that horse racing and related activities contribute more than \$100 million to the economy due to the foreign exchange it earns, the business it attracts, the people it employs, *et cetera*.

It is estimated that televising of the last Gold Cup race was viewed by approximately 18 million people. This is a big tourist promotion. Therefore, I think that the sooner the Barbados Turf Club and the Government could come to some understanding, so much the better.

These figures that have been quoted are an indication of the high level of arrears that are due to the Government. They do not represent the total arrears of revenue as several ministries and departments have failed to submit the relevant documentation. Sir, the survey at the back of the Report also indicates the departments and ministries that have not submitted their reports.

Sir, I would only emphasise that auditing is a very important function. Whether it is in the public or private sector, there has to be an independent assessment and an opinion expressed whether those accounts are fair and accurate. I would urge the Government to pay more attention to the Report of the Auditor General and not just treat it as an annual statutory exercise. It is a tool of management. Managers within the public sector need to recognise it as a valuable tool to assist them in getting more productivity and a better performance out of the ministries.

Every accounting system needs to have internal controls against errors, fraud and waste built into it. When such controls are either lacking or deficient and are not monitored and audited independently, the opportunities to exploit weaknesses in the system are obvious.

Jamaica has just launched a Corruption Prevention Commission this month. Trinidad and Tobago is gearing on spending more public funds on hiring top lawyers in efforts to hunt and to expose corruption. It is my understanding that similar needs may exist in Guyana and elsewhere in other CARICOM countries.

Without making any insinuations or accusations regarding Barbados, I draw your attention to an old Bajan saying, “when yuh neighbours house on fire, dat is the time to hold down yuh own.”

I wish to commend the Auditor General and his staff for the observations and recommendations that are outlined in their Report for 2002 and in previous Reports. I hope Government would now pay more attention to those Reports and would strengthen the resources of the Audit Department.

Finally, I would like to turn to the outlook because these Estimates do not exist in a vacuum. Are they achievable or not? Can anyone be confident about the projected expenditures in the Estimates 2003-2004, under existing circumstances? Surely they cannot, before other issues with which we have little or no control, are addressed. Will there be more "shock and awe", a phrase we are seeing on television daily and have come to memorise?
5.05 p.m.

Mankind needs hope in order to create a better future. Will there be a spiritual awakening and what are the other alternatives, if any? We are really living in troubled times. A war that appears to have no basis in international law or moral authority was started by an American led on Iraq on March 20, 2003. That war was avoidable.

The attack was based on the doctrine of preemption. Was it the result of the USA not sharing sensitive military information with its allies, or was it due to the USA's impatience with the United Nations or due to the arrogance of a superpower? Sir, I do not pretend to know the answer but those questions must be addressed.

It was not and could not be sanctioned by the Security Council of the United Nations. Mr. President, It has established a bad precedent and I predict that will haunt the world community for years to come.

For example, what will be the future between China and Taiwan or Venezuela and Guyana and we can think of other countries. A precedent has been established by the only superpower in the world today, military and economically and others will say that if the USA can do it, we can do the same, and this is my concern.

The people of the world are strongly opposed to the regime of President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. He is despised and attested universally. Most importantly, except for the majority in the USA, they are equally opposed to this war and by their words and deeds they have demonstrated their opposition to it in no uncertain terms. Their public protest and the advice and warnings of Nelson Mandela, Koffi Annan, Pope John Paul and many other prominent world leaders have been ignored.

The USA has claimed that it has support for its attack against Iraq from Governments of more than 40 countries and this is a fact which is published daily. If this is correct, the world may never know if and how such support was

obtained whether through bullying, bribery or other means. However, the world knows through published polls and public demonstrations beyond any shadow of a doubt that the large majority of people in most of those same countries as well as in the USA and Britain are strongly opposed to the war.

While Barbadians bear no responsibility for the war, we have to live with its consequences and the problems it will create. As Barbadians and West Indians, we can be proud that CARICOM earlier announced their opposition to it publicly. CARICOM's opposition must be expressed in the United Nations General Assembly. We do not have to take any advice not to attend or how to vote because we have our integrity to protect. If we do not protect our integrity, people will lose respect for you and we have to be sure to attend that meeting.

I say we have to attend because it is alleged that the USA is advising us not to attend but to abstain. The Constitutions of the Caribbean countries allow for freedom of expression. The First Amendment of the USA Constitution provides for freedom of expression and religion. We cannot claim protection under the USA Constitution but we can invoke the spirit of that amendment. The Americans are looking to maintain freedom of expression in their country but are seeking to deny the same to Barbados. Sir, it does not make sense but we have to stand up and be counted.

The slow economic recovery that Barbados has been experiencing has been reversed. This will inevitably reduce our foreign exchange earnings and empowerment level and this is being realistic. We face a challenge that will be far more serious than the one we faced after the Persian Gulf War in 1991.

We must strive together as Barbadians to overcome the formidable challenges that lie ahead and it will not be easy. We must also strive to retain and strengthen our relations with the USA, Britain and other allies and friends. It is easy to get lost and be carried away with personalities we do not like so we must focus on issues and principles and not on personalities and deal with those in our enlightened self-interest.

I have always had and still have a great admiration for Britain and the USA but on the current issue of the attack of Iraq I believe they are wrong and I feel strongly about this.

The Japanese preemptive attack on Pearl Harbour occurred on December 7, 1941. President Franklin Roosevelt happily described it as a date that will live in infamy. Most regrettably, unless weapons of mass destruction are found in Iraq, history will also record March 20, 2003 as another date that will live in infamy.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, I rise to support this Bill before us and to commend it to this Honourable Chamber and, by extension, to the country as a whole as yet another example of this Government defending the economic interest of the people of Barbados. We know from our experience that this Government has defended the social and political interest of the people and is now demonstrating that the economy prospers and we grow as much as possible, given the difficult international situation.

Sir, we are in a difficult time in a difficult world where the mass of uncertainty is upon us. We cannot adequately plan for tomorrow because we do not know what tomorrow is going to bring, but we know that we cannot sit and do nothing. We have as far as possible to ensure that our institutions are in proper working order and that we pay attention to economic fundamentals because, in the final analysis, all the lovely programmes we have for social engineering and the fancy talk, if this economy is not correct, our plans will fail because in the final analysis it is of vital importance how we get and spend our dollars and cents.

We started to have economic problems before the infamous September 11, as a result of difficult international conditions which saw a determination in our tourist sector and saw our offshore sector under some stress. We saw a lessening demand for products worldwide which threw our fledgling manufacturing sector into problems and these Estimates for the coming fiscal year comes about at a time when we are slowly emerging out of that recession.

For the past two years the world has undergone some difficulties. We saw large economies like Argentina, Brazil, Venezuela, Japan and others under severe stress. We also know of difficulties in Asia, the second largest economy in the world where for years they have been trying to get out of an economic quagmire.
5.15 p.m.

There is Germany, the largest economy of Europe, seemingly unable to arrest a decline. Sir, it is no wonder that we are presently undergoing some difficulty.

Mr. President, the test is, not whether or not you can drive. It is not how you perform on a dry road when there is little or no traffic. The real test comes when you have a lot of traffic and a little bit of water on the road. That is where your skills are called upon. When visibility is low, you see danger and that brings out the test.

I want to tell this Chamber that this is not the first time that this country was in economic danger. In 1990 we were almost in the same situation and let us compare how we feared then with how we fear now. We all know that the

crisis of 1990 had more to do with local economic mismanagement than it was with any international conditions.

Mr. President, from 1989, we were then in Opposition, and we were warning the then Democratic Labour Party that the rate at which they were going they were going to drive the economy in serious problems. Mr. Sandiford, now Sir Lloyd Sandiford, or Mr. David Thompson would not take heed. They brought in the guru,

Clyde Mascoll, a Member of this Chamber, and from all reports he made a bad situation worse. In spite of all the warnings that they had, they still went ahead with the reckless spending. The worst statements I ever heard any political leader in the country make was one made by the then Prime Minister of this country. In an interview he said that he knew what to do but he was not about to commit political suicide.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, this is not hearsay. I heard it with my own ears.

Sir, he knew what to do but was not about to commit political suicide but he was about to kill the whole country. In short, the health of the Democratic Labour Party was more important than the health of the country.

Mr. President, the 4 000 that went home and the remainder of the civil servants went on an 8 per cent cut. All of them suffered because the then Prime Minister was not about to commit political suicide. All their hopes and aspirations were frustrated resulting from the then leader of this country, according to him, was not about to commit political suicide.

Mr. President, let me talk about the contempt with which they treated Barbadians. They felt that Barbadians were so foolish that they could not appreciate when a Government was working on their behalf. The result is history. The suffering that resulted could have been avoided. When the Opposition is talking about rescuing the economy, it is like a doctor that gave you the wrong diagnosis and instead of you getting better he made you worse. Then he carried out a surgical procedure and claims credit that he is a boss surgeon.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: However, he forgot to tell you that if he had given you the proper medicine for the common cold in the first place, he would not have had to perform this complicated surgery.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, all the trauma that the patient went through to make him look good as a surgeon could have been avoided if he had done the correct diagnosis in the first place. Sir, that is the analogy that comes to my mind.

Mr. President, they tell us that they were under pressure from the IMF and they had to do what the IMF told them to do.

When we came into power in 1994, one of the IMF representatives had one of the best offices in Bay Street. I remember the 1991 Budget, the only one that David Thompson presented to this country. The IMF representative was in the Honourable House of Assembly parading. Sir, that is what we were reduced to. When the Democratic Labour Party talks about what they did to the economy in 1991, they have to recognise that they caused the country to be in that position.

The Democratic Labour Party talks about being the pioneers of free education in Barbados. They ought to tell the people in Barbados that when they left office what they were in the process of negotiating with the World Bank. One of the items on the agenda was the payment of fees at the Samuel Jackman Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College. I am not saying that they would have done it. I am saying that it was on the agenda and it was being actively discussed. They were also discussing rents, bus fares and water.

Mr. President, they also said that they were going to go into some enhanced surveillance programme with the IMF. Sir, that is what happened when the crisis hit Barbados.

Sir, the difference between 1990 and the present crisis is, the sensible man prepares for a famine in the time of plenty. When things are going good, you prepare yourself for any eventuality because you will be telling yourself that things will not go good forever. There is going to come a time when there is going to be some problem in the international economy, some not of your own making, so you must prepare for any eventuality.

Mr. President, that is why we pay so much attention to economic fundamentals. That is why we made sure that when things were going good we did not run any large fiscal deficit. When things were going good, we did not engage in reckless spending but we prepared for any eventuality.

Sir, a year-and-a-half ago the Prime Minister was able to tell this country that we are going to get through this crisis without the loss of any public sector jobs because he knew that the work he had done in the past few years was about to

pay off. Our foreign reserves were in a very healthy situation. Even though the situation might have called for a reduction in spending, it might have called for enhanced revenue measures.

We had run a tight shift over the past five years prior to 2001. We were able to have the liberty of running a larger deficit. The deficit was large in 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. Sir, we were only able to do that because five years prior to this, we were paying attention to our economy and putting it in a position that it could earn foreign exchange.

Sir, the tourism sector was put in a position where it could prosper and putting the manufacturing sector in a position to take advantage of what was happening.
5.25 p.m.

Sir, remember that one of the first acts in this Barbados Labour Party in 1994 was the removal of onerous duties on agriculture and manufacturing. I can also remember the present President of the Democratic Labour Party. He was in the Senate then. He poured scorn on the measure to relieve the agricultural and manufacturing sectors from excessive taxation. I remember hearing him in here, pouring scorn, saying that it is not going to do anything.

Sir, I will say that because of the attention we paid to those sectors then, we are reaping some of the benefits now. I am not saying that all is well in those sectors but what I am saying is that the attention we paid to them helped them to perform a little better than they were performing.

Sir, the crisis that we are now hopefully emerging from, ended with us...

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: The difference is that at that time, unemployment increased to about 27 per cent of the workforce, under the Barbados Labour Party. The last figures showed that unemployment rose only slightly from about 9.7 per cent to 10.6 per cent, less than a 1 per cent increase, Sir, at a time, when we saw the opposite happening, all across the world, even in Germany. This is no comfort, but it is a fact that our unemployment rate is the same as in Germany.

Sir, we believe that any Barbadian unemployed is one Barbadian too many. We have to see things in the perspective that when we have an employment rate which equals that of Germany, it shows that we must be doing something right.

Sir, when the Prime Minister said that this economy is capable of providing 30 000 jobs, the then Opposition

laughed and that was the big thing in the 1994 election, Arthur promised 30 000 jobs, as though it could not be done. Sir, the records show that in 1993, the last year that the Democratic Labour Party was responsible for this economy, 100 400 persons were employed.

In 2001, one hundred and thirty thousand, eight hundred Barbadians were employed. Sir, simple arithmetic of which all of us in here are proponents, would tell you that is more than 30 000. They laughed us to scorn but we assured them, we took the lashes because we said in 1994, job number one is jobs, and, thank God, we have been faithful to our mandate. Sir, 130 800 was the largest annual figure for employment ever in this country.

Sir, in the last year, we slipped by about 2 000, but in the context of what was happening worldwide, that was a tremendous achievement. So much so, Sir, and this is something that we must not forget, the total number of persons employed in the last quarter of 2001 was over 134 000 persons. This is the largest on record, so that at a time when the economy was in recession, because of our proactive measures, because of the way we treated the people of Barbados, and at a time when the international economy was under great stress, Barbadians were being employed.

Sir, this is because this Prime Minister took the courageous decision that we are going to get through this crisis, without any significant loss in public sector employment. Sir, do not let anybody think, for one moment, that the State was the main employer. I heard a lot of Democratic Labour Party propaganda saying that the State was the one doing all the employing, but what do the figures say? I always say that figures do not lie, but liars will figure. What are the facts?

Sir, I could go back to 1991. In 1991, twenty-four thousand, seven hundred persons were employed by the State out of a total environment of 107 000 and that is 23 per cent. So in 1991, 23 per cent of the people employed, were employed by the State. In 1993, and that was when the full weight of the IMF Programme came down on Barbadians crushing their hopes and aspirations, that figure was reduced to 20.9 per cent.

Sir, by then, the number of people employed by the Government had dropped from 24 600 to 21 000. Sir, that is when 3 000 or 4 000 were sent home unceremoniously. What happened also is that not only did the number of persons employed by the State fall, but the total number of persons in Barbados, as a whole, fell. We lost 7 000 jobs on the whole so both the public sector and the private sector were shedding jobs.

Sir, when we come to the year 2000, we found that the

State was employing 25 000 persons, slightly more than in 1991, but the numbers of persons employed were 128 000, so that we had a massive increase in employment, but the State was employing just as many as in 1991. In 2002, the State was employing a little more because the State's employment rose to 27 700, and the overall employment remained the same.

Sir, the point I am making is that the figures are giving a lie to the Democratic Labour Party propaganda. The employment by the State is less in percentage terms than it was in 1991, and it was about the same as it was in 1993, so if the State is doing all the employment, the figures do not show it.

Sir, what the figures show is that the State took the lead, where we were trying to preserve jobs. The private sector responded, in kind, because they had the confidence in the ability of the Prime Minister and the Government to run the affairs of this country. They responded, in kind, and significant investments were made to ensure that the people of this country benefitted from what was going on.

Sir, even today, we see that the private sector is continuing to make the solid investments that are needed. Only two weeks ago, we saw another private sector building going up at Warrens.

Sir, the State's employment has always been significant and will always continue to be significant in our economy. But what is of more importance is that the State is leading the way and making the environment conducive to investment, so that the private sector can take up some of the slack. The result is, that the level of employment is remaining steady.

Sir, on This Side, our record on employment is second to none. Historically, we have always been associated with low unemployment because the only time we had a 10 per cent level of employment was around 1980. Do not forget that in 1973 it was around 27 per cent. It is almost fair to say that the Democratic Labour Party is associated with high unemployment and the Barbados Labour Party is associated with low unemployment. This is almost a truism, and the record is there.

Sir, even in 1986 when we were put out of office, the unemployment level was on the way down, after it went up in the 1980s.
5.35 p.m.

The point I am making is that we had two crises, but the response of the two Governments was totally different. The result is that in one case, because of the local condition, and because the Government then was not prepared to pay attention to local economic conditions, this country underwent a massive devaluation in our standard of life and our standard of living.

This present crisis so far sees the country coming out of a recession with our social institutions intact, with our people at work and there is hope in the economy. When we took the decision to maintain economic activity, we knew that it would result in higher deficits and that it would cause some problems in our foreign reserves, but we had the economy sound enough to undertake such decisions.

The fact that our credit rating may have slipped a little bit is to reflect on the fact that we are not about to cut expenditure to send home people, and we are not about to increase taxes to increase revenue. We knew the downside of that would be that we would have higher deficits and that we would have a lessening of our credit rating, but we could have taken that decision given the fact that our economy was basically sound. That is why this year we took the decision to hold strain especially with our capital spending, because we knew that the private sector is now in a position, after the difficulties seem to be over, to carry forward and to do what they were doing in terms of investments and in terms of providing jobs for the people. The pipeline for investment projects is there.

The Honourable Senator mentioned the much maligned Hilton Hotel. I do not know why the Opposition seek to find skeletons where there are none. They are looking under every rock for a bone.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Some may say for a slug but they are examining every...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I am not sure I like your choice of words, perhaps you can improve on them.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: They are going to attack the GEMS Project when everybody knows that the GEMS Project was as a result of the fact that a lot of the South Coast hotels were about to go into receivership and the GEMS Project was a way of saving a lot of Barbadian properties on the South Coast. We can defend them because we knew that there were jobs...

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber because I do not think that Blue Horizon or Eastry House would fall into that category, so the premise on which the Honourable Senator is basing the origin of the GEMS Project is really misleading this Chamber.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I know. I was there. The Barbados Development Bank was about to close down and we are standing by the decision we took. Even the Opposition was saying that the GEMS Project was a good project. Now all they are concerned about is to see who gets what and all of that.

We took the decision on the GEMS Project and there came a time when we had to take more decisions and we took them. When we found out that things were not going a certain way, we took decisions, but all we are hearing about now is JAWS and who got what. The fact remains that we had to take that decision at that time to protect Barbadian interest.

The Opposition is talking about the Hilton Hotel now. I do not know what the beef is about the Hilton Hotel. The point is that this Government has done wonders in terms of managing the economy, in terms of being progressive, in terms of positioning this country and above all, defending the economic interest of this country.

After the recession, unemployment remained steady, prices remained steady, our debt went up a little bit but our foreign reserves were still in a good position. We were facing uncertainty and we took a decision because we do not know what tomorrow is going to bring and therefore we are going to prepare for the future.

If the Democratic Labour Party wants to castigate us for that, well then, we are castigated, but the public knows the truth and they know where their interests lie. That is why, in spite of all their propaganda, and in spite of their dominating the Call-in programmes with all sorts of hysteria, the people of this country will defend their interest.

Sir, let us now look at some issues at the macro level, especially as it relates to the Estimates. Senator Mascoll made a song and a dance about the fact that Barbadians are overtaxed. Sir, for some people one per cent taxation is too much because people basically would prefer to pay less taxes, but there are always two sides to an equation.

Less revenue means less spending and less spending means that instead of the State spending, you, the individual will have to spend. It means that you will have to pay to send your children to secondary school and to university and the social mobility which gave rise to the society that we have, would be lost.

Many of us in here would not have been in here were it not for the State subsidising our education; that is a fact. That was started in 1952 when the then Barbados Labour Party decided that they were going to build secondary schools for the masses. They built the St. Leonard's School, Parkinson Secondary in the Pine, Princess Margaret in St. Philip and West St. Joseph Secondary. The State felt that it had to take the leading role in providing education for the masses and that has a cost. There is a cost to establishing a society.

It also has tremendous benefits. The fact that you may be poor does not mean that you should not have access

to the best health care available. There are very few countries in this world where people can get bypass surgery on the State. That happens in Barbados and there is a cost to that. The cost is that we will have to pay taxes.

If we go on this mad craze about cutting taxes in order to find favour with the voters, as though the voters do not know where their true interest lies, all it would mean is that the poor would not get the education and the health services they deserve and our sanitation services will not improve. There are two sides to the equation. Cutting revenue means cutting expenditure basically.

5.45 p.m.

Mr. President, let us remember that in 1986 we had this debate about cutting tax, tax-free, *et cetera*, and the people believed that they were going to get \$15 000. In July, after winning the election, they brought a Budget and there were massive giveaways. They gave away everything. People got their houses repaired through the State but who were they? They were not the poor but the rich who benefitted tremendously.

Sir, to the credit of the then Minister of Finance, by April of the next year, he saw the errors of his ways and imposed upon Barbadians the largest ever increase in taxes, in April 1987, when the consumption tax was increased by 15 per cent.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: On a point of order. Mr. Barrow died on 1st June, 1987, and the Minister of Finance who made the significant changes was Mr. Erskine Sandiford.

Mr. PRESIDENT: We cannot have this dialogue. Please proceed, Senator.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: The Minister of Finance was Dr. "Richie" Haynes. He resigned from the Party after the Right Excellent Errol Barrow died. He was the Minister of Finance in July, 1986 and in April, 1987. Sir, within nine months, they had to reverse themselves because it sounded good on the political platform.

Sir, we had a two-hour speech from the Leader of the Opposition, who said he is going to bring us the DLP's plans for the country, but his speech on the DLP's plans for the future only lasted for five minutes. There is an old Bajan saying, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me". Therefore, we have to be very careful when we talk about cutting revenue, because it sounds good but the premise on which it is based has no foundation in numbers.

The Member has said that we have moved the tax take from 30 to 40 per cent. Sir, I have checked the figures and there is no where the tax take has increased from 30 per cent

to 40 per cent. My figures are not wrong. What I have found is that it has increased from 33.8 per cent to 38.1 per cent.

Sir, let us not forget the increase in VAT on tourism. A lot of that tax is paid for by the foreign sale corporations and the IBCs. If those are being factored out, one would see that the tax increase has not increased much in our time.

Sir the Honourable Member is playing upon emotion in order to curry favour with the electorate. If he cannot deal with North West, I do not know how he can deal with the country.

Sir, it is not good to come into this Honourable Chamber to use figures unless one is accurate in those figures. It does this Chamber no good when any Member comes and misuses figures. Yes, there has been a slight increase in the level of tax takes but one must also look at the level of services that are offered. Barbados now has a level of services which are second-to-none in this part of the world.

Sir, let us look at the older people who are living better because of the intervention of the Rural and Urban Development Commissions. Sir, look at those persons who now have better roads because of the efforts of this Government to provide proper asphalt or concrete roads for the people of this country. Older persons are now having their homes fixed. Others are having their hopes and ideas being realised because through the Urban Development Fund and Rural Enterprise Growth Fund, they have been able to start their own businesses. It is no wonder the DLP are singling out those institutions for their worst venom because they know that this is helping the ordinary citizens who will respond in kind whenever the bell rings.

5.55 p.m.

The Honourable Senator must tell us if he is going to cut revenue and put back VAT on food. I know he is a person that likes a challenge and I hope he takes up the challenge.

I want to spend a few minutes dealing with the subject of energy because that is an area that caused us some anxiety, especially given the happenings in the Middle East and a few months ago the biggest exporter in this region, Venezuela was undergoing a bit of domestic difficulty which was impacting on their ability to export oil.

Sir, the point must be made that this Government's record on energy and energy prices is second to none. When we came into office, the price of gasoline at the pump was \$1.54. Over the past eight years we took decisions which saw the tax on gasoline reduced by \$0.25 and the tax on diesel reduced by over \$0.30 per litre. At a time when the price of oil is \$25 per barrel Barbadians are paying less for

gasoline than they did in 1994 under the Dems when the price of crude was \$15 per barrel.

Sir, I want to repeat for emphasis that in 1994 the price of crude was \$15 per barrel and we were paying \$1.54 at the pump. The price of crude now is \$25 per barrel and we are paying \$1.48 at the pump. This is because we reduced the tax take on one gallon of gasoline by almost \$1.00. To make matters better, the businessman who buys diesel and gasoline gets it at a cheaper price because VAT on gasoline and diesel is an input tax which is returned to the producer. Sir, this is our record as far as energy prices go.

We also took a decision to close the Mobil Refinery. In 1986 the Dems increased the guarantee profit of the refinery to 15 per cent after tax even though Mobil had a monopoly to provide the country with fuel.

Sir, I want to make the point that Mobil was getting exorbitant returns and we took the decision in 1998 that the people of this country must benefit from lower prices and we not only reduced the tax but we saved five cents per litre when we closed the refinery because of the surcharge we had to put on the product in order to pay for what was an efficient refinery. Sir, prices of gasoline and diesel are where they are today because of the decisions this Government took in relation to energy prices.

We also took an important decision. When the Dems found themselves in the self-induced difficulty of 1991, they put a tax on fuel oil and this Government took the decision that since fuel oil is the main ingredient in the production of electricity we could effect a reduction in electricity bills if taxes were removed on the raw material.

We removed the tax on fuel oil and it translated itself into a reduction in electricity prices. Electricity prices would have been higher if we did not take the decision to reduce the tax on the basic material used in the production of electricity in this country. Sir, we are proud of our record when it comes to energy pricing.

We cannot control the world market price for crude and energy products but we have done a lot in our time to cushion the effects of the price to the Barbadian consumer. We have pledged this to the people of Barbados and we have delivered. We do not know what the war will mean in terms of international prices, but the people of Barbados can be comforted by the fact that at a time when oil prices are high, they are paying less at the pump.

Sir, we are making positive moves to ensure security of supplies because our ability to store gasoline is limited. We are now in the process of getting new storage facilities and erection of the tanks will start in a few months' time. This

means that we will be able to import more at any given time and effect savings on transportation and build up a bigger stock in case of any difficulties with the war.

We recognise that this economy will grind to a halt if we do not pay careful attention to the provision of fuels for transportation, electricity and other activities. We have made sure that we make a positive move in that direction.

We are also worried about the fact that our oilfields at Woodbourne are presenting us with special difficulties because there is a difficulty with the geology in terms of oil production. There is oil in our fields but it is difficult to reach it and we have to be continually using new methodology, and technology, and it is costly for us to maintain production. We are trying and in a month or two we will be drilling new wells to allow us to keep production at 1 200 to 1 500 barrels a day. If we achieve that, we would have done well because when we drill we get oil, LPG and natural gas and a lot of our hotels, commercial plants and 13 000 houses are fired by natural gas. It is an important commodity for us and we are in the middle of a programme where we are trying to extend the network so that more Barbadian homes can take advantage of what is a safe, clean fuel.

We started work in Westbury Road, Brandons, Eden Park, Tichbourne, Crane, Salters, Durants and Holders Hill because people must have access to their own fuel.
6.05 p.m.

We have started work in Westbury Road and Brandons. This is the constituency in which Senator Mascoll has an interest and we have to make sure that his people are being looked after. We are also doing work in Ealing Park, Tichbourne, the Crane and we have advertised for work to be done in Durants and Holders Hill.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, our intention is that during the next year, to carry the commodity to more people across the island. We feel that the people must benefit from what is going on in this country. We are tired of seeing people having to transport heavy gas cylinders in unsafe situations. We do not like to see these cylinders being transported on the mini buses because of the potential risk they carry.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, we feel that as a State, we have a responsibility to ensure that our people enjoy the benefits of this country. This is a programme we are very enthusiastic about and we commend it to this Chamber and the people of Barbados.

We know that people are going to complain that natural gas is in some areas and not in theirs. However, I can only ask them to be patient. It is our intention that the whole urban corridor will be completed and then we would be moving further inland but it is going to take time. Sir, of necessity, some people will get natural gas before others.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, we are all in this together and if you do not benefit but your cousin benefits, you have to be thankful for your cousin. Our job is to expand the network as much as possible, but it is going to take time to reach everyone.

Sir, we are seeking to commence another junior programme which will result in the stabilisation of oil production. We are also looking at other alternatives. Natural gas is one of the most environmentally sound fuels. On the other side of the coin, oil is probably the dirtiest in terms of exhaust. We do not believe that there is too much scope at this time, given the present technology, for solar and other energy. They can be expensive and they are still experimental. Twenty years from now, they may be more economically viable but at present, we have to use fossil fuel for a while and that is a fact of life.

While we are still going to be doing some work with our alternative energy, we know that for the foreseeable future we will have to depend almost exclusively on fossil fuels. We should now use the safest one which is natural gas.

It has been proposed by the Trinidad Government to have a pipeline from Trinidad to Barbados and other islands to supply these islands with natural gas. This is something we are keen about because it would solve a lot of problems in relation to our fuel supplies. Mr. President, that is about another five years away and if it happens, we would still use the natural gas we have in Barbados and use the imported one to augment our supplies.

For example, a lot of our electricity generated plant could be retrofitted to use natural gas instead of jet fuel that is currently being used, and the ones that are using fuel oil could be converted to use natural gas. These are things that we are looking at. The possibilities are there and I want the public to be assured that this Government is taking the energy needs of this country very seriously and will ensure that, not only do we have a reliable source of energy, but we have it at the best available price.

Sir, we are going to be examining all the different avenues to ensure that the people of this country benefit from the resources of this country.

Sir, these Estimates are presented to us at a difficult time but we are assured that this Government has the credentials, expertise and knowledge in order to steer this

ship through any difficult waters.

Sir, given the history of the two parties in the last 20 years, who would you want to charter your ship? Would you want, Sir, the tried, tested and proven Barbados Labour Party, under Prime Minister Owen Arthur, or do you want to regress to the mess that was created in 1991, when the guru economist who does not believe in certification, with the tried, tested and failed methods, or do you want to keep the ship in the hands of people who have showed what they are made of, and who have carried this country through difficult waters, and have brought us out relatively victorious? Sir, we cannot afford another "5-4-3 plan". We cannot afford any "bus fare and lunch money economics". We are not going to put our economic future into Senator Mascoll's hands.

Sir, the choice is clear and the Estimates again show that the choice is clear. The Government has delivered and will continue to deliver. I am sure that the people of this country are taking note. They know who have their best interest at heart. All the propaganda about high tax and the hysteria will go to nothing. In the final analysis, this country must survive.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, the Minister of Finance, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, continues to manage the economy very well. This year's Estimates show wisdom, balance, sincerity and courage. I say courage because he is not going to run the risk of running the country into economic difficulties just to win an election.

Interestingly, like successive Governments, education, next year, will account for the greatest proportion of Government's expenditure. Sir, \$375 million will be spent on education.

Mr. President, the Barbados Labour Party has always placed much emphasis on education. For instance, in 1949, a Barbados Labour Party Government increased the number of Barbados Scholarships to five and these were opened to boys and girls in classics, modern studies, science and mathematics and one was opened to girls alone to a girl reaching either open scholarship or exhibition standard. This was a genuine attempt at justice in redressing the imbalance in the education of girls. It was also an attempt to meet new social demands for skilled manpower, albeit, in a modest way.

I know that the Honourable Opposition Senators do not like to hear this, but it is the truth that the Barbados Labour Party started free education with the building of

St. Leonard's, Princess Margaret School, Parkinson School and West St. Joseph. Mr. President Sir, as one who is interested in education and who, in all honesty, contributed a great deal to education, I am never tired of reminding people of that. I also know that the Barbados Labour Party put the 14-year-olds back to school, after they had been sent out of school by a Democratic Labour Party Government. I know all about that. Then I can speak of a functional competency survey which was done and since 1994, great many changes have occurred in education.

6.15 p.m.

There is a White Paper, entitled, "Each Child Matters", which has been in a way, revolutionary, and the Ministry of Education is making education relevant. I wish to refer specifically now to a few areas. For instance, the HIV/AIDS Awareness Programme, and the plan is to sensitise all teachers, ancillary staff, PTAs to facts and figures of HIV/AIDS. It will be a special four-prong training programme for the teachers who will then deliver the module and the syllabuses to the children.

The Ministries of Health and Education will meet Principals to discuss guidelines on how to handle HIV/AIDS. They will do 10 schools at a time, until March 2005, when all 103 Government schools and private schools will be covered. The money is provided by the World Bank to help with the training. The staff of the Ministry of Education and satellite centres are being sensitised.

I want specially now to mention syllabuses. Sir, for the first time, we have syllabuses which set out topics and the attainment targets for each subject in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes so that parents should be informed what children should know. Of course, money has been allocated for that too and the curriculum is clear.

Sir, just as important, the schools are now offering an international curriculum. The Ministry looked at syllabuses across the world, so that if children go abroad, they will not be disadvantaged.

Mr. President, for years Barbados has been admired and respected because of our high attainment in literacy and functional competency. Now, we have to aim at the same high achievement in technology education, hence, the use of technology, largely through methodology and video, *et cetera*.

Technology education is being provided at levels 1 and 2 in secondary schools. We, perhaps, know it better as Lower First and First Forms still and students are learning how technology affects the world of transportation, communication and modified foods, in other words, how it

affects our lives.

There is no longer regurgitation, talk and chalk method. Education is just not memorising, although there is room, and I wish to remind Senators and others who may be listening that there are beautiful passages of poetry and prose which should be memorised. They are ensuring that there is critical thinking and problem solving, so that there are major changes in the way teachers teach.

The Ministry of Education has also introduced a system of subject coordinators, who will ensure that subjects are being properly taught. I think this is significant also that in the Common Entrance Examination, as it is generally called, from this year, even if children make a mistake in the final answer, they will be given a mark for the reasoning, prior to the answer.

I wish to repeat this that in the Common Entrance Examination, from this year, even if children were to make a mistake in the final answer, they will be given a mark for the reasoning that leads to the answer. The relevant teachers have been prepared for this.

The Ministry of Education has also brought Mount St. Vincent University to work in collaboration with Erdiston College. Thus teaching, through distance and face-to-face contact, one will learn via computers. They also do assignments and tutorials and in that way, they will obtain a Masters or Bachelors degree in education in special needs.

Teachers at the Irvin Wilson School are receiving training in teaching the hearing impaired and the visually impaired, and those with speech impairment as well. There are special computers there which help them. There are 80 teachers enrolled in this course, mostly primary, but there are some secondary.

Sir, dyslexia is included in the special needs education. It is hoped that when the course at Mount St. Vincent is finished, the teachers being trained will be able to diagnose and treat dyslexia. I think this is something that needs to be stressed because, presently, parents have clinical psychologists test children and this can be costly. I also understand that about 10 per cent of children are dyslexic, with either mild, moderate or severe symptoms.

The Education Technical Enhancement Programme or EduTech as we know it, has been allocated \$30 million in this year's Estimates with the proviso that if revenue performs better than is projected, the first claim on the resources of the Government must be to allow them to carry on the EduTech project at a level that is warranted by the project, as designed.

Again, I wish to stress what I have said before, and which I know the officials at the Ministry of Education and the Chief Education Officer keep stressing, that EduTech is another tool. It is a 7-year programme, so when there is criticism that it is not going as quickly as it should, it must be remembered that it is to be implemented on a phased basis, in private, public, primary and secondary schools.

There are four components. Repairs and refurbishment of schools, training and retraining of teachers, 3 000 of them, and officers of the Ministry of Education, how to use it in areas where never before it has been used. They are trained to do that with video and camera.

A third component Sir, is to give support and build the capacity of Ministry of Education to manage the programme efficiently and effectively. Then, there is the installation of all kinds of technology and the procurement and installation of hardware and software.

In addition, I wish to mention that there are 14 schools now fully equipped. Combermere, St. James Secondary, Ellerslie, Alexandra, Westbury, St. Mary's, Deacon's, Christ Church Boys', South District, Sharon Primary, St. Joseph Primary, St. Gabriel's and the Irvine Wilson.

I wish to say something about the University College of Barbados. Sir, its main purpose is to offer tertiary education that is not being offered by the UWI and also to cut cost. The percentage of Barbadians going on to tertiary level is approximately 28 per cent. It is the highest in the English-speaking Caribbean but it is still not enough.

In North America, it is up by almost 60 per cent and if we do not increase our intake of tertiary level students, we will be at a disadvantage and our students will be qualified only for low level jobs, or we will be just skimming the talents of our people.
6.25 p.m.

The aim is to have better qualified students trained so that they can work overseas as well and not just at the bottom of the pack. The Barbados Community College is now offering a Bachelor Degree in Fine Arts. This has helped many of our teachers to be trained in arts and craft. They get full pay leave. The Course started in 1996 and to date 89 persons have graduated with a Degree in Fine Arts.

The Barbados Community College has also been doing a B.Ed. in technical vocational education. Again teachers get full pay. Fifty-three persons have graduated since 2000. This has never been done before and it is something for which Government and the Ministry of Education should be highly congratulated. It is also being done to raise the status of those subject areas, the image of the teacher and to encourage more gifted children to pursue these courses in order to make our economy more productive and more

viable. Quietly, the Ministry of Education has been bringing about necessary changes and progress and expanding beyond the traditional.

Mr. President, I regret that I have to mention this but I really cannot let it pass. When Senator Mascoll made the statement that qualifications were overrated, I was overwhelmed with astonishment, I was nonplussed, I was dumbfounded. As an educator of many, many years who have started at all levels of the system, including tertiary and university, I could not believe what I was hearing. That statement cannot be made when the Ministry of Education recognises that each child matters and that each child should be given credit for what he or she has achieved at secondary school.

Furthermore, in about two years each secondary school student would have two types of qualifications. There will be the CXC and the National Diploma of Secondary Education which will replace the School Leaving Certificate which was associated with failure. Again, the Government must be highly praised for recognising the needs of the majority of children in Barbados. This Diploma will show competence of the individual course subject areas like English Literature, Mathematics, Social Studies and Integrated Science.

We tend to see these as subjects, but these provide the basic skills which formed the foundation of all other learning areas. The students must show competence in conversational Spanish and in an extra curricular activity. They have never been given credit for this before, so this too is an innovation.

Mr. President, a great deal of new ground has been broken since 1994, but students' needs are different in what today is a very different world. Education is responding to those needs. Long before September 11, the Government had already recognised the need to reposition the economy and to position the country to participate and compete in the new economy. Positioning the country means positioning the people. It is for this reason that the decision was made to set up a university college of Barbados. Planning for its establishment has been going on over the past year.

I want now to turn to the National Sports Council. The National Sports Council's objective is to continue to create opportunities for the development of programmes that will promote and facilitate sports for all Barbadians.

Among the Council's plans are the installation of lights on a number of existing hard courts and playing fields and the construction of pavilions at Boscobel in St. Peter – that will be an extension – Archer's Bay in St. Lucy, Gall Hill in St. John and an extension at Farmer's in St. Thomas.

There are 26 lighted playing fields in Barbados, and no other Government has done as much. Unfortunately, Dover is not one of them. A great many sporting teams from abroad stay in the Gap on the South Coast. Recently, the blind cricketers, Jamaica, the Finnish National Football Team, the American footballers, the United States of America hockey team and the English netball team all stayed there during the past year. St. Lawrence Gap has become the most popular venue for sporting groups because it is central and has all the facilities.

The playing fields and the hard courts at Dover have no lights. These are urgently needed in order to continue to promote the sport in this area. I know that the next representative for that area will see to it that it is brought into line with other lighted playing fields.

The National Sports Council can also be proud of its boxing programme which continues to bring recognition to Barbados. A perfect example of that is Junior Greenidge. He came through the National Sports Council's programme. He was the only one, as we know, to win a medal at the Commonwealth Games in Manchester last year. There is also Shawn "Terry" Cox who won a gold medal at the Pan American Games last year. Both Shawn "Terry" Cox and Junior Greenidge are going to the Bahamas next month to represent Barbados in the Caribbean Amateur Boxing Association Championships. The coach of the team, Mr. Gary Bowen, is the National Sports Council's coach and he is doing a fine job with these young men.

It is interesting to note that the National Sports Council is celebrating its 25th Anniversary next month. I cannot help reminding this August Chamber that it was the Barbados Labour Party which founded the National Sports Council in 1978.

6.35 p.m.

It assists and gives support to the Barbados Tourism Authority in planning a number of international competitions in Barbados. They also assist with the Sir Garfield Sobers' Schools Cricket Tournament, the Banks' Hockey Festival and provides facilities for a number of playing fields and hard courts which are used for these events.

The National Sports Council also has plans to develop practise pitches at Blenheim. These are very much needed for young cricketers, especially during the football season which is in progress now. Therefore, there is a need for artificial pitches where one could select the best young cricketers now leaving primary schools and put them into a special programme. These pitches are in countries such as Trinidad and Tobago, Grenada and I think here in Barbados at Windwards, Carlton and Wanderers Cricket Grounds. These pitches would come in very useful when we host the World Cup in 2007.

Mr. President, before closing, I wish to say something about the Ministry of Social Transformation. This Ministry will embark on programmes with an allocation of \$70 634 848. Its focus, as is generally known, is the provision for assistance to and the empowerment of individuals, families, communities and socially-disadvantaged groups. Part of the empowerment programme includes the building of partnership in the Ministries and in the civil society, including the private sector, instituting community programmes and the meals-on-wheels programme for the elderly.

There is collaboration with similar agencies with similar ideas, such as the Salvation Army and the Barbados Red Cross Society. There is a Welfare-to-work programme and a fatherhood-initiative programme. These are two new projects which were introduced in the last financial year.

The Welfare-to-work Programme has been established in an effort to focus on the challenges faced by individuals who receive national assistance monetary grants. The record shows that of the 7 000 persons who are on welfare, 3 900 were children under the age of 16. These children were either not receiving maintenance from their fathers or the support was minimal, or sometimes irregular. Some mothers were unemployed and dependent on monetary or kind benefits from the Welfare Department.

Mr. President, the programme tries to address the challenges that women faced in securing employment and seeks to assist them in changing their lives circumstances and in breaking their dependence upon the public's assistance. That, too, is important.

Sir, during the assessment, the Department has realised that the women's likelihood of working was steadily decreasing because of a number of barriers which included their level of experience, their job skills or lack of them, transportation difficulties, domestic violence and physical health.

To date, 92 women have been involved in the programme, 67 of whom were receiving training. The clients themselves have expressed a wish to be trained in the hospitality industry, so that they have been doing services such as fundamentals of dining room service, introduction to dining service and residential housekeeping.

The age range of persons is under 20 to over 44. In association with the Barbados Community College, 25 women are being trained in textiles, pattern-making, cookery and needlework. Also, in association with the Pinelands Creative Workshop, literacy classes and job placement programmes are also being held. There are currently 40 persons being assessed for training in the new financial year.

Finally, I want to mention a programme with which I have much sympathy and in which I am interested from my experience as a teacher over the years. This is the Adolescent Mothers Development Programme. The Ministry of Social Transformation is enrolling teenage mothers, after having their first child, in a self-development programme using the following as necessary: mentoring, counselling, training, skills training, personal development and parenting skills, including budgeting.

It is a collaborative effort involving the Ministry of Youth Affairs, medical social services, PAREDOS, the Barbados Family Planning Department, the Welfare Department and community health nursing. This is a proactive programme and will assist with poverty eradication.

I want to say here and again in reminding listeners that this Barbados Labour Party Government is the first one to have set aside money for a Poverty Eradication Programme and out of the very few in the Caribbean, we have been the first to do something about poverty eradication.

Mr. President, with these few words, I wish to say that I fully support the Bill. I know that Barbadians, with their high standard of education and good sense, will know when they have a great leader and how to work when it is time to show their appreciation for all that this Government is doing, has done and will continue to do. I thank you, Mr. President.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow. I wish to remind all Honourable Senators that it is a suspension and, therefore, we will start promptly at 10.00 a.m.

