
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Thursday, November 27, 2003

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. Before we continue with the Budget debate, with the House's permission we will revert to Government Notices.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

1. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Special Olympics Barbados) Order, 2003; and
2. Land Tax (Rate of Tax) (No. 2) Order, 2003.

I beg to give notice also of a Resolution to grant the sum of \$3 198 636 from the Consolidated Fund and to place it at the disposal of Government to supplement the Estimates 2003-2004 as shown in the Supplementary Estimates No. 5 2003-2004 which form the Schedule to this Resolution and that the Explanatory Notes to Heads 13 and 37 be amended at set out in Schedule II to this Resolution.

Mr. SPEAKER: We will now continue with our debate. Honourable Member from St. Michael West, I will have to deduct one minute from your time, Sir, so that we will be on schedule.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Resolution before the House and to commend the Minister of the Finance for the content of the Financial and Economic Statement which he presented to this House two days ago. There are specific reasons I wish to support this Resolution and to commend it to the House. One of those reasons is that the content of the Financial and Economic Statement is set out with an eye on the

environment in which we live now and the environment in which we will soon have to live.

Through that eye, one obviously sees and recognizes, not the gathering of gloom necessarily as some would purport, but the dynamics of change - turbulent change, tumultuous change, radical change, change of the nature of radical transformation - in the Barbadian society and the wider Caribbean society. One sees a Barbados economy - today and certainly tomorrow - not as an economy isolated in its own national context but as part of a single market arena which is about to emerge with all that it portends and with all that it offers exposed to the economic impulse of the greater Americas area.

One also sees a Barbados economy which must function in the context of integration with the rest of the Caribbean and in an environment where global rules seek to afford us better economic opportunity while at the same time further exposing our traditional vulnerabilities. The eye on the environment brings that information to our consciousness and therefore beckons that we prepare ourselves for what is impending and that we further build upon the platform that has been created over the past nine years or so in this country.

I support the Resolution as well because it puts again in another instance a case for agriculture which is tremendously important. Agriculture is on the frontline of the battle where the trends, the winds and waves of liberalisation assault the economic shores of Barbados. It is important therefore that each opportunity be taken to bolster what is now perhaps in some people minds a fledgling agricultural sector, especially with reference to the traditional dominant crop of sugar production for bulk export.

I believe a case is put for agriculture on the basis of the need to ensure continuing levels of food security against a situation which traditionally we have had high import bills. In this very turbulent world we need, as far as

it is possible, to avail ourselves of a level of food security that would give us some level of comfort against the vagaries of life.

Agriculture needs to be supported and bolstered where possible because of its value to preserving the rural character of Barbados. This is a point which cannot be over emphasized. Much of the character of Barbados which lends itself to the enhancement of a tourism product and to the ambience of the Barbadian lifestyle which is heralded and hailed all over the world, is drawn from its rural character. We cannot afford therefore to see the demise or the disappearance of the rural character of Barbados.

I support the case being put for agriculture in this Financial and Economic Statement because I believe in the concept of a balanced land use. Persons would advance the notion of use of land for the best economic return, a principle which I support but in the context of a broader principle of a balanced use of our land resources. We cannot therefore let a situation arise in this country ever where land traditionally given to agriculture is so removed from that sector and given for other purposes, that the rural character disappears and there is a tremendous upset to the balance of the use of land with respect to the policy implemented vis-à-vis other uses for which land in Barbados.

I support the Resolution because it seeks to promote the concept of fiscal prudence. We have gone through a period where the deficit in Barbados has been such that it has gone higher than the traditional levels to 5.4 per cent, I think it has been higher recently, for a specific purpose which can be defended. As I understand it, this is not a level that can be sustained and therefore this Government has committed itself to the pursuit of a level of deficit which is in the region of three per cent. So fiscal prudence is being advocated and reflected in the Financial and Economic Statement before us.

I support the Financial and Economic Statement because of the new thrust which is being reflected in the area of cultural industries, the creative economy. As we come up against the pressures of internationalism, liberalisation and the downside of those influences, obviously, Mr. Speaker, economies such as our would have to look for alternative means which would suggest viability. Barbados has been developing heavily in the area of the services sector both financial and other services sector, but even those are threatened these days. I see, therefore, the thrust into this new aspect of economic endeavour and activity, as being important from this perspective.

Mr. Speaker, there used to be a time, anyone would acknowledge, when the power of the gun ruled the day. In

the minds of a declining few, this still obtains, of course. In the power of military might, it is the dominant power.

House 13 Sequence 60

9.40 a.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: We have come to the point where we are going beyond, where the dollar is the dominant power of the day. My view is that in years to come, it will be the power of creative, innovative ideas and energy which will rule the day. The economy which can turn up the type of ideas that encourage and attract the interest of the world is the one which will be viable. From that perspective I support this thrust toward the creation of a cultural economy in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, traditionally the platform of the Barbadian economy has been lodged on access to preferential trade and the premise of access to soft aid. Of course, the business of soft aid has virtually disappeared for Barbados because of the economic advancement in Barbados and the matter of preferential trade access is also very swiftly dissipating before our very eyes.

What, therefore, must the economy of the future of Barbados in the context of Caribbean Single Market and Economy and FTAA be hung upon? It must be hung upon the creation of competitive and productive capacity. We cannot make recourse to claims of comparative advantage any more because the ruling dynamic now is one of competitive advantage and so we must sharpen our wits and seek to become more competitive and productive and redress the imbalance which obtains in Barbadian society, where we are, to too large an extent, a consuming public and a consuming economy rather than a productive economy. This is one of the platforms that the economy of the future must be lodged upon.

I support the recommendation that we create institutions, regimes and policy initiatives which form platforms for hemispheric and international market penetration. Certainly, this document presented by the Honourable Member of Finance speaks to this very thing. It speaks to the creation of institutions, regimes and policies which will become the platform upon which attempts can be launched into the international and hemispheric markets of our region and the world.

At page 123 in the summary of this document we see that it provides for capital injection of \$1 million for a cotton research and development fund. Sir, cotton has been an asset under-exploited in Barbados. Therefore, any measure designed to ensure that we make better use of this asset for greater return is to be support.

Page 125 of the document speaks to the contribution of a further \$5 million in working capital for an industrial investment fund. It also speaks to the expansion of the scope of the industrial investment fund to provide financial assistance to companies seeking to expand their operations internationally and into CARICOM. Sir, I support these recommendations.

The economy of the future for Barbados will be premised upon the dynamic of free movement of persons engaged in employment and investment in Barbados. These investment and employment related endeavours will come about as a result of free movement of people into our lands and this is to be supported. There is an element of fear and trepidation because of uncertainty and though we may find that there is a downside to wider access of persons into the Barbadian economy, we must remember that reciprocally, there would be persons going out from Barbados for the purposes of employment and investment.

Sir, in any event persons coming into Barbados for the purpose especially of investment will create spinoff effects for employment opportunities in Barbados as well as for other businesses related activity which can result from investment into the Barbadian economy.

Sir, while there may be an element of uncertainty and fear which is understandable, I do not think there needs to be a sense of dread because what seems to work against us can be made to work for us and to the benefit of the Barbadian economy.

Therefore, we anticipate in the economy of the future that there would be a greater reliance in the movement intraregionally of goods, capital and services. The truth is that historically there have been more obstacles to interregional access than there have been obstacles to international access for economic entities in Barbados and the wider Caribbean. Of course, we have to deal with the influence of liberlisation but when this is examined, usually there are some macro areas which are looked at to determine the likely effect upon a vulnerable and small economy such as Barbados. Those macro areas include the fiscal effects of liberlisation on economies such as ours, the effects on production as it relates to governance, structures, corporate entities and cultures in countries such as ours.

It is mentioned in the presentation that the removal of taxes will represent a loss of more than \$130 million over the next few years from the coffers of Barbados as a result of tariffs and such things. This is a matter of concern to us because if you contemplate massive loss because of removal of tariffs, you have to examine it against the context of a trend now being pursued by Government of reducing the tax levels which already exist in Barbados.

We have had an ease as it relates to land tax and we are in the process of seeing relief with respect to personal income tax. Add this to what Government will lose in terms of revenue because of removal of tariffs and you will see what we are up against when you contemplate the effects of liberlisation on the issue of the fiscal climate and situation in Barbados.

What are some of the implications? There will be less revenue to Government, whether from taxes on imports or domestic tax policies and this will mean a reduced capacity of Government to provide for the social sectors. It will also mean a constrained capacity on the part of Government to provide sectoral assistance as has been the case for manufacturing, agriculture and small businesses which, in very substantial terms, has been the case with respect to tourism when it went through its stresses last year following the downturn resulting from September 11th. Sir, these are effects with which we have to grapple and the statement by the Honourable Minister of Finance seeks to address these issues as well.

Mr. Speaker, the effect on the production level of liberlisation has also to be understood. The challenge to the business of preferential trade becomes an important issue when one considers that about one-third of our GDP is related to preferential trade and once that is removed, you will see what it portends in terms of our ability to produce and sell our brands abroad.

Then, of course, there is the effect on governance as we will have to dismantle some of the regulatory frameworks that exist for some time in this environment of protectionism. These are issues we have to grapple with.

Perhaps the biggest challenge is the corporate effect where small entities must now compete with large international entities.

9.50 a.m.

Sequence 61

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: This is, perhaps arguably so, the most challenging of the effects, therefore, strengthening of the investment capacities of entities such as the Barbados National Bank must be considered and, in this context, would be appreciated. If there are entities that, through mergers, are consolidating and enhancing their capacities to invest, then entities which have been homegrown must be given that enhanced capacity for further investment. I say, therefore, that against that, the handling of the matter with the Barbados National Bank must be examined and could be understood in that context.

Mr. Speaker, we may not be able to resist liberalisation but we certainly must proceed at a pace and in a direction which serves the interest of the Barbadian economy. Issues such as right of access and right to establishment would bring opportunities but would also bring challenges. Principles of most favoured nations and of national treatment will prescribe for us, in a large measure, our regulatory behavior and our capacity to determine our own regulatory situation. Therefore, as far as possible, we have to seek to control the core areas of the economy insofar as this is permissible under international rules, to the extent that we seek to build up our competitive capacity. Until that is done, then we have to proceed cautiously and prudently about the business of liberalisation in our economy.

Mr. Speaker, it might not come as a surprise that even in spite of all the talk about liberalisation, relaxation, and reduction of duties, developed countries still provide up to \$US280 billion in annual subsidies to their sensitive farming sectors.

The Statement presented by the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, therefore, puts the case that ought to be put for Barbados and for economies such as ours, for special dispensation; special claims for longer time frames; for implementation of agreements; for exemption of sensitive products and sensitive sectors; low levels of obligations; special consideration in respect to compliance with standards and for access to technical and financial assistance. All of these things are critical until we can reach the competitive capacity necessary.

Mr. Speaker, I support this Statement as I do any statement. I make reference to its capacity for generating employment opportunities. Sir, listening to the Statement when presented and on reviewing it, there is significant capacity, in my view, for generating and maintaining employment levels in Barbados.

On page 21 of the Document it speaks to Capital Works projects of Government, largely to be done off budget: a Judicial Centre, \$70 million; the expansion of the Bridgetown Port, \$35 million; the upgrading of the Harrison's Cave, \$7.4 million; the Grantley Adams International Airport and Coast Guard relocation Projects, \$50 million; the new Hilton Hotel, \$212 million; the National Housing Corporation Joint Venture Programme, and the National Petroleum Corporation expansion programme. Sir, these will all generate employment, not only in the construction area but in other spinoff areas as well.

Mr. Speaker, it must also be said that this type of activity, would further build up our foreign exchange earning capacity and our productive capacity. It is to be supported.

Sir, page 67 speaks to the reduction of Corporation Tax for manufacturing. Manufacturing has been on the front line for taking the assault from regional competitors thus far and, therefore, to the extent that the burden could be eased and that manufacturers could be supported to reinvest, to turnover business and to export at competitive prices, would provide for the further employment and enhancement of the productive capacity.

Sir, at page 84, there is to be the creation of a joint public/private sector company with the mandate to promote, market and distribute cultural products, regionally and internationally cultural products, primary music and the visual arts. Barbados can boast today of being the world's equal in terms of literary art. Barbados has a quality of fine arts today which can be branded anywhere in the world, in my view, and certainly in relation to music, expression, and other forms of liberal arts, Barbados is among the best. We can name persons who have succeeded on the international arena because of being part of a cultural and indigenous project.

I salute and hail mightily the provision for the formal inclusion of studies in business and entrepreneurship in the education curriculum because with a very good educational system in Barbados, of which we can be justly proud. For too long it has still remained a system which has largely created products with an emphasis on marketability. I think when we talk about officially including subjects in business and entrepreneurship, we are planning and preparing to produce persons with an emphasis on market control and not marketability. In other words, we are looking to produce business persons rather than employees. The emphasis would, therefore, be shifting from the marketability of a student, to market control. I think some Honourable Members on the Other Side would be able to appreciate it.

I cannot sit without noting the provision of special development areas and the concessions flowing from that to go to developers who are involved in building low income housing in the greater Bridgetown and in other areas. In St. Michael West, this is a problem and, therefore, we need some housing. To the extent that the environment is being enhanced so that it becomes more likely that private developers could come into the market and could still provide low cost housing, I would want to support that fully.

In 2003, this Parliament, as the first elected of this new Century, cannot come to the close of its term without even making further strides in terms of providing further housing for Barbados. What Government is now doing, with regards to its joint venture programme, is to be lauded. What Government has done in recent years, through the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment in trying to provide for the housing needs in Barbados, is to be

commended and stands in contra- distinction to what the record of the Other Side suggests. Sir, certainly a move such as this where private developers could find that they are the beneficiaries of concessions from the Act governing special development areas, to be given for embarkation on projects in providing for low income housing in urban Barbados is to be hailed and supported. I hope with my fullest heart that St. Michael West could benefit from such an implementation of this provision.

Government is to establish a creative centre, focusing on the creation of innovation and practical designs for souvenirs and other craft items and facilitating collaboration between craftsmen and trained designers, researchers, trainers and technicians.

Mr. Speaker, I will never forget once being in Equador and meeting an Indian guy who was making souvenirs which were branded Barbados. In a conversation with him, I discovered that he makes them out in the backwaters of Equador, brings them to Barbados, sells them to Cave Shepherd & Co. Ltd., for onward selling to the Barbadian public and for tourists coming into Barbados.

I am saying, therefore, that this measure is designed to facilitate the development of a sector and industry where persons who might not be so highly academically inclined, would gravitate to, which would provide a significant livelihood for such persons, not only here but abroad.

I thank you, Sir.

House No.13(62)09.50 a.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: Rev.J.J.S. ATHERLEY:

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. I want to express my thanks to the good people of St. Philip North for reposing their confidence in me and I would make my contribution today with some analysis unlike the Honourable Member who just sat.

Asides.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a submission and to support the Leader of the Opposition who replied to the Budgetary Proposals yesterday. I must say that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition provided a true and correct analysis of the state of this economy. Secondly, to indicate that the Leader of the Opposition and members of the Democratic Labour Party are ready to take over the rein of Government.

Asides.

Dr. W.F. Duguid: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. They are not ready to take over the reins of Government.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not a point of order. Order, please. Proceed, please.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: Thirdly, there is vision on the part of the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, the other reason I support the Leader of the Opposition in his reply is that he provided some hope for the poor, disadvantaged and underprivileged in their search for social and economic justice in this country.

I must speak on the area of philosophy. I must submit that there must be a shift in the emphasis of infrastructural development and we must look at development where it matters most. For example, the provision of houses for the masses and the provision of health care for all Barbadians. I am submitting that the young, elderly and poor will find comfort in a Democratic Labour Party Government.

Asides.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: We must look at development where there is improvement in the quality of life of the people and not at these lifeless concepts of per capita income. That is the philosophical foundation of the Democratic Labour Party and there is historical evidence to support my pronouncement.

Mr. Speaker, if I am requested to describe the presentation by the Honourable Prime Minister, how could I describe it? Should I describe it as rhetoric, fluff, devoid of any plans for the pensioners and the workers of this country? Those are words that I would use to describe the presentation by the Honourable Prime Minister of this country.

Sir, when we examine the state of affairs in this country we see people who are no longer secured in their jobs; people who are no longer comfortable in their environment; people who no longer believe that acquiring a house and land is a reality and not a dream. That is the foundation on which I will make my contribution on today.

Mr. Speaker, before I go into further into the substance of my speech, I would submit that a country is dependent on the state of morality. Any attempt to threaten the moral and social fabric of a society should not be allowed.

Recently, there was a debate on the decriminalisation of prostitution and buggery. I believe that it is an issue that any Honourable Member of Parliament should make a statement on. I submit that anytime there is any attempt to bring any matter that would threaten the orderly existence of society, we must not allow it.

It is the function of the law to preserve the moral welfare of the state and to protect those who are weak and are in need of social and economic independence. I submit that we stand against any decriminalisation of buggery and prostitution in this country.

Sir, many issues arise in this Budget. Is this a job creation Budget? It is not a job creation Budget. Where is the help for tourism? We talk about the flexibility of working hours for Custom Officers and that is certainly a fundamental change in the terms of the contracts of the Custom Officers.

I will now speak on the Copyright Act and say that I will accept that we must preserve copyright material. We have the civil courts that can deal with any infringement of the Copyright Act. I travel over to the law courts on many occasions and I have come across approximately three matters a year relating to a each of the Copyright Act. I am saying that we can deal with these matters in the civil courts where the entertainer can get compensation and damages for infringement of his rights. Those are the issues in this Budget.

Sir, I shadow the Ministry of Labour and my former teacher, the Honourable Member for St. James North, is the Minister of Labour.

Asides.

10.10 a.m.

Sequence 63

Thursday, November 27, 2003

10.10 a.m.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, when we examine industrial relations in this country, it is a fact that when the employers demand policy initiatives or anything from the Government, they receive them. When the employers of the business class request any policy initiative or any piece of legislation, they get it. In fact, they were asked on some occasions to tell say what they want.

Mr. Speaker, where are the workers in this country? The workers are still the Cinderellas in this economy. They work hard. The Government gets its revenue, the

employers get their profit, but what do the workers get in this country.

Where are the assistance and aid through legislation to assist the working class in this country, the hard workers in this country, that make contribution to this economy, day in and day out? I must speak with passion on this topic. What are we doing for the workers in this country?

I was disappointed, Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Member spoke last night. I expected to hear when certain pieces of legislation would come to this Parliament to assist the workers in this country. What about the rights of our workers and, the health and safety at work legislation that were promised some time ago?

I would say, Mr. Speaker, that special attention must be paid to the health and safety of our workers. It is a fact that job related injuries account for the highest percentage of claims from the National Insurance Scheme. Where is the legislation that the Minister of Labour promised to this country to assist and, certainly, to affect the health and safety of workers in this country?

Mr. Speaker, there was much talk about a sexual harassment Bill. It never came. Since 1994, there was much talk of an Employment Rights Bill. Where is that legislation today? Sir, for nine years and two Ministers of Labour, there has been only talk and no action. Where is the defence for the workers in this country? Where do the workers in this country stand?

There is no employment protection Act, no sexual harassment Bill, and Mr. Speaker, from my research, since July 2002, it was intimated that a draft Bill is with a women's group in this country for discussion. I would like to know what is the status now of this sexual harassment legislation.

Mr. Speaker, when you contrast the performance of this Government, in terms of Labour relations to this side, we have produced the Trade Union Act and the Severance Payment Act. We have also produced legislation to assist the development of workers, and to protect the rights of workers in this country.

The unions have been pleading for minimum wage legislation in this country. They have indicated that they would introduce a national minimum wage. It is a fact, Mr. Speaker, that this Government has done nothing for the rights of workers, through legislation.

Mr. Speaker, it brings me to what happened recently in St. Philip at Sam Lord's Castle. I know the matter is sub judice, but I will not get into the substance of the matter that is before the courts. Certainly, what is this Government doing to assist those workers at San Lord's Castle? They

have worked for years and made investments. They have families to feed, children to send to school and utilities to pay. There is a lot of 'long talk' in here but we want to see action, and the Ministry of Labour must plead guilty to the fact that nothing has been done for the workers.

Mr. Speaker, because of that event at Sam Lord's Castle, I will submit, respectfully, that we make some changes to the existing legislation, in relation to national insurance, that we strengthen the hands of the inspectorate and they will be given more power, so that employers will meet what is requested in a timely fashion, so that there will be no undue delays. When we are speaking about social and economic justice in this country, I believe that employees must be given their just due because they work hard in this country. They have worked hard at Sam Lord's Castle and, yet, they are still pleading, and have nothing to show.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the employers get their profits, the Government gets its revenue, but what are the workers getting. Tell us what the workers are getting in this country. This is consistent with the philosophy of the Barbados Labour Party. They do not care for the underprivileged, the working class and the disadvantaged.

We believe in a philosophy, Mr. Speaker, that a man is a man whether he was born in a hut or a castle. We believe in a philosophy that the workers are an extremely important component of this country.

Mr. Speaker, persons from your constituency have suffered from this philosophy of the Barbados Labour Party. Weeks and months after the elections, they walked around your constituency all dressed in red. What happened, Sir? Weeks and months after, there was an attempt to bulldoze the homes of the disadvantaged, underprivileged and the working class in the Belle, after all the promises. The people in the Belle walked around in red and now they are seeing red.

House 13, sequence 64, 10.20 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, politics is about philosophy, about care and about assisting the needy. That, Mr. Speaker, is consistent with the philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, you pleaded with this Government for mercy in relation to what is happening today with your constituents. Mr. Speaker, I must speak with passion and from my heart because I come from within the working-class section of the society.

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, certain bourgeois elements must speak, which is consistent with their philosophy. They can run, but they cannot hide.

Mr. Speaker, I must go to the area of housing. Mr. Speaker, what is this Government doing to assist low income earners in this country to acquire a house or a house spot? Mr. Speaker, I made an analysis and when I looked at a maid - the maid who lives in Marley Vale; the maid who lives in Fortesque; the maid who lives in St. Martins; the maid who lives in Brereton; the maid who lives in Bayfield; the maid who lives in Merricks and the maid who lives in River, St. Philip, - who works for just over \$1 000 a month and when I looked at the National Housing Corporation prices for low income houses which cost \$106 000 to \$135 000 at Hoytes Village, I had to ask myself how could a maid who work for just over a \$1 000 a month afford a house costing \$106 000 to \$135 000. Mr. Speaker, let us look at the payments for a 25-year mortgage. My calculation shows that maid would have to pay \$749 a month out of a salary of \$1 000 for a house costing \$106 000 and \$826.00 a month for a house costing \$117 000. Is this a Government that wants to assist low income earners in this country? I am submitting, Mr. Speaker, that this situation is in keeping with their philosophy. They have changed the philosophical mandate of the National Housing Corporation which was to provide housing for the needy, the disadvantaged and the underprivileged.

Mr. Speaker, we were not impressed with that person who was the Minister of Health and we are not impressed with this person who is the Minister of Housing. Sir, it is clear to us that the general workers at a supermarket and the workers at Transport Board cannot afford any of these low income houses.

We have set proposals in relation to housing in our Manifesto. We have said that we would give those National Housing Corporation rental units free of cost to those persons living in them if they had lived in them for over 20 years and we would give a small legal fee. Mr. Speaker, when I spoke about houses for the low income earners, I did not include the cost of legal fees and the other fees.

Mr. Speaker, when the Democratic Labour Party is returned to Government, we will return the National Housing Corporation to its philosophical mandate. Mr. Speaker, many complaints have been made against the National Housing Corporation. Only on Saturday my good friend called me and told me about a person who died on the Monday and on the Friday, the day of the funeral, the National Housing Corporation officials went to that house and locked out that family who were in a period of mourning. Mr. Speaker, where is the compassionate hand of the National Housing Corporation?

Asides.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: That is the face of the National Housing Corporation acting under the hands of the Government where the conspiracy against the poor continues. Mr. Speaker, we on this side would cease and settle when the low income earners of this country can afford a house in this country and when the workers of this country are protected by legislation and not talk. All we had were two ministers and no action at all.

Mr. Speaker, I must turn to some constituency matters. What is the position, Mr. Speaker, in relation to the land for the landless farmers in River, St. Philip? Mr. Speaker, this Government continues to practise the politics of spite against the people of St. Philip North because they voted for the Democratic Labour Party. I also want to know what is the position in relation to the installation of natural gas in St. Philip North, the transportation problem on the Bayfield route and the roads, mainly the ones from East Point to Well House and Six Roads to Church Village.

We need a serious cultural centre in St. Philip North. There is no National Housing Corporation presence in St. Philip North.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please, let us hear the Honourable Member, please.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: A recreational facility between Marley Vale and Long Bay will assist us with the cultural and social development of the constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party will continue to fight for the poor of this country. The Democratic Labour Party will adhere to the philosophy that the workers and the people of this country must be at the centre of its policy and philosophy.

House 13 Sequence 65

10.30 a.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I want to say that any attempt to decriminalise buggery and prostitution in Barbados, would threatened the orderly existence of society. Sir, morality is based on Christianity and the Book of Common Prayers say that we cannot encourage any sinful or immoral behavior in this country. I thank you.

His Honour J. J. M. EDGHILL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the Financial Statement as was delivered to this

Honourable House two days ago by the Right Honourable Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, this Financial Statement was delivered against a background of Barbados having to be ready by 2004 for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, of Barbados being able to be ready for the year 2005 for the Free Trade Area of the Americas, as well as for the year 2007, when we would have our trading arrangements with the European Community. Sir, ultimately all this leads to globalisation.

I would like to commend the Honourable Prime Minister for an excellent job done in preparing this Financial Statement. Sir, one has to look at the fact that over the last 50 years since adult suffrage in Barbados, I do not think that any minister of finance has been faced with any problems confronting or looming before us as a result of globalisation.

We must also be cognizant of the fact that the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is controlled by the eight developed countries in the world and obviously they would do things which would benefit them more than the small or developing countries. Therefore, we have to be constantly redefining and restructuring our economy so that we could take advantage of the benefits that might come out of globalisation, as well as to take care of the negatives that might impact on us as a result of the many things which are not good things that are liable to come out of globalisation.

Mr. Speaker, this is just an example of how the World Trade Organisation (WTO) operates. Only recently we recognised that with the pharmaceutical industry, the World Trade Organisation (WTO) has been trying to encourage them to make as much money as possible, even to the detriment of the developing countries. Here it is we have this world, especially the developing world which has severe health problems in relation to HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and various diseases associated with the mosquito, and strange enough, the developing countries do not see this as being important to them. They are behind the reputable drug companies that are operating within the developing world, to continue to price goods at a very high rate. It was only recently during the Cancun Agreement that the developing world has been able to receive some benefits, whereby some countries such as Brazil and India would be able to have a lot of these drugs available to them at a much cheaper price.

Sir, in the past drug companies would give donations and, therefore, I now wonder what is going to happen. I also wonder what is going to happen in the form of subsidies. Sir, we are still operating under very high tariffs, which could be a disadvantage to the small countries and the less developed world, which are infested with these kinds of problems.

Mr. Speaker, during the presentation of the Right Honourable Prime Minister, I was able to recognize that much emphasis has been placed on helping the 'small man' because in these days of globalisation, we must remember that the 'small man' plays an important role. If we were to look at what has happened over the past 50 years where we have had all kinds of reductions in tariffs, beginning with the developing world, one would find that over the last 20 years, the 12 poorest countries have gotten about 20 times worse than they originally were, while the eight developed countries are about six times wealthier.

Therefore, one can see there is a big divide between the rich and the poor and it is, therefore, important for us in Barbados to ensure that our poor people are able to benefit as a result of trade liberalisation and globalisation.

In the Financial Statement I did not see much about housing, which is our biggest social problem. It is true that this Government has done a lot of work in housing over the last 10 years. I can remember when we first came to power in 1994, the Sites and Services Programme was virtually abandoned. We took it up and have now acquired over 1000 acres of land over the last six years and, therefore, with so much land on the land bank, this Government is now in a position to start dealing with the problems facing many poor persons in relation to housing.

Mr. Speaker, I have a research committee which would be having consultation with the Minister of Housing in the not too distant future. We are looking forward to these consultations with the aim to addressing many of the problems that confront the people of Christ Church in general, in relation to the housing needs of these persons.

Mr. Speaker, when I was listening to the Right Honourable Prime Minister, I saw that a lot of emphasis was placed on the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development.

House No.13(66)10.30 a.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

His Honour J.M. EDGHILL: By so doing, the Ministry will be provided with \$1 million under the Agriculture Development Fund as a special project to finance specialised agrobusinesses.

Secondly, it will also provide \$250 000 annually to meet the administration cost of a farm mentorship attachment programme for young people interested in farming.

Thirdly, it will capitalise the Agricultural Development Fund by \$7.5 million and reconstruct it to

provide \$10 million in annual loans to the sector as well as \$6 million annually to support the sugar industry.

Mr. Speaker, I am quite sure that you are in a similar position to me because we both have constituencies which consist of poor people and when we hold clinic weekly we are confronted by all types of problems especially from very poor persons of these communities.

Sir, before I came here this morning I spoke to a friend of mine who lives in Gall Hill, Christ Church. His name is Ryan Walcott but most people know him as "Nigger" and he is an articulate and intelligent young man. He spoke to me about the problems that confront the young people of Gall Hill, Silver Hill, Lodge Road, Sargeant Village and Vauxhall. He said that young people feel ostracised and neglected by the powers that be, that they hear a lot about being able to obtain loans from institutions like Fund Access, Urban Development Commission, Rural Development Commission and other agencies but that they have to undergo a lot of bureaucracy to obtain these small loans.

There is tremendous talent on the 'block' because these young people have skills; some of them may not be academic but they are artistic. If you talk to these young people they tell you they would like to open their own businesses but that for some reason although the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission have been set up by this Government - it has been acknowledged by members on the other side that the reason for these commissions are noble and sensible, that they have done a lot for poor people in Barbados and that they play an important role - a lot more should be done to address the social needs of young people throughout Barbados.

When I spoke to my friend Ryan this morning and to Anita Morrison from Maxwell Hill, whom the Honourable Member for St. Philip North knows very well. If you spoke to 'Snake' from Silver Hill and Wayne Keizer, you would get a good idea of what goes on in the psyche and thinking of these individuals who often spend their time on the block.

It is of concern to me as well that although so much has been done by Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission persons talk about the long time it takes to access funds from these agencies and the bureaucracy they have to undergo to get a business started.

I am appealing to the powers that be to get persons who understand the needs of these people to work at these commissions so that it can redound to the benefit of these poor people many of whom operate on the block. Sir, persons working in these agencies are frightened and they

write those persons off immediately when they go in with their big pants and speak their lingua. Sir, these are the problems that confront small people in Barbados. It is good to have policies put in place by the Government but what matters most is the implementation of them.

If the policies sound good but they are implemented slowly, it serves poor people no good. I know several persons who are trying to get loans from the Rural Development Commission who have applied for months. In most of these cases the loan is below \$10 000 but for some reason these people are finding great difficulty in getting the loans when these two commissions, Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission have the money for this purpose and these loans could be dealt with swiftly. I get the impression that staff at these commissions do not care or understand what it is to be poor.

10.50 a.m.

Sequence 67

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: His Honour J.M. Edghill:

Sir, sometimes they come with good academic qualifications and acquire jobs but they tend to forget that there are a lot of young people whom we need to give assistance.

I am happy to see that the Right Honourable Prime Minister has allocated approximately \$1 million to the Oasis Project. It is, indeed, the right step at this time of our development and I am looking forward to the Honourable Prime Minister, in the not so distant future, making more money available for this project. If we are saying that the Oasis Project is for the boys on the 'block', I have about a dozen blocks in Christ Church West Central and in Barbados we could easily think about three hundred blocks. Although this \$1 million is important, I think that it is still too small and we have to think in terms of providing more money as soon as possible so that these young people can say that they are part of the Barbadian society. It is also a way of empowering or enfranchising many of these young persons on the 'block' and in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I was surprised yesterday to hear the Leader of the Opposition alluding to the fact that there are more boys under the age of twenty-five than there are ladies under the age of twenty-five. This in itself would create a social problem for Barbados when one looks at the fact that the young boys, to some extent, have been marginalised. I am one of those persons who believe, to some extent, that co-education has had a negative impact on the way boys perform in schools today.

I said that because I remember being a student at Boys' Foundation School and after school finished in the afternoon the boys would go on the pasture and I was among those boys that would not leave school until about 6.00 p.m. every day. I was involved in cricket, football and various games.

Currently, if you visit any of the coeducational schools the boys are leaving school the same time that the girls are leaving. They are not taking part in physical education as much as they should and then there are a lot of other reasons they are not producing as well as the girls.

Sir, we must also recognise, and it is a fact, that girls from the date of birth to age of fourteen have a greater intellect and they would do better than boys of that same age. When we talk about boys being disadvantaged there are some feminists groups who are saying that the boys had their chance and now is the time for the girls to have their chance.

Mr. Speaker, they do not recognise that the man is supposed to be the head of the household, that is in the Bible. Anytime that the man is being marginalised it is going to have negative affect on the population and this would create social problems among the people in this country. Therefore, I was very glad when I heard that something is going to be done for the young boys on the block, in view of the fact that there are more boys than girls on the blocks. We really have to do something to uplift the boys. Sir, this in itself will be a better community.

Asides.

His Honour J.M. Edghill: Sir, I once again commend the Right Honourable Prime Minister for a job well done in repositioning the economy of Barbados. It has been a very difficult job if you look at the trend this world is going to be taking the next five years and obviously from time to time we will have to come back and think in terms of not only repositioning but also restructuring our economy so that we can take advantage of whatever good there is that could come out of globalisation.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution on the Financial Statement Economic and Financial Policies put forward in this Chamber last Tuesday by the Right Honourable Prime Minister. First, let me thank the good people of St. Michael West Central, those people in the areas of St. Stephen, Clevedale, Wavell Avenue, Yearwood Road, Yearwood Land, Murray's Land, Dear's Land, Kellman Land, Fairfield, Spooner's Hill, Grazettes, Denton Road, Trallis Walk, Hurley's Land, Hollywood, Seclusion, Ecksteins Village, Long Gap, Allamby Gap, Rock Gap and all the other areas within the

constituency of St. Michael West Central for giving me another opportunity to represent their interest here in these Hallowed Chambers.

Mr. Speaker, like you, I first came to these Chambers in 1994 and I have worked hard. I am sure that if you were in the position to stand on this floor today you would want to thank the people of St. Michael Central for giving you the opportunity to represent them.

Asides.

Mr. R.D. MARSHALL: I want to praise the Right Honourable Prime Minister for the outstanding job he has done in this country since this Barbados Labour Party came to power in 1994.

11.00 a.m.

Sequence 68

Thursday, November 27, 2003

11.00 a.m.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: At this time also, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for giving me an opportunity to serve in his Cabinet. I would like to thank as well, the Honourable Members whom I had the opportunity to serve with in the Cabinet. Among these fine men and women, I was able to learn a lot.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson, the philosopher said:

“Every man I meet in some way is my superior in that I learn something from him.”

At this time, I want to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, on her elevation to the position of Deputy Prime Minister of Barbados. It was not bestowed on her because of her good looks alone, it was bestowed on her because of her ability. A time will come, Mr. Speaker, when she will be able to demonstrate to this country that she has the ability and knows how to run a country and I look forward to when that time will come and hope that she would get the support.

I heard her speak in here last night when she mentioned that she was in a position where she was alone and wounded but she can defend herself. Sir, I will say more on that statement as I proceed in my speech. I will mention what brought on that statement.

The Leader of the Opposition yesterday made comments about a lack of leadership in the Barbados Labour Party and a present lack of leadership for this

country. Sir, I know, the people of Barbados do not agree with that statement.

In 1994, they showed confidence, they were happy, they were contented. Again, in 1999, they went to the polls and gave a resounding, yes, to the Prime Minister's ability and the Barbados Labour Party's ability to run this country. Sir, again in May of this year, they gave that outstanding confidence in the Prime Minister and the Barbados Labour Party and hence, the Barbados Labour Party is in a position to manage the affairs of this country.