The question that the Honourable Senate be suspended until Tuesday 25th March, 2003, at 10.00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Senate accordingly.
6.45 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Honourable House is resumed.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Yesterday, in his presentation the Honourable Leader of the Senate gave a background against which these Estimates have been presented. Unfortunately, when we examined the Estimates and the policies being pursued by the Government not much of it seems to be related to the theoretical intentions of the Estimates.

Before I get into the substance of my presentation I would like to refer to one or two issues which came up since the Estimates were presented in the Other Place when persons have been discussing the impact of the first conflict between Iraq and the allied forces.

Sir, I was taken back and embarrassed by some of the comments I heard in relation to the attitude of Barbados towards the USA. Yesterday we heard a coherent and well-thought out presentation made by Sir John Stanley Goddard with respect to his attitude towards the conflict in the Middle East and everyone is entitled to their opinion and Sir John put the matter in perspective from his point of view.

Sir, when we are dealing with our friends we have to be careful how we deal with them. If a friend does something that you think is not the correct thing to do, you do not ball the friend out in public in a manner that is undignified. I was taken back when I heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade making a broad side attack on the Government of the USA. Most of what she said may have been true but often it is not what you say or do but the manner in which you do so. Sir, if the USA is a friend of the people and Government of Barbados then we should deal with our objections to the way they behave in a more dignified manner because if a boat load of mercenaries landed on the shores of Barbados tomorrow, the first country we would call to beg for help would be USA. If the Government of the USA through diplomatic channels communicated with the Government of Barbados the decent thing to do is for the response to be through the same diplomatic channel and not to get on the Floor of any Parliament and curse the USA.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I ask you to withdraw the word curse. It is a well-established principle of parliamentary practice that Members of one House are not permitted to make personal references against Members of the Other Place.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, I withdraw the comments. Sir, this is a national issue that affects all Barbadians that was broadcast live on radio to Barbados and in this modern era of technology a lot of the rest of the world.

I want to make the point that any response to a diplomatic note to any country should be done appropriately through diplomatic channels and not by publicly lambasting another Government particularly one which you claimed is a friendly Government. As far as the conflict is concerned my view has been and remains that when friends fall out you do not get involved because they must know something about each other that nobody else knows.

Mr. President, the Honourable Leader made reference to the fact that these may be the last Estimates in the current

parliamentary session and I think it is a fair statement. Therefore, many persons will be taking the opportunity to make as much mileage as they can out of the presentation. He said that it came against the background of war and what has now come to be popularized as 'the silly season' when any statement made relating to the practises of Government is dismissed as a statement in keeping with this season. We have so little regard for people whether Opposition politicians or the general public that everything is viewed in the context of trying to score cheap political points.

The Honourable Leader also made the point that there was a recession from June 2001 to August 2002. When the Democratic Labour Party through Senator Mascoll was saying that the country was in recession, the Government's spokespersons and other supporters of the Government said it was not true. I am also hearing statements that we are going through difficult times in this country at this point in time. This is certainly not in keeping with the feel good attitude portrayed by the Government, time after time when we were being told that we never had it so good.

This time is identical to the period of 1991/92 in many regards. At that time there was a war going on between the same parties in the Gulf and the world was in a state of economic recession and we were approaching a general election. In many regards the climate that existed then is very similar to what exists now. In the 1991/92 period the Government was faced with certain difficulties and they sought to deal with it in the way they best could. The Democratic Labour Party was faced with some harsh economic realities like most countries and the Barbados Labour Party claimed that nothing that happened during that time had anything to do with the international situation but were homegrown difficulties. On the part of the Barbados Labour Party whenever something happens that appears to be good it is purely because of the genius of the Government but when there is adversity they blame external factors. They ignored the fact that there was international recession and that there was a decline in tourism and that people were not travelling as much as before. All of these things contributed to the difficulties which we faced in that period.
10.10 a.m.

Sir, we have a very interesting situation developing in this country. The Barbados Labour Party Government continues to engage in a lot of nationalistic rhetoric. As part of their Manifesto of the 1999 Elections was that Barbados would become a Republic. There was a Republic song in place and all the trappings for the inauguration of this Republic status. Apparently, because of some negatives from some of their main supporters, whether financial or otherwise, they seemed to have backed off the idea of the Republic.

However, they continue to feed the public with national rhetoric and it is very much reminiscent of the policies of a Nazi government and you look for scapegoats to blame when anything goes wrong and you put in place a person to spout national rhetoric and propaganda.

While there is all this national rhetoric, the Government pursues a policy of denationalising vital economic sectors in this country. Point in case is the decision to sell the shares of the Barbados National Bank to the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago.

Sir, let us look at the origin of the Barbados National Bank, to the credit of the late Tom Adams who was the one who transformed the Government Savings Bank to a commercial bank. He also made the point that it was necessary to have some government involvement in the commercial banking sector and that the Barbados National Bank would, therefore, be in a position to help the Government to influence what was happening in the commercial banking sector.

Sir, he found a good supporter of the Democratic Labour Party in the form of a former Senator of this Chamber to place as the Head of that bank at that time. I must say that gentleman did an excellent job in nurturing that bank to the point where it was beginning to make a significant impact in the banking sector.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, we have to examine some of the sociological implications surrounding the Government's decision to sell the shares of the Barbados National Bank.

Mr. President, when this matter came before the Senate, I made the point then that Government was divesting of the Barbados National Bank's shares at the wrong time because they were competing with shares for the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, shares for BWIA and it was also at Christmastime when those shares were brought on the market.

I made the point then that you cannot expect the average Barbadian who has not, traditionally, been an investing kind of person to look at buying shares at Christmastime and that is a stark reality. I was told that I had a very low opinion of Barbadians and that I felt that they could not understand what was happening. The result was, the shares were under-subscribed. Nevertheless, Government continued to give the people of this country the impression that the share issue was an overwhelming success.

Mr. President, the reason that was given by the Prime Minister for the sale of these shares was the need to form some strategic alliances with other banks in order to bring new products to the banking sector in Barbados.

However, most of these products are already here in Barbados and available to the banking community.

I have been critical of the commercial banks before because I think they are not doing enough in order to help the average Barbadian entrepreneur, particularly new entrepreneurs in getting themselves established in business and the Prime Minister shares this view.

Recently, at the groundbreaking ceremony for a building at Warrens, the Prime Minister literally begged the commercial banks of Barbados to assist the entrepreneurs in this country. Yet, against a background where he realises that he is almost powerless in terms of influencing what the commercial banking sector does in this country, he opts to divest the Government's interest in the one bank that at least the Government has a say at the Board level. The question is why?

Sir, why this change of approach when we were spouting national rhetoric at the time of the sale of the bank and appealing to the patriotism of the Barbadian public? Why this change in approach? Why the change of approach when the shares in the Pine Hill Dairy were being sold and the national spirit and patriotism of Barbadians was called upon to rally in order to get public support for a Barbadian company to own the shares in the Pine Hill Dairy. Similarly, when the shares in the Life of Barbados were being sold, there was a similar public relations exercise. Barbadians were called on to exercise their patriotism and sell their shares to a Barbadian company.

Government that spouts this national rhetoric about '100 per cent Bajan', when they are selling the shares in the Barbados National Bank they turn to a non-Barbadian entity to sell those shares to, almost in a secretive kind of way. By the time Barbadians knew that the shares were being sold, the Chairman of that bank was in a position where he expected that in 90 days time the deal would be completed. Sir, this means that this is a process that was ongoing for sometime.

Sir, I want to find out if there is any nexus between the early redemption of the Trinidad and Tobago market for HRL, seven years early, and the sale of the Barbados National Bank's shares now. I would like the Government to say what percentage of that bond issue was taken up by the same bank now that the interest of the Barbados National Bank is going to be sold. Is there a nexus between the two events?

I recall both Senator Mascoll and myself asking the question when we heard that bond issue was being redeemed, where was the money going to come from. At that time the funds from which it would have come without requiring parliamentary approval was down to about \$3 million. Therefore, you could not get the money from there.

Sir, Senator Mascoll has already made the point in here and other places that it came from an account which forms part of the Consolidated Fund of this country. Therefore, to reduce that fund required parliamentary approval.
10.20 a.m.

We have heard a lot of academic arguments about above the line and below the line, when in fact, all of the accounts that are mentioned in the Accountant General's report show that this money came from above the line, not below the line. Sir, anything that comes from above the line, as far as I know, and I am not an economist either in reality or by pretense, but common sense tells me that if anything that is above the line has to get Parliament approval, then the funds which were used to pay off that bond issue should have had Parliament's approval.

Sir, this Government has continued to reduce the importance and involvement of Parliament in the affairs of this country for quite some time. It has been an ongoing process where Parliament merely rubber stamps the decisions made by this Government so that is in keeping with that. But, these funds came from a loan which the Government of Barbados raised and said were for a rainy day.

I do not see, by any stretch of the imagination, Sir, how the early redemption of bonds for Hotel and Resorts Limited of the GEMS could be seen as a rainy day.

Sir, I also listened with amazement when the Prime Minister made the point that those two loans, in essence, have had a negative impact on the economy of this country and to some extent, are responsible for some of the measures that have to be taken now.

Again, Sir, when we raised the question as to the wisdom of taking up those loans, we were told, oh, we have a good credit rating. I remember Senator Barker making a big speech about the fact that we have such a good credit rating, we could afford to borrow. We can get money at good terms. Therefore, we could go and borrow it now and put it down for when we want it.

Now, Sir, we are hearing that Barbados' credit rating has declined. Now, at a time when you really might need to go on the international market to raise money, you cannot,

or you are not in as good a position to do so. I am sure that those two loans contributed, to a large extent, to the present decline in the credit rating of Barbados, simply because when the Government was gloating that we had the highest foreign reserves ever, those foreign reserves were a result of borrowing money on the foreign market. So you borrow foreign exchange and you put it there and you say that our foreign reserves are good.

The foreign reserves did not come as a result of the productivity in this country. It did not come as a result of our foreign exchange earning sectors earning more money because tourism was down, manufacturing almost non-existent and agriculture on its last leg. The major foreign exchange earning entities were all underperforming.

In addition, Sir, the international business companies that we were told were going to bring so much revenue into this country, did not perform as expected, we borrowed money and put it aside to make the books look good. All the international community is saying now, look, not only did you have an unrealistic foreign exchange outlook but now you have used it, but not in any productive means to earn the foreign exchange that is required to pay the debt. You borrow money on the foreign market and then you do not have the means to earn the money to repay it.

The result, Sir, is that the Government is now faced with the situation where it is not a matter of choice that they have to reduce the capital works. Sir, do not mind this rhetoric about the Prime Minister being so good and being clothed in this robe of statehood, that even in the face of an election, he is not going to reduce capital expenditure.

It has nothing to do with that, Sir, it is a stark economic reality that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made it abundantly clear that the Barbados economy is not performing. Therefore, you must reduce your capital expenditure.

Sir, I raised the question as to what was the nexus between the early redemption of the bond issue in Trinidad and the sale of the BNB shares. After some thought and investigation, it is clear, Sir, that what ties those two events together, is the current poor financial state of the Government of Barbados, both in terms of access to foreign currency, as well as access to local reserves, that they can use in the Capital Works Programme.

What in fact, Sir, the Government of Barbados is doing, is making a trade off with the Republic Bank where the Republic Bank would have paid off the bond holders in Trinidad and Tobago, then buy shares in the Barbados National Bank and simply pay to the Barbados Government the difference between what they would have been paid off in Trinidad and the shares here in Barbados.

Sir, some people believe that does not make sense but if they redeem the bonds in Trinidad for \$45 million, and you sell the shares in Barbados for \$189 million and the person who paid off the bond paid \$45 million in Trinidad, you will just deduct \$45 million from \$189 million in Barbados and give you the difference. You do not have to be an Einstein, Sir, to know that but what, Sir, is the reason for doing this.

Sir, you have a situation where the Government finds itself being unable to raise any money outside of Barbados in order to complete the Hilton Hotel. Again, Sir, the Hilton Hotel was razed to a pile of rubble sometime in 1996 or 1997, but about six years ago, the Government of Barbados destroyed the Hilton Hotel, not even knowing where they were going to find the money to rebuild that hotel.

I hope, Sir, that when we are talking about records, that we would be able to find records for the building at Warrens, records for GEMS, for Greenland and that we can find all the records that are not of personal interest but to the interest of all the taxpayers of this country.

Sir, the Government could have allowed the Hilton Hotel to continue to operate for another two years, while they looked to raise the funds to rebuild it, if in fact it was absolutely necessary to go the route that they did.
10.30 a.m.

You do not knock down a building that is earning money without having the money to rebuild it. What is happening is that you have now at this time to sell the shares in the Barbados National Bank in order to find money to put into the Hilton Hotel when we were told that the Hilton International was going to be a partner in that project. All that has turned out to be now is that Hilton International will manage the hotel for a fee. They are not putting the kind of money into it that was anticipated. What kind of negotiation went on to bring us to this sorry state?

We have the Dover Convention Centre which is now an empty space. What madness could possess a Government that they could destroy revenue earning entities when they do not have the money to replace them and just leave the land there? That is what has happened in this country over the past six years.

Sir, if the Government of Barbados needed to form strategic alliances with the banking sector, what the Government should have done when Barclays Bank was anxiously looking around for somebody to sell their operation to, was to look at acquiring Barclays assets in Barbados and merging it with the Barbados National Bank. That is what they should have done.

We have a situation now where the Government is moving away from their initial policy when the shares in the Barbados National Bank were sold. When the shares in the Barbados National Bank were sold, it was structured in such a way that nobody would have majority shares and would not be able to trigger the takeover process. Government has gone now and sold somebody the majority shares which means that the takeover process is triggered.

Sir, given the appreciation of the shares of the Barbados National Bank for whatever reason, many Barbadians will be tempted now to sell their shares to the Republic Bank which could end up, rather than owning 57 per cent, owning well in excess of 60 or 65 per cent of the Barbados National Bank. That is the reality of the situation.

I would like to tell the Government of Barbados for what it is worth that the average man in Barbados is not satisfied with that decision. Many persons whom I never even expected would have had an interest in a matter such as this have been approaching me and asking me what craziness it is that the Government of Barbados is selling the BNB to a foreign entity.

All I could advise the people of Barbados to do, in whatever way they can do it, if it means having to sign a petition, is to let their voices be heard and let the Government know in no uncertain terms that they are not satisfied with the decision which they have made. This Government in its attitude of arrogance have always believed that they can do whatever they want to do when they want to do it and the rest of Barbados would simply fall in line because you dare not oppose anything they say.

Sir, I will move on to another issue. The Barbados Labour Party, as a political entity, prides itself on being an election machine. We have seen the election machinery going into top gear in this country sometimes a year or so approaching an election but never before have we seen an ongoing process of electioneering by a Government as we are seeing now.

The election campaign in 1999 for the Barbados Labour Party has not yet ended, it continues unabated from 1999 to this present day. I will demonstrate to you, Sir, why I am saying that. The Estimates and Government spending have been geared toward electioneering for the entire process. We hear a lot of talk about the Prime Minister not increasing capital expenditure even in the face of an election, but let us see what happened in previous years. In 1992-1993 capital expenditure was \$113 million. Facing an election in 1994 capital expenditure rose by 7 per cent to \$121 million in the 1993-1994 period, while current expenditure only went up by 2.3 per cent. In 1998-1999, this is the Barbados Labour Party, current expenditure went up – from 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 – by 24 per cent

approaching an election. Capital expenditure went up from \$241 million to \$267 million, an increase of 10 per cent over that period. So you would have thought that elections have come and gone and Government would therefore now at least exercise the prudent management that they claim they always exercised.

They had a lot of VAT money available to them, so they decided to blow it. They had over \$90 million one time in the Public Enterprise Fund, so they decided to blow it. The Government went on a grand spending spree partying with the money from the taxpayers in this country. They gave money to Southern Meats. While they are spouting nationalist rhetoric, they are denationalising everything. They closed down the Government abattoir and gave a private company, Southern Meats, money to open a private one.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate. As far as I know the money that Southern Meats got came from the Agricultural Development Fund. It was borrowed from the Public Enterprise Fund, but was reimbursed from the Agricultural Development Fund.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I maintain that the Accountant General's Report shows that money from the Public Enterprise Fund was transferred to Southern Meats. I do not care what channel it went through. The record shows that it went from the Government's coffers to Southern Meats. I know what I am talking about. The record is there to show that it went from the Public Enterprise Fund. So I am sorry, but the Honourable Senator is mistaken in that regard.

Sir, in the year 2000-2001 capital expenditure again rose by 13 per cent. As I said, I thought that the election was finished but the election machinery was still in top gear. This is the first time we have seen electioneering from one election to another. In between there, there was a by-election where the candidate for the ruling party had to spend \$80 000 in a constituency they claimed to be a stronghold of the Government in order to win an election against the \$15 000 that was spent by the Opposition.
10.40 a.m.

If only \$80 000 was declared, then probably the figure was \$150 000 because the Barbados Labour Party never declares what money they have spent in an election. I know the person who represented the Democratic Labour Party had no more than \$15 000 to spend.

Sir, again the Government increased the Capital Expenditure by 13 per cent. In 2001-2002, they increased it again by 15 per cent because probably Government was

gearing for an early election. Now we see a cutback of 4 per cent in 2002-2003.

Sir, why is the trend in cutting back on Capital Expenditure through the Estimates? The reason is that when there is money to put into the Public Enterprise Investment Fund, which does not require Parliamentary approval to spend, money could be taken from that source to spend on projects that were funded out of the Consolidated Fund.

In previous years, Government entities such as the National Sports Council, would have been funded out of the Consolidated Fund. The Ministry of Social Transformation projects would have been funded out of the Consolidated Fund. What do we now see? We are seeing programmes in the Ministry of Social Transformation being funded out of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund which does not require Parliamentary approval, so that they could quickly put money into enterprises.

This is the point Senator Mascoll was making when he said the money from the sale of the shares could be used to finance an election. It has nothing to do with putting money in the hands of the Barbados Labour Party as a party. It is a matter where the money could be used like a slush fund and that is what has been happening in this country over recent years.

The Public Enterprise Investment Fund is being used by Government as a slush fund to finance their continued electioneering which has been going on from the last election until now. The money from the sale of the Barbados National Bank would go into the Public Enterprise Investment Fund and then channelled into something else in order to sway the electorate in this country.

I think the public of Barbados must be aware of this, which cannot be disputed. When we look at the recent record, it is clear that is what has been happening. We can see the sums of money that have been transferred to the Ministry of Social Transformation. We can see the sum of money that was transferred to the National Sports Council. We can see the sums of money that have been transferred to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. We can see how Government has been using this Fund to get around the Parliamentary process and, therefore, shield themselves from any Parliamentary debate in respect to the matter for which these funds are being spent.

Sir, whether or not the Government wants to accept it, the people of Barbados are beginning to see through the smoke screen that this Government has set up with talk of nationalism, of 100 per cent Bajan but every opportunity Government gets, they are denationalising.

Sir, the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, I believe, would be the next casualty. The Government of Barbados will pursue the same process that they are pursuing now with the Barbados National Bank in dealing with the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. The Insurance Corporation of Barbados would also be sold off and chances are, it would also go to another foreign entity to form another strategic alliance.

Sir, the Honourable Leader in his presentation has stated, with some great glint of pleasure in his eyes, what Government is going to be giving to the care of the disabled community – \$2 349 666. Sir, the census shows that there are about 13 000 disabled persons in this country.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: On a point of order, Mr. President. I wish to clarify something for the Honourable Senator. The care of the disabled under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, speaks specifically to the St. Andrew Children's Home. I believe the care of the disabled and the Disability Unit comes under the Ministry of Social Transformation, to which I have made reference yesterday.

Therefore, it is incorrect to say that Government is giving \$2.3 million as though that is the only amount given to the care of the disabled.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, that argument subtracts nothing from my argument and, in fact, adds nothing to his. The fact still remains that with 13 000 disabled persons in Barbados, that amounts to \$180.74 each per year, for the care of the disabled, since persons in that category cannot afford to wait every month for assistance.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is still continuing to mislead this Chamber if he persists with the argument given that the Leader of the Senate has just remarked that the money refers to one specific institution. The Honourable Member must not continue to mislead this Chamber.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the point of the matter is, if the Government had done anything of significance, one would have heard them parading about it.

Mr. President, the \$180.74 amounts to \$15 per month to the disabled in this country or \$3.48 per week or \$0.50 per day. That is the situation with respect to the contribution made by the Government of this country to take care of the disabled.

Sir, the Honourable Leader also said the hospital has acquired some equipment for the Physiotherapy Department.

He made the point that some persons will need the care of the physiotherapy department after the activity in the general elections. I think it is noble of him to ensure that he has the facilities in place for himself and his colleagues while he is in position to do so. There is a saying, 'whosoever diggeth a pit shall fall into it'. The physiotherapy equipment being provided for other people might be required for the Barbados Labour Party itself.

10.50 a.m.

We hear that \$1 million has been set aside for consultancy for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. What about the recommendations from the Haynes Report? What is the need for this million dollars to be paid to consultancy? I would like Government to explain the need of this consultancy. This Government has adopted an approach in recent years where it feels that if they pay big money for consultancies they will get good service. They say that if you pay peanuts you get monkeys so we have to look for exotic amounts to pay.

Sir, we have seen continuing disregard for the people of this country where the Government has moved a public servant out of the public sector into the political arena and at the same time gave the person a lucrative consultancy. This is not a good example that the Government is setting and it is not in the interest of the people because people who go into the political arena do so at their own risk. Why should the Government move a public servant and then give the person a consultancy which is way in excess of what the person was paid as a public servant. It cannot be a proper approach to the way things are being done in this country.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party prides itself on being an election machine and all of the policies of the Barbados Labour Party since 1999 elections until now have been geared towards winning the next elections. The Government of Barbados takes the taxpayers money and buys political support. They continue to talk about nationalism but their policies are far from being nationalistic. The people of Barbados deserve an explanation. I call on the people of Barbados to voice their concerns about this recent decision of the Government of Barbados to sell the shares in the Barbados National Bank because that is the first step but step two will come when the Insurance Corporation of Barbados is sold in a similar exercise.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I rise to associate myself with the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue. I want to say at the outset that I want to contextualise my remarks along the lines of belief which we might do well to reflect on and embrace if I could be bold enough to make a suggestion to the Other Side. There are some issues which transcend partisan politics. Questions of national pride and dignity have to be among those precepts and values which

we have to start to see as transcending the conveniences of partisan politics. I say that in all seriousness since reflecting on some of the things I heard fall from the lips of Senator Mascoll yesterday. There was much to be desired in the presentation and even if the Democratic Labour Party took pride in it, there was not much in the context of national pride.

We have to recognise that we came to this stage today after approximately eight years of consecutive growth between 1994 and 2001. The average annual rate of growth during that period of time was in the vicinity of three and four per cent per year. Speaking as a Barbadian it was an achievement in which Barbados could be proud. It was not an achievement of the Prime Minister of Barbados alone or the Cabinet of Barbados but of the people in an effort to make Barbados more competitive and efficient and able to stand on its own in the face of the regional and international community.

Therefore, it does not bode well when Senators seek to detract from that achievement and try to ask the citizens of this country to believe that Barbados can some time be insulated and encapsulated and protected from the slings and arrows which affect the total globe. Up to year 2001 we enjoyed that growth but we reached the stage where there would be some fallout for Barbados when the German economy went into recession in the context of the tourism industry which we hold dear. When the economy of Japan, for a long time the second most powerful economy on the planet, went into recession, it had ripple effects on the basis of investor confidence in this region. When the United States of America went into a stage of crisis, precipitated largely by bad corporate governance, it was nothing to do with the Prime Minister of Barbados. It was nothing to do with the leaders and captains of the commercial world in Barbados. The reality is, there was an implication for Barbados in the context of investor confidence.

11.00 a.m.

Sir, when the terrorists' attacks took place on September 11, 2001, it was within a matter of days that the aviation industry recorded millions of dollars in losses. It was within a matter of weeks that the tourism industry in the Caribbean started to hemorrhage badly and that is a situation to which we had to respond. It is a situation, the aftermath of which we have continued to grapple with and deal with.

Sir, there is, I think, a necessity to speak to the issues that are affecting Barbados outside of the context of the opportunism that can creep into partisan political discourse. I would want to say as one of my points for takeoff in this speech, that when we look at what has transpired within the last two years, we have seen a demonstration in how best to manage an economy which in the face of international

recession, which in the face of investor confidence seems to have had tremendous potential and where the people of Barbados still anticipated that they could trust and rely on their leadership to give them the very best possible management and I think that there is nothing to be ashamed of.

I heard Senators Mascoll and McClean speak, sadly, in a negative way about the fact that we went off and secured fundamental capital on the international market. It was not capital to squander. It was capital to protect this country against what was obviously going to be a severe and significant impact from the same international sluggishness and fallout of September 11, 2001.

Barbados' economy is by no stretch of the imagination a large one. It is not one which is anything other than a dependent one. We do not possess any large manufacturing industrial base where people can live off the proceeds of the domestic production free of the impact of external trade. We rely extensively on tourism and that is a reality. Equally, we rely extensively on external trade. Those two limbs upon which we rest our fortunes economically, came under significant threat and something had to be done to correct the potential fallout. It is as simple as that.

Therefore, when a meeting was convened of all the relevant parties of the private sector in Barbados and we had a consultation, in fact there were two of them, one in February 2002 and October 2001, to look at how best we could parcel a set of policies to protect Barbados' short-term and medium-term interest against these potential fallouts.

Sir, that was a move which was not only unprecedented down here but which the United States of America and England subsequently imitated. It is important to recognise and read into this record the fact that the Democratic Labour Party was invited to participate in that consultation and they refused to do so. It is equally important to read into this record the fact that the decision to go to the international marketplace to raise the loan in question was a decision which was taken after that consultation and which was thrown out to the floor at the consultation and it was one which, to the very best of my recollection, the participants in the consultation agreed.

Therefore, I think that we would do ourselves a terrible injustice if we try to couch that loan and those steps in the national welfare, in the interest of protecting the Barbadian economy, society, way of life, jobs and family if we try to decontextualise those steps and try to read into it something perverse or reckless on the part of the Government.

I want to say that we also have to be mindful of the fact that post-September 11, 2001, a new phenomenon has crept into the global marketplace which is impacting very heavily

on Barbados, our neighbours in the Eastern Caribbean and it is something over which we have limited control. There is a new form of uncertainty about movement. We have a situation whereby people from North America and Europe who are largely ignorant of the degree of security and culture of our Caribbean society, believe that they are hard-pressed to contemplate leaving what, for them, is the known "safety of their neighbourhoods, environment, security of their countryside" and then to travel abroad. The irony of it is, *Sunday Advocate* revealed, there is a view that the Caribbean today is, perhaps, one of the safest places in the world to be but that is not the prevailing and prevalent view in Europe, Germany or United States of America.

We have a situation where we are contesting with a new phenomenon called an 'uncertainty about travel'. It is that uncertainty about travel and movement that means that we have a more difficult task as we rest an abundance of our expectations, economically, on the success of our tourism industry.

Sir, we also have to recognise that one of the by-products of going to the marketplace when we did was that we were in a position to raise our foreign reserves to a level which was well beyond the minimum twelve weeks recommended for the basic level of comfort to be felt in the country. Having so raised our platform of reserves, we were then in a position to continue to go about the way of business that Barbadians had become accustomed to with the minimum amount of dislocation.

Therefore, unlike what transpired in 1991, there was no widespread layoff. There was no large-scale loss of jobs. There was no economic hemorrhage in foreign exchange that imperiled this country. There was maintenance of investor confidence in Barbados. There was a maintenance of a good-feel factor among our people and that is something for which we ought not to be placed in a position where we should apologise.

It is also something which, if it were a more self-respecting Opposition, the Democratic Labour Party would be anxious to have associated itself in the cause of the greater good and welfare of the people of Barbados but alas, that was not to be the case.
11.10 a.m.

Sir, I would want to say that we have come to this stage against that backdrop but with a set of Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure which essentially now places or seeks to place Barbados in what is really a holding pattern, until we can be more reasonably sure as to where revenues will be coming from, as to how effective certain types of industry will be in the future, as to when we get a clear position on

what will happen with the war that is currently taking place, as until such time as a lot of the ambiguity that now exists out there has passed.

The Prime Minister in his presentation to the Other Chamber described what we are going through as part of a cyclical period. Quite rightly, it happens in Barbados or has been noted to happen in Barbados since Independence on a ten-year basis. We are at the tail-end of that and therefore, Sir, there is a need for us to hold strain.

Sir, having said that, I do not, at any stage, allow myself to embrace the view that the IMF has started to dictate or to determine to the Government of Barbados how it is supposed to conduct the management of its revenue. I cannot accept that and I do not know whether Honourable Senators have read the IMF report, but the suggestions and hints which come from Senator Mascoll and Senator McClean cause me great consternation.

Sir, if you were to speak of that report in its totality, then there are things which they suggest that we do, which are not even within the contemplation, not only of the Government but of the people of Barbados. It is not within anybody's realm of discussion that we privatise the Barbados Water Authority. This is nobody's realm of immediate discussion.

I have listened to people complaining about traffic management, I have listened to people complaining about the appropriateness of the ways in which the Transport Board operates but I have not heard anybody suggest that we privatise it. Therefore, Sir, we have to be very careful how we subscribe to this view that because the IMF has published a report, the men who operate in big buildings consequently are possessed of the biggest and best brains and that the Government has decided to lay prostrate before them so as to do their bidding.

Sir, that is basically the message which is coming across from the Opposition and that is not fair. It is not correct. Far from the methodology and fable about them telling us how we should conduct our revenue, it is to my way of thinking, abundantly clear that if we paid careful attention to some of the revenue raising departments of the Government, we could demonstrate, not only to the Opposition but also to ourselves, because part of the problem here, Sir, is that we need, nationally, to approach this problem.

We have to demonstrate, beyond any doubt, that it is possible by simply taking a number of small steps to rectify some of the difficulties that we experience. One such step, Sir, is the question of revenue raising capacity and function of some of the Government departments. It is arguably legendary that some of the Government departments of Barbados charged with a revenue raising responsibility are

either somewhat lackadaisical in their approach, or somewhat inefficient in their approach but the truth of the matter is that potentially, we are allowing a large sum of money to go by untapped.

If we go to the Estimates of Expenditure, Sir, and I have, in perusing here at page 14, Sir, for argument sake, the Ministry of Agriculture, the capacity of the Ministry in terms of its earning revenue in the context of fees for central livestock station, laboratory fees, soil conservation proceeds, import and export permits. Import and export permits in Barbados are approximately \$250 alone, fees for cold storage, \$903 000, we have fees charged for analysing samples, \$300 000, the Ministry of Tourism and International Business, Airport charges alone are more than \$6 million.

Concessions and rentals at the airport are \$5 million and international registration fees are \$140 000. Sir, that is just but a glimpse into the revenue raising capacity of different departments of the Government. Sir, I think a certain degree of efficiency now has to be brought to these revenue raising departments, so as to ensure that there is less potential for persons who must pay and who should be paying to slip through the system and the cracks in the system.

It is unfortunate that the Opposition does not seek to speak to issues of that nature because I genuinely believe that Barbadians have grown tired of the traditional fear about what somebody has on this body and what piece of information you have on the next person and so on. I do not think that we get ourselves anywhere when we go that road. I honestly believe, Sir, that we have to reach a stage where we are looking at what we have some real control over, how we do business, how effectively we seek to do the business and therefore, Sir, make the corrections that need to be made and implement them as a matter of urgency.

Sir, I go further to the issue of tourism and international transport. It seems abundantly clear to me that when you read these Estimates, one of the principal objectives of the Ministry is to foster the development of full potential of the tourism sector in order to provide maximum employment opportunities for persons engaged in the industry.

Sir, if we are seriously looking at developing the full potential of the tourism sector so as to provide maximum opportunities, we come to a point in the debate where I part company completely with Senator McClean and Senator Mascoll and I say why.

It is abundantly clear, I think, that we have come to a point in our development as a society where we have to stop seeing things only from inside the box. We have to stop

trying to ask Government to do that which we know the Government has done and overburdened itself for doing from time of independence.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Yes, some peripheral vision. There have to be alternative ways of raising revenue. You cannot on one hand be saying that for the first time in the history of this country, we are recognising the importance of the disabled in the society and trying to advance their cause and elevate them to a status and stature which they justly deserve, to find the revenue for that and at the same time, you are saying that we must do so without raising taxes. Because the issue of taxation, the Opposition thinks the taxes are high, but at the same time, there is not supposed to be any social fall-out.

At the same time as you have that, we are supposed to still depend on the Government to be servicing the development of industries, such as the tourism industry. Sir, that does not make sense. It defies the most basic levels of understanding of how a country has to develop. It defies the most basic levels of understanding.

Sir, we have a situation where we have an asset like Harrison's Cave. Honourable Senators who have passed through the Caribbean would realise that every country has some of the same basic infrastructures. We have all got the beaches. We have all got the nice hotels and so on. We have all got water sports activities but when you have a natural resource such as Harrison's Cave which presents something exceedingly rare, exceedingly special, something unique in the Eastern Caribbean, it is a premier tourist attraction, then common sense would seem to be that we ought to be developing the Cave to the highest level possible.

11.20 a.m.

When therefore I see that the Government is interested in investing another \$10 million toward the expansion of the Cave, I believe that is an idea whose time has long come. The Cave as a natural resource of that type is subject to levels of exhaustion because there is such a density of human traffic passing through. It must be replenished in terms of its expansion because it is so attractive that we want to get more people in there, but we have to find innovative ways of doing that and accommodating that. It cannot be through the same entrance and take them to where you see the chandeliers *et cetera* and come back down. You have to think in terms of how you relate to the asset in the broader interest of the well-being of Barbados so that there is something special about coming to Barbados.

Senator Mascoll made the point that there was some talk and some evidence about persons from the cruise ships saying that the people should get off at Barbados and take a drive through the country and so on and not necessarily go equipped to expect the best of shopping. I too have heard

that. I will come back to that issue but if we are saying that the cruise ship people are saying to get off at the Bridgetown Port and go through the country, where are they going to go. We know that nine times of out ten they will see the east coast of Barbados because that too is a very special area. Some will play golf with Senator Haynes, but largely they will be going to see the Cave. Therefore, when we see that we have an asset of that nature, it is in our best interest to make that asset as developed and as competitive as possible, but where would the money come from.

We have heard that there is a plan to develop the Pierhead so that Barbados, which has long since the days of slavery benefited from being the first stop on the transatlantic route once you get to the Caribbean, will at long last have a marina of competitive standards, but that is pooh-poohed. When it is not being pooh-poohed as an idea, you are told that you should find money from the public purse to finance it. The question I ask, if you are supposed to be raising taxes and you are not supposed to be decreasing revenue via taxation, where then are we supposed to get the money from for the development of the asset. We have the geographical asset, we are the asset, but are we just going to continue to allow our competitors to capitalise on the fact that Barbados has decided not to get off that which it sits upon and get about its business to make its resource product more competitive so as to employ more Barbadians.

I think, without reflecting on the Senator, that there is a danger in coming to a certain level in public life without having had the opportunity to do more than read text and be very theoretical.

I reflect in a personal way on about nine months of my life spent in Road Town, Tortola. There is a Marina at Road Town, Tortola and the place where I stayed was on a hill overlooking that marina. That marina, apart from being obviously exceptionally well laid out because it plays home to about 400 to 500 boats, has services attached to it. I am not talking about the basics of a restaurant and a cafeteria because they are there and I am not speaking about the fact that there are shops and so on because we expect them. I am talking about boat repairs which provide job opportunities for the young men in Road Town, Tortola. There is not only the boat repairs, there is the servicing of the boats in terms of cleaning them and in terms of the maintenance of engines, the security facilities and the storage facilities.

It is a reality that many people come down to the Caribbean and leave their vessels which have to be stored somewhere, so you have an expansive dry dock. A similar thing exists in St. Maarten and the storage facilities come at great cost, but because you are part of the yacht owning class you do not shrink away from paying a cost to store your investment because your investment is worth nearly a \$1 million and in some instances more.

The fact of the matter remains that once you have that raft of ancillary services associated with something as simple as an investment in a marina, it gives an opportunity to a range of persons in Barbados to get themselves involved in a range of different types of job opportunities that previously was not open to them.

Therefore, we come to ask the question, where does the money come from? I hear Senator McClean heralding his return to the Chamber.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I am not going to share any licks now, I am speaking to the question of what I see as a real concern. I prefix my remarks as I did purposely because we are really talking about Barbados being at a cross road. This election is about national development and I am satisfied that the people of Barbados are listening to hear about national development. Now, if therefore we come to the question of where the money is to come from, the Prime Minister has made it abundantly clear. He has suggested that by the sale of certain shares which Barbados owns in some institutions, we give ourselves capital which can be injected into some of these projects. I feel it necessary to draw a distinction between these shares, for example, the sale of shares in Barbados Dairy Industries Limited, Heywoods Hotel or BET when said shares were sold in such a way as to the detriment of the long-term interest and development of the people of Barbados.

I find it difficult to understand how someone can come in here today and keep so much noise about shares when they know that they were party to a shameful exercise when BET had an extra 20 years in Barbados. As the Honourable Senator said, that will hang you. The reality of the situation is that we should not be getting into the issue of the sale of shares in 2003 anyway and I will tell the Chamber why. It is shameful for us to be getting in here debating whether or not shares should be sold.

Sir, the Government of this country – I do not care whether it is a Barbados Labour Party Government, a Democratic Labour Party or whatever party Government – has to come to an understanding that the time has come when Government is best served reducing the amount of ownership that it has in entities like that and become a financial regulator in the marketplace. That is the role of governments around the world. We have to stop holding on to these Stalinist and Leninist thinking because of the fact that in 1950 or 1960 we had to do all of this in order to help lift a burdened country out of a colonial situation that you must continue forevermore to be the big brother or the big sister to the people of Barbados.

The people of Barbados having benefited from free education must now be carried to another level where they become familiar with how they turn their educational well-being into investment and financial opportunities. That is nothing to be apologetic about because there is nothing to say as I heard Senator McClean on the radio today saying, that is perhaps why he...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please!

Asides.

11.30 a.m.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, it is a sad thing. Senator McClean made the point that in the year 2000 at Christmas time, people would not have wanted to take their money and buy shares. Sir, I know of one situation where a lady who is employed in a clerical capacity in a hotel at the front desk, bought some shares for her 15-year old son as a Christmas gift. It was not a toy gun, a new set of jeans or a new pair of shoes but an opportunity for the young man to understand that there is something important in thinking along the lines of what one owns.

Sir, it is very necessary for us to come to recognise that the world is changing and is in danger of passing us by. We live in a Caribbean today where we have the creation of a First Caribbean National Bank. Sir, it would not have been sensible for Government to have bought Barclays Bank PLC's interest because Barclays did not begin and end in the Caribbean nor in Barbados but was throughout the region. When the linkage was made, Barclays was throughout the region, not only in Barbados. Sir, this shows the limited insulated problem that we have, where people's vision, politically and economically, begin and end on the 166 square miles of this island.

The reality of the fact is that once there is a situation where one creates a First Caribbean National Bank, the Barbados National Bank whether or not we like it, is hard pressed to compete and to survive. The Barbados National Bank automatically is smaller than the First Caribbean National Bank. It is automatically smaller than the Banks of Nova Scotia, which are throughout the region. It is equally smaller than the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago. It is smaller than the Bank of Jamaica. It is smaller than the Caribbean Commercial Bank. Therefore, it is hard-pressed to survive.

Sir, the limited thinking that we have been hearing for the last two days in this Debate goes further. The danger in it is that we have a would-be finance minister sitting amongst us, who does not understand that the Barbados National Bank must not seek to attract new portfolios if it

is to survive. The realm of the investment banking which larger institutions are doing in order for them to survive in the Caribbean, the Barbados National Bank cannot do because the Barbados National Bank's portfolio is too small. Are we supposed to say that because the Barbados National Bank exists in Barbados, we should have never sold out a share because, in some way, we are doing damage to Barbados?

Sir, I know that the insurance companies in Barbados, Sagicor in particular, the former Barbados Mutual, dominates the insurance industry in Jamaica. We cannot be a part of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy and be heard to continue to practice and preach xenophobic nonsense. We are trying to give meaning and effect to a CARICOM Single Market and Economy. If we are trying to give effect to a Caribbean Single Market and Economy then we have to understand that we cannot approbate and reprobate at the same time. It is Barbadian business which dominates the insurance industry. It is Barbadian calypsonians, who are holding private places in Trinidad, the so-called home of calypso. It is Barbadian construction firms that are holding pride in place across the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. One of them does more business in the Eastern Caribbean than it does in Barbados. If we are talking about building Caribbean Single Market and Economy, we cannot willy-nilly pick out what suits Barbados to dominate Jamaica in insurance, construction, in their services and skills, *et cetera*, but it does not suit Barbados when a bank from Trinidad comes here and seeks to acquire shares.

Sir, I feel the region and the country has to be governed and, in the year 2003, I will not allow my political mind to be limited to only the 166 square miles of Barbados. There is something larger than Barbados. It is called the Caribbean region and that I want the Honourable Senators on that Side to understand. We are not talking about destroying the Barbados National Bank but about giving it life for it to be competitive.

Sir, do you know where the philosophical distinction lies? I sat in this Chamber today and listened to the Honourable Senator McClean. He asked the question, who will be buying shares in the Barbados National Bank once the two of them link up?

Sir, the question is not that. The question should be, does not a strategic alliance between the National Bank of Barbados and the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, give the Barbadian an opportunity to invest in shares in the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago? If the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is doing well, does it not, therefore, mean that the Barbadian investor has created wealth for himself?

This is where the problem began. When they went across the water in November, 2000, there was an Independence meeting where one could have run rats through it – I would not say that because I had already left the Party, it had lost its mass appeal – that Senator was not invited to speak because he was *persona non grata* at the time. He still is.

The fact of the matter is that the Leader of the Opposition and Senator Mascoll kept castigating the idea of selling the shares. They never had the vision to understand. If they were a responsible Opposition, they could have told the Government that it must conduct a broader educational campaign, that Government could well work harder to try to get people to understand that rather than condemn investments in shares, they should try to understand its benefits. If you are going to say that people should not buy shares because it is Christmas time and people have to find money, first of all, to buy furniture or vehicles, then the Opposition is bankrupt of ideas, bankrupt of policies and unsuited to public life.

Sir, in passing, I want to say that the Constitution of the Barbados National Bank contemplates these kinds of strategic linkages. They may not know it but it does. I believe that Government is not selling all of its share interest. The fact of the matter remains, I hold fast to the philosophical belief that Government has to move with some haste towards being a regulator largely in the financial marketplace rather than the owner, because it gives people the opportunity to say things depending on how the wind blows. I speak one thing constantly.

I have seen too often where people have seen where Government has been the primary controller of companies and interests, there has been a raft of corruption. That has been a Caribbean experience and therefore, we need not continue to fear the market but we have to understand that you transform those abilities and formal skills into an awareness and understanding of how in practice they can assist you to make money.

11.40 a.m.

I would like to move to the question of some of the economic efficiencies in the social context of this country. Every day in some parts of Barbados there is a line of mothers and children waiting at the Magistrates Courts for the purpose of collecting maintenance for children. We need to recognise that these matters need to be dealt with a greater degree of consideration to provide a level of dignity and privacy for the mothers and children involved. I experienced being at the magistrates court where a young girl dressed, in civilian clothes was waiting in line in the hot sun to collect maintenance money because it was supposed to have been posted to her mother but she had not received it, only to discover that the cheque was not at the court.

Sir, we have to understand that the time has come to make the system more responsive to the need to have persons' dignity and privacy protected and that the systems must be more organised where persons are contacted in these instances.

Sir, I am speaking under the Head of the Attorney General and the courts of Barbados. I contextualised my speech at the beginning along the lines of the ways in which we proud Barbadians can better order our affairs so as to make more productive use of our time and resources. Anyone who has visited a traffic court in Barbados has seen one of the largest exhibitions in squandermania. The Attorney's time is squandered, the litigants' time and the courts' time is also squandered. Very often, the court does not open until 9.30 in the morning and there is a situation where people have to sit for the entire day because there is no system to the way cases are called and you may wait for three hours only to be told to come back next week. During that period of time the employer is bereft of his employee and things that could be done to advance the productive sector of Barbados are not being done. We have to ensure that the courts of this country are not unwitting contributors to being the agents for lawlessness in the country.

Once we have recognised the way our judicial system impacts negatively on the question of time management and economic resources we have to look at the quality of protection which is offered to the judiciary.

I spoke to this Head one year ago in another Appropriation Bill debate and I am sad to say that little has changed in Barbados and I gather they are complaints that have been made long before I made them. I want to say to Senator McClean that if I am fortunate enough to be successful in the upcoming elections I will be raising Cain in an effort to ensure that we treat seriously to these matters.

We talk about CARICOM Single Market and Economy and I understand that the legal system has to be embraced in that as well and inefficiencies in any country should be of concern to us because we are seeking to merge with other Caribbean countries at some level.

This Parliament has passed a number of statutes which have expanded the work of the magistrates and the scope of their jurisdiction. One that comes to mind is the Drug Abuse and Control Act which empowers a magistrate to inflict upon a guilty offender seven years in prison. He can also fine someone \$250 000 and, Sir, this is a lot of money. My concern is not the ability of the magistrate to effectively execute such punishment or conduct such trials but my concern is the temptation persons may have towards trying to pervert the course of justice. We have to recognise that the status in which we hold our magistrates has not changed

throughout the years because a magistrate is treated like an ordinary civil servant. He is not given the kind of constitutional protection that his judicial counterpart in the higher judiciary is given. A better salary and the perks of office are not the purview of the magistrate.

Sir, the Organisation of American States has seriously started to look at the potential for structured corruption taking place in the Caribbean as a result of cartels being formed by criminals. These criminals might be white collar criminals. They need not be drug men. It could be all sorts of things. The fact is, if we do not look and treat our judicial officers, at every level, as though they are an integral part of protecting, safeguarding and maintaining an efficient system, then we run the risk of trying to close a stable door long after the proverbial horse had fled.

11.50 a.m.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Address the Chair, please. I have already spoken to Senator McClean and I do so for the last time.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I want Honourable Senators to realise that I am not in any way casting an aspersion on the quality of our magistracy. I went to great pains to say that I do not do so. However, I cautioned this Chamber and by extension the powers that be, that there is a real risk out there of persons seeking to undermine and tarnish the credibility of our judiciary at the lower level, which is the level which, I believe, cries out for strengthening and protection in terms of their constitutional safeguards which are given to the senior members of the judiciary. I do not think that is an unreasonable point.

Sir, now that I am provoked to think about it further, I believe that Senator Sir Stanley Goddard would have been part of a Constitutional Review Commission which would have made similar recommendations.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I want to spend a little time on social transformation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You have about four minutes left.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Very well, Sir. I think that it was Lord Diplock who said that a society stands judged by the way in which it treats its minorities. The Book of John would tell us that when Christ was on the Cross he was making arrangements for the well-being of his mother. I believe that is correct.

I want to say that there is everything good, proper and correct about having a department of Government which is specially set up to look after the well-being of the more vulnerable aspects of our society. I believe that fundamentally, especially in the area of poverty alleviation, we have to understand that poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere.

Sir, fundamentally, this Parliament, historically stood in the way because of its colonial legacy and has passed laws which have had the effect of hindering certain underclass in this country so that vendors at one stage, through the laws of Barbados, were inhibited and prevented from conducting their trade in different parts of Bridgetown.

I want to make the point that I am happy that today the Government on one hand is doing the kind of work that it is doing but yet I am saddened, it is like a tale of two cities, that the Opposition does not embrace that work. When you have persons like the vendors in Oistins, shoppers in Paynes Bay, those persons who could go to Rural Development Commission or Urban Development Commission and access micro loans at low interest rates, those persons who not only could access the loans but get the benefit from management expertise and advice. What we are doing is seeking to empower a class of people who have previously been treated as an irrelevant class by a colonial legacy enacted through the Parliament that we now sit in. It is a good, proper and righteous thing that we have sought to reverse that.

We live in an era where there are landlocked tenancies and there are people who do not have the access to their homes, not only that, they have to walk through mud when it rains. The social disconnection is larger than that because when an ambulance cannot get to somebody's house because there is no road, it may mean a loss of life. When a fire engine cannot get into Chapel Gap, St. James, because there is no concrete road, it could mean a loss of property. Therefore, the work of the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission in ensuring that concrete roads go through these areas is work which is worthy of commendation.

Sir, we talk about community technology. I am happy and encouraged that persons who would not have had the opportunity to gain access to the internet, can learn to use and manipulate the computer and to correspond with that technology so as to advance their small businesses and make them more marketable, attractive and efficient, because those persons may lack the financial means, all is not lost because they can now have the benefit of a state-sponsored community technology programme.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, the problem is, this Parliament, unfortunately, has not been hearing these things from the Opposition.

Mr. President, I am sorry that Senator Mascoll has absented himself. The issue for Senator Mascoll is not what anybody on this Side may have on him. That is not the issue. Sir, the issue for Senator Mascoll to debate with himself is whether there is anything to him. The people of Barbados know that there is nothing intellectually, politically, economically useful about him.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I think, Senator, that in the absence of Senator Mascoll, I must provide a measure of protection. I think that you are going a bit far.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I withdraw in the absence of the Senator, I will not be uncharitable to him. I only want to say that there will be more opportunities and I hope that we could have met with Senator McClean on the political platform but I gather from his own words that after 6.00 p.m. on Elections day, he is finished with the Democratic Labour Party and politics. I would take this opportunity to bid him farewell.

Thank you, Mr. President.
12.00 noon

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: We are bound by international agreement to have a census for agriculture. We are supposed to do this every ten years. The last census was held in 1989. Therefore, in 1999 we were supposed to have a census. We did not have it and we still have not had it and every now and then I hear a little flurry, oh yes, we are going to appoint things, I see a little money put in the Estimates for a census and we have not had it as yet. I do not understand how we can go ahead and plan anything without the necessary information on what is the position out there. How many animals and how many farmers are there and so on.

What can we do with these ministries that are supposed to do these things? They are supposed to hold the census. They did not do it, what can we do with them? Sir John Goddard the other day mentioned in the Senate that you see reports and they continue to be laid. We had some laid yesterday for the year 2000 or before and what happens?

Sir, we have legislation that says you are to pay Income Tax. If you do not pay on time, there is a penalty. If we do not pay VAT on time, there is a penalty. If we do not pay NIS, there is a penalty. The Ministers who are responsible for these matters, should put this one on the Table of Parliament. There should be a penalty. Do not tell me it is the civil servant.

Every time we pass legislation there is more and more power being given to Ministers in the appointments of boards and so on. Surely a Minister could say to a board if you do not produce it in time, I will fire you and he would be within his rights.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, I will give an overall picture of agriculture and try to express my vision as this will be my last opportunity here before the elections in August.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, regarding sugar cane, why should we continue to grow sugar cane on most of our arable land with the price of raw sugar that is continually falling, and over which we have no control whatsoever.

There are some good reasons for growing sugar cane? It is a grass. It gives good control of soil erosion. This is a very serious concern because our soils are relatively shallow and we do not want to lose any more than we have lost over the years.

Sugar cane is a most efficient converter of solar energy into useable energy. It is seven times that of corn. As a tourism dominated country, we want to see a maintenance of aesthetic countryside so that people driving through the area will see everything looking nice and tidy and not just full of bush.

We have grown sugar cane here for over 300 years and therefore we have locally, all the expertise and technology that we need to continue to grow it. The possibility now of continuing to look at sugar cane as a producer of products, other than sugar is where my vision leads me. I would see all sugar cane grown on the relatively flat arable land, in the medium to high rainfall areas.

I think this is very clear that we are going to have to mechanise. Nobody is going to cut sugar cane by hand again. This is dead. We have to face it. I think the unions have fully accepted that we are talking now of being fully mechanised. All the production of sugar cane will come under a single commercial company, publicly owned by the people of Barbados.

There are two basic types of sugar cane that we can grow. We have the potential here because we produce varieties of sugar cane. We want to produce two varieties particularly. One will be a high fibre cane that is low in sugar but very high in bio mass production. It must be a variety that will ratoon for many years because the major cost in the sugar production is the replanting procedure. So if we can get a cane to run for ten years before replanting, this will

bring our cost down considerably.

We have to produce that cane so that we can take it and put it through a mill, de water it, take that juice out and use it for fermentation, alcohol and hopefully the rum producers of the island would come together and produce a crude alcohol which will then be shipped to rum refineries for further refining and so on. Sugar cane juice rums are I think the future for us to go down.

The bagasse from that could be dried in the sunlight and then burnt to produce electricity. We will then take a very high sucrose gain. We have here in Barbados canes at the present moment in the research area that have more than 30 per cent sugar. The conventional cane is 18 and 20 but we have some that are over 30.

We need to grow these canes. We need to process them through some new technology such as the Trilby separation system which will produce a direct consumption sugar, about six thousand tonnes of sugar for local consumption and some niche market exports maybe and then the rind from that sugar cane, produced by this machine, will be used to produce building boards for making cheap houses and so on.

We would also produce table syrups. I think that we spend about nearly \$100 000 a year importing table syrups such as Aunt Jemima and Log Cabin which we could easily produce here and probably produce better. Then the things like sugar cane wax and pharmaceuticals and other various things that we should be looking at. But the major emphasis would be on fuel cane, where we would keep the countryside in sugar cane and produce electricity for which we have an unlimited market.

If we had the whole of Barbados in cane, we still would need to burn some other gas roll in to produce electricity. So the market is there and that makes it very attractive.

Let me talk about these other sophisticated products, then we are looking at market problems and so on. For electricity, there is none.

Now where would all this happen? It has to happen at a central place. The Government for some reason has indicated that a single factory would go at Andrews. I had meetings with all sorts of engineers and technologists and nobody is supporting the idea of Andrews for the following reasons.

We think that Bulkeley site is the site and there are very good reasons for that. There is an old train line that runs from Bulkeley going into St. Philip, Christ Church and

that is where the major amount of cane will come from. The bed is there and it could be easily converted to a road for sugar cane only and this would take a lot of that traffic off the roads.

Right now they are pulling cane up to Andrews and we are already seeing congested roads. The Bulkeley site is situated right next to the main natural gas pipeline going to Bridgetown and therefore, you have another source of energy that could be used if you do not have enough bagasse. Right now if one of our factories shuts down for any length of time because they run out of bagasse, they then are in real trouble. They have to go around the countryside, gather wood and all kinds of things. It is a crazy system.

The Bulkeley site has that advantage. It is the sheet-water area, therefore, their water supply is not a problem. Andrews has a water supply problem right now. They have to pump water from down in the St. George Valley back up to them. The other very important thing is that all the cane coming into this site will be coming from the flat or downhill. From St. John coming downhill, it is much easier to come down loaded and go back up empty. Right now we are pulling cane uphill to Andrews. I think they tried going through Gun Hill and found that to be a real 'no-no' and really messed up everything. Now they have to go around and come up from the west side.

The site would include a sugar cane processing plant, consisting of a mill and some evaporators. We would not be using water or anything like that, it will have a distilling unit for the production of crude alcohol which would go to the refineries and the electrical generating plant.

There we will have another building which would be a multipurpose plant, which would hold the Trilby separation system and also be in a position to process vegetables and so on out of crop. The Trilby separation system for sugar would only operate for about four months out of the year, from February to May like the normal crop now, but then from May onwards, when vegetables are available we would then bring them in there, process them and make flour like we did during the war years out of cassava, sweet potato and so on.

Sir, turning to livestock, the poultry industry right now has a gross domestic product of about over two and a half times that of the sugar industry. It is a huge industry in Barbados. There are big consumers of poultry and the poultry industry is highly efficient. It is as efficient as any poultry industry anywhere in the world in terms of conversion of feed to meat, eggs and so on.
12.10 p.m.

One of the problems that we have with the poultry industry is that it utilises imported feeds. Sixty-five per cent of the money spent on the cost of production is for feed. What I am looking at is that we could produce a high energy feed from the molasses that could be used to replace some of

the grains. Some of the proteins in that feed could come from an expanded cotton industry where we would process the cotton seed to produce oil and cotton seed meal. The small farmers would be encouraged to produce free range chickens. That is like organic farming. People are looking to get chickens that have not been fed on these imported feeds but that are mostly fed on grass and so on.

The raising of the Barbados black belly sheep has traditionally been a small farmer operation. The problem with that is that the animals are tied out on grass and are not slaughtered while they are still lambs. They do not reach slaughtering age until they are already mutton, so we have been producing mutton for years.

The sheep farmers own a feedlot now which has been established with the help of the Inter-American Development Bank, the Peter Moore's Trust and most significantly with a grant from the Agricultural Development Fund which have put it on soft ground and hopefully and we will be able to progress from there. The feedlot presently purchases weaned lambs at \$70 to \$90 a piece. That makes it very attractive to the small farmer who is the producer of lambs and who owns the feedlot because it is economically feasible for them to buy the lambs at \$70 to \$90 because they would be able to make a bounty.

The feedlot now produces a very high quality, nicely flavoured lamb that we have introduced into the tourism industry. We have been working closely with the Barbados Agricultural Development and Management Corporation (BADMC) with the assistance of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and we have developed linkages between agriculture and tourism. The first one we worked on was the lamb and we now have lamb being served at Sandy Lane Hotel on a regular basis, I think they call it Rachel Pringle Lamb. They are very happy with the quality.

What we need to do is to improve the genetic selection. The feedlot is an ideal place for doing that because you are getting lambs from all over the countryside coming in there. We need to check the ones that are growing the fastest, take out those and put them back into the farms rather than slaughter them and in that way we will have the genetic selection toward production of meats.

We need to do some work right now. We are using some imported feeds in the feedlot. We also need to replace a lot of those with local ingredients. We also want to look at some of the recycling products. We did some work with paper and it looks like it has exciting potential to replace some of the hay and the roughage part. We want to develop

an export industry for the semen particularly for artificial insemination and perhaps embryos for embryo transplant. One of the things we are producing up there as a by-product is organic manure which can go toward the production of organic feed for vegetables.

The beef industry in Barbados has seen a major expansion in the last 25 years. Due to the reduction in profitability of sugar cane, there has been a switch from the sugar cane in the pastures and we have seen beef... The big problem so far is in the marketing. We brought in a master butcher. This man has transformed the local meat situation in Barbados. From here he went on to Trinidad and did the same thing. The other day at a CARICOM meeting I met a guy from Jamaica who said that the same guy went to Jamaica and did exactly the same thing. He has shown people how to age, how to cut, how to package and how to display meat.

Ten years ago when you went into a supermarket 75 per cent of all the meat there was frozen. The fresh meat situation has grown now and only 25 per cent of the meat that is displayed in the supermarkets these days is frozen. Barbadians have gone onto this age thing and everybody is very happy with it. Of course it is much easier to deal with. The housewife does not have to thaw it. She just takes it out of the fridge and cut it and deal with it right away. Of course, the flavour, the texture and everything is so much better.

However, the quality of the grass-fed beef in Barbados is still not up to what the hotel would want. As with grass-fed lambs a similar thing happens to the grass-fed cows and it takes longer to bring them up to slaughter weight, so they are slightly older and they do not have the finish that you would want for top quality meat. My vision is that we should establish a beef feedlot alongside the lamb feedlot which would share management and security and all of the other things so as to help to reduce cost of production.

This feedlot would be funded by grants and from loans from the Agricultural Development Fund and would be owned by the beef farmers in Barbados so that they would be happy to supply weaned animals again.

The cattle would be slaughtered at the Southern Meats Abattoir. That abattoir needs expanding to establish a meat aging... Right now we are aging meat down at the old BADMC abattoir in town. We are working very closely with their butchers and they are the ones who are aging, packaging and sending it to Sandy Lane Hotel, but we really need to do this at the Southern Meats Abattoir. I think there is also potential for export of this meat.

Proper Pork: this is a very popular meat with Barbadians. Our pork processing industry has to import

certain cuts for making ham and bacon. One of our problems is that we need to reduce the cost of production because we cannot really compete with some of our Caribbean neighbours.

My vision is that we should look at taking weaned pigs and put them into a central rearing facility which would rear them under the proper condition to get rapid weight gain in order that they be low in fat and that type of thing. We could then put in a biogas digester to deal with the pig manure. If we did all of this at the same central area up there, not far from Woodbourne, we could inject the meat. Right now if you put a biogas digester, you would end up on the farm with vast quantities of meats, but then what are you going to do with it. You have got to find some use for it. We have the ideal opportunity, we can inject it into the natural gas mains and it would enhance the content of the natural gas so that it would be an easy market for it. The liquid from the biogas digester would be an organic manure of high value which would then be used in the production of organic vegetables.

The major problem facing the pig industry right now is that we are very short of pigs. We need to give an incentive to the pig farmers because what is generally spent...

Aside.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Some farmers do both, but quite often you get specialised farmers who produce weaned piglets and then there are the other farmers who do the fattening as two separate operations.

12.20 p.m.

We need to encourage that by giving farmers an increased incentive and I suggest the Ministry could give an incentive in the amount of \$30 per piglet. Presently, farmers are getting about \$90 per piglet. They need to get about \$120, yet the pig farmers cannot afford the \$120. Therefore, if, for the next year, the Ministry could put the \$30 incentive there. It must be done without too much bureaucracy. Let there be a simple process of issuing a receipt between the farmers for the sale of the piglet and take that receipt to the Ministry to be paid.

The Ministry sets up schemes of \$1.7 million every year for such incentives and sometimes we cannot get any of it. Sometimes the Ministry's officials set themselves up as policemen, wanting to scrutinise every thing. For example, they want to make sure that the spray is not used for any other purpose to which it was intended. The result is that the farmers are not using it because it is too much trouble. We have complained about the bureaucracy at the Ministry. They have revamped it but the situation still remains the same. An officer at the Ministry said he is there

to make sure that a farmer does not get any incentive to which he is not entitled. The result is that there are a few dishonest farmers but the majority of the farmers are honest and are, therefore, put off by this bureaucracy.

Last year in the Budget, the Prime Minister said that he wants to see the Barbados Agricultural Society bringing in the entire group. We brought in the sugar industry. The cotton industry came in. The fisheries and sugar industries came in.

We now have an extension officer who can work with us. What is in it for us to come in? The Minister, foreseeing that, has granted us \$250 000 for institutional strengthening. A senior civil servant in the Ministry of Agriculture said that if the Prime Minister has said that, he should not have, and if he did, the Prime Minister did not mean it, which resulted in the fact that we did not get any money.

We would love to take over some of these officers in the extension services in the Ministry. Presently, an Extension Officer in the Ministry, would spend 17 seconds per year with one farmer. If they were employed under the Barbados Agriculture Society, we would put them under an incentive scheme where they would receive bonuses for bringing in work. We cannot do that in the Ministry but that is what I understand institutional strengthening to mean. It is frustrating. Like my friend Senator Bolden said, Government is an army of occupation.

SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, on a point of order. I would not like my friend Senator Laurie to give the impression that I have made the statement that the Civil Service is an army of occupation.

I have been in politics since 1964 in this country. I remember the history from that time until now. It was the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow who said that the Civil Service is an army of occupation; when they are in, you cannot get them out. Therefore, I do not want him to label me with that. If I do speak today, I will say my position in respect of this situation.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Thank you for the correction, Senator Bolden. I know you do not believe that.

I would like to address the subject of food safety. An essential part of the agricultural setup is that we would be producing food to the standards of the World Trade Organisation sanitary standards that were set up to cover food production. All of our sectors should be set up using the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATTs) practices. This is laid down internationally and where appropriate, we also have International Standard Organisation (ISO) which we should meet. We have to work very closely with the Ministry of Health on it, I am looking forward to the promised establishment of the National Agricultural Health

and Food Safety Authority, which would take elements from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health and put them less than one authority to deal with this specific issue.

We now have a system where there is huge overlap between the two Ministries and where things fall between the cracks. I am somewhat skeptical because we have legislation which was drafted in 1985 for controlling slaughterhouses but which is yet to come to Parliament.

There seems to be no political will to close down the 'chop-and-gut' shops that are out there. We have 19 licensed slaughterhouses by the Ministry of Health that have no right being in operation. Government has one at Six Cross Roads that could not pass any kind of standard. It is disgusting. We should be aware that we are entering the food chain in Barbados that is not properly inspected.

A politician remarked to me that his father used to slaughter under a breadfruit tree and he is still healthy; that nothing has happened to him because of the fact that his father slaughtered without set health standards. We cannot afford that because of our tourist industry. I have spoken to Mr. Jean Holder of the Caribbean Tourism Association and he is worried about the situation that one day a food-borne disease would occur because of this kind of slaughtering which will significantly affect the tourist industry.

The Dominican Republic had a serious food outbreak which set back their tourism industry. Mr. President, we cannot wait for an outbreak to occur, not even in one hotel because of the fact that word would spread.

There was a food disease in Trinidad and Tobago where desserts that included raw eggs were served and caused an outbreak of salmonella poisoning. Luckily, it was a school graduation ceremony but it just goes to show that we have to be very careful and to do something about it.

The Southern Meats Abattoir has been designed for the sanitary requirements of the World Trade Organisation. This not only allows us to export meat but to set up trade barriers that say that others must meet our food standards. I think we have to move towards these international standards with haste.

What is the problem with Southern Meats Abattoir? Why did the Government have to inject money into it? It is because the 'chop-and-gut' businesses are taking a number of animals and slaughtering them when they should be going to the Southern Meats Abattoir, under proper conditions which would make it viable. The Southern Meats Abattoir was designed to operate at its maximum but it has never ever

been operated in that way. When the Barbados Marketing Corporation (BMC) Abattoir operated in Bridgetown, they were getting \$40 000 per month in subsidies from Government.

Another aspect we have to look at is the grading of meat. The consumers in this island are paying good dollars for meats that are not up to standard and there is no law that controls that.

The Government has brought in a consultant from overseas who has prepared a grading system for meats to be done at the Southern Meats Abattoir but it has never been implemented.

12.30 p.m.

Recently, we wanted to sell the lamb to Sandy Lane but they said they were not going to buy ungraded lamb. The Sheep Farmer's Association has set up a grading system for lamb from the feed lot and we can now guarantee that what is going there is lamb. We need to train someone to grade lamb. We need to have the legislation to protect the consumer and prosecute the person who is selling old sheep for lamb.

Sir, we have done nothing about genetically modified foods and we have no policy in place. In Europe they do not allow genetically modified foods on their shelves neither do they allow American beef because it is raised with hormones. Sir, there is no secret about this, all American beef is raised with growth hormones because they believe that they cannot be competitive unless growth hormones are fed to the animals. Sir, we need laws that speak to labeling so that we know if the beef is local or raised with growth hormones. We must continue to prohibit the use of growth hormones and antibiotics in our production here. Sir, the consumer must be protected and we must have labels so that people are given a choice as to what they want to buy.

Sir, another problem at Southern Meats is the by-products. Southern Meats spends \$100 a day taking blood and inedible offal to dump at Lonesome Hill in St. Peter. If you visit the site, it smells horrific. Most efficient abattoirs in the world today sell their byproducts. We need a complete edible offal processing plant for skins and horns and also develop a leather industry. We sent three people to India to train in producing leather. When they returned from India, they were put at the IDC in a plant that cost \$0.5 million. They knew the technical side of leather making but since they were not given a manager, within two years the plant was closed. IDC wanted the space so they put the equipment in the yard at Spring Garden and it is now totally rotted. There is interest in trying to revamp it and IICA is doing something in that regard.

In vegetable production we are going to see a movement towards organic foods and there is an area in St. Philip where the livestock manure is being produced.

We also have to look at cassava because it has a good potential to be used for flour and livestock food to replace some of the imported foods.

After the disastrous experience with CARSICOT it would appear that Government has no concerted plan for cotton in Barbados. I notice in the Economic Report made recently by the Prime Minister that the yield of sea cotton has fallen under 500 pounds an acre and we used to produce 1200 pounds per acre. We had a think-tank at the Barbados Society for Technology and Agriculture and we had a think-tank on cotton and we brought all the experts and...

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is unwittingly misleading the Chamber. I have been enjoying his anecdotes and insights into agriculture but he is misleading the Chamber when he says that Government has no coherent policy on cotton because Government has just gone to the expense of establishing a cotton forum to bring together various forces to revive the cotton industry and to get back the trademark so it is quite inadequate for the Honourable Senator to make that statement.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I was present at the meeting and we produced a report which we gave to the Ministry three years ago but they said they never saw it. The next morning he called to say they found it sitting in the Ministry for three years and apologised.

I am happy that Government is doing something but we do not have a policy because the forum has not met yet.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, on a point of order. There must be some policy that has guided the Government's thinking to set up the bureau. This is the beginning of the development of the policy because Government does not pretend to have all the answers about cotton and it is seeking to draw on the expertise and I hope that Senator Laurie will be available to contribute whatever he knows about cotton.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I would like to touch on the subject of water because farmers are getting more concerned about the future of vegetable production which requires irrigation. The Water Authority has gone to desalination to put water into the drinking water mains but what about agriculture. The integrated rural development project has some wells. I live near to one next to Salters in St. George and as the dry season comes, for three days there is no water. In my operation, which is mainly livestock, it does not vary a lot between dry and wet season in terms of

water. I know that my water during this time is approximately ten times what I usually pay. I showed the people from the Barbados Water Authority and told them that I cannot use ten times the amount in water.
12.40 p.m.

Sir, this integrated rural development project needs to be expanded, particularly in the area of St. Andrew. The idea of the land for the landless project is very good. In 1992 we started a programme at Barbados Agricultural Society (BAS) called 'Idle Land for Idle Hands', which is similar to land for the landless project.

The private sector sold the land that they could not make money on to the Government. The Government tried with it and then abandoned it. Now they are giving this land to, sometimes, inexperienced farmers and saying to them to work this land, they lease the land for a very small price.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, I am sorry to interrupt the Honourable Member again. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. On the issue of land for landless, farmers are not akin to giving idle land to idle hands. These are persons who are either farmers who have no land or persons who want to be farmers but do not have the land. As a further clarification regarding the cotton, Government has set up two institutions an advisory committee and \$200 000 are allocated in the Estimates for this programme. I think that the Senator is a little bit off-target with our policy.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, I have seen some of this land for the landless and I think that it is pathetic. Here are farmers who are really trying but without help in the areas of irrigation and marketing. There is a problem. If all the farmers in the land for the landless produce food, who is going to market it for them? Sir, they do not know anything about marketing. Marketing is a major problem for the most sophisticated farmer in Barbados.

Sir, I back this programme 100 per cent but it cannot be successful without serious planning and support. I would love to see it work but I have some grave concerns about it.

Government continues to lead this country without a land use policy. This is something that is basic, not only to agriculture but to the general development of this country. Land is a scarce resource. We spend millions of dollars bringing in consultants to produce an area development which was to look, particularly, at agriculture.

The Physical Development Plan was laid in this House about four years ago but it was never debated. We have a Town and Country Planning Department that is operating there with, apparently, no modern plan. Maybe they are using the Physical Development Plan without it being law or they are confused. That is why it takes two years to get anything

through that department.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: It is something that I cannot understand. The area development is yet to be laid in Parliament and the Physical Development Plan was laid, not debated and not yet into law. Is it such a political problem? Do we have to wait until after August to get this document through Parliament?

Sir, transport and traffic are the main problems. Overcrowding on the road is getting worse. There is a waste of petrol because motorists are stuck in long lines of traffic and as a result there is a lot of pollution. There is also a significant loss of productivity since employees arrive late at work because they were stuck in traffic and you cannot blame them for that.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, the country is losing a lot of productivity time and that is something that needs to be looked at. We are losing a lot of money. We need to have someone carry out a survey and look at the problem. Please, do not bring in any outside consultants because there are people in Barbados who can do this.

Mr. President, we have an increase in stress, road rage and accidents. Years ago, road rage was something unheard of in Barbados and now we are seeing it daily.

Sir, we need to have a series of Town Hall meetings where we can talk to the Minister. There is an organisation called 'Treading Lightly', which is involved with the environment. A meeting was set up with them to discuss this problem with the overcrowding on our roads. The Minister, Permanent Secretary and the Chief Technical Officer were invited and not one of them turned up. This meeting was held at 7.00 p.m. and they just did not turn up or call to inquire about what was discussed.

For example, jambusting was discussed. We have to stop this nonsense that is going on at the roundabouts. It is crazy. The left lane should turn left or go straight and the right lane should turn right only. This is so at one or two roundabouts but at every roundabout there are different rules. The police are saying that it is nonsense and what are we doing about it?

I invited the Minister of Transport to meet with me and I told him that I would bring a few of the people who were very vocal at this meeting that was held. He told me that he would call me and I am still awaiting his call.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, we talked about a new highway starting from the Globe, Belle Gully to the Norman Niles Roundabout. This highway would not be very costly and the land that may have to be acquired would be cheap because it is gully land and we will be able to get traffic in and out of Bridgetown easily. There could be an outer bypass road from Newton, through Bannatyne, connecting at Dash Valley, St. George Church, Charles Rowe Bridge, Lower Estate, Lears, Vacluse, Content and meet at Highway 2A. This would mean that the congestion that we have at the Wildey area would be alleviated.

Sir, the only time that the traffic in the area at Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation flows freely is when the traffic lights are not working.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, I hope that Government would recognise the urgent need to make the necessary decision to ensure that whatever happens in the world, our people would have nutritious foods produced locally and produced under healthy conditions.

I thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended for one hour to resume at 2.00 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
1.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR THE REV. L. W. B. ROCK: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. I am grateful for this opportunity.

The Leader of Government Business, in presenting the Appropriation Bill, set it in the context of national trends as well as global events. One such global event, he reminded us, which will impact upon the economy of this country and also on the economies of the Caribbean and the world, is the war in Iraq.

I think, quite rightly, he reminded us that though we are an island, we are not isolated from the events that have and are transpiring across the world.

I think, therefore, Sir, as we respond individually to the Bill that is presented to us, that it will be remiss of us, if at sometime, we did not embrace the opportunity to say something about the war which is taking place in Iraq.

It is with a sense of pride that I received the news, as I am sure many other people in the Caribbean did, that the CARICOM community took a stance against the aggression and invasion by the United States of America's President, his administration and his allies against the administration of Iraq.

I say it is with pride that we received that news because we, as a people believe in law and, certainly, as members of the world community and participants in the United Nations, we certainly must support the rule of law.

Our country, as part of that CARICOM community, took a stance in favour of the decision of the Security Council which was against the invasion of Iraq by the Bush Administration and its allies. I think that stance was a right one. It was very evident from the report of the inspectors that some progress was being made and, indeed, one got the impression that they were willing and encouraged the UN Security Council to give time for their effort, because what was primarily their concern was that peaceful means be employed to achieve the end of disarming Saddam Hussein and his regime.

It is regrettable, Sir, that the President of the United States, his administration and those who support him did not heed the advice and intention of the Security Council, and sought to pursue what they believed to have been the only way to achieve the end of disarmament.

Following hard upon this, it has been brought to the attention of the nation and beyond it, that the United States administration is unhappy with any effort for the United Nations Assembly to meet, so that nations which are not represented in the Security Council would have an opportunity to express their mind on the issue of the war.

What strikes me, Sir, as hypocritical is that we are told in one breath that the aggression of the US administration and its supporters is to liberate. It is to bring freedom to the people of Iraq. But on the other hand, according to the reports which we received, it seems as though the same liberators would deny Caribbean Leaders the right to express their minds freely, as democratic sovereign nations. That seems to be very hypocritical and, certainly, raises the question of what are the true motives behind the invasion.

I think, Sir, that the people of the Caribbean and all the people of this nation of ours, should fully lend their support to our Governments, if the occasion presents itself by way of a meeting of the United Nations, to freely express what are our views. It may be costly but there are some things, Sir, that we need to stand for or we stand for nothing.

The sacrifices which we may be made to pay, I think in the end will be worth it, but what is important for us, is that we stand together as a Caribbean community and we do not allow the old principle of divide and rule to weaken us, or in any way to cause us not to stand for that very important principle.

Therefore, as I make my contribution in this debate, I would ask that we, as a democratic country and as we meet in this Parliament, join our voices with the voices of people across the world, calling for a cessation of this war, calling that even now, the means to find a solution which can save the lives of thousands of people, be pursued.

We must be concerned for the value of human life, whether it is human life here or human life everywhere. Life is a gift from God and it is not the right of anyone to deprive another human being of his or her life. We condemn, Sir, the dictatorial policies and sufferings which people in Iraq have undergone over the years. I am sure that we long with them for liberation but we believe that through the means of peace, that can be achieved and that we need more, now than ever, to support the United Nations in all of its efforts, not only in this instance but in what lies ahead in the future. Because it is evident to me that this war is also intended to send a message, over the world, about the strength of the United Nations and it appears as though, the message we are seeing is that might is right.

We cannot, Sir, support that and it leaves me also to say that while we challenge that principle, in terms of military might, we ought also seriously to analyse our own situation and wherever, in this instance it may not be military might but it may be economic might, that we also challenge that principle which seems to be evident at times in our community and which leaves our people with some concern.

I want also to say that what is happening in that situation, in terms of the importance of the democratic rights of people, should lead us to continue to be vigilant and to do everything that is humanly possible to preserve our own democracy. Vigilance is the call for all of us.

I would like to continue, Sir, having addressed the context in which this presentation has been made, at least one of the hearings of the context in which it has been presented, to draw attention to one or two areas mentioned in the presentation of the Leader of Government Business. I refer first to him.

It was most heartening to hear Senator Walcott tell us of the many achievements in his own Ministry. He numbered to us the steps taken by the Ministry to improve the work of this Ministry and, particularly, in terms of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), to enhance that institution and to enable it to fulfill and give the services for which it was created.

As I listened to him number the acquisitions and the enhancement of the medical service being provided by the QEH, I also paid very careful attention to what he shared with us, in terms of the bureaucracy in that institution which impedes its effectiveness. The question which came to my mind is, whether the Ministry and the Government are aware of the bureaucracy which hinders the delivery of proper medical services by that institution, why have they not done anything in order to remove the bureaucratic road blocks which affect the efficient delivery of service?

I know that they will say that it is the Board, but it seems to me that it is years now that we have been aware of the bureaucratic stumbling blocks. It seems questionable, and the Minister himself reminded us that every year, more money is being voted for that institution, why would you continue to vote money to improve services and do nothing about removing the road blocks and hindrances to the efficient and effective service of that institution? It is true that it is being addressed, but I would still raise the question, why was not more done in order that the institution be more effective in its work.
2.10 p.m.

I am very concerned that the Accident and Emergency Department is not doing what it ought to do. I believe I have mentioned before, the length of time people have to spend there in order to receive treatment. These are people who are very ill and who are in pain. I know of more than one person who has had to spend almost an entire day there awaiting attention. It is not the fault of the staff – in fact, I think we should congratulate the staff for their performance and efficiency – but there is, as I am told, a lack of adequate staff. One would think that an Accident and Emergency Department should be so functioning that people are given good quality treatment and at a time when they need it most. The result of what is happening is that those who can afford it have to leave the Accident and Emergency Department, go to the FMH Clinic and pay for the service.

Asides.

SENATOR THE REV. L. W. B. ROCK: Some of them are sent back which is also true, but that is part of the tragedy of that situation.

I hope that as attention is being given in terms of the establishment of the Board, and great hope is being raised on

what the Board can do, that we can see an improvement in this area at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital not in the distant future but very soon.

Sir, I would like to address a concern which people have raised about certain chronic diseases in Barbados which is costing the Government much and which is impairing the health of the nation. I refer to diabetes, hypertension and such illnesses. As that question is being addressed, more than once we are told about the necessity for people to pay attention to nutrition and the necessity of people to eat properly. We are told about the strong weakness which some of us have, as one of my ministerial colleagues would say, for fast foods.

To me one of the areas that needs to be looked at very carefully is the affordability of foods to help our people to be healthy. What I am getting at is whether it is not time that the whole question of the Value-Added Tax on food not be addressed and that the tax be removed from all food stuff. I do not think that you can in one breath talk about enhancing the quality of health of people and on the other hand it is so expensive for people to buy the sorts of foods that they need and do nothing about it. So my own challenge to the Government is to look at the area of Value-Added Tax on food and to give some attention to the possibility of removing it.

I want to touch on the Immigration Department. I believe this comes under the responsibility of Senator Murray. For a long time, we have been hearing much about public sector reform. I remember there was a time when there was a great outcry on the indignity which our people had to suffer, like having to wait long hours in lines in the sun when they had to go to the US Embassy to apply for visas. It is no less so in our own Immigration Department. The Immigration Department opens at 8.30 a.m. and sometimes there are people outside the department waiting from around 7.30 a.m. and then when the door is open there is a mad rush to get inside. Our people have to stand there with the sun beating down upon them before they can get in to take a number and to wait. It seems to me that this needs immediate attention. It is very humiliating. I can talk about it because I have heard about it and I went and joined the crowd one morning. If we are going to complain about it as it affects what people have got to do with a foreign embassy, then we need to address that situation and improve it for our own people. I trust that some attention would be given to that.

I have raised this question before and I would raise it again and it has to do with what I would term the failure of some of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force to take action on keeping the sidewalks of the city clear. I believe the sidewalks are placed there in order to facilitate the pedestrians when they are walking. I will use James Street as an example. It is possibly one of the worst streets in

town when it comes to the way the people walk in the middle of the street. They are walking in the middle of the street because some of the sidewalks are blocked with people selling and I have seen policemen walking up and down and saying nothing to the people. It is not only there, but in other places the sidewalks are being blocked. I believe that if action is taken immediately when people begin to sell on the sidewalks, then it would help to address this problem. Let us not wait until somebody is knocked down because they cannot walk on the sidewalk and we have a great accident before some action is taken. I believe that a little more vigilance on the part of some members of the Royal Barbados Police Force certainly would help.

The last thing I want to say is by way of my disappointment that to date the Report of the Constitution Review Committee languishes somewhere and seems not to be as important as we would like to think that it was when that Committee was appointed. I have had the honour of being a member of that Committee and the impression we got when the Committee was appointed was that there was some urgency about the revision of the Constitution. The members of the Constitution Review Committee worked very hard. They solicited the support and the responses of people here and abroad. The Committee gave its time and so confident were we that the Government was really serious about the reform that the appropriate legislation was even prepared so that when the review came forward for debate that the legislation would be ready to be implemented.
2.20 p.m.

What we have had is a tinkering with the Constitution where a number of changes have been made but that urgency seemed to have waned. It seems that we would come to the end of the life of this Parliament before that revision and the legislation are debated fully. That is a disappointment to me.

I share this, because together with Senator Goddard, I have had the honour to be on that Committee. We had high hopes for it but it is the disappointments with which we end. With these words, I would support the Appropriation Bill, 2003.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to congratulate the Prime Minister on his sterling effort in managing the Barbados economy for over the last 8 years.

The Prime Minister's leadership has been pivotal in the success of this Government and this economy, through the economic highs and lows that have evolved over the 8 years. Sir, I believe some rough times lie ahead.

Indeed, his leadership has captured the imagination of the Opposition and of our Caribbean neighbours. He also

has a well respected worldwide following. I think he has the courage, the loyalty, understanding and vision. These are all virtues which are currently lacking in the Opposition and, indeed, the current West Indies team.

Sir, I am happy that you are in the Chair today because yesterday Senator Mascoll was like Poonka – all over the place. Sir, I never knew that I was a threat to Senator Mascoll because I am no longer in the race. What I would like Senator Mascoll to do is to stop fishing in this Senate. He should go to St. Michael North West and fish there, which I am sure he would come up with an empty net.

Sir, Senator Mascoll should look at the polls which state that nobody wants him to be their leader, not even his Colleague in the Senate; not even Mr. Kellman and for sure, not Mr. Thompson but yet Senator Mascoll shouted and masqueraded yesterday, talking about how he is going to lead the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) in the next election, *et cetera*, but I leave Senator Mascoll in the hands of Mr. Williams, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Kellman.

Sir, Barbados is well governed. It is my experience that both locals and visitors alike, have all expressed their sentiments that Barbados is a gem. I had the privilege to be with a number of cricketers from England a few days ago and listening and observing how those cricketers feel about Barbados, I am not sure if they have left Barbados already but some were talking about staying because it is too cold back in England. Let us not forget that some of those guys are not blind but visually impaired.

I was also accused of playing a lot of golf. I was told I would have been the next Tiger Woods. Again, talking to persons playing golf they believe we have a nice place to live, that is why we have so many returning nationals to Barbados who are building and investing and I believe this should be encouraged.

Sir, the efforts made by the Prime Minister in these Estimates is no exception to the high standard set over the years. The emphasis placed on health, housing and education, shows a commitment to the most important social aspect at a time when the economy is being challenged by many external events, most important, the war in Iraq. Sir, I am one who believes that the war will have a mixed effect on Barbados and it will all depend on how we can manage our affairs at this crucial time.

I want to concentrate my efforts on those things that are dear to my heart, which can impact on our young people and the average Barbadian family. I want to concentrate on sports tourism and I would like to start on cricket. I would like to congratulate the Australians for winning the World Cup, 2003, in South Africa. I believe that in South Africa,

Australia was the superior side and, as was quoted, the only team that would have beaten them would have been the Duckworth and Lewis side.

Sir, in a number of weeks we will be having the daunting task of getting revenge and trying to beat Australia. Sir, the World Cup champions will be playing in the Caribbean and I believe that is a great promotional tool for our tourism. We are going to have visitors coming from London, America and Australia. Let us hope that the war in Iraq does not impact negatively on this tour. I believe it is going to be a great test for our young cricketers who would be playing against the Aussies. Sir, I said “our young cricketers” and, therefore, I am hoping the selectors would pick some because we need to look to the future. We need a three-year to a five-year plan. I do not know who would be the captain, the coach or the manager but I believe the West Indies Cricket Board is looking into that.

I believe this tour should be a big foreign exchange earner. It might not be in the vicinity of the 1994 tour of England when we made about \$59 million but Australia, being such a good cricket side, I believe a lot of people would follow.

I believe it could be of significant value to our tourist industry but I am looking forward with excitement to 2007, when the World Cup would be held in our region.
2.30 p.m.