This Budget, Mr. Speaker, is designed to kick-start the economy. This country was in recession for about a year and a half or two years, but when you looked around the country, you could not believe that the country was in recession. There were no massive layoffs. In fact, the Prime Minister gave the assurance to this country that there will never be any layoffs in the civil service.

As I said, we went through a recession and people went about their business. Yes, there were some job losses. We live in a country where we do not have the kind of resources that other Third World countries have, and we have been able to weather the storm, despite the resources that we lack. Our main resource is our people, and we have been able to do very well.

Mr. Speaker, we depend on imports. We do very few exports, but as I said, the country has done extremely well.

Mr. Speaker, through this Budget, I can see many benefits coming to this country. There are two areas that I would like to dwell on today. One is in the area of housing and the other one is in area of social transformation.

I do believe that when the Minister of Social Transformation gets up to speak that he would be able to explain to this Chamber and to the country, through the media and television, the plans his Ministry has for the people of this country.

Within the last year, I know that the Ministry of Social Transformation was not in the position to deliver on many of the areas in which they were mandated, such as the programme of repairing houses for poor people and the area of poverty. It was lacking in those areas.

I know that in the area of St. Michael West Central we were looking forward to having more houses repaired. We were looking to have new houses for those persons, especially the elderly, who have found themselves in the position where their houses have deteriorated to the extent where some of the houses are falling.

I have confidence in the Minister and the Ministry of Social Transformation that they can remedy the situation when the time comes.

The people of St. Michael West Central know that in the past, they were well-served by the Ministry of Social Transformation. We had a number of houses repaired for old people. We had many poverty cases and those people were able to have their houses repaired, as well as have new houses where needed.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure you had a number of houses repaired in your constituency. I passed through your constituency...As you know, I originated from the constituency that you represent. I go through my old home town sometimes. I am not one of those people who have moved away and forgot where they came from. Sir, if I forget where I came from, I would not know where I am going.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, you also will be happy when the Ministry of Social Transformation can resume the good work that they have started in these two constituencies.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you were saying that you passed through my constituency, you did not finish that.

Hon. R.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I passed through the constituency as I said, and I have seen the amount of work done in that constituency. There are some new housing units on Bush Hall, near the Howard Supermarket. This work did not happen by accident, it happened because you went out there and worked on behalf of those people.

I am quite sure that you will continue, in your capacity as representative, to make sure that the needs of the people of St. Michael Central are met.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the people of St. Michael West Central were treated quite well by the Ministry of Social Transformation. I want to thank the Minister of Social Transformation, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East for the work that he has done for those people. He assured me that all those houses I have passed on to him, in the area of Wavell, Spooners Hill, Clevedale, First Avenue Grazettes, Second Avenue Grazettes, Fairfield and Eckstein Village, would be repaired as soon as they get their finances together.

He told me that he is going to walk with me personally and make sure that the work there is done in a timely fashion and I want to thank him.

I also want to thank the Ministry of Social Transformation, Mr. Speaker, for the amount of work they

have done in the area of St. Michael West Central where the road programme is concerned.

When I was the Minister responsible for Public Works and Transport, I was able to have complementary work done by the Ministry of Social Transformation where they assisted us with the Rural Road Programme. Sir, areas that never had roads before were given roads. I remember when I went to Yearwood Road No. 2, the people who were living there for more than 40 and 50 said they never had a road there. It is through the Urban Development Commission that those people were able to have a proper road.

House 13, sequence 69: 11:10:14

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: It is the same thing with the people on the lower road by Miss French. Miss French told me that she lived there for about 45 to 50 years and they never had a road, and she thanks the Urban Development Commission for the amount of work they have done there.

There was a horseshoe road to be built at Upper Wavell Avenue, which comprised about 50 houses. One section of that road has been finished and the Urban Development Commission has promised me that they would continue their work in the area for the people in the constituency. Mr. Speaker, I would wish to thank the UDC for the work they have done there.

The National Housing Corporation has been able to sell the lots in Belfield and St. Stephen to the persons who were living there at a reduced price. Those people are happy now to be having their own homes. Some of the people there who were living in chattel houses were in a position to go to the National Housing Corporation to borrow money and were able to add to their existing structures. They did what we used to do in the past, they built from the back and came forward. They are able now to have their homes in a very nice fashion where they are able to entertain their friends and to raise their children in a different setting. So again I would like to thank the Ministry of Housing for the work they have done in the area.

My other concern with the National Housing Corporation has to do with the old Grazettes Great House. When that land was for sale, I approached the owners of the land and I was able to get some of the staff from the Ministry of Housing and Lands to go with me to look at the land. We were able to acquire the land and we have been able to put some sites and services in place. There is also a plan to build about 30 houses in the area. So I look forward to the time when the roads will be built and the water mains installed so that the people who bought the lots will be able

to build on them, and that houses would be built for those persons who have expressed a desire to the National Housing Corporation to build houses for them.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip North speaking about the inhumane face that is put by the National Housing Corporation as they extend a service to the people of Barbados. I know that there are persons in the National Housing Corporation, not all of them, who do not act towards the general public in a humane manner. So I am saying to them that they have to get their act together, get their servicing department together, and make sure that the staff are well-trained in dealing with the general public.

However, at the same time, I will say to the people, especially those who are living in the units of the National Housing Corporation, that they have to pay their rent. If they do not pay their rent, they will have to go. It is as clear as that. There are people who live in the units who own two motor cars and have a big satellite dish on the house, they are paying their electricity bills and for their MAX telephones, but they are refusing to pay the water bills and the National Housing Corporation. I do not believe in politicians saying that you cannot put people out of the units because they are poor black people. That is nonsense.

I sat in a Parliament with Honourable Members on this side who tell people that you cannot put people out of the units because they are poor people. These are the same poor people who are refusing to pay their bills. I believe everything should be done on merit. If you are a poverty case and you cannot help yourself - this is not a welfare Government - you can go to the Ministry of Social Transformation and ask them for help. The Minister of Social Transformation is a very humane person and he will give the necessary help, but it will be done on a case by case basis. However, people believe that because it is Government, everything is free.

I was working in a by-election in St. Michael North West and a lady came up to me and said: "Mr. Marshall, I have this water bill here that I want you all to pay for me." I said to her: "Let me see the water bill." When I looked at it, it was about \$700 and when I was talking to her about it, I saw a gentleman coming down the stairs with about eight chains around his neck and a big 'boom box' on his shoulder. I asked her: "Who is this young man?" She said: "That is my son." I asked her how many sons she has and she said she has three. I asked her if they were working, and she said: "Yes, all three of my sons are working." I said to her, "And they cannot help you pay your water bill?" She said: "It is my water bill, not theirs." They are using the water and they are bathing in the house, but she is telling me that I should pay her water bill for her to vote for me. Mr. Speaker, I left the house. I do not tolerate foolishness. I do not prostitute myself to people for a vote.

You are going to have to meet me half way and I will meet you half way.

Mr. Speaker, it is the same thing with the water bills. They have some Honourable Members on this side who would tell you that people should not pay their water bills, that the water comes out of the earth, so it should be free.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Yes, you Minister, people like you.

The Barbados Water Authority pays \$1.2 million every month to the Barbados Light & Power Company for their energy bill. They have staff to pay and they are in need of a new building, yet someone is going to tell me that water should be free, 'nah', you have to pay your water bills. If it is a case where a person is experiencing hardship, they can approach the Ministry of Social Transformation and they would get help.

People should not say that we are being unfair to people. Everybody has to pay their share. If I do not pay my mortgage, they will put me out of the house, it is simple as that. So if you are renting, you have to pay your rent. You cannot do that to a private landlord, they would put you out and some of them would even take off the windows or the doors.

I would like to know about the case I heard the Honourable Member referred about where somebody in Christ Church died. Sir, I will ask the question, how much rent did they owe. You have to do things sometimes where it would hurt a little and you would know what is going on.

Mr. Speaker, the debushing programme of the Ministry of Health is about to start. I know that the Ministry of Health is getting their teams together. There are some areas in Pillerdorf, Grazettes and Clevedale that are in need of some debushing. This is the time of the year that the programme starts and it goes for three months. Beside the debushing, it gives an opportunity to some poor people who are not working to be able to get a job for about three months in the debushing programme. Besides doing the work, I would like to know that some of the people from St. Michael West Central would be able to work in that programme.

I would like to see the Barbados Water Authority hurriedly institute the laying of the new water mains. We have been experiencing some serious water outages here or late. We are in the middle of the rainy season, there is still some rain falling, but prior to this season, we had a lot of problems with the Barbados Water Authority as it relates to the wells in the northern parts of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, what is of concern to me now is that every week parents are asked to come to the schools for their children because the school is being closed due to the lack of water. This, Mr. Speaker, interferes with the learning of a child. A child cannot do well at school if two and three times a week they have to forego classes because they do not have any water at the school. This is an area I would like to see the Barbados Water Authority starting to do some serious work on. I know that the mains have been in the grounds for over 100 years, but it is time they look for some kind of programme in the range of \$60 or \$75 million to look at a serious programme for laying mains in this country.

Mr. Speaker, at the beginning of my presentation, I spoke about a topic that of late has created a stir in this country. I do not believe it is a topic that we can sweep under the carpet. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the statements which were made were made at a time and in a setting where there was a debate on AIDS where people were talking about the AIDS programme. At the time the statement was made, I can see where the statement was intended.

House 13 Sequence 70

11.20 a.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, people have a way of turning things around. I am quite sure that if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy had gone into a shop, had a number of drinks, and fell, people would say that he was drunk and that they saw when a dog licked his face. Sir, what I am saying is that people try to add and to make situations look as badly as possible.

Sir, this is a serious topic when we talk about the decriminalisation of homosexuality and prostitution. Sir, where prostitution is concerned, I am still hearing people talking about prostitution as a way of life and as a big money earner. Mr. Speaker, I would like to know what percentage this contributes to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). I do not go for this foolishness about people having to make a living for themselves by engaging in prostitution and, therefore, at no time can I defend or contribute to that kind of debate on such a serious topic.

Mr. Speaker, as far as I know, people want to sweep it under the carpet because nobody wants to talk about it. The Honourable Member for St. Michael West has made some comments, which I do support.

Mr. Speaker, I was born in a Christian country and not a pagan society and we have morals in this society that we have to live up to. We raise our children, they go to

school and they go to Sunday school. Sir, we have come up in the church in this country but people may say we are hypocritical. Sir, nobody in here goes to more funerals than me. When people go to funerals they sit and watch the reverend, they listen to the reverend very carefully. This is a God-fearing society, Mr. Speaker, and I will not be part of any Parliament that will come and say that we are going to decriminalise homosexuality, buggery and prostitution. I am not part of that and that is how I stand on it. It will become like...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, this is a Budget Speech and I guess Honourable Members have all kinds of latitude, et cetera, but surely, I believe Honourable Members must be focused. This is not a matter that is before this Honourable House. It is not a matter that has been brought before this Honourable House.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: But Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not stopping him from speaking, I am just saying that Honourable Members must put it in clear perspective as leaders of this country. This is not a matter that is before the Honourable House. I have allowed you to mention this in passing and you need to make it clear that it is not a matter that is before this Honourable House.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker...

Mr. SPEAKER: You can give an opinion, I am not saying you cannot give an opinion.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I said I wanted to touch on that, and I have. I just want to say that when God created Adam and Eve, he did not create Adam and Steve. I say on that, that I will never support that decriminalisation of homosexuality nor buggery.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to thank you for allowing me by law, my 30 minutes to speak in here. It might come a time very soon when I might not have to speak at all in here, I do not know. But I think that sometimes people in here are allowed probably because of where they come from or their family status, they are allowed to say what they want to say.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, let me say that we in Barbados must continue to be strict guardians of our heritage and firm craftsmen of our faith. I thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is indeed my privilege to address this august Chamber on the issues raised by the Prime Minister entitled, "Financial

Statement and Budgetary Proposals,” which was presented two days ago.

Mr. Speaker, I was almost transported to times before when I sat before the television and listened to the pronouncements of the Right Honourable Prime Minister. I was somewhat caught up in a situation of *deja vu* because what I was hearing on Tuesday, I seemed to have heard before, almost in its entirety.

I wish to state that the contents of the report as presented, seem to be nothing else but a wish list. I know that some men dream, and I have no fear of dreaming because men must dream. I know that some men wish and, therefore, I have no problem with wishes. I believe, nevertheless, that we must be able to take those dreams and wishes and transform them into some sensible reality. Mr. Speaker, what has characterised this Parliament

since 1995 and is an expression of the policies of this Parliament, is that many of the wishes and dreams of the Barbados Labour Party have not come to any sensible realisation, as a result, I believe, of several inadequacies which permeate many of the Honourable Members on that side and those whom I believe should actually carry out those policies. Mr. Speaker, policies must first start with ideas, ideas which are discussed among others, which then could be fashioned into policies.

Mr. Speaker, I will not stand here and quarrel with several of the ideas which were transformed into policies by the Barbados Labour Party. What I have to quarrel with is the lack of execution and the successful implementation of many of those policies.

Mr. Speaker, I would be quarrelling with myself if I believe that the journey of leadership and management of any economy in a developing or developed world, could be easily managed, more particularly economies such as Barbados which many have characterized as being an open economy. But I pay particular attention to the inadequacies brought about because of a few areas which I now intend to mention, which could be seen on the Other Side.

Sir, those inadequacies are: the removal of the heart of the civil service of Barbados by the actions of many Ministers of State. Mr. Speaker, persons in the public sector speak of the frustration, depression and the agony which they feel when carrying out their duties and how they are circumvented and short-stopped, and yet it is expected of them to work and to be productive. We expect them to move systematically to implement the policies of ministers and of Government with which they are frustrated. It cannot happen, it cannot work.

We also have situations in the public service of this country where persons have been promoted ahead of

another deserving persons. This too has caused frustration and withdrawal of work from many persons in the public service of Barbados. This has already been spoken about and, therefore, I do not claim originality for that idea. House No.13(71)11.20 a.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. R.D. JONES: Sir, I am not a Minister of State so I do not interface with the civil service in Barbados but they are the ones who carry and speak to the agony. Therefore, those in Government who run the affairs of this country should take another look at how they relate to the public service of Barbados, how their policies and practices seem to squeeze the life out of the public servants of Barbados. Sir, they should halt and take a new view of what is happening.

Mr. Speaker, we have strong, dedicated, and dynamic leaders in our public service. They are persons who have the knowledge, skills and attitude to carry this country forward and we have to understand that total implementation of the policies means there must be synergistic relationship between those who formulate policies and those who execute them.

This statement on the economy and financial policies of the Government reminds me of someone who is running fast on the same spot. Mr. Speaker, they are running fast but they are going nowhere. They beat themselves into a state of frenzy, perspire, pant and huff and, at the end of the day, the journey cannot be completed. Therefore, my encouragement is for sensible policies. I do not care from where they originate because the Democratic Labour Party for the last two days has been placing before this august Chamber sensible policies.

Sir, I do not intend to be only critical so I want to say there are some sensible policies in the report but if we continue to believe it is a wish list and do not execute it sensibly, next year, if it is the wish of the Prime Minister, we would be in here debating the same things after having ran fast on the same spot.

Mr. Speaker, I speak holistically on behalf of all of us. If we are able, after the hiatus, to transform the economy that since 1994 was orchestrated and organised by the Barbados Labour Party, I am sure, that future generations would say that the first Parliament of the 21st century has done this country some justice and service.

My appeal as we leave here and interface with the many persons across Barbados and the wider Caribbean is that we make sense of our current reality to bring to bear everything we discussed here to impact on the quality of lives of our people.

Mr. Speaker, there are people today in this \$6 billion economy who stand on the periphery of Barbadian existence. We cannot be comfortable with this state of affairs because it takes us back over generations.

Mr. Speaker, it is our duty and our responsibility to transform those lives. This is not about Project Oasis because the Barbados Labour Party is noted for coming up with excellent sounding phrases, buzz words, glitz and glamour and Project Oasis is the most recent buzz word. Sir, we need to get rid of the buzz words and get down to action and transform the lives of Barbadian people as well as those who live on the block.

Mr. Speaker, I want to dismiss the nonsense and the notion that when we speak of the block that we are speaking of a new creation that is dangerous to the existence of Barbados. In fact, if you continue to encourage the sort of mentality that those on the block are different from us, then we will have a substantial problem.

Sir, Project Oasis will have no impact on the young people of this country who assemble at strategic points across Barbados to interact and develop certain social attributes. I cannot say that all of the interaction is positive, as much of it hurts my heart and I want to see all of our people moved from the periphery of Barbadian existence into the mainstream of development of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I do not mind the tongue-in-cheek phrases that emanate from the mouths of those who seem not to understand the dynamics of Barbadian life today. They do not understand that those young men and women who assemble at these strategic points want the same things as you and me, Mr. Speaker. In fact, some times it might be inverted because they have children like you and the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, they want their children to survive and do well but they cannot do so in a situation of alienation where hostility is placed at their feet and minds each and every day.

Sir, as far as I am concerned, Project Oasis as it is euphemistically called, draws its genesis from the brilliant idea called "kick-start" of the Democratic Labour Party contained in its Manifesto. I have no quarrel with it because it is used across the world to substantiate and buttress other ideas and policies and if the Barbados Labour Party feels comfortable and confident in using ideas from any source, let them use them because, at the end of the day, it is not about the Honourable Member for St. Michael South or the Honourable Member for St. Lucy or any of the Honourable Member in this Parliament as individuals. Sir, it is about the collective call of Barbadians, how we insert ourselves into the wider global world, what type of identity and face we project to the wider world and who we are as people. We are proud, purposeful and

determined that we will not be pulverised as people in the so-called global world.

Mr. Speaker, too many times persons believe it is about them and that they can curse you. They will do all manner of evil against you but, Sir, it is not about them and until we understand that in this Chamber then our policies are going to be worthless and they will mean nothing to those whom they target.

Sir, policies such as Project Oasis will be a waste of money thrown about to curry political favours on behalf of the Barbados Labour Party.

11.40 a.m.

Sequence 72

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. R.D. JONES: Sir, we now have a new commission, the establishment of the Block Commission, naming the simple ideas which are to gain currency within Barbados and a lot of them do not make sense. Therefore, we have to move the things that make sense to force people to interface and interact with them, to become comfortable with them, to demonstrate that they make a difference in the lives of our people.

Mr. Speaker, education stands critically and fundamentally at the core of all of our endeavours, education and training in all its forms and dimensions, education for the 21st century that seeks to understand the complexity of the world in which we live, a world that is not simple, a world that is difficult, a world which is still filled with divisions, class-wars, religious wars and violence. Yet there must still be hope that we as a people, placed upon this earth by the Great Maker, can make a difference in our lives and in the lives of those to come.

Sir, that is why as we borrow, beg and cajole to borrow, that we do not burden ourselves further in the massive debt which seems to be hanging around this country at this time. It is not to say that we must not borrow because we all borrow in our personal lives and the nation borrows, but as we borrow we must be conscious that at the end of the day that burden hangs heavy if we cannot service it.

Sir, earlier the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central spoke about kick-starting the economy. I suspected that it is a kind of image phrase being used and I tried to determine what he meant. We were told over the last two days that this economy is moving well, it is flowing but the two stand on opposite sides.

Mr. Speaker. There is almost a dichotomy between what we are hearing and what the Honorable Member for St. Michael West Central recently spoke about, You do not have to kick-start that which is moving and moving well but maybe, that is what we have to do. Maybe we have to kick-start and if we do, let us kick-start it well and keep it going because it would impact on and the quality of lives of all our people.

Sir, information and information technology must continue to be an integral part of our educational landscape. I know that we still have a lot of work to do but we cannot deny our young people the opportunity either in schools, homes or villages to have a basic understanding of information and communication technology because it is the way and wave of the present and not of the future.

Sir, EduTech is a project which is almost three years behind total implementation in many ways. I would want, as one who has some knowledge of what I am speaking, to encourage the Ministry of Education to continue to put systems in place to deal with the training and retraining of teachers making them more familiar, not only with the basic productivity tools but with the notion of infusion and integration of the technology into the production and reproduction of what is taught in the various schools. It would make sense to the students today and in the future.

Sir, when repairs have to be carried out to schools that there should be a sensible analysis of the repairs to be done, so that cost overruns could be eliminated. I would like to see production time remain on target; the hardware and software placed in schools at the time that it is said it would be placed and that we do not have to wait a year or two after for those things to happen.

Mr. Speaker, the project is supposed to be completed by the year 2007 but it would not now be completed until the year 2010 and that is if they do not continue making the mistakes that they have been making.

Sir, what the Barbados Labour Party sees as development, in many instances seems like political expediency to others. If we truly want to talk about the development of Barbados, political expediency must step back and it must take second place. It must not be the apple of the eye but must retreat into a place, hopefully to be forgotten, because we must work with a new dynamic. People will know us not only by our words but by our actions. People would know the Barbados Labour Party in the same way that they would know the Democratic Labour Party, that is by our actions and not merely by our words.

Therefore, I believe that we must continue to work assiduously as a people, generating hope, hope led by a vision of where we want to take this country as a people,

principally led by those we have been elected on May 21, 2003. Sir, that is what has to happen.

Sir, other social partners must be involved in the delivery of all of the systems and all the things that we have to do. We spoke of the difficulties of the early 1990s. It is a period that none of us should run away from but we should use it as a learning experience. We all know that it was a difficult period. The Democratic Labour Party was the Government in power at that time.

Mr. Speaker, I am scared that as the other Honourable Members on the other side speak, all they would do is to point out as though there was some glorification of the tragedies and difficulties of that period, rather than using it as a lesson to foster ideas and policies which would carry this country further towards a greater glory and conclusion.

Sir, human resource development and human capital formation are integral to how we go forward into the 21st Century. I said earlier that we should use all the systems that are at our disposal; such as access to distance and online education, through the utilisation of information and communication technologies which must be carried forward even more.

Mr. Speaker, education through non-formal structures such as seminars, workshops et cetera must be encouraged. We must go to the blocks and take education where they assemble, instead of seeking to move those persons elsewhere to educate them.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North spoke earlier this morning about things that have been promised but were never delivered. We talked about a national certification exercise which was not delivered. I want to see, and I am wishing as well because it seems to be the mode of this Parliament to wish, that many of our young people would leave school with the benefits of a national certification exercise, and that we should not give our young people certificates willy-nilly because we have to work for everything in life. I want to see many persons who have left our schools without being properly certificated, without the full benefits of education within the formal structure, being gradually tracked back into some form of education because it must continue to be the way of the future otherwise they would be left out further behind and we have to change that.

11.50 p.m.

Sequence 73

Thursday, November 27, 2003

11.50 a.m.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Training in the new technologies should be one where we are spareheading some aspects of the national development.

Sir, if you passed the area of Christ Church East Central recently, you would have seen the land being cleared for the placing of the informatics sector. Mr. Speaker, that is only one small area. You know of the myriad high level and base level jobs that can be created through an understanding of information and communication technology.

Sir, businesses can develop as a result of understanding this, and manipulating the internet, setting up virtual stores and selling excellent Barbadians products. There are things which must be tied together, not only having an understanding of what to do but the telecommunications sector must be sensitive and sensible, in order to receive your information and to sent it. You cannot price yourself out of the marketplace because others are doing it as well. The postal service and those who move small packages around the world must also be cognizant of that, because our wares must reach as far as Siberia.

Mr. Speaker, wherever there are people, we must be able to sell, using virtual reality and the internet, as part of the delivery of our goods and services. Therefore, we must continue to push that particular agenda forward. We must work hard to ensure that all hindrances are removed, if we are to make sense to our people.

Mr. Speaker, sports and cultural products in this new dimension, in this globalised world, in the changing face of those things which we encounter, are going to be major to whatever we do. The Honourable Prime Minister identified several areas such as the establishment of a national art gallery, the filming events bureau, training in special areas, a minimum of two scholarships per year, a creative centre, and those are all interesting endeavours.

I come to a position, Mr. Speaker, almost like cynicism, that because the wish lists over the years have not been met that this wish list also will not be met.

I want, Mr. Speaker, to appeal for not only scholarships within the cultural sphere but within the sporting sphere, scholarships at the level of management and supervision of sports. I think scholarships in those areas, as well, would understand the dynamics of both sporting and cultural services and products.

Mr. Speaker, I want to see where, notwithstanding the lights going up all across Barbados, persons can go to work, come home and relax and then go and play, thus becoming part of the recreational product of Barbados.

I want to see Barbados, Mr. Speaker, catch up with many of the countries, both in the Eastern Caribbean and places like Trinidad, where we use our knowledge to develop sensible infrastructure for sport such as football which can impact on the tourism product, as is done with cricket, hockey or volleyball.

We must not continue with the prejudice which seems to be inherent in the Barbadian society that because a sport is supposed to be mass based that persons by some stretch of the imagination, are either ignorant or they are caught up in some other aspects of criminal behaviour. This is what stymies the development of those aspects of the Barbadian society. We need to remove the notion of class, and that such like, from our behaviour as a people, and work so that we can truly develop our young people, so that they can make sense of their reality in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time is up.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Thank you.

I look forward to the day, Mr. Speaker, when the good people of Christ Church East Central would be able to have the roads they need, where the potholes do not become ponds, where cleaning of the gutters and the roadways are done effectively, and garbage is removed daily and not become permanent mud in the roads.

Mr. Speaker, I look for the day when the young persons who say to me, Mr. representative, we want a house...Maybe I am adding to the wish list, but I dream for that day because those dreams, under a Democratic Labour Party Government, will become a reality for the people of Christ Church East Central and the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, even though you may have come to the end of your public tenure, the people whom you have historically represented, will not suffer. Sir, I recognise within you, a quality of goodness and that goodness will be rewarded.

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time is still up, though.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, as we move into the full celebration of our Independence, part of the construction of what I call the Barbadian house by the Democratic Labour Party, I want to wish each and everyone in Chamber a Happy Independence and all of those across Barbados a Happy Independence.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my full support to the presentation made by the Honourable Prime Minister on Tuesday in this Honourable Chamber. It was once again a demonstration of moderation and clearly

in touch with reality to ensure that all the gains that we had made over the last nine years, were not squandered by any extravagance on this occasion.

It contrasts sharply with what we have been hearing from the other side and, really, there have been some ramblings that left us in a state of darkness as to even what was being said.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip West last night. I really wanted to hear him talk on health issues. There are some people who dabble in every little thing and people who really epitomise the saying that a little bit of learning, can sometimes be very dangerous.

The Honourable Member wants us to look, for example, at the issue of recessions. Can you imagine a Democratic Labour Party member talking about recession, and saying that we should explain about recessions? Barbados, under the Barbados Labour Party, went through a recession in 1981 and again, recently. If the Prime Minister did not speak to the country and say we were in recession, nobody would have felt it at all. This contrasted sharply with how people in Barbados were dealt with, and the effects on them when they went through the recession of the early 1990s, an era of total chaos in Barbados, under the Democratic Labour Party.

I think the Honourable Member for St. Philip West needs to 'cool down' and focus on the issues at hand. This is not, Mr. Speaker, a political platform. We had a Budget presented here on Tuesday, where no new taxes were introduced. Neither in here on Tuesday nor in any presentation outside of Parliament have any new taxes been introduced.

House 13, sequence 74, 12:00:14

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, when prior to this Government has anyone heard, outside the context of an election budget, that no taxes were to be introduced in a Budget. In this Budget we have had a lifting of taxes on computers and a renewal of the commitment already legislated that we are going to be lowering personal and corporate income taxes.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing really in the presentation on Tuesday for people to be crying about. To prove that, the interest groups, the Barbados Manufacturers Association, the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Association, have all indicated their support for the presentation on Tuesday. So the Democratic Labour Party finds itself standing alone once again in its condemnation of the proposals which were introduced on Tuesday.

Mr. Speaker, the country is doing well. It is not me who is saying that, a look at the major indicators would demonstrate that. Tourism is bouncing back. For the first six months of this year, tourist arrivals to Barbados increased by 8.6 per cent. Of significance is that we have recorded increases in tourist arrivals from every single major market, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Trinidad and Tobago and other CARICOM countries, Germany and other European countries, for the first six months of this year.

Our rate of inflation is very low. For the first five months of the year our rate of inflation stood at a mere 0.4 per cent which is even lower than the 1.7 per cent for the same period of 2002. Our unemployment rate, Mr. Speaker, is at 11.7 per cent which is way down from the 25 per cent that the Democratic Labour Party left it at in 1994. Our foreign exchange reserves are in excess of \$2 billion from the \$13 million they left in 1994. Where does it lie in the mouth of the Democratic Labour Party to talk about our foreign reserves.

Mr. Speaker, let us do a comparison of what is going on. Let us look at the same tourism. We have to compare like with like, so we have to go back to the first three months of the year which is the latest information we have. Tourist arrivals in Barbados increased by 2.7 per cent for the first three months of this year. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West does not know these things.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Protect me, Mr. Speaker, I beg you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, I need to hear the Honourable Member. I speak specifically to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West. There are rules in here, Sir, and I have rules that I can control this House by, if you do not want to hear. Honourable Member, continue please. Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN: The Bahamas, a major tourism destination, experienced increases of only 1.1 per cent for the first three months of this year, but Barbados increased by 2.7 per cent. In the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), with the exception of Dominica, tourist arrivals fell in every single one of them for the first three months of this year. St. Kitts and Nevis had a decline of 31.4 per cent. St. Vincent and the Grenadines had a decline of 24.5 per cent. There were declines to them, with the exception of the United Kingdom, from every single other market, at a time when Barbados saw an increase in arrivals from every one of its major markets in the industry, so what is the complaint.

Our inflation rate for the first three months stood at 0.03 per cent. In Trinidad and Tobago, it was 3.1 per cent. In the OECS countries it was low, but not as low as ours. Our unemployment rate is at 11.7 per cent which is lower than most of the other countries in the region. Mr. Speaker, there is no denying that we are doing well in this country, that the country is in good hands and that this administration should be congratulated for the performance of the Barbados economy.

Mr. Speaker, I want to spend a few minutes on some of the other areas mentioned in the Financial and Economic Statement. I want to look at the area of science and technology.

Asides.

Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West would continue to try to heckle me but he would not succeed in derailing me. I am going to talk about science and technology and perhaps he should listen and learn.

Mr. Speaker, at a time when economic systems and countries in the world are placing heavy emphasis on technology, it is about time that Barbados develops a science and technology plan. Science and technology has to be used as a serious engine of growth to develop our productive capacity in Barbados. We are to some extent lagging behind some countries. For example, Jamaica has a very well-structured science council that sees after the development of Jamaica, and we have now to get on board.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that we do not yet have a plan is not because we have not had very competent people heading the National Council for Science and Technology and neither is it because they have not been pushing very heavily for having a plan prepared and for some priority to be assigned to the area of science and technology. The fact that the Ministry has had to concentrate on the discharge of its mandate in other areas is perhaps why it was not able to give as much attention as was really needed to the area of science and technology. That is a matter that is now being addressed. Recommendations were made from as far back as the preparation of the Estimates for the current year and for the input into the preparation of the Manifesto in relation to science and technology and the role it should play in Barbados.

I am pleased to see therefore that there are a number of measures set out clearly in the presentation on Tuesday ensuring that the Government of Barbados is going to take the whole area of science and technology very seriously.

The first thing we have to do, is to commit a certain level of expenditure to the area of research and development in science and technology. Jamaica

committed one per cent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to developing science and technology research. In Barbados, and this is stated in our Manifesto, we have decided to commit 1.5 per cent of our (GDP) to ensure that research and development activities are conducted in Barbados in areas that are critical to Barbados' development. We have not been just talking the talk, we have started to walk the walk because in this presentation on Tuesday, it was expressly mentioned that the sum of \$5 million would now be allocated to ensure we get off the ground in the whole area of research and development in the area of science and technology.

The National Council of Science and Technology has got to be restructured to be able to conduct research and development in areas that are critical to Barbados. One of the areas that is critical to our development is the whole area of renewable energy source. We recognised that there is a certain limitation on the availability of oil, pollution associated with fossil fuels like diesel and the fact that it is a drain on our financial resources to have to continue to import oil to supply our energy needs. So we have already started on an alternative energy programme.

Sir, one can see the results of that work in solar energy research because in the schools, for example, there are a number of projects in relation to the production of distilled water by solar power, for use in schools laboratories and there is the provision of lighting at Government Headquarters, which is also powered by solar energy. The production of ice at Skeetes Bay is currently being done on the basis of solar power. We need to go further into the area of solar power because the whole issue of powering cars by solar power is an area that is already in use in many parts of the world. It does have its problems and therefore it is incumbent on us now to join that research, not duplicating what has already been found to be unworkable, but to ensure that we can try to help in the process of ensuring that we can use solar energy to power vehicles.

House 13 Sequence 75

12.10 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, we also need to go into other areas as well, for example, the issue of converting wave and wind energy into electricity. We also have to look at the area of genetics, particularly the genetic improvement of crops and farm animals and the more efficient use of our water resources such as converting sea water to fresh water. These are all critical areas that we must investigate and research to ensure that we could, in fact, save foreign exchange in the process and ensure that Barbados develops along the way.

Sir, Science and Technology has to become a day-to-day thing for Barbadians, it cannot be seen as something that is esoteric, abstract or far-removed from our daily lives. It is, therefore, incumbent on Government to build upon and to expand a number of things that have already been done, to popularise Science and Technology and to make it more interactive and consumer-friendly.

Mr. Speaker, in that context, Government has outlined a proposed National Science and Technology Centre, which is very timely because it would now provide a full-time, centre which would allow a range of exhibits and allow the ordinary Barbadian to interact with students, professionals and academics in the area of Science and Technology, to ensure that the interaction is there, and that Science becomes a culture for our productive enterprises and also a way of life for the average Barbadian citizen.

In Barbados, we have something called Sci-Tec Expo, which is a massive display of exhibits from primary and secondary school students, private and public sector institutions and involves a very wide cross-section of the community. It is held every two years and allows students primarily to be able to see the connection with science and applying it to everyday life. There are some very useful products and projects that are usually exhibited at that Expo.

Mr. Speaker, one of the problems that Expo encounters is that it is only held every two years and runs for only two or three days. When the exhibition is over, quite often a number of the exhibits are normally disposed of, though some of them might be relevant and impressive.

Mr. Speaker, I think too that scholarships should be awarded to encouraged study and research in Science and Technology. The National Council for Science and Technology must play a major role in spreading information and communication technology throughout the society as part of its programme to ensure that all Barbadian citizens, irrespective of the station they hold in life, could, in fact, have access to information and communication technology.

I was very surprised yesterday to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West making the point that it was as if the Barbados Labour Party has suddenly realized there is something called Information Technology. I do not know in which world the Honourable Member could be living. This Government has long ago recognised that we are living in an Information Age, where information and knowledge are, in fact, the keys to success. We have already introduced measures to ensure that Barbados could be propelled to the forefront of the information age.

We are in the process of putting a legislative framework in place to facilitate that. We have already passed an Electronic Transactions Act, which has equated in law paper-based contractual transactions with transactions being concluded on online. We have also prepared regulations to ensure that things such as digital signatures and inscriptions could be dealt with under the same legislation. A Computer Misuse Act and a Data Protection Act are also under preparation, so that we could have a full legislative package in relation to that area. Therefore, a lot has been done.

Mr. Speaker, I am surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West does not know this. Only recently there was a Community Technology Programme which is well underway. There was an event in Grazettes when the opening of the event was officially opened at the Grazettes Community Centre. In fact, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West does not know about it because he was invited but did not attend.

Sir, this programme takes the technology to the people. It is well recognised that everyone cannot afford to buy a computer and, therefore, this Government has decided to take the technology to the people. Sir, not only is this going to be manifested by the supply of computers but also training would be provided, to ensure that every Barbadian in any community, irrespective of where one lives or one's financial circumstances, would now have access to Information Technology because it is the future. I am sure we would eliminate the distinction between the digital divide, those who have and can buy and those who do not have and cannot buy.

Mr. Speaker, the development, promotion, ensuring access to information and communication technology, is one of the main planks on which the whole issue of the repositioning and modernising of the Barbadian economy rests because of the competitive advantages that it brings. Of course, when one speaks about that, one has to recognise the supreme importance to the proper development of Information and Communication Technology in Barbados and that very central to that is the provision of competitively priced, high-quality telecommunications services. These are critical to that area.

Mr. Speaker, this brings us briefly to the question of the progress in the area of telecommunications reform. Mr. Speaker, last night I would have wanted to hear the Minister responsible for Telecommunications tell us about where are we in terms of telecommunications reform but I recognised that time did not permit him to do that. The Minister of Telecommunications has indicated that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Minister of International Business, would speak to it. I would certainly want to hear his account as to where we are in terms of telecommunications reform.

Mr. Speaker, what we are gleaning from other reports and what I know from experience, is that we are dealing with a very uncooperative and arrogant creature when we are dealing with Cable and Wireless. That is what I know. It is a company that is hell-bent on using every single delaying tactic to retard the progress of liberalisation of the telecommunication sector. Sir, I heard a jingle by Cable and Wireless on the radio and I think it is something that should be investigated by the Fair Trading Commission because under the Consumers Protection Act, misleading and deceptive conduct is an offence.

Mr. Speaker, I noticed the jingle gives the impression that Cable and Wireless equals liberalisation and that it is for it, when, in fact, Cable and Wireless is radically and fundamentally opposed to the liberalisation of the telecommunications sector.

Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Fair Trading Commission for its unshaken resolve to deal firmly but fairly with Cable and Wireless. It has not capitulated to Cable and Wireless and I have no doubt that it would not do so.

House No.13(76)12.10 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: I know recently of a case where an individual approached a lawyer who works for Cable and Wireless to sell him a ticket. He replied that since the person did not like Cable and Wireless and since all the money in his account came from Cable and Wireless that he could not buy that ticket. Sir, this is a professional lawyer who had indicated that he has capitulated to Cable and Wireless so we understand what we are dealing with. Sir, the Fair Trading Commission is not worn out to the point where it would give into Cable and Wireless' foolishness and I thank God for that.

Sir, we are now in the transition phase from monopoly to liberalisation and it is a dangerous phase. It is a time that justified what can be referred to as very heavy handed regulation because anyone who loses a monopoly would naturally want to squeeze the last juice out of everyone before they deal with competition and it is incumbent on the Fair Trading Commission to ensure that Cable and Wireless does not get away with any attempts at foolishness. I believe it is time that the Fair Trading Commission digs deep into the legislation, see the full extent of its power and impose the maximum sanction that can be imposed on Cable and Wireless when it fails to comply with the things that it should comply with.

Mr. Speaker, there is a Bill currently before this Parliament to increase the number of commissioners. When I left the Ministry, I was aware of the fact that the Fair

Trading Commission was checking with other jurisdictions to see the extent of the responsibility of the regulatory authorities and the number of commissioners who sat on the various panels in those jurisdictions. I would have to assume that the Fair Trading Commission concluded its review and advised that there was a need for the number proposed in the Bill before Parliament.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, may I remind you of the rule relating to anticipation as the Bill has not come before the House as yet.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, if there is any justification to increase the numbers of members of the Fair Trading Commission, I hope that new members on the commission would share the same philosophy and approach as the current members, that additional numbers would not be a mere dilution for the sake of dilution and that they would function in a relevant and forceful way but fair to all parties who come before it, in the same way that the current members function.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the Opposition has this fixation with metered rates because before I left the Ministry, three Ministers and myself opposed metered rates and I am not aware that there is any change in the Government's position on metered rates. Thus far, the issue of metered rates is a purely regulatory matter for the Fair Trading Commission. There can be no prejudging what is going to happen when the matter is determined by the Fair Trading Commission and perhaps the Democratic Labour Party continues to set up a straw man to knock it down.

Sir, I am not aware of any change in Government's position that we are unequivocally opposed to metered rates.

Mr. Speaker, in winding up I want to speak on a few issues. I am still settling in and acclimatising to the backbench and I will not speak too loudly on some of the issues in St. Michael North, as I am prepared to give relevant Ministers a chance to deal with the issues of which they are aware. Therefore, I will mention a few things quietly at this time.

There is the issue in Eden Lodge of the construction of a new multi-purpose centre. I was expressly told in January 2002, as I was about to attend a presentation ceremony in Eden Lodge, that I could comfortably say to the residents of Eden Lodge that work on this new centre was going to begin in May 2002 and relying on that assurance I repeated it to them. In January 2003, I made another presentation and no work was started on the new centre and the residents naturally asked me where was the centre.

Mr. Speaker, I want to quietly say that I expected to see the project off the ground because every time I queried the start of the project, I got a 'lot of long talk'. Sir, I want to see people walking the walk and not talking the talk.

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I wanted to address a few more issues but you have cut me down in my tracks.

MR. SPEAKER: I have not cut you down in your tracks, Sir, you actually had extra time.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, you have always accommodated me and I appreciate it. With those few words, I support the measure and I hope that Honourable Members on the other side would at some time come into contact with what is before Parliament and that we would hear something other than the current ramblings of the other side.

Thank you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate for us to take the break at this stage and I recommend that his House be suspended until 1.15 p.m.

Sir, I want to repeat that instead of the usual hour break for lunch, we will only take 45 minutes today in order for us to accommodate all persons wishing to speak in this debate.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmation without division, and MR. SPEAKER, suspended the House accordingly.

12.29 p.m.

Sequence 77

Thursday, November 27, 2003

RESUMPTION

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

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely honoured to speak in this debate and to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Finance, the Right Honourable Prime Minister, for delivering what I consider to be one of

his finest Budgetary Proposals to date. I believe it has measures to move this country forward in a big way and to help redress some of the problems that exist in this society.

I want to take this opportunity to look carefully at what transpired over the last nine years in this country but before I do so, I must say to all Honourable Members that this is a Christian society and there is a time for everything under the sun. There is a time to be born and a time to die; a time to love; a time to shut up and a time to repent. I believe that the Democratic Labour Party should use this opportunity to repent of their wicked ways.

I want to thank the good people of St. George North who have continuously ensured that I have increased my majority from 1 000, in 1994, to over 2 000 in 1999 and 2003. I am sure after this term when the Barbados Labour Party is able to do the things that we have planned in St. George North, for example, repairing Salters Road and extending natural gas supply to Rowans Park, Flat Rock and Airy Hill and Belair, the people would again elect me to represent them.

Sir, we will also be doing a number of things during this term and I believe that the people of St. George deserve to benefit from these things. I want to congratulate the Ministry of Sports for erecting new lights at the Glebe pasture. I want to ensure that lights are installed at the James Bryan's Complex, as well as at Sheffield. I hope that the good Minister of Sports would also provide the pavilion at the Glebe that he has promised.

13.20 p.m.

Sequence 78

Thursday, November 27, 2003

1.20 p.m.

Hon. G.A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want to use the remainder of my speech to look at what has happened over the last ten years in this country, as well as to remind the Democratic Labour Party of what they have done between the period 1986 and 1994.

It seems to me that the Democratic Labour Party would not want us to remember. They would want to go back to 1961, some 40 years ago, when the Right Excellent Errol Barrow ruled this country but want us to forget the period of 1992.

I want to say that during the last nine years, we have witnessed, Mr. Speaker, economic growth; high employment and not unemployment; rapid housing development and infrastructural development throughout Barbados, especially in Bridgetown; and cultural

exposition, as we have never seen it before; high tourist arrivals and, indeed, a good economy of \$6 billion.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Democratic Labour Party does not understand our perspective. They keep asking us about the policy. We all come here and hear the Opposition telling us that they are the savers of the poor people, without a clear perspective. They cannot be, and they keep reminding us of the late Right Excellent Errol W. Barrow's legacy. They do not have a clear perspective. Each one of them got up in here and they have never said what they would do, if they were the Government of the day.

Whereas, Mr. Speaker, we have put the people first. We have established two commissions in the last nine years, the Rural Development Commission and Urban Development Commission, to address the imbalance in this society. The aims of those two commissions are really to stop poor people from being poor. We have seen to a number of house repairs. We still have a lot more houses to repair. We have seen street lights installed across this country. We have seen urban and rural enterprises created, yet, the Opposition would want to know where is the philosophy.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party criticised our EduTech Programme, and the people were right to dismiss them in May 2003. They criticised \$450 million Programme that speaks to the poor people of this country. Sir, that is why I say, there is a time for everything and the Democratic Labour Party must repent.

Sir, they talk about investment in human capital. Mr. Speaker, do you want a greater investment in human capital than allowing people, the young boys and girls in the schools, and in the street, as in the case with the community centres, to learn computer technology that so happens to permeate this world. I am saying that we must never forget what we have done.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would want us to forget the period, 1986 to 1994. I want to go through, systematically, why the Democratic Labour Party would want us to forget that period and I would explain.

In 1992 to 1993, Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party changed a tax system to the disadvantage of all Barbadians in this country, for example:

(A) An individual who was claiming five children up to 1992, could now claim only two children.

(B) Individuals who were claiming between \$750 and \$2 100 per annum, for children at schools or universities, could now only claim \$500 per child.

(C) The Democratic Labour Party administration, between 1986 and 1992, abolished claims for insurance premiums, so you could not claim those on your Income Tax.

(D) You could not claim medical expenses such as doctor bills or medication on your Income Tax.

(E) You could not claim NIS contribution, wages paid to gardeners, household help, interest on mortgage payments or repairs and improvement to homes on your Income Tax.

(F) If you were married, but your spouse was not working, you could claim \$750 before, they reduced it to nil.

(G) Personal allowances were dropped.

Sir, you will remember that it was carried by Dr. Haynes to \$15 000 in 1987. It was carried by a financial minister of that period to \$15 000 and it was reduced to \$13 000 by the Democratic Labour Party.

(H) In the reclassification of the civil service in this country in, \$35 million were given to a few top high end civil servants; supporters mainly of the Democratic Labour Party. When the economic crisis came, all the civil servants of this country had their salaries cut by 8 per cent.

(I) Workers had to pay their own severance.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying, again, that there is a time to repent by the Democratic Labour Party, and they want to know why is it that workers in this country, appear to be worse off. The answer lies in 1992/1993.

Mr. Speaker, in this connection, when the trade union movement leadership is saying that the workers need to catch up, it is that period we are talking about which has set back this country a great deal. I am advancing the argument, again, that it was the period 1986 and 1994 that has caused the workers of this country to have a great set back.

Sir, even though we have increased wages, and the lot of the people in this country, I am saying that it would take another 25 years for the workers of this country to come up to par, and it is because of the Democratic Labour Party.

I am saying that if they want to find out why, they must repent. The people of this country should not and will not entertain the Democratic Labour Party unless they come and repent and change their ways.

Mr. Speaker, could you imagine the Democratic Labour Party having the temerity to come in here and say that they have a good record in housing, but I encourage them to look at the facts. I just want to bring one item for the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

Mr. Speaker, the General Workers Loan Fund is earmarked for the poorest sector of this country. In eight years, the Democratic Labour Party only made 396 loans, totalling \$5 million, Sir, the number of people who got loans per parish is as follows: St. Michael, 156; 20, St. James; 15, St. Peter; 27, St. Lucy; 12, St. Andrew; 13, St. Joseph; 19, St. John; 56, St. Philip; 54, Christ Church; 23, St. George and one from St. Thomas. Sir, I will make this a document of the House.

House 13, sequence 79, 13:29:52

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, whereas, between 1994 and 2003 we lent \$44 187 000 to 2 641 poor people. Mr. Speaker, the number of people who got the loans per parish is follows: St. Michael, 1 218; St. James, 122; St. Peter, 82; St. Lucy, 47; St. Andrew, 144; St. Joseph, 41; St. John, 51; St. Philip, 305; Christ Church, 278; St. George, 268 and St. Thomas, 85. Mr. Speaker, we also lent a further \$10 million in \$5 000 loans, to 1 962 people who came in and got a loan within two days.

Mr. Speaker, I am advancing the argument that the period 1994 to today was a revolutionary period for housing in this country. I am further saying, Mr. Speaker, that we have used the parliamentary process to acquire land for the poor people of this country. I have said this before, and Honourable Members would see, that it takes two years to transfer land from purchase to development. We are now seeing a joint-venture programme for low income as well as middle income houses. The Democratic Labour Party forgot that we bought 19 acres of land at Lower Burney, St. Michael to provide 200 lots for the poor people of this country; the maids they talked about. We bought land at Cottage and Groves in St. George. We bought land at Jackmans in St. Michael to provide another 72 lots. In fact, we bought land all over this country to facilitate the poor people. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party have no record in housing, and this argument that the Barbados Labour Party has done nothing for housing must stop.

Mr. Speaker, you would recall that not only have we done all of that, but this Government passed the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, which they opposed. That is why I say it is time for the Democratic Labour Party to repent. When we came in here and brought the amendment to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, to give the people living in urban tenancies the land at \$2.50 a square foot, they

opposed it. Not only did they do that, Mr. Speaker, they then claimed it as their own.

Mr. Speaker, I have always made the point, because my conscience is clear, that the very first person I heard speaking about the \$2.50 per square foot of land was the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. She advanced that argument when I was Minister of Housing and Lands and we did it. We also created the opportunity where people could get homes at a six per cent mortgage interest rate on \$100 000 loans. We have done all of that, Mr. Speaker, yet the Democratic Labour Party is saying that we have not done anything.

Since 1994, householders are better off in this country. Allowance for a child was raised from \$500 to \$1 000. Pensioners 60 years and over had allowances for \$20 000, but that was raised to \$23 000 in 1996 and it was further raised to \$30 000, so pensioners are better off under the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, over the last eight years a number of things have been done in this country for the benefit of the poor, yet the members of the Democratic Labour Party would want us to believe that we have done very little. Mr. Speaker, the records have shown what we have done and therefore I would want the Opposition to note the facts.

Mr. Speaker, we came in here with a piece of legislation that future governments would never be able to cut the salaries of civil servants again and when one thought that the Opposition would have supported the Government, they voted against the legislation. That is why I am saying that the Democratic Labour Party must repent if they ever want to form the Government of this country. Mr. Speaker, how can a civil servant ever support a government that do not believe in increases of salaries. I have fundamentally made the point that the Democratic Labour Party believes that salaries can be cut.

We believe, and Government has shown, that it is better for us to borrow for capital infrastructure and to help create employment. The Democratic Labour Party will not borrow, but will send home thousands of workers. Mr. Speaker, we on this side believe in keeping employment, generating employment and putting people first. Mr. Speaker, we have a good Government that cares for everyone, not only the poor or the middle income earners.

The statement by the Honourable Prime Minister in which he is proposing to increase the subvention to the cultural sector is important. It would cause a renaissance in this country that we have never seen before and culture will take off. Mr. Speaker, we have seen what is happening in the musical industry. We have seen what is happening to the artists and the designers. The public must be able, Mr. Speaker, to walk hand in hand with this Government on

culture. It is one industry that can bring tremendous success and rewards to this country. We have seen it in this year's National Independence Festival of Creative Arts (NIFCA). We have seen what young people can produce. We have seen what the musicians have done at Crop Over over time. That is why there is a difference between this side and that side.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the officers of the Ministry of Public Works who have done yeomen service over the years. Mr. Speaker, we have a fine network of roads, but there is still room for improvement. There is a lot of work to be done over the next five years. We have a strong programme which we hope to put in place.

Our Prime Minister made the point that we must put in place a strong consumer charter in which the mission statement of the Ministry would be to help the consumer in every way by allowing people to know what is happening. Mr. Speaker, that is why the Honourable Prime Minister has said that the Town and Country Planning Development Office, the Government Electrical Department and the Licensing Authority, should all have a new mission statement so that they can respond to the needs of the people faster than they are doing now. We also want to have a strong mission statement at the depot level where the public would be able to know what is happening in their district.

Mr. Speaker, I have encouraged the officials of the Ministry to improve their relationship with the public in order to get local knowledge to see where any problems exist, especially with drainage and any problems we may have with the roads.

Mr. Speaker, even though we have a fine network of roads, we have some roads across the country that are in a very poor state. There are over 150 tenantry roads in this country still to be fixed. Mr. Speaker, over the next couple of years we will be looking at doing work on Hindsbury Road, Martindales Road, Bay Street and Salters on Highway 7. All of these must be done in the next year or so.

The sidewalk programme will continue because we recognise that there must be a separation between the traffic and the pedestrians.

House 13 Sequence 80

1.40 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, as one passes Hindsbury Road or Bank Hall, it is sometimes very difficult to walk without getting in the way of traffic or

vice versa, therefore, we have to provide opportunities for bus lay-bys. It is necessary for us to look at areas such as Hindsbury Road, Green Hill, Bay Street, Collymore Rock, et cetera, where there is a mass of confusion, especially in relation to traffic management.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the fact that there are more than 104 000 vehicles on our roads, it necessitates action and, therefore, during the next financial year, we are hoping to improve traffic management in this country.

We have talked about making some streets that were traditionally two-way streets, into one-way streets. We must try out something. We must have the park-and-ride system. There are a number of things that must be done over the next five years to improve the traffic management in this country.

I also want to say to this Honourable House that it is important for us to look at the drainage system between the Fairchild Street bus stand, up to the Globe Cinema. A team of workers have already been clearing the embankment but it is very important that part of the Careenage be redredged and we are hoping that in the next financial year, that could be done.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has spent a lot of money over the last five years. We have seen the amount of money that was spent on the Bridgetown Redevelopment Programme. By the end of this year that programme will come to an end. There would still be some remedial work which needs to be done but we are saying that it is a fine road, which would eliminate traffic from coming through Bridgetown. Traffic would go around Bridgetown on to Garrison Hill, and on to Highway 7. We are hoping that as soon as that is completed, Highway 7 up to Oistins would be started because we have seen how heavy the traffic is destroying that road and most roads in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we also need to put in place a new traffic law. We will be coming to Parliament very shortly for an amendment in order to control some of the problems that we now have on our roads.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say that in spite of the police department doing a very good job, we believe that more has to be done in order not only to protect this country but to keep it going forward.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party should point out what are some of the things they would want to see done in their constituencies and in this country. They must congratulate the Government for not marginalising the people but for, over the last eight years, providing opportunities to make people better off.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members of the Democratic Labour Party are criticising the boys on the 'block' programme and the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has asked the question, why is it that the Government has not conceptualised a programme. Sir, we have conceptualised this programme because we have recognised that over the last eight years, there is need to help the boys on the 'blocks.'

Mr. Speaker, over the last eight years we have done a lot of work. We have a Skills Training Programme at the Barbados Vocational Board; a Fatherhood Initiative Programme; a Mentorship programme and community investment programmes, et cetera. These are all things that we have done to assist the boys on the 'blocks.'

Mr. Speaker, the Government has now conceptualised another programme in order to help the boys on the 'blocks'. I believe that rather than criticising it, the Opposition should say they would want to encourage it and would want more money put into it in the next financial year in order to help the boys on the 'blocks.'

Mr. Speaker, we have recognised the problem. It does not stem from the lack of finances. I am advancing the argument that 18 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is spent on education. When the Democratic Labour Party formed the Government, it was only 16 per cent. We have now increased that by two points and, therefore, now more money is being spent on education.

Sir, we have seen the refurbishment of the schools. There are more trained teachers at both primary, secondary and tertiary levels. We have also revolutionised Erdiston Teacher's Training College and more is being done in education, more people are being trained than before.

The Honourable Member talked about 70 per cent of the schools' population that are coming out without certification. I personally do not want to believe that. I would want to see more attention being paid to the school system, to those boys who are coming out of secondary schools. Sir, Government has put the resources but more has to be done at both the primary level and secondary levels, to nurture and to improve the relationship between boys and girls.

Mr. Speaker, it is a fact that in the population, the under-25 age group are more male than females. I have checked and can confirm that but we have been doing and will continue to do a lot for that age group.

Mr. Speaker, I need to make the point that the Democratic Labour Party must repent of their ways, especially during that period. The period of 1986-1994, saw not only a decline in the morals of this country but also an elimination of a number of things, for example, poverty

and crime increased during that period. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party would want us to forget that period but we cannot because that period is the genesis of all the problems with which we are now confronted.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you, Sir.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also wish to thank the wonderful people of St. Thomas for having given me this privilege to represent their cause at the highest level.

Mr. Speaker, it is as a result of the policies and programmes of the Barbados Labour Party, from the late 1930s, 1940s and onwards, that ordinary persons like me are have been given the opportunity to have received education as well as to have climbed the ranks and to represent their interest. I am extremely and eternally grateful for the opportunity here today.

I too support the Financial and Economic Statement presented by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter on Tuesday and to say that it is a Budget with a difference. Barbadians, more often than not, tend to find it difficult to accept change but I am sure that when they delve into the substance of this Budget, they will be able to get a grasp of what it is about.

For many decades we have grown accustomed to be hearing about how much money was being added to or taken from gas; how road taxes have been increased; how bus fares have gone up and how much more taxes we might have to pay in a number of areas.

Mr. Speaker, this Budget is totally different. It says that our Leader, the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Honourable Member for the constituency of St. Peter, has the vision, which is lacking, when compared with that of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition's.

House No.13(81)1.40 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, we have been given the mandate by the people of Barbados and this is our third term. There was no easy way about it but the people of Barbados made up their minds they were "Goin' with Owen" because he and his team had the better package. The people bought into it, gave us the mandate and we will not betray the trust that has been given to us.

Mr. Speaker, the most I gathered from the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Michael

North West was a historical regurgitation of what the Democratic Labour Party did in the era of 1961 to 1976. I would like for that Honourable Member to be aware that the history of Barbados did not start with the Democratic Labour Party.

The history of Barbados started many years ago but if we wanted to become more current we could start looking at the 1930s, with the struggles and sufferings of the downtrodden, the poor people in Barbados when the Barbados Labour Party, under the astute leadership of the Right Excellent Grantley Adams sacrificed his life and resources to make sure that poor people in Barbados got a better opportunity to live and move on.

Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to some of the things done at that time, to help Barbadians to get a better understanding as to who care about their needs and who put systems in place to help them.

Mr. Speaker, I have to go back because sometimes you have to go back, take a full view of the picture and then come forward. I am not here to tear down because all our Honourable leaders over the last half century have made outstanding contributions to the growth and development of Barbados. However, there are areas I will identify so that Honourable Member on that side will understand that Mr. Barrow alone did not make Barbados, that other leaders before and since then and indeed, other leaders of the future will help to stabilise this country to make it the gem of the Caribbean and indeed the world. Sir, we will work together with our policies and programmes to make the difference.

Mr. Speaker, some of the things the Barbados Labour Party did were universal adult suffrage, the introduction of holiday with pay for workers and free secondary education. They first built Princess Margaret School, the St. Leonard's School and West St. Joseph. There was no Democratic Labour Party previous to 1961, so the Right Honourable Errol Barrow was a member of the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, Honourable Members on that side do not know the history about the Democratic Labour Party and from where they have come. Indeed, they know where they will go because they are self-destructing and a house divided against itself will not stand.

Sir, we will construct a new modern Bridgetown Port and we have enacted the Protection of Wages Act, constructed public housing units in St. Michael, Christ Church and St. Philip. The Democratic Labour Party had a foundation that was built by the Barbados Labour Party and they continued to build education and other social programmes to the benefit of thousands of Barbadians and themselves.

Mr. Speaker, I respect their leader the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow as an outstanding Barbadian, that is the reason why he is one of our heroes but he called the civil servants an army of occupation. Sir, he went to the by-election at Redman's Village in 1985 and low-rated the women of St. Thomas and I was disappointed that a leader would go into the gutter to criticise the women of St. Thomas and, indeed, any woman because we must respect our women.

Mr. Speaker, he fired two Senators under the street lights and he said he did not want to see a cane blade from Bridgetown to St. Lucy. He succeeded in making that statement come true because our sugar industry is dying today as a result of some of the policies of the Democratic Labour Party. Mr. Speaker, we will not put up with the double standards of the Honourable Members on the other side.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West yesterday said that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East wrecked the education system but he has forgotten that earlier this year he said there was no need for young people to have certification. Sir, he has a degree, his children get quality education but our young boys on the 'block' must feel that it is unimportant to be qualified or certified. Mr. Speaker, I do not agree with him because the Democratic Labour Party has a way of making Barbados into two.

Sir, the Barbados Workers Union motto says: "Where there is no vision the people perish." The Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow had vision and he shared it with the people of Barbados but if he came back together he would be disappointed with the magnificent seven because none of them have a vision that can make the difference in the lives of Barbadians in this early twenty-first century.

Sir, during the general elections there was much talk about dismantling EduTech but that would be a backward step in the lives of our people and perhaps that is why the young people did not vote for the Democratic Labour Party because technology empowers our people and put them on the cutting edge.

Mr. Speaker, I will not dwell too much on that. I will simply say shame to those on the Democratic Labour Party's side who supported them in not paying attention to certification, for wanting to dismantle EduTech and criticising the policies and programmes of the Government of Barbados when it comes to education when there have been tremendous reforms in this country.

Asides.

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I hear the Honourable Member for St. Philip West but I will deal with him on a political platform because I do not want to get personal in here. I want to get on with the business of fulfilling my role. The people of St. Thomas, who turned out in the thousands, put me here in this Parliament to look after their needs. Therefore, I am going to ignore the asides.

Mr. Speaker, it was hurtful yesterday to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West pay great attention to 1961 and 1976 but conveniently...

MR. SPEAKER: Order, order, please.

Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I will ignore the asides because the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has so much malcontent in his heart for living in St. Thomas that he has registered and voted for himself in St. Lucy. Sir, I will not pay him any attention because he is of no credit to me at this moment.

14.00 p.m.

Sequence 82

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE:

Asides.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, 1976 to 1986 was the period that the Barbados Labour Party became the Government of this country so there was relief for thousands of Barbadians. There was no self-deserving effort coming from us, it came from the Democratic Labour Party. That is how we won the Government, because the then Honourable Member for St. Andrew had built houses in St. Andrew and he did whatever he liked with them because there was nobody to monitor what was happening. Sir, we are hearing about squandermania but we have met and talked about that at another forum.

Sir, let me speak about the achievements during the period 1976 and 1986. Mr. Speaker, I want to refer to the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. My mother cried when she had lost her small property which she was renting from Sturges Plantation. If she had known that, we would have been able to access that property at ten cents per square foot but somebody else has benefitted from that and I am happy.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen better employment opportunities. We have seen bus drivers, police officers, inspectors and managers in businesses come to the fore under the Barbados Labour Party's period, Sir, we now

have persons purchasing properties at ten cents per square foot under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act and improving their standard of living. The residents of Hope Well, Forty Acres and Cane Field have all the roads they wanted for a long time and the people in the north of the island have finally got some assistance because the Democratic Labour Party had deliberately left them out of getting a piece of the pie during its term in office.

Asides.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, there are better employment opportunities for women. We are now seeing more women driving buses, female police officers, inspectors and managers in businesses than under the Democratic Labour Party's administration.

Asides.

Hon. C.Y. FORDE: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has failed to mention the periods 1986 to 1994. During that period salaries were cut, including mine. The Honourable Member for Christ Church Central knows that he shut me up for talking and the only thing that he did not do was to tape my mouth when he was the President of the Barbados Teachers Union. I knew what his intentions were and I dealt with them to suit but, unfortunately, I was only one lonely voice crying in the wilderness.

Asides.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: Sir, more than 3 000 people were sent home and that is where the genesis of the many problems we have with our youth on the 'block' and some of the people that are now unemployed arose. Many people lost their jobs but thank God, in 1994, the people of Barbados said enough is enough, including the leader of CTUSAB and the other unions. The leader of CTUSAB said that nothing new nor elaborate has happened between 1991 and 2003 but yet he is driving a BMW vehicle.

Sir, an Honourable Member on the other side spoke in here a few weeks ago and pompasettled about his mother being able to buy a property at Kingsland under the Barbados Labour Party's administration, however, we keep speaking with different voices but the people of Barbados are not fools. The people have their heads on and would do what they have to, by voting for the Barbados Labour Party the next time around.

Asides.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I do not know how the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West could have spoken so eloquently about what the leader of CTUSAB said and did but we also know of his

intentions too because he spoke on the political platform during the election campaign. I was very disappointed when leader of CTUSAB went on a political platform after being elevated to such a high level. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that these are good times for us in Barbados. There are other countries in the world that are reeling under the pressure of violence, crime, poor economic management or from a lack of resources in every sphere in Barbados. We have it good and some of us do not know how to appreciate it.

Sir, neither bus fares nor road tax have been raised during the period 1994 to 2003. The cost of a new passport is still \$50 and the National Housing Corporation has not raised the rents on their units. Our people are enjoying a better life. We have the HIV/AIDS, Commission, a novel idea that has now caught on in the rest of the world. Sir, not even the United States of America was able to pursue a policy and programme such as ours in HIV/AIDS yet we are hearing that nothing has happened in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, casual workers are now a thing of the past. The Barbados Labour Party's Government has made a conscious decision that casual workers will now become permanent employees and where people now have security of tenure. They could now buy houses or could go to the Embassy of the United States of America to acquire visas yet we are still hearing that nothing unique has happened in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, schools have been refurbished under the Barbados Labour Party's administration and teachers have proper toilet facilities. Unfortunately, we cannot carry out the refurbishment as rapidly as we would have liked because of funding and the poor structure of some of these schools. However, it is our intention to continue the fight because the teachers, ancillary staff, and students are all Barbadians and we have vowed that no one would be left behind under this Barbados Labour Party administration.

Sir, again I want to refer to the Budget and to say that the folks in St. Thomas, like the rest of Barbados, are happy today that they do not have to worry about additional increases that would have come in the Budget. The land use policy that is to be instituted in agriculture is an excellent idea. There are some plantations in St. Thomas that have been taken out of sugar cane production but some of the owners are looking at the idea of turning them into polo fields, growing grass for the beef industry, and to diversify into agriculture. However, there are still some lands that are left idle.

Sir, I am happy that the Government has decided to give price support to independent cane growers in order to help them to develop a further interest in agriculture. I want to say that we still have a lot of experienced labourers living in rural communities who could give technical

advice to some land owners. I support the growing of Khus Khus grass along the hedge rows in Barbados because Khus Khus grass helps to hold up the top soil around the hedges. The mechanisation of the industry has caused a lot of the top soil to be washed away into the river and sea.

Mr. Speaker, measures have been put in place to sustain the pork industry. I love 'proper pork' and I am sure that the folks in St. Thomas at W.B. Farms, located at Ashford/Holy Innocent, those at Reece Road and other areas are extremely overwhelmed to hear of this initiative by this Government.

Mr. Speaker, small farmers are also happy about these incentives. I would encourage more Barbadians to become more self-reliant with regards to cultivating their own plot of land because that is a good way to supplement one's income. Sir, as children growing up, our parents planted kitchen gardens and the income from those crops have helped to support families. I am sure that by cultivating small plots of land would help reduce Barbados' \$300 million import bill.

Sir, I would like to see more fruit trees being planted to ensure that we have a sustainable agricultural industry. Farmers can purchase duty free refrigerated trucks to transport the carcasses of animals and I encourage them to pool their ideas.

14.10 p.m.

Sequence 83

Thursday, November 27, 2003

2.10 p.m.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East speak to a project called, "kick-start". I have never heard of it before, Sir, I heard about kick boxing. I wish to mention the Block Committee and the Government's initiative in ensuring that the boys on the 'block' get opportunities to further their education and to make proper use of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, that Block Committee was born out of the Youth Affairs Department, less than three years ago when the youths in St. John were rivaling each other and one young was killed. I think the Honourable Member for St. James Central would have worked on that case.

Mr. Speaker, the real point I want to make is that when the Youth Affairs learnt of the rivalry the Director, Mr. Richard Carter and a small committee from the Youth Affairs Department went to St. John to talk to the group and helped to settle those young people. I am sure, Mr.

Speaker, you would not mind me calling their name because this is the initiative from the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports they were:

Mr. Marcus Stevens

Mr. Charles Griffith, Chairperson

Mr. Shawn Brook.

Mr. Speaker, the youth from Clifton Hall and the youth from Chalky Mount were fighting and stabbing and each other, and all sorts of confrontation. Again, representatives from the Youth Affairs Department went there and it was out of settling certain confrontations, that they arrived at meaningful things that these young people indicated that they wanted to do to empower them, I would say.

Mr. Speaker, that intervention has made a tremendous difference. Today, I can thank this Government of Barbados for the allocation for the Oasis Project, where the youth, not only in St. Thomas, St. Philip West, St. James Central and St. Michael North West, but indeed the whole of Barbados would get opportunities. As I speak to you, Mr. Speaker, the youth in Chalky Mount, that were rivaling and those in Proute and Clifton Hill have started to work a two-acre plot of land over the past 18 months. As a result of this, Chalky Mount is now as quiet as a lamb.

Mr. Speaker, they have now been allocated an additional half of an acre because they are expanding and more people are coming on board, including those who are not on the block. They are also doing leather craft.

Mr. Speaker, the youth at Ellerton, St. George are doing an agricultural project. The youth of Crab Hill, St. Lucy are getting involved in leather craft. Station Hill is forming a youth group and they are working towards sports. Grazettes has come up with the concept of a play park and they have already acquired the land and started the clean-up process.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend the Government for giving these young people a further opportunity to show their worth. The boys on the 'block', and they are now joined by young women, are talented young people, who are not attached to any community group or association, who have excellent skills that need to be tapped. Therefore, the \$1 million that the Government is putting into their care would help them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we know of a time in Barbados when our 14-year-olds were sent home from secondary school, under the Democratic Labour Party. The Honourable Member for St. George South as Minister of

Education, was able to get them back into school. We are talking about the boys on the 'block'.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John in his Budgetary presentation on March 28, 1994, did not speak any differently from the others over there. They did not do anything to address the needs of those young people, when he said and I quote from page 83, it is already a document in this House:

"I left university and started my first full time job over eight years ago, and for me therefore it is very painful to go to a shop and drive pass a street corner, and see young unemployed persons caught up in lifestyles which seem to lack purpose and direction, and which bristle with danger and destruction. Some of them left school with me and are still lacking a stable job."

Mr. Speaker, that was his favourite lunch money and bus fare speech, but today this great Barbados Labour Party has ensured that there is funding in place for mentorship programmes.

Mr. Speaker, I want to laud the efforts of the Ministry of Education for the Alma Parris School.

Asides.

Hon. Miss C.Y. FORDE: The Democratic Labour Party did not have the vision to keep Erdiston open. Erdiston is now taking in people in large numbers offering all kinds of programmes to upgrade teachers' skills, to train and retrain them. We will continue to do it because we believe that Barbados should always be on the cutting edge.

Mr. Speaker, the Alma Parris school has a School-to-Work programme, and the young people go to different institutions on a day release basis. Two of them were working at Greenland in the area of agriculture on a one day release, and they are now employed. Young people want to get involved in agriculture. We must not continue to stigmatise agriculture. It is the bedrock of our existence in this country and indeed, Mr. Speaker, in any other country.

Mr. Speaker, this Government must be lauded for the community resource centres as well. As I speak to you, the children at Sharon Primary, this is going on two years now that they have their laptops.

I thank the Government for the community resource centres, through the Ministry of Social Transformation, for the Bridgefield location, on the outskirts of Cane Garden. Mr. Speaker, that will help the parents from Sharon, and Bridgefield, Shop Hill, Hope Well, Cane Garden and the other communities to get an opportunity to access the

training, so that they can help their children with homework.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I conclude by thanking this Government for the initiatives it has set, not only now in this Budget but, indeed, from 1994 through the Youth Affairs Department and the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES). We now have YES Junior, young people in school being involved in activities that prepare them for what we call the cooperative society experience.

We have the CHECKS Programme, stilt-walking, Land Ship and tuk-band. We have the Youth Achieving Results Programme, where young people who are unattached are getting involved in music, voice training, art, sculpting and things of that nature.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy and I want to express openly, my admiration for the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and Prime Minister and, indeed, this group of individuals on this side who continue to have the vision for carrying Barbados forward in the 21st Century.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I wish to encourage other Honourable Members on the Other Side. It is always good to listen, observe and learn. Do not open your mouths and talk because you feel like and want to be heard, but search deeply to ensure that there is substance in what you have to say, and then go forward.