South Africa has set a very high standard and we need to follow it. I listen to Dr. Ali Bakr talk about the amount of work done in South Africa by volunteers but in the Caribbean we need to be paid for everything but we might have to look at groups like the Lions Clubs and other charitable organisations to assist with some of the volunteer work for the World Cup. From reports coming out of South Africa, they benefitted significantly from the World Cup. There were 31 000 people watching the game and restaurants and other facilities were fully utilised. People were disappointed that many of the top sides were not involved in the finals but this region must act now because it is going to be the biggest event held in this region. Barbados must position itself to embrace the opportunities that will redound from the World Cup. The business sector must start now to put plans in place and the tourist boards of the region must advertise, Governments must get on board and lead the way. We talk about the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and this is the time for the Caribbean to become integrated.

When I read the newspapers this morning, I realised that Kensington will be the venue for the World Cup games here in Barbados. There will be serious renovations and I hope there will be provisions for wheelchairs and people

who are differently able. I have a nephew who is 16 years old who has never walked and I understand the challenge that people who use wheelchairs face in this country. There is going to be a capacity of 28 000 at Kensington Oval and there will be temporary stands that will be taken down after the World Cup and go back to 15 000 which will be a more manageable capacity. There is talk of building a new stadium and new cricket grounds but in Barbados we are aware of places like Grenada and St. Lucia who build massive stadiums and then find it hard to support them. It is important when these types of stadiums are built that they are multi-purpose and that they are used all year.

Sir, we in Barbados will look at Kensington Oval and make sure it is adequate for the semi-finals. I know that Trinidad is bidding for the finals to be held there but Barbados will hope to be able to hold the finals here with the new renovations.

Sir, we in Barbados should look to strengthen the structure of our cricket because people come to Barbados for the sun, sea and a smile but we have produced some fantastic cricketers like myself. People come to Barbados to play golf and talk to people who have made a contribution to the country and we need to look at a professional system of cricket in Barbados.

There is talk about having a professional league but I am concerned because we would need to invite players from overseas and with the international calendar so hectic it will be difficult to have a professional league here. We do need a professional system because the test match brings \$59 million to the economy and Government should be willing to spend \$2 million to contract 30 of our best young players so that when 2007 comes, five or six Barbadians will be ready to play for the West Indies, even if we pay \$25 000 yearly to make a tour to England to maintain linkages with South Africa and England. In the 80's we were the top cricketers in the world because we played county cricket in England with teams from South Africa. We played under all types of conditions. We played when it was sunny, wet, windy, cold and when the ball was swinging around and we learned our trade that way.

Sir, there may be a few Sir Gary Sobers out there but we have to look at a new system to bring our young people on board. I believe that we need to get them on very early and we must have them on a contract because they must be able to look after themselves, their families and they should be paid.
2.40 p.m.

Sir, for example, the reason that I am so serious about our players getting involved in professional set up, we are now talking about Vasbert Drakes, as captain of the West Indies. We are talking about Vasbert Drakes and his

performance in the World Tour. Our cricketers must get more involved in understanding the professional system. This happens in Australia. When you see the Australian team, you would think that these guys are having a party. There is a posse of about 24 persons, a sports psychologist, physiotherapist, trainer, and someone to keep all the information on the game so that the players can be kept up-to-date. This is what we call a professional unit and this is what we need.

Sir, we cannot keep falling behind and expect our players to wake up one morning and become professional cricketers. There must be a system in place. You do not play professional cricket when you are in Barbados because you make about \$400 when you are playing in the Busta Cup or the Red Strip Game. After you put some petrol in your car, you have to beg a fellow for a drink. So, we need to make sure that these fellows are paid properly and that we try to form a linkage with our neighbours.

Sir, currently, in England each County now has two overseas players attached to it, so we need to get our guys exposed to some professional cricket and to some good cricket as well.

I hope that when you look at Kurt Wilkinson, Tino Best and the other fellows in 2007 we would be able to see some cricketers to play for the West Indies, even though a lot of people believe that the selectors are not too keen on players from Barbados.

I am saying that Barbadians must perform. They must go out there and do well in order to fight for a place on the West Indies side. I believe that with this system we would have more productive cricketers. I am sure that we would not have any Hoopers.

Asides.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Professor Hilary Beckles and his team for the fantastic work that is being done at the Cave Hill Campus. I realise that there will be some indoor facilities and they are getting ready to play against Australia when they arrive here in Barbados. I believe that the work which is being done there is very good. Yesterday I looked at the outfield and I am very impressed with the work that is being done there.

I would like the University of the West Indies to do a little bit more for all sportsmen and sportswomen. Again, I must be biased. I am talking about cricket now. We find it very difficult to study and at the same time put yourself in a position to play for the West Indies. It is very difficult. You have to make a choice, one way or the other. You have

to say, I am going to take my chance and see if I can play for West Indies and make some money and then I will study. Sir, there is no way you can do both at the same time.

I believe that the University can do a bit more. When you are coaching young people and you go to the parents, the parents are very interested in making sure that the child gets his education first. The parents do not care how good the child can bat, bowl, field or keep wicket, the only thing those parents say to you is that they have to make sure that he gets his education right before they allow him to play cricket.

Sir, we have a situation where young Sebastian was prevented from playing in the Busta Cup this year because he should concentrate on his A'levels. His dad said that his education must come first.

I would like to see the university making a special effort to allow sports persons to learn at a pace that would not affect their education and their sports. I think that is very important.

Mr. President, I want to touch on horse racing. I want to make it clear that I am not a betting person but I love to see horse racing. I believe that it is a great spectacle. I have some friends who make a living by looking after horses from the breeding stage to the stage of racing.

I have many friends who have horses and they breed these horses. I believe that the Government should pay some attention to this area of sports. This could be done by way of tax concessions. There are a lot of Barbadian jockeys, trainers and grooms who ply their trade in Canada and make a good living from it.

Asides.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: The point I am making is this, horse racing is a vehicle for promoting sports tourism and attracting some overseas investment.

Mr. Deputy President, for example, look at the Gold Cup event which has a viewership of 15 000 000 people in North America and other parts of the world. I know a lot of personalities who have decided to own horses and farms in Barbados. They also purchased homes and live in Barbados and as a result of this type of activity employment is generated.

During the Gold Cup, I was invited to play in a charity Golf tournament at Sandy Lane.

Asides.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: Sir, that charity raised

over half million dollars. The money was to be distributed among several organisations in Barbados. These people who come to Barbados and organise such events should be commended and encouraged to market Barbados as a sports tourism destination.

Sir, I love watching horse racing and I believe that we should have night races as well. The reason why I believe that we should have horse racing at night is because whenever there is an important cricket match at Kensington Oval, it is always clashing with horse racing on Saturdays. We need to make sure that we have a lot of the sporting organisations arranging their calendar in a way so that these big events do not clash.

Mr. Deputy President, night cricket is becoming big in Barbados. People want things to do after 6 o'clock in the evening. We want to help those persons who are involved in burglaries to find something more profitable to do such as watching sports or playing sports. Having horse racing at night would also give them the opportunity to go and watch good horse racing.

Sir, a lot of my friends love going to the Garrison but when I look at the infrastructure of the Garrison, I believe it needs some improvement but I leave that to the BTC. I understand that they have some financial challenges but I would suggest to them that a proposal should be sent to Government. Sir, with night races in Barbados we would be able to attract some of our Caribbean friends. That is another area where we can promote sports tourism and invite people to come to our shores.
2.50 p.m.

Sir, we need our Caribbean neighbours in our tourism market. Again, Sir, the sport of horse racing plays an important role in employment as I said before, in entertainment, foreign exchange earnings, and financial contributions to the social needs of the people of Barbados.

Sir, I would like to turn to golf tourism. I did mention it in here last year and I think I will mention it again. I believe that we need to promote Barbados as a golfing destination. I think we need a few more golf courses. I know that the people from the agricultural sector might not agree with me. Tourism is our main foreign earner and we need to look at increasing our golf courses here in Barbados by four or five. We have some young players. We may not produce a Tiger Woods but I believe that this will create employment for our young people and it is going to be good for our economy.

Sir, I just want to caution about the golf courses. I am all for having golf courses here in Barbados but I do not want this Government to make the mistake that the last Government made with Royal Westmoreland. They allowed

people to build the golf courses and expensive houses and they made no contribution to the surrounding communities.

I am saying that when they want to build the golf courses and they want to build their 140 houses and they want to sell them from \$2 million to \$4 million, if they are building 90 houses, they should be building 140 low income houses for the people of Barbados with the land provided by the Government. We cannot expect them to buy the land and then build the houses for our people. But they should build the houses for our people and sell them at what it cost to build them.

Sir, I am saying that they need the permission to build the 90 multi-million dollar houses and they should build 140 low income houses for our people so that my friends and family will be able to own a house in Barbados.

I know it happens in England. When you get permission for development sites in England, and you are building houses of a certain calibre, you are asked to build some low income houses in order for people to be able to have houses. I do not believe they will run with this if they have to buy the land but as long as the land is provided, I believe that the investors will be quite happy to build the houses.

Sir, that would ease the National Housing Corporation (NHC) because, we always look at the Government to be building or doing something. We have to go out there and make sure that we start doing something for ourselves. The same way we are going to give these people a concession, we have to make sure that the concessions are benefitting the people in the community.

I am sure that we cannot afford to let these investors come because what happened in the Royal Westmoreland project is that the concession was not given to all of the property owners. It was given to one company, so he was charging a property owner \$15 000 just to bring his furniture from the Port to Royal Westmoreland. That money was not coming into our pockets. So when we are granting this concession, I think we have to be very careful whom we are giving it to because sometimes, we as people and as locals, look at people and we believe that they are the ones who got the concession. Why do you give him concessions to build a house and I did not get any, and I built my house, but the concession went to the investor of that company? That person only bought the house from him. I am saying that we should not make that mistake like the last Government.

Sir, I would also like to see the supporting organisations with a central location and a secretariat. I know that cricket has one. I know basketball and I think athletics has a Secretariat.

We need to have the sporting bodies with their records on computers and a filing cabinet. I believe that the National Sports Council should be helping with the day-to-day running of the organisation with a secretariat. Sir, I would like to see that you take at least three or four sports and form a secretariat with a CEO who will look after these sports. So that there will be a central location to access information where people will know they can get the information. Whether it is the YMCA or UWI or some place that is central so that people know that this is where the information should go.

I think the secretariat will help with the organisation of the tournaments and again, making sure that we do not have these very important sporting events clashing with other events in Barbados.

Sir, I want to talk about the prisoners. Our prison is overcrowded and there are a lot of people there who need to come out and do some community work.

Sir, we have a lot of sporting organisations that are struggling to pay their light bill, to pay for the use of the national stadium, to pay for the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium. There are many cricket clubs and football clubs around that cannot get the football field marked out and we have people up there in prison sitting and getting fat. I believe that we need to do something about those people who have committed petty crimes. We should get them back into society and get them out there working and paying their dues.

Sir, I remember when I first played for the West Indies, I went to Antigua where I played my first one-day international and the prisoners prepared the wicket. They were supervised but they prepared the wicket. The wicket was good, Sir, I made a hundred.

Asides.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: I am only telling you, Sir, that those prisoners can do a good job.

Sir, not only the cricket, look at Blenheim. When I attended the Federal High School, I used to play at Blenheim A and the MHO used to play at Blenheim B, and the prisoners in this island used to prepare Blenheim wickets. We need to get those fellows back out there.

There is a lot of bush and we get a problem with mosquitoes in the rainy season. We cannot ask the Government to do all of this. Let us get some of the prisoners to do some debushing. Let them start looking after certain parks and beaches.

Sir, we are beautifying Barbados but we need help and we have a lot of those fellows there who can assist. Sir, I am very serious about this. I believe that we can organise something where we can get these guys to do some community service.

Another subject, Sir, I would like to touch on, is that as a sportsman, and I believe that I share the sentiment of a lot of sportsmen and sportswomen in this country that we must revisit the daylight saving time. I believe that we should have daylight saving time in Barbados because I find it very difficult when people are working and getting involved in sports by the time they leave work and get home, it is dark.

Sir, we need that extra hour. I do not know the reason why it stopped, in the first place. I used to enjoy it but I am saying that I would like us to look at daylight saving time. 3.00 p.m.

I find that we are always very quick to criticise our sportsmen and sportswomen when they go on tours and have not done well, but nobody worries about them. Nobody cares about if the fellow is training, if he is working, if he has a job, if he is eating or what, but from the time he makes it, you will hear someone say, I know him from ever since, I know he was always going to be a good cricketer and he gets a sponsor. We need to get people involved in the development of our youth from the stage where they are nobody.

Sir, you might not want to agree with me about daylight saving time, but I am sure you must agree with me that we need some indoor facilities in this country so that we can get, as I said before, our young people off the street so that they can get involved in sporting activities which will stop the laziness. We have got to start protecting this country. People love this island and they want to invest in it. However, a lot of people are not going to invest in it if they do not feel safe. So we must look very seriously at protecting our citizens and the people who come to this country to live. We cannot afford to let a small percentage of people create all of the problems we have in Barbados and then nobody is getting hanged. We have a situation here that as soon as we put them in prison, they are out of it after a few years.

We have got to look very seriously at how we go about protecting our citizens. People build lovely homes here in Barbados and they want to enjoy the comfort of them. People pay a lot of money to stay in the nice hotels in this country and they want to be comfortable. They do not want to be prisoners in their own homes or in the hotels in which they are staying, so we need to find ways to stop our young people who are being tempted to go and break into somebody's house at night or to go down the street to smoke herb. I would love to see at least three or four indoor facilities in Barbados.

These facilities would also help to ease some of the workload at the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium. Every dog fight in Barbados is held up there. We need someplace to relieve some of that workload. We had a situation where the netballers could not use it because it was already booked out for another function. We need to have areas in Barbados where we can go to events, where we can pay to watch a little netball or a little volleyball, so that the volleyball club could make some money to pay for the lights. We need to have some indoor facilities where people can get off the street and if a guy wants to coach a fellow after 12 o'clock, he can do so. A fellow can get a bowling machine. We do not have a bowling machine when it comes to training cricketers and so forth in Barbados.

With these indoor facilities, I believe that we will be able to get a home and a place for amateur boxing because as we know there is no place in Barbados for amateur boxing. People might say yes, you just have to set up a ring and it goes, but the boxers need somewhere to train. It is not only fighting for the night. We have some of the best boxers around, but they need someplace to train. We have Junior Greenidge and Christopher 'Shaka' Henry. We need someplace for these fellows to train because what is going to happen is that when we produce a world champion, all of a sudden everybody is going to jump on the bandwagon and say, man, they can come by them and train, we 'gine' do this and we 'gine' get this for you, but we need to do it now.

The other problem I have is that there are a lot of companies in Barbados which refuse to give time off to players when they are selected to play for Barbados. I experienced this myself when I was Chairman of Selectors for Barbados. We selected a guy to play for Barbados and his workplace refused to give him time off. Not only that, in that same week we had the death of Sir Conrad Hunte, so he did not get paid for the week he was playing in the trial games and when he was off for Sir Conrad's funeral he did not get paid for that either. I confronted the workplace and asked them what is going to happen, this guy has a family to support. I told them that they could not say they were not going to pay him. The lady told me that they gave him the time and asked what more he wanted, that he did not work. This is a guy who is trying to represent Barbados, but when he makes the Barbados team now, that same place where he was working is going to jump and say, 'man, he is one of my staff, he is a good cricketer, I know him for years, I always knew he was going to make it'.

Sir, it is not only the management of the companies, some of your own work colleagues envy you and they do not want you to get time off because they do not play any sports. We really need to draw to the attention of the people of Barbados and these companies that they need to give time to these sportsmen and sportswomen in order for them to play

their trade and to do their training which is very important. The Australian cricket team and the top athletes in the world did not get to the top by getting up one morning and going and hit a cricket ball or a golf ball or box. People talk about Tiger Woods and VeeJay Singh but these persons trained for hours. We need to look at the training so that we can develop our young people. So I am appealing to the business community to give these people some time, to be more lenient on them and pay them. I also want to appeal to the work colleagues not to jump on the bandwagon when the fellows make it, but make sure that they support them even if it means having to go and do a shift to help them out.

Sir, when I first played for the West Indies I was working at the Miramar Hotel on the 7-11 shift. I missed the morning shift and after the game I had to go and do the 7-11 shift in the evening. When I made the 100 runs against Pakistan here, I was so embarrassed when Sir Garfield Sobers said to Intikhab Alam that the guy who just passed with the tray is the one that is 116 not out. By that time I had the tray leaning so that I Intikhab could not recognise me, but that is what I had to do. So because I am a living example of it, I do not want Ryan Hinds or Tino Best to be in that situation. I want the business people of Barbados to be a little bit more sympathetic to the sportsmen and sportswomen of this country.

3.10 p.m.

Sir, Senator Desmond Haynes would like to see a Sports levy. I know that everyone is talking about the lotteries that we have but I believe if we were to ask everyone who is working for \$1 to assist with our sportsmen and sportswomen in this country, it would be a dollar well spent. Sir, I said that because there are people who are remortgaging their properties to provide for their athletes to succeed. That is why I am saying we need a Sports levy. Along with the Sport levy, I would like to see a committee being set up to manage the distribution of these funds because it is going to be very important that the committee realises that these funds go to people who really need them.

I know that people would ask the question why a sports levy when there are a number of lotteries already in Barbados. I know that as the system goes, the lottery owners first take out their profits and whatever is left back, then distribute to other sportsmen and sportswomen.

Sir, in conclusion, I would like to say that I feel honoured and privileged to be in this Senate. I know that Senators might think this is a farewell speech but I want to say that I have enjoyed the Debates in this Senate and during my two years, have learnt a lot and has got much respect from Members. I would only hope that the Debates in the Senate remain of a very high standard. With that, Sir, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy President, with rapt attention, I listened to my Friend and Colleague, Senator Haynes. In fact, I am reminded that one of my lecturers used to refer it as sitting at the feet of Gamaliel. I feel honoured to sit next to my Friend, Senator Haynes but I also feel I have had the privilege of sitting at the feet of Gamaliel. Rarely have I heard such elaborate and intensive treaties on sporting and sports as it relates to the fundamentals of Barbadian society. For that, I would like to congratulate my Friend and Fellow Senator.

Mr. Deputy President, I too rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill, 2003. If I might reflect on a quotation which I would attribute to a French writer who said:

“The problem with our times is that the future is not what it used to be.”

I think that cryptic quotation speaks volumes about Barbados at the start of a new millennium. There are many things that confront us. There are many things that we lack the capacity to influence and to control but despite the difficulties and travails that we see in today's world, this country with a population of 260 000 but with the tenacity and intellect of a country where one might imagine have 250 million people, has continued to weather such storms that were thrown our way and have kept our pledge with the Barbadian electorate.

I believe this Administration is a results-oriented Administration because, at the end of the day, no matter what plans and policies are put in place, the true test is whether or not the results speak for themselves or whether or not the results bring about the kinds of policy initiatives that were put in place.

Mr. Deputy President, I believe the work of this Government in managing Barbados' affairs since we were last here debating the Appropriation Bill, 2002, clearly demonstrates a Government with foresight, initiative, and perhaps, more importantly, courage. It demonstrates a Government with the courage to take a stance that may not be popular or the courage to take a stance which said loudly and clearly that fiscal prudence is of greater value than the short-term gains of what people might call election spending.

With those introductory remarks, I would like to focus my presentation on a few selected areas. I would like to begin by looking at the work of the National Housing Corporation. Whenever I speak on the issue of the National Housing Corporation, I do so with tremendous pride because I number among many of the people who have had the honour of chairing that statutory body. I had the

daunting task of chairing the National Housing Corporation from 1994. It was daunting because it was immediately after the 1994 election that this Government found a situation in the National Housing Corporation where it had not built any single-terraced unit for several years. We had applications from the General Workers Loan Fund which dated back to 1986 but were not yet processed. It was a difficult time. However, today, Mr. Deputy President, the National Housing Corporation continues to demonstrate to the people in this country that given what it takes, it is able to deliver and to meet the housing needs of Barbadians.

I can hardly think of another statutory corporation that has served the people of this country so well. It is a corporation that has been on the receiving end of many criticisms but at the end of the day, the results have to speak for themselves.

The idea of selling terraced units goes back perhaps to the time when they were first built. There have been many promises made but for the first time, we have a Government that is determined to meet those promises.

The matter of selling terraced units is not an easy matter but one that has been fraught with difficulty. Mr. Deputy President, with tenacity and determination, the National Housing Corporation has put itself in a position where very concrete proposals have now been put to Government to establish, once and for all, that the Corporation is intent on meeting the housing needs of the citizenry.

On the matter of the sale of terraced units, some of the issues that confronted the National Housing Corporation (NHC) would have been matters such as the communal wells. I think it is well known that every terraced unit does not have the benefit of its own well and this is a matter which has attracted much attention and consideration. It had been considered that the terraced units could have been sold under a condominium-type approach. That kind of approach is not really user-friendly and requires a great deal of complexity and sophistication to set up and to maintain.

The fundamental position is that the Government is determined to sell the terraced units but to accept and to maintain the responsibility for those things that cannot conveniently be passed on to the tenants. Therefore, the proposals that have been put by the National Housing Corporation (NHC) is that in cases where there are communal wells, despite the sale to the tenants, the National Housing Corporation (NHC) would continue to maintain the wells and the open spaces.

This is an important point to reach because the whole idea of selling the units is to empower the residents while recognising the difficulty of having tenants contribute to a

central fund in order that the wells be maintained into perpetuity. The Government would also be taking the position that they would maintain the wells, the opened spaces and the hard courts.

3.20 p.m.

In terms of the mechanics for sale that have been proposed this indicates to the world at large that Barbados is truly a sophisticated society. I remember several years ago meeting the Secretary General of Habitat when he came to Barbados to look at our housing situation and he could hardly believe the extent of the ongoing commitment of this Barbados Labour Party to the housing solution. What we in Barbados insist on as a minimum standard for the housing of our people is what would be considered in many countries across the globe to be high income housing. Our Government's position is clear that whatever it takes to meet the needs of the people as far as housing is concerned we are prepared to do.

Of course, it is recognised that many of our housing units have repair requirements but to set about repairing all of these units would result in tremendous delay so we proposed in lieu of repairing the units, tenants would be given a rebate of \$5 000. On the basis of an assessment done last year the National Housing Corporation was able to determine that the average cost per unit to effect the necessary repairs would only be \$1 600 but recognising that some units may take more or less to repair and the position is accepted that we would give a rebate of \$5 000 this would be a tremendous savings in the hands of a tenant. If the only thing that needs changing is a door or window, a tenant could get this done for far less than \$1 600. I have to give credit to many of the people who occupy the National Housing Corporation properties because in many instances they have taken a noble and proactive approach of effecting minor works themselves without waiting for the machinery of the corporation to come to their aid. The concessions being offered are realistic from carrying out assessment and surveys in the various estates.

There used to be 3 765 asbestos roofs on terrace units on National Housing Corporation properties in Barbados. Today there are about 1 200 remaining. The National Housing Corporation remains committed to removing these asbestos roofs and when the units are to be sold the corporation fully intends to change these roofs at their own expense and this has nothing to do with the proposed debate. If an occupant of a terrace or single unit has an asbestos roof, the corporation is committed to changing it prior to any sale at no cost to the tenant.

There is going to be a concession of 40 per cent of paid up rent over the period of the tenancy to a maximum of \$25 000. This is in fulfillment of a long-standing promise of

this Barbados Labour Party that moneys which tenants have paid in rents over the years will go towards the purchase price. The 15 units that exist in Lammings, the tenants of them are going to be able to benefit firstly from \$5 000 rebate and secondly, from having 40 per cent of their rents added back as a credit against the purchase price.

This will see us in a situation where we will substantially increase the number of Barbadians who for the first time in their life can own a piece of this rock. It has to be taken in context that the history of Barbados makes it clear to us that the enfranchisement of its people in terms of property ownership is something that started to expand in the late years of the last century. Only in the 60's did you see Barbadians buying real estate and with ownership of real estate comes empowerment of a kind that an individual does not feel except he holds a title deed.

At the time of the riots less than five per cent of Barbadians owned any real estate and we have come to a situation today where over 50 per cent of all Barbadians according to the last census are owners of real estate and this percentage is probably not exceeded anywhere else in the developing world.

Sir, this represents the second phase of the Barbados Labour Party's drive to empower the people of this country through real estate ownership. The first phase came at the time of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which saw thousands of Barbadians for the first time owning property. We are now going to a new phase where people for many years lived in housing estates and will now become home owners of those properties. It is a significant point to reach and a tremendous point of conduct of our society over the next twenty years.

It is common knowledge that when people are owners of real estate they develop a mindset which sees them thinking for the first time of investment and of what happens to the next generation. This special kind of empowerment will see greater unity, civility in our community and greater respect for other people's property. Also we begin to recognise the importance of inheritance and passing on property to the next generation of Barbadians.

This is not only a terrace unit initiative because the Government through the National Housing Corporation is going to be selling lots to thousands of tenants across Barbados who rent lots. Last month the National Housing Corporation began sending out letters to people who rent lots. These lots will be sold at a price of \$2.50 per square foot which is far below current market values. In addition these tenants will be given rebates so that anyone renting a lot for over 25 years will be given a maximum discount of \$2 500. Persons who have been living on a lot for less than 25 years will receive a discount of \$180 per year for each

year of tenancy.

I want to caution tenants that the various concessions will only be given to people whose rents are paid up to date. It is very important that we mention this because tenants are not to believe that they can have arrears going back years, then come to the corporation and say that they are ready to buy the land now. That kind of thing is not going to be allowed. The concessions will only be given if the rents are paid up in full.

3.30 p.m.

Sir, there are, of course, one or too unfortunate situations that I have encountered where some of the residents of St. Joseph, Bissex and Lammings, said to me that they are very happy for the opportunity to buy the lots and are happy with the concessions. However, they are not working at this time and would like to know if they are going to be thrown off the land because they cannot buy the land at this time?

For the benefit of those people who are concerned about this, I want to say emphatically that no such action will be taken against them. It is recommended that these individuals go into the Corporation and talk to the officers and explain their difficulty. As a matter of policy, the lots are being offered to the tenants and it is hoped that they will buy. They need not fear that if they are not in a position to buy, that the National Housing Corporation will take stern measures to evict them from the property.

Sir, again, this is part of the Government's initiative to ensure that Barbadians are in a position to pass on property to the next generation and the generation after that. These are not initiatives to be taken lightly. It is clear that we need to develop Barbadians in all aspects of their existence.

I believe that any individual who takes the opportunity to walk into a district where there is significant landownership, the first thing that they would notice is that the quality of housing is better by far than in tenancy situations. It is better by far because these individuals will have the necessary documents to walk into a financial institution and borrow money to improve their housing. Many people would like to improve their houses but because they are tenants they are being told that they cannot borrow money.

Again, that is a feature of the normal commercial institutions but that is something that I am pleased to say that we at the Corporation in recent times, took a tremendous initiative to say to people that we will continue to support Barbadians who live on tenantry lots; whether there are owned by Government or private landlords, the

National Housing Corporation is going to lend you money and use your lease as a security. This is an entirely new approach.

The fundamental assistance that the Corporation has rendered Barbados over the years of its existence cannot now be doubted. It continues to develop housing estates. St. Joseph, Blackmans and part of Claybury are being developed. Sir, there are 120 lots at Blackmans. I believe that the desirability of these lots is clearly seen that 1 200 people from across Barbados have applied for the lots at Blackmans. For every lot that was available at Blackmans you had ten people applying.

Sir, 80 per cent of those lots have been allocated to people who are from St. Joseph and this is a very important initiative. It is most desirable that people who are allowed to reside in the parish that they have grown up in feel more comfortable. It also eases the transition in such a way that if you were to move to a parish that is completely alien to you, there is a certain feeling of dislocation that one experiences. That project is likely to see construction starting in the very near future. I am reliably informed that the final permission for the construction and designs of the houses has recently been given by the Chief Town Planner for the start of construction there.

It is a hallmark of this Government that we cannot just develop residential districts in isolation. So, adjoining the development at Blackmans will be the development of Tamarind Hall where we will see the construction of a new court, post office, police station and a library. A library is something that the people of St. Joseph have been asking for and this will be coming to that development.

If I may digress a bit, we complain bitterly that our young people do not read and that they spend too much time watching television. We can only levy that complaint with any seriousness if we provide the facility for them and they do not use it. I am happy to say that this Government continues its support of literacy and it continues its support of the concept of childhood reading and the development of a library at Blackmans that is going to be a welcomed adjunct to the community that is going to be springing up at Blackmans.

We will have a residential community of 120 lots and a new court, police station and a library so that the residents of this new community and those across St. Joseph are going to have a library at their disposal for the first time.

Sir, Barbadians have always been resourceful people. Many of the youth groups in St. Joseph have been talking about creating their own library. It is worthy to note that the Government is going to be putting a library at Tamarind Hall, which adjoins Blackman.

Mr. Deputy President, I would also like to laud the work of the National Housing Corporation in terms of its General Workers Loan Fund. I experienced a very unfortunate meeting with a client recently. He said that he was a painter and he had two employees. He wanted to buy a piece of property but when he went to the financial institution, they asked him to bring proof of his earnings.

There are some things that we take for granted. A person who is employed can walk into a bank with a job letter in his pocket but a self-employed individual is generally unable to provide that kind of proof, particularly a self-employed individual who has a small business. A self-employed lawyer or accountant may not have such difficulty. This gentleman, who to the best of my knowledge has been working as a painter for many years, has employees, but is simply not able to establish to the financial institution that he has a legitimate continuous source of income. Unfortunately, he was turned away from that financial institution.

The General Workers Loan Fund represents an entirely different kind of thinking. The conditionalities associated with processing loans from the loan fund do not bring with it that kind of stringent application of rules. It is a very flexible arrangement but it recognises that when you are dealing with that particular segment of the society, you are not going to be able to find the kind of documentation that one could normally find if you were dealing with a person who is employed by another.

The irony is, if one of that painter's employees had gone to the same institution and said that they want to borrow money, that individual could have given his employee a job letter stating that he employs 'John Brown' and this is his weekly wage and 'John Brown' may have got the loan. In terms of his own proof of earnings, he found himself unable to do that.

3.40 p.m.

Sir, the General Workers Loan Fund has, for many years now, been serving the Barbadian community where people who formerly would have fallen through the cracks of our financial system, this loan fund has been there to support them.

In closing, on the matter of the National Housing Corporation, therefore, as I said at the beginning, I can hardly think of a Corporation that has done so much for so many in Barbados. It is a Corporation, I reiterate, I had the distinct pleasure of Chairing at sometime in the past. The good work continues and we can expect much further work from them in the future. What is seen now is a shift in their approach because it is result oriented and the results in

housing are seen, not in terms of statistics, but in terms of land ownership and in terms of residences.

Mr. Deputy President, there are several other areas of the Barbadian landscape that I would want to mention this afternoon. Having touched on the matter of, I suppose what people might call these days grassroots issues, we have to recognise that we live in a world which is not unidimensional and while we must at all times focus and remain committed to domestic issues, and remain committed to, in a sense parochial issues, we have to recognise that our capacity to deliver on the parochial issues is determined, in large measure, by our capacity to manage the macro aspects of our economy.

We have to recognise that in a globalising environment, and I know that Senator Laurie will agree with me, standards are not things that we can continue to set for ourselves. I do not support the comment on the matter of backyard slaughtering, but I believe that Senator Laurie's emphasis, if I may take the liberty, is to say that we must have standards which must be capable of being maintained and which must also be maintained.

Standards do not always operate in the area of food and food safety. Standards are now being applied across every aspect of our existence. Standards are now being applied internationally, in terms of how our financial institutions work. Standards are being applied in terms of such things as transparency in Government acquisitions. We are living in a world, which, to all intents and purposes, is ceasing to look inward and looking outward.

Barbados, therefore, perhaps because of its good track record, finds itself under the scrutiny of many international agencies. We do not have to go too far back to remember the challenge posed to us by the OECD and the fact that the Barbados Government, singlehandedly caused the OECD to back away from a position which they had taken against larger domiciles. It is on this occasion that the persuasiveness of the Barbadian leaders has really come to the fore.

Mr. Deputy President, it is clear to all rational thinking people that under the leadership of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and Prime Minister, the Hon. O. S. Arthur, the OECD had to stand up and reckon with a jurisdiction of 250 000 people. There is no other country in the world that can claim to have fought off the threat of the OECD, without making a single concession. We know the history of CARICOM and the history of the concept of unification in approaches. I believe one of the Senators earlier spoke about CARICOM needing to be united, in terms of its positions.

There was no unity in this case because Trinidad said it had nothing to do with us and they bailed out early. The Bahamas accepted the OECD's position, without complaint and it was left to Barbados to lead the charge against the

OECD, which we did successfully.

This now represents a significant turning point in the fortunes of Barbados. We have put our eggs, essentially, in carefully crafted and thought out baskets. The International Financial Services Sector is one that continues to provide for Barbados, Sir, strong prospect for success in the future.

We cannot fool ourselves into thinking that other people do not have this sector as well. It is clear that there are certain international organisations that it would do us well to associate our work with, certainly the work of the Basal Committee on Banking is one that is well known. It is when we recognise that standards are being set, in a sense for us, but really are being set for a global marketplace, that we begin to understand the importance of zeroing in on the global issues that face us.

Barbados has, over the years, benefitted tremendously from a well-skilled Public Service, a public service that has served internationally as well as domestically. I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who have worked ably in negotiating various matters in the FTAA, the World Trade Organisation and so on.

It is precisely because over the years, we have emphasized education and the development of our people that we have domestic resources that we can call on today. If we look across the Caribbean, we will see that many of our neighbours have Government departments that are so poorly staffed that one wonders how they get by at all. I understand that in St. Kitts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has about three people, including a permanent secretary. In Antigua, there is a similar situation.

Now, we have clearly benefitted from a civil service that is well skilled and well trained and I have to say that having had the pleasure and honour of negotiating for CARICOM, that as we negotiate in the fora of the FTAA, sometimes CARICOM's position is really the Barbados position. Precisely, because the ranks of our civil service take the trouble and follow the lead of the Government to ferret out what the issues are and to determine what positions are beneficial for the development of this nation. So that when we go with a position, it becomes really very easy for other countries to sign on to the position, partly because they have not had the resource base to enable them to do it.

Sir, people are constantly amazed when Barbados leads a delegation on property issues. The delegation often consisting of one or two issues to a meeting where the US Delegation might consist of 30 or 40 people on the other side of the table. I have experienced that myself. The people

with whom we negotiate, remain amazed that a small country like Barbados is able to hone in on the issues and to come up with intelligent and solidly backed positions.

It is of tremendous credit to Barbados and it is something that has continued to hold us in good stead so that when Barbados speaks in international fora, people sit up and listen. This is something that is sure to continue in the future, so long as the reigns of Government in this country remain in the hands of a caring and progressive administration.

Aside.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy President, having fought off the challenge of the OECD, we are now poised to take off in our offshore financial services sector. Sir, having enacted physical legislation that is consistent with the various international recommendations and the various international standards set, we find ourselves in a position really to comply with international criteria, far more easily and effectively than many of the larger jurisdiction.

I was pleased to see an e-mail this morning from an international investor which posited, essentially, that Barbados is in a better position to comply with the standards set by the Financial Action Task Force than countries, such as South Africa which have far larger budgets and far greater resources available to them.

We sometimes think of our small size as being a hindrance. We think of it as being something which would impede our progress. The truth is, and I am convinced now that the fact that we are small has always enabled us to make the changes and adjustments that we need to make with some skill and alacrity, so that we are able to face the challenges as they continue to come at us.

We have a well thought out EduTech policy, a well thought out E-commerce policy and Barbados has been able to move to make tremendous strides, in terms of our telecommunications policy. So that in a very short space of time, because we are dealing with smaller numbers but at the same time, we are dealing with highly skilled people, working on behalf of the Government, we have been able to make such changes as we need to make, to ensure the continued success of Barbados as an international financial services sector.

3.50 p.m.

The regard with which we are held today, therefore, is a thousand times higher than the regard with which we were held prior to 1994.

As an attorney in a busy law firm in private practise, I am able to say that we encounter clients who have thought about investing in Barbados in a previous administration but who found that they could not do so because of the uncertainty of the environment with which they were faced not just in terms of economics but in terms of what roles would be applied when seeking concessions.

There is a saying in law that equity is as long or as short as the Chancellor's foot. The message conveyed through that maxim is that when you are talking about something as slippery as equity no one knows really with certainty what is going to happen.

This Administration has been careful to enunciate its investment policy in legislative terms and in clear policy guidelines so that an investor coming to Barbados is not faced with any illusions as to what is available. He is told clearly, if he wishes to invest in the Scotland District, in Carlisle Bay, in Speightstown or in Bridgetown, what concessions are available. He is told clearly what concessions are available if he is interested in inland tourism. There is certainty that attends the fortunes of Barbados today in a way that was entirely absent ten years ago under a different administration, and investors are interested in certainty. It is true that you can never be certain that you would make a profit but they are interested in certainty of the environment. They are interested in knowing what are the concessions that are available to them should they make an investment, secure in the knowledge that they will not have to make some special accommodation with a Minister of government or anything of the sort.

One of the things that I certainly have preached is that there are no hidden costs to doing business in Barbados. There are hidden costs in other jurisdictions, but there are no hidden costs to doing business in Barbados precisely because this Barbados Labour Party, following the best of standards and the best of practices, has set high standards and practices for itself and has insisted on maintaining those standards in terms of governance and fiscal prudence.

So, Mr. Deputy President, we are poised to move ahead. The challenges that have been thrown up to us at the start of this millennium have certainly dulled some of the enthusiasm that we would have felt at the breaking of the year 2000, but under the skilful and compassionate leadership and under the leadership of a Government that understands clearly what brief it has been given by its people – I think it is important to make that point because as a Government we preach policy, but our policies are informed by a brief that has been given to us by the Barbadian electorate – which says that they want a civil society that works, a society where there is continued and increased respect for law and order and a society where no one can be left behind. That is our brief. That is our manuscript.

I venture that as long as this Barbados Labour Party follows from that manuscript, we are in a position to create history when it comes to the quality of life for Barbadians. That is a manuscript that I am happy to associate myself with.

As we continue in the reign of Government the support of the Barbadian people is clearly behind us and we as a Government will pledge to continue in the direction that we have been going always recognising that the results speak for themselves. We have a large number of achievements which are speaking for us over the last eight years. As a result oriented Government we intend not only to publish those results but also to indicate to the people of this country that our plans are never short-term. We have to think today about how we are going to pay our bills 10 or 20 years from now. With that manuscript, we are in a position to secure the lives of the Barbadian people and the children of tomorrow.

With those comments I again wish to reiterate my association with the Appropriation Bill and commend it to the Members of this Honourable Senate.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: I would firstly like to congratulate the last speaker who skilfully used the parish pump. It was probably the first time I heard it being used so skilfully from this House. I think that his use of the National Housing Corporation to demonstrate the policies and the programmes in housing certainly stole the thunder of the Minister of Housing and Lands. We certainly do have before us a potential Minister of Housing and Lands when you think of it.

What I like about the last four presentations was that there was the absence of posturing and ventriloquy. I think there was a lot of merit in what was said by these four speakers. One would expect that at the end of the parliamentary session or near the end of the parliamentary session that there would be a large degree of self-satisfaction and praise. One would expect that the exchanges would be routed in party considerations and therefore we should not be entirely surprised. What it has done however is to deflect substantially from the Estimates of Expenditure. I do not think it was dealt with in any meaningful way by most of the speakers in this debate.
4.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, what I would like to point out is that in these Estimates for the first time that I can recall, debt servicing has been the largest single item while personal emolument has now taken third place in the allocations under Current Expenditure. The debt service is \$622.269 million. Current transfers to organisations and individuals is \$650 million. Wages and salaries, \$582 million. Sir, that sounds to me like an exercise for a good thinker in financial and economic management to arrive at some conclusion

which might not be as salutary as we are led to believe.

I think in a situation where the public sector is over 26 000, has had five years of annual salary increases, has had reasonably good conditions of service maintained in areas such as travelling, *et cetera*, it is surprising that we have reached a stage where debt servicing is our largest outlay on Current Estimates. That tells me that we are travelling on a serious path. It recognises \$100 million more in debt services in the coming year than it was in the last year at a time when we are saying we have cut back on expenditure in order to reduce the deficit in order to pay the high debt servicing bill.

With transfers, I accept there could be a change in terms of transfers based on the fact that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) is now added to the transfers bill and, therefore, comes from salaries and wages.

I think that the decreases have been in places which have not been satisfactorily explained by any of these people so far. There has been a serious decrease even in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) at a time when the hospital should have more money in current expenditure. Here is a new institution, a statutory board that at present benefits from a number of services rendered by central government and would now have to finance itself. Here is a new institution that would have to deal with its own printing and legal services, insurance and travel. A substantial bill is insurance and the hospital itself is probably the most expensive in terms of insurance of Government's institutions. This suggests to me that we either have to be looking for substantial new money later in the financial year or – and I hope this is not so – we want to saddle a new institution with a debt because it is required to borrow. That has been the undoing of too many of our institutions in the past. They had been under capitalised at the start and have found themselves in debt forever. The one to which I must constantly refer is the Barbados Transport Board, which started in 1955 with \$30 000 and has never gotten out of that bind.

I think the hospital is much too important, and one of the things that should be pursued with vigour is to find alternative sources of finance. I have seen hospitals in Canada where one-third or more of their financing comes from foundations but people are not going to covenant money for an institution unless they are satisfied that it is rendering the satisfactory service that it should.

I know there is already a foundation that has offered to do some work for the hospital but it has not received any response from the hospital about requests or suggestions made to it. We, therefore, need to look at the question of

finance of the hospital, its dependence entirely on the public treasury and see if we could come up with innovative ways of dealing with it from its inception and not to wait until it starts to deteriorate further.

The fee structure at the moment would provide much revenue which the hospital needs. It is true that revenues are not being collected. I want to suggest to the Minister responsible for Health that early in its operation, the Hospital Board be mandated to develop ways and means of finding additional revenue for running the hospital. Much has been said over the past year since the Act was enacted and proclaimed last year about instituting the Board with effect from April 1, 2003.

I think a golden opportunity has been lost between December 1998, when the *Haynes Report* was submitted and now, to do the work that had to be done if it was to be a smooth transition. It is not the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW), or Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB). No trade union will do the work that should have been done in sensitising the staff of the hospital and in encouraging them to join the new organisation. No trade union now can either prevent it or cause it to happen.

It has come to my notice that up to now, bodies of staff at the hospital have not been spoken to by anyone. It is not possible to have the staff coming over to work from April 1, because nobody is going to send them. Note they are the employees of the Government of Barbados and as such, they are the responsibility of the Chief Personnel Officer and the Public Service Commission on behalf of the Government of Barbados and the Government cannot send them over to work with a Board. Therefore, the question of secondment is a sensitive area which should have been worked on years ago.

I do not think there is any other place where the staff at the hospital could work but what they can do is to hold Government to ransom, get the benefits of what the constitution allows them and still work at the hospital afterwards as employees of the Board and still the taxpayers would have to pay this large sum of compensation.

There is a gentleman who was one of the three persons who were dislodged from the hospital. I hear the Minister of Health sing the praises of the Psychiatric Hospital more than anything else because that person is the Director of the Psychiatric Hospital. He has not got his money as yet but he is the one, if I had to make the decision, I would invite to take over the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH).

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: I am better informed than most of you when it comes to public sector matters. What I am trying to say is that we have skills here that we should use but we go and depend on foreign consultants. I believe the hospital would do well if it had a powerful, foreign consultant to launch it, with a local counterpart who would be able to take part at some point in time. If the hospital is going to be started with a Board and has been given the money from the April 1, 2003, it would have no authority to pay that staff unless the staff agrees to be seconded to the hospital and the Treasury, the Government of Barbados and the Chief Personnel Officer, would have to continue to pay them because they would remain members of the civil establishment and the Order is still there where all their posts have been provided.
4.10 p.m.

As one who is a signatory to the *Haynes Report* and one who is particularly concerned about the transition, I took it on myself to talk to people in the public service who had responsibility for these matters to sensitise them to the importance of this transition and prepare the road for it but I have failed. I have tried to talk to Mr. Joe Goddard to ensure it was done in the correct way but he advised that no one talked to the people, therefore, I have to keep my views.

The Barbados Tourism Authority got \$60 million in the current financial year. It is scheduled to get \$49.5 million in the new financial year. Pray tell me, with the present situation in the Middle East and the uncertainty in the whole area of travel do we believe that you can short change the Barbados Tourism Authority by that kind of money in 2003/2004? I am more reasonable at the others that have been cut, like the Rural Development Commission and Urban Development Commission. I hear boasting about the roads that these two Commissions did over the last number of years but we were always doing tenantry roads in Barbados. Between 1983 and 1986, the Ministry of Transport and Works did 150 tenantry roads. This is a record that the Urban Development Commission or Rural Development Commission can ever reach. Sir, we do not make a big sound and dance about a few roads built. If we were able to build roads all year long and we have the same technical staff that MTW now has the question is, what will the staff do now if they are no longer responsible for designing, supervising and building roads?

Sir, the rental of property is now over \$18 million. I am disturbed as a citizen and taxpayer that we are not reaching the stage where we can completely revamp lots of our buildings and complete the new ones because we pay \$18 million for rent.

The greatest eyesore in Bridgetown is the west wing of the Public Buildings. In 1983/84 a sum of money was voted specifically to start the repairs of the Public Buildings. A

plan was drawn up to show the scheduling of the various changes but it never materialised. After 20 years the west wing is worse off than it was in 1983 because in 1983 Government offices occupied the west wing but now no one can enter it.

Sir, this is a disgrace. It is not a credit to our capacity to deal with serious matters if the west wing is allowed to remain in the condition it is in presently. It seems that unless there is a BOT arrangement that nothing can be done now. Sir, BOT means build, operate transfer where the private sector builds, then manage the property to get back the money invested and transfer it at a cost back to the owner but we cannot do that with the west wing. I suggest that the west wing is put high on the agenda for reconstruction because it is an eye sore and a derelict building.

I will touch on the question of the Barbados National Bank. I was most impressed two years ago at the pronouncement that Barbados National Bank and Insurance Corporation of Barbados shares were going to be put on the market. It was an aspect of shareholding democracy and I thought it was not necessary to do that if Government owned the shares as the Government represented the people of Barbados but I was told there was merit in giving these shares to the private sector. Now I hear that because of a good offer it is advisable to sell these shares to a foreign purchaser, hidebound.

Sir, I am not hidebound to anything of nationalisation but the Government should not ignore the expression of disgust of people that these shares are being sold to a foreign company. It seems to accord with the concept of privatisation which we referred to in here in our last debate in relation to the GAIA and the Minister gave the assurance that there would be no privatisation of the GAIA but shortly afterward the Chairman of the board said the airport would be privatised.

Sir, who is speaking on behalf of the Government? We need to get our policy right on this matter of privatisation. Any entity that has to be privatised the Government should be the spokesperson and not a minion who says this after the Minister.

If we are going to sell the shares in the Barbados National Bank I hope that care is being taken that the provision in the Bank Act gives Barbados National Bank an exclusive position in relation to other banks where the Government guarantees the deposits and interest for people who use the national bank. When we did the amendment here there was a section in the new Act that said it should continue for as long as the Minister considers it necessary. I hope that he will not consider it necessary one day after the

shares are being sold to Trinidad. It is not something which can be left to be done later unless you want to hear a lot of talk.

4.20 p.m.

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order, Sir. The Barbados National Bank shares are not being sold to Trinidad. They are being sold to the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, as I understand it. Thank you.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Thank you for the less than important intervention.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Sir, I would think that my presence in this Chamber arose from a consideration that because of my long experience in the public service and my present association with a group of older citizens, I could make a contribution in those two areas. I do not want to dwell too much on that.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: In 1999 when I first participated in a debate of this nature, I was told quite glibly about a regrading exercise and that it would take two years. I want to repeat this. In 1999 when I first sat in this Chamber, I was told about a regrading exercise that was being contemplated and that it would take about two years to be effected. I said then and I repeat, it could not be done in two years. I say now that it will not be implemented in a hurry.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. Deputy President, I want to make the point that it will not be implemented in a hurry.

Sir, the other point I want to make about the public service has to do with the question of reform. I am not sure that the people of Barbados have recognised any significant reform in the public service. If you cannot get your response from Town and Country Planning, if you cannot get your passport in a week or so, if you cannot get your birth or baptism certificate in a few days, if you cannot get these things done then you are not going to be satisfied that there has been any significant reform in the public service.

Sir, one of the Senators spoke earlier about the red tape and bureaucracy in accessing funds from the Ministry of Agriculture. I also heard the Minister, who led off the debate, refer to the bureaucracy involved in making a simple appointment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, for the record I am saying that was not always so.

I think that there is no need for some of the stops in the procedure. I cannot see if you are appointing a doctor at the hospital why you have to go to any Minister. Therefore, while it is salutary to hear that this will not happen with the board, I warn that it happens with boards now and I hope that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board will really be the exception.

In reference to older people, I want to say that we are talking about 15 per cent of the adult population of Barbados, not Barbados Association of Retired Persons (BARP), and among the older people some very poor circumstances are existing. We cannot ignore the claim that VAT on food is a heavy burden. It is a burden for the person who gets \$80 a week, who has to go into the supermarket and buy groceries, and there is VAT on some food items.

Sir, there was a relief through the instrumentality of Barbados Association of Retired Persons (BARP), 42 items which we asked that VAT be removed.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: In addition to that, I want to repeat a plea that I made before. Where old people are being shuffled left, right and center, they do not know where to go for information. We asked as an organisation, that is BARP, that at some point in the Ministry of Social Transformation there will be an information desk with relevant posters *et cetera* publicising information so that people will know that when they need information they would know where to go.

Sir, when you think of older folks in Barbados, there are not many that are rich and we need to do these little things to the 15 per cent of our adult population.

Over the years, BARP has made an irrefutable case for a relief on pensions. I am speaking of National Insurance pensions. I am not speaking of pensions generally. The level of rationale is so clear that it boggles the mind that it cannot be understood, if not implemented.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Sir, if you look at a person who pays a registered pension plan, a person who contributes to the Widows and Children Fund and other funds, even a covenant, that money is allowable for tax purposes.

4.30 p.m.

It used to be allowable in 1967 to 1992 for Income Tax purposes, the national insurance contribution. In 1992 because of the crunch, it was no longer allowed but on top of that, the tension formed part of taxable income. So you are

saying that it is not allowed for tax purposes but what you get from it is taxable. If you want a strong case of double taxation that, certainly, is one.

I repeat that it is important to recognise, not who it is coming from, not who is bringing the message but look at the message. I regret to say that we will have to find other ways and means of publicising our efforts because it is too easy, in my view, for anybody to understand far more than somebody in the calibre of our Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

I am not too sure how I should sum up my state in this Chamber so far. I think it was a great learning experience. Here I saw some of the basics of political-back-and-forth. I think that, by and large, the Chamber has listened to the views expressed by those who are not themselves part of the Government side. I could name three or four things which, unfortunately, were not noticed and they were not matters of mere mention. They were matters of substance. When that Bill was being discussed, for changing the Constitution, to allow the females to have the same status as the males citizens, in matters of marriage. I think we pointed out, quite clearly, that there was duplication and conflict of what was passed, in relation to what was allowed to remain in the Act and we have not heard anything. We were told that will be corrected in due course.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to draw to the Honourable Senator's attention that it is improper to reflect on a Bill which has passed this House, unless it is on an amendment.

You are now criticising what the Chamber has done and has already passed.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Thank you, Sir. I would only say that if something is wrong, it should be told that it is wrong. We said it was wrong then and nobody took us on.

I would like to wrap up by simply saying that in some respects, there has been some good work done, over the four and one half years. In many respects, there have been incomplete projects and bits of legislation, some that one feels fairly strongly about. I think there is certain reservation to express about the whole question of the Constitution Reform, the Reconciliation Report and the question of the Republic.

I think what it says is that within a Parliamentary session, no Government can achieve all that it says it would do. What it does not say is that the practice of coming back to the people midterm and explaining this through a new speech from the Throne, has been abandoned over the last eight or ten years, not since 1989, was this done.

I think that shows, not so much disrespect for Parliament as for the people. It is not answering Parliamentary Questions and that is something that one feels bad about, when one has been responsible for twenty years, for ensuring that all Parliamentary Questions that are asked relating to the Ministry in which you were charged, had to be answered within two months. We do not do that any longer and that is the public sector matter I would like to see being tackled.

Mr. Deputy President, all in all, I feel honoured to have been a part of this system and I look forward to every good success for the Senate.

I thank you.

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Bill on the Estimates 2003-2004.

Mr. Deputy President, these Estimates have to be seen in the context of the past eight years and the preparation of the development of this country entering into the new millennium and into a new economic environment. It has to be seen in a much broader context than just in the snapshot of this week or this year.

It is very clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this Barbados Labour Party Government has done a remarkable job in the initial phases in the transformation of our society and our economy. It has addressed both the development of human capital and the development of the people, and it has addressed the infrastructural development of Barbados. Sir, because we have lived with it day in and day out, month in and month out, year after year, many of us do not recognise the gradual change and in some instances, the dramatic change that has taken place in many sectors of the economy and in many areas of our infrastructure.

At the same time, the economy of this world is rapidly being transformed. The impact of technological change has had resounding repercussions around the globe, in the world economy and in the economy of this country.

The Government has put in place, a steady stream of legislation, infrastructural development, human resources development and it is creating an environment for the business community to respond to the challenges of this new century.

Mr. Deputy President, while driving in to be with us here in the Senate today, I listened to an amazing rendition of a Brahms violin concerto with Itzak Propman playing and I was reminded of the excellence of the orchestra and the musicians and the coordination that it took to reproduce that magnificent piece of work. In large measure, that is how the

Barbados Cabinet, the Government of Barbados, has worked over the past nine years.

Asides.

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: It is very clear that the Prime Minister has done a remarkable job of interacting with his Ministers who have had initiative and resolve to change the Barbadian economy and our society, in a way that will prepare us for the vicissitudes of the coming century.

Mr. Deputy President, I will just mention a few of the accomplishments of various ministries. I will start with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to show that this Ministry has really transformed its operations and had to deal with a number of major complex issues, simultaneously.
4.40 p.m.

As we deal with negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in the Free Trade Areas of the Americas, with the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and with the European Union and our relationship with the ACP Nations, the Division of Foreign Trade has had to garnish critical skills and to do an enormous amount of work over the past few years to come to grips with the many issues that have arisen.

But more dramatic, Mr. Deputy President, is the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has interacted with the many different ministries that have interest in these various negotiations. These include the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of International Business with the Corporate Registry. This Government has created a new post in Geneva which to my mind is probably the most important foreign affairs post for Barbados in the coming decades. That is the post that interacts with the World Trade Organisation, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organisation and the International Telecommunications Bureau.

We are at the stage where we are creating a new global order where new frameworks are being forged for the conduct of the global economy that is emerging and the global systems that will impact on that global economy.

Mr. Deputy President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has developed some critical skills and has gone a long way into utilising modern technology to facilitate their communications and the development of the knowledge that is necessary for the negotiating teams to be able to fulfil or to carry out our national objectives.

At the same time, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has also been tremendously active in the physical development of Bridgetown. We have the trading environment and our foreign affairs relationships to look after, but we also are keenly aware of the need for upgrading our physical infrastructure. This year, in the 375th Anniversary of Bridgetown, the Minister can be justly proud of much of the work that has been done to upgrade Swan Street, Broad Street and the Boardwalk. Fairly soon the Baxters Road/Tudor Street complex will be completed. Work is proceeding along with the Town Hall. We have had the old customs liquor bond renovated. There is the London Bourne Towers. Church Village is still to be completed. Last but not least, there is going to be the breaking of the ground this year for the Pierhead Development which has been long in coming but which truly is a massive project which will spread beyond the Pierhead to encompass Independence Square and the work to be done on the high-rise parking and the Empire Theatre. All of this is being done to enhance the capital City of Barbados.

At the same time we are also developing the international structures and trading structures that would let us meet the new economic environment that is unfolding before us.

Mr. Deputy President, the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport have been similarly active in developing our hospitality industry. We have much criticism about the GEMS Project and people are focussing on the specific project itself, but many government works around the globe, not just in Barbados, are works that are intended to cede private sector activity. I am minded of the Marriot Marque that was built on Broadway in New York with a subvention of \$40 million from the City of New York so that it would have a keystone effect for the development of 42nd Street and the Broadway area which was an area that had become very depressed and needed significant clean up.

In the same way, the GEMS project has stimulated renovation and building activities along the South Coast and has uplifted the quality of the hotel plant on the South Coast to a significant degree. Just a few days ago I was talking to one of the managers of one of the newer places on the South Coast and he told me that his annual occupancy rate had risen from 85 per cent last year to 89 per cent this year. An average year-round occupancy rate of 89 per cent in the Caribbean is a laudable and substantial occupancy rate and certainly one that would create profit for the enterprise. Some of these things have been a result of upgrading the plant and upgrading the human resources in that plant through the training and development of people. This is being done along the South Coast.

We are just not looking at this thing in a linear context. We have had the South Coast Sewerage Project under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, and though there have

been delays due to contractor problems in that operation, it is coming to an end and it will clean up the inshore waters of the whole South Coast area and provide a much more conducive environment for the hospitality industry.

I think you would recognise, Mr. President, that there have been hotels that were plagued with offensive odours and overflowing cesspits and so on for a very long time in this area, but that now will become a thing of the past.

Mr. Deputy President, we have got the infrastructural development going and we have had a complete renovation of the St. Lawrence Gap area and it is now one of the most pleasing hospitality industry areas in the country today.

This has brought about continuing investment and there are more private sector investments that are now flowing. Several of the hotels have upgraded significantly and we have had some of the other hotels also expanding their operations.

I find it most heartening, Mr. Deputy President, to see the development of the old Barracks area that is across from Coconut Court that had been abandoned and disused for a very, very long period of time. I think that it is being renovated most tastefully and will add to our overall activities. I am advised it is a heritage site. I think behind that there are going to be other developments being built.
4.50 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, the Ministry of International Transport has also been active in the development of the airport and in the expansion of the harbour facilities. We have had significant dredging activities which have allowed the new super ships to berth in Barbados and because of the twin activities of developing the Bridgetown Port and the Grantley Adams International Airport, Barbados is now going to become a more attractive sight for sporting cruise ships. I understand this coming year we will see more home porting taking place and the addition of approximately 250 flights in the winter season alone, to service those ships.

All of these things are predicated upon how things pan out this year but I am hopeful and optimistic. We have also seen the continuing expansion at the Airport. People only see the buildings that are going up but over the past few years we have expanded the parking apron substantially so that we can handle more aircraft. The taxiway has been completely resurfaced. The runway has been resurfaced and the equipment upgraded.

Mr. Deputy President, the activities of the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport are geared to our hospitality industry capacity and to add to the infrastructure

of Barbados that makes it a premier destination for holiday activities, as well as for international business.

With that, I move to the Ministry of Economic Development where continuing activities of that Ministry has prepared Barbados to continue into the development of international business. Last year we had an increase in the number of International Business Companies (IBCs) that have been formed in Barbados.

I think with the robust negotiations that are taking place, we are forging a unique environment for international business to be conducted in specific fields of activity. Already we know that international business activity contributes 40 per cent of the corporate tax take in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy President, we have heard much about the over taxation of the average taxpayer. However, I think when one does an analysis of the taxes paid by international businesses through corporate tax, the VAT paid by those businesses and VAT paid by visitors in Barbados, one would find that approximately 17 per cent of the tax take is from international businesses and visitors. Therefore, when one starts to adjust the tax take for individuals, one would find the average tax being paid by Barbadians on a per capita basis is much lower than that quoted by Senator Mascoll earlier in this Debate.

Sir, the Minister of Economic Affairs has been active in pursuing more business from the global insurance industry. This is meaningful business because it provides significant back office support for many insurance corporations and could be a major generator of meaningful employment of highly skilled individuals.

Sir, the global insurance business has been in a turmoil since 9th September, 2001, along with subsequent developments and declines of the world stock market. Despite those facts, Mr. Deputy President, we have noticed an increase in the business activity by the international insurance companies in Barbados. We are now positioning ourselves so that when the upturn comes, we would be able to capitalise on the growth of that market once again.

Mr. Deputy President, we have to look at this development in a realistic sense. We have to have a continuity of development through good times and bad times. We have to maintain both the stability and the social fabric of this country. We also have to continue to upgrade our infrastructure so that when the waves come we can catch them and we have a boat on which to sail. That, precisely, is what the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is doing with these Estimates and has done with the Estimates in the previous years, to ride out the rough times and to be prudent this year.

Mr. Deputy President, I have heard much said about the fact that suddenly we are responding to cutting the deficit spending because the International Monetary Fund (IMF) told us so to do. I distinctly recall hearing the Minister of Finance saying last year when he announced the deficit spending that he was envisioning for that year, he would be cutting it back this year. He said that was to be a one-off time and that we would be returning to a regime of prudence and we would not do it all in one fell swoop. That is precisely what is happening here today.

Therefore, I do not understand how people could wake up yesterday morning and decide that it was the IMF who were here last November, that told the Prime Minister last March, that he should cut the deficit spending this year. It is very clear this was all along in the strategic plans in the Ministry of Finance and they have acted accordingly.

Mr. Deputy President, once again, it just shows the prudent, financial and economic management of this country.

I will refer to the Economic and Financial Policies of 22nd October. I said last March but I was mistaken where the Prime Minister said the following:

“Over the course of the last year, we have relied upon a counter-cyclical fiscal policy to help us offset the severity of the recession facing this country. This essentially is entailed as a means of maintaining a satisfactory level of domestic demand in the economy, incurring an overall fiscal deficit that has been larger than the deficit that we would normally seek to incur.

The policy was feasible and could be implemented without severely impairing the Balance of Payments because of the extraordinary foreign exchange position that has been built up over the past 8 years. There is a limit, however, to the degree to which the expansion physical policies in this time can be used if we are to achieve sustainable economic growth. In addition, the Government does not propose to foist on Barbados, debt service difficulties of a kind that has brought so much havoc in so many developing countries. We propose, therefore, as soon as circumstances permit, to return our overall fiscal deficits, to a level of approximately 2.5 per cent of GDP that we regard as being sustainable.”

Again, in the Estimates Debate, it was pointed out that this was an interim step to move us back to the 2.5 per cent level. Therefore, there has been extreme prudence in the development of these Estimates.
5.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, the Ministry of Public Works, over the past few years has presided over an unprecedented

programme of road building. They have completed most of the bypass roads going around Bridgetown and in Bridgetown itself. Roads were resurfaced from the Crane, Gemswick and all the way back to the airport. There is a major road programme on Highway W and most of that is completed. People do not recognise that there has been an improvement in traffic flow in recent months. Last week I was on the west coast and had to return to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and travelled the bypass road up to Culloden Road and traffic moved expeditiously and flowed swiftly. I come to work along Pine Road every day and travelling now as apposed to five years ago is like chalk and cheese. It is smoother, quicker and much more expeditious. Once again, these things are not done overnight.

We have tackled the issue of drainage around the country. We do not hear of flooding as we used to hear before. We have undertaken a major project in Headleys Land which will drain the entire area into the Constitution River and there is significant improvement. The representative for that area is to be commended for helping to oversee the activities in that area.

The Sanitation Service Authority has been upgraded substantially over a period of years and the collection activities have been much improved and enhanced. The Ministry of Health will speak more about that but there are ongoing plans for further improving the collection capacity and a much better disposal and management plan for solid waste.

We continue to spend significant sums of money on education. I want to talk about EduTech and the development of the university college of Barbados. These are significant projects where additional activities are going to be undertaken at the tertiary level particularly in the area of information technology and research on the new internet protocols which are being developed which are going to define the internet of the future.

Mr. Deputy President, I speak of Internet Protocol Version 6 as opposed to Internet Protocol Version 4 which we are currently using. This heralds a new internet development which will add better band-width, increase security, tele-medicine and tele-education, better handling of video and has major impact on trading activities around the globe. This will transform the way people use distance learning and the way the medical profession uses telemedicine. This use of protocol is in the developmental stage and countries around the globe have been asked to participate in the trials and experimental phase of the development of this Internet Protocol Version 6.

I am happy to report that the principal of the Barbados Community College is interested in the IT department being involved in the process and will be meeting next week to define how this may well be done. Once again Barbados is in the lead in the Caribbean in this area because no other

country is involved in this type of activity at the present time.

EduTech is an extremely important programme and I am astounded to hear an educator say it is a waste of money. Sir, EduTech is not about teaching people to be computer literate. It is about changing the mindsets and the way they use and transit information. It changes the way they communicate and their perspective of the globe they live in. It takes them out of the island mentality and hopefully will create a less xenophobic population.

Once again, this programme is the one that will define Barbados of the future. At the same time, the Government is well aware of the problems of digital divide and I am pleased to say that in the Ministry of Social Transformation there is a most exciting programme to develop resource centres. Resource centres have taken on like wild fire and there are oversubscribed and no more people can be taken into them.

There are approximately nine centres opened presently and Government's eventual plan is for 18 more centres to be open. I would like to throw out a challenge to the NGOs, the churches and the private sector to match Government with this programme. The churches have buildings that are disused or under-utilised. The private sector has skills, capital and equipment that it may be replacing and the NGOs might have volunteer people who would like to involve themselves in community activity. If they came together, they could complement Government's programme by creating resource centres of their own which will allow for computer training, internet access and development of skills for those less fortunate in our society. To my mind, this is an activity worth doing. I am sure that the Minister of Finance will be more than generous in assisting this particular programme.

I intended to say something about housing but after a full explanation from Senator Dale Marshall I can only say that Government has done more in the past eight years to provide housing for low income people than any other previous Government.

We have also continued the revolutionary programme by taking the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and applying it to urban tenancies where people can now buy their own property at a subsidised rate of \$2.50 per square foot. We have seen dramatic changes in the country where people have bought their own land and are building their own homes with the help of neighbours and friends and through very creative financing activities. We have seen a transformation of the rural tenancies. I have no doubt that a similar transformation will revitalise the city areas.

5.10 p.m.

I hope that there was some disquiet about the difficulty of the elderly in accessing information regarding their national insurance *et cetera*. I will illustrate what is being done about this to show in a microcosm what Government intends to do in the area of e-government, that is, electronic government.

The National Insurance Scheme has embarked upon a programme that will put in place a network system that would allow every worker in Barbados and every retired person to access their National Insurance account to ensure that it is up-to-date and date that the contributions are being made to it. This is a remarkable programme because it will create a self-policing system. It will reduce the administrative cost considerably.

Sir, when we take that system into account, we will see that ultimately there would be widening circles of information that could be layered on this network so that through the enhanced security systems that would be available, which would maintain individual privacy, people would be able to access information they want regarding naturalisation, immigration forms or any information required from any government department.

Sir, this would be accessible to all Barbadians because the Government is providing the opportunity for anyone in our society who has the skill and desire to come to a kiosk and get that information.

Mr. Deputy President, we talk about living in a dynamic environment. The cost of technology is plummeting daily and more and more devices will come on stream which will allow people to communicate at a lesser cost until that cost approaches zero.

I feel that the Barbados Government is focused on making Barbados technologically liberal, making sure that everybody comes along regardless of their status in society or economic capability. I hope that this would be met by the private sector in the area of training and development of their own staff.

Mr. Deputy President, we talked about Public Sector Reform. Public sector reform cannot happen in a vacuum. Public sector reform and private sector reform have to happen together. The greatest challenge that we probably face in this regard is the creation of new systems of communication and management, utilising the technology that we already have in place.

I must say that much of the technology that is in place in the private and public sector is tremendously under-utilised. I would not want to put a percentage figure to it but because people continue to do things the old way, people continue to take paper-based systems and transfer them to a

computerised system, we are not maximising the potential of the communication of a network system. We also have to devise different lines of authority and communication. Therefore, the overall hierarchical concept of how a corporation, NGO or Government is structured has to change.

Mr. Deputy President, this is going to be the transformational thing that we need to get through to move Barbados firmly into the 21st century. It is not about technology. It is about management structures and it is about how we do business.

Mr. Deputy President, all of the Ministries in Government are challenged by providing better service to the citizens of Barbados. More cordial, swifter and accurate service is required. Therefore, they are utilising technology to arrive at this. They are also involved in massive amounts of human resource training but it is about changing mindsets. It is a matter of changing our society and this is all part and parcel of the reform that is taking place.

Sir, recently, the Minister of Physical Development and the Environment addressed her Ministry. She outlined a list of things that had to take place: The need to improve the slow nature of the initial computerised application process; the need for improved training and courtesy of front desk staff; the availability of senior Town and Country Planning to answer complex developmental planning queries at the front desk; the sensitivity of Town and Country Planning staff to economic implications to applicants in Barbados where the planning process is severely protracted, and the need for a geographic information system which is likened to a general management system. Sir, that is a revolutionary system where we use digitalised geographical information systems linked to a management system. This means that a week's work can be done in five minutes.

Mr. Deputy President, we can see that the Minister has been highlighting a series of initiatives in her department in streamlining Town and Country Planning to make it more transparent, efficient and user-friendly.

Sir, there seems to be a general perspective that when you buy a computer system and you put it in place, train everybody how to use it and start working with it, you have computerised the operations. Sir, nothing can be further from the truth. That is the beginning of computerisation and you must continue to develop that programme, process skills of people and to interact with the customer and user to see how things are more friendly and how they can be adjusted to better suit the needs of the customer. That is the process of computerisation.

5.20 p.m.

Now, Mr. Deputy President, we all know that we are going through a traumatic period of time and the war has had much play and we do not know how this will impact on Barbados or the Caribbean. There has been much criticism of the way in which the war has started and I appreciate that criticism. However, it is almost immoral to oppose the war in Iraq and not simultaneously address Saddam's crimes against humanity.

Sir, you have to understand that while I understand and also identify with a great feeling for peace, I think I can speak with a little bit more authority here on that subject than most in this Chamber, because I have seen the horrors of a war and still recall things that I would rather forget.

However, we cannot ignore the crimes against humanity that Saddam and people like Pol Pot have visited upon us. I said Pol Pot because I recall, with anguish, how the rest of the world turned their backs on Cambodia and let him do as he would, until the Vietnamese had enough of it and stepped in and put a stop to it.

So I think that there is something we have to learn about intervention and about how the United Nations works or should work. Nothing is perfect in this world, but I am also mindful of the fact that both France and Russia have sold substantial amounts of technology to Iraq and that there is a certain disquiet about what may be uncovered in the coming weeks.

Mr. Deputy President, I also am concerned about the effects of this war. I am also concerned as, Sir John Stanley said, about the wider connotations, when one considers what is happening in Iran and North Korea. We live in a fragile world and at a fragile time. It is in that context that the Prime Minister has been prudent in these Estimates and has also stated that he would revisit them in the light of unfolding activities.

Mr. Deputy President, I support a call for a peace that will be long lasting and a peace that will be beneficial to all those involved in the current conflict. How that may be achieved, I do not know. The die has been cast and what we have to do is to ensure that we manage our economy and environment in a way that will be in the best interest of all the people in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy President, with those few words, I support this Bill. Thank you.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended for 15 minutes to resume at 5.45 p.m.

The question that this Sitting be now suspended until 5.45 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly. 5.30 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT in the Chair.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, after spending two sessions in this August Chamber, I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Appropriation Bill and I will carry on from where Senator Goddard left off. He gave a list of areas that the Minister of Physical Development and the Environment would like to look at and I want to say a few words in that regard on pollution control.

This Ministry has a grant of \$44.9 million, but if you look in the revised objectives, pollution control cannot be found in any of the old objectives or the new objectives. I would like to know if this is an oversight or if it is an error and what is the policy on pollution control.

I would like to deal briefly with plant emission. I am thinking in terms of the Barbados Light and Power Company at Batts Rock, Pine Hill Dairy and the sugar factories that pollute the air that we breathe in abundance. If you are wearing a white dress in the Batts Rock area, the amount of black smoke that is spewed out down there turns the dress black, so can you imagine what that will do to your lungs. There are filters that are available worldwide that control this pollution. I would like to see the Ministry of the Environment taking a closer look at that type of pollution.

I would like to talk a little about automotive pollution, motorised vehicles that emit clouds of black smoke. Sometimes if you are driving behind them you would see that they even mark the ground, so could you imagine what they will do to you when you breathe? All you have to do is to visit the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Asthma Bay and see the number of people who are suffering from asthma. If you talk to elderly people like myself you would hear about the problems we are getting in the golden years of our life simply because of the many cars that have been added to our streets and the polluted air that is making our life uncomfortable.

In addition to that, we have the burning of refuse. I heard the Minister of Physical Development and the Environment speaking on the radio when she was trying to promote her policies and somebody asked her about the burning of stuff and she said that they were not planning to look at that, but I suggest that they need to start looking at it very fast because many of us who are in our homes cannot breathe. I myself have spent \$6 000 in all sorts of equipment

to control the air that I breathe at home, but yet some days when I come home, people are burning the leaves that they raked up on top of the Lazaretto Hill which defeat the purpose of the money that I have spent to purify the air that I have to breathe.

The point is that the air in Barbados is getting more and more polluted. It is nice to have all of these vehicles but it is also nice to bring some form of legislation to control emission of smoke and noise pollution. There is a group, the Society for a Quieter Barbados, which has banded together to promote a reduction in the noise levels. We also need a cleaner Barbados with cleaner air to breathe because it would save quite a lot of money in health because health care as we know is a very expensive item in our agenda.

In addition to that, there is dumping. For example, the refuse from the St. Leonards School. What they are doing is taking all of the rubble and dumping it in the village where the people live and they are not even putting any water on it to dampen it and sometimes at night those poor villagers cannot sleep. They are trying to clear the rubble at the St. Leonards School but they are not carrying it to the dump, they are putting it in the village which is disgraceful. I myself have written a letter on the behalf of my maid when they pushed down all of her fence and mash up her bicycles and they have been giving her the run around for about five months now by promising to come and look at it to compensate her. When Honourable Senators leave here on their way home, they can drive down there at the back of the St. Leonards School and see that they are dumping the rubble in the village that gives off a lot of dust for the people to breathe in. When they ask them if they are not going to wet it, they say no, they do not have any time.

The Minister of Health is here and he is hearing this now. This is election time. Burning stuff is a fire hazard. The St. Peter's Church was burnt down because they were burning refuse. Now in all fairness to the health workers, we use to teach in the olden days that one method of controlling the burning of refuse was to burn it in a bin or a can. In those days that was okay because we did not have all of these buses and cars on the road polluting the road. Today that is no longer okay. It is really a nuisance to the elderly people the very young and the very old. When you are in your middle age and you are a young adult these things do not seem to worry you, but when you are very young and when you are much older it becomes a problem. Could you imagine how many man hours are lost because of pollution? We have to think seriously about doing something about this pollution in the new year. This is one of the things I have spoken about during my two terms in office and I would like to see something being done about that.

Mr. President, I was really ashamed the other day to hear that schools had to be closed because of mosquitoes and fumes coming from a laundry for over two years. I can

understand two months but not two years. Something has to be done about these fumes that are affecting our children and going into the atmosphere. When it comes to mosquitoes, I cannot believe that a school had to be closed because of mosquitoes.

Mr. President, I have spoken about this and I am going to speak about it because this is my last chance to speak. Years ago we used to have a cadre of people stationed at the Lazaretto called the *Aedes Aegypti* control workers. A department was headed by a public health inspector and those workers did absolutely nothing but to go from house to house 365 days a year looking for mosquitoes and spraying them. Now with centralisation, it was disbanded and they brought them under the public health inspectorate unit and it is lost. We have to get back to decentralisation in certain areas. That is one area that we have to look at especially with the West Nile virus stirring and we are not sure when the plagues are going to bring that mosquito to Barbados.

In those days when I was a health education officer, they used to look at the *Aedes Aegypti* index to find out how many *Aedes Aegypti* mosquitoes were in the area. We have managed to get rid of the Dengue Fever and keep it under control because you had people who did absolutely nothing but go from house to house and look for the mosquitoes to spray and get rid of those mosquitoes or do something to get rid of them and educate the people what to do. I am pleading for us to get back to those days where we do not have to close schools or any institution because of mosquitoes infestation.

In addition to this unit, we have the Coastal Zone Management Unit. I see that they are trying to upgrade it because they want to have geological surveys *et cetera*. I sincerely hope that would come to pass sooner rather than later because it is really necessary for persons who live on the coast to know exactly the quality of the land on which they are building. It costs about \$10 000 to get someone to do a geophysical survey which is a lot of money for a poor person.

5.55 p.m.

Government needs to make that available to persons and to examine it so that people know exactly what they can and cannot do, so that it becomes transparent.

In addition, I would like the Ministry of Physical Development and the Environment to look at the legislation and to stop making decisions based on what they term as merit. They cannot say whose merit. Is it the owners merit? Is it the Minister's merit? Is it Town Planning merit? Whose merit is it for them to make a decision? They have to define

exactly what they mean so that people will know when a decision is made, it is made fairly.

Mr. President, I declare an interest in Town and Country Planning. I have had a lot of problems with the Town and Country Planning Department and will not stop talking about it. I have also declared an interest about the mosquitoes. As a Health Education Officer, I have brought the Ministry of Health up to a certain level of health education. Now there is only one education officer there, neither has the Ministry expanded that department despite the fact that I wrote a number of proposals for them to staff a proper health education unit.

We cannot go very far without health education. There are diseases such as HIV/AIDS. There is no cure for that and, therefore, there has to be health education. The number of administrations, Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party, seem to have a fear of setting up a proper health care education unit with persons going out into the community, in order to help educate the people to be healthy.

Before the time runs out, let me start with my pet topic – nursing. When I came to this Senate, I said I would have tried to use my position to bring nursing from the 1900s into the 21st Century. I have not been successful but would still try, though this is the last opportunity that I have to do so.

Mr. President, the Leader of Government Business has mentioned that the nurses have recently developed a strategic plan. One hundred and twenty-five persons were invited to Sam Lords' Castle to develop a National Strategic Plan for nursing services from the year 2002 to 2012. The Nurses Assistants Aides Association of Barbados (NAAAB) of which I was the founding President was not invited to the organisation. Senator Rickinson who has been in this Senate speaking about nursing was not even invited to the opening ceremony. No professional organisation was properly represented, yet all kinds of organisations were invited.

I would like to say publicly that nurses in this country must get their act together. There cannot be a strategic plan of nurses and not invite the professional organisations to be heavily represented. Who then is going to develop the strategic nursing plan? It does not matter how many boards are put in the hospital, if this is the way the nurses are going to function, then the hospital is not going to go anywhere.

It does not matter how much money is poured into the Ministry of Health. I see in this Budget that the Ministry of Health has the largest budget. From the first day I entered this Senate I said that health is a bottomless pit. It has reached the point of diminishing returns and increasing costs and would suck in any amount of money that is being put into it. It has to be restructured and I have outlined the way

in which it should be reconstructed. The Ministry of Health has to be decentralised.

Aside.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: That was not the only strategic plan that had been developed. They developed one just before the last election and have never discussed it. It was simply put aside and another one was developed. I was not invited to the first strategic plan because I told them where they were going wrong and they did not want me there. They had no idea what they were doing.

Aside.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, please address the Chair. Try not to be distracted by asides that are coming from the Other Side.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, we all know that in a day like today, everybody is talking about what is happening in Iraq. We do not know what is going to happen tomorrow. How could one start developing a strategic plan from 2002 to 2012? This long range planning has to be cut out and formulate a plan from 2002 to 2005 and revise it. The world is changing so fast that one does not know what is happening throughout the world. There is also the need for different types of nurses because there are different types of specialisation. The problem is that they do not want to listen and I am saying this publicly. Once I was asked to give a lecture at the Barbados Community College on health and the law and the majority of the nursing teachers boycotted the feature address. They did not want to learn about health and the law, yet when they had the strategic plan, they wrote the wrong things because they did not know about the process of legislation.

Nurses have to sit up, that is why we cannot go anywhere. That is why, as soon as we train the nurses, they leave. This is not the first time that we have begun to train many nurses. We used to train 60 nurses every six months during the last administration when Mr. Brandford Taitt was Minister of Health. Where are those nurses now? They have gone overseas and those who are now being trained, will go. They will not give them a proper wage.

The Hallam Report indicated that nurses should be given a proper wage in order to stop them from leaving. In 1966 when I came back to Barbados, they were given a proper wage. I was one of the people who was attracted back to Barbados because it was worthwhile coming back to work. The wages were not as much as the developed countries but the pay was a decent one. One cannot raise the Parliamentary wages and not the nurses and expect to keep the nurses in the island.

6.05 p.m.

The nurses are leaving and will continue to leave until you give them more money and restructure the nursing service by decentralising it. All those persons walking around with boots giving the nurses trouble should be put on the ward as specialists to do some of the work and guide the nurses. Sir, the managers deal with the personalities of the nurses, not the function of the nurses and they are very petty. This is what is causing the nurses to leave.

We have to decentralise the nursing services, allocate a budget to each ward, train people in modern management practices and bring in specialists in nursing in order to get anywhere. This is nothing new because a proposal of these ideas was sent to the Ministry of Health since 1995 when I was President of the organisation and it has been ignored and year after year, I talk about specialisation in nursing and no one listens. Sir, a doctor comes from medical school, trains and in three years they specialise and move forward but the nurses come in as staff nurses and when they are 60 years old they leave as staff nurses. Sir, this is the system that exists in Barbados.

Nurses who are trained to work in the intensive care unit, if the manager does not like you, you will be moved elsewhere even though you are trained to work in that area and no Board will change this culture. When the nurses become administrators and work in the office, they change and adopt old practices. We have to quickly bring in two nursing administrators from overseas who do not have an axe to grind in order to sort out the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I know it has been said that the Psychiatric Hospital has done well and I accept that because I hold no brief for the person in charge even though we do not see eye to eye but he has done an excellent job. In fact, he has written me some nasty letters but he has done an excellent job and continues to do so. In fact, we had a seminar for 75 of our members and he gave the feature address. He is an excellent manager and a professional person. We need professional people in the system who can agree to disagree.

Sir, we all await the Board to begin its work in two weeks time but it will be business as usual once people are there with the same culture and attitudes. I cannot leave the Senate without saying that I was a member of the Haynes Commission and we invited the National Union of Public Workers several times to appear before the Commission and they bluntly refused to come to represent the workers and are now publicly talking all sorts of things.

Sir, I want to say that I support the Board because the Queen Elizabeth Hospital needs a Board. It will not change things overnight but the Board is needed to get rid of some of these prejudices. I will give an example. In August 2001,

a poor health aide caught scabies from a patient and infected her clothes and her mattress and since then we were trying to get money to replace the bed but to no avail. She took her money and bought a new bed. The matter went before the Hospital Director and the Ministry of Health and presently it is at the Minister of Finance.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: The last letter we received said the matter was before the Minister of Finance and the cost of the bed is only \$1000 yet we hear that GEMS is allocated millions of dollars.

Mr. President, the nurses do not give reports to the health aides. We have begged the nurses to give the health aides but the nurses do not want the health aides to work at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and therefore, do not give them a report of what is happening and the aides then pick up scabies and other diseases and infect their beds so the Government should be responsible for replacing the bed.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Why should we need a Board to solve the matter of the bed. I am also lobbying the Leader of the Senate to solve the matter. But, do you think I should have to bother a Minister about a mattress?

Sir, the Hospital Director has not made a decision nor has he said yes or no.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: We are not interested in suing anybody. We know that we can sue them and get more than a mattress but I am giving an example because we are only interested in the development of the nursing system and making decisions about the future of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, I have the letter here which says that the Minister of Finance is dealing with the matter and I will make it a document of the Senate. Sir, are you going to tell me that is what happens at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? What sort of managers we have there that they cannot sit down and make a decision? They brought in Human Resource Managers and they cannot do the work. Sir, we have to bring in a team of people to do the work because they cannot sit down and make simple decisions.

6.15 p.m.

There is a lot of talk about the Accident and Emergency Department. I do not know what is going to happen when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is going to be financed by its own money. I looked and I realised that there is no new money being allocated. I realise that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has to function as a clinic. I said that in this Senate on several occasions because after a certain time at night and you get sick, there is no place to go for medical attention other than the Accident and Emergency Department.

Mr. President, very few private doctors want to make house calls after a certain hour at night. The Sir Winston Scott Polyclinic does not open 24 hours a day. Unless you can open the polyclinics 24 hours a day, you cannot relieve the pressure that is being placed on the Accident and Emergency Department at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, I am cautioning the public not to look for any miracles from any Board. The Board can only do so much and it is going to take years to do it. It is a good thing that the Government has to pay them because it would give them time to put things in place because there are a lot of things that need to be sorted out.

Mr. President, if the situation with the nurses is not sorted out, we will never get the Queen Elizabeth Hospital sorted out because nurses are working 24 hours a day. During the night and on bank holidays the nurses practically run the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because all the other staff go home. When the nurses want a doctor, they call them at home or in their room if they are on the compound.

I spoke a lot in this Senate and I sent in a minority report to the Haynes Commission and nobody listened to me because they thought that I was being awkward when I sent in the report. I sent in this letter from my heart and the same thing that I told them would happen is happening. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is in a mess.

Sir, recently when my late sister was hospitalised, the people who work in the office had to run the ward. There were no nurses on duty and that is how bad it is. Can you imagine that the nurses who are running the office had to put down their pens and go and manage the wards. There are not enough nurses at the hospital and sometimes the health aides are the ones that run the wards. These are the same health aides that they do not want at the hospital. I blame the health care system for not educating the nurses about health aides. Mr. President, when I trained as a nurse I did not think that I would be a nurse if they were no health aides around.

In 1955 when I was training in England, we had nurses' auxiliaries to give bed pans to patients and to bathe patients. Are you telling me that in the year 2003 we are trying to bring in health aides to help bathe, feed and do certain things for the patients and some of the nurses do not want to have them around by giving them a hard time.

Sir, the health aides are given some very ugly uniforms even though they had agreed on a suitable design. This design went to the Matron and the Ministry of Health and up to now they do not have a decent looking uniform.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Sir, I think that the Ministry of the Civil Service must take some of the blame for this because for over a year a letter for representation of these health aides was sitting on the desk in that Ministry and they would not even reply to the correspondence. They replied after the National Union of Public Workers went into the hospital and convinced some of the health aides to join the union. The Ministry also did the same thing to the Elroy Centre. Mr. President, the Ministry of Civil Service is worse than the private nursing homes. We represent private nursing homes and we do not have those kinds of problems.