I am sure, Sir, that it would be a good learning lesson for the new Honourable Members on that side in this Sitting, and I trust that in the future, they would become ambassadors for the constituencies that they represent, as we, on this side are in this Barbados Labour Party.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members before the next speaker rises, I must deal with a matter here of much urgency. I have asked the television cameras not to televise this, and also the radio station, not to broadcast this.

PLEASE NOTE THAT AT THIS POINT THE RADIO
BROADCAST AND TELEVISION TAPING WERE
DISCONTINUED.

House 13, sequence 84, 14:20:14

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. SPEAKER: Earlier this morning I had occasion to speak to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central after a certain statement had been made. This is the second time I have had to speak to this Honourable Member about certain behaviours. The statement made was this:

"This is a God-fearing, society, Mr. Speaker, and I will not be part of any Parliament that will come and say that we are going to decriminalise homosexuality, buggery and prostitution. I am not part of that and that is how I stand on it."

I believe that as Speaker of this House I have a duty not only to this Parliament but to the whole of Barbados. Therefore, I suggested that that statement could be misinterpreted as if that matter is before the House. I also suggested that that matter is not before the House. Other Honourable Members have alluded to the same matter and pressed on.

The Honourable Member on taking his seat once again behaved - I do not know how I should describe that behaviour - in a manner that I would say is not the kind of behaviour that we would expect from this Parliament. He took his bag and left, making his statements. At lunch time the Honourable Member came to my office to make certain statements. I believe that in my job here as Speaker, I cannot be subjected... There is no Speaker who can be subjected to those kinds of comments by Honourable Members if not the whole issue of democracy would break down completely. I make mistakes sometimes and I am very quick to admit when I make mistakes. On this one I stand by my judgement. Anyhow, I said not a word to the Honourable Member while he was making his statements. As I left my office, I was described in a certain way which I would not like to use the words. I went downstairs to take my lunch and once again I was subjected... and I believe the other comments Honourable Members heard were directed toward me, including certain things that I had stolen.

I do not believe that this House should really sink to this kind of behaviour. I have the rules here before me and I think that this House must never degenerate into that. This is the second time this has happened. Honourable Members will remember that I had to warn this Honourable Member before when an allegation was made that I had cut his time when he was given the same 30 minutes that other Honourable Members had been given. I will not put up with that kind of behaviour from anybody and I am asking the Honourable Member to apologise to me and to this House, and I am asking him to do it now. I have before me Standing Order 40, which I have all the power to invoke.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, let us finish this matter now, please.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: At the end of my presentation this morning, I guess I behaved in a manner toward you the Chair that was not becoming. I guess it was out of exuberance and a desire to represent my constituents speaking on behalf of this Budget and to you and Honourable Members of this Chamber, I apologise.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: Accepted. The matter is now closed, please. We will now continue with our debate please, and would the members of the media and the television stations continue, please. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, it certainly gives me great pleasure to speak once again as the parliamentary representative for St. Andrew in this Budget debate. Unlike, the previous speaker, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that there are certain goals I set myself when I was first elected to represent the constituency of St. Andrew. Notwithstanding the fact that like in most things there are always certain bumps and road blocks in the way, I believe that I am well on my way to those goals and barring ill health, I will be around for a very long time to represent the constituents of St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, I must take issue at the beginning of my presentation with certain comments which were made relative to the fact that this budget is an empty budget and that the interest in this budget has not been like what it was in the past. We have developed a certain attitude in this country that when there is something negative, we all like to jump on the bandwagon and we all like to know that we see it displayed here, there and everywhere. In that respect, it is rather unfortunate that the Nation Newspaper saw it fit not to carry the presentation of the Minister of the Finance in its entirety as a public service.

Mr. Speaker, I said this because when I first came to these Chambers there was a certain excitement in these presentations, simply because we were ushered into periods of doom and gloom, which is no longer the case. It is unfortunate that because we are no longer in those days, that persons who should know better could characterise these presentations including the reply by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in that light. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that if all 30 of us in here, the 23 of us over here and the seven over there, had to give a presentation in these present times, we would all give a different presentation. The budget of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition if he were in Government would not necessarily be the same budget as the Minister of the Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Peter. That does not necessarily means that the Minister of the Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, is empty in his presentation, because I do recall hearing the word fluff being used, and that such a presentation could be designated in that light.

I believe that we should be responsible as Members of Parliament when we are making these presentations in making those kinds of statements because at some point in time we ourselves will be judged. We must remember that 10, 20 or 50 years down the road none of us would be in here and what we say here, we would be judged on at some

particular point in the future. As I said, Mr. Speaker, if all of us had to make a presentation, it is fairly obvious that we would not necessarily make the same presentation as the Honourable Member for St. Peter.

House 13 Sequence 85

2.30 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, there are certain segments of these financial measures that I have some difficulty with, as any other Honourable Member would, but when the Financial Presentation is taken in its entirety, one must commend the Minister of Finance for placing us in the position where a budget of this nature could be presented.

Mr. Speaker, I said I have certain concerns with respect to certain matters raised in the Budget and I want to deal with a few issues with respect to those areas with which I have difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, both as an Honourable Member of Cabinet and out of Cabinet, I have been an advocate of the property transfer tax. The property transfer tax is like a joke, for example, there are 30 of us Honourable Members in this room and if the first person is given a joke to pass onto the next person, when it gets to the end of the line, that person would have gotten something completely different. This is exactly what has happened to the property transfer tax over the years.

At the time of the presentation of the Budget, I think it was in 1969 by Mr. Errol Barrow, now the Right Excellent Errol Barrow, our primary concern in the Caribbean were about foreigners coming to these shores, taking up all of our valuable properties and pushing their prices up. Barbados, as I have said in the past, did not go the way of other territories in the Caribbean. We did not go the way of bringing to Parliament certain legislation which would have stopped foreigners from owning land in Barbados. We did it the other way around. The property transfer tax was more in the form of a penalty or could have been construed as a penalty but when one looked at it, both the vendor and the purchaser at the time of that legislation, were still liable to the payment of the property transfer tax. A person was exempted at the time for payment of property transfer tax if that person was a purchaser of property and a citizen of this country.

Sir, what has happened over the years is that the property transfer tax has developed into a taxation matter. If one notes what has happened on the last occasion it was amended, it was very unfortunate because there was then a change in its focus. At the time when we were talking

about alien landholdings and foreigners owing property in Barbados, we had a situation where the purchasers of properties were being penalised, having to pay property transfer tax and at that time, the property transfer tax for non-national was as high as 8 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, what we did, we abolished the property transfer tax for those persons and we penalised the citizens of Barbados to the tune of 10 per cent. We doubled the price that citizens of this country paid for land when they sold it, and that was wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad we have realised that it was wrong and if ever a case was made out for the abolition of the property transfer tax, it is in this Budgetary Presentation. Here the Minister of Finance is telling us that he has realised that it was wrong. It matters not whether it has been reduced by 2.5 per cent, 5 per cent, or abolished altogether with respect to vendors, the fact remains that the Right Honourable Prime Minister has realised that it was wrong and it had the effect of sending prices up.

I am hoping that this would be the last occasion when we would be talking about property transfer tax in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals. Mr. Speaker, property transfer tax is exempted on leases, except for those up to 25 years.

Mr. Speaker, I am a practitioner and have been dealing with this area practically all of my working life. I believe that on one hand I could count the amount of transactions that are dealt with in this country, with respect to leases for over 25 years. What does that tell us? It tells us that unwittingly successive ministers of finance, have been pandering to certain interest groups in this country. Whenever there is a big transaction, or whenever there is something relating to their particular problem, they would come to the minister of finance, and the minister of finance would be hoodwinked into bringing certain proposals to this Parliament and making that the law of this country. That is wrong, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that the time has come for us to look at the property transfer tax in its entirety. If we are to proceed, if the Minister of Finance finds it difficult to abolish property transfer tax, if there could be no alternative revenue collecting measure, then the Attorney-General, the members of staff in the Office of the Attorney-General's and the practitioners dealing in this particular area, through the Barbados Bar Association, must sit and must come up with some type of legislation, rather than these ad hoc measures which serve no purpose and which do not reach the 'little man' in the street.

Mr. Speaker, I believe there are three small areas which we could look at if we are going to continue with this Property Transfer Tax Act. I am looking at it, not

necessarily from the perspective of those interest groups but merely as a practitioner. This legislation has brought certain hardship, certainly in the case where there is an individual who wants to transfer his property to a company in which he owns all of the shares. In a situation where someone has property that is worth \$1 million and goes to the bank to borrow \$100 000, the bank insists that the property must be transferred to a company that is operating the business. Sir, the transfer takes place. Do you know what happens? What happens is that, except with that \$125 000 exemption, that person then has to pay 10 per cent property transfer tax on that transaction, which is even more than what is being borrowed.

I believe if we are to continue with this legislation, that is one of the provisions which has wrecked hardship in this particular area and that is one of the points I would like the Minister of Finance and the Attorney-General to look at, if this legislation is to be a reality in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the second area is the situation where there is a transfer by a personal representative, either in relation to a person who has died, having made a will, or one who has died intestate. Mr. Speaker, sometimes it happens that a person might make certain testamentary dispositions to children. The Act quite rightly exempts from property transfer tax, the transfer to those particular individuals. For example, there might be the occasion where there might be ten children and a number of them might have been more fortunate than the others, where one child might have decided to give his share to his younger brother.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the fact that the Act makes provision for exemption, I believe that is something the drafters missed, despite the fact that person's share is given to John, that property might be located in the area where the value has gone up and would mean that person would still have to pay property transfer tax on that transaction, and that is hardship.

House No.13(86)2.30 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. G.W. PAYNE: I am saying that if we are to continue with these provisions, an amendment to the property transfer tax should reflect not only the case where some other person who is mentioned in the will as a beneficiary is being allowed to take a share of another person but also in situations where a person is entitled under that will or where on intestacy is being asked to take the share of another person.

Mr. Speaker, I am dealing with the situations where a particular individual would like the property to go in the name of a specific person. As a practitioner, on a weekly

basis I get transactions of this nature and some times these matters hang for years and the transfer is not done because the parties cannot pay the property transfer tax.

Mr. Speaker, exemption in case of a building should also be looked at. In the last budgetary proposal the exemption was moved from \$25 000 to \$125 000 but it did not go far enough. Mr. Speaker, I purchased my property in 1978 at \$1.35 per square but land in that area is now being sold between \$15 to \$20 per square foot, almost fifteen to twenty times the price I paid for it in 1978. The property transfer tax came into being in 1969 and at that time the exemption from this tax in the case of a building was \$25 000 which could have given you a wall house with the land then. I am not calling for the exemption to be multiplied 15 or 20 times because the values have gone up but we must cater to the average person who wants to buy a house.

If you build a house of the type that I spoke about in 1969, there is no way that you can build it now under \$500 000. The exemption needs to be raised so that the ordinary Barbadian will not be burdened by the payment of property transfer tax. Sir, I am calling for its abolition.

Mr. Speaker, I am glad that in these provisions, mention has been made for a cap to the land tax but it does not go far enough. There was a time when the site value was negligible and if we are to bring some sort of fairness to the payment of land tax we cannot simply cap it because that is not enough.

I believe that in dealing with land tax we must take into consideration the previous site value. When you revalue every three years, the site value does not exceed a certain limit and what happens is that you have been living on land for a long time and people buy the land next to you, make a lot of improvements and then you have to paid very high taxes. I have seen a tax bill where someone paid \$5 000 in land tax having paid \$200 the previous year.

Mr. Speaker, capping the land tax would not solve the problem but we should set a limit over how much it can increase over the three-year period. It should not exceed more than 10 per cent of the amount it was at the last valuation or the value of the land in the case of a gift.

Mr. Speaker, in transfers under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, the value of the land should be exempted from these provisions. I notice that we have been asking people in units to purchase them but what is the sense if a person is paying a certain amount of money for his unit and is now being asked to pay another price for it and when he pays the price, it would be the same as if he were paying rent. Sir, it does not make sense.

We have to look at certain special cases even if we have to put a ten-year period whereby the new purchases

could be exempted from the payment or the payment could reflect the real value of the property at the time. Mr. Speaker, those are the two areas in respect of taxation matters that I would like Government to look at.

Mr. Speaker, I presided over the Ministry of Housing between 1994 and 1999 and I am concerned that with respect to housing and lands in the constituency of St. Andrew and this country that we have acquired land for certain purposes. Sir, if you try to make certain distinguishing judgements on the Land Acquisition Act, you would be in breach of the Act, notwithstanding, the fact that the main purpose has been achieved.

Sir, if I came to Parliament and say that we are acquiring land for low income housing, for people in the village on the periphery of the existing settlement, what the Minister of Housing said would have been reported in Hansard and it would have been supported by Cabinet that the Minister is acquiring land for people plague by natural disasters. We cannot come years after and tell those same people who were told that the land would be sold at a certain price that they would now be charged \$10 per square foot for the same land.

14.50 p.m.

Sequence 87

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. G.W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, that pains me because one of the main purposes of our acquisitions between 1994 to 1999 was to acquire land for poor people. When I came to Parliament as Minister of Housing. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy likes to refer to these people as poor people, low income people.

We have to be careful when we try to pander to middle income and by extension the middle class in this country. When we started the programme for low income houses, there were a number of people who wanted to know what about the middle income group. Sir, you could only satisfy the middle income group after you have done what you have to do for the lower income group.

Mr. Speaker, what we are doing is creating a big division between the rich and poor in this country, as happened in South America. One only has to travel the length and breadth of South America, Venezuela and Argentina and one could see the difference between the rich and the poor.

Sir, I remember when I was Minister of Housing, we were doing a housing project and we were talking about giving people a shell with all the facilities while the people in Jamaica were still talking about pit toilets. We should be

glad that we have that division: the low income, middle income and whatever we call the other group. I am not saying that one should not pander to the middle income but that there should be another programme for them. Let us not utilise the same programme that there is for the low income people and pander to the middle income like that.

Mr. Speaker, I do feel proud when a person in my constituency, for example, as a maid, could come and tell me, "Mr. Payne, I am glad that I got one of those houses at Apes Hill." I would feel good about that but that is a thing of the past.

I do not know if the Minister of Housing knows exactly what is going on in the Ministry of Housing. A few weeks ago I received an invitation to attend the opening of a housing project in Dean Town. A few weeks before that, I got a letter from a deputy general manager, who shall remain nameless, telling me that the price of land was \$10 per square foot. Mr. Speaker, I was furious, and when I get furious I react. I made it very clear that I would not be attending the opening because I do not want to be associated with that. It so happened that particular opening never came about. Sir, that opening might have never come about but the fact remains that the project might still come to fruition and a number of persons who were earmarked for houses in that area would no longer be entitled to do so. Sir, the people who came from that area, their children and their children's children, realising that the facilities were not there and saw it as an opportunity to go back but they cannot because of the high price of the land.

Mr. Speaker, we have a serious problem in this country. We feel that there are only certain people who are entitled to certain things. Sir, the facilities at Dean Town are not associated with the middle income groups but it was in one of the areas that, in terms of view, has one of the best views. I do not believe that the Minister of Housing knows what is going on in the National Housing Corporation. The people at the National Housing Corporation realised that this beautiful view was not suitable for low income people. I know the area well because my mother was born in that area.

Mr. Speaker, the contradictory part that hurts me, is that when the Ministry of Housing sent out letters offering the people the amount of money for the land, people were paying between \$1 and \$100 in land taxes and yet, the National Housing Corporation could now see it fit to sell that land for \$10 per square foot.

I want to close with a caution to the Government, with respect to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. It is commendable for the Government to plan the development of the economy, free of the constraints traditionally imposed upon us by the size of our market population and land area. However, we have to be careful

that we are not branded as being consumed by our own ego in pushing a movement simply because we see it as a lasting legacy to the people of Barbados in particular, and the Caribbean region as a whole.

Sir, the European Common Market did not evolve overnight but came to fruition after years of planning, struggles, setbacks, bumps and more planning. The process of education, debate, planning and refining the formula to deal with the complex problems and differences in attitudes in the region must continue. Deadlines must be used as a mechanism, not only to stir the countries of the region into action but to test the seriousness and the preparedness of the peoples of the region of which the political directorate is part of the change. It is only then that the region as a whole would be Caribbean Single Market and Economy ready. It is for this reason that I prefer the term Caribbean Single Market and Economy prepared for the process that we are undertaking.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Nr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to rise in this Debate to speak on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party but it is especially a pleasure to speak after hearing the case for the Democratic Labour Party so eloquently put by one of the senior members of the Parliamentary team for the Government. It was so well put that all I say is 'hear hear!' All that we were saying about the cost of land, we have now heard from the Honourable Member about interest groups pandering to the Minister of Finance and, indeed, what we were saying about property transfer tax, sometimes to the point where we were accused of being repetitive, we have now heard from the Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, I do not propose to go any further into that but I would make the following observation on the issue of property transfer tax. I note that the reductions are effective April 1, 2004, which is a little baffling because obviously persons who have transactions to make would delay closing until after that date in order to enjoy the reduction. Naturally, that would have a ripple effect in one of our leading sector, the construction sector, because if the conveyancing is not completed then the mortgage, renovation or construction would be delayed.

Sir, that is just another observation and I warmly embrace the sentiments from the previous speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

I also wish to make the following observation.

8.15 p.m.

Sequence 88

Thursday, November 27, 2003

3.00 p.m.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, like most of the Honourable Members in here, I have followed this event over the years, as it was the only debate that was televised. I cannot say that in those early days, I anticipated making a contribution to such a debate but I certainly never anticipated that if that opportunity was granted to me that I would be approaching Parliament building, draped in Independence bunting and with yellow and blue banner, in the middle of Independence, at the end of November, eight months into the Government's financial year.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to submit that this exercise should take place closer to the beginning of the financial year where it has, historically, always been held. There was good reason for that. Errol Walton Barrow did it and Tom Adams maintained it. For that matter, Erskine Sandiford, and Sir Harold St. John who did not have a very long time, but all of the previous Ministers of Finance recognised the merit in discussing the economic policies, as they pertain to taxation proposals, et cetera, close to the Estimates Debate.

Mr. Speaker, it has worked well for us. No Chancellor of the Exchequer in Great Britain could bring any Budget in November. I noticed this exercise has taken place since 1997, after the windfall from the VAT. I am not interested in hearing about mini-budgets and fireside chats. That is one matter but I am talking about the Budget exercise.

I am suggesting that having a windfall of taxes, if anything, you should be more anxious to hold that exercise close to the beginning of the year, because you would want to tell the people exactly what you are going to do with all this extra money.

Mr. Speaker, I just thought I would make those points about my personal feelings, on the way in which the Parliament calendar is being fiddled with, by this Government.

Mr. Speaker, I stand here as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. The people of St. Michael South Central have always held their representatives to very high standards. The area that makes up St. Michael South Central has been called other things before, such as North Central, but it has always sent representatives to this Chamber, expecting the very best from them, particularly in exercises like this, the Budget Speech. By and large, they have been successful in having serious representatives.

I make a straight call for the Budget to resume its place back in the Parliament agenda. While I am on that subject, permit me this opportunity to thank those wonderful people for giving me the opportunity to represent their interest in this Chamber. They have my word that I will maintain those high standards they have always set, coming down the line, and nothing or no one will stand between me and my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, we had a three and a half hour presentation in here on Tuesday evening that contained very little to improve the quality of life for the average Barbadian. Indeed, the only new initiative is this Project OASIS. I heard an Honourable Members say that she does not know about "kick-start" she knows about kick boxing, but as far as I know, Oasis is a bar in Bridgetown.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot look at a young man in St. Michael South Central, 'on the block' because this is a new phrase that has entered the lexicon of many of these people and tell him that all the Government is going to do is to put \$1 million into some obscure programme named Oasis.

Mr. Speaker, we heard that the Bank had \$2 billion in foreign reserves. There are existing programmes that obviously need to be properly financed and managed and this is where they should be focusing. Where are we going with this project, Oasis? We note as well, Mr. Speaker, that we are going to have the created economy.

I would say is that we have to review the idea of having no new taxes in this Budget because I recall when we were told that there was a secret tax on petrol, a year and a half ago, to finance cultural initiatives in this country, so you do not need to bring any new taxes because you have been over taxing all along. In the case of the created economy, you have already announced taxation to finance those efforts, so there is really very little contained in this document. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, a lot of it we heard already. In fact it would not be wrong for me to describe the document as largely vacuous.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to have responsibility for business development. There are some trends taking place in this country, which I have to speak on because, naturally, they would impact on the lives of all Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West in that gem of a presentation yesterday, gave some historical analysis to our present situation. It was a very effective analysis, sector by sector of how the economy is doing. Then, of course, he hinged that framework into suggestions for the future, anchoring it in a philosophy and an ideology. This is something that I think he should be lauded and congratulated for, because it was a wonderful presentation.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that so many businesses that were owned by non traditional Barbadians have evaporated, is a source of great concern, not only for me personally, but for the Democratic Labour Party. It would be bad if we were seeing the absence of the BudgBuys and the Julie'Ns and the Sam Lords in a vacuum. Actually, Mr. Speaker, we are seeing it at a time when big businesses, the conglomerates, are growing stronger and large insurance companies and banks are amassing economic power in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we have conglomerates from even other parts of the region, swarming around Barbados like hogs around a trough, trying to get their hands on as much of the agents of profit that they can get in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Government of Barbados needs to have a clear programme in place to assist emerging entrepreneurs. It was rather puzzling to hear the Honourable Member for St. Peter talk about putting the Enterprise Growth Fund and the Micro Enterprise Fund back together again.

Mr. Speaker, it was with great pride that he announced that BDB was going to be split up like Sach Moore said: "Archie, 'brek dem' up". BDB was put into Collections and Recoveries Limited, Hotel and Resorts Limited, of much fame now of course, and the Enterprise Growth Fund and Fund Access. The performance of these entities has hardly been that encouraging, Sir, when we look at the development of entrepreneurship in our country. It is shocking to hear now that he has come to the realisation that it was a mistake, years down the road, and we now have to reverse that effort.

Mr. Speaker, not only should the Enterprise Growth Fund and Fund Access be put into an entity, as was called for in that wonderful presentation by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, but we need a national development bank for all of those lending entities to work together, so that businesses can be developed at the embryonic stage through to the adolescent stage until they become powerhouses in Barbados.

House 13, sequence 89, 3:25:14

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. R. L. SEALY: It is about spreading opportunity for all especially those who were previously dispossessed. It simply does not make sense having Fund Access, the Enterprise Growth Fund, the Small Business Venture Capital Incorporated, the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission doing the same thing in terms of lending money. Mr. Speaker, the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission cannot focus effectively on the needs of the

small business persons because their mandate is so wide and varied. I know Cabinet has tried its best to deal with that because they are no longer cutting trees anymore in the Urban Development Commission. I also know that the Prime Minister announced a few months ago at an event at the Alexandra School that the tree cutting incident caused him to have to review the issue of governance in Government institutions. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no need to review governance in our institutions. The case of the tree with the Urban Development Commission is quite simple. As the Prime Minister said in here, 'tiefing is tiefing'. Mr. Speaker, the Urban Development Commission is in a mess and it needs to be reviewed, but enough said on that.

Mr. Speaker, the right environment for business smacks at our trading environment. Government has to be sincere in creating this environment. It is with this in mind that I turn to the Fair Trading Commission. It has been promised that the Fair Trading Commission will manage the Fair Competition Act, which would therefore give Barbadians generally, an opportunity to take cases to the public counsel if they feel they are being unfairly treated. Mr. Speaker, the Fair Trading Commission based on its present performance right now does not really give us much encouragement.

I listened to the comments of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, unfortunately, he is not in his seat now. The current debate with Cable and Wireless and the struggle the Fair Trading Commission is having in dealing with Cable and Wireless is directly related to Government's policy toward Cable and Wireless. The Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Cable and Wireless out of which a Green Paper was produced which says, I have it here, it is already a document of the House, that Government will require the Fair Trading Commission to exercise the minimum level of regulation possible to achieve the policy objectives of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North said that the Fair Trading Commission had to dig deep into the legislation that it had and remained strong in dealing with Cable and Wireless. Mr. Speaker, you have the conflict there, and this explains why he could no longer serve in the Cabinet. The Green Paper is saying something diametrically opposed to what he got up in here and said. Mr. Speaker, before we tell people to 'cut the crap', we must understand where the 'crap' really started, which is with the Government in its policies toward Cable and Wireless.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is the story with Government and Cable and Wireless and the apparent less than holy alliance they have. What I do know is that a number of ex Cable and Wireless staff are holding

positions in Cabinet, in the foreign service and heading statutory corporations, but I am not saying anything more than that.

The Fair Trading Commission replaced the Public Utilities Board and it is upsetting to see that in the area of utilities regulation where it should be most competent, it is actually a horror story. The Fair Trading Commission is in court wasting time because Government has already undercut them because of a policy agreement with Cable and Wireless. Mr. Speaker, I am waiting with bated breath to see how they are going to handle the Pine Hill Dairy situation and all the other wonderful ideas that the Fair Trading Commission said they are going to regulate for us. I am sure I am not alone in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, I have to make another observation insofar as the Economic and Financial Policies of the Government are concerned. We were told, Mr. Speaker, that it was time for a paradigm shift in Barbados' economy. We were told that this was a statement about restructuring the economy for centuries to come. I have noticed, Mr. Speaker, that there is not a single mention anywhere in this document about the role credit unions can play in our future. Mr. Speaker, it is a glaring absence of any serious policy document and certainly one that is this hefty. Since Sagicor sold the Mutual Bank, the credit unions are literally the only indigenous financial institutions in Barbados today. They have 100 000 members with \$600 million in assets. Mr. Speaker, the credit unions are the potential salvation of those 100 000 souls who sit by on the fringes and, as I said earlier, watch big businesses have their way in the new Arthur environment.

The co-operative movement should be expanded and should be given encouragement to do such, but there was not a word in this Economic and Financial Statement about them. The co-operative concept can be spread to a variety of other activities, it does not only have to be in financial services. There is farming, manufacturing and retailing. No effort was made to spur them on, rather there is draft legislation right now to restrict the activities of the credit union movement.

Mr. Speaker, obviously we cannot be so previous, but certainly the draft that was rejected by the Cooperative Credit Union League had contained certain restrictions on the types of activities they could do in terms of investing. For example, they were not allowed to invest in property. There were restrictions in terms of their liquidity requirements that were considered onerous. Mr. Speaker, there was also a clause that precluded them from taking the deposits of non-members. I sincerely hope that no legislation that is so regressive in its thinking would see the light of day in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, you, all of Barbados and certainly all those 100 000 members of the credit union movement have my word that the Democratic Labour Party would energetically oppose any legislation that would seek to jettison that wonderful movement.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister spent some time discussing the whole issue of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

House 13 Sequence 90

3.20 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, a few months ago, I had a peculiar pleasure at the invitation of the Anglican Church, to give an address on this subject. Sir, it was interesting to note that as I expressed some views which were held by the Party and by Barbadians in general, it caused some significant disquiet among some elements associated with the ruling party. I do not think any Honourable Members in here personally disagreed with anything I said, certainly my private conversations with them did not suggest such but there were persons associated with the Party who, for whatever reason, decided to take me to task for what I had said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad that in his response, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was able to highlight the fact that we are strong integrationists. It was the Democratic Labour Party that at Dickinson's Bay in Antigua, signed the CARIFTA Agreement in 1967. It was the Democratic Labour Party that was there at the establishment of CARICOM, the Treaty of Chaguaramas in 1973. It was the Democratic Labour Party that saw the same CARICOM Single Market and Economy become a reality at Gran Anse in 1989. However, we believe that in order for it to work properly, Government to Government negotiation is not the way to go. Mr. Speaker the people have to be informed and to be involved and they have to be embraced in the process. That is the only way forward.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is, that we are a little puzzled by the actions of the Government. The Honourable Member for St. Peter has recently described the process as being laboured and ineffectual when he was addressing the opening of the Caribbean Media Corporation a few weeks ago. The Honourable Member, of course, launched a broadside on the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, stating that until the fishing accord was settled, he was not going to go anywhere. Mr. Speaker, you might want to hear that at 9.00 a.m. yesterday morning, "The Shelly," a Barbadian fishing boat was held in Trinidad and Tobago waters by the Coast Guard. There is no fishing agreement.

Mr. Speaker, what does that say about this document? There is no fishing agreement and there is no Caribbean Single Market and Economy, nine years and three elections later and Barbadian fishermen are still being held, as we are speaking right now. I have it on good words that they are from Christ Church like you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They are idly sitting down and not working.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has another two minutes.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, on the issue of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, I want to say that we are a little perplexed. The Pan African Commission is under the Prime Minister's Office. How could the Prime Minister have the Pan African Commission and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy Unit sharing office space, when the Pan African Commission has publicly declared that they have nothing to do with the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and, as far as they are concerned, it is a waste of time.

The Honourable Member for the City cannot deal with it because she cannot stand the people in the Pan African Commission. That is why the Pan African Commission is in the Prime Minister's Office and not where it should be, that is, in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I hate to interrupt a neophyte, I really do. There is just no truth in what has just been said and the Honourable Member knows it.

The Pan African Commission is in the Prime Minister's Office because the Prime Minister has put it there, as indeed, he has put other entities such as HIV/AIDS and others, under his immediate supervision. I do not understand why such a ludicrous statement would have been made. It is blatantly untrue.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Why would it be under my Ministry?

His Honour J. J. M. EDGHILL: Honourable Member, would you please wind-up?

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Honourable Member for the City, as she approaches retirement or certain defeat, for having agreed with me so wholeheartedly to what I was saying.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, with regards to the expansion of Special Development areas, the Democratic Labour Party proposed that legislation. We are now seeing that it is going to be expanded to include Roebuck Street, where the headquarters of the Barbados Labour Party is, and Baxters Road, where the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has her constituency office. That is just by coincidence but the point is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it should be expanded to include all of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Tweedside Road is as special as Gall Hill. We need to identify projects and treat them specially and not necessarily by geographical locations.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I know my time is up and I just want to say very quickly to those vulnerable groups out there, that there is hope. I want them to take solace in the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and in everything that they have been hearing on this side and, for that matter, what they have been hearing from the Other Side as well.

The interest groups that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew spoke about cannot pander to us. We believe that the vulnerable groups - and there are several - not only workers, the would-be home-owners, students, teachers, the disadvantaged, the agriculturalists, which you would hear about from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in due course, all of them, Mr. Deputy Speaker, could take hope that as we approach our 37th Anniversary of Independence, that the Democratic Labour Party stands at the vanguard for insuring that their interest is never imperilled. I am grateful to you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. First of all, I want to give thanks to all those persons who have given me the legitimacy to stand in this Chamber. I do not want to speak for myself as the representative for St. Michael East but more so for the people of St. Michael East, especially those persons who are not privileged to speak for themselves in any forum to gain the respectability of the leading elites in this system.

Mr. Speaker, I do not have to speak for those persons who constitute the wealthy, the non-black academic elites from in the 'Heights' or who are in the mainstream of the major institutions of this society and have an opportunity to shape the direction of the future of Barbados because these persons are in a position to speak for themselves.

Mr. Speaker, just like some persons who have committed themselves to defending corporate Barbados and a specific race interest of a privileged group, namely the privileged caucasians who control the commanding heights of the economy, I have committed myself to speaking mainly on the behalf of the poor black man and I am going to say it with so much regularity that it is likely to become monotonous to some persons.

House No.13(91)3.20 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, you will hear it from me regularly because it is my focus. There is a group of black people who are suffering with a phobia. They speak with courage and their language flow smoothly until they say to you that they disassociate themselves with people who are called by the term "poor black man".

Sir, I have to address a speech made on this side before I give credit to the Prime Minister for his presentation because a member on this side spoke with great passion from his heart. I have never heard him spoken so well but he made a number of blunders today. He was angry because he felt that this Government had a responsibility to put people out of their houses on the basis of merit, whatever he means by that, because it certainly could not carry the meaning of Oxford dictionary since there is no merit in the judgement to evict people from units owned by National Housing Corporation.

Sir, people were put out of their houses without any proper social survey and then told that if they did not have the money to pay they should go to the Ministry of Social Transformation. Sir, after being humiliated in front of their children and neighbours and being shut out of their houses, they were then told to go to the Ministry of Social Transformation for assistance. How progressive is that? If you heard that over 40 per cent of the tenants are indebted to the corporation, a contemporary sensible scientific approach would be required to carry a social survey so that people would not have to face indignity, if they were in such distress that they could not honour their payment.

Sir, they were put out, sent to the Ministry of Social Transformation and now I am being told that it is a policy. I want to know which member in this Chamber could support that type of approach to resolving some of the social problems in our country. Sir, this is where I depart from what the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central had to say today.

The Honourable Member went further on this issue that speaks to a very important subject matter. When the Leader of the Opposition spoke yesterday, in the conclusion of his speech I was of the opinion that he had

some worthy political content when he said there is a need to put our programme and policies within an ideological framework.

Sir, I do not think he was not talking about the ideology of Edmund Burke, Thomas Hobbs, John Lockes, Emile Durkheim or Spencer. I would like to believe that he was talking about the progressive minds that emerged during the Renaissance of the 1960s or before that time because C.L.R. James wrote his book before the 1960s. I would like to believe that he was not talking about George Beckford in "Persistent Poverty" or the cultural identity which possesses "Great Substance", by Rex Nettleford, Walter Rodney in "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" and the works of C.L.R. James speaking about the dialectics of the Caribbean, not the dialectics of the Marxist/Leninism at all because the Marxist/Leninism dialectics were devoid of an analysis that related to race.

Sir, ideology is central and when there is no ideology there are inconsistencies that run contradictory to what was said yesterday and what is said today and you are never conscious that you are making a fundamental mistake. When you are grounded in a sober and lucid ideology, you can never go wrong because there is a common nexus in terms of how you believe the country ought to go.

We differ when the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central sought to summarise the content of his speech by making reference to an Eurocentric thinker in the form of an American President. They were always imperialist and will never change, whether it is , Abraham Lincoln or Nixon because they have always stuck to the principles of expansionism.

They have fooled the world including Latin America and the Caribbean on more than one occasion. They spoke gloriously about protecting the Caribbean from any unfair encroachment or imposition on small territories. They spoke nobly about protecting the Spanish countries in Latin America but those same presidents who spoke that way are the ones who encroached on the sovereignty of these countries.

Today, the Caribbean and Latin America find themselves in a political quagmire because of the impositions of the multinational corporation whose interest the United States of America is looking after. It is being looked after under the umbrella of a number of organisations that ought to be described as sinister. These organisations are the FTAA and the WTO. The Caribbean is now reacting to find a form of resistance that now motivates the drive to bring together Caribbean countries because whenever we talk about putting provisions in place for regional unity, we talk about what we have to do before 2005.

15.40 p.m.

Sequence 92

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: ... There are no strong philosophical principles, no ideological grounding of a cultural identity and a reciprocal commitment to our Caribbean people and their economic and political growth. We must be clear on these issues. We can talk about how good it is in here and about how many houses and roads we have been built and who gets land but there are issues that are more complex that are responsible for the suppression of the growth of the Caribbean people, including states like Barbados. I want our people to begin to meet the challenge and elevate the debates to something more profound rather than to speak only about the new barbed green roads within their constituencies.

Sir, it is important but we have a responsibility.

Sir, for a long time we have been seeing small elements of growth and decline. These small states continue to fluctuate in order to establish an economic equilibrium because of the strong dependency of small states on what is happening in the metropolitan world. We have to raise the level of the debate.

It is strange that as we are about to celebrate 37 years of Independence of Barbados, we have a national debate in our country trying to define our cultural identity. What ought to have happened before we had any constitutional Independence, is that our cultural identity should have been clearly defined. The debate on more than one occasion spoke to the national agenda but it never survived. It is fundamental that it forms the nexus of the future for the Caribbean if we are to establish ourselves as an independent people with a unique persona. It is important that we identify ourselves with the great civilisations and the contributions which we have made and to clearly define who we are.

What is this thing called Caribbean unity? The Caribbean is segmented in many ways. It is segmented by race, class and religion. It is because that within the educational system because we never thought that we should design an educational system that causes us to understand who we are because education has always been on one track. When the labour market changed, we changed the policy at the secondary and tertiary levels to suit the labour market.

We are now hearing that there is a need for science and technology. We cannot have a country making any substantial development unless we pay attention to science

and technology because we will always be reacting to labour in the system itself.

Sir, other metropolitan countries lead and change the form of nature because they are advanced in science and technology and that is how Japan came back on track. Countries across the world that are advanced in manufacturing, are advanced because they have a complementary science and technology programme that helps to sustain that manufacturing. Sir, not by people changing the technology every day, undermining you and preventing you from enjoying certain economies of scale.

Sir, every minute we have to modernise factories and we cannot even make a part. They have even destroyed the Barbados Foundry over the years. The society has to examine some serious areas. That is why I am saying to you that we have first to be honest with this society and we have to plead guilty for not wrestling with certain debates because on the outside there are people who are prepared to label us as racists, people who talk foolishness every day and play to the gallery. I am not into any partisan talk today.

Sir, every time certain people speak in this Parliament, there are journalists who would write nonsense all the time because they talk about poor black people, most fragile and marginalised people in the society. Men that are now controlling newspapers, who are only two or three generations that have escaped from slavery are now twisting and distorting the logic of contributions or people who speak on the behalf of people of the poor in the country, in order to make you believe that you do not have any reason to speak on these people's behalf.

Sir, they are not concerned if you talk about concessions to the corporate sector, whether you made sure that after September 11th that special privileges are given to the tourist industry in order to sustain it. Nobody cares about that. However, they care when you say that there is a large percentage in the National Housing Corporation's estate units in the Pine and the Ivy who cannot pay their rent. It is a humane policy that ought to be guided by a sound ideology that says that rather than torture and ridicule these people, you can write-off a portion of that rent so that those people can live with a sense of dignity. The Government has a responsibility to provide that service.

I have listened to all types of debates in here where people were trying to measure the square footage of a public unit and comparing it with the market value of a private unit. Sir, this was done because they have no ideological foundation. The Government's purpose is not to achieve maximum profit and rape the tenants in the houses. We have found people who were homeless and landless and they have given us an opportunity to serve in this

Parliament. Therefore, the policy must address the needs of those persons because we owe it to them.

Mr. Speaker, this stems from people not having a clear ideology and from a lack of a Caribbean dialectic that will help them to understand the principles that you take from those who have and give to those who do not, that is what the tax system is all about and that is where I differ very much on many of these issues.

I do not want to play that I am any guru. I want people to be honest with themselves but there are people in politics who seem to be allergic to the truth. They speak at election time about poor people. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you heard them speak about how important poor people are and when they get back to Parliament, this is a distasteful term to use, it constitutes a phobia to speak on the behalf of these people. Sir, the people who speak on the behalf of the poor people are the main symbols that they flaunt in the electorate face during the elections, especially when some of them are in difficulties in some constituencies.

Sir, we are of no importance to them during the five-year period. We have to deal with these issues. I urge all of my colleagues who speak fearlessly on these matters, not only on this side but on the other side, to recognise that you have a calling that is more important than any partisan divide. To represent the interest of the down trodden is a noble position to take and you must never move from that position whatsoever. Sir, that is what I want to say today in my contribution.

4.05 p.m.

Sequence 93

Thursday, November 27, 2003

3.50 p.m.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, I have another bug and it is that this element which calls itself capital, people who plunder the world, especially the wealth of the Third World Countries, all of a sudden, they have a doctrine that they have sold to us, a new technique of getting into these markets, where they want to take that money they have accumulated over the years, and invest it in small states, under special reciprocal arrangements, making us believe that we can invest something in there's, if we so desire, and we do not have anything to invest.

They are talking about the free movement of capital but the same states that are now advocating that capital ought to move freely, do not want any special treatment, and I do not know how many Caribbean leaders are advancing a call for the free movement of labour. Why do they say to us, we know that you have a fragile economy

and as a consequence of the automation that we would bring to your economies, there will be a major displacement of labour, or labour intensive businesses and leaders will continue to have to rustle with the difficulty as sciences continue to advance, information technology, displacement of manual workers, while in the interim period, we plan to retool and to open up new institutions to help people.

Sir, states like the United States of America are not prepared to open up their economies to the free movement of labour from the Caribbean. We know that it is a valid and important phenomenon that ought to be advanced. In the Caribbean Single Market and Economy arrangement, we have put it on the agenda. It is not as extensive as you would like, because you have to be skilled workers, an entertainer or you have to be an academic.

The Leaders of the Caribbean still have restrictions on the grass roots people. The immigration could still hold you by your pants and determine whether or not you should come in, if you do not have any skills to offer. The US Government will never open up their markets, not to labour, but they tell you about these three important elements, land, labour and capital. They want your land, they want your labour and they have the capital to invest but, do you know that they are not giving us an opportunity to get into the US market.

I want leaders to get the courage to begin to advance and carry out the advocacy to make these people understand that we are not prepared to succumb to the dictates of the United States of America (USA) or any metropolitan country, whether it is Europe or the USA. We have to be very clear and courageous, and be prepared to stand up like other people, who stood up with that revolutionary spirit to see the changes that are required.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have one more minute.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Thank you, Sir.

Sir, I want to thank the constituency of St. Michael East but I want to say a lot more, especially about the importance of cultural pluralism. It is vital and it is a very important nexus that we have to connect with, and I look forward to a debate at a later date on culture. In this country there is a cultural inversion, a kind of psychological flip where the values and symbols that we ought to respect are relegated to inferiority. We judge excellence based on Eurocentric values in our system, whether it is in dance or behaviour.

I heard people condemning the 'wuk up' culture, so people cannot 'wuk up' anymore. I can understand condemning vulgarity or obscenity, but not the 'wuk up'

culture. They condemn almost everything that is African. What they have done to us, have still remained a legacy of that colonial, pre-emancipation and post-emancipation experience which still lives on with us today.

I am hoping, Sir, that at a later date, I would have an opportunity to give thanks for the contribution to community of natural gas, also the housing project carried out by the Urban Development Commission in assisting the poor people in my community and the senior citizens, the work of the National Assistance Board, and for some of the programmes that speak to the concerns of the 'boys on the block'. I also want to give thanks to the Prime Minister for the small gesture in the programme called, Project Oasis. I want as well, to give thanks and to say that I respect the positive nature of the contribution that relates to the cultural units that will be formed, as a consequence to giving an avenue to people who are involved in drama, dance and literary arts.

I hope that we would be able to have an assault on what I just described, Sir, as a cultural inversion, so that mass-based cultures, which are Afrocentric would not remain at the level where they would be inferior.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank you very much for your tolerance in the circumstances.

Thank you very much, Sir.

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very happy to give my support to the Resolution before the House. I want to speak this afternoon, specifically to that aspect of the Resolution which makes reference to the need for great economic transformation, causing us to ready ourselves to function as part of the global economy, on terms that bear no resemblance to those which have hitherto conditioned our relationship with our regional and global economic partners. Sir, that is my point of departure.

Sir, I think that in all of the contributions that have been made so far, Honourable Members have spoken with a clear understanding, whether or not they have expressed it explicitly, that what we have before us in this debate, has to be looked at in the context of the political, social and economic realities of the world.

Barbados is only a small place the world and cannot be an island unto itself. There may be some mornings when we wake up that we would wish it were so, but that is not how it is. We are living still, although some would wish to deny it but in my own deliberate judgment, in a time of global recession. We heard over the last two to three years

now that it is lifting, but I do not see that with the naked eye, yet. We see a little movement now in the US economy but there are those who are telling us that this has to do with restocking and that kind of regeneration which happens during the Thanksgiving/Christmas period. We are seeing the same thing happening through the Independence/Christmas period but nobody is willing to predict or to forecast what could happen in the first quarter of 2004.

We are living in that kind of grave uncertainty. Mr.

Alan Greenspan, if you read today's newspaper, Sir, has told the world that the only certain thing today is uncertainty. These are tumultuous times, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are living in a post-September 11th 2001, a post-Enron and now a post-Cancun world.

Sir, it is in this context that we need to be viewing this most excellent Statement on the economic and financial policies of the Government of Barbados. These are the realities

House 13, sequence 94, 4.15 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I heard Honourable Members speak, and I before I sit, I will mention things that I would like to see, but which I know cannot be accomplished today or tomorrow. There is no Government that can plan only for today or tomorrow.

When I was a child, there used to be something called a five-year development plan. People then started to think in terms of ten-year plans. Then they came to a place where the global economy was so uncertain that they could not even think in five years and people were literally living on a year to year basis and in some parts of the world from quarter to quarter and looking to see what could happen, that is the reality.

I heard talk in here from the Leader of the Opposition on several occasions when he made his reply, I had difficulty understanding it then and I am still trying to understand it now, about going forward in reverse. I do not know if that is physically possible, so I would give him the benefit of the doubt because I am still trying to work out what it is that he was trying to say. What I do know, Sir, is that you cannot drive without a rearview mirror. We also know that if you drive looking in the rear-view mirror all the time, that within short order, there is going to be an accident. The purpose of the rear-view mirror is that from time to time you have to look at the environment in which you drive so that you can have a clearer understanding of how you may proceed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is going to be the burden of my intervention this afternoon. A large part of the success that Barbados has enjoyed through the 375 or 376 years since its establishment and certainly since the establishment of Bridgetown as its capital city - I am delighted that this debate is actually taking place in the 375th year of the establishment of Bridgetown because that too must help to ground us - has been its ability to adapt to the imperatives of the times whatever those imperatives were.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in post-modern Barbados, we speak about repositioning, openness to new ideas and to inventions wherever the global trends are leading. Indeed, in the past wherever the global trends were leading, we were in Barbados, more often than not, ready to be able to respond and to attract business and trade of one sort or another to this little island. I do not know how many people are aware of these things, so there are some interesting parallels that I like to draw. In the 1840s when sugar was king, the British merchant houses went bankrupt and the then colonies of India and Cuba became very fierce competitors with Barbados because they had a larger capacity to produce sugar and more cheaply than us. This occurred for the first time in all those 300 years when sugar was king. The same thing is happening today. Australia, Thailand and Brazil are now proposing to the World Trade Organisation that what they see as the unfair advantage that countries like ours have by way of special and concessionary and preferential arrangements with the Europeans in respect of the sugar protocol, is something that they must fight. According to the World Trade Organisation rules and regulations they are entitled to fight.

As in 1840 when a new industry in coal, iron and steel, this is when the great industrial age came about, demanded diversification, Barbados survived it because we were ready to take advantage of those changes. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in those days men came from the country to the City of Bridgetown to work as lightermen, stevedores, ship chandlers and seamen of all kinds. When I was a child and the Barbados Workers' Union had their May Day march you would see them under their banners all through what is now National Heroes Square and down the Wharf side marching in their orders. Women also came and they worked as coal carriers, hawkers, seamstresses and laundresses. This city was a vibrant and busy place because we were able to diversify.

Are Honourable Members aware at all that even in that century, in the 19th century, we were strategically positioning Barbados so that it could become in 1870 a major station for the West India and Panama Telegraph Company and the headquarters of the Royal Mail Steam Package Company in 1885.

Today, Cable and Wireless is on the ground together with other companies applying to the Fair Trading Commission, which is there to make sure that Barbadian consumers have greater and more affordable access to the new telecommunications technology, which is part of the technology, which is going to drive the development and the niches that we want to carve out in these early years of the 21 century, certainly in this first quarter of the 21st century. That is an interesting parallel that needs to be drawn that people are not aware of.

Pipe water was extended to the City of Bridgetown in 1861 at a time when it was not known in many developing countries of the world. We had a railway which connected the town to the rural parishes and schooners were offering transport from Speightstown to Bridgetown. I remember as a little child seeing the schooners moving from Speightstown to Bridgetown and bringing the sugar in crocus bags for shipment from the old Pierhead. There was a tram which was operational in Barbados in the 1880s. Gas lights were introduced in 1875 which were replaced by electric lights in 1910, the year my father was born. In 1882, Bridgetown was one of the first cities in the world, three years after London and Paris, to put a telephone system in place ready for the 20th century.

What I am saying here is that a great deal of the work that has been done by successive administrations in the latter decades of the 20th century was part of a grand preparation for Barbados to be able to keep its head well above water for a coming 21st century. The infrastructure has been put in place. A lot of work that has been done was designed to prepare us for the changes we knew were coming some of which are going to be cataclysmic not only in respect of trade.

Barbados is an aging society and we have to prepare ourselves for a population pyramid which looks very different from the way it looked 50 years ago. All the infrastructure has been put in place in terms of the utilities. Bridgetown is sewered, the south coast is sewered and the west coast is about to be sewered. Natural gas is about to double in installation in this country. The fibre optic cable is in place and water and electricity are accessible to all Barbadians. Even as we speak, we know that the telecommunications infrastructure is being upgraded.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are readying ourselves. This is the burden of this financial statement that has been made and that we are debating. All I am trying to say here is that it is not a new process and Barbados has always been able to adapt and find itself in a state of readiness and that is what we are doing today, and it is difficult for me to believe that anyone would want to gainsay it.

4.10 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Indeed, what I heard coming from the Other Side, if the only real fault that I am hearing is about the timing of this or the timing of that, that is not such a bad thing. All of us would like some of these things to be happening more quickly but there are other social and competing priorities which have to be satisfied. The Honourable Member who has spoken before me has spoken to some of them, and they are many.

Therefore, these are all things which we have to do and to put in place so that we could take advantage of trade and other opportunities which most certainly will open up to us. We want to be part of that market of eight hundred million in the Americas. I cannot imagine that anybody who is into any business, be it small, medium or large size enterprises who would not want to be a market of eight hundred million in the Americas, a market said to be worth \$13 trillion. The new technology would allow one to do that

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in such a market and with the help of the new technology, and as Barbadians become more and more multilingual, there is a niche for everyone, even the solar operator. It is already happening, for years Goddards Enterprises and other entities in Barbados have been doing business both regionally and internationally.

Sir, do not let us fool ourselves about the Four Lome' Conventions. As far as Barbados was concerned, the Four Lome' Conventions were almost exclusively in respect of the sugar protocols. Sir, trade with Europe, in the way that the United States of America is our major trading partnership - and I have no doubt that in the foreseeable future, would continue to be so - that was not something that we have enjoyed.

In this new attempt now to forge an economic partnership agreement with Europe, we are looking forward to trade with an enlarged Europe. Sir, some of the countries coming into the enlarged Europe are countries not too far removed from ourselves in terms of their developing status.

In respect to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Democratic Labour Party took us there before the election in 1994. Before the elections, nobody said a word to us, not that we would not have gone there if we were in Government at the time. It is how we do our business. It is the conditionality that is attached and one's state of readiness. Sir, no consultation had taken place in this country and it was done almost by stealth.

I am not surprised that the Honourable Member for St. John, who was a Minister of Finance at the time, is not now in his seat, but it is the way of the world and we have

much that we can gain. We have to fight tooth and nail for it and, indeed, Barbados was part of that great coalition at Cancun, which stood up to developed world.

Sir, December 15, 2003, is the date fixed for a meeting to take place in Geneva which, it is hoped, would restart the negotiating process.

The Right Honourable Prime Minister has made a very important point, of which people must not lose sight. Sir, because there was a failure at Cancun does not mean that negotiations came to a total stop. There is something called a built-in agenda, where agriculture and services, which are two sectors of the greatest importance to us, dominated that built-in agenda, one in which we totally have to revolutionise our thinking and another, that is services in which, like most of the rest of the world, we are now looking to find our way and to carve out our niche.

Sir, that negotiating process is ongoing. It is in our interest to be at the table. It is in everyone's interest in this CARICOM to be at the table. The Bahamas has now made its application late, but better late than never, to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), to be told that it is better for them if they come under the umbrella of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Mr. Speaker, for those doubting Thomases who do not understand, they should read the Internet and journals. People need to be informed in their comments, especially in this Honourable Chamber. This is not a place to mislead and that is why, more often than not, points of orders are made in respect of misleading the Honourable House.

Of course, there is the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and this is how we would now want to position ourselves. We do not have any choice, if we are to be able to access this global economy.

Sir, in this connection in CARICOM, we are negotiating among ourselves and outside of this region, bilaterally and in the multilateral fora. Sir, in this connection, let me make a comment about Trinidad and Tobago and fisheries. Mr. Speaker, ill-informed comments came from the Other Side from someone who really needs to be better informed and as a new Parliamentary, yes, do your homework. I have been in here for 25 years and I know of what I speak. Do your homework so that when you speak, you are speaking from the strength of knowledge and information which you can defend.

Sir, Trinidad and Tobago does not have a fishing agreement with anybody in CARICOM. It does not have an agreement with its neighbour Guyana. Trinidad and Tobago officials arrest more Guyanese fishermen more frequently than they arrest Barbadians fishermen because Guyanese trespass more. Trinidad and Tobago officials,

with its oil partner Venezuela next door, arrest Venezuelan fishermen with more frequency than they arrest Barbadian fishermen. But the Prime Minister of Barbados has appealed to Barbadian fishermen that while Barbados is seeking to do something that will be a first-time exercise for Trinidad and Tobago, that is, to forge a fisheries agreement, that Barbadian fishermen should try not to be provocative.

The Bajan fishermen know a little about where the line is. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know a little about this and you may too, bearing in mind where your constituency is located. I am not saying that in this case it has happened, sometimes there is a genuine mistake and sometimes the mistake is on the side of Trinidad and Tobago but too many times it is Bajan fishermen deciding that they are going to cross the line.

Mr. Speaker, not that I do not understand that, fishermen follow the fish. When fish are running up in Martinique, the Barbadian fishermen go to Martinique to catch them. When the fishes go to the Guyana banks, the Barbadian fishermen go to the Guyana banks to catch them. When the fish fly off to Tobago, the Bajan fishermen fish off Tobago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us not forget that for a short while, Barbados and Tobago were once a unitary State but there might still be some who might feel that there is a certain affinity between those countries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fishing negotiation is a very complex thing and we have our Fisherfolk Association as accredited and as part of our negotiating team. It is not just a matter of simply agreeing to something and writing it down and saying that we have agreed. We had a so-called agreement in the early 1990s, which was negotiated when the Opposition was the Government. It was not worth the paper on which it was written and did not last two minutes.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Do you know why?

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: No one got locked up because nobody went.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what happened? The Trinidadians were insisting that fishermen must land thousands of tonnage of fishes in their jurisdiction before Bajan fishermen could have brought any home.

House No.13(96)4.10 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. Miss B.A. MILLER: They also wanted to give us fishing rights when the fish was not running to Trinidad. Any one in this Honourable House who knows anything about the fishing season would know the reason why fishermen are arrested at a particular time.

Sir, it is no good negotiating an agreement for access when the fish is not running to Trinidad. This is why the fishermen never bothered with the agreement because it was not worth the paper it was written on but it was still something that the High Commissioner to Trinidad could hold in his hands. Sir, we are not interested in a piece of paper. We are interested in a genuine arrangements which will allow all entities to benefit.

I want to move to the special development area because this is an area to which I must give special praise and thanks. Sir, these things do not happen overnight and neophytes must learn to do their homework because you have to apply for special development status. I applied several years ago and was told that certain developments had to take place. I was patient, the people in the city of Bridgetown and those outside of it were also patient because a lot of people who are proprietors in Bridgetown are not necessary from Bridgetown. We had several meetings, we planned, waited and we are now ready to go. Sir, we even have plans drawn which are in the office of the Town and Planning Department.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a Manifesto promise which has come true and I want to give praise and thanks. I am proud because it is all happening in the 375th year of Bridgetown which coincides with my 25th anniversary as a Member of Parliament representing the interest and concerns of the people of Bridgetown.

I give praise and thanks that we have come to this place in the Urban Renewal and Redevelopment Programme for Bridgetown and that we now have that special development status which will confer concessions and incentives of several kinds in respect of commerce. I am also pleased to hear that low income houses are to be put in place and that the defining of the boundaries only remain to be done.

In the letter which I wrote I have asked that Baxters Road, Tudor Street and Milk Market be special areas and Sir, you can see the renewal going on there as we speak. It is also happening through Roebuck Street and I am pleased to say that Tuesday morning next week, I will meet with consultants from the IADB to look at four possible alternatives as to how we can uplift housing at Green Fields and in the Cats Castle area.

We will also deal with residential Bridgetown in respect of those aspects of development which touch upon the people whom I represent, who have voted for me time

and time again to defend their interests. Mr. Speaker, some young parliamentarians will look on with envy but these things do not happen overnight because places like London Bourne towers were not built overnight.

Sir, even as we are speaking two hard courts are being built in Bay Street. I invite Honourable Members to drive along Bay Street out of town, look to the left and they will see two hard courts with a paved play park for children. The pavilion-cum-resource centre now has to be built so that for the first time in 375 years, young people in the city of Bridgetown will have a place for recreation and the learning of new skills such as they never had before.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot be other than overjoyed at what this Financial Statement and Economic Policy, enunciated by the Honourable Minister of Finance, has been able to do for both domestic and business Bridgetown. Sir, business Bridgetown is the key to the opening up of this little island to those new opportunities, trades, enterprises, niches and ways of doing business. Mr. Speaker, some of them are not even thought of yet but with the University College of Barbados coming on stream, I have no doubt that Barbadian young people are going to be on the cutting edge and that Bridgetown will be at the centre of it.

I am much obliged, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George South.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the last two days, I have listened to the contributions of various Honourable Members of Parliament both on this side and the other side and I have tried my best to assimilate much of what has been said. Sir, I like to see the cut and thrust of debate. On the other side, especially among the new members, I have seen a great deal of exuberance in the way in which they express themselves.

Mr. Speaker, many good point were made on both side and as Alice in Wonderland said, I will try to deal with the sense of it all even though half hour is too short to deal with all that I have heard. Certainly, over the next couple of months and particularly in the debate of the next Estimates, I will try to deal with some of the sense and as Alice in Wonderland said, the sounds will take care of themselves.

Sir, there was lot of sound and fury signifying nothing. They get up and made a lot of noise in half hour, showing a lot of passion and pushing their chest up and in some people minds that constitutes a good contribution to the debate.

I want to go back in time because the whole purpose of the Financial Statement is to put Barbados in a position

to deal with the new phenomena of globalisation and trade liberalisation. I prefer to see them as two scourges and not much of the debate so far has put them in that category. It is useful to do a little background talk which is not new because I have made these points before.

Ever since the end of the second world war, there has been a concerted effort by certain developed countries to make sure that the new emerging independent countries never found their feet. It was their intentions from the beginning to keep them in their place. They want to perpetuate all the controls of colonialism and earlier imperialism. They were not willing to concede one inch to new countries particularly small countries. H13/16.30 p.m.

Sequence 97

Thursday November, 27, 2003

Mr. L.R. TULL: In Brighton woods, in 1945, when they instituted the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, they set down a lot of rules that were harsh for small developing economies. I do not want to spend a lot of time on this because it is common knowledge, even among those who are new in this business, of the devastation that the policies of the International Monetary Fund have wrought on not only the economies but societies of small developing countries.

Sir, we in Barbados have been the recipients of that kind of punishment. All across the globe, for a period of approximately fifteen years, the International Monetary Fund, walking in locked step with the World Bank, was controlled by certain first world powers. They marched triumphant over our economies doing as they liked, while being insensitive to the suffering they were inflicting on the people in these countries.

Sir, we moved beyond that after sense prevailed or we got tired of what they were doing, into a new era in the 1980s, when there was talk of the magic of the marketplace that governments should be miniaturised, that the national sovereignty should be diminished and that the people who called the shots should be the private sector in the individual territories. Sir, internationally and the big multinational corporations were the ones to call the shots.

More and more, leaders in small countries were to be diminished and were to be given a narrow space in which to operate. Sir, that too passed out before that passed, we had people in this country who were the advocates for those kinds of unfortunate practices. They were loud and vocal in the way in which they put the case for the kind of policy. We have passed beyond that and now have the twin scourges of globalisation and the trade liberalisation.

I have tried my best to keep up-to-date with what has been written in relation to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, Free Trade Areas of the Americas and the World Trade Organisation, a large volume too difficult for an average intellect to comprehend unless you are dealing with it on a day-to-day basis.

I have also looked at the new arrangements being worked out between the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and the European Economic Community and, therefore, I have a general understanding of the issues, although I cannot claim to have an expert's view in that regard.

We are in a situation where the concept of globalisation is taking over everything in our countries and is about to do some serious damage to places like Barbados. It is not only going to affect our economies, our trade patterns and our industries, it is going to affect the way of life of the people in our countries. Sir, our values are going to change and that, we are already beginning to see. The penetration of their culture is going to make a phenomenal difference; everything is going to become sanitised; all our cultures are going to become homogenised and the dominant strains of some first world countries would be the ones that would prevail.

I know that Governments such as Barbados are being maneuvered into a very narrow space in which to operate. We are not going to be in a position to do anything whether we are dealing with the protection of young or modest industries, the question of preferences or the protection of tourism, the manufacturing industries, or even in the area of education and health services.

In the Budgetary Proposal, the Minister of Finance made a few passing references to matters regarding the liberalisation of the service sector. The Right Honourable Prime Minister said that a number of countries are putting requests to Barbados for the liberalisation of services, I am going to make reference to education.

Sir, in the negotiations, there is a consideration that a service such as education should be liberalised and, therefore, the question of free tertiary education is under consideration. There are already universities in the United States of America and Europe that are pushing for a freeing-up of the education system at the tertiary level so that they could get involved. Therefore, the University of the West Indies would be under tremendous pressure to remain the institution that is now.

Asides.

Mr. L.C. TULL: It is going to affect every aspect of tertiary education in Barbados and reference was made to it two days ago.

Sir, we have to deal with these things. We cannot sit back and believe that we are going to ride out this storm without a great deal of dislocation. When I heard the debate on both sides, I realised that there is a general consensus as to where we are today, what is coming and where we need to go. There is a lot of talk about philosophy and vision. There are words that sound good but have more in them than their sound. Sir, when we strip away all that and the emotions, there seems to be a general consensus of the two political Parties in this Honourable House that we are approaching some very turbulent waters and that we cannot do business as usual.

Sir, this statement is clearly intended to focus on the new reality. It is normal for a political party to score some political points, if they did not, they should not be in politics. Therefore, we accept that and would expect that when the Honourable Member for St. John, who persists in interrupting me, I am sure that when the Honourable Member speaks later this evening he would, perhaps, make the most political speech of all, which is his privilege and therefore we do not knock that.

Asides.

Mr. L.C. TULL: I want to deal with the question of culture. There is a new set of proposals in this Budgetary Proposal for the further development of culture in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. L.C. TULL: There would be the question of scholarships, training courses, the national performing art school, art gallery, et cetera. The question of culture in Barbados would not be addressed for the first time. It was in the late 1970s that a Ministry of Culture was first established in this country.

H13: 16.40

Sequence 98

Thursday, November 27, 2003

4.40 p.m.

Mr. L.R. TULL: A phenomenal amount of development has happened in culture in Barbados, even in the time when the Honourable Member for St. John briefly had some responsibility for it, Sir.

I speak, Sir, on the question of cultural penetration and the way it will affect our values and ways of life. It is important to note that all through the centuries that dominant states have always used their culture to influence those over whom they want domination.

I remember Aime Cesaire once talking about the French colonialism and the mindless hedonism of the French creole. In fact, he had a long thesis on it and at the heart of that, was the way in which France used its culture to win the minds and hearts of people they were seeking to colonise, and over whom they had domination, but it is not peculiar to France.

Sir, it was so with the British and it is so with the Americans, although they are not historically, a country with colonies, their *modus operandi* has been much like the other formal imperial powers. It is in their interest to foist their values on countries like ours. Culture is essentially how people live and how they react, the things they do, the things they feel and how they do them. This is what would be affected by the process of globalisation.

Sir, getting back to our own peculiar local problem, the culture and there is something that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said that jarred me a bit, in relation to our culture. Sir, this is nothing new because the whole purpose of developing culture in our country is not about an industry that I hear everybody talks about now, or how much money you are going to make by selling this and selling that. If they are consequential benefits, so be it, but our culture must be concerned with the development of a self-awareness of our people, a self of confidence, particularly among our young people, and an appreciation of all things Barbadian. We must feel comfortable with ourselves as Barbadians. This is what has been happening over the last 25 years or so.

Sir, I remember what we started to, what I like to call, democratise culture in Barbados, when there was a period of a cultural baroness, and I speak only in the area of the arts. I am not talking about the rich way in which people lived, their styles and traditions, much of which is dying, I am talking about the arts.

Sir, every theatre space in Barbados is always busy. Two weeks ago when they had the finals of NIFCA at the Frank Collymore Hall, every night was sold out, the week before. This is a recent phenomenon. There is a surge of activity in the communities, in every area of the creative arts. We have provided the theatre spaces, whether Queens Park House or the Queens Park Steel Shed or Combermere.

I see here in this Statement that we will provide a minimum of two scholarships a year, in culture. Sir, back in the 1970s, we were providing scholarships for people in the arts. For example, Kofi Akobi had a cultural

scholarship and studied in Nigeria. I do not want to start calling people's names, but Kofi would not mind. I can think of other people who went to the Jamaica School of Arts and now have degrees, who are very much involved in cultural activities in this country.

Those were the days, Sir, when we instituted for the first time, theatre in Education, where young people who were not good at reading a history book, could get in the yard of the school or in a theatre, and act out, and understand and appreciate important aspects of the history and culture of Barbados.

This was a period, Sir, when we started dance and drama in the primary schools. We got money from UNESCO to employ teachers of dance in this country and this was in the 1970s when I was the Minister of Culture. I used to talk about culture in here, Sir, and really in dealing with this, I should have pulled Hansard and refresh my memory on many of the things that were said in those days because these things are important.

Sir, I hear Honourable Members on the Other Side in their exuberance, not malice, talk as if we are not interested in the development of our people. I remember again, when I made the point in here that development is not only about bricks and mortar, tall buildings and fancy ideas, but that development has to have the people. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said, people must be at the centre of development and this has always been my view. Sir, I sit in here now and I hear all kinds of, what the Honourable Member for the City calls neophytes, they come in as if they are rediscovering the wheel, but the wheel has been discovered a long time ago.

In the 1994 election campaign, I went to Carlisle car park and spelled out a charter for the good society in which all these things that I am hearing, were mentioned, such as the development of the human personality. The Charter is lost and nobody has any record of it, either in tape or in writing. Sir, it is, not even in my head because I forgot a lot of it, but it seems to be in the hearts and minds of a number of people who heard it that night, because they keep referring to it.

Sir, we have to be careful when we are getting into areas such as culture. In fact, it is not an area for a divide.

One of the things that I would hope that these monies and new energies being put in culture will produce is, at last, a proper oral history of Barbados. There are a lot of old people that are dying fast, who have in their heads, a lot of the history, customs and practices of old Barbados. Every time one dies, a bit more of 'Barbadiana' goes into the grave.

It is going to be necessary for the people in culture, and at a very rapid pace, to put the tape recorders into the hands of young people and send them out into the villages of Barbados to talk to many of these centenarians whom I see in the newspaper on a weekly basis.

Asides.

Mr. L.R. TULL: The times are good, so they are living longer.

They should talk to them on a continuing basis because what they do not remember today, they will remember tomorrow. They should get on those tapes, a proper oral history of Barbados. I know how important it is, Sir.

House 13, sequence 99, 4.50 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. L. R. TULL: Sir, I sit in this House and listened to bright, committed, educated, young and old parliamentarians speak with a lot of conviction, but with a great absence of knowledge of important things that did not happen very many years ago. There needs to be a tapping of the collective memory of all Barbadians who want to make that contribution.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you please wind up.

Mr. L. R. TULL: That is important for our continuing integrity as a nation. It transcends politics, class and financial resources. We have a duty to generations yet unborn to have, like old civilisations and old countries, proper history of this country.

I thank you very much.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to give my submission to this debate. I want to start by thanking the people of Christ Church West for giving me the opportunity to make my first budget speech in this Honourable Chamber. I, unlike my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, who gave a wonderful presentation today and spoke about the poor people in his constituency, would speak not only for the poor people of Christ Church West, but for the middle class people and the rich people of Christ Church West. Indeed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would speak for the people of Sergeants Village, who I have to thank for coming out in their numbers and giving me support and votes on that fateful day. I also have to speak for the people of Clapham; Forde's Road; Bonnetts; Simmons Land; Dayrells Road; Pleasant Hall; Hart's Gap; Blue Waters; Hastings and Worthing View, who came out and made a conscious choice that has put me

in this Chamber today. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also come to this House to speak for the people who did not vote for me and for the people who did not vote at all because they too are the people that I have been charged to represent in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was enthused at sharing some blows in this Budget, but when the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was speaking, his father came in and sat in the speaker's pleasure and that disarmed me. Seeing him did that disarmed me because I will never have the pleasure of my father hearing me speak in this Honourable House because he is no longer with me and it brought a tear to my eye.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: I do not mind the asides because I am speaking from my heart. A lot of people do not know this, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but May 25th, the same day that I won the election to come to this Honourable House, was the 10th anniversary of my father's funeral. So I was really moved to see that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central father took the time to come to hear him make his first presentation in a budget debate. I felt saddened in my heart that I would never get that opportunity and to some extent that took the fire out of me, but I am going to share some lashes nonetheless.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, after hearing the Budget presentation by the Honourable Prime Minister, I went back to my constituency, as a good representative should, and asked my constituents what they thought about the Budget. Some of them said, it was a good budget. Some of them said, it was excellent and some said that it was first-class, and I felt good about that because it told me that we had connected with the people and what they wanted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, after hearing the reply by the Leader of the Opposition, I went back and asked my constituents the same thing and they said, they did not understand him and that it was 'a big bundle of balu'. I must also record the comment of Joseph Cummins - I do not like to call names but I have to call his - who lives in Sergeants Village and who is a great friend of mine for years and who said to me, and it struck a chord, that the Leader of the Opposition reply proved that he was totally out of touch with reality. There is evidence and it is clear because at no time at all did he connect with the budgetary proposals that were presented by the Honourable Prime Minister. It was as if he wrote his speech two weeks before. I feel he wrote that speech when he wanted to deliver a speech when he thought that the Prime Minister was not going to bring a budget. I truly feel that was the speech he had then that he came and delivered to the House after the Budget. That is my suggestion. I do not know if the Honourable Member is going to get up and agreed or say

that it is not true, but certainly that is how it appeared to me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate the Prime Minister and his Cabinet for such a visionary budget which is geared towards economic stimulation and growth of this country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I speak the truth because I am one person who believes in the truth. If you are doing something right, I am going to tell you that you are doing it right, but if you are doing something wrong, I am going to tell you that you are doing it wrong as well. That is how I structure my life and that is how I would represent the people of Christ Church West. I would not be stifled.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I had to admire the Prime Minister who got up and speak for three and half to four hours and gave a really tremendous speech. That speech was an eye-opener. It spoke to vision, stimulating the economy and multiple sectors. It really touched the hearts and struck a chord with the people of this country. As I was sitting here, I was thinking I do not know how he managed to do it, because even for me to sit, it was difficult at times.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to join with the rest of Barbados and say that I am disappointed with the reply on the other side. It was a major drain on my patience. It proved to me that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has learned nothing, offered nothing, has no new idea and no vision whatsoever. I really expected something better in the sunrise of my political career.

House 13 Sequence 100

5.00 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, we all know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West likes acronyms. We all know about that famous acronym JAWS but I have an acronym for the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. His presentation was far-fetched, it was arrogant, it was incomprehensible and it was laborious; FAIL. He has failed the people of Barbados. He has failed his Party. He has failed his country, and he has failed to perform. That is the acronym that I want him to take back.