Mr. President, the Ministry waits until the members drop out from the union one by one and then they say to the union that they do not have the majority of the members, therefore, they do not have full representation and they can only represent the members one by one.

Sir, these are the kinds of things that are happening and people do not believe that these things are happening in the Ministry of the Civil Service. These things have to change if we are going to make any progress in improving the standards at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, the Civil Establishment Order came out in 2001. Sir, they did not state that certification in ward techniques should be a requirement. This is a requirement in order for anyone to work in an operating theatre. This qualification is not stated in the qualification for the operating theatre but a mental nurse is stated.

Mr. President, what does mental nursing have to do with the running an operating theatre? Absolutely nothing, unless you are going to analyse the doctors. It has nothing to do with it.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: This kind of information is what is required in a Civil Establishment Order for qualifications for workers in an operating theatre.

Sir, another area of concern is where a Chief Public Health Nurse is required to have less qualification than a Senior Public Health Nurse. A Senior Public Health Nurse is required to have a degree but not the Chief Public Health Nurse. We cannot have situations like these, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Sir, the Matron or the Director must have qualification in general nursing and mental nursing. There are approximately 8 beds for mental patients at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and all the other beds are for medical patients and no mental nursing qualifications are required to manage those beds for medical patients.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is not a mental hospital. These are the kinds of things that we have in nursing and expect things to improve when we put a mental nurse to run a hospital. Sir, mental nursing is totally different from general nursing.

Sir, we have a similar situation at the Geriatric Hospitals. Nurses are trained as mental nurses and they appoint them as staff nurses at the Geriatric Hospitals. When the mental nurses are appointed in these positions, they say that they cannot do certain things because they are trained as mental nurses. Mental nurses should only function in a mental institution.

Sir, it is like getting a carpenter to do plumbing. We cannot run a hospital like this. These are serious anomalies in the nursing profession.
6.25 p.m.

Sir, when I get up and talk like this, you can understand they do not want me to help them develop any strategies in nursing because they want to go and do nonsense and write these upside down nursing practices that are not going to work. I would appeal to those who are responsible for civil establishment to look at the qualifications.

While I am speaking, I must congratulate the Minister of Health who invited me to sit with the General Nursing Council at a meeting...

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Since then, a committee has been formed and I was invited to sit with them to help them look at the General Nursing Council. The General Nursing Council is a body that controls nursing.

Nurses have to register every year in order to practice in Barbados. Those who do not work for the Government, like myself, have to pay a fee to get a licence. Many people do not know this.

The General Nursing Council is a very powerful body and is similar to the Medical Council, the Veterinary Council, the Legal Council, *et cetera*. It controls nursing in

Barbados and it is the only body that can remove a nurse's name from the register, so that she cannot practice. It is a very powerful body and it needs reorganising. We are looking at that and we are discussing it. I do not know what the outcome will be but it is a professional body.

Sir, in that strategic plan, they had the National Union of Public Workers to be legislated as part of the General Nursing Council, not so, it has nothing to do with union. It is a professional body and I told them, if you want the National Union of Public Workers on the General Nursing Council, let the Minister of Health use one of the areas and appoint them as an interested party or somebody from the community, Sir, but not through legislation because it is a professional body.

There are doctors who are members of the Barbados Workers Union and you do not see the Barbados Workers Union on the Medical Council, not so, it is a professional body, Sir, and the other people that you can have are people who the Minister of Health could appoint. As long as you are going to write legislation for a professional body, there must be nurses, qualified nurses and nurses who are working.

Sir, in the GNC there are nurses who retired and who have not looked at a book for 10 or 20 years, examining people's papers and correcting those student nurses' papers.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: This is what is happening in Barbados.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: It is true, true, true. A lot of these retired nurses do not like to read and they are there marking scripts and these nurses are doing an Associates Degree at the Barbados Community College. Are you going to tell me that they cannot find, among the practicing nurses, enough people to examine the students' papers?

Sir, the Government paid for many of these nurses to do degrees, whom they can choose from but, no, they hand pick their friends and have retired nurses. Do you think if they came to me and asked me to correct papers I would agree? Not me, even though I read. I would say, no, I do not know what is happening. Sir, they have these retired nurses out there helping to correct student nurses' papers and helping to examine student nurses. They tell me that I do not understand how it works, when I pointed out to them that they cannot have this.

Sir, I understand very well. Anybody can tell you that if you are a professional and you are examining people, you have to have people who are practicing in the areas to do the examination. Do not bring people who have not done a stroke of nursing. These are not nurses who were on wards. These are nurses like a retired Chief Public Health Nurse, who sat in an office for years and did not read a book and they are correcting the nurses scripts. This is the nonsense that is going on in nursing. Do you expect the QEH to be any better?

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Not the Minister of Health, it is the Board. The way the GNC is set up, it is difficult for the Minister of Health to change very much of that, they would have to reorganise the GNC.

For example, in England, what the active nurses have to do, you have to put down your name and you have to be elected to serve on the Nursing Council. You have to go to your peers and tell your peers what you are going to do for them while you are in the Council and you are elected.

For example, psychiatry is elected, general nursing, geriatric nursing, midwifery, all the different branches of nursing are elected to serve on the Council. There is not the question of the Minister just appointing them.

Sir, this is how I saw them doing it. They say, this is your turn, do you want to serve this turn, or okay, you want to pick this turn? That is exactly how they go about sending the names to the Minister. This is how it goes out and they pick their friends from turn to turn, even though they cannot make a contribution.

I wrote to the last Minister of Health about one person who has been there for years. Year after year, he is there and nobody else who can contribute can be given a chance. He leaves his work and is up there at the GNC all the time. Doing what? What they say is, I am going to Council and you do not know what they are doing, so they get out of the work at the hospital and they are up at Council. They are doing nothing at the hospital and they are doing nothing at Council.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: This is the sort of thing. How are we going to get nurses? We have to get the bright young people in nursing who can carry nursing forward and we have to hand pick them and put them in, in order to carry nursing forward in Barbados.

Another area that I would like to speak briefly about is the area of solid waste. In Barbados, a 2x2 island, we do not have enough land for people to build houses as well as to

make dumps. We have to go the incinerator route.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: With the incinerator route, they are filters that could filter the smoke. When you have an incinerator, it does not have to let out the black smoke like the Barbados Light and Power and pollute the air. They have certain things that you could put on these factories. They have smoke emissions and control it. They do it very well in Europe.

Even in your house with a little fire place, there are only certain things you can burn when you are in Europe. It is against the law to burn certain things and emit certain things into the atmosphere and that is what we can do. We have to start getting an incinerator and I will repeat and I have said it before in this Senate, we have land.

Our family have land next door to Greenland and the family had to move from down there because one day they woke up and found the house down the road. That land slips. That is no place for a dump. It has springs and you cannot control a spring. Never mind what these experts come and tell you because when you capture one spring one way, it is going to find another way to come out and you will always have springs. So abandon Greenland, cut your losses and try and get an incinerator and let us get on with solid waste control.

Another thing is they are talking about the West Coast Sewerage project but recently I have heard persons on the call in programme, complaining of their eyes running from the Bridgetown Sewerage Project.
6.35 p.m.

Now, I do not know what they do overseas, but as a nurse we had to visit several sewerage projects and we did not smell anything at all. I do not know how this sewerage project we have in Barbados works that it is always smelling up the place like that and making people sick. It is my opinion that nobody should be sited next to any sewerage project at all. You need to find some land and resite those people immediately.

Government have acquired a whole lot of land. They brought it to the Senate and we have passed it time and time again. It is not that they do not have land. They have a lot of land in a land bank. They need to resite those people immediately. Nobody at all should be living beside the sewerage plant. They can put something else there but not allow people to live there with little children and elderly people, they will get ill and then it will cost us money. We must not forget that people do not pay at source for medical care. When people get sick they go to the Queen Elizabeth

Hospital and they are going to get drugs, but the taxpayers are going to have to pay for it. So why on earth are we going to have these excessive cost, we can do without that. Let us find some land in the next couple of months and resite those people out of the vicinity of that sewerage project.

Another thing I would like to speak about is the market facilities. Government spent a lot of money building markets. I pass that Eagle Hall Market every day and I would really like to get a bulldozer and knock it down. That is where they park cars at night and play dominoes. If you go to that market, I go there, you would see that the people are putting their stalls outside the market. They do not use that place. That market has all sorts of things sticking up and all sorts of crossways that need pushing down. They do not look artistic to me. It looks like madness. Those things need covering up from sight. We need to hide all of those things or do something about it.

Another thing is I shop every week in the Cheapside Market. You cannot build a market without stalls or without parking space and then tell people that they cannot walk across the grass and they cannot park here or park there, if you want all of us to come and shop in the market. The small businessmen grow all of those things and bring them down to market to sell. People support them and they want to go and buy the things, but when you get there you cannot find any place to park. How can they design a market without parking space and then start complaining about people walking on the grass because people park where the people walk. You need to look at this. I do not know where these plans come from, but when these buildings are finished, they are not right, something is wrong with them. We need to start putting stalls in that market and it is going to be hot.

When they were building the one over here in Palmetto Square, I got in here and I asked for a refrigeration unit which was not put in. I said that if you do not do that the things are going to spoil with all that heat in there. These markets need to be open. In Africa they have an open space. We do not need any architect to design any market.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, there are two minutes left.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I welcome the opportunity to serve in this Senate for the past two terms. There are whispered asides that there are more sittings, but it is better to be sure than sorry. I have enjoyed my stay in the Senate. I like talking. I have talked and I hope I have made some form of contribution to health development and to nursing in particular even though they might not be accepted, but I feel that down the road when people read what I had to say they would say that Peggy Rickinson recommended this and that because we cannot get too far without some of the things that I have been recommending to you.

I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, in rising to add my few words to this debate, I have to say that it is a privilege on this occasion to speak after Senator Rickinson because this was an excellent contribution on her part in many areas and I congratulate her.

Mr. President, I will just follow on naturally from where she left off by speaking about the Ministry of Health. We all know that the health care professionals within that Ministry of Health have been making an excellent contribution to the well-being of our citizens. Persons who have come into contact with the present Minister are impressed by his competence, his sincerity and his sound common sense, but he cannot do everything himself.

We also take note of the excellent work being done in relation to the HIV/AIDS programme, to promote healthy lifestyles among Barbadians and the work being done in the polyclinics. The polyclinics are like the younger sister of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and often we do not hear of the excellent work being done in these polyclinics but I happen to know that they make a sterling contribution to health care in Barbados.

I also take note of the steps taken in recent times to upgrade the operation of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and to conduct physical plant maintenance which has been long overdue. However, this is the 21st century and hospital administration, like airport administration, is a highly technical area. Not only must doctors and nurses be well trained but the administrators must be well trained as well. They must be well paid and they will need consultants from time to time to assist them. I hope that the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board will do what is necessary to improve the quality of administration at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The policymakers must be persons whose guiding principle is what is best for the health of Barbadians and they must not be hamstrung by outdated rules, regulation and procedures.

Many people who have had dealings with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are of the view, in Barbados parlance, that it is not a bad facility, but we all know that all is not well. Almost every second person you meet has some horror story to tell in connection with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Some are obviously the result of lack of funds to do certain things, some are caused by poor management and others are caused by the fact that some of the staff have lost their way as professionals.

6.45 p.m.

Mr. President, it is for these reasons that I believe a broad-based Board is the way to go at this point in time. I

would say that after a number of years and the Board is found wanting, Government must have the courage to make whatever changes are necessary. We Barbadians love cricket and if our team is on the losing path, we clamour for the removal of the captain, so should it be with the administration of our most important institution. We should not be afraid to make changes if it is possible that better conditions would result from those changes.

In my view, one of the early tasks of this Board is to deal with personnel. I said earlier that some of the staff at the hospital have lost their way. There are nurses who, for several years, have been working in special units and I think some of them should be returned to general nursing. It seems to many persons who have had dealings with them that some of them have forgotten the tenets of general nursing and hide behind their specialities. Also, in some of these areas of specialties, it seems that some of the nurses are not aware of the most modern practices.

With our scarce resources, there should be no unit in a general hospital in which staff outnumber patients and can huddle together, chatting for hours, when in other units nurses can barely cope. As I said, I think those persons should be returned to nursing or from time to time, put on a rotation basis so that they do not forget the basic tenets of nursing.

I am sure there must be a programme in place at the hospital for continuing education, to acquaint the health care professionals to the latest developments in the areas of specialty. The Board must see to it that there is fair access to postgraduate training for as many as possible. There must also be a system for identifying those who have been suffering from burnout, have lost interest in the job or have forgotten what are the old rules of nursing. Some may need challenges, others might have lost interest with the working environment and some cannot work shifts. Lives depend on the service which health care professionals give and they should have the opportunity to be reenergised from time to time where this is necessary.

One cannot say that better wages would be the answer but I know that our nurses and police – like nurses and police the world over – are not very well paid. Teachers have managed over the years to get a better deal than previously but nurses and policemen, persons on whom we have to depend so much for our well-being, are still to a great extent, at the bottom of the ladder.

It may well be that the Board may wish to recommend a special wage scale to nurses when the Board is fully functioning and has got its personnel and other administrative problems sorted out. In my view, any recommendation for a special wages scale, should be accompanied by standards for productivity and patient

friendliness.

Mr. President, having said that, I would wish to encourage staff at the hospital who have been dedicated to their jobs and who give good service to their patients to continue. I am sure persons in that category are not in fear of being in the employ of a Board of Management. Those persons already have a good work ethic and would get the job done irregardless.

Mr. President, I now turn to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Immigration Department. Some months ago in this Chamber, I had raised questions about non-nationals working here without permits, mainly in the hospitality industry. I am aware that certain actions were taken some months ago but I have always been curious about the amount of due diligence which the Immigration Department carries out in relation to applications for work permits. For instance, Mr. President, do they examine the local application when an organisation informs them that there is no suitable local person applying for the job? Does the organisation acknowledge local applications and inform the locals why they are not suitable? Is it true that persons from overseas visit Barbados ostensibly on holidays to carry out short-term work assignments at hotels and other places, for which they are paid and go back to their homes without paying income tax, which might be prejudicial to the qualified locals?

Mr. President, if the Immigration Department is going to be vigilant on a one-off basis, that is not good enough. They need to maintain the same standard at all times to ensure that our own people are not being prejudiced against, even though I am not one of those persons who believe there is no place among us for non-nationals. I believe several of them, certainly the Guyanese and some from the other Caribbean countries, are making an excellent contribution to certain services in Barbados, such as the building industry. The work of Vincentians and Guyanese is well known and documented but at the same time, our Immigration Department has to be vigilant to make sure that in the final analysis, Barbadians are not being disadvantaged if they have the qualifications and are available for the available jobs.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Transport and Works has been a very busy Ministry during the past several years and it is evident to all Barbadians. We have seen road improvements and beautification on a scale not witnessed for many years and this Ministry must be congratulated for pressing ahead with its programmes, especially in urban Barbados, even though at times it has been heavily criticised by persons who are suffering temporary inconvenience.

However, I would like to focus on the Licensing Authority. If there is ever a department that is crying out for reform, Mr. President, it is this one. I am sure thousands of

dollars have been spent and are being spent every year for computerisation of this department, yet when one goes to renew a license, one gets a sinking feeling on seeing the number of old dog-eared files that are sitting around in the offices and simply hopes that the information that is needed to process one's application, is not among those files.

To make matters worse, even if one's data has been computerised, the receipt that is given, is written by hand. Therefore, if it takes one hour to reach the counter, one still has to wait for another 15 minute to have it processed and then written in long hand.

I am wondering why is it that when one goes to the Licensing Authority early in the morning, the staff are slow to rise and even slower to begin. I have come to the conclusion that they are afraid of the amount of writing that they have to do daily.

I wish to say something on the matter of handwritten documents from the Licensing Authority. Recently, one of my daughters needed evidence that she has been driving in Barbados for a number of years. She took to Canada one of the handwritten documents. The Canadian Authority would have nothing to do with it. They could not believe it was authentic.

In today's age, there are computers in the department. It might well be that there are not enough network printers but I would think that if there are that number of computers, the next step which is purchasing network printers should not be too far off. I am not sure if that is the case or if the general management of the Licensing Authority needs to be overhauled. I rather think it is the latter. Mr. President, this department is a major revenue earner and both the staff who work there and the customers, deserve a better deal.

Mr. President, I next turn to the Ministry of Physical Development and the Environment. I would like to commend that Ministry, if it is responsible, for the job well done in beautifying the highway, just after leaving the airport. It is amazing just how a few heathy-looking bougainvilleas could make the visitors feel welcome and could make Barbadians feel happy to be back home after being overseas.

Congratulations are also due for the work done in the public parks, beaches and gullies around the island. The only problem is that our people persist in littering. We have had some 'stop and start' anti-littering campaign from time to time. I do not suppose that the funds are available for such campaigns to be carried out on a permanent basis but I would say that possibly placing more garbage containers around might be the answer to some of the problems that we are having. For instance, I have attended functions at the Sir Garfield Sobers Gymnasium and during break times, when persons have eaten, they are looking for a garbage can and

cannot find any within the immediate vicinity, if at all. People are, therefore, forced to put their garbage on the ground or on the pavement, which certainly is not good enough.

6.55 p.m.

I am sure the Ministry of Environment is responsible for it but it must be managed by the Gymnasium. It certainly is something that could be looked into.

The Ministry of Housing like the Ministry of Transport and Works has been maintaining a high profile during the past few years. The Housing Credit Fund has been providing loans to medium and low income earners to assist them in owning homes and between April 2000 and March 2003, over \$10 million were disbursed for this purpose.

Senator Marshall spoke eloquently and at length about the work being done to provide housing for Barbadians over the past few years and I will not dwell on that to any extent.

However, one thing worries me about the housing programme. I do not think that the Government is placing enough emphasis or driving home to Barbadians as forcefully as it could that the era of owning their plot of land is fast coming to an end because our bank of land is not unlimited and we must build more high rise condos and terrace housing. I believe there is a long term plan for the provision of terrace houses and more creative ways of providing complexes in which people can live instead of using three or four acres of land for four houses.

Already the price of land is prohibited and the high cost of living leaves many families without extra income to pay mortgages even though mortgages are available through the Housing Credit Fund. In a few years there will not be much land available to be purchased even if the money is available.

Mr. President, it is also desirable for Government to impose greater control on the amount of agricultural land being devoted to housing but it is like being caught between a rock and a hard place because both needs are imperative.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until Wednesday, March 26, 2003 at 11.00 a.m.

The question that the Senate be suspended until Wednesday, March 26, 2003, at 11.00 a.m. was put to the SENATE and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Senate accordingly.

7.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Sir, I rise to support the Appropriation Bill which is now before the Chamber. I want to start by saying that the Estimates show the position of a Government that recognises that we are moving into new and dangerous waters. That we need the sort of personnel to run a Government that can understand the feeling of the people at home and put that against circumstances that affect us in this world.

Mr. President, one of the things that we have to look at is how is the Government going to proceed from here in order to keep Barbados at the standard that it is today and the standard we now enjoy.

I recall the Honourable Prime Minister saying that it is his wish that he could move Barbados into the status of a developed country out of the status of a developing country. If we want to be a developed country there are certain things that we must accept and adhere to.

One of the first things I think we need to look at is Public Sector Reform. That will only come when the unions in Barbados recognise that things have to change and until we change, our productivity is not going to be sufficient to compete with the changing world.

Mr. President, I am going to give you an example of this. In 1978 I was Minister of Transport and Works. One of the first things that I attempted to do was to save that department from the gossip of people who would complain in the Press and on the radio that Ministry of Transport and Works' workers were standing at the side of the road and hiding under trees and doing nothing. Sir, with that statement, it accused the Government of not properly managing that sector of its employees.

I called a meeting and I discovered that there was an agreement that each one of these workers was supposed to weed 300 yards a day and at the end of weeding the 300 yards they had nothing more to do for that day and that was part of their contract. I asked the representative how would you like them weeding 300 metres and whenever they were finished they could go home. The representative agreed and five groups started it the following morning. The report was that persons went to work from as early as 5.30 a.m. and by 9.00 a.m. they had finished their allotted task and they went to work in the sugar industry cutting canes and doing several other things.

A few weeks after that the union called and said that it cannot work because this was a unilateral agreement and that it had to stop. The union said that the workers were weeding

30 feet more than they should and that they did not have any say in the matter. However, four out of the five groups came to the Ministry and said, "Mr. Minister, we like this and we will carry on this arrangement".

Now, that is an example of the unions not pulling in tandem with the developed world. Until we get the unions to understand that this is a developed world, we are going to be in serious problems.

Sir, I had another problem, I was still Minister of Agriculture in 1976 and I had a call from a plantation owner who said that he had planted pumpkins in a field and from the time he reaped them he could not get anything else to grow. He said that he had been calling the Ministry of Agriculture for months and nobody had responded. I called the then Permanent Secretary to get a team out to this plantation the Monday morning to carry out the necessary test. He called me back and told me that the arrangements were made for the visit to the plantation. I called the plantation owner and told him that a team from the Ministry would be out on the Monday. On the Tuesday morning I got a call from the plantation owner and he told me that he waited all day Monday and no one came.

Sir, when I called the Permanent Secretary, he came back to me and said that the persons who were supposed to have visited the plantation said that it rained on Monday so they could not go.

Mr. President, I have gone to Taiwan and I have seen people in the fields with hats on and they introduced me to people in the fields who were professors and they had PhDs. One officer of the Ministry told me that his job was to sit at a desk and he is not going out into the field. This is an agricultural officer that told me this. I said to him that if he does not go out by tomorrow morning and get the job done, you and I will appear before the Public Service Commission, I still have an office on Pinfold Street and I hope that you have one somewhere to go because the two of us cannot be in here together. Sir, that was my method of running a Ministry.

I believe that this will be my last term in this Honourable Chamber but when I leave this Chamber I intend to tell the public of Barbados how Government is run in Barbados. The public of Barbados does not understand the running of Government.

Sir, yesterday you heard what the Minister of Health said regarding the procedure in appointing a doctor. I can tell you that a file will sit on a desk and it will stay there for months and it cannot move until that officer decides to put his signature on it. Why do we constantly blame Ministers for not doing this or that, when my knowledge tells me that

there is only one Minister that I know, since I have been back in Barbados in 1964 and part of a new administrative Government, who knows anything about a cheque book, where things are sorted, filed and how files are retrieved in Government. A Minister has to wait until a file is put before him.

Sir, sometimes if the Minister dares ask a question, you will hear things like, he wants to run in here, well we will show him something. I do not want to tell you the story about that because I know the story behind that. If you doubt me, you can ask Mr. Ralph Boyce and he will tell you the story.

Sir, yesterday when I heard Senator Collymore chiding the Government for certain things, Senator Collymore should be the last person to chide any Minister in Government for anything in Government because he occupied some very top positions in Government over a long period of time and he knows how it works. So, to come in here and say that the Minister did not do this or that is not fair.

Sir, when I was Minister of Transport, I put a figure in the Estimates for realigning the road above the Cheapside Market. A Permanent Secretary came to me and said, "you cannot put so much money in there. You have to do it a certain way. You normally go back for a Supplemental Estimate".

Mr. President, when I was Minister of Agriculture a consultancy team came to Barbados and our portion of the agreement was to provide housing for this team. I got a letter from the Ministry of Housing that we had three houses at Hinds Hill available. They told me that we cannot give up these houses because we do not know when we would need them. In the meantime, there was a mango tree growing from out of the sink of one of these houses, through a window and outside. The Chinese who lived in this house had left a mango in the sink and the mango seed grew. Sir, we have to understand how Government works in this country and stop blaming Ministers.

There is a situation where three bus drivers came to me a Sunday night and said to me, Mr. Bolden, we have been told that we have to leave Probyn Street Bus Stand by tomorrow morning. We want you to represent us. I went to a meeting the Sunday night and I ask them to bring their permits to me. The Monday morning there was an incident at Probyn Street where 20 policemen were there to move these buses from Probyn Street. I told a senior officer from the Licencing Authority that he could not move them because the permits say Probyn Street, Bay Street and Jemmotts Lane. I told him that if he puts them in the River Bus Stand, the Special Constable would report them for being off-route.

Sir, he looked around, got into his vehicle and left.

Sir, they went back to the Licencing Authority and spent the night typing new permits and distributed them up to 3.00 a.m. The bus drivers told me that they wanted me back at Probyn Street the Tuesday morning because these new permits were dated for the Tuesday.

Mr. President, when I got to Probyn Street on the Tuesday morning I said to the officer, a permit is property under the law and you have no lawful authority to change somebody's permit unilaterally, so you cannot move them. 10.10 a.m.

The following Sunday, they went and pushed down the facility from beside the old Plaza. Up to today, those bus drivers are still out there urinating all around the area without any facilities.

Then the Prime Minister got into it and asked for a visit to the River Bus Stand. The morning the Prime Minister said, in the presence of all of us, that this is not even fit for human beings to be here. He turned to a senior officer and said, that is the old Queens College building, refurbish it, make a waiting room downstairs and you can have offices upstairs to control the buses in this area.

We set up a meeting two days later at MTW, and do you know what a senior officer at MTW said, I know what money I have to spend and the Prime Minister or nobody can tell me what I have to do. Up to now, the old Queens College building is still there with water in the bus stand up there and the buses are still out Probyn Street.

Now, when Senator Mascoll comes in here and talks about above the line and below the line, off budget, *et cetera*, he is only running the same tune that the Democratic Labour Party has run every period of the election and they have lost and he will lose also.

Let me tell a story.

Mr. President, the same noise you are hearing is the same noise that said, he will not support Mascoll because Mascoll knows nothing about the Barbados Labour Party and its philosophies.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You cannot presume that I am hearing noises.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I apologise for trying to test your hearing ability.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Sir, the Democratic Labour Party bought a boat to move cement when we did not have a cement plant. They cannot deny that. Then in 1985, the then Minister of Finance, when he was a shadow minister before that, kept saying that Barbadians were overtaxed.

Sir, this is the same noise that Mr. Mascoll is making now that Barbadians are overtaxed. Mr. Mascoll will sit and look at this and subtract this from this *et cetera*. I will get to that in a minute.

Sir, when the Barbados Labour Party said they would give you \$12 000 tax free, the same Minister came out and said, \$15 000 tax free. I remember walking through the Courts and hearing young girls and boys in the Courts saying, we are voting Dems because we are getting \$15 000 tax free.

They told the public \$15 000 tax free and they boasted how they back raised H. B. St. John. Do you remember that Gabby, your supporter, made a calypso, back raise, back raise...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please address the Chair.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I am addressing the Chair. Not your supporter, Sir.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Back raise, back raise. You won the election in 1986 and the first thing that was done, he up the taxes on gaming machines to such an exorbitant level that half of them collapsed in Barbados and that was the first signal of people going home because they had no work. But that is another philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, in 1975-1976 they sent home teachers and 14-year old children and left them on the streets. We argued, what are you doing. You are creating a dangerous situation where parents have to go out to work and children of that tender age will be left alone in these homes with nobody to care for them.

Do you know what the Minister of Education came in here and said, that he will do what he has to do. This raised an issue because the gentleman who said he is going to run in St. Peter now, wrote a letter in the Press, condemning the action. The Minister came into the Other Place and said he will not have him in the department any longer and he must go. But that man's brother came back to the House one evening with a cutlass to cut off the hand of the Minister. You can check the records and you will see what I am saying.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I know. You will always disown everything now. Nobody is ever there but, Mr. President, that is not all.

They said we were overtaxed and they started chopping left, right and centre but what happened by 1993-1994, they sent home civil servants and then they cut the civil servants salaries. And worse than that, when Mr. Mascoll talked about Barbados' credit rating falling, those were the same words that were used in 1986.

They will not tell you that their Minister of Finance went around the world trying to borrow \$60 million and nobody would entertain him. Then he went to a Finance Ministers' Meeting and started his portion of that Finance Ministers' Meeting by reading a poem when everybody was talking about money.

Sir, Mr. Mascoll will have to tell us that Barbados attempted to borrow money and could not succeed. But they will throw this talk about Barbados in this bad position, because they say election is coming up, and they believe that the people of Barbados will be foolish to believe them, you fooled me once, you fooled me twice and you cannot fool me the third time.

Sir, he talked about GEMS and about JAWS and when challenged about JAWS, he said that was something he made up and there was no JAWS.

Now, credibility is a big issue and will be a big issue. He said that the Government should get out of HRL. This runs parallel with the Barbados Labour Party's thinking. That Government sold Heywoods when I was a Minister, when we had to go down there and take over Heywoods which they had started and the IADB told us that if we rejected it we could not borrow money from them again, because it was an international project and Heywoods had to go through. Then they sold Heywoods for less than it cost to be erected.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, I am glad that he sold it to a Barbadian company. Now, GEMS is a Barbadian company, owned by Barbadians and the concept of Heywoods was that Barbadians had no stake in the tourist industry and therefore, Heywoods should be developed so that Barbadians could own sectors of that property as a Barbadian entity. That is why you have three swimming pools, four restaurants, *et cetera*. That was the international finding that Barbados had no stake in the tourist industry. The GEMS project is a Barbadian entity, but they are now saying to get rid of it.

Sir, I want to know if you know that at GEMS today, as of last night, they employed 17 persons at management level, 34 assistant managers, 17 administrative persons, 35 security persons, 17 maintenance persons, and 197 line staff, making a total of 317 persons employed. They pay a monthly wage bill of \$170 000 and a weekly wage bill of \$111 000. Tell them at GEMS that you are shutting them down and sending home those people.

I want the Democratic Labour Party to come out and positively tell the people of Barbados, if we get in the power, we will shut down GEMS and we will send home those people. Instead of that, what I want you to do is call on the Government to register tour guides in this country, and then you would know the true system of the all-inclusive hotel and the hotel industry.

Mr. President, a lot of people do not know a lot of things. Do you hear about the 'do-flicky' that is put on at Pelican Village, as a method of attracting the visitors off the cruise ships? Unfortunately, in my view and I am very positive about this, the redesign of Pelican Village is not in-keeping with a native market.

Sir, people do not look at it as a native market. I have friends from Canada, Germany and all over the place who came here and said they never thought that was a native market, so they do not go into it. You now have to spend money for a 'do-flicky' to get the people off the ships.

Sir, I have several friends that went on cruise ships and they said that on the ships themselves, people are telling the visitors not to shop in Barbados and not to go to Pelican. They are saying that the prices in Pelican are too high.
10.20 a.m.

I would advise the Government to put a PA System outside the Port so that from the time the ships get in the Harbour they would be giving the people information on what to enjoy in Barbados. That will defeat the action of the cruise directors on board the ships.

I have at this minute an ex-BA pilot and his wife staying in Barbados. On Sunday night he was telling me a story about some of his friends who came to Barbados and went back and said that there is nothing in Barbados. He said he asked them where they stayed and they told him that they were taken to a hotel where they spent a week and came back home. He told them that they have not seen Barbados.

I know of another two people who came from Canada and spent three weeks here while staying in Sunset Crest. They have now gone back, but they were told the same thing, that is, not to go out, but the gentleman said he rented a moke and he got lost in St. Lucy. He said he has often heard that if you get lost in Barbados to look for a rum shop. He went into the rum shop and asked questions. He said the people in the rum shop bought him drinks and from that day he has been

coming back to Barbados every year and he has been telling his Canadian friends that when they go to Barbados to get out and they would enjoy Barbados.

We have got to devise ways and means of telling the people who come here on cruise ships that there are things in Barbados to see and do and in that regard we would overcome the bad mouthing of the cruise directors. We are getting mega cruise ships here. I have got clients who ran taxis from the Port and they tell me the few jobs they get, the people tell them straight and plain what the cruise ship people told them. They walk from the Port up to Nelson here and after walking up and seeing the beauty of Barbados, they then decide to get into the taxis here around Nelson and tour the island.

So the Barbados Tourism Authority (BTA) has got to get things right. I am suggesting that as a first step they should install a PA System. They can have recorded information and pipe it out to the cruise ships before the passengers come off the ships so that they will know who is true and who is not true.

The Democratic Labour Party has now resorted to their elders, but I asked myself in the year 2003 how can you expect to use past persons to guide you, Mr. President. I have been reading the newspaper and there is a gentleman who used to be High Commissioner to Trinidad and then there is a lady who is talking that we should have had a fishing agreement for the longest time...

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: It just shows the thoughts of the people.

When it came out in the newspapers that Barbados and Trinidad were nearing an agreement, many organisations in Trinidad said that if the Government of Trinidad and Tobago goes into an agreement with Barbados they will go to the court. Yet still, the Democratic Labour Party's past elder is telling you that we should have had an agreement, but he was the High Commissioner to Trinidad for a long time. He did not get one negotiated. It just shows you the strategy of the Democratic Labour Party to confuse the people out there, but I think the people out there read the newspapers and they will see that to conclude agreements are not as easy as stand up because I heard them saying they are carrying the fisherfolks from Barbados down to Trinidad and the fisherfolks in Trinidad are agreeing with them.

I will tell you another thing too. I have many clients as fishermen and they do not want any agreement. Eighty per cent of the fishermen in Barbados do not want an agreement

with Trinidad. They say that the day we have a fishing agreement with Trinidad, the boats will all head down to Trinidad and Tobago waters and the price of fish will drop in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please!

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, I want to turn to the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. I think we need to do a serious reorganisation of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport in terms of the Licencing Authority. If we are supposed to be an island that is putting our development and future into visitors to earn foreign exchange, I believe that we should be as friendly and as accommodating as possible in this way.

Many visitors still drive around Barbados. I myself am very confused every time I reach a junction because nearly every other junction in Barbados has a different type of marking for direction of traffic. As far as I know, road traffic is regulated by signs, but somebody has now moved from signs to words. If you doubt me, come from JB's Supermarket in Sergeants Village and you would see a big sign stick in the left-hand corner saying, if you are going to the Airport take the left lane and if you are going so and so... Tell me what somebody who comes from Germany or from France who cannot speak English is to do when they are coming down to that junction. Those road signs are very confusing. If you take it at this junction, the next junction is completely different.

I believe that the Road Traffic Act, and I said it over and over again, needs serious revision by people who know the law in Barbados and not by expatriates. There is a tendency of employing consultants who do not understand what is happening in Barbados.

One of the things that I want to highlight is that a visitor to Barbados can get a one-year drivers' licence for \$10 but a local person has to pay \$50 for the same one-year drivers' licence. I know there are several non-Barbadians who are living in Barbados and who are driving with a visitor's permit and they go and renew them every year. You only have to turn up with your passport and say you are a visitor, you came in last night and you are going back next week and the police would renew it for you.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I think we have to have a different system. I do not mind if you are going to encourage the visitor to drive by giving them a \$10 licence but I think you must keep careful records and you must be able to look and see if that person had a licence

before, if they left the island and if they came back. I think that needs to be done.

Now, I turn to the Highway Code. As far as I know in law the Highway Code must reflect the laws and regulations of the traffic laws of Barbados, but I have seen a published Highway Code that has things in it that do not reflect anything in Barbados. Here again a Highway Code is written that pays no attention to the Road Traffic Act, but there is a Highway Code. The Road Traffic Act demands that the Commissioner of Police produce a Highway Code. Here again I think that is not in keeping with Barbados' law because one can rely on a breach of the Highway Code in a civil case in our courts in Barbados, but you cannot with this one. This one talks about going over bridges, steam rollers, trains, *et cetera*.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR. SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Get a Highway Code and see.

I turn now to the Licencing Authority. The Licencing Authority issues a renewal disc for motor cars but after a month you cannot see what is written on any one of those discs, so when a police stops you, he will ask you when did you renew your licence.
10.30 a.m.

I do not think it is that hard for us to devise a computerised system where it could be printed and enclosed in a plastic case and given to the driver. Instead of that, a handwritten disc is given and in two days' time, no one can see what was written on it.

Sir, I go back to traffic. Everybody complains about traffic congestion in Barbados. The private sector employed a consultant to come up with suggestions about how to relieve the traffic congestion in Barbados. What I have read in the newspaper is that the consultant has said that schools should start earlier. I do not know what the consultant was thinking at that time.

I live in St. Thomas and when I leave home at 6.20 a.m., there are school children waiting at the side of the road for transportation. If school times are going to be changed these children would have to leave home at 5.00 a.m. Instead of that suggestion, the consultant could have gone to the Ministry of Labour where he would have seen that we have had a consultant here in the early 1970s and that I had made a presentation before that consultant.

At that time, I said that what Barbados needed was flexitime and that the stores in Broad Street should not be opened before 10.00 a.m. If stores are opened at 10.00 a.m., it would relieve at least half of the traffic that comes into

Bridgetown. One now finds that anybody could walk into a store on mornings and would not find as many as six people in it at that time, yet the air-conditioning units would be running and the staff not having any customers to serve.

These stores do not realise they would save by not having to run the air-conditioning units at 6.00 a.m. They do not realise how many man hours would be saved by opening at 10.00 a.m. and closing at 6.00 p.m., than opening at 8.00 a.m. and closing at 4.00 p.m.

Mr. President, rather than the consultant tell the private sector the reality of the situation, he chose that the schools should be opened earlier. That is why I said when the Road Traffic Regulations are being revised, one has to find people who know Barbados and who know what goes on. Little does the consultant know that the Transport Board takes about 70 buses off the roads on mornings to move children to and from schools. If the opening times for businesses are moved, those buses would be easier to move with school children and come back to service workers. Instead, the private sector wants to penalise the school children to satisfy themselves by continuing to open from 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.

I doubt many persons in here know there was a time when Broad Street used to be closed half-days on Saturdays and Swan Street half-days on Thursdays. When Parliament was made up of that interested class, they insisted that both be closed on Saturdays because Swan Street was making more money than Broad Street. This is the year 2003 and we should not carry on with that kind of thinking anymore.

Mr. President, I want to raise one other issue. I would like to ask one question, which I believe the Leader of the House could answer. How soon are we going to get a good telephone system in Barbados? I am having difficulty in using my telephone. After 5.00 p.m. on evenings, all I am hearing is "all circuits are busy now". I think the Government of Barbados will have to do what the Government of California did – go to court and have an action that the telephone supply company does not send bills to persons who do not get adequate service. That is the only way we are going to get a better system. After so many years of Cable and Wireless being in Barbados, do you know what someone up there told me, that I was on the 438th circuit and would experience that problem. When I questioned for how long, I was told I would have had to ask someone in management. Sir, there must be some remedy for what is happening. I think it is time for the Government of Barbados to tell us what is happening. With that, Mr. President, I thank you.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. President, in rising to make my contribution to this Debate which is now in its

third day, much has already been shared but I do feel that I want to add my voice to the Appropriation Bill, 2003.

Sir, as I do so, I want to begin by reflecting on Barbados' sovereignty as an Independent nation, well able to manage our affairs. Mr. President, sovereignty for me is more than about broken tridents or the blue and gold flag flying majestically in Barbados. It is about lifting people up. It is about ownership. It is my Barbados. It is your Barbados. It is about our sense of belonging. It is about our sense of being. It is about being able to participate in a society at whatever level we choose to or are at which level we are able. It is not about mendicancy and prostituting ourselves for hope of future aid which might never be forthcoming. We are aware there are many Third World countries where promises from all sources have been made and are yet to be fulfilled.

Sir, sovereignty is about being able to speak out against atrocities. I give that background because on a day like today where a part of the world is at war, I feel we should speak to it and for me to say I am opposed to the war. My feelings on anti war is nothing to do with the style of leadership within that country but I do not support oppression or dictatorship being a camouflage for democracy in any form.

The invasion by the United States and its allies is about power. It is about super power's might and super power's right, as they would think, to control. There are those who would even think it is representative reminiscent of a bygone era called colonialism and the powers in the past as they too sought to control. It is a flagrant disregard for conventions and resolutions agreed to by States of the United Nations and Barbados is one such State. We have agreed to certain conventions and this act flies in the face of those conventions.
10.40 a.m.

Sir, this war, as will all wars, will leave in its wake grave dislocation of families and even though we are not hearing about them on the news media there are many broken bodies, poverty, destruction and death.

This war is almost like a movie as we watch it on television. It is almost unreal and I have not heard much comment about the people implicated. As a matter of fact in a section of the media today I saw children being handed sweets by a man in uniform. Sir, it boggles my mind and it says to me that there are certain biases.

I want to speak about the method by which we have responded to a suggestion from the U.S.A. Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade chose to respond on the Floor of Parliament and was castigated for doing so. Everyone knows that the individual who holds the portfolio

of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade knows how to do things when it comes to protocol. For the Opposition to suggest that we should have responded diplomatically by way of a communique is nonsense because it would have been taken care of already. If the Minister chose to speak to it on the Floor of Parliament I do not have a problem with that. I have a problem with the Senator on the Other Side setting himself apart from it.

Sir, Barbados must stand united in our position. If we believe in freedom, peace, democracy and free speech, we must come together at this time. The Honourable Senator is entitled to his opinion but I want to ask him what image he has of himself. Is he a puppet pulling to the tune of some player because Barbados is not like that.

Barbados has demonstrated its ability to lead and get out of situations because if we were not able to lead our neighbours in the Caribbean we would have gone down a sticky path.

I remember the kind of image Barbados has worldwide. I think of Dame Nita Barrow when she was part of a U.N. grouping to look at the whole issue of peace and democracy. She was one of the first advocates of whom Barbados can be justly proud. She was eulogised as the best Secretary of the United Nation that ever was. I think that is kudos indeed.

I am pleased to be a part of this Government because it has done an excellent job in managing the economy of this country in a decent and sovereign manner in difficult times and in good times. Obviously, Governments comprised human beings and none of us is perfect and we may make errors. I am not saying that we have done everything right and the electorate will have a chance soon to make their mark and determine if a good job has been done by this Administration in the last two years and I want to suggest that this Government is ready and able to do another term.

The decisions made by this Administration have been made in good faith and with professional and expert advice. The Minister of Finance deserves to be commended for his management of the economy. Even with war in the background and predictions of challenges in the economic front due to globalization, the Prime Minister is steering this ship through troubled waters with tenacity. In what is expected to be an election year, he could have done what others in the past have done and be loose with his hand in encouraging and initiating grand election spending. It is very clear that the Minister of Finance has not gone down that road with these Estimates before us.

As a matter of fact he did quite the opposite for the last three years and I remember him urging Barbadians to tighten their belts, save and invest but many have not done that.

Those who have not done so, it is to their detriment.

I will not go into the issue of selling and buying shares but suffice it to say those who did not purchase shares when they were up for grabs for Barbadians, the shares are now up to such an extent that they could have cashed them in and bought more again.

The Prime Minister advises us to save and invest to shore up for now because at the time there were no rumours of war and we know the effects war can have on us.

I will give an example of a young lady who services an international clientele and there were cancellations from many going to the USA and she was distraught because they were not traveling anymore. The cancellations were going to impact on her business. As far away as Barbados is from the Middle East, as a small services provider we are beginning to feel the effects of the war.

Sir, it was this Barbados Labour Party that refunded the 8 per cent back to the civil servants. These were moneys taken out under a Democratic Labour Party Administration and the Minister of Finance strongly urged those who received the 8 per cent refund to invest it in buying shares in Insurance Corporation of Barbados and the Barbados National Bank. I want to say that a greater understanding about these types of investment would have been beneficial.