Mr. Speaker, his only claim to fame is that he has surpassed the Honourable Member for St. John in giving the worst reply to a Budget ever before seen in the history of this Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, I have tempered my presentation because I have been saddened by the appearance of the father of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has said that the Urban Development Commission is a cesspool of corruption.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: You said that in your presentation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, he said that. I am sorry that Hansard is not immediate so that we could get it now but I will not sit here and allow anybody to denigrate the good work of the Urban Development Commission and its partner, the Rural Development Commission. It was a lurid, wicked and ludicrous misrepresentation of the facts.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I would like to see is any Honourable Member on the Other Side who agrees with that statement, putting up their hands. If they were to put up their hands, I would suggest that they should forfeit any kind of representation or assistance from either the Rural Development Commission or the Urban Development Commission because those Commissions are good Commissions. Yes, sometimes they are going to make mistakes. We are all human and sometimes we will make mistakes but as a rule, they are both good Commissions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party, through the Urban Development Commission, has succeeded in its efforts in assisting the poor in our society. The evidence is there to prove that the Government's initiatives over the past decade have changed the lives of many, many who were left for dead by the Democratic Labour Party. The standard of living of Barbadians who were demoralised by the structural adjustments of the 1990s, has been nourished and revitalised by the Barbados Labour Party, through initiatives such as house replacement and house repair programmes over the last seven years. The Urban Development Commission has allocated substantial funds to guarantee a better living for the people.

Sir, over 300 Barbadian families throughout the urban area, including old aged pensioners, disabled persons, persons living with HIV/AIDS, single women living in conditions of abject poverty, persons filled with total destruction and destitution, are all now in new and modern homes which were provided by the Urban Development Commission. The Urban Development Commission has repaired over 700 homes.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: I do not have to write them down, as you drive across the length and breadth of Barbados you can see them for yourself. I am sure you have seen them. Did you get any in St. John from the Rural Development Commission? Well, you might know why.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to the good work in housing, the Urban Development Commission has also built roads, issued loans, et cetera. Sir, I take the point from the Other Side that they are doing so much work that maybe the loans might be difficult for them because they have such a large portfolio. It gives me great pleasure to take the point from my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, because he and I have shared a class and I do enjoy being in this Honourable House with him, as well as with the Honourable Member for St. James Central. All of us were in a class together.

Sir, in fact, some time ago when I happened to be deputising as the Chairman of Committees, I was almost in the Chair when they were making submissions to me. It was a great opportunity for me and I thank the Honourable Members of this Honourable House for giving me that opportunity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I take the point that the ambit of the Rural Development Commission is huge but yet they have given several loans to small business persons. These are the things that we all come to public life to do. In fact, Manley said this: "That is why we ought to be called to public life, to help poor people from being poor." This is why we should all be here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in his presentation, the Honourable Member talked about how life was better then and how life is now. Sir, let us look at the two eras. In the modern era under the Barbados Labour Party, we have more jobs. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and all of us in here must concede that there are 18 000 more jobs. There are more cars on the roads, more people now have access to cars. All one has to do to prove this fact is go by any substantial construction site, one would see that provision has to be made for carpenters and masons to park their vehicles. These are persons who have never before had access to cars but who, with the great policies of this Government, now have access to cars.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are more savings and whether one likes it or not there are more houses.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: The Honourable Member for St. Philip North is showing me a comic strip, I think he calls it a manifesto. I do not know why he is showing me that comic strip. It even has a cartoon on the front. It does not have a picture of anybody. Does it have a picture of a leader? It does not even have a picture of a leader.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are better communities, more people going to college, better

health and living conditions and the people of this country are living longer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the other hand, let us look at the 1986-1994 era. There were thousands of workers that were sent home; 8 per cent pay cut; three day work week; the 'like it or lump it' philosophy; losses of homes; foreclosures and bankruptcies. This is the legacy of the Other Side.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I first came to Parliament, the Honourable Prime Minister told me to always read Hansard. I went back and read Hansard and in the words of my predecessor, the structural adjustments of 1991-1993, have wrought havoc upon us and has destroyed the very social fabric of this society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there were many good things in the Budget and I will mention a number of them that have caught my interest, as they relate to the constituency which I represent, that is the constituency of Christ Church West.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot has been said about the OASIS project but I am happy to see an initiative to help the boys on the 'blocks', the boys in Pleasant Hall, like Omar, the boys in Rockley, the boys in Bonnetts and in Sergeant's Village. These are the guys who I would imagine would be benefiting from project Oasis.

House No.13(101)5.00 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

DR. W.F. DUGID: Sir, it makes my heart full with joy to see that they will be getting the opportunity through this good Government. I also like the removal of VAT on computers. This was long in coming because it was a Manifesto pledge and the VAT will be removed in January. Sir, this is fantastic because it will not only give access to a greater number of people to benefit from computer and technology but it will give access to the young and the old to benefit from this opportunity to buy their computers cheaper.

The other thing I thought was interesting is the mentoring programme in agriculture. This is not new because mentoring programmes have gone on for years and I am happy to see that we are putting funds behind the programme so that young people interested in farming can learn on a day-to-day basis how they can get into the business of farming. If we are going to develop new entrepreneurs and a new farming class this is absolutely critical so that we can move towards trying to provide as much food as possible within our country for ourselves.

The revival of the cotton industry is another good initiative. I hope we could move forward in finding a

replacement for the sugar industry which is not providing the revenues it used to years gone by.

I also want to talk about the special development areas which stop at the Garrison and starts again in St. Lawrence. I would like to suggest that the special development area should be from the Garrison right up to St. Lawrence. It will encompass that part of Highway 7 and, as I have said before in this Honourable House that there are fourteen businesses on that stretch of road which are now inactive that could benefit significantly by being part of a special development area.

Sir, up to today some businesses have not received compensation for the sewerage project and I want to urge the Government to move quickly to pay these people their compensation. It is ludicrous that the sewerage project is finished, everybody is connected, businesses have suffered and my constituencies have not yet received their compensation. I want to urge Honourable Members on the frontbench to move with haste and compensate these people who have lost business due to the sewerage project.

I want to go further and talk about community investment which is another importance initiative. The people of Bonnetts are suffering because they do not get the liberal access they would like to the resource centre. I look forward to the day when the keys to the resource centre will be handed over to the community of Bonnetts because they deserve it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must also speak to tax relief. It is an amazing thing when you would have 26 000 people being removed from the tax net by 2007 and 18 700 also being removed from the land tax role. These initiatives are already passed and they have given tax relief to the ordinary Barbadian.

A particularly novel idea which held great interest for me is the introduction of a science and technology sector for Barbados. It is a wonderful thing. Again, I am showing my bias in the sciences and I must laud the innovation to set up a science and technology sector but I want to suggest to the manager to put a picture of Honourable Members on the other side in that centre. I say this because they have proven the concept of Boyle's law which is the concept that as you increase volume you decrease pressure. The people in Barbados, in their wisdom, have increased the volume of Honourable Members on the other side from two to seven but the political pressure they have exert on this House of Assembly has decreased. They have absolutely proved Boyle's law and I want a nice picture of them put in the centre for science and technology. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as far as we are concerned, they have failed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as Chairman the National Petroleum Corporation I am happy to say that the expansion programme is moving forward with haste. The work done in this programme will be made a document of this house. Work in this expansion programme was done in the following households:

Ealing Park South 215

Westbury Road 325

Brandons 211

Ealing Park North 105

Friendship Development 217

Tichbourne 132

Holders Village 193

Durants Village 211

Chancery Lane 283

Fairholme Gardens 111

Leadvale 68

Brownes Gap 80

Speightstown 198

White Hall Avenue. 254

Mr. Deputy Speaker, National Petroleum Corporation is moving with a pace. We have already added over 1 500 to the grid for natural gas and I look forward to the day when the people of Silver Hill and Gall Hill will be able to switch on their natural gas because all people must be able to get gas in this island. Sir, the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto promises to double the number of people benefitting from natural gas from 1 300 to 2 600 and work is moving forward in this regard. I encourage all people in Barbados to hook up as soon as possible because it is a clean, clear alternative.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I unreservedly give my full support to this debate. This is no gimmickry and these are not fly-by-night incentives because Barbados continues to improve its infrastructure and to have a stable, political framework. It continues to have a sound regulatory environment and reputation in the international community. Our future goal and objective is to develop a strong, robust economy to provide world-class services here and abroad.

H13/17:20

*Sequence 102**Thursday, November 27, 2003*

Continuation of: Dr. W.F. Duguid: I must say that it is already being done. The Pine Dental Services is already providing services at a world-class level.

Sir, let us make the sector the best it can be. Let us not settle for the bronze. Let us not settle for the silver. Let us go for the gold every time, Mr. Deputy Speaker. With everything else, let us thank God for the people of this country. For in spite of our small size, with his help we have done well and we will continue to do well for the people of this country. Thank God for all who have contributed to the development of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Hon. H.F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to begin from where the Honourable Member for Christ Church West stopped. I want to thank God for giving me the opportunity to be in this Honourable House for this Budgetary debate here today.

Sir, I want to center my discourse this afternoon by making a social statement on building sustainable livelihood. I am happy to support the measures as outlined by the Right Honourable Prime Minister in his Financial Statement Economic and Financial Policies of GOVERNMENT to this country.

I am particularly pleased and impressed by the Prime Minister's presentation since it brought a number of new innovations and creativity to the economic and social landscape of this country. The Prime Minister must again be congratulated as he seeks to challenge all Barbadians to be innovative and creative in this new globalised and challenging environment, while at the same time providing them with the necessary infrastructure which would help them to achieve these goals.

Sir, I would like in this presentation to look at the importance of building sustainable livelihood against a backdrop of eradicating poverty from this country and the creation of social and economic justice and equity. It is, therefore, our distinct intention to radically adjust and re-access our human and financial resources to maximise efficiency and to assist in the stimulation of economic growth and the reduction of inequality and poverty. Sir, to achieve sustainable living we should also seek to build a framework that pursues the integration of individuals and communities at the local and regional levels to aid in the

reduction of crime and other forms of social evils in the society.

Therefore, in our pursuit to achieve a Caribbean Single Market and Economy, we must devise a process of building tolerance. I want to repeat that, Sir. First, we must devise a process of building tolerance and understanding of our neighbours. We must not forget that between the 1920s and 1960s thousands of Barbadians left these shores to seek employment to support their families in Barbados.

I believe that all Honourable Members of this Honourable House would be very familiar with the vast exodus at various times in our history. Some of them when to work on the Panama Canal and in England, Guyana and Cuba. We must be tolerant of our brothers and sisters in other Caribbean islands who come to Barbados seeking better livelihoods for their families. Sir, we refer to them as foreigners. Yet, we refer to persons of a lighter pigmentation of the skin, mainly from North America and Europe as tourists. It is a certain basis inequality that we have to look at. We must change that mindset of our people away from complaining, to the point of preparing them for the changes that will come in this new globalised economy.

Sir, we have to start at the community level and engage Barbadians in a process of education that inculcates discipline and higher levels of productivity in this new emerging economy. Therefore, our role is absolutely clear. I propose that we seek to pursue a line of social planning that would to re-engineer and revamp our educational system to tap the vast reservoir of human resources within our school system.

Sir, on too many occasions we leave these problems for the communities to solve but I believe that we can deal with these problems by putting the necessary systems in place in the schools. By doing this, we will begin to capture the talents of our sons and daughters before they drift into a life of non-productivity of the so-called boys and girls on the block and engage them in the process of personal and national development.

Sir, the pursuance of a policy and a network of shared responsibility across Government agencies, private and civil society will ensure that the process of debate, designed and the implementation of programmes and projects is enriched. I am sorry that Honourable Member for St. John is leaving his seat at this time. I have to speak about a programme that he has in St. John and I would like him to come back and take his seat very quickly.

Asides.

Hon. H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, I want to look at economic pioneers and change. The reason I am speaking

in this tone this afternoon is because there are many people across Barbados that have a particular mindset about persons who come from within communities in Barbados, like the Pine, which was once deemed a bastardised community. Could anything good come out of Nazareth? These are challenges that we face. Once you come from ghetto-based communities like The Pine and Nelson Street, there is a fixation that you are stupid and that it might have been by mishap that you have entered into these hallowed and sheltered walls of Parliament.

Sir, I turn my attention to recognise certain pioneers of economic development and social change or from which we should seek inspiration. There is an old cliché which says that a good man is never honoured in his own country and among his own people. The same can also be said for certain organisations in Barbados. Therefore, I would like all of us to take this opportunity to remember an institution called the Civic Friendly Society which paved the way for the modern credit unions.

5.45 p.m.

Sequence 103

Thursday, November 27, 2003

5.30 p.m.

Hon. H.F. LASHLEY: Sir, the credit unions allowed Barbadians to own land, homes and cars and pursue further education, Sir, and invariably improve their standards of living.

Therefore, the honourable C.B. Layne who is now deceased, and I want to use this opportunity to call him that, should be seen as a champion and pioneer in helping the poor and helpless of which my family and I were recipients of the goodwill of the Civic Friendly Society.

Sir, identity which was said - and I heard a lot of Walter Rodney quoted this afternoon - to precede participation. January 1st came to be recognised by the poor people in Barbados as Civic Day. I would like all of us in this Chamber before we depart, to mandate that January 1st becomes Civic Day again, also that the Civic Friendly Society which was located at the corner of High Street and Swan Street, would be preserved for immortality, as it is a symbol of where poor people sustained their livelihood.

Sir, this is the 375th Anniversary of Bridgetown and I believe that the contribution of the pioneers of the Civic Society and black businesses in Barbados should be honoured and immortalised into a Hall of Fame for these black businessmen that existed. For example, N.E. Wilson, Rollock and there were quite a few of them.

Sir, I also want to look at the institution of the Barbados Land Ship which is celebrating 140 years. If you know the history of the Land Ship, you would find that the majority of the members were involved in businesses. They developed a 'susu' or what we call a 'meeting turn'. They have also contributed to many shops and the building of chattel houses.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, it will be remiss of me at this time, and that is why I asked the Honourable Member for St. John to take his seat, not to mention the Pinelands Creative Workshop, which is celebrating its 25th Anniversary this year.

Mr. Speaker, when I get on my feet to speak, I like to be fair to people, although people sometimes like to be unfair to me. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. John is doing wonderfully with the boys on the 'block', through his Family First Programme. He decided to work hard in the community and I hope that he would retain that position, working in the communities and leave the leadership to my partner...

Asides.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: Sir, he is doing a wonderful and splendid job with the Family First. In actual fact, when the commission went out into the streets and pinpointed which community is really active and doing the work, they pinpointed the correlation between the representative and the community organisation. It is against that background that we, in the Ministry of Social Transformation will also strengthen this programme.

Additionally, we are designating the entire year next year, through the Ministry of Social Transformation, as Barbados' Year of the Family. I will be inviting the Honourable Member for St. John, if he wants to face up to the challenge, to sit with us and help us to plan the entire year.

Sir, the Pinelands Creative Workshop, which is in the constituency of St. Michael South East, is celebrating its 25th Anniversary. Although the Workshop is junior to the Land Ship, in terms of its age, it has led many developments in this region, impacting on Governments and communities, through social, cultural and economic activity.

Sir, we have been talking about CSME, but this organisation formed the first Caribbean grass roots cultural fusion. In all the exuberance of the politicians across the region, I believe that the only way we can unite the Caribbean, is through the interaction of the grass roots folk at the community level.

There is the existence of the Caribbean Grass roots Fusion which was formed 14 years ago, on 4th October in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad. The Pinelands Creative Workshop, in addition to pioneering the fusion of grass roots organisations in the Caribbean, has a micro business workshop component, it sponsors sporting and cultural activities and it was responsible for the first Resource Centre in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, it is therefore very clear to me that in our quest for a new social paradigm that we must recognise the importance of institutions of the non-governmental organisations and CBO movement to social and economic planning and development in Barbados.

It is therefore against this background that I would want to use this opportunity to pay tribute to another member of parliament, who is senior minister, the Hon. Miss B.A. Miller who is recognised, globally for her contribution in building the NGO Movement and continues to be a mentor.

Sir, I am saying this now, because I want it to be put in the records of Hansard. We have a pattern in Barbados where we only talk about people's good deeds when they are deceased. When we are alive, we practise the politics of hypocrisy. We curse them and do all kinds of things. The fact is that she is recognised, internationally, as a key person in the NGO Movement.

Mr. Speaker, another disadvantaged group that I would like to put in the records of this Chamber, is the Rastafarian Community. Everybody in this Chamber by now will know that Hamilton Lashley is a Rastafarian at heart. In the 1960s and 1970s they were the risk takers in Barbados. If you all remember the system well at that time, Rastafarians were marginalised, brutalised, stigmatised and ostracised in the society.

Yet, the Rastafarians have set up in the Rikers Alley. They were the own entrepreneurs, they decided that they would develop their own businesses, and they did not conform to the methodologies of the society. Sir, these small businessmen, through the informal sector, have contributed significantly to the development of this country.

Sir, all of these institutions that I talked about, including the Rastafarians community, represent concepts of good governance, economic planning and a fresh approach to social engineering, which we must encourage and include in our process of Governance.

We cannot judge, as we do in Barbados, persons based upon appearance. I see a lot of people with fancy mock locks masquerading as Rastafarians. I am saying this because many of the Rastafarians are vendors. If we talk

about decriminalising, we must decriminalise vending in Barbados. It is wrong for the police in Barbados to harass persons and stop them from making a natural, honest living. In Barbados and throughout the world, vending is an open exercise.

It is wrong that vendors who ply their trade were taken off the streets, carried into cells and beaten and brutalised for making an honest dollar. This is unfair. We, as a Parliament, instead of leaving it to the people, must revolt against this kind of institutional lawlessness.

House 13, sequence 104, 5.55 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, this is one time when the law becomes absolutely lawless, and we have to look at these things. I cannot sit in a ministry like the Ministry of Social Transformation and every time the fellows get harassed on the bridge they run into my office... and you know me, I am going to leave my office and go out there and 'block'.

Sir, the point is we have to make Barbadians feel part of this collective arrangement. These processes, if encouraged, would contribute to a decrease in criminal activity and enhance the livelihood of the family and the community at the national level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to turn my attention to the Community Enterprise Empowerment and Divestment initiative, which is referred to as the CEED programme, to which the Honourable Prime Minister alluded. Sir, I am happy that the Honourable Prime Minister has given me a chance to represent Barbadians at the highest level, because at this particular junction in our history, the rule of thumb has got to be creativity and innovation.

Mr. Speaker, I am speaking about this Community Enterprise Empowerment and Divestment initiative against a background of reducing crime and social tensions and the creation of an environment for social and economic equity to flourish, which I alluded to before. We will continue to build bridges between community activities and national priorities. Communities must become the bedrock for new concepts of community tourism, cultural products, services and this particular item which I called compensatory education and planning and the development of businesses. The initiatives must inculcate vibrant and innovative activities that would capture the attention of our ordinary citizens and provide the impetus for their participation in national building.

Sir, we will seek to build social capital by entrusting credible community organisations and bodies with the management of Government facilities. In this way,

Government will begin to build meaningful partnerships with civil society and other systems for social change and development. All of us in here know of the problems that communities and communities practitioners have in getting access to community centres across Barbados. When community development officers go to these centres, they have a system of closing the centres. A community does not function that way. A community functions 24 hours a day seven days a week. Therefore, putting these community centres into the arms... I must say to the Honourable Member for St. John that St. John is earmarked to be part of the first pilot programme.

Sir, there are some people in this country who should know better who scoff at the idea that it would never happen, but the day will come when we would see communities and community practitioners managing Government building. There are also some people who believe that only a certain type person should be given this responsibility.

Social transformation is not social conformation. We come to transform not to conform to the accepted standards. We must change, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has another two minutes.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Sir, as part of this process, Government has committed itself to providing resources to building the capacity of community institutions and to facilitate the involvement in a national decentralisation programme. Additionally, this Government will soon bring to this Honourable Chamber the necessary non-governmental organisations legislation and policy guidelines to support this new paradigm of leadership development and civic engagement. Sir, we will leave it at that. We will also make available out of our poverty fund, which I would speak to possibly at the Estimates, approximately \$2.5 million as resource funding for these organisations, without them having to go through the bureaucracy.

Sir, I understand that my time is flying fast, but I want to say that at this time, more than ever, we need to disengage the divisive tactics of partisan politics, to which the Honourable Member for St. Michael East alluded in his speech of passion, fury, eloquence and strength and engage a new process of collaboration by bringing together all of our human resources to chart a new and exciting path for future generations.

Sir, it is clear to me that slavery as an institution has been responsible for many of the social challenges and inefficiencies which affect the behaviours of our people who are direct descendants of slaves and inheritors of the legacy of slavery. Sir, as Walter Rodney would have said,

we as African people have an ancestral dignity that we must rediscover and keep alive.

I want to remind this Honourable Chamber that there is no greater force than an idea whose time has come. The Ministry of Social Transformation time has come. We must be the catalyst for change. We must be the directors of our youth and this country's fate.

Finally, Sir, let no obstacle be greater than the cause.

I thank you.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too rise to speak on the Financial and Economic Statement and to congratulate the Prime Minister for admitting that the policies put in place during the early 1990s were the correct policies to follow.

One would remember that the first budget presentation by the Honourable Member for St. Peter dealt specifically with the agricultural industry and the manufacturing industry. Nine years or ten budgets after, we have a situation where we are now having to return to these two heads that we were supposed to have corrected some nine to ten years ago.

Sir, it is known that manufacturing and agriculture are two important industries. One would have thought that at the same time when the Minister of the Finance put policies in place to give sectoral support to the tourism industry that he would have done the same for those two industries to make sure that the foreign reserves and the revenues of the country would increase. What we saw, Sir, is that at an early stage a token amount was given to the agricultural and the manufacturing industries and after that they spent the majority of their time looking at the tourism industry when they should have been looking at the agricultural industry, the manufacturing industry and all other industries.

Sir, at the time, the emphasis was mostly placed on the industries called construction and the other one called selling land to foreigners, to build foreign reserves. Sir, there is no doubt that the foreign reserves of this country have grown, but it has not grown through the natural growth of the economy as one would have expected. That is why in a short period of time, the Barbados Labour Party was able to amass large sums of money in the foreign reserves account. Sir, one can easily understand why the foreign reserves account looks so good when one looks at the massive borrowing that have been undertaken and the large tracks of land and properties that have been sold in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I have said nearly seven years ago in this Parliament that we have a situation in this country

where we have people whom we have invested in and have encouraged to leave the country to go overseas and to amass large foreign exchange accounts.

House 13 Sequence 105

7.50 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, yet we are not prepared to put financial or other plans in place to attract Barbadians living overseas and who have foreign exchange accounts overseas and to bring them back home to help boost the foreign reserves of this country. Sir, instead of doing that, we have now attached ourselves to Trinidad and Tobago and are considered as the third state of Trinidad and Tobago, which would be Trinidad, Tobago, and Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not so sure, based on what is going on within our economy, that we have any right to be here speaking on this Budget because it has always been said in this Parliament that it is the local private sector that normally dictates to this Parliament. When one looks at the investment that is being created in Barbados, I am not sure whether the private sector of Barbados has any right to comment on this particular Budget. We have to wait and take time and understanding from the private sector of Trinidad and Tobago because whereas we have \$2 billion sitting in our banks in Barbados, not one cent is being moved from the savings accounts to investment in Barbados. Sir, what are we seeing? Every day as we open a newspaper, we see a bank or an institution, which is profitable, being sold to Trinidadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me say this, I believe in localisation, including all countries in the Caribbean but at the same time, the people within the Caribbean, especially those in Trinidad and Tobago, must understand that if they expect me to support them in their investments in Barbados, then too the fishermen of Barbados must have a right to fish in their waters.

Sir, until we could see the same approach that we are putting in place for Trinidadians to invest in Barbados, Trinidadians can appreciate that we are all part of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, and that the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is not only about Trinidadians investing in Barbados and that we cannot have a say in their economy. Sir, if that is what the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is about, then I might have to rethink my position but being a regionalist, I cannot. Therefore, I call on the Prime Minister to send a loud message to the Trinidadian players and let them understand that we in this country have taken enough. We have opened up everything for them.

I am saying, if this is the example of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, we then have a problem but we cannot continue to allow a country to interfere with an economic planning that is good for the Caribbean. That is why I have said that if Trinidad does not want to have a relationship with Barbados on a fair wicket, maybe we need to take the advice of the great Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, who once said it would have been good to continue to have a relationship with Guyana.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know of what I speak and it is clear to me that the Honourable Member does not know me well and so he needs not worry. But that is all localisation.

Sir, we have to understand that it is in Barbados' interest to make sure that we look after the interest of Guyanese too. In the good old days, Barbados has gained a lot from Guyana. We must remember that we have never had a problem with our shrimp boats going into Guyana. We must understand that if we are to target tourism from within the Caribbean, the country that shows the greatest demand to want to come to Barbados is Guyana but instead of putting a proper tourism plan in place, we are pretending that we are not allowing Guyanese to come and are easily slipping in other regions that are different from those that should be allowed in.

Sir, I do not have a problem with Guyanese coming to Barbados to work but we must also encourage them to understand that when they work in Barbados and take their money back home, they are helping to build their country. We need to help build the Guyanese market so that we would have the impetus to be able to trade with Guyana. We cannot have a one-sided market. We need to understand that there must be a relationship between Caribbean people and that we cannot allow one side of the Caribbean to dictate to Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been consistent in everything I have said, that is why it is very easy for me to sit here and hear the Honourable Member for St. Andrew speaking about Dean Town. Sir, when Dean Town was compulsorily acquired and vested in the National Housing Corporation, without a shadow of a doubt, I told the Minister that no poor people would have been able to live there because his comrades would not have allowed him to have allowed poor people to look down on the rich. You have now heard what has occurred in here today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have defended the people in Dean Town, because I know the Barbados Labour Party policy. They believe that whenever they have good land, it is too good for poor people and there was no way that the Barbados Labour Party was going to allow the poor people

who wanted to go to Dean Town to live, to look down on the rich.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if Sugar Hill Estates does what it has to do, a lot of the land that one now sees at Lancaster would not fall into the hands of the people for whom they bring this Resolution to compulsorily acquire the land. It will not happen.

Aside.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, at Arch Hall, that is true. Arch Hall is next to Sandy Lane. I also spoke to that too and I am glad that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has reminded me that when the Barbados Farms Limited had 80 acres of land to the east of Arch Hall on the market, I had asked the Government to buy the 80 acres of land so that they could expand Arch Hall, so that the speculators would not be able to buy out the whole of Arch Hall.

Government, at the time, refused to buy the 80 acres of land and now Sandy Lane owns it. There is now a situation where Arch Hall is now pinned into the development at Sandy Lane. Sir, every day there are investors there who hunt and harass the people of Arch Hall to sell their properties to them, whereas if Government had expanded Arch Hall, the possibility of those speculators buying out the whole of Arch Hall would not have been as great.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to understand that this country belongs to Barbadians. I have already said and will continue to make this particular point, that if we are to tackle seriously the housing problem in Barbados, we must put some land into the hands of the masses of the people of Barbados. If we attempt to put land and house at the same time, we will create a problem. What we call low income housing in Barbados is really middle income housing. Government must stop fooling people that they are building something for the masses of people of Barbados when they do not have the disposable income or the capacity to buy that particular product.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not in Parliament to fool people, I have a passion about this because the foreparents of those persons would have worked in those fields, and would have had an entitlement, using the Treasury of Barbados in subsidising those lots, to make sure that we get lots in the hands of the masses of the people of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have even gone further, if one were to check Hansard, one would have seen that I have argued in this Parliament that Government should buy large parcels of land and then allow the Ministry of Public Works to put in the roads. Government should then sell these lots to the poor people at the purchase price of the

land. If we do not do it now, we will never have the opportunity to put land in the hands of the masses of people in this country.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am told that is the only point I have made in nine years but if my political life is to be judged on that, I want to be judged on that particular point because at least I have been consistent in looking after the interest of the people who have sent me here to look after them.

House No.13(106)5.50 p.m.

Thursday, November 29, 2003

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, yesterday the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said that the worst loan ever borrowed was the bullet loan for £30 million. Mr. Deputy Speaker, no Deputy Prime Minister in another Parliament could make that statement and remain in that position. Sir, the Minister of Finance is a trained economist and he would know when a lie is being told to Parliament. It is the biggest lie ever told in this Parliament...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please rephrase that statement.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am sorry, Sir. It was the biggest error ever committed using statistics in this Parliament by an Honourable Member. When the Democratic Labour Party borrowed that £30 million in 1990, the pound rate at the time was \$4.00 to £1, after the war. If I could bring a report from the Nation in this House, I would bring it but I saw a report where Government received \$120 million for £30 million. Mr. Deputy Speaker, call any bank in Barbados and ask the exchange rate for buying pounds to change that loan it will be \$3.49 which is a depreciation of \$0.51. If you look at page 76 of the Central Bank of Barbados Economic and Financial Statistics, you would realise that the pound dropped further during that period to \$2.99 which meant that the interest rate to service the loan depreciated from the day the loan was taken. It also meant that the effective interest rate was not 13.35 per cent, that it was lower and that we would have to depreciate the interest rate by the depreciation in the rate of the pound.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would have to agree with this because he claims to understand statistics.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I do not expect the Honourable Member for St. Michael South to follow this debate because it is too high for him. He needs to know his place and bow out at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the impression has consistently been given in this Parliament that the Democratic Labour Party was responsible for running down the foreign reserves of the country but that is another lie. One simply has to look at the statistics from the Central Bank of Barbados in May 2003, turn to page 72 and he will see a very interesting thing.

When the Democratic Labour Party left Government in 1976, for 15 years they were in power, they borrowed local debt at \$13.9 million per year and foreign debt borrowing was \$3.8 million per year but when the Barbados Labour Party left Government in 1986 they were borrowing local debt at \$50.44 million per year and foreign debt at \$53.09 million per year for ten years. If you multiply that by ten, you will find that they borrowed \$530 million, net of payments. By the time the Democratic Labour Party came to Government in 1987 to 1994, we were able to borrow on the local market \$133.1 million per year which meant that we wanted the taxpayers to pay for whatever they incurred so we borrowed on the local market. Sir, during that period we only borrowed \$16.3 million per year net.

Then, up comes the Barbados Labour Party in 1994 and between 1994 to 2002, they are now borrowing at a rate of \$103.45 million per year on the local market and foreign borrowing is \$76.5 million per year which means that the massive build-up in the foreign debt has been accumulated by the Barbados Labour Party.

Sir, it is regrettable that the Democratic Labour Party was borrowing at \$16.3 million during that period and we had to repay the bullet loans. One would question why we did not have foreign reserves in the early 1990s. How could we have foreign reserves when we had to pay off the massive debts left to us by the Barbados Labour Party during that period of time? In other words, money which we earned in 1988 and 1989 that should have been servicing the economy, was used to service the debt left by the Tom Adams' administration at time.

Sir, we also found a situation where the Barbados Labour Party at the time introduced the unemployment benefit the wrong way. Instead of getting people back to work, they encouraged people to sit at home for 26 weeks without any capacity to produce and when they go back to the work market they do not produce as normal.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party should have done a calculation, give workers an up-front payment, encourage them to go back to work so that they could increase the

reserves at the National Insurance and otherwise. Sir, it is not too late to put this measure in place. We need to make sure that the masses are not being given benefits to stay at home and be unproductive but we must encourage them to be productive and be self-employed. If a lumpsum payment is given to the workers they would have been able to employ themselves by using it as capital to open businesses instead of sitting at home.

Sir, it is not the workers or trade union fault because they understood that it would have been a period of hardship for Government to put such policies in place to make sure they create the right climate for themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have nothing to say about agriculture. I will simply say that we have a Minister who copies and I congratulate him. I have said in this Parliament before and it is documented in Hansard that cotton to Barbados is like oil to the Arab and I now hear there is a plan for cotton.

Sir, it is interesting to note that all the charges made against CARSICOT, the Prime Minister has now reversed them. He has accepted that it was a good idea and that he now needs to copy it to put the cotton plant back in place. Sir, the Democratic Labour Party left a project in place that allowed people with cows to carry them to the Barbados Marketing Corporation and it is quite clear that the Government understands the importance of the beef industry to Barbados and it has also put a plan in place to deal with this industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government also has to understand that the farmers at the Spring Hall Land Lease Project and those farmers who lease land from Government must be given the right to purchase the land to use as capital so that they can finance their business to give it meaningful use and to plant long-term for agriculture. H13/18:10

Sequence 107

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, agriculture is not a short-term project. As long as you continue to lease that land, you are not going to have the full benefit of the land and I am saying that on behalf of all farmers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I saw in this Financial Statement that the Government will be clearing land. I wonder what the former President of the project at Bawdens would say when he hears that the Government is now prepared to cultivate the land and give it to farmers. I know that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would agree...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: On what point do you rise?

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I hate to stop the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in his fine flow but I do not want to give the impression that it is only with the presentation with a statement, in the context of the Land for the Landless Programme, that land would be prepared for those farmers who would be participating in the programme. I just want to remind this Honourable House that at the outset of the programme that was one component of the project, which farmers who are already in the programmes, have been very thankful for.

A few years ago when the programme started, land was prepared, cultivated and made available to the farming community.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceeds, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am saying that the gentleman from St. Andrew who accosted me outside of this building and said that I am asking too much from the Government, maybe, he should speak to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South because it seems to me that as policy maker, he knew better than the farmer who rented the land from Government.

I also want to say that if we are to push tourism forward, we have to understand our transportation, especially in rural Barbados, must be put in a better state. It is impossible for a worker to feel happy waking up at 5.00 a.m. to catch a bus at 6.00 a.m. in rural Barbados and cannot get a bus. The next bus would be 7.00 or 8.00 a.m. It is impossible for people from St. Lucy to travel to Six Men's to get fish without having to travel Maynards to get on the Duncan Oneal Road. You cannot use the road via Rose Hill/Farrs Children Home. If you try going from Six Men's going towards St. Lucy's Church or use the road going towards the former Parliamentarian for St. Lucy, Roy Brathwaite, you cannot use that route.

Sir, I am saying that some infrastructure needs to be done on the roads in St. Lucy.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am also saying that because of the input of the new Minister and myself, the depot has the capacity of doing great work but we need the equipment and action men at the depot to complete the work.

Sir, in three weeks fantastic work has been done at Farr's and they are even showing up the private contractors but they need the equipment to do the job.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: With reference to tourism, we do not need an increase in head tax for people who come to enjoy Barbados. We need a head tax for those people who have been abusing our ports. They are the people who disembark at the port, catch a plane and leave Barbados.

Sir, it is untrue that the Democratic Labour Party wanted to increase anything because it was not in the interest of the Democratic Labour Party to increase the head tax any further because they had an agreement with the shipping agents for a stipulated period of time. When we were told in this Honourable House that some Trinidadian told him that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, whom I replaced, messed up the arrangement, how can we accept an argument from a Trinidadian, who has no interest to see tourism at the stage it is at in Barbados, against our own people. We knew at that time that the Caribbean people were jealous of us and a lot of them wanted to see our country going through hardship because they were bragging when they heard that we had a few problems.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that tourism is our business but the Minister of Tourism would have to be told that community tourism needs his attention too and that the Concorde plane is not only a plane to be resting at the airport but it can be placed any place in Barbados and if he needs any information, all he has to do is consult The Nation newspaper or go to the BBC News to find out how to move a plane. Sir, those who felt that they had a big laugh must realise that the last laugh is not with them but the information is available. Tourist attractions must be evenly spread across Barbados and we cannot spend so much money on an airport, bring a Concorde there and leave it as an attraction. Our best attraction is our airport.

I thank you very much.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. K.D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity to lend my voice to this debate and I would want at the outset to thank those persons from the constituency of St. James Central who, by their support, encouragement and active participation have empowered me with a voice on their behalf so that I might contribute to these matters of social and economic significance affecting them.

Sir, if I were to begin where my friend, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, left off, on a note of a tourist attraction, it might best be suggested that if an effort had to be made to find a new tourist attraction, then the Honourable Member might best be that tourist attraction.

Sir, we were treated to a lengthy diatribe on the debt of 1982, unemployment benefits and Carsicot. I came to this Parliament when I was seventeen-years and watched a no-confidence debate involving the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, as he then was, involving Carsicot and I could never have believed that I would have been privileged nineteen-years later to be sitting down listening to Honourable Members on the eve of what is, perhaps, the most tumultuous global arrangement to face this Caribbean region and this country to be still fixed in time on the question of Carsicot.

It goes to show which the Honourable Member is inclined to make amounts to the sum total of zero, insofar as the well-being of this country is concerned. I want to say that I represent a constituency in which there is a monument erected to the arrival of the settlers from England in Barbados and those persons, like the Honourable Member for St. Lucy I believe, who can easily be described as historical revisionist, would say that the depiction of their arrival in 1605 is accurate. Those of us who consider ourselves better schooled in history would argue that the settlers arrived in 1625.

Sir, what is beyond doubt is those settlers established this Parliament in the year 1639. In the 364 years that have elapsed since that time, the Parliament of Barbados has never been treated to as detailed, specific and as analytical an exposition of this country's relationship with its global trading partners as we witnessed on Tuesday.

Asides.

6.35 p.m.

Sequence 108

Thursday, November 27, 2003

6.20 p.m.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: We are now, Sir, thirty seven years into an Independence and the Parliament of Barbados has never had a Minister of Finance who was prepared to come to Parliament and abandon the tried, weary, failed and flawed prescription of macro-economic dependency on a protective regime, hatched in colonial and post-colonial times. Sir, what we saw in contradistinction on Tuesday night was for the first time in 37 years, this Parliament was treated to a prescription based on looking inward, trying to evolve by way of retooling, redeveloping,

reinvesting in our people, reinvesting in our companies and planning and articulating a path forward, for the first time in 37 years.

Sir, the point has to be made, this debate is a timely debate, and I am going to crave your indulgence, because I also want to say that in spite of the tremendous provocation from That Side, I am not going to descend into the partisan. Many of them are my friends. I want to say, however, that we have a timely debate and a time opportunity which must not be squandered, not only because of the fact that we are negotiating in three theatres, the ACP EU, WTO, FTAA and at the same time trying to build, and I want to emphasise the point, a single market and economy in the Caribbean, because it is a work in progress, not only because of the fact that we are on the eve of our Independence Anniversary, and the reality is that ever a prescription which speaks to investing in one's people, self-sufficiency, developing one's capital base, one's productive sectors what is important, it must be of prismatic hematic importance and symbolism at this particular time, but more importantly, in my view, Sir, because it gives us an opportunity to engage what can only be described as a type of political parasite that is parading around this country, not in this Parliament, by persons who feel that it is their duty to disrupt and derail any effort being made towards building a sound and stable economy in this country, and people who seem to believe that there is great rejoicing to be heard, if the economy of Barbados goes into reverse. And, great sadness to be felt if we do well, and they must be engaged.

There are persons of a certain ilk and political type who find it morally possible to go into a cathedral in Bridgetown and in the presence of the Lord, they will say to the nation and unsuspecting citizenry that the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is something to be deprecated and denounced. When they come to the House of Assembly, they are regionalist and Caribbean men.

The question that was asked by one individual was what is in it for the Barbadian man or woman. I did not hear the champion of Caribbean realism, the Leader of the Opposition, albeit nascent to the position of being a champion of regionalism, come out and say that this was a foolish question and reprimanded the individual who posed it.

The fact of the matter is, Sir, that those persons have to be brought to the Christian understanding that the small economies like ours are increasingly facing challenges based on our size and underdeveloped markets. The only way that we can effectively counter those challenges is if we distill a strategy towards redeveloping and retooling our productive sectors. Sir, the true is, we must also unify.

Sir, the strategic alliance born out of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) is something that obviously is causing difficulty and if it is a problem, it must be put to rest. It is a strategic alliance which is a work in progress aimed at helping to protect us from vulnerabilities which are inherent, and I am going to speak to that question of vulnerability. Sir, when we speak about the CSME - I heard yesterday, Honourable Members talking about the philosophy and objective and the direction - one of the objectives must be that we build a common trade policy between the states. Sir, why is that necessary?

Sir, it becomes necessary because in every country, we lack the technical skills, human resources and financial resources in order to adequately represent our fragile interests, significant, but fragile interests abroad. Therefore, we harmonise with a view to have a collaboration on trade policy. It is necessary because we want to protect our consumers and this is why I want to strip this out of all the mystery and esoterica. It is a very simple issue.

Sir, when we talk about single market and economy, Sir, you are talking about the well-being of the waiters and waitresses who come from Hoytes Village and Fitts Village, because you are talking about a liberalisation in many ways of services, such as the tourism sector provides.

Sir, we are talking about the ladies who are working in the manufacturing industry who are leaving work in Harbour Road all like now. It has nothing to do with alienating the ordinary average man or woman. You are talking about the agricultural sector. That is basically what it is about.

Therefore when I speak to protecting our consumers, we are trying to say that we must have a competition policy which is common in the region, so that investors coming into the region, can be regulated.

It makes no sense, Barbados, because we have an advance set of technical persons, perhaps some very competent attorneys, et cetera, rush through and have an effective competition policy, but next door in St. Vincent and Dominica we do not have it, because we cannot seriously talk about creating an opportunity to expand in cross-border trade, if we do not have those basics in place. We are talking, Sir, about the movement of skills.

This Opposition, Sir, has reduced the Parliaments to something like a 'smut-lamp' where the flames lick on the walls, metaphorically, licking the walls with the same flame all the time. We give free education. We heard it yesterday, a Leader of the Opposition in a time warp. In 1961, free education, yes, 1966, yes. God blesses the gentleman, but the fact of the matter is that a policy

prescription, based in 1961 has to be directed to the benefit of the people of the country in 2003.

Asides.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: Sir, this is why we need to ensure that we create a framework and we have to spearhead the effort to build the framework to move those people who are educated and who can productively put their skills to use and bring foreign exchange to this country. This is what it must be about.

Sir, they talk about philosophy and you know that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, a dear friend of mine, I would never disown him, but he behaves sometimes like a man who began in barbarism and went on in decadence and did not pass through civilisation.

Asides.

Hon. K.D. SYMMONDS: He challenges, Sir, the philosophy and the direction. He asked the question, what is unique. The Leader of the Opposition asked it also. When you look at the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, we are trying to build a regime in which countries retain their sovereignty but at the same time they deepen their functional collaboration.

The European Union (EU) conceded to the ceding of sovereignty. All of them, if they are talking about uniqueness, that is the unique feature. If they want to talk about philosophy, Sir, then let them ask the question what is to become of Haiti. The Haitian Republic is the oldest black republic that this world knows. It has to be brought to the table of international relations in a manner which is befitting of its age and decorum. It has therefore to be engaged constructively. It is through the collaboration of the Foreign Ministers of CARICOM that we are now trying to get Governments around this region to participate in levelling the playing field, so that the Haitian people, the Caribbean people, black people, are able to benefit.

House 13, sequence 109, 6.45 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: If Haiti is connected to this Caribbean Single Market and Economy and Haiti is striving, there is a market out there for services of which every Honourable member constituent could provide. So it connects then to the average individual in Barbados.

The Democratic Labour Party talked about philosophy, but if we did not try to drive the process, how then could we get to a stage where a regional integration fund is being formulated to assist a country like Dominica that was sliding downhill as a result of an unhappy

relationship between Chiquito Dole and the Clinton administration, which is a byproduct of a fight in the World Trade Organisation. Those things had nothing to do with the governance of Dominica, but Dominica's economy has felt the fallout and the repercussions.

Dominica is part of this region. We do business with Dominica on a daily basis. Tourism business, such as ancillary services in our hotel sector and our restaurants and people getting their hair done, come through here from Dominica. All sorts of people benefit as a result of Dominica's economy being stronger. Therefore, when Barbados spearheads the initiative and is able to ensure that money and assistance of a technical capacity is given to the Dominicans so that their economy can grow and that the International Monetary Fund prescription, which is far less wholesome and unsavoury, does not prevail, then we are doing it in the interest not only of Dominica but of the people of Barbados as well.

Sir, I also want to speak to the question of vulnerability. Size alone gives us a situation where we have limited human resources and financial resources. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West asked what is the policy direction. When we go to a negotiating table with the rest of the world we have to be mindful of the fact that - the former Leader of the Opposition no longer has to parade for the cameras, so he can sit there and smile because he knows it is true, it resonates in his breast because he has been trained in the issues - our climate alone puts us in a position where susceptibility to tropical storms can wipe out our agricultural sector overnight and destroy our housing stock overnight and the people of Barbados can be pauperised in a day or two as a result of one climatic experience. Limited domestic market because of the fact that we are heavily reliant on imports makes us exceptionally vulnerable to economic shocks. These, therefore, are part of the concept which guides us, drives us and directs us when we go to a table.

Sir, in talking about a Free Trade Area of the Americas, the questions which came from the Opposition are, how does it benefit us and what is the direction. There is a Free Trade Area of the Americas starting from the Antarctic and going all the way down to Tierra del Fuego in Argentina. Sir, as long as there are two superpowers virtually within this hemisphere that are subsidising heavily their agricultural products, then we cannot come to a table and say we are prepared to liberalise, we have to be guided. We have to say that we will be hell-bent to protect the agricultural workers in Barbados. So what do we do? We just cannot stand fixed in time and say that we are going to protect the agricultural workers and that is the end of it. We have to make sure that while we are asking them for flexibility that we can extend the time frame and that we can reduce the scope and the coverage of the agreement that we are talking about. We therefore have to come here

and do what my Right Honourable friend did on Tuesday night which is to ensure that we provide the kind of injection and boost to make our agricultural sector more competitive. So I do not understand why there should be a difficulty in that.

The Leader of the Opposition speaks to trade reform and suggested, almost as if it is the premature onset of senility, that the management of trade reform is poor. I start from the premise that businesses trade and people trade, but countries do not. This Parliament and this country must stand in judgement of trade reform. It would do so because in 1989, the Democratic Labour Party took Barbados to Grand Anse to start a Caribbean Single Market and Economy commitment. The same Democratic Labour Party now whose new leader has all these flexible positions, speaks of the Right Excellent Errol Barrow time. Sir, I do too, but I will never forget that there was a Sir Lloyd, who was treated like an outside child on Wednesday night during the reply. He was forgotten. The point I want to make is that at no stage before Grand Anse and the commitment by the Democratic Labour Party in 1999 was there any national consultation or any educational exercise.

In 1994, my friend from St. Thomas was in here scouring a budget, the only budget presented by the Honourable Member for St. John and within five to six days after that, Barbados signed on to the World Trade Organisation, but that Budget was silent, deafeningly so, on the implications. There was no national consultation as we see now. Only two months ago we had a national consultation on the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. When one opens the newspapers every Wednesday, one would see advertisements explaining to the people what we are trying to do. The Honourable Member has the temerity to say that there is no interrelationship with the grass root people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I went to the office which is located in the Central Bank and they told me that they have distributed the information in the schools, in the supermarkets, in the public library and all over the place. Perhaps the Leader of the Opposition no longer reads. He speaks as though he has not read in a long time. The booklet is called the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. It speaks to every issue, the movement of capital, the movement of people, competition policy, investment, et cetera. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central asked what is in it. Clearly, Sir, you cannot help those who will not read.

I want this Chamber to know, and Hansard must reflect, that when we had the Caribbean Single Market and Economy discussion, the only Honourable Member from this Democratic Labour Party that condescended to attend was the Leader of the Opposition. I know, I was there. In all fairness to him, he spent the whole day walking up and

down quarrelling about those people when he has to work with that are so irresponsible that they do not come to these important meetings.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, they like to talk about a Magnificent Seven, but that is really a league of extraordinarily incompetent gentlemen.

Sir, we cannot only talk about transforming the economy because the country's businesses have to adapt.

Asides.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip North is calling me a 'Dem'. This is the Honourable Member from St. Philip North who resigned from a party because he thought that he was going to get a chance to run and come and ask if he could run over here.

Asides.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I want to speak to the question of Fund Access because if there is anything that stands out in this Budget, it is the prescription to empower the businesses of this country especially the small and micro businesses. If you look at the United States of America, Canada or England, you will see that the businesses which have driven those countries forward are not necessarily the big businesses, which will merge and acquisitions would take place and they will disappear from time to time, but the small businesses which are built by the blood, sweat, tears and the toil of the people of the country. Therefore, that is where the base of our development must come.

Fund Access was created to provide loans up to a maximum of \$50 000 to the micro sector, while the Enterprise Growth Fund sought to provide venture capital financing in the sum of \$50 000 to \$500 000 to foster the growth of young dynamic export-oriented firms.

House 13 Sequence 110

6.40 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Opposition Party has not sought to make contact with the facts, yet we have heard about everything, including homosexuality. They did not condescend to make contact with the fact that in the case of Fund Access, the capital will be increased from \$5.8 million by an amount of \$1.6 million per year.

The Prime Minister comes and exercises his discretion to improve the capitalisation of the Enterprise Growth Fund so that it will have an injection of \$10 million during the next four years. They did not say anything about a coalition of service industries that would now get \$500 000, so that architects, lawyers, those persons who are working in the culture industry such as the musicians, entertainers, et cetera, could all have access to build web sites to market their skills and services, so as to allow this region and this world to know of their existence. Sir, they could mount at trade shows, some of which are exceptionally costly, even to get there. That is what the capitalisation of the coalition of service providers is about.

The Opposition Party does not speak about the technical assistance package which was given to the tune of \$BDS 7 million a year to enterprises, so as to help them to arrive at global standards. I find it impossible and almost vulgar, that a Leader of the Opposition in this 2003 could come to Parliament and could have located himself in a 1961 era, like a lost child, and could have failed to connect with the fact that, for the first time, we are now spending money in order to retool, reinvest and re-equip our businesses and in our people, so that they could become competitive in the circumstances.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West said that it has started late but he has not suggested it before but must be heard to find fault. That is the nature of the politics, that is why the Honourable Member for St. Michael South was so right. That is perhaps what has brought the Honourable Member for Christ Church South to tears today, the fact that we are in a position where we are saying that this country is to be built, advanced and developed but, at the same time, the people of this country are being treated to empty partisan rhetoric.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to go further because there is a provision which was made in this Budget for building trade related capacity. Sir, the Small Business Guarantee Scheme is dear to my heart.

Asides.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: They could make sport at it. I know it is light, Sir but the Small Business Guarantees Scheme is there so that one could underwrite loan portfolios to the same Fund Access and to the Enterprise Growth Fund. I know of persons in my constituency, and I would guess that in every constituency of this country, there are persons who have mortgaged their homes in order to ensure that the business effort they are conducting, would survive. These small and micro businesses are fueled off debt financing. They are not fueled on equity

because there is no one to partner with them, instead they would gobble them up if they could, but to keep their businesses going, these honest, right-thinking Christian Barbadian men and women have gone out there and have mortgaged their houses, and there have been countless stories.

Sir, the Leader of the Opposition talks about persons losing their businesses. Yes, they have lost their businesses and what has to happen is that we must find a fiscal measure which enables them to capitalise at interest rates which are affordable and in conditions and terms which are flexible. Sir, I take my hat off in saluting the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, because he has come to the assistance of small and micro businesses in situations where people in Barbados otherwise left with this long legacy that the Opposition has talked about, would stand as bastardised and marginalised people in this community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you very much. In closing, I want to say that trade rules cannot subordinate our humanity. Sir, I want to quote the words of C.R.L. James:

“Black people of this world have long known struggle and affliction. That is, however, not our destiny for we have also known wealth, riches and rule. The task of this mighty people is to continue the struggle to educate, to build, to unify and to overcome, so as to enable ourselves to assume our rightful share of this planet’s riches.”

Sir, I thank you.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the outset I would wish to say how delighted I am to have the opportunity to speak on behalf of the people of St. Joseph from the position on the Front Bench. It has been quite sometime since a Member of Parliament for that constituency has had the opportunity to serve from this particular location.

I am especially grateful to the people of that constituency for having reposed in me the great confidence and for having repeatedly reposed great confidence in the Barbados Labour Party as being the political body that could best carry the future of these people forward.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Statement of Economic and Financial Policies is essentially a novel approach which has been used by us over the last few years, to express in clear terms, not just what we intend to do today but what it is that we intend that should happen for the medium-term and the long-term. It is the kind of approach that is required in a world where things are rapidly changing and where we always, while having our feet fixed firmly on today, have to focus our eyes on tomorrow.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Statement of Economic Policies comes at a good time. I have heard one of my colleagues on this side described it as an historic occasion. It is certainly the first such Presentation in the new term of a Government since the turn of the millennium.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that these are really and truly tumultuous times. To some extent, we have been protected from some of the ravages of war, famine, et cetera, but we have not been able to insulate ourselves from the ravages of HIV/AIDS, the difficulties that are attendant with globalisation, nor from the difficulties in the international financial markets beyond our shores.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, notwithstanding, the great difficulties that lie ahead, this Government is one that has clearly shown the people of Barbados that it is able to manoeuvre the course and is clearly able to chart a path for progress and development that is the envy, not only of the people of the Caribbean but certainly the world.

Therefore, as I travelled in various international arena even before coming to this position, it is with great pride, to hear persons talking about the Barbados model of development, to hear people marvel that in a country this size, Barbadians are able to sustain a standard of living that is second to none in the Caribbean.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am proud to stand here and to repeat on the eve of Independence, that I am proud to be a Barbadian. I am proud to be a Barbadian not just because I am a Member of this august House but because I am part of a team that clearly intends to follow the mandate that the people of this country has given to it.

I am proud to be a Barbadian when I recognise that our proud performance is not based on something that we might have done in 1976 but something that we have achieved in the lives of persons who are living today, and that our achievements are not 40, 50 or 60 years old but that they lie more in the foundation we are laying today for what is to come tomorrow. Sir, it is clear that some persons have great difficulty with understanding the importance of a foundation.

House No.13(111)6.40 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: The reason for the astounding silence yesterday when the Leader of the Opposition said that Barbados needs the Democratic Labour Party now more than ever is simply because of the fact that there is no confidence in him when he makes that statement nor is there acceptance of that fact by the people standing on the other side with him. Sir, Barbados needs a

Government that is forward-thinking and the people of this country returned such a Government to office.

Sir, we see the challenges that lie ahead as opportunities for the Barbadian man and woman to show their resilience and innovativeness. This Statement of Economic and Financial Policies is replete with examples which are designed to firmly entrench Barbadians with their sense of enterprise and their sense of initiative into the Caribbean of the future. This particular set of economic policies shows sensitivity and is one in which every Barbadian can find hope.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the people of the constituency of St. Joseph are pleased to have been able to listen to this presentation on Tuesday. As they listened, they were able to pinpoint various things that were going to make a material difference in their lives.

Therefore, I want to laud the efforts of the Ministry of Agriculture in preparing a plan for presentation to the people for the complete development of the Scotland district. Honourable Members of the other side perhaps do not have much of an opportunity to gaze at that beautiful side of Barbados in their constituencies but this district represents one-seventh of Barbados' land mass. It is important to this Government that we try to encourage development in the Scotland district and we are taking the bold step of the declaring it to be a special development area.

I look forward to very soon being a part of the formation of a special group of people called the Scotland District Development Group, which will build on the foundation of the special development area provisions and encourage sensitive and sensible development in the Scotland district.

I am especially heartened that in this particular plan we are able to announce what is stated to be the development of water resources. It is not with any pride that I reflect on the fact that the people of my constituency have been facing grave water woes over the last year. I am able to say that the Barbados Water Authority has been working assiduously to ensure that these water woes are being relieved.

I am especially pleased to see on page 53 of this document, under development of water resources that provision is being made in the sum of \$14.8 million for reservoir development. This is clearly an indication that this Government recognises the continued importance of the Scotland district as an area of tremendous beauty and natural resources and also as a place where Barbadians continue to call their homes.

Therefore, it is an important pillar of this Government's platform that instead of abandoning areas such as the Scotland district that we do all we can as a Government and a Party to ensure that this area is returned once again to pride of place in the economy of Barbados. It is also noteworthy that a significant sum of money is going to be invested on arboriculture and reforestation of the Scotland district.

Sir, the Scotland district is clearly one of the most scenic parts of Barbados and it is certainly the area in Barbados where ecotourism has its highest potential and as a Government we intend to see that this area is returned to its full glory.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the matter of manufacturing falls within my portfolio as Minister of Industry and International Business. Therefore, I am pleased to be able to comment on the provision made in this statement for the improvement of the lot of the manufacturing sector.

We are well aware that there are challenges ahead in globalisation and I want to remind members of this august body that liberalisation in the manufacturing sector has been taking place as far back as 1994. As a matter of fact, by 2000 most of the protective mechanisms in place for manufacturing had been removed. Notwithstanding the fact that the protectionist's era was long over, the manufacturing sector has continued to hold its own in the Barbadian economy and currently employs 10 000 jobs, contributing 8.4 per cent to the real GDP of Barbados.

It is, therefore, with this in mind that this Government is pleased to continue the technical assistance programme that we started three years ago. In the three years that this programme has been functioning, it has rendered direct assistance to over 98 companies and a further 67 service providers and entities.

It is significant, especially when you recognise that we are forced today to manufacture goods and services to world class standards. This Technical Assistance Fund has worked admirably in ensuring that Barbadian manufacturers are able to reach world class standards by becoming both HACCP compliant and ISO ready and it has been providing a large degree of training for the employees in this sector.

We are, therefore, delighted not to continue this technical assistance programme for a limited period of time but for as long as it takes for all Barbadian enterprises to compete easily and readily with manufacturing concerns abroad.

Sir, we can be proud of our manufacturing sector because, notwithstanding all the difficulties we faced, companies in Barbados have been able to successfully

export in the regional and extra-regional market. It does not do too much to ask Honourable Members to remember the contribution of rum to the manufacturing sector in Barbados.

Recently, I was delighted when the company Remy Martin said to me that they had closed a large operation which bottles liqueurs in Curacao and which employed many people to bring their operation to Barbados to take advantage of the fact that Barbadian workers are highly skilled and because many efficiencies are available in the Barbados financial environment.

Sir, it is a signal honour when the economy of Barbados so pleases an international investor who has operations across the Caribbean that he is now thinking of moving the headquarters of their full distributive sector to Barbados. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the confidence that our economy encourages. Sir, no concessions were given to Remy Martin to get them to come Barbados but we are successfully able to penetrate the regional and extra regional markets in many other areas. Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the issues we now face is that in order to export certain fish and animal commodities to Europe, we have to be on a list. The Ministry of Agriculture is tackling the issue so as to be able to allow companies like Bico Limited and Roberts Manufacturing Limited who are tooled up and ready to reach into these markets to be able to access them in a competitive manner.

H13/19:00

Sequence 112

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. D.D. MARSHALL:

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that all of the measures that have been announced for the manufacturing sector would have caused particular delight when it was announced that a corporation tax at the rate of 25 per cent is to take effect in 2005. It is clear that this Government is committed to seeing that manufacturing maintains a special place in the productive sector of Barbados. Moreover, after 2005, we are committed to further reductions.

Sir, we can expect to see that Barbados will not only be treating its manufacturing sector as a special sector which will benefit from special tax regimes but we are also positioning ourselves to see that Barbados becomes the hub for manufacturing in a way that has never seen before.

There are economies in the Caribbean which have certain benefits. Certainly, the Trinidadian environment has a significant advantage in terms of manufacturing when you look at the cost of their energy. We aim to ensure that

there is going to be an equal playing field when once we get the matter of the purchasing of natural gas sorted out so that we can offer competitive energy cost. There are other factors in the equation and we want to make sure that we treat to all of the relevant inputs and issues. The issue of corporation tax as a significant incentive is one which has been welcomed overwhelmingly by the manufacturing sector.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this economy is one which sees a significant reliance on international business. I am pleased to say that the sector continues to show some growth in some areas but certainly we are not in a situation where we are in any declining. The international business sector continues to be strong for Barbados and we are developing a strategic focus to ensure that the sector continues to be fully supported.

We have taken measures and listened to the recommendations of the private sector and made amendments to the legislation which they have asked for to make them more competitive. It is a Manifesto promise that we are going to develop a dedicated unit specially for doing research and development.

Sir, in the past certain products were developed around us and Barbados would therefore try to bring these kinds of investment vehicles into our framework but we recognised that the international financial sector is one that is dynamic, fast moving and it is one where there is a tremendous amount of competition. We are committed to lead in this sector and not to be relegated to being a follower.

This specialist research and development unit is going to be focusing on research, to develop appropriate policy responses and it is going to be looking at developing special purpose vehicles. Sir, we are going to effectively bring a Barbados brand to the international financial sector, which should see us attracting more and more business away from other domiciles in the near future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the matter of business facilitation is one that is of great importance to this economy. I mentioned earlier the opportunities that we are making available in the manufacturing sector. I would want to talk about the fact that Government remains committed to the Enterprise Growth Fund and Fund Access. I want to indicate to the public that this Government has been responsive in dealing with the issues that have been raised by the private sector.

Sir, these funds have been very well utilised but they have been some bottlenecks and private individuals who want to get assistance from these funds have come to the Government and said that their timetable is not necessarily the timetable of the administration of the Enterprise

Growth Fund or Fund Access and sometimes your conditions are not accommodating.

A committee was set up in January, 2003 and that committee met with members of the private sector and has been able to make significant recommendations to the Government and these recommendations have been accepted. We recognised that at the end of the day that it is not the Government that trades or does business, it is the private sector. We therefore recognised that in order for Barbados' private sector to continue to be competitive that we have to be willing and able to accommodate the demands that they place on the Government.

I want to mention specifically our commitment to the area of services. Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we say that Barbados has a natural competitive advantage in the area of services in the rest of the Caribbean, Members of the Opposition seem to think that we are not serious about what we are saying. There are significant indicators of the reason we take this position. We have an educational system that is second to none in the Caribbean. We spend a greater percentage of our Government's expenditure on education than any other sector. We have a quality of Government service that is second to none in the Caribbean. We have good infrastructure in Barbados. We have a rules-based society and more important since September 1994 we have good governance. These are the things which ensure that Barbados has a competitive advantage in services.

I want to use this opportunity to make it clear that when we speak of services we are not necessarily speaking of what you might consider the high IQ service opportunity. We are not just talking about doctors, lawyers and actuaries. We are talking about services running from the very high to the very modest. When we talk about services, it is in recognition of the fact that Barbados has easily some of the finest artisans, carpenters, masons and makers of furniture, to be found anywhere in the Caribbean, and I am reminded that many of them come from the constituency of St. Joseph.

Sir, when we say that Barbados has an advantage in services, we are running the gamut of services but it is clear to me that Her Majesty's Opposition does not include such things as furniture making and construction as services in the way in which we include them. That is a typical narrow definition that is applied by the Opposition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not recognise that when we talk about services that tourism, the single largest driver in this economy, is the finest example of how Barbados has excelled as a service economy. The international financial services sector, the second largest driver, is another service sector. When we talk about services, we are not speaking about something new that we want to go into. We are

speaking about an engine in the economy that Barbados has shown outstanding success in for the last forty or fifty years.

Sir, we are now seeking to go beyond the traditional services of tourism and international financial services sector and ensure that Barbadians recognise that in the area of cultural activity that we are second to none as well as in the area of carpentry and, perhaps, in the area of embalming. The point is, all services provided by the people of this country are available and are encouraged for export. Sir, that is the reality.

We have done exceedingly well in terms of services in our domestic sector. What we have to recognise is that your capacity in our domestic sector allows you to export. When we think about the fact that in a services sector, for example Crop Over, we have photographers, artists, designers, composers and arrangers, we, therefore, have a cadre of Barbadian service sectors that come together to make the Crop Over Festival what it is.

H13: 19.10

Sequence 113

Thursday, November 27, 2003

7.10 p.m.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, we are able to export the finest of our products, out of our festivals like Crop Over, across the rest of the world. Therefore, we want these advantages to encourage Barbadians to come on board with us as we seek to exploit them, and that is why we have encouraged supporting the coalition of services.

The Barbados coalition of services today, represents a body of almost 3 000 professions. We have to recognise that the time has come, more now than perhaps before, especially given the CSME and FTAA, that we have to position all Barbadians, whether they are craftsmen or creators of something else, to be in a position to export these things across the regional market.

I am happy, again, to talk about construction services, because we have so trained and retrained our artisans that they are able to work on first-classed residential and commercial properties. We now have construction companies that are ready to burst out of our geographical confines, and move onto the rest of the Caribbean.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, 40 years ago this region was focusing on independence, and that is what all of the leaders of countries had in their minds. Today, we are moving in a different ideological direction. We are moving

from independence to integration. We have moved away from the position that we are able to stand alone or, in fact, that it is even desirable to stand alone. We are moving towards a position of integration because we recognise that we can no longer rest or rely on the strength of our domestic markets.

Asides.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: We can no longer rely on what we have within our shores, so we have to start looking beyond our shores, and that is the real purpose of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

I am not surprised that Her Majesty's Opposition has mixed reactions to something as noble and as full of potential as this. It suits them to remain insular in their thinking while we, on this side of the room, recognise that reaching outward, is what takes us forward to success. We have to prepare, not just for CSME, but for the FTAA and the WTO. Therefore, our work in the CSME, is an integral part of that transition.

I look forward to the day when, across this region, we have full movement of people and free movement of people. Barbados has led the way in circumstances where other countries have been a little reluctant to opening up to the free movement of skilled persons. This country, and I said before that I am proud to be a Barbadian, has never shirked on its international commitment. It has never shirked on its regional obligations. It has never shirked on providing opportunities for our people. I want to say with full confidence that I see the CSME, as an opening market, full of opportunities for all Barbadians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is important in this challenging environment that the Government looks towards diversifying. We have made tremendous strides in bringing new businesses to Barbados. We are doing tremendous work in call centres. Right now, we have in the region of 700 young men and women who are employed in call centres. These are in good jobs, solid jobs and jobs that can give to them a tremendous degree of self-respect and fiscal opportunity. Our plan is to see this move to 3 000 over the next two to three years.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government is playing its part. We want Her Majesty's Opposition to play their part but we see their part, not as standing as obstructionists in the way of progress, but as joining together with the Government to ensure a better future for all of our people.

Asides.

Hon. D.D. MARSHALL: It is on that point clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we diverge. The Opposition clearly does not have the same vision that we do. We have

a vision of a brighter tomorrow for all Barbadians. We have a vision where all of us, hand in hand, will go forward to a future of prosperity. I want to salute the principles which are the bedrock of this Statement of Economic and Financial Policies, the Principles of stability, the principles of good Government, the principles of forward thinking and the fundamental principle of progress for all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg that this House be now suspended until 8.00 p.m. tonight.

It is anticipated that we will complete the other speeches tonight and there may be a possibility that there will be additional business tonight that we will have to transact after the closure of this debate.

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

The question that this Honourable House be suspended until 8.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

House 13, sequence 114, 7.16 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Hon. Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, it is a distinct honour for me to rise at this time to speak in support of this Resolution and to commend the Right Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of the Finance for a comprehensive and visionary Financial and Economic Statement which is replete with creative programmes and sectoral policies.

I also want at this time to thank the good people of Christ Church South who assisted me during the campaign, for reposing their confidence in me and for giving me the opportunity to serve and represent their interest in this Honourable Chamber. I want to assure them that I will endeavour to do my utmost during the time that I am here to represent their interest. Immediately, I want to say that I am certain that many of the measures which were outlined by the Minister of the Finance will be of benefit to many of my constituents.

Some Members of the Opposition is saying that the presentation made by the Prime Minister is not a budget.

Some may wonder what does this do for Barbados and where does it takes us. I have heard the Leader of the Opposition describing the presentation made by the Minister of the Finance as fluff. I sat and listened yesterday to the Leader of the Opposition for three hours and twenty-two minutes, and I do not know if there is anyone in Barbados who would be able to tell me a salient point that was made in that three hours and twenty two minutes. All I could describe his presentation as is absolute froth. Mr. Speaker, the Financial Statement which was delivered by the Minister of the Finance seeks to prepare us for the world environment in which we as a country would have to participate and operate in the next five years. I have heard Honourable Members on both side speaking to the issue of the World Trade Organisation, the Free Trade Area of the Americas and the EUACP.

Asides.

Hon. Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: Realising the pending international trading arrangements which would make the way we are accustomed doing business in Barbados completely different, it is ideal that the Honourable Prime Minister has come with a set of policies which are creative and imaginative especially in the areas of agriculture, manufacturing, international business, the new area which he has brought in the cultural industry, and with the appropriate emphasis on science and technology at this point in time. Mr. Speaker, these are all aimed at ensuring that we avoid some of the economic pitfalls which might befall many countries in their approach when dealing with these negotiations while at the same time ensuring that we have the human resources and the social capacity to deal with the challenges of globalisation and trade liberalisation.

Mr. Speaker, we have to get it right at home first. Within this region, it is imperative that we sort out all of the issues in relation to Caribbean Single Market and Economy, including those of delimitation, a case in point being the fishing agreement with Trinidad and Tobago. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central made reference to this earlier today. I believe he has some interest in some fishing vessel that was impounded in Trinidad and Tobago. I do not know what it was doing there, if it was fishing or what it was doing. He made some reference to that, I do not remember the details of it. However, I think that we need to come to some agreement. It has taken a long time.

The Opposition in their time attempted to achieve an agreement with Trinidad and Tobago and they were unsuccessful and we are still having problems in coming to some agreement with them. My information is that there are still some outstanding issues which need to be decided on to come to some new agreement. After the breakdown in the talks, one could see in the Trinidadian newspapers reference made to the fact that Barbados wants to come to

Trinidad and Tobago for its flying fish. Mr. Speaker, I am sure that you understand that the flying fish is a migratory species and they do not belong to one particular nation.

A lot has been said about this Caribbean Single Market and Economy, but we have to come to grips with the whole concept of the education of the public. If after all this time people could still assume that someone in one country is coming for fish in another country, then we have a lot of work to do. It is time that we educate our people to make that psychological change to understand the whole concept of a single market and to understand that a single market means that any individual in a particular country can use whatever method and whatever opportunity he has to take advantage of an economic opportunity in another country. It is a single market, so it is open to all when an opportunity arises. Until we have instilled this concept into our people, I believe we are going to have problems in getting this single market going. However, in his wisdom, the Minister of the Finance is still going on making preparations.

I want to commend the Prime Minister for trying to put plans in place to upgrade our fisheries infrastructure. This being very important to ensure that our fisheries sites are consistent with international standards, Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) and other standards, so that in the long run our fish can be exported to Europe, Britain and North America.

In this regard, I am particularly pleased that he has made mention of the fact that \$800 000 have been allocated to change the roof of the Oistins fish market. I must thank the Honourable Minister of Finance for listening to my concerns and that of the fisherfolk of Barbados who have been complaining about the state of this Oistins Fish Market. I believe the changing of this roof is but the first measure, as there are plans to upgrade and expand this fishing complex.

In addition, I know that there are discussions being held about upgrading the fish bay complex to upgrade the facility being used not only by the vendors but by local visitors realising that hundreds of people go to this area every weekend.

I am also mindful of the plan for the redevelopment of Oistins bearing in mind that tourists go to Oistins. I am sure you know about the plan for Oistins as a berthing facility, Sir. It is felt that Oistins could become a small port. There are obviously plans to upgrade the civic centre there with a new post office and a new bus terminal, with possibly an extension to the polyclinic and indeed an arts and craft centre and a skills training centre. All of this planning to develop Oistins will redound to the benefit of those who lives in the surrounding areas.

While I am on this, I should also mention the planned restoration of the South Point Lighthouse which is of concern to the many residents of Enterprise and Atlantic Shores. Government has started making provision for this. Indeed, advertisements were placed in the newspapers recently and so we hope to have the work started on that in the not too distant future.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to make reference to the very important Oasis project which has been derided and criticised by the Honourable Members on the other side, especially by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central. I am pleased to see that Government has made a start in this direction. It is very important that we are able to rescue some of the young men of this society, especially those who seem to be what we would call dropouts and the boys 'on the block'.