Sir, I have served two terms in this Senate and I have learnt many difference things. I value the time spent here. I am wiser for it. The idea of being concerned with a Budget with the vast numbers that these Estimates talk about was awesome for me. Many years ago, before coming to this Senate when the now Prime Minister and Minister of Finance was the Leader of the Opposition he put a human face to these numbers which many Barbadians are in awe of even though we are well educated and it began to take on a different understanding for me then a much younger business woman. Since I was in this Senate, I want to thank Senator Barker because he put another spin on it. He simplified the issues and said to me that the Budget is no different from managing a household, it is just a much bigger household and that really makes it real.
10.50 a.m.

Mr. President, these Estimates speak to the upliftment of Barbadians. I say that because we think immediately of money for the building of roads *et cetera* but it touches people at a social level. I want to spend some time dealing with that.

I want to commend the housing policy and I am not going to go into specifics because Senator Marshall did so with much aplomb. I want to know that this continuing policy will redound to the benefit of women, particularly. I

say that because many women are householders but not homeowners. The Senator spoke about the continuing sale of terrace units. Sir, we all are aware of starter homes and duplexes. I say that it would benefit women largely because there is no secret that 44.5 per cent of householders in Barbados are women, particularly single-headed households.

I am hearing in an aside that there are more than that but I am going by statistics provided by the Gender Bureau.

Mr. President, the question of ownership of property is a dream that most Barbadians have. Everybody aspires to own a piece of the rock. Those of us who owned our home or invested in the first piece of land, even though you might be paying an institution for it, there was a tremendous sense of achievement and that achievement is being realised by this Barbados Labour Party Administration, not only by the sale of houses but the issue of urban tenancies at \$2.50 per square foot paid by the individual and the difference paid by Government up to a certain size lot. Mr. President, that is an initiative that I do not believe is mirrored anywhere else.

I believe that this Government should be commended. Historically, we knew that we had the 10 cents per square foot under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, again, a Barbados Labour Party initiative. We are making sure that Barbadians feel that sense of ownership. If you feel good about your environment and good about your achievements, I expect that it would redound to the benefit of the society.

In recognising the issue of housing availability, to house a nation is a herculean task and I know that this Administration could never hope to satisfy the demands in this short period of time. However, the commitment is there and over time we will begin to see significant benefits across the board in that regard.

The amount of money allocated to housing in this Estimates is testimony of our commitment. It is there for all to see and I commend it and look forward to those who have the opportunity to do so and urge them, if they are in a position to purchase the lot that they live on, through the Urban Development Commission, do not let it slip through your hands otherwise you will regret it. I urge you to take advantage in this regard because land does not spoil. So, if you invest now, who knows what the value of the land would be in years to come.

Sir, it also has an implication for the next generation. This kind of ownership, which is new to many upcoming Barbadians, has implication for inheritance for the next generation so that they can take that opportunity to build and grow from there.

I want to look at social issues. The Ministry of Social Transformation has extensive responsibilities. The responsibilities speak to the core of our nationhood under the ambit of the Ministry of Social Transformation. It deals with children, women, elderly, disabled, poverty alleviation and Urban Development Commission, just to name a few.

Sir, these are the central parts of any society. Figures are what there are but it is who they impact on that makes all the difference.

I am always expected to talk gender. It is not what more women want. It is about how things affect men and women equally or equitably. This is not a lesson in gender studies. There is a time and place for that on another occasion.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Sir, looking at gender issues we look at the reactions as well because there are called material relations and ideological relations.

I want to look at some of the issues under gender affairs, which have been allocated for in this Budget, and I would start by saying that the scope of the work expected of the bureau recognising that it was formerly a women's bureau and which has now been broadened, a commitment by this Administration in its 1999 Manifesto, to equally look at conditions facing men and women in a modern progressive Barbados and to ensure that every Barbadian has an opportunity and are not marginalised in anyway.

Sir, the issue of staff will continue to be a cause for concern. Provision is made for an additional research officer in the Bureau to add to the present staff of a director, who is a technocrat in the field, understands gender issues well and is the ideal person to spearhead work in that division, along with two existing research officers. There is a provision for a third officer.

Sir, if in 2003 we do not pay attention to the relationship and harmony between the sexes, we are going down a rocky road and it has implications for all forms of violence and Barbados cannot condone that, being a signatory to conventions that speak about eradication of violence in this nation.

11.00 a.m.

Sir, not to be sidetracked, let me press on.

Under the responsibility of the Bureau and on the mandate of this Administration, an advisory council on gender was established. They meet monthly and they will be and are, the advisers of the Bureau. It is jointly Chaired by a man and by a woman. It has members of the Barbados

Christian Council, the Small Business Association, the National Organisation of Women, the Men's Educational Support Association, in each instance, the President or a designate, a representative from the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Director of Bureau Affairs. Sir, the law is represented by the two co-chairs and their responsibility is very clearly outlined. It is to monitor the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the National Commission on the Status of Women.

This Status of Women Commission was established now, well-passed 25 years, under a Barbados Labour Party Administration. I have to keep this because it is this Barbados Labour Party whenever it comes to the issue of looking at the improvement of the lot of people's lives, it has fallen to the Barbados Labour Party and so too again.

The Advisory Council is to advise the minister on such matters affecting the interest of women, as he may refer to it, to investigate and report on complaints of discrimination against women, to address gender inequality, general gender issues, and specific women and men's issues.

Sir, because it is a gender bureau, we must not forget that there are still circumstances, as felt by some persons, that women are still marginalised for want of a better word, in some regards. The Council will look at women's issues and men's issues to make sure that there is equity and equality in Barbados.

Part of the mandate is also to assist in the implementation of a national plan on gender and development. The development of programmes and the refinement of policies and other matters as they relate to the functions and mandate of the Bureau of Gender Affairs.

Sir, as part of the work, the advisory council has received submissions from a number of agencies and continue to do so as they pull in and get a better understanding of the conditions that exist in Barbados today. Now, M.E.S.A, the coroner, a psychiatrist, Sir, because of the issue of suicide needs to be deeply looked at, in terms of what happens to men and women and how they react to stress that exist in the society.

The Centre for Gender Studies has also made submissions. There are also receiving submissions on the impact of health conditions that affect men and women, whether it is diabetes, pollution, *et cetera*.

Issues of politics, what is the politics in Barbados and is there equity and equality in the domain. I am sure they will hear submissions about quotas as well with respect to participation on an equal footing of men and women.

Issues of race. They are in receipt, of course, of the document that was spoken to, by the members of the National Reconciliation Committee and would look at that as well.

They are also in receipt of a report from the National Task Force on the criminal risk factors. All of these speak to the kinds of behaviour, Sir, that could impact on Barbados' ability to respond equally and equitably on men and women and their relationships therein.

They are also in receipt of a report dealing with the roles of child rearing and child bearing. Obviously women have to be the ones to bear the child. There are some who think that is the most important part but I have to tell you that it really cannot happen one without the other. I do not care how much genetic anything. I am not even going to go there because I have problems with test tube babies and the like, but that is another discussion for another time.

They are also going to be looking at the aging population. This too, will have an impact. How many Barbadians are now putting their seniors in the hospital and forgetting that they are there? How many seniors are leaving because there is nobody at home and they are lonely?

I was involved in a study under the National Assistance Board many years ago looking at homelessness in Barbados. One of the things that stood out quite clearly was that there was an elderly gentleman on Baxters Road who came and lived on the street because there were people there. He was not lonely there, even though he might have gotten cold in December at night, he wanted to be where people were. He might have done that by choice but the truth is, if family neglects, then the senior has to look for another place where he can find solace and comfort.

The Advisory Council must also, as part of its responsibility and has recognised this, look at the Conventions to which Barbados has signed and look at the compliance. This is very much the work of the Advisory Council that I would speak about today.

Sir, to come back to the Bureau and its direct work, they have spearheaded workshops on gender analysis and training across Government agencies, with what they refer to as gender focal points. Each ministry should have a gender focal point, which is the person who would be the conduit. If information is happening in Ministry A, B, or C, on a particular matter or a particular set of concerns and is not channelled to any one repository, then it is just out there and does not help to inform policy, recognise if any change needs to take place, and that is part of the work of the gender focal points. They would bring to light issues of equity and equality in their respective ministries for the pooling of information.

Sir, incoming, there will be two major research studies done by the Bureau. One of them will look at the situation of Barbados' men and their treatment within the criminal justice system. I already know that one of the things that will be considered and will come up in this discussion and research, is the whole question of custody of children. This requires some dialogue because there are men in this country who, for one reason or the other are denied access to their children.

I am not suggesting, Sir, that persons who may have abused, *et cetera*, have access but there are some in Barbados, we refer to as 'decent men' who are denied access. Very often, you see this coming if child support is late and I may say that these conditions usually exist where there is discord in the family unit. This study, Sir, among other things will look at the whole issue of custody and men and their children.

The research will also look at the social and economic cost of domestic violence. Sir, domestic violence is exceedingly topical and it is not going away until the violence stops. The statistics in Barbados are still pointed to the fact that it is primarily women who suffer domestic violence. While we recognise, of course, that some men may suffer it, the statistics such as they are, point directly to women.

Sir, I must spend a minute on one of the things that the Bureau will be doing in terms of the gathering of information, because we can only speak from what we have, in terms of statistics. In my view and in the view of the Bureau, research needs to be done further on collecting data.

Sir, data collection not only speaks to some of the matters I spoke of earlier, but will also determine how a country will determine its policy, how it will channel its funds in different kinds of ways. I would have to say that we have fallen down in this regard. Because from the time I have been coming to the Senate, sometimes it has been very difficult to get figures. Even to get to a single place, you have to collect information from different places and then do your own analysis. This is not good or safe, unless you are a person trained in working with analyses and determining their outcomes.

One of the issues, as well, in terms of gathering information from domestic violence and the social and economic cost is the whole question of the power of arrest. The Protection Orders Act does not make provision for this and recently, as part of this research, the feeling as is employed in other places, is that there needs to be a power of arrest where violence is perpetrated against a person, regardless of the sex. There needs to be that extra because there are people who have a Protection Orders Act, and still get bludgeon, black eye, break foot, break hand, you name it, puncture, hole in head and the list goes on. This is gruesome

and disgusting and the violence must stop.

It will not stop, Sir, until each and everyone in Barbados recognises that not one of us – if you recall when you were a child and might have been a bad boy, as I am sure that some people on my Side and over there would have been, and bad girls too – when you got punished, not bludgeon, a spank or reprimand, it hurt your nerves badly and you did not like it and you tried not to do it again. And so, it would not stop until each of us recognises that it is not a good thing to be subjected to that kind of abuse.

11.10 a.m.

I am not referring to a parent punishing a child as abuse, not the abuse that we know exists in this Barbados. It may not be as bad here as it is in other places, but we are nothing to do with that, we have to be concerned with here. Each person has an opportunity and a right to be able to live free of fear and free from fear.

Sir, it also has an impact on productivity because if you do not feel good about yourself – remember we talked earlier in this debate about our human resources being the most valuable asset – you cannot meaningfully contribute to your job, to your own employment, to managing your affairs and to managing and raising your family well. So it is important that we get the statistics on these things to see how we can implement programmes of awareness and of correction.

Sir, one of the things the Bureau must do, which will be helped by the general focal points I made earlier, is to collect information so that it can be accurately captured in any reports that Barbados is mandated to make to regional agencies such as CARICOM and international agencies such as the United Nations Convention on Discrimination Against Women and the Organisation of American States. It is critical, if we are signatories to conventions, that our reporting must be done timely and accurately.

Sir, having spoken about violence, I want to touch briefly on a piece of legislation – I do not know if it is allowable to wear all the hats that we have, but I wear several hats. I recall about two to two and a half years ago the National Organisation of Women presented to the Government what they referred to as a list of demands. Amongst them was the call for a Sexual Harassment Bill.

I want to touch on this because I have read aspects of the media that this Bill is in delay because the National Organisation of Women has failed to respond or to offer any submissions. Sir, this is not accurate. I am not necessarily knocking the department that has responsibility for dealing with this, but if we do not speak out to things that matter, then they may never get resolved because all across the

world and in Barbados we talked about things that we did not like and they got changed. If we keep silent about things, we would go on from year to year and nothing will get resolved. So today I am going to speak about the Sexual Harassment Bill and the fact that the National Organisation of Women has made its submissions. I have a copy of such and I want to touch on one or two of the points. I do not have the actual Bill with me, I have the points that concern the collective group of the National Organisation of Women which is an umbrella organisation of 13 members including political organisations, the Barbados Registered Nurses Association – Senator Rickinson would be happy to hear this – and several other agencies that work with women in the communities.

The draft legislation now has had an issue with part of the preamble. The members felt that the legislation should not be limited only to...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, if you are speaking of a matter which is likely to be brought before this Chamber in a reasonable time, then perhaps you should not anticipate it. This is forbidden by our rules.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: I will leave that, Sir, just to say that I look forward to it coming to this Chamber.

I heard an aside, but you always urge us not to speak to asides, Sir.

People talked about the work that the so-called social clubs do in this Barbados which impact positively on the different sectors.

Sir, I want to touch briefly on the Child Care Board and the Ministry of Social Transformation because I do not plan to spend a lot of time on them given the time allocated here today. I believe that a nation is judged on how it deals with its disadvantaged groups. Some may argue that our youth are disadvantaged because they are still in the nurturing process and if you do not do it right, then the nation is in trouble. We need to look at our elderly and the disabled. Barbados has a proud record, ever growing because we must never rest on our laurels, in terms of making provisions for disadvantaged groups.

The Child Care Board has under its responsibility 123 children living in their residences. As they grow up there needs to be a transition for these adolescents from institutional shelters to a home of their own in some way or the other to at least manage their environment whether they are owners or tenants or whether they are sharing accommodation.

Sir, there are service clubs in this country that make a contribution in ensuring that they assist this Government. I think they must be commended because I believe we are still

in the year of volunteer. Last year was the year of volunteer. I am one of those people who believe that every single Barbadian should be volunteering to do something to help somebody else. I do not make any apology about that because I believe that if more people were to contribute time, energy and effort to all kinds of issues that would help to improve the lot and to uplift people generally in a society, the workload will be reduced on a larger number. So I unapologetically call, I wish I could make it a demand, on everybody in Barbados to volunteer, but to make it a demand, it would not be voluntarism.

I am aware of the initiative taken by the Optimist Club of Barbados to adopt the Sterling Children's Home. This is not new. Adopt in this sense refers to adults spending time working on programmes to uplift and to develop the young persons. This is encouraged by the Child Care Board. The Optimist Club went further and created what they called 'The Steps to the Future Project' which saw the building of three homes to accommodate adolescents on the cusps of leaving the Child Care Board institutions. This is part of their initiative to help these young adolescents to manage their own environs and affairs.

11.20 a.m.

I am aware that at the Challenor's School, a unit was also constructed for a similar purpose. Many of the Children's Homes have additional space in their environs that could accommodate this type of project. It is a sort of project that could lend meaningful support to young people and I believe it needs to be expanded.

I would like to go further and to suggest that service clubs that are spearheading these ventures should be encouraged to continue and that the project be matched by funds or assistance from Government. Furthermore, that the material used for labour receives tax concessions. That way, the cost would be reduced overall because, at the end of the day, the beneficiaries are the young, often able sometimes disabled young people, who will be making a contribution in one way or another to Barbados. We cannot measure that contribution because it would vary across the board.

One concern though is that the laws only make provision for children under the age of 18 to be under the auspices of the Child Care Board and so that needs to be managed. I am suggesting that if there is a unit built on the property of the Child Care Board, that it not necessarily be captured under the same legislative arrangement because technically, the individual would be living within a stone's throw and not necessarily under the auspices of the Child Care Board. There may need to be some amendments and the lawyers who are aspiring to the Other Place might want to take that on as one of the projects that would certainly win friends and influence people.

Sir, I want to look at the care of the elderly and to remind Barbadians that the Home Care Programme coming out under the National Assistance Board has, because of the initiative of this Administration, ensured that all home helpers are now employed on a full-time basis. Sir, the benefits to that are tremendous. Not only would the persons working be able to command a better take-home pay but the persons in their care would have access to better week-round services. There was a time when no service was administered on a weekend. That has changed now that there are full-time staff working as home helpers.

Two new projects have also come in under the Home Help Programme. One is the installation of smoke detectors. Sir, we are well aware that house fires in Barbados are not on the decline but on the increase and very often, it is caused by senior citizens, whether it is an old smut lamp or an oil stove. I think this is a good initiative. A further initiative is the issue of pick-up of prescription service. Many old people do not have someone to do things for them. Therefore, this service is a superb one to assist seniors. Of course, the recipients in this programme continue to benefit with such things as walkers, wheel chairs, *et cetera*.

The National Assistance Board also has to encourage recreational facilities; a programme that sees physical exercise and training in craft being incorporated in 13 centres across the island, with over 357 participants. Government's plan over the coming year is to extend the programme in response to the needs of a growing elderly population. We know that Barbados is an aging society.

When we look at the older people of today they are still actively doing things, for example, driving. If I can think of my colleague on my left, though retired, is as active as any young working person. Therefore, for those persons who thought that retirement was sitting back and swinging away on a hammock. If I can have it such as the Dame has, then there is nothing to worry about. I laud the Government and those older persons who want to contribute to the satisfaction of their needs.

I want to commend a project that has finally started. That is the construction of the Senior Citizens Village, Vauxhall. This was on the books for a long time. The Barbados Labour Party cannot take credit in its initial stage. That was the initiative of the Other Administration but it was lying dormant for sometime. I am now pleased this construction has commenced since August last year. The village was conceptualised to provide alternative accommodation options to address national problems of housing accommodation for the elderly, to meet the needs of further development of recreational centres for this group of persons.

The complex is 5 ½ clusters providing for three 11-bedroom units. It is being constructed on approximately 54 000 square feet of land. Provision is also being made for a day care and recreational centre. I do not recall Senator Collymore speaking to this but I believe that Barbados Association for Retired Persons (BARP) is also giving some thought to this to see if they, as an agency, in a joint venture partnership, could possibly create similar types of housing to meet the needs of persons in another sector of the community. I would want to urge the Barbados Association of Retired Persons to look at getting shareholders to put money to contribute to it. It is similar to Coral Ridge Cemetery where they are allowing people to invest in burial plots now that they are alive.

Sir, I want to raise a number of concerns pertaining to the Immigration Department. I want to do so because I note and have noticed that I am seeing more and more applications for work permits for some jobs that I would call – and no disrespect to men – run-of-the-mill. I have to ask the question. Is there no where in Barbados that we can we find people to fill these posts? I am not suggesting that we should not have free movement of labour but when I see applications for jobs such a purchase manager or operations manager – Barbados has a well-educated human resource, well-educated in a wide range of disciplines.

I want to beg the question, I suspect that some of the requirements for these jobs which are being advertised are not realistic for the post and are only a setup to ensure that certain persons can get their friends into Barbados under the guise of work permits, then have them to be living and retiring in Barbados.

Sir, I would like to see some criteria being set out to state what exactly is it they are looking for in these jobs. I believe that as concerned Barbadians, when the advertisements appear in the newspapers asking persons to submit their objections, if we are clear-thinking persons, we should send our letters of concern or complaint to the Immigration Department, if we are serious about giving our young people in this country the opportunities of growth and for work, for a good pay.
11.30 a.m.

I am equally concerned of the young brilliant minds in Barbados particularly in the area of technology who are able to develop programmes but then they meet a blockade because they do not have the resources or contacts for the products of their small business to fly and to become contributors to the economy of Barbados.

The President left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT took the Chair.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Odle, you may continue.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Thank you, Sir. Mr. Deputy President we are talking about upliftment and opportunities for Barbadians.

Sir, I will deal with the last item on my list. We are blessed to have the Minister of Health as Leader of Government Business here in the Senate. He outlined magnificently the works being administered under the Ministry of Health. I was pleased to hear of some of the improvements before us because we know that the health of our nation is the wealth of our nation.

I want to touch briefly on the issue of HIV/AIDS. We in Barbados recognise that HIV/AIDS is truly a pandemic that could decimate our landscape. I was not able to pick up the total amount allocated to this Head but maybe one of the other Members will speak to the amount of funds being allocated collectively across this portfolio as there is training in other areas and the anti-retroviral drugs which have a tremendous cost. I think that as a small developing country we can see the importance of making provision for this type of treatment.

I want to look at HIV/AIDS in terms of the impact on family life because every one of us in this Chamber may know someone with HIV/AIDS. In Barbados we are inclined to be insensitive and we stigmatise, label and ostracise people with HIV/AIDS. We do not stigmatise persons with cancer, diabetes or any other life threatening illness and I wish we would not do it with HIV/AIDS either because no one in his right mind would ask for a life threatening disease. No matter how good you protect yourself there is still risk. You may be in a monogamous relationship and your partner is not promiscuous but we know that HIV/AIDS can be contracted in so many different ways. Sir, I believe that promiscuity is still too high in Barbados and once there is promiscuity there will be trouble in the camp.

I would like to preach abstinence if you are not married but people would laugh at me but people should re-evaluate their lives and use abstinence as a tool for protecting themselves.

We talk about the impact on families but HIV/AIDS has an impact on the productivity of this nation. This was particularly bothersome to me when I received the news of the death of a young woman who has five children. I do not know what will happen to these children because the extended family is not there. Sir, what destruction has death brought to this family? It behooves us to be careful and not to be judgmental about these kinds of conditions but to continue to educate and inform.

Against that background I want to commend the HIV/AIDS Commission headed by Dr. Carol Jacobs because I believe that whilst we are advanced into the spread of this

disease we have to continue to do and spend much if we want to save Barbados and make sure that the quality of life is secure.

Sir, none of us can predict the length of our lives but we can have some say in terms of the quality of life and to those who are now disadvantaged because of this terrible disease.

Sir, the last eight years have been great. I have already said how much I have learnt and how I enjoyed being a part of this August Chamber with the diverse views of this wide cross section of Barbadians. I believe that the Senate should remain as a Chamber of the review and as a management of our system of Government.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator your time has ended.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Sir, I simply want to say thanks again and to urge the electorate as they listen to the remaining part of this Debate and when the question is posed to you soon, please do the right thing.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. Deputy President, I must say from the outset that I have found this Debate to be quite fascinating. Sir, that must be added to the subvention by the Barbados Labour Party to ensure that political parties survive in Barbados. Political parties who normally have to wait on contributions from various sectors of the society, no longer have to be beholden to the society but they have money which they can use to run their affairs on a regular basis without having people sign mortgages on their personal property to protect the interest of the political party of which they support. I think that is a very progressive step and I think that it also flies in the face of the propaganda from the Democratic Labour Party's Side which says that we are trying to extinguish the Democratic Labour Party in any form or fashion, when we have tried to enhance it.

11.40 a.m.

Sir, I want to congratulate most of the Senators who spoke, so far, for the quality of their presentations which help to save the Estimates debate from staying on the downhill path which Senators McClean and Mascoll of the Democratic Labour Party consistently did. I am sorry that my friend Senator McClean did not have the strength to resist the temptation to follow the lead set by Senator Mascoll.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: I really expected him to be strong enough to resist the temptation. He normally strikes out on his own path and makes his own point. However, he succumbed but I do not know for what reason he did that. Senator McClean has already made it known that he would not be a candidate for St. Philip South so I do not know why he would have to succumb. Only he could tell us why. Therefore, I am very sorry that he followed the bad lead set by Senator Mascoll.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, I have been in this Chamber too long and I have interacted with Senator Mascoll too long as well to have been disappointed in his presentation.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: On a point of order. I think that the Honourable Senator is reflecting negatively on my character when he gives the impression that I have no mind of my own and that I am simply following somebody. I think that I made my presentation in the best interest of myself and my party. Therefore, for the Honourable Senator to suggest that I am merely following a lead is saying that I do not have the capacity to think.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: It is not a point of order. The Honourable Senator is intending to give his opinion of what he believes. The Rules specifically preserve that kind of debate.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

Sir, I do not know why Senator McClean is protesting. I paid him a compliment. Normally he is a man who strikes out on his own path and follows his own direction. Therefore, I was surprised that he did not resist the temptation. I was only complimenting him that characteristically, on most occasions, the trend is that he is normally a man who can speak out. Therefore, I was surprised and disappointed. However, if he does not want to accept my compliment, I still offer it for the record, Sir.

Sir, Senator Mascoll spoke for about two hours and said a lot with which I have to disagree, that should not have been said or said in that fashion but that is his privilege and it is also my privilege to disagree.

Sir, what I found more surprising was the fact that he spoke for two hours and did not mention a single word regarding the single biggest issue facing the world, the Iraq

war. I found it really surprising and, therefore, I have to contrast Senator Mascoll who is...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member should address the Chair and do not side talk, please.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. Deputy President, Senator Mascoll is, I think, the President of the Democratic Labour Party, therefore, I would have felt that would have been his occasion to be statesmanlike. I expected that as a good Combermerian, especially on an international issue when the whole world is watching and listening, that his colleague took a different route and made it quite clear that he was throwing his full support behind the stance taken by the Government of Barbados, meaning the Barbados Labour Party Government, regarding the proposed Unites States war against Iraq.

Sir, he said that he was well in agreement with Government's condemnation of the war in the East and agrees with the Minister of Foreign Affairs' stand on the war and there is no difference of opinion.

Sir, that is a tradition of a democracy as we know it. For example, in the United States where there is a situation that confronts the nation, political parties come together, submerge their differences and have one opinion that represents the totality of the views of the State at that time.

Therefore, I would have expected Senator Mascoll to do that because I feel at a time when he expects to lead his party into the next general elections, that his statesmanlike leadership would have shown and he would then be in a position to lock horns with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Therefore, he would have risen to the occasion and spoken that way.

It may go back to some of my biblical readings that I have done in my time and to say that when the country and the party were crying out for leadership of that calibre, there goes none. I, therefore, have to take solace in the Gospel of Luke Chapter 11.11-12 which says:

"If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he for fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?"

Sir, that is how I felt when Senator Mascoll failed to rise to the occasion and failed to join his leader and the leader of the Government in representing the views of Barbados in that regard.

Mr. Deputy President, if we think that was bad, there was worse to come. Senator Mascoll did not mention the Iraq war but Senator McClean did speak on Iraq and took a contrary stance to Senator Mascoll. He said that he was taken aback by some of comments of the Government of the United States. He said that he was extremely disappointed and embarrassed at the Government of Barbados' attitude to the United States led war on Iraq.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: On a point of order. I do not know what the Senator is quoting from. It is very much like what was published in today's newspaper. My comments did not relate to the attitude towards the war. It related to the manner in which the comments were made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

I said that even though the comments may have been correct, the manner and place in which they were presented were inappropriate.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator, that was on a point of elucidation.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: I also recalled that when Senator McClean attempted to give his personal view of the issue, he said that he was not getting into that and that when two big friends fall out, you do not get involved. I am not sure whether that is a lack of political courage, whether it represents political disingenuousness or whatever form that represents.
11.50 a.m.

Sir, again, that is a further repudiation of the philosophy and practise of the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, their founding leader. He had a famous dictum at Independence when he addressed the United Nations, when he said that Barbados will be friends of all and satellites of none.

I cannot understand what that represents. Whose friend Senator McClean or his Party could be, based on his views or whose satellite he could be. Sir, it makes me wonder if he could be embarrassed and disappointed by the Government's handling of the issue, an issue which had become public, I do not understand this hypersensitivity they are demonstrating.

I recall that his founding leader once referred to the President of the United States as a cow boy, and not even at a time of war. That represented the view of 'the friends of all and satellites of none'. As a matter of fact, that represents the traditional Barbadian instead of independence, that goes right back to the freedom at Oistins in 1952 when we told Cromwell and his gang, go your way, we make our own decisions. We pay our own way and we are not beholden to you, therefore, no taxation without representation. This was enshrined in the Barbadian psyche as far back as 1952. It

was then further exemplified and articulated by the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow. It has also been demonstrated since then by the other leaders.

Sir, when one takes the stand of the present Prime Minister of Barbados against the OECD, that was further manifestation of a sense of independence, of us being our own people and the leader being his own man, or woman. I do not understand this seeking to make excuses as to why you cannot take a position.

What is wrong with taking a position? I am wondering if you were advised that this is the position you should take by Jennifer Laslo, your 1999 public relations consultant from the United States of America, that you should not rub the United States the wrong way, even to make a comment which you are legitimately allowed to make.

Here is the United States of America expressing disappointment and hoping that we would not take a position in the United Nations. We pay our dues in the United Nations. We are not in arrears in any form, shape or fashion with the United Nations. Therefore, we are entitled to our views, just like the United States of America who represent or seek to represent freedom of speech and freedom of expression.

We have a right to have freedom of speech and freedom of expression, even if they do not like it, because we pay our own way. This has been the well established traditional Barbadian attitude.

Sir, after his comments, some people were shocked. I received telephone calls last night and this morning asking me what is going on.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator, please, I do not think you were interrupted in your speech. Let the Honourable Member get through his speech. We will accommodate Asides but not at that level.

Thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, people are wondering why this further act of political heresy on the part of the spokesman for the Democratic Labour Party. They cannot understand it.

First we had this repudiation of the value of education on the Barbadian system where one leader of the Democratic Labour Party said that qualifications do not matter. They do not count, they are not important and they are over-rated. He almost said they should be thrown away, forgotten about or abolished which is the next thing I expect him to say.

Then, you have this act of non-Barbadian, un-Barbadian or whatever you may want to call it, Sir, where people are said to be cow-towing to the United States of America. Some people asked me whether this might have had anything to do with a reported visit of some high level team of Democratic Labour Party supporters to Washington not too long ago, to campaign for funds. They want to know if this is a payback for that visit. If this is a follow-through, in order to get the funds that might have been promised to them on that visit to Washington.

Sir, his Party is accusing my Party of seeking to use funds from the sale of the BNB for electioneering purposes to get electioneering funds. Then the people are saying, have you noticed how all of a sudden, the Democratic Labour Party is indulging in a lot of glitz, fancy and glamorous approach to events.

Sir, yesterday Senator McClean spoke of a nexus but what might be the nexus, Senator McClean between this sudden ostentatious show of money and that visit to Washington.

Sir, I also had to say that the good, but I remembered yesterday that I saw in the newspaper on page 11 of the *Nation*, former President Jimmy Carter, former Barbados Prime Minister, Sir Lloyd Sandiford, listening to former Honduras President, Carlos Roberto Reina at the conclusion of a conference on Campaign Finance in the Western Hemisphere last Wednesday.

Sir, what is going on? I was saying maybe these phone calls are not too far off and that one has to pay attention to see the nexus between these matters. I am grateful, Sir, to the members of the public who drew it to my attention. Therefore, I want to be sure that these weedwackers and rakes and boxes of fruit that we are seeing have nothing to do with Washington.

I would hate to think that a party of such fine standing and such a long tradition, up until recently, for independent, thought and action, could suddenly be so supine and seemingly servile to the United States of America's Government.

Sir, that was one of the most disappointing aspects of this whole affair and I hope, therefore, that Jennifer Laslo's description of us in 1999 as a nation of toilet scrubbers is not now being rephrased for us to be regarded as a nation of money grabbers.

Sir, from toilet scrubbers to money grabbers, I am not sure which is worse. I just hope that this is, therefore, not the new attitude being foisted upon us from them.

Sir, I am not surprised because one has to recall...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Please have that argument outside, not in here.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, one has to remember that the Barbados Labour Party never got any firm support from the Democratic Labour Party in its heroic fight against the OECD. As a matter of fact, I recall reading where Senator Mascoll said that we should have complied with the OECD and also the same thing happened with the shiprider.

When we took on the 'mighty' United States of America to get our own version of Shiprider, where our sovereignty will be protected and defined by us, not by them, we were told by Senator Mascoll on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party that we should have gone ahead and signed the agreement. In other words, forget about sovereignty, forget about dignity, forget about independence and whatever, and just because of people's superiority of finances or technology or the wherewithal, they should just run riot in your country.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party has never subscribed to that and, therefore, we never will subscribe to that. I therefore, Sir, am just wondering how much more of this we are going to see. I think the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow must be very unhappy as he looks down on his Party from his place of rest.

Sir, you have a repudiation of the value of academic qualifications where people are saying that academic qualifications are overrated in every respect and in every area of life. Degrees and those things are overrated. I have said this before and I mean it. In other words I am adamant and I will not apologise.

Sir, I would hate to think that a party built upon the foundation laid by the Democratic Labour Party where free secondary education is concerned and universalised it...

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: The facts are that we know that already and we have said it many times. Sir, the perception was articulated and created by the Barbados Democratic Labour Party. We do not begrudge them because we know it started on a good foundation so that is no problem. I am glad you joined us in that respect. That is in keeping with the tradition where one Party does, another Party extends and improves and enhances and goes on. It is a continuum, *ad infinitum*. So you did it, Sir, and the country is the better for it and we praise you for it.
12.00 noon

I want to know whether this attitude that qualifications do not matter is meant to be a further repudiation of the qualifications and that we must replace the CXC's, Diplomas from the Barbados Community College, Associate Degrees, Bachelors of Arts, Masters and PhDs with qualifications in weed-whacking, raking and apple gathering. I do not understand what is happening. I think that is rather patronising coming from someone who described himself as an intellectual with a First Class Honours Degree in Economics especially since he was tutored so admirably by Senator Barker in econometrics and in other spheres of his study.

Sir, I think it is unfortunate that those who might not be as discriminating in their thinking as others are led to believe that they should forget all about school and not be bothered about getting certified and that all they need is a weed whacker or a rake and they will be cool and that is life. I would hate to think so.

I have heard Senator McClean time and time again castigating this Party for allowing an educational system that would allow so many Barbadians to leave school uncertified. I think seventy per cent was the last figure. Therefore, if you are condemning a system and those who are administering the system for the last six years for allowing the system to make it possible for seventy per cent of those persons to leave school without qualification, I really think it is contradictory to want to say then that the quest and the acquisition of qualifications after examination is overrated.

Sir, I want to let it be known that we in the Barbados Labour Party do not in any way subscribe to that point of view, but rather that as our philosophy and slogan for education says, no one will be left behind. That is how we are approaching the whole question of education.

I also want to deal with Senator Mascoll who spent a great deal of time riding his hobby horse on the GEMS Project and the Barbados National Bank. Sir, to my mind, there is a nexus between the GEMS Project and the Barbados National Bank. Senator Mascoll readily admitted that the infamous acronym JAWS was a figment of his imagination which he had put together to represent a company called JAWS, but there was no company. In the same way that there is a nexus between that, there is a nexus, to my mind, between that and these charges, these innuendos and character attacks where the sale of the shares of the Barbados National Bank is concerned.

Sir, I am not surprised that some people may describe this as the result of puerile imagination. Where the Barbados National Bank is concerned, the Democratic Labour Party has never subscribed to the idea with the Barbados National Bank. Sir, let me declare an interest where the Barbados National Bank and the Insurance Corporation of Barbados

are concerned. I was among the first few persons to deposit a few dollars in the Barbados National Bank and I have been a faithful contributor ever since. I also did the same thing with the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. I was privileged enough about three years ago, I think it was, to have been awarded by the Insurance Corporation of Barbados for being among the very first, I do not remember what number, of its clients. Therefore, when they put shares on the market, I put my money where my mouth is and bought a few shares that I could afford and showed my solidarity, my patriotism and my nationalism.

For those of us in this Chamber and outside who are being so critical of the Board of the Barbados National Bank for seeking to sell its shares, I wonder how many of them put their money in the mouth when the time was right. The late Errol Barrow made it plain that we should not subscribe to the Barbados National Bank because it is nothing but a piggy bank. So when now people are talking about nationalism and what it represents to the Barbadian mind and mentality and you want to sell off this glowing Barbados asset, remember it was nothing but a piggy bank. I only wish that all the piggy banks in Barbados could have mushroomed and expanded like that because we will be a very wealthy country. A lot of young people in Barbados still have piggy banks. In my day, we had a puzzling tot where we saved a few pennies because we could not afford anything more than a tot. We did not have anything ceramic. If we had more puzzling tots or piggy banks of that calibre we would be a much better off society. Therefore, this castigation of the Government is not surprising at all.

The Prime Minister in his Economic and Financial Policies enunciating on October 22, 2002 on page 70 in relation to the Barbados National Bank said:

"In relation to the financial sector, Government's principal focus is to exercise effective supervision and regulation, to become less involved in owning and running such institutions. For those that are now owned by the State we want to support their institutional development in a sector that has become consolidated and liberalized."

He mentioned the Barbados National Bank and he said:

"Mr. Speaker, the last quarter of the year 2000 saw initial public offerings by two government corporations: the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and the Barbados National Bank. In my economic policy statement of 2001, I announced the intention to allow the two institutions to return to the market to continue the process of divestment of a substantial portion of the remaining shares owned by the Government of Barbados. I also stated that this offer

would not be limited to the local market, but would also be targeted at regional pension funds, insurance companies, social security schemes and strategic partners either regional or international. Since that time the Board of the Barbados National Bank, acting as agent of the Government, has been in discussion with possible strategic partners.”

So this is not something that was hatched in the dead of the night for any nefarious reasons. Its intention was announced way back in October 2002. Therefore, what happened is a natural progression of those affairs as represented by those in charge.

Sir, I had the great privilege of seeing the views of none other than the Deputy General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union, Mr. Robert 'Bobby' Morris, which organisation represents the Barbados National Bank workers. He said that the Barbados Workers' Union does not anticipate any industrial relation problems for our local employees of the Barbados National Bank when Government sells it shares to the Republic Bank Limited a move which the Union says might not necessarily be negative. He went on to say that the Union has taken the position that the sale is more an issue of our indigenous bank having to seek strategic alliances at this time to be able to survive in the future, so we are not necessarily seeing this as a negative thing – this is Robert 'Bobby' Morris, Deputy General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union who is also regarded as one of the most progressive minds in the Democratic Labour Party – but as an opportunity for the Barbados National Bank to go into the lucrative areas of banking, corporate banking, investment banking and offshore banking. Clearly they have to form a partnership with a company like the Republic Bank, Morris said.
12.10 p.m.

Sir, I think that is commendable. No one in Barbados could seek to describe Robert 'Bobby' Morris in any sphere as a conservative. He is one of the most progressive minds any where in Barbados and, therefore, I very seriously have to take his view.

Sir, I wish to make a comment in relation to the Hilton Hotel. Again, a great deal is being made about that hotel. People try to overlook the fact that the hotel was tired, old and had virtually become dilapidated. It had outgrown its position in the marketplace in every possible sense and needed to be refashioned. Just as Sandy Lane Hotel had to be refashioned, a national asset had to be refashioned and given a new lease on life, one which would continue to make a great contribution to the Barbadian well-being.

Sir, as regards to the speculative exercise about not knowing how much the Hilton costs, *et cetera*. When Senator Mascoll said that, it reminded me of the fact that the

Hilton Hotel was built in 1966, almost 38 years ago. Up to this time, nobody knows the true cost of the hotel, a hotel that was built; has been occupied; has made a significant contribution; has been operated; has helped to put Barbados on the map through the linkages of the other Hiltons and the services it offered, 38 years later, nobody can tell us the true cost. At the same time, Senator Mascoll is speculating about a work in progress. I would ask him if he could use his powers of research, research that he has come up with such matters as JAWS, *et cetera*, to come up with the true cost and also tell us about the origin of the fire that has destroyed the records of banks, receipts and the safe. If Senator Mascoll can research that, I would be eternally grateful.

Sir, having put those matters out of the way, I am now in the privileged position to be able to deal with some of the issues as they relate to the Estimates. One of the things I would like to start with, which I am sure is pleasing news to Senator Rock's ears, is the question of compensation to the churches of Barbados for the Government funding the repairs for those buildings that were used by Government.

Last year, 2002, the Government made part of that compensation. A committee in the Prime Minister's Office has been working with the various denominations. It is a rewarding exercise where people have been very fair and where there was a sense of maturity on both sides. That year in compensating these churches, the Government has paid out \$723 883 to the Anglican and the Methodist Churches. There were four properties for which the Anglican Church was compensated in the sum of \$480 673. Last year there was one property for which the Methodists were compensated in the sum of \$243 210, representing \$723 833.

This year, 2002-2003 financial year, the exercise has continued. I am pleased to say an agreement has been reached between Government and some of the denominations to the sum of \$978 185.50, with the Anglican Churches being paid \$331 967 for two properties, namely St. Mary's Infants' School and St. Stephen's Junior School. The Methodist Church received \$86 000 for the cost of repairs to the Paynes Bay Primary School. The Moravian Church being compensated for two properties in the sum of \$560 218.50 for the Clifton Southborough and the Grace Hill Primary Schools.

There are still 8 properties belonging to three denominations which have to be dealt with: four to the Anglicans, three to the Methodists and one to the Moravian. Government has put another \$1 million into the 2003-2004 Estimates to finance this process with the intention that as long as an agreement is reached, further compensation would be paid as the exercise goes on. I hope we could complete it this year and could let that be a settled issue between the State and the Churches. Sir, I, therefore, want to thank all

who have contributed to the exercise. I want to thank them for the great spirit they have exemplified.

I want to speak to the issues of culture and to some of the major issues that are outstanding for the 2003-2004 financial year. As part of the Ministry of Culture activities, one of the major events for this year is, apart from the continuing work with National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA), the Crop-Over Festival; the Community Independence Celebrations, dealing with the Barbados Historical Society and the Barbados National Trust would be that particular attention is going to be placed for National Heroes Day. There is going to be an announcement that there would be a life-size statue of Sir Frank Walcott being unveiled on that day. There is a Committee made up from persons of the Barbados Workers' Union; the National Insurance Board; the Cabinet Office and the Prime Minister's Office, working to formulate the programme for National Heroes Day, 2003.

We are promising it would be an undertaking in keeping with the dignity and the seriousness with which Barbadians attended the unveiling of the statue of the Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams and last year, the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers. This is going to be an event to which the public could look forward with great anticipation and which would be a rewarding experience for all concerned.

I am also pleased to say that another major event would be the Emancipation Day at the Rock Hall Monument. Sir, as you would know, last year for Emancipation Day, there was a ground-breaking ceremony for Rock Hall, which is the first free village in Barbados. There will be the erection of a statue to commemorate the historic part that location plays in the Barbadian social history.

A competition was launched and I am pleased to say there was a great deal of response to it from the widest possible aspects of Barbadian life, where persons wanted to design and to submit entries. There were a total of 45 entries from amateurs, professionals and others. The Committee has determined and has made certain recommendations and the winner would be announced early next year April. I think there will be a first prize of \$10 000 but there are a number of other prizes to be won.

Sir, I also want to deal with the Prime Minister's Office in relation to HIV/AIDS. Senator Odle has made some reference to it but I want to assure you that the programme continues at a pace. It is being refined and adjusted. Since the Commission has come into being, surveys have shown there is heightened awareness amongst the Barbadian population about HIV/AIDS. We want to take it beyond that level where we are seeking to change people's behaviour

because while knowledge is important, unless persons change their behaviour, then everything is naught.
12.20 p.m.

Let me assure Senator Odle that abstinence is a major component of our policy. We do not shy away from promoting the value of abstinence. We give young people all the choices and let them know there is nothing to be embarrassed about if they choose to abstain and that it is a legitimate valid way or representing a behaviour choice. We are developing billboards, literature and other media communications to follow-up the ones we did before.

The billboards at Bay Street and Queen's Park are going to be replaced by others which will promote abstinence and behavioural changes. The programme is continuing and we want persons to know that the commission is hard at work co-ordinating the work of the various Ministries, NGOs and the private sector. There has been admirable level of co-operation from all concerned.

One of the behavioural changes we want to emphasise is the question of stigma, discrimination and marginalisation of persons infected or affected by HIV/AIDS and this is a major plank of the Government's national programme. We want to let all Barbadians know the benefits of attending Ladymeade Reference Unit where Government gives free antiretroviral drugs, counselling and support.

Last year at World AIDS Day the Prime Minister announced that a register was set up to register acts of discrimination and to seek to develop policies to as how we will deal with those acts of discrimination. The Ministry of Labour has been doing some work and a policy framework is being examined and analysed to see how it can be put into being as quickly as possible.

We have also begun to work on setting up an AIDS Foundation, a non-governmental institution with people from the private sector which will work to develop its own programme to raise funds for various causes. This is a contribution from the good corporate citizens of Barbados. I want to say thanks to Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard for his contribution and initial efforts and I look forward to him and his other partners working to bring that to conclusion soon.

The Ministry of Health is working on plans for a drop-in centre where we can provide an environment where persons with HIV/AIDS can go to study, have recreation, exercise and make friends. They will not have to look for accommodation but will have a safe place where they can operate at a level in keeping with their aims and objectives.

I want to deal with the question of the Ministry of the Civil Service. Yesterday Senator Collymore made mention

job evaluation exercise that is being conducted to seek to enhance the system that has been in existence for many years and which has been the source of much contention. There was never universal satisfaction with the way the system works and the last job evaluation exercise was carried out in 1989.

We are seeking through this exercise to put it on a more comprehensive, objective, less personalised, less subjective basis. Phase One started in October 2000 and was completed in May 2001. We are into Phase 2 started in November 2001 and this will involve the actual evaluation of jobs and according to the programme which is on stream, it is expected to be concluded in November 2003. There is every expectation that this deadline will be met and we can expect to see the fruits of this labour being available to Government so that implementation can happen soon after.

We regard this as a major plank in Government's activity and we are determined that we will proceed with it as quickly as possible.

Mention was made of the qualification order and I want to say that the last order was made in 1974, amended in 1976 and another was done 25 years after in December 2001. There are queries about the current order and every effort is being made to accommodate most of the concerns raised by persons but in addressing these concerns, it must be understood that further work will have to be undertaken that will incur some delays in implementing legislation which has not been amended since 1976.

It is being reviewed and I give my assurance that this exercise is being given serious consideration by Government and that it will not take another 25 years before another qualification order is done. Sir, it is a major exercise and Senator Collymore can attest to this. Sir, I also want to speak briefly on the new Public Service Act which is now being drafted. The drafting of this Act will be the result of the debates, comments and recommendations of the Committee on the proposed policy. This Act is to improve the management of the public service in every sphere. Sir, the idea is to consolidate and modernise the legislation that impacts on the administration of the public sector towards the attainment of greater efficiency and effectiveness in the public service.
12.30 p.m.

The Committee which developed the policy framework has agreed that this should proceed apace and Government is doing that. Government has given priority to the new Public Service Act which we feel is absolutely necessary if Barbados is to maintain its place in the world as a progressive, efficient society. Those are some of the programmes that we are undertaking.

I must repeat that the work on the casual workers to public officers is about 99 per cent complete. Approximately 99 per cent of those persons who are eligible have received their letters of appointment. Over 4 000 would have received their letters of appointment in the central civil service. We know that this Act will bring tremendous benefits to those recipients. We are hoping that this exercise for regularising all casual workers will be 100 per cent complete shortly.

We want to thank the unions for the part played in this area. We want to assure them that we appreciate their co-operation and we do not regard this as the end of the journey but only the beginning of things to come.

Mr. Deputy President, on the area of Public Sector Reform, some mention was made regarding conditions at the Immigration Department. I spoke to the acting Chief Immigration Officer and other persons related to that department and I want to assure the public that the scenes of long lines in the sun is not a situation where people have to line up all day, as has happened elsewhere. What creates this kind of situation is that people would go to the department before the office is open and wait outside until the doors are open. When the doors are open they go in, take a number and then have their business attended to.

As a matter of fact, the Immigration Department has relocated the passport section to the ground floor and other business is conducted upstairs to make it more convenient to persons. This department has done a lot of remedial work in improving its image. Information brochures and pamphlets have been completed and distributed. These are available at post offices across Barbados instead of making a journey to Bridgetown to collect forms.

Several changes have been made in upgrading the department. For example, hotlines, the distribution of passport forms, installation of suggestion boxes, process review of documentation and provision standards identified for delivery of service. The Immigration Department will be the first department which will be publicly put on display by putting its reputation and profession on the line, where it will publish standards. They will give you the assurance that once you have completed the paper work for your passport, you will receive your passport in a few days time. There will be a public commitment through a customer charter. The Immigration is not only promising to do things but they are putting their reputation on the line by stating what they intend to deliver.

Sir, we realise that in the final analysis, it is how you present the delivery of service to the public that will count and not the fancy slogans. There will also be a jingle and new public service announcements and other promotions that will be done.

Sir, while there has not been a lot of public song and dance about the public sector reform, a lot of work has been going on in the public sector. Last year we published a document called Public Sector Reform 'The Facts'. It enumerated organisation reviews, upgrade of systems, customer charter activities, the setting up of reform committees and employee assistance programmes, where the Government pays for persons who have emotional or other problems that may impact on their personal lives and productivity at work.

Sir, I had a discussion this morning with the acting Director of Public Sector Reform, who recently returned from a conference in New Zealand. He said that he took a copy of the literature of what Barbados has been doing and he reported that we are not doing badly in terms of world standards. We admit that more has to be done in the area of customer service and great emphasis will be placed in the next financial year in that area to the Barbadian public.

Sir, regarding the technical standards, the job evaluation exercise and strategic plans, we are doing well in this area and greater work will be done in the coming year and this will be initiated by that first customer charter activity at the Immigration Department.

I want to say with a great deal of satisfaction, as I review part of the work of the Government in this regard, that we regard the public servants' qualification and certification as an integral part of the Barbadian society. As a matter of fact, on Friday, March 29, 2003, the Training Division will be celebrating its 36th Anniversary with an awards ceremony. It is a pity that we cannot quantify the contribution made by that division to the training and the production of civil servants that has helped Barbados to progress over its years of Independence. It has been an integral part of the Barbadian society.

I want to close with a quotation from Luke Chapter 6. It is meant to encourage my friends who might be concerned about the slings and arrows of great misfortunes as it relates to the Democratic Labour Party. I have to take solace in these words from Luke Chapter 6 Verses 26-28:

"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! For so did their fathers to the false prophets.

But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

Therefore, I am proud to be part of a Government and a country. My perception of Barbados is contained in this quotation from the great statesman Adlai Stevenson and I quote:

"To what was his inserenity and wisdom, with self-respect and the respect of all mankind, a patriotism that puts country ahead of self, a patriotism which is not short, plenty outburst of emotion but the tranquil and steady dedication of a lifetime."

I am obliged to you, Sir.
12.40 p.m.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to make the final contribution to this Honourable Senate before the Leader of Government Business winds up on the Appropriation Bill. I would like first, once again, to congratulate the Leader of Government Business for the way in which he presented the Appropriation Bill to this Chamber and, more importantly, the way in which he went through his own Ministry, the Ministry of Health, and brought us up-to-date with the things that have been happening under his watch, and the very good work and improvements that have been made, within the QEH in particular.

Mr. Deputy President, in beginning my contribution, I want to speak about an issue that weights on me heavily. In small societies, we must be guarded against giving an impression that you are being personal on matters, and you must be at pains to ensure that you deal with things fairly, honestly and forthrightly.

We are all charged with a responsibility that when we find ourselves in certain positions that we have to speak out on matters when we find it difficult and troubling with things that are happening.

I want to deal with a matter that would have its roots based in Head 44, Subhead 420, which is really the Labour Department, dealing with industrial relations matters. The reason why I want to speak to it, is because we have a system in this country, when it comes to industrial relations, where the process of volunteerism is one that we have practised, it is the one that has served us well, it is the one that I, as a trade unionist many years ago, believed in, and it is one, that I would have hoped, would have been something that we could continue to use as the process by which we can resolve matters.

More and more, the things that we are seeing unfolding, are putting that process under serious stress. The one main ingredient that makes volunteerism successful is the fact that it requires good leadership at the top. Our success over the years, in large measure, has been the result of excellent union leadership for the years past. It has served us well. I believe the time has come when some leaders, particularly the leadership of the National Union of Public workers, needs to do a bit of stocktaking.

I also want to say up front that I have never been and I will never be involved in union bashing. I believe that the unions, as far as I am concerned, are partners in the business. They have been partners, to my mind, and that is how I consider the role of the unions, partners in the business.

Our achievements have been the result of the fact that the unions have played a significant part and a role in the development of this country. Long may the unions last and live in this country. At the same time, I have a responsibility to say to this Chamber that we have some serious concerns in terms of what I am seeing and what is the purpose behind it.

Last night, in this Honourable Chamber, we heard from Senator Rickinson. She spoke about her experience and involvement on the Haynes Commission, which was set up to look at and review the QEH and to make recommendations for the improvement of the administration of that institution. We were told that a key strategic part in the process, having been invited to attend meetings with that Commission and share, so that the Commission could have benefited from the concerns of that strategic partner, and I specifically refer to the NUPW, she was able to say to us that not once, and she did say for the second time, that not on one occasion did they have the benefit of the presence of anybody from the NUPW to come to that Commission to say, this is how we view the QEH, this is the concern as we see it and these are our suggestions and recommendations to move forward.

I only want to use that as a case in point to get back to the point I am making, because, as I said, we are now at a point where it has to do with ensuring that we do not move now to the law of the jungle.

I heard this morning, my good friend, Mr. Joe Goddard from the NUPW castigating the private sector...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I want to draw to the Honourable Member's attention that you are not permitted to call the names of civilians here, unless you have given notice that you intend to call his name. You may be able to deal with it in a different fashion.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Thank you for your guidance, Mr. Deputy President.

The leadership of the NUPW is seeking to give advice to the managers within the private sector, in terms of what they should and should not do, to maintain industrial peace and harmony. If there is one institution, in this country, that needs to do a bit of introspection, it is that same NUPW.

Sir, as a person who has been involved in industrial relations for many, many years, I can say that managers, particularly when they are governed by collective

agreements, make doubly sure that when it comes to things like the grievance procedure, they are following to the letter of the law. Because, if you do not, the unions will come down on you like a ton of bricks.

Sir, you, as a responsible manager cannot attempt to fracture that process in any way. However, you can have a situation where workers can put down their tools and withhold their services, or whatever, and then the union leadership comes in and says, we are going to legitimise the action. In truth and in fact, that is what you are doing. This is very serious. This is not a question of suggesting to workers that they may not have grievances. Of course they have grievances that must be addressed but you must establish a process, not for it to be respected only in the breach, rather than in practice. That is what it is set up for but as I said, the managers must respect it but the workers and the union can disrespect it in the breach.

Mr. Deputy President, as I say, things normally start, one today, one tomorrow, two the next day and thereafter you reach a situation where there is a flood. I am observing what is happening because, I know that has not been the practice in this country.
12.50 p.m.

We have had good responsible leadership over the years, this is why I say there must be some introspection. I think there comes a time when you become so immersed in something that you have to take a step back so that you can regain your objectivity. I have a responsibility as a person who has been following our industrial relation practices for many years to say these things. I take no comfort having to say that, but that is the reality of the situation. As I said, those of us who know better and who understand better would be condemned if we sit idly by and allow these things to take place without comment.

I just simply want to ask a few questions along the same line. I observe what is taking place now in the Port. I want to speak simply in general terms because, as someone who understands the issues when they reach the level of discussion, one must not do anything to seek to create further difficulties because at the end of the day there has to be a resolution.

I can simply say to you, Mr. Deputy President, that one of the things after September 11 that this Government has had to do was to give undertakings to the United Nations to improve our own security particularly at our ports of entry. We have an obligation to do that. How many of us remember the incident that took place in Bali after September 11? There was also an incident, as far as I can recall, in Kenya. You are asked as a country to give an undertaking as to what you are going to do to improve the security in your country

and to make sure that those improvements, in some instances, act as a deterrent, and you have to demonstrate that you are doing something about it. Recommendations are made to you and you give an undertaking in response. As I said we have the experience of other incidences subsequent to September 11.

Mr. Deputy President, if we did nothing and something happened in this country, particularly at our ports of entry, we would be heavily censored and justifiably so. That is my personal belief. Mr. Deputy President, I know persons, particularly like Senator Philip Goddard who has quite a bit of military experience, would agree with me when I say that terrorists look at certain vulnerable installations. They look at things like telecommunications facilities, energy facilities, television and radio facilities, the police and the ports of entry.

I am also made to understand that you want to put a camera here and you do not want to put a camera there and it is better that it goes elsewhere, but I ask when a terrorist is coming do you know where he is going to start from, do you know where he is going to attack. We all sat and watched in horror the experience of September 11. I, Mr. Deputy President, could never have imagined that someone could take an aircraft and use it like a missile. But terrorists do not think like normal people. So when you say to me that a camera must go here but it must not go there, I asked the question where will they start from.

We have, in this country, a situation where lots of other institutions like banks and so on have sought to ensure that they capture certain things to protect their staff and the public whom they serve. That is why I started by saying that this whole thing saddens me because I firmly believe that when we reach a stage where we begin to lose our objectivity, that we have to take a step back. That is where as far as I am concerned, the National Union of Public Workers finds itself today. If one side of a partnership is asked to respect a system, the rules and the process, the other side is equally expected to do the same, if not it cannot work and it becomes unequally yoked as the holy book says. I believe what I have just said speaks for itself.

Mr. Deputy President, before I move into the main part of my presentation, I want to speak to a comment made yesterday by Senator McClean which equally disturbs me. He spoke about the Deputy Prime Minister making a broadside attack on the United States of America. Mr. Deputy President, I have a way of writing very copiously, so if he did not say that, he can get up and say so, Sir. He said that most of what she, referring to the Deputy Prime Minister, said might be true, but you need to reply in a dignified manner.

Mr. Deputy President, it is true that our Deputy Prime Minister speaks with passion when she is ready and in a most incisive way. Yes, she speaks with the courage of her convictions, but never in a disrespectful manner. So that remark that came from his mouth yesterday saddens me because, as you have reminded us, these debates are carried live and someone just listening to him yesterday would have been given an impression that the person said something different from what she said.

That apart, I am getting some very mixed signals. I saw a newspaper article which says that the Leader of the Opposition was in support of the position taken by the Government. Senator Mascoll got up in his presentation and spoke all around it and up until now I do not know what his stance is. I have heard Senator McClean and I know how he feels about it.

Sir, when he spoke yesterday instantly as he said what he said, I remembered that part of the good book that spoke about Judas betraying Christ for 30 pieces of silver. I do not know why it just came to me when he said so, but it came to me at that juncture. That is all I want to say on that matter. 1.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, in places such as the United States and elsewhere, people would have difficulties as they look at issues but after that, there would always be a closing of the ranks.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy President, I am a bit aggrieved that the Honourable Member should be creating a nexus between my comment and the betrayal of someone for monetary gains. He is sailing very close to the wind, in my view, but I do not know what your informed judgment would be on a matter such as this.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You said that he sailing close to the wind but I have never known of a captain sailing his ship close to the wind who was in breach of any marine rules. Therefore, if you want me to rule, you will have to tell me exactly what you mean.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. Deputy President, I think that the Honourable Member, in his comments, is creating some kind of association between the comments that I had made and the betrayal for monetary gains.

I, Sir, have never ever discussed my position with anyone, far less to seek any kind of monetary benefits to make those comments. Therefore, I think that the association with the two comments is unparliamentary.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I do not agree with you. What I heard the Honourable Member saying was, when you made the statement, he said his mind suddenly went to that part of the Bible. I do not see any connection. If he is pretending to be religious and is looking for solace at a time of pressure, then his mind can wander to any part of the Bible. Until he makes a closer nexus to you and to the statement, then I am powerless to rule.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, all I would say to Senator McClean is that he protests too much and for what reason, I do not know. I have not gone anywhere outside the boundaries of what is legitimate that could be said in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Is it that the guilty fleeth when no one pursueth?

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Sir, I do not know. Mr. Deputy President, Senator McClean spoke about speaking in a respectful manner to our large neighbours...

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: On a point of order. If the Honourable Member is going to quote me, let him do so correctly. I never said anything about speaking to any large neighbours. I made the specific reference to speaking about friends, if one considers people to be friends and secondly, if there is communication through a diplomatic channel, then the decent thing to do is to respond through a diplomatic channel.

Therefore, I think the Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber by misconstruing exactly what I have said.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That is a point of elucidation, to which you are entitled.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, if Senator McClean wants to understand what Senator Murray is saying, I wonder how he would consider the remarks from one of his most outstanding leaders, who, at the time, was not speaking about any ordinary person but about a President of the United States, where he referred to him as a cowboy.

I wonder if the Deputy Prime Minister had spoken in those terms what would I have heard yesterday? That is the kind of double standard one gets in this country. This is why I said when there are issues that are supposed to straddle political boundaries, that we not take a partisan position. I think particularly in times like these, it would be worth the while of people like Senator McClean, to understand what nationalism is about.

Sir, if there is one thing that could have been said about the late leader they had, was that he never had to look behind

his back to see who was coming. He was a man that stood for the things in which he believes. Were he alive and in any one of these Chambers and had the opportunity to speak to what was going on, I am sure it would have shocked me. We know what the individual stood for and the principles he had. He never would have come to this Senate and skirt around any issues but would have taken a position. That is what leadership is about. When things like these happen, what people like Senator McClean do not understand is that it gives people an opportunity to see what that person would be as a leader. A leader is not about dodging about issues but of taking a position of principle.

Mr. Deputy President, I want to look at Head No. 22, the section relating to the Small Business Sector. I have said it in this Honourable Chamber before and again I will say it today. While big businesses in this country and elsewhere are merging and, as a consequence, are displacing people, it is the small and medium enterprises that have to pick up the slack and are called upon to make the decisive difference.

Therefore, when our own small business sector says to us that they are experiencing difficulties, we, as a Government, have to address it. That sector in general, has always suffered from an absence of appropriate financial alternatives. The range of funding options that are available to the sector are limited primarily to debt financing, which reinforces a predisposition towards debt.

Many small businesses have excessive debt levels and there is also what I regard as an absence of an equity culture. Sir, there is a view by small business persons that if they create a business and own 100 per cent of that business, then they are not prepared to allow anyone else to come in, besides those persons who would have created that business in the first place, in order to invest and to improve it.

Sir, if one has a 100 per cent of something that is floundering and needs strengthening, to my mind it makes more sense to have someone else coming in and assisting the business by way of equity, so that one might receive maybe less than the 100 per cent but of something that is larger. That is one of the things that needs to happen in this country. 1.10 p.m.

Those small and medium size enterprises have capital structures that are improperly capitalised. They continue to rely basically on debt and they always have short term and liquidity financing difficulties.

There is a further double whammy because there is a commercial banking sector that is not predisposed towards lending to the small business sector because they see the

sector as high-risk and are not prepared to put finance into them or to support their activities.

If the banking sector is not prepared to give the small business sector short term financing to help with their liquidity difficulties, it rests on the Government as it has been doing over the last eight years to find windows of opportunity for those small and medium size enterprises.

A number of things presently characterise how the small business sector operates and the difficulties they experience. I have said before that they are underdeveloped in terms of equity capital and there is an unwillingness by some potential investors to take risk with capital and for this reason Government has recently established the innovation fund. There is also a reluctance of entrepreneurs and business owners to share the business with outside investors simply because they have created the business and do not want anyone else to become part of it where if gains and profits are made they would have to be shared with someone else.

There is the question of the conservative commercial banking sector that has a strong aversion to lending to the small business sector and those same small businesses are in dire need of technical assistance and professional advice.

In discussions with the sector, persons were also able to identify a number of challenges they face. Applicants say they were not obtaining loans because oftentimes their businesses were deemed not to be viable and the fact that the time taken to approve loans was deemed to be too long, they also say that some times the proposals were considered inadequate in terms of information.

This brings me to the point that lending institutions have a responsibility to help these small business people to be able to provide the kind of information and prepare the kind of proposals that would see a higher level of approval via those windows set up by Government.

Cash flow problems are often not taken into account. It makes no sense if someone asks for \$10 000 to deal with cash flow difficulties to give him \$5 000. At the end of the day you are making the situation worse because the person cannot survive on the \$5 000 and the inevitable is delayed. These are issues and difficulties enunciated by the small business sector.

Government, of course, has always had the interest of this sector at heart. Big businesses are emerging and are looking to create more profits towards the bottom line and last year we had the most interesting development where a company in Barbados earned over 100 per cent in after tax profits but continues to send home people. I speak of none other than an institution for which I worked for over 30

years. I take no comfort in saying to this Honourable Chamber that I believe it is fundamentally wrong particularly at a time when we are all going through difficulty.

I asked companies that are successful if they do not see themselves having an obligation to ensuring that people are not put out of work when 100 per cent return can be made on profits. Sir, what signals are they sending to the society? I think those things are wrong. I have worked with the institution at a time when people were of a different persuasion and thinking. I worked during my stewardship with people who had the interest of people at heart. I have seen a different kind of thing creeping in these days and as a Barbadian who cares about people I cannot and will not sit idly by and not comment on things like these that are fundamentally wrong.

Sir, the same institution is now attempting to do to Barbados what has been done in other parts of the Caribbean. As you know, we have started the process towards liberalisation in the industry. Quite frankly the Government has been slow in setting up the mechanisms and institutions necessary to ensure there is orderly transition to liberalisation and we have seen Cable & Wireless taking Government and other operators to court in Dominica, Jamaica and St. Lucia and it is my understanding that they want to take the Government of Barbados to court. These things tie up the whole process within the legal system and therefore, they believe that the process towards liberalisation could be frustrated. Sir, in the fullness of time, I will speak to other matters that trouble me dearly.

Sir, I want to continue to address the issue with the small business sector. We must have a change in the mindset of both those persons who are entrepreneurs, small business operators as well as the lending institutions. The agencies themselves must play a more complimentary role. You cannot set up a structure where the cost of maintaining it is greater than the assistance you provide for people. We have to look at the cost benefits of having lending institutions and the assistance that those institutions give the small business sector.

Agencies must also strive for institutional strengthening to enhance the operational processes and procedures of reporting and the accountability.

There must be a careful evaluation of the client's needs and the information submitted must have a higher level of approvals when small business people seeking short term and medium term financing to help their businesses move forward, grow and develop and for them also to be able to deal with the new realities because they now have to compete every day in a different marketplace in a different environment. May I say, Sir, that one can expect assistance

in every way from this Government in terms of helping the small business sector to continue to grow and develop. We have created institutions to look at every aspect of small business in this country and we believe that the small business sector is the sector that will make the difference in terms of helping us reduce the level of unemployment. May I say, particularly in a time of recession, it is still one of the very best anywhere in this hemisphere. In fact, in times of past recessions in this country, the level of unemployment is now better than at any other time, whether it was 1981/1982 or 1992/1993 period as we are now hovering around 10 per cent. This is to the credit of this administration that has done tremendous work to ensure that Barbadians remain employed. Sir, the Government made sure that it did absolutely nothing that would have militated against that.

1.20 p.m.

Sir, when this administration came into power, it made a promise to this country that our number one job was jobs and it did not matter whether we were in a recession, we still had a responsibility to keep people employed.

Senator Mascoll in his culmination spoke about money that was put aside for a rainy day being spent. Sir, part of the money that the Government acquired in 2001/2002 was used, as he said, to keep Barbadians employed. I wonder what he would say if the Government had not taken that prudent decision. Sir, he would have said that the Government had over \$1.5 billion in foreign reserves but it was not prepared to spend a cent to keep the public sector workers or anybody for that matter, employed. Sir, the Government did the complete opposite and the Government is being criticised for its prudent decision.

Sir, I recall Senator McClean, sitting on the opposition side of this Senate, cautioning government during periods of recession not to cut spending. He said that when you cut spending you drag out the period of the recession. Mr. President, we have seen this happened in the 1980s and the 1990s. However, this administration, recognising all the signs and signals, put aside something for a rainy day, borrowed money and then used it to keep Barbadians employed during the recession. We were able to come out of that recession and were doing quite well, in relative terms, until the start of the current war in Iraq. Sir, I have every reason to believe that if that had not intervened, we would have seen real growth in 2003.

Mr. Deputy President, I cannot say what will be the outcome. We all hope for the best but I am also mindful that the world is now a different place. People are no longer preoccupied with assisting in world development. The largest nation on earth, in terms of being a super power, is being preoccupied with terrorism. To that extent we do not know what is going to happen because those countries also have their challenges.

Sir, if we look at ourselves in terms of our own performance last year, we did better in comparative terms, than places like Singapore and Hong Kong. Incidentally, Hong Kong had to increase corporation tax and income tax and we did not have to do that.

In terms of the performance of this country, when you look at certain indicators, inflation was approximately .1 per cent. In terms of our net international reserves, Senator Mascoll did not say that inflation only shifted by \$49.1 million for the year. We have seen on other occasions, during a period of recession, where it dropped by over \$200 million.

I am happy to be able to say to this Honourable Chamber that the target that we set ourselves of 30 000 jobs was realised even though we were criticised by the Opposition who said that it could not happen. Furthermore, we have done everything possible to maintain the unemployment level around 10 per cent and hopefully that too will continue to be reduced.

Mr. Deputy President, this brings me to the area of productivity. If we are to grow and develop as a country, we have to continue to focus our attention on productivity. The Barbados National Productivity Council is an institution in this country that has been doing tremendous work in that regard and it should be commended and I want to highlight it today.

Last year that institution planned to deal with improving productivity within 77 departments, which covers approximately 15 Ministries. Those activities centered around seminars, workshops, television and radio programmes and articles to the press. The Barbados Productivity Council is the only institution that has a weekly column dealing with productivity and productivity issues and it must be complimented for that. A number of in-house presentations were held for the public and private sector entities.

Sir, the Council has also been assisting in developing what I referred to as home-grown schemes with the assistance of the Barbados Workers Union and I commend the union for the emphasis that it has placed on developing productivity-related payment arrangements.

1.30 p.m.

Sir, as you recall, this whole idea of developing productivity schemes started back in earnest in the early 1990's when at that time companies could not grant increases to workers, except, of course, under two conditions which were either profit sharing or where there were clear instances of productivity gains realised.

There are times, Sir, when the same productivity council is required to assist the NUPW if the negotiations in

constructing such schemes reach a point of difficulty. The Council also is seeking, and this is a very fundamental point, Sir, to establish national indices of productivity.

I think, as we move forward as a country, we have to be able to have bench marks that show the levels of productivity for which we should all aspire, as companies and as institutions.

However, currently, Sir, there is a lack of appropriate data at the national level that could assist with the establishment of such indices both within the public and the private sector. There is also the challenge where companies remain reluctant to collect and forward data, data that can assist in developing those same indices and standards.

The Council, however, is working with the Central Bank, the ILO, the Barbados Statistical Service, all in an effort to ensure that they are able to establish those national productivity indices that are necessary at this point in time.

Clearly, Sir, in a period where we are moving towards liberalisation and we have to deal with things like the WTO and so on, we have to compete. If we are to compete, we must know what standards there are that we have to reach.

The Council, Sir, again must be commended for developing a number of courses that impact significantly on this whole question of productivity. They have been able to develop forces in customer service, performance management dealing with things like change management, making sure that operations and companies are aware of what are the things that will make a difference in moving forward and what they must do to change.

It also, Sir, has developed a number of performance-based incentive schemes, in terms of courses, problem solving and decision making, time-management, areas of motivation, multi-skilling to allow people to understand that, in truth and in fact, the nature of a job will continue to change.

If we start a job today, and in the past we would only be looking at a job description specifically. Now, people are called upon to do different things and people must have different sets of skills, in order to be able to survive in the new environment.

The Council, Sir, in terms of statistics, since 1997, has conducted more than 240 general and in house seminars, impacting over 3 600 employees. This is both in the public and private sectors. May I say, through you, Sir, to Senator Murray that this is one agency of Government, that will make a difference in our thrust towards public sector reform.

In the coming year, Sir, the Council will also assist companies within the manufacturing sector to enable them to evaluate. Sir, having evaluated their operations, they will be able to target training in areas that are needed.

Sir, I want to briefly look in, I presume, the five minutes allotted to me, to say to you that Senator Mascoll in his presentation made reference to the University College of Barbados, as simply an institution that centered on the Polytechnic and, as he said, nothing more. I do not understand why any time he begins to speak on anything dealing with education, he seems to get it wrong.

I heard with consternation, Senator Mascoll, in his... again, you know what word I would use, suggesting that the degrees from the University of the West Indies are overrated. He said to us, in this Honourable Chamber that he teaches at that institution.

Sir, if a person teaches at an institution and then he says to the country, these degrees are overrated, should one take him at heart. He is a lecturer but he is saying this after he has been the beneficiary.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. Senator Williams is misleading the Honourable Chamber, I said that academic qualifications are overrated in the context of the debate over its Fisheries department. I never said that a degree should not be sought, or that it is overrated.

Therefore it is misleading for Senator Williams to suggest that and I want to make it clear, and I repeat, that no person who worked for 20 years in the Fisheries department, wherever, should be replaced by some person without experience who has four or five 'O' Levels.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, that would be a new speech.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: No Sir. That is no new speech.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You cannot tell me whether or not that is a new speech and if you keep on with that attitude I will have to ask you to take your seat.

There is only a point of elucidation but you cannot start a new speech.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: It is not a new speech.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That is your ruling but my ruling is that it is a new speech.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Well, you are wrong.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Therefore, you must terminate your intervention.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, I regret that Senator Mascoll rose to defend himself at the eleventh hour. Sir, this is a matter that has been before the country and when it is placed in the context, now by me, seeing that he is a lecturer is saying that these degrees are overrated, I say that he should have been using the same argument with the BTA.

Sir, I recall when the appointments were made at the time, that Senator Mascoll, who came in here two days ago, and said that people are now learning things about tourism by correspondence courses and whatever, he said at the time that a man was unfit because he only had a Masters and did not have a first degree.

Sir, let him get up and say he did not say so because, he said such a person is unfit, and now he is saying that degrees are overrated and they are not important.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, you have to conclude your speech.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order again. The situation at the BTA cannot be compared with the fisheries' situation. He is misleading this Honourable Chamber. The person who assumed office does not have any experience in marketing either, and is not qualified.

Therefore, you cannot suggest that it is a similar situation to what obtains at the Fisheries department. He is lacking in both experience and the absence of the academic qualification.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy President, in conclusion, let me say that these Estimates have come at a time, when in truth and in fact, tremendous uncertainty face this country...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You had better conclude quickly.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: ...but I will say, Sir, that this country has an outstanding leader who has taken us through difficult times and this country will continue to go forward under the leadership of the present Prime Minister.

I am obliged to you, Sir.
1.40 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: As I rise to speak on this matter for the final time, I want first of all to thank all Honourable Senators, especially my colleagues on

the Government side and the independent senators, for the very well thought out, coherent and constructive contributions.

At the beginning of my first presentation, I indicated that this was going to be a desirous debate as these are serious times and the country is at a crossroad. On reflection, I think it is rather unfortunate that the two Opposition Senators could not make a single serious intervention in this entire debate. But I understand how difficult it must be for a party which has three leaders. They must be extremely confused, but a monster or an animal that has three heads would always be in a state of confusion. This is just part of the continuing confusion within the Democratic Labour Party.

Senator Rickinson, I am sorry that she is not here, made some comments about nursing, and we in the Ministry of Health are cognisant of the problems and are certainly moving ahead to address them. Her concerns about the air quality and noise pollution are being addressed by the Ministry of Physical Development and the Environment.

Senator Laurie was concerned about the cotton industry and I must tell him that Government is committed to the revitalisation of the cotton industry. We are also mindful of the problems involved in the Slaughter House Act. We know that we have to move towards that as we go through this whole issue of negotiations with the World Trade Organisation and the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

In the case of Senator Rock, I have noted his continued concerns about the Accident and Emergency Department. He would note that in my initial presentation I spoke of the acquisition of equipment and we are certainly looking at staffing matters. Having said that, I should also indicate that some of the problems at the Accident and Emergency Department are due to the abandonment of elderly people at the department whose occupation of cubicles cause a back up in dealing with patients who need to be in them.

Senator Collymore, my good friend, made a very serious contribution especially regarding the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and its transition to a Board. He took issue to the fact that the allocation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been reduced, that we are moving towards a Board and that a number of other things would have to be undertaken within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This is well understood but surely Senator Collymore would understand from his several years within the Civil Service that you have to plan for these things. You know you would need more staff and equipment to carry over the transition but you cannot budget for these things until these posts have been approved. In addition to that, I made the point that the

Government has given the green light to the Board to look at the amount of funds that will be made for the capitalisation and we have secured a loan from the commercial business sector.

His point about a report being submitted in 1998 and the lost of time is well taken, I have no quarrel with that, that is true. We are certainly looking at revenue collection and the issue of making this more efficient.

Sir John's comments about the St. Joseph Hospital and the Paradise Hotel are taken. The Ministry of Health is looking at the utilisation of the St. Joseph Hospital. A number of people have approached us with various recommendations and various plans for that institution which I am sure you will hear more about in the not too distant future.

Senator McClean's position on the war in Iraq was well dealt with by my colleague Senator Murray. He said that he could not understand the need for a new consultancy at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and stated that we just had a Haynes Commission report and wanted to know why we would need a consultancy. I do not know if he had ever seen the Report of the Commission which was released to the public in 1998. I do not know if he has read it and if so, if he has retained any part of it.

On page 213 of that report at item 16 it says:

"The Commission recommends the preparation of a physical development plan for the hospital taking into consideration the requirements outlined in this chapter."

This chapter dealt with the need to expand the hospital. This is one of the recommendations that came out of the Report that he was talking about. I guess this is also part of the confusion that emanates from that Side.

Senator McClean as well as Senator Mascoll were concerned about the selling of shares in the Barbados National Bank. I want to spend a few minutes on this because it is interesting that all of a sudden, an entity that was extremely unpopular with the Democratic Labour Party which was described as a piggy bank and people were told that they should not deposit a cent in it – I believe Senator Collymore remembers the statement – because it was not going to last for a year, that there is this consternation and apparent nationalism over this entity. I will just mention a few things about it.

In November 2000, the Government of Barbados offered for sale 50 million shares of the 96 million shares it owns in the Barbados National Bank. At that time we had heard the discussion that took place at the political meeting

in Independence Square where about nine or ten dozen people attended who were told by the various spokesmen on finance and other things that they should not buy any of these shares because they were not going to be worth the paper they would get for them.

This has been in keeping with Government's plan which had been announced in 1997 in the financial statement and budgetary proposals of that year. This was reinforced in the year 2000 in the Budget which was presented to us on October 24, 2000 when the details of the privatisation of the Barbados National Bank and the Insurance Corporation of Barbados were announced. So this is nothing new.

Again in the 2001 Financial Statement, Economic and Financial Policies of Government which was presented on August 08, 2001, it was stated that the intention was to return to the market to continue the divestment of a substantial portion of Government's interest in the bank. The Minister of Finance at that time indicated that it was Government's intention to retain, at the most, 20 per cent of the Barbados National Bank shares. He said at that time that the second attempt would not be limited to the local market but would be targeted at regional pension funds, insurance companies, social security schemes and strategic partners either regionally or internationally.

As a result of this, the Board of Directors of the Barbados National Bank established a privatisation Committee which was chaired by the Chairman of the Board and included the Deputy Chairman, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, the Managing Director of the entity and one other board member. They said they were undertaking a task of sourcing a strategic partner.

The Committee made a presentation to the regional meeting of the social security directors in May of 2001 and secured a purchase of two million shares by the National Insurance Board of St. Lucia. In addition, this Committee made a number of approaches to other financial institutions both locally, regionally and internationally whom the Committee felt could add value to the Barbados National Bank. The Committee received responses from three entities. These were the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, the First Citizens Bank of Trinidad and Tobago and E.L.C. Caribbean Holdings Incorporation a branch of N.C.B. of Jamaica.

The Committee did not consider First Citizens Bank of Trinidad and Tobago to be a worthwhile strategic partner because the entity was a 100 per cent owned by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and only operated in Trinidad and Tobago and was only interested in a share swap.

E. L. C. Caribbean Holdings Incorporation from Jamaica was conditional and this company had no interest in the shares owned by the Barbados National Bank in the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and had no interest in acquiring the subsidiary company, Barbados Mortgage Finance Corporation (BMFC), and in addition did not wish to make an offer to all the shareholders. As a result of this, the Committee did not think that they were suitable.

1.50 p.m.

The Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago indicated that their offer was subject to a number of concerns. These were:

1. Access to the Housing Credit Fund to ensure continuing viability of low-cost mortgage financing.
2. Waiver of stamp duties and other fees payable on the acquisition of shares.
3. The assurance that there would be no significant changes in the regulatory environment which could adversely affect the bank's profitability.

The Committee had no problem with these, bearing in mind that the access to the Housing Credit Fund was not a problem. The waiving of the stamp duty would not have been a problem because it would be paid by the vendor and in relation to the regulatory environment, there was no indication that they would change in the foreseeable future.

The Committee of the Board, therefore, recommended to the Government of Barbados that the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago be accepted. The offer from the Bank was 57 per cent of the Bank's shares at a price of \$3.45 per share.

In recommending this to the Government of Barbados, the Committee felt that an alliance would provide the following:

1. allow the Barbados National Bank to achieve greater diversification of products and services, which would ensure that the Bank keeps up with the competition in the wake of the mergers that had occurred, especially Barclays/CIBC, and the acquisitions that were occurring throughout the industry;
2. increased growth and revenue through an increased customer base, as a consequence of the external redirecting of business;
3. allow access to regional and international markets;

4. facilitate the ability to accommodate United States dollar financing thus enhancing customer base profitability;
5. the Republic Bank is involved in merchant banking and has developed some expertise in this area through its ownership of FINGCOR; and
6. facilitate the availability of competitive funding for public sector projects.

In addition, the Republic Bank's aim was to move the Barbados National Bank from a market share of 18 per cent to not less than 28 per cent. These were some of the issues discussed and the advice of the Committee to the Government of Barbados in selling the shares of the Barbados National Bank.

Finally, Mr. Deputy President, in Senator Mascoll's presentation, there were mutterings from a troubled and confused mind. The backbone of his plan for the development of Barbados, will be a gradual reduction in income tax. This is something to which the Government of Barbados, through the Minister of Finance, is committed and has already started. Yet this modern-day Columbus plans to start today.

In the case of the Hilton Hotel Project, Senator Mascoll has said that, "not even 50 Barbadians are being employed", "No small businesses benefitted in Barbados". There is the company called Tucker-Johnson Construction Co. Ltd., which employs over 100 Barbadians. Senator Mascoll has said, "there are no small contractors". Everson R. Elcock is being contracted on the Hilton Project. Then there are other contractors such as Morris Straker Construction Incorporated; Platinum Systems Incorporated; R. J. Construction; R. L. Philips; Callender's Construction; Maurice Bourne; Victor Knight; Ally Moore and Orin Baker – All local Barbadian contractors.

In the case of tourism, he said our performance has been the worst in the entire Caribbean. Mr. Deputy President, I will quote figures from the Caribbean Tourism Organisation for the year 2002. Tourist arrivals: Aruba showed a decline of 7.1 per cent; Bahamas, 2.9 per cent; Cancun, Mexico, 11.4 per cent; Cayman Island, 9.4 per cent; Martinique, 2.7 per cent; St. Maarten, 5.6 per cent; Dominican Republic, 2.6 per cent; US Virgin Islands, 1.9 per cent; Jamaica, a decline of 1.8 per cent; Barbados, a decline of 1.8 per cent. But from Senator Mascoll, we have done the worst in the entire Caribbean.

In the case of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I have heard Senator Mascoll say there is no need for a Board and that all it needs is computerisation, which would solve all the problems.

Mr. Deputy President, I do not know if we can really believe that. What do we really expect from someone who believes that qualifications are overrated and might be irrelevant, while still actively pursuing a Ph.D? What would you expect from someone who would extend the building of a property without first seeking Town and Country Planning's permission, then to have it removed? What do you expect from someone who is unable to state his position on a simple but significant thing, the war going on between Iraq and the Anglo-American Coalition? This is the kind of thinking.

My Honourable Colleague went on to talk about a high powered delegation that went off to Washington and the concurrence of former prime ministers seen there at a conference, looking at campaign cost and contribution. I am not going to get into that. I do not know if that has any bearing on the fact that this particular leader would be unable to make a comment, one way or the next, about this whole issue.

Mr. Deputy President, these are serious times. Serious decisions have to be made regarding the future of this country. This is a time for serious thinkers, like our present Prime Minister and Minister of Finance. This is not the time for day dreamers. This is not the time for a Latter-day Don Quixote.

I now beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT, the Bill was read a third time and was passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2003.

ORDER NO. 5 – TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228, THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN FOR PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT FOUR HILL PLANTATION AND FRENCH VILLAGE IN THE PARISH OF ST. PETER IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PURPOSE OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Walcott.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy President, this Resolution seeks permission to acquire two parcels of land at French Village, St. Peter and one parcel of land at Four Hill, St. Peter, for housing development. The three parcels of land total approximately 3.88 hectares. I beg to move that this Resolution be now passed.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, I am forced to speak to this matter.

First of all, I think that the Honourable Senate should

be privy to the knowledge that this Resolution would be coming to the Senate today. I had the impression that we would have wrapped up the debate on the Appropriation Bill and then adjourned but since the Member has introduced this Bill, I would wish to find out what kind of housing project would it be in the parish of St. Peter. Is it a low-income housing project? Is it a middle-income housing project? Is it the usual typical high-end project that we are accustomed to in the northern part of this country?
2.00 p.m.

As a resident of St. Peter, I am privy to certain information.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: In order to get to my house you have to pass through the housing estate at Maynards. Sir, I am concerned as to what kind of housing stock will be put in this area and whether or not it is consistent with the housing stock to be placed near to Gordon Greenidge Primary School where we have been seeing the advertising of homes with down payments and we are not sure whether low income Barbadians will be able to access the housing place there, whether it will be a joint venture between Government and the private sector or who are the persons involved in the provisions of these houses in French Village.

Mr. Deputy President, I am asking these questions but I do not expect to receive any answers since it was an attempt by the Leader on the Other Side to pass this Resolution through without any debate but we need certain clarification on this matter.

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: First of all I do not know if the Honourable Senator did not see, read or remember Item 5 on the Order Paper. As far as I know, the land is being vested in National Housing Corporation and the type of housing will depend on the necessary Town & Country Planning permission and the conditions which they will put on it for housing suitable in that location.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned *sine die*.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn sine die was put to the SENATE and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
2.05 p.m.

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- Report of the Social Investment Fund for the Quarter ended December 31, 2002.
- Barbados Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2003-2004.
- Schedules of Personal Emoluments 2003-2004.
- Annual Report and Financial Statement of the National Conservation Commission for the period 1st April, 2000 to 31st March, 2001.
- Annual Report of the National Sports Council for the period 1st April, 2001 to 31st March, 2002.
- Annual Report of the National Cultural Foundation for the year 2000.
- University of the West Indies (Guarantee of Bonds) Order, 2003.
- Report of the Judicial Council, 2002.
- Annual Report and Financial Statement of C. L. Limited for the Fiscal Year January 1 to December 31, 2001.
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