If we are serious about national development and developing Barbados as a real developed country, we cannot afford such a valuable group of young people to be on the periphery and to be left out of society. We have had consultations with these boys 'on the block' and they have told us some of the things they think needs to be done for them. This is all part of the project. I would agree with some of the Honourable Members who said that \$1 million might not be enough but at least it is a start and as we go along we would allocate the funds as necessary. I am obviously pleased that many of my constituents would stand to benefit in this regard.

Sir, I am the Minister of Health and I think it is important tonight that I speak to the issues concerning health in this country. The Minister of the Finance in his Financial Statement made reference to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital as one of those state institutions which needs to improve its level of service and efficiency. Indeed, the Leader of the Opposition, who raved and ranted for three hours and twenty-two minutes from the banal to the esoteric and made absolutely no sense, spoke extensively of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. House 13 Sequence 115

8.10 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. Dr. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, as he spoke, I sat here with a feeling of *deja vu*, a feeling that I have heard or seen what he was saying somewhere before. It then dawned on me that as he was reading, I remembered reading the column of the Opposition from time to time, it was something that some two or three weeks before I had read in one of their columns. This startled me because I kept wondering as they spoke of Independence, is this what we have come to from a Leader of the Opposition in our 37th year of Independence. Sir, this is an important response to a Budget speech, as we move into these

negotiations with the Free Trade Area of the Americas and World Trade Organisation (WTO). Could a serious leader who hopes to lead this country come to Parliament with a collection of previous newspaper columns, the Democratic Labour Party's columns, stapled together and read them as a response to a Budget? Is this what we have come to in 2003?

Mr. Speaker, I believe this Honourable Chamber deserves better. The Leader of the Opposition has said much about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and tonight I intend to respond to everything he has said.

Mr. Speaker, I believe I have a special relationship with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I was trained there as a student, I worked there as an intern, I did some of my surgical training there and I have been hospitalised there. Therefore, you must understand the sort of bond that exists between that institution and me. Sir, you must also understand the commitment that I have to ensuring that this institution is transformed into a beacon of health care in the Eastern Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West shares this appreciation and also believes this. Having said that, we recognised that there is need for improvement in the level of service being administered at that institution. There was a Haynes Commission of Inquiry and a Haynes Report. One of its main recommendations was that there was need for the hospital to be run by a board of directors, to improve its efficiency. This is not a unique concept. I believe that worldwide, Barbados probably lags behind most countries in not having a board to look after its main health institution.

To make it easier because of the problems we are hearing about and being cognizant of these problems, the composition of the board was looked at carefully. Here was a Board consisting of 10 members, where the Act says that only three would have been selected by the Minister of Health, the other seven would represent other groups in the society, such as the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB); the Barbados Registered Nurses Association; the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners; the Christian Council; the Barbados Association of Retired Persons; the University of the West Indies (UWI), and the private sector. Therefore, for the first time in Barbados there were these seven entities being represented on the board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, a Board set up by Government where the majority of the people were not appointed by the Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, knowing that the problems at the Hospital were long-standing, no one expected that those problems would have been solved overnight, after all, they

have been going on for several years. I believe as far back as 1991, when the Other Party was in power, they were having problems with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and I believe that was one of the reasons they had decided to reopen the St. Joseph's Hospital at that time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said before, it was felt that the establishment of a board would have given the Queen Elizabeth Hospital greater autonomy and would have led to greater efficiency in the delivery of service at that institution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for instance, when hiring a new doctor from the United Kingdom, the whole process of getting that doctor to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital could have taken months. Sometimes a doctor would write the institution offering his services and by the time the whole process is completed, which might be a year later, that doctor might have been hired somewhere else.

I believe at some time we went through the number of steps it would have taken and it was about 22 different steps that had to be taken in order to get a doctor appointed at that institution. Therefore, one could imagine the situation with doctors leaving and doctors wanting to come, and if there were a shortage of doctors in a specific specialty, the problem of having to go through 22 steps to have a new doctor in place. Of course, we recognised that having a board in place would have removed all of this bureaucracy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, similarly the hospital runs out of supplies from time to time and you would appreciate that the hospital coming under the authority of the Ministry of Health, would have to go through that whole period of going to the Ministry of Finance, having a Cabinet paper done, having a supplementary done in order to get funds for one simple line item or for materials. Therefore, moving to a board would remove all of this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is expected that a board would improve the efficiency of the institution but most important, it is felt that it is necessary to look after improving the conditions for patients. I think that in all of the arguments and discussions, the Honourable Member seemed to have forgotten that the main focus of the hospital is to provide care and attention to patients, all other things are secondary.

Having said that, it was also felt at that time the staff, especially the nurses, were working under stressful conditions. The Board felt that by putting certain things on stream would have helped to alleviate some of the stress and would have improved their conditions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was felt that for the first time we would have developed a code of rights for patients, this

is something that is non-existent. Sir, to show commitment and goodwill, the Board started off by establishing the 2 080 posts which existed at the hospital under the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service, to show that there was no intention to send persons home, as the union had started to claim.

There was also a clear understanding that, on transition to the Board, the terms and conditions of staff employed at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would have been no less favorable, and, of course, they would have been entitled to their pensionable guarantees under Section 19 of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act.

In fact, when I came to Office, I started meetings with the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB), the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners (BAMP), and we had a number of meetings to look at moving the process forward. After about four meetings, the National Union of Public Workers excused themselves from further meetings. We were under the impression that all of the other unions were all in favor of the Board and that the National Union of Public Workers were opposed to it. In other words, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners, the Barbados Registered Nurses Association, the Nurses Assistants Association of Barbados, and the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) were in favor of the Board and the National Union of Public Workers seemed to be the odd one out.

As a matter of fact, the National Union of Public Workers December 10, 2003 stopped coming to meetings, said that they were not interested in a board and, in fact, went further and said that they would be fundamentally opposed to any board.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I should go back and say that this has a history. After the Haynes Commission of Inquiry was set up, all unions in Barbados who represent workers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital were invited to make representation on behalf of their members. Incidentally, the National Union of Public Workers were invited three times and never went before the Haynes Commission of Inquiry to make representation, yet we hear that no one has spoken or is talking to them. This is absolutely not true.

As I said, we were not looking for any confrontation, our focus has been to improve the standard of delivery of health care to patients and to all Barbadians. The National Union of Public Workers then distributed brochures, and I can make one a document of the Honourable House. In that brochure it said: "The National Union of Public Workers, a Case Against the Board of Management at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital." They went on to advise their workers not to agree to any secondment, that no one could have forced them into secondment, neither were they to accept

or to act on any directive coming from a board. This was their approach to solving the problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and improving health care.

After the Board was named last year, the National Union of Public Workers went further and told the officials in the Ministry of Health that their workers were not to be spoken to by any member of that Board. Therefore, there was a situation where there was a transition period, where the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was moving towards a board, where the Board was supposed to speak to the workers and explain to them how it was going to function, but yet members of the Board are being told that they cannot speak to the workers of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because they are civil servants and would not be listening to them.

As a result, up to this day the members of the Board who have attended meetings were allowed to sit while officials from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Finance and the Civil Service, spoke to the workers. Sir, there is no input from Board members in speaking to these workers.

Sir, when secondments were attempted last April, the National Union of Public Workers were again opposed to them and threatened to have an injunction. We decided at that point that was enough, that we were moving towards a transition period of one year to 18 months, in which time a senior management would be selected, a transition team would be devised to work out the necessary systems and protocols to get it going. They would then enter into discussions with the various unions. Sir, I keep hearing the National Union of Public Workers saying that they represent the 2 080 workers at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

House No.13(116) 8.10 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. J.X. WALCOTT: I would like to know which doctors they represent because the 2 080 workers at the hospital are represented by five unions but we keep hearing that they represent all of them. It was expected after we devised a system that we would enter into discussions with the workers representatives to look at the terms and conditions, we realised that people are going to be encouraged to come over from the serenity and solidity of the civil service and that we would have to offer them better conditions. We were contemplating various allowances, improved training opportunity and career streams for the nursing staff which is non-existence. Again, as I said, we are attempting to improve conditions for patients, this is all we are trying to do. We are not trying to disadvantage any person but to improve conditions for patients who have to utilise that institution.

We were only asking the National Union of Public Workers like other unions, to come on board and join the Barbados Workers Union and BAMP in moving this process forward. Sir, yet we get workers being called to meeting at nine o'clock in the hospital. I ask, Mr. Speaker, who would be affected? Sir, it is the patient that is affected. We get National Union of Public Workers advising workers that they should not take any instructions from the Acting Director of the Hospital but the patient suffers. Workers were told by National Union of Public Workers not to attend staff meetings but it is the patient who will suffer.

Sir, I am at a loss as to what they hope to achieve. On one hand they say they are Barbadians and are interesting in improving healthcare and the standard of delivery at this institution but when we try to move the process forward they seem to be seeking to cause obstruction. Sir, is this really necessary? These are the sort of questions we have to ask.

Again, I reiterate that we have not been seeking confrontation. We agreed that the board members should not speak to the workers and that there would be no secondments but there is only a limit because the Government must govern. The Government intends for a board of management to take full control of the running of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and it will happen.

As I said before there will be a transition period of twelve months and at the end of that period, terms and conditions will be worked out and workers will be given options to come with the board or to be absorbed in the civil service at a comparable post. This will happen and those who do not want to come with the board, will have to be paid out.

Sir, there are some other issues. The Leader of the Opposition reading from his DLP column or in his reply to Budget spoke of the ambulance service. Again, we are mindful of the condition of the ambulance service.

We are not fools, we know what we are doing. As I speak to you, there are plans for the decentralisation of the ambulance service. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip West speaking about the need to have a facility at Six Cross Roads. I agree with him but in the interim there is a new fire station at Arch Hall which already has facilities to accommodate an ambulance so we will start with decentralisation of a pilot project in Arch Hall next year.

We have retrained all of our emergency ambulance technicians over the last years not only the one employed by Government but also those in the private sector. We have also trained policemen and fire officers and have had discussions with the Barbados Community College to start,

for the first time, in Barbados the training of paramedics in January next year. Sir, we are mindful and we intend to improve conditions.

Sir, there are also plans to acquire new ambulances but at present there is no maintenance contract and there seems to be coordination between the workshop and the ambulance service but we are dealing with these issues.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West also queried a waiting time for surgery. I believe that every person in Barbados knew that the operating theaters at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital were being refurbished and I was at a loss to hear from the Leader of the Opposition that there is a waiting list. Sir, does the Leader of the Opposition not live in Barbados or not read the newspaper? Perhaps he lives in a cocoon and does not see anything outside of himself.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said that there are problems with nurses leaving the island. Again, I am asking if the Honourable Member has not heard about the regional managed migration programme for nursing because migration of nurses is a problem for every country in the region. It is not a unique situation to Barbados and we cannot simply wave a magic wand and solve the problem because it is a universal problem and nurses in this region leave to find greener pastures. The Honourable Member should say how he would deal with the problem instead of criticising the situation.

The Honourable Member spoke as well about the insecurity of patients going to the hospital but I want to say that every day, hundreds of lives are saved at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West can bear me out on this point since daily open-heart surgery and neurosurgery are done daily and we are the only place in the Caribbean where laparoscopic surgery is offered free of charge. Yet, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West has the temerity to say that people are afraid to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Sir, two weeks ago there was a plan to overthrow the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. If it were to happen again and he developed a sudden chest left side pain, where would the Honourable Member go?

The Honourable Member also spoke about dialysis which he should know about because he has an intimate relation with it and knows who pays and does not pay for it. We have a dialysis unit but there are more people than it can accommodate and Government has agreed to pay \$45 000 per person to have dialysis in the private sector. Is the Honourable Member saying that Government should also pay for persons who have medical insurance as well and deprive another person who does not medical insurance?

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West wants to speak and I imagine that he will speak about declining health care in this country. He is employed full-time with the Ministry of Health to look after sick people at the Geriatric Hospital and, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask you to find out from the Honourable Member for St. Philip West how many people he has seen this week, how many of his patients have died this week or had complications and how many hours he spent in the hospital this week.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West is being paid as a full-time officer but still has the temerity to speak about declining health standards in this country.

H13/20:30

Sequence 117

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. Dr. J.X. WALCOTT: . Why do you think that we have these declining health standards if we employ people like these?

Asides.

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

Hon. Dr. J.X. WALCOTT: Mr. Speaker, during the course of these two days we were treated to three hours and twenty-two minutes of absolute froth, not a salient point. Perhaps, one thing that I can remember is that I was used a considerable number of times. I do not know what it meant. We had a number of Members speaking and grandstanding, repeating overused clichés about workers, black people, poor people and their philosophical mores. Some of their philosophical mores are based in Highgate, Brereton and Church Village. There seems to be a mismatch going all over the place and trying to tie their flags onto some flag pole, wherever they could find one.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have two minutes to conclude now, please.

Hon. Dr. J.X. WALCOTT: I support this Resolution and I have no hesitation in doing so. I think that it would help to pave the way to take this country further in the next five years.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, this is the eighteenth Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals

that I have had the chance to participate in. Like other Honourable Members, I want to thank my constituents for bestowing a great honour on me, not only by electing me but by the third highest majority in the last election, even though I am a Member of the Opposition. Sir, that gives me the courage and fortitude to participate in this debate with the same tenacity with which I have always represented the interest of my constituents and the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, I am tempted on this occasion to begin my presentation where I ended last year. For in the final seconds of my presentation to this Honourable Chamber, I recalled reminding Honourable Members of this House and forewarning the people of Barbados that in spite of the Government's ranting and raving and in spite of what were going to be their vicious personal attacks, not only me and my colleagues but on the Democratic Labour Party as a whole, that Barbados in the year 2003, notwithstanding that there was going to be a general election, would be business as usual.

I said to Barbadians that when all the song and dance was over, when the fat lady had sung her final song on last year's Budget presentation, that people would find that there was absolutely nothing in that package for them. I forewarned the public that members of the Prime Minister's 'How Great Thou Art Chorale', found both in the public and private sectors in Barbados were going to hail his presentation as his finest ever. I predicted that and the next day I read it with my own eyes in the newspaper. They lined up one after the other. Sir, not the Honourable Members of the House because that is their job whether they have a spine or not to say that their leader is worthy, the greatest et cetera.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I was talking about other persons in the public who felt it important that they should jump up immediately after the presentation was over to say that it was the finest ever. They proclaimed it as a good Budget, calculated to address and redress the social and economic difficulties confronting the country. All that and more has come to pass since the last Budget.

Sir, that Budget was delivered, it was hailed as the best ever by some leaders in the private sector and Members of the Government's side of the Honourable House and as usual the public was left to swallow that which others were chewing. In other words, select interests in this country were chewing while the majority of Barbadians were swallowing air.

Mr. Speaker, of course, I was vilified and verbally crucified on that occasion simply for forewarning the people of Barbados that there was absolutely nothing in

that Budget for them, nothing at all. The presentation on Tuesday simply confirmed not only what I said about that Budget but what was said on this side about previous Budgets since 1994. This year the cycle is here again. The annual Coney Island comes once a year to Barbados and we also have a circus coming to Barbados, as we can predict them at a certain time of year. We cannot predict when the Budget will come but we predict what will be said, who will say it and you can also predict that when it is all over it will be just like the circus, it will pack up and leave with all of the dust behind it and that is all.

Sir, the Minister of Finance, this week, painted a picture of Barbados, his annual word picture in which he created an image of this country that is near-perfect. Indeed, to borrow the words of the Barbados Tourism Authority and my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, he outlined plans to put Barbados, "just beyond the imagination."

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I have to give the Honourable Member for St. Peter credit. The script was much better written this year. It was more reader-friendly than in previous years. He was in high spirits. I very much enjoyed his mood. He said that he was heavily influenced by the fact that he has been called to the Bar, the only non-lawyer to have done so and I thought, generally, that the mood of his...

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: I will say this though. Once again, after that presentation, the people of Barbados would be invited to forget the troubles of today as no doubt he forgot about them as he was presenting that wonderfully sounding Budget and to journey with the Prime Minister into the land of tomorrow.

The Minister of Finance has a fixation with the horizon. Every year in his Budget presentations he presents against the background of this far-off horizon. For the past five years we have been told in this country of the necessity to reposition Barbados for the challenges of tomorrow but tomorrow, for the vast majority of Barbadians, it would appear, will never come.

Sir, all that this Government has done and continues to do, by the admission of its own members, is to reposition people out of Barbados, so that people are being repositioned out of housing in this country and people are being repositioned out of education. I saw my friend, the Honourable Member for St. George South look up when I spoke about housing. I am not surprised because he has been in here for a long time, many summers, winters, springs and falls.

Two weeks ago I heard the Honourable Member say that he could not ask the people of St. George South to vote for the Barbados Labour Party. He could never ask them again because in nine years they have not provided a single house spot or house for him as a parliamentary representative, a long-standing former Chairman of the Party, senior member and hardworking member of the Barbados Labour Party.

20.40 p.m.

Sequence 118

Thursday, November 27, 2003

8.40 p.m.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Sir, that is how the Barbados Labour Party treats people in a constituency that has given them one of their finest Honourable Members.

Do you want us at the end of the day to believe that this Budget is repositioning the people of Barbados? This is repositioning select interests in Barbados. Select groups of people are being satisfied by this repositioning.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Oh yes, but there are a lot of people who are being repositioned out of Barbados. They live here every day, but they do not have anything at stake in this country, as a result of the policies of this Government. Sir, that is all the repositioning which is taking place in this country. People are being repositioned out of jobs. People who could once wake up every morning and know that they had a job and could feed their families, that the moral and attitude, even of some employers in this country were such, that they would not knock them off overnight, like a hoe handle. Sir, those persons can tomorrow be knocked off, because of what the Government accepts as the repositioning of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, nobody can go to work today in this country feeling that they have a secure job, no matter how hard they work. There is no legislation to help them, not a single piece of labour legislation was passed by this Government in nine years to protect workers, or to offer them a minimum wage. Do you want me to accept that you could be repositioning Barbados to the benefit of the people whom I represent? You all are repositioning Barbados for the people whose interests you serve and not for the average Barbadian.

Sir, that is why I say there is nothing in this Budget that the people of Barbados could exercise a song and dance about. They have lost interest in the exercise a long time ago. If they were to have to pay to come in here, I

believe that some members would not even come, and would say that it is not worth it.

Sir, last year's Budget was geared at preparing us for a brighter tomorrow. The same holds true for the year before and the year before that. The Budget presented on Tuesday also speaks of a brighter tomorrow but a tomorrow that is clearly never coming, and which falls only within the scope of the imagination of the Prime Minister and the members of his 'How Great Thou Art Choir'.

Mr. Speaker, we need to examine the performance of the Leader of this Government because that is where the buck stops. Every single tool that any leader would want to get his job done, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has been given. Every single conceivable tool that any text book talks about, and the reality of politics talks about, the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has within his grasp.

Prior to the last election, he said, "I want the team for the times." It is true some of you all over there were not supposed to be in that team, but I congratulate you, nevertheless for being in here. Against the better judgment of his colleagues, he was given the team that he requested. He told the country, that this is the team he wanted. He told that to all of you at the branch meetings. He went in the newspapers and said that this is the team that he must have.

Sir, a leader must be given the team he wants, and as I say, with or without a spine, all of you gave him the team that he wants. At the end of the day, Sir, even those persons who were rejected by the public at the polls in the last election, that he identified as the persons whom he wants, he was able to find a way to make way for them.

Sir, he now has a Cabinet, persons sitting at the table of national decision making, including the Honourable Member for St. James Central, the losing candidate for St. Philip West and the losing candidate for Christ Church East Central. This is the team he said he wanted, so the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter got his entire team. He got what he called, the team for the times. What does he tell us in the Budget?

We are having implementation problems. He tells us give me a little time more, it is coming, we are working on it. Sir, he has the largest Cabinet in the history of Barbados. The last one was the largest, but this one is even larger. He has every talent. He has three men doing work that the Honourable Member for St. George South did alone and did well, 15 years ago, when they did not even have computers. He has the largest collection of Ministers anywhere in the Caribbean, I believe, young and effective. Sir, but what happened on Tuesday?

Sir, we heard, we are trying to get through these things, we are sorry about implementation, I can point to two things we have done but the rest, you know how it is.

Mr. Speaker, what is in it for the people of Barbados? They have given him everything.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister told this country that the economy is stable. He has \$2 billion in foreign reserves, an economy that is performing. He boasted all of that. He said that the recession was not even as bad as they thought it would be, but what is he telling the people who want houses and the people who want an improved bus service?

I heard the Honourable Member for St. George North in here saying that everything is good in St. George. I passed through St. George last night on my way home and met people who told me that they go in the bus stand on evenings at 4.00 p.m. and cannot get a bus until 7.00 p.m. and he is the Minister of Transport and does not know that, because he said that everything is good in St. George. Buses are coming down full from other parts of the country...

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: St. Philip, that is even worse.

Aside.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Are you the Minister of Transport? They are so many of them, so I do not know how these Ministries are divided up now. Is it true that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is the Minister of Transport?

Aside.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: He did not say that everything is good in St. Philip South. Thank goodness for that, but I know that everything is not good in St. George North. There are still people who have valid concerns but this Budget would not address any of them.

The Prime Minister is so successful at negotiation, foreign, regional and local that he negotiated out of the Cabinet of Barbados, and the Barbados Labour Party's active Member, every single threat to his leadership. Sir, even that he did well. He is not under threat internationally, the first leader in the history of Barbados to achieve that successfully, so he does not have any threats around him.

He said his deputy is mortally wounded, so that is not a threat to him.

Asides.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: His deputy is no threat to him. He said the ambitions of the Honourable Member for Christ Church East are stillborn, so they are no threats anymore. Understand where we are, because people are going to laugh and think that I am in here making sport today, but I want to tell you all this, that the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter has had the clearest, most effective mandate ever given to a Prime Minister in Barbados for three consecutive elections, has removed every threat to his authority, has been able to get the team he wants, but could still come in here, nine years later and nine Budgets later and tell the people of Barbados, sorry, I was not able to deliver.

What more must the people of Barbados give to the Honourable Member for St. Peter for him to deliver? What more must they give you all, for you to deliver on their dreams, on their aspirations, and on helping them to survive day by day in Barbados? What more?

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Peter has been able to worm his way into the embrace of every top private and public sector leader and leader of the social partnership. Their support for him is so strong that even when they think he has done wrong, they would rather sacrifice the people they represent, than to tell him, you are wrong, publicly; so he does not have any threats out there either.

Asides.

House 13, sequence 119, 8.50 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I believe every leader in the Caribbean would be jealous of a position like that. There are leaders that were under greater threats than that and they delivered within 18 months of being elected in 1961.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They should not talk about jealousy, they should talk about comparison. This country knew within 18 months where Errol Barrow was going.

Whatever you might say about Tom Adams, whether or not you like his policies or methodologies - and I did not - the point is that within 36 months, he had his agenda on the table in this country and Barbadians knew where he was going. Sir Harold St. John, did not had long enough, but nobody could ever doubt his ability as a thinker, a hard worker and an implementer. That was established for all

time in Barbados. Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford managed the economic affairs of this country in its most turbulent economic period and is credited universally for managing the economy well.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Whether one liked it or not, one knew where he was going. None of these leaders had a full treasury and none of them had a supportive private sector.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Excuses are made year after year in these budgets. The Prime Minister is still asking the country to give him more time to get the job done. He had everything else and now he wants more time to make his mark on the social and economic landscape for Barbados.

All of those leaders I spoke about served for a fraction of time that the Honourable Member for St. Peter has served. After nine years, the Honourable Member for St. Peter is still laying the foundation for his performance in this country and for the people to know exactly where he is going. So the time has come for the people of Barbados to ask themselves whether they have not been duped, whether they have not been misled and whether the stunts played by the Honourable Member for St. Peter do not amount to the greatest hoax ever played on the people of Barbados.

There is nothing in this budget to suggest to the people of Barbados that 2004 will be any different from 2003, 2002, 2001 or 2000. The script was a little better written but the provisions were the same. There was a little tinkering here and little tinkering there, but there was no serious or real attempt to address the pressing issues of concern to the majority of the residents in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding all the flowery language which the Prime Minister used on this occasion, we heard from him and senior members of that party what their real agenda is, just a couple weeks ago. Less than five months after winning the 2003 general election and receiving another massive vote of confidence from the public of this country, the primary focus of the Barbados Labour Party in the year 2003 is not how to kick-start the economy; not how to provide more jobs in Barbados; not how to get more housing and more land for Barbadians; not how to fix the myriad problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and not how to move our farmers from despair and poverty to success, but how and what this Government must do to win a fourth consecutive term. That is what the Chairman of the Party said is the Party's agenda, which tells you that the Barbados Labour Party is nothing more

than an election winning machine. That is why my leader would have to speak about ideology and remind those over there that a Party has to have some other relevance.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Let me help them to understand what I am talking about in this particular debate. This crop of Barbados Labour Party members is not concerned about the social and economic problems confronting the people of Barbados, they are not eager to solve the fishing dispute with Trinidad and Tobago; they do not yearn for better performances by our children in our schools and they do not wish to hear about the disgusting terms and conditions under which people work in some institutions, both public and private in Barbados, because their first order of business is to win the 2008 general election. That is all this Government is concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I said that what is before us today is nothing more than an obligatory exercise, geared only at appeasing those who believe in this annual charade otherwise known as the Budget Debate. What we were served this year is nothing more or nothing less than what we were served the previous year. It reminds me of a dish called pepperpot. You can keep a pepperpot running for years. Karl Broodhagen told me that he kept a pepperpot going for years. You put meat in it and the same meat can stay in it for years. You spice it up, you pepper it up, you put in some cassareep and you boil it a little bit every day. That is what the Honourable Member for St. Peter has served up this year.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: He boiled it, drowned it down with pepper, disguised the original taste, put in some cassareep and serve it up to the people as an annual delicacy. Sir, a pepperpot budget. It is designed to hoodwink the people of Barbados into embracing something that is really not there.

That is why I will end my presentation this year exactly at the point where I began the presentation last year and also where I ended it last year by forewarning the people of Barbados, as I did last year, that once again the Honourable Members on this side would be vilified in this debate. We are not vilified because we are not in Government. We cannot solve the housing problems in Barbados. The policies of the National Housing Corporation have been corrupted by a Government that is more interested in building office buildings than building houses for people that need housing. All kinds of decisions are made in Barbados and nobody can tell you how they are made or no Minister of Housing can explain how those decisions are made.

In relation to the roads in this country, nobody can explain to me why the roads in Barbados should be as bad as they are. There was a time when people would look upon parts of the world with scorn because all you would see are dust roads and so on. The highways in Barbados are an atrocity. You can travel to parts of Africa and some of the poorest countries in the world and see better highways than what we have in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the investment in the infrastructure is declining. The tenancies roads, all of which were supposed to be fixed by the turn of the century, hundreds of them still remain unpaved. I am not talking about St. John only, I would not even bother to start there because none is being done there now.

Mr. Speaker, that is not the fault of the Opposition, but the Government curses the Opposition, I do not understand it. This is the only country in the world practising the Westminster system where a Government having been around for nine years can still be cursing the Opposition. It got the largest mandate, the economy is in good shape, but it is still cursing the Opposition. The Opposition raises concerns that affect the people that we represent but the Government curses us and then has the blatant hypocritical action of extending its hand in co-operation to Members of the Opposition. What co-operation do they want? They want co-operation so that they can continue to do nothing and then say that the Opposition helped them to do it.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: They want us to come up to Sherbourne with them and listen to all of them grandstanding on the economy, and then to say that we were there. I heard it today. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the Leader of the Opposition attended a function which in the normal course of things should be acceptable. As soon as you attend, the Honourable Members of the Government grabs upon it that the Opposition is going with them. They have done that with the private sector already and have neutralised them. Consultation does not mean consultation, it means complicity for this Government.

Once you are there, you are part of it and you have to accept it. The unions come along and once they are there the Government said but you all were present. They sold the Barbados National Bank (BNB), a union representative was on the Board of the bank, and when people asked how they could sell it, the Government said that the union is on the Board. The Barbados Tourism Authority did rubbish, the Minister said that the union is on the Board. When workers get unfair, they say the Barbados Workers Union is on the Board, so what is the Opposition keeping noise

about. This is the kind of hypocrisy that is being practised in this country today.

House 13 Sequence 120

9.00 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I have warned them, as I have said on the last occasion, that they could chew us up and spit us out, it would make no difference because, at the end of the day, the questions still remain for the people of Barbados: How did the last Budget impacted and positively changed their lives? In the end, when all is said and done with this most recent version of a Budget, first presented in 1995, how it has changed and has positively altered the course of their life?

Mr. Speaker, once again the people of this country have been served a dose of deceptive literary nourishment but the Good Book says: "Weeping may endure for the night but joy cometh in the morning."

Mr. Speaker, this Budget as presented by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter proffers the exact opposite and I warn the people of Barbados on this occasion, that for this Budget and for the current policies of this Government, their joy will endure for the evening but weeping cometh in the morning.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I will not be sidetracked by the heckling or grandstanding, nor will I be thrown off my intended path. The people of Barbados are better off under the Barbados Labour Party than they have ever been under the Democratic Labour Party, and I begin with that, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Honourable Prime Minister and Honourable Member for St. Peter. On the eve of Independence, I would wish to begin this exercise by thanking the good and noble people of St. Michael South for endorsing me for a second time to represent their interest in this Honourable Chamber.

Sir, I know where we are positioned as a country. I know my loyalties and I know Barbados' position. Let me congratulate the Right Honourable Prime Minister for his visionary leadership in one of the most challenging periods we have ever faced in Barbados. Let me congratulate him for his forthrightness, his futuristic thinking, as articulated by the Leader of the Opposition. Sir, let me thank him for

his honesty and respect for the people of Barbados at a time of great challenge.

Mr. Speaker, some would feel pain but most would get the gain. Sir, contrast that with what we went through in the early times in the 1990s, and with the arrogance that had accompanied it. It would be foolhardy to come here and not to tell Barbadians that we are facing some of the most difficult periods we have ever faced, and that what we need is a fresh beginning in politics to cope with a world in fundamental change. That is what we need and that is what was outlined by the Honourable Prime Minister and Member for St. Peter.

Sir, as is the obvious, this Budget has something in it for every Barbadian. One has to understand and to go beneath the surface. The Opposition would never dig below the surface because they are superficial Members. They are not digging deeper to understand the true elements of this Budget.

Mr. Speaker, let me say that every time the Honourable Prime Minister comes here, he stimulates the minds of all of us in Barbados. He implores all of us to think outside of the box. He implores us to understand. He tells every one of us to remember why we were elected, and that is to stop poor people in Barbados from being poor.

Let me say, Sir, this Budget forms part of a continuum. Sir, who would ever think that after 1994, this Government could have restored the fortunes of the people of Barbados in as short a time as we did. Sir, when faced with some of the most challenging of times, what we did every year was to hack away at the problems and challenges that faced Barbados, building a new economy, continuing to diversify and develop our economy, in order to deal with these challenging times.

Sir, our Prime Minister has been able to do it. This side has been able to do it by following some sound macro-economic fundamentals, which continue to be the benchmark and hallmark of the Barbados Labour Party administrations, running low inflation; the highest Balance of Payments; the highest foreign reserves ever in the history of this country; running as low a fiscal deficit as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) given the circumstances; low rates of unemployment; and continued measures at tax reform. That is what we are speaking about in this particular age.

Sir, then at the micro level, the Honourable Prime Minister continues to prepare the sectors to trade effectively in a new trading environment, better positioning our trading sectors to earn their way in a completely new environment that they would face.

Sir, this Government and the Right Honourable Prime Minister have given agriculture a new lease on life, with a comprehensive treatment of the agricultural sector in Barbados. Sir, I do not know how any Honourable Member of the Opposition could ever criticise what has been stated in relation to agriculture, particularly as it sets out the issues for a new sugar cane industry, rather than a sugar industry, to move beyond non-sugar agriculture, to speak to cotton and other industries but more importantly, to ensure that we have a measure of food protection in Barbados.

Sir, at the level of food, the agricultural sector must be able to exist and be able to provide food for the 260 000 people of Barbados and the 500 000 tourists who come every year.

If we can successfully do that from the measures taken in Barbados from our lands, we stand to better reposition this economy and to reposition the tourism sector.

Sir, the international business sector allows locals to own exempt insurance companies. The Prime Minister then focused on two new productive sectors that must be important for a new Barbados. Sir, he spoke of the creative economies and of the importance of cultural industries. He dealt with capital expansion, and building retirement villages and being able to build new services sector for Barbados.

Sir, the Minister of Finance has focused on a number of issues. Tourism development has been dealt with under a new Tourism Development Act. This is the first time in 40 years that we have had a new Tourism Development Act and are focusing on the development of tourism. This new Act not only focuses on issues such as the old Hotel Aids Act but gives every ancillary sector of the tourism industry a fighting change in a new age.

Sir, telecommunications has already been dealt with and we spoke about the privatisation of the Barbados National Bank and the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. He also spoke about housing and insurance. The Honourable Member for St. George North has focused on issues in relation to housing and has outlined very clearly the Democratic Labour Party's record on housing, versus that of the Barbados Labour Party administrations. Sir, all these things have literally passed over the heads of the Honourable Members on that side.

Sir, the business investment and facilitation, a one-stop, fast-track mechanism, created to facilitate speedy and transparent implementation of investment projects in this country. Sir, usually I would focus on the tourism sector, as I am the principal steward for that sector but I do not think that it is necessary for us to spend any length of time dealing with issues in relation to tourism. What I am more

than clear about is that every initiative that was outlined in this Budget this year, in a tourism driven economy, will aid our tourism development.

House No.13(121)9.00 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Hon. N A. LYNCH: Sir, it is not necessary for us to spend a long length of time dealing with issues relating to tourism. I am more than clear that every initiative outlined in this Budget this year will aid our development in a tourism-driven economy. Also, new products in the agriculture must aid the development of the tourism industry.

Sir, we have got to trade in tourism on our uniqueness and the cultural industry will provide the basis for us to better indigenise the sector. The trade liberalisation issue which the Prime Minister spoke about and positioning Barbados within the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, FTAA and beyond will bring new efficiencies to the tourism sector.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and Leader of the Opposition has long been concerned about the input cost to the tourism sector and that Barbados will become uncompetitive vis-a-vis our neighbours because of our input cost structures.

Sir, new trading arrangements as they relate to commodities and services should bring new efficiencies to the tourism industry as long as we are careful to understand that while we seek to create a basis for these new efficiencies that we do not destroy any of our indigenous industries.

Sir, business investment facilitation, telecommunications liberalisation, technology availability and access, efforts at retraining and retooling and even Project Oasis will allow us to give those people who are most vulnerable in our society a fighting chance. Sir, you are always at risk when you invite people to your shore and so you must take care of the most vulnerable because those are the ones most prone to anti-social behaviour. These are all tourism-related and will all aid the sector.

Sir, the tourism sector has performed well but the Democratic Labour Party members are the only people who do not admit that it has performed well under the most challenging times ever, with things happening like 9/11, SARS, the Gulf War, the downturn in the global economy and with the United States of America's economy in shambled. Sir, the goodly doctor, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West does not want to admit that the economy is doing well because he is like a mason doing the work of a carpenter. Sir, the last time we had a doctor

masquerading as an economist, we know what happened to Barbados.

Sir, any statistical measure can be used but the universal measure of tourism performance used across the globe is arrivals, although it is not the only measure. Since April 2002, the arrivals to Barbados have constantly gone up and for the first eight months of this year there were recorded at almost 9 per cent. Barbados is the only mature tourism destination in the region that has performed admirably. Of course, we have concerns within the sector and we understand that profitability and our input costs are some of those concerns for Barbados.

We need to create a much more indigenous industry for the future. We also need new and continued investment in the industry which will affect the profitability factor but when we think of the maturity of our sector and what we are doing in relation to product development as the basis for any future tourism development in Barbados, you can understand that we need that type of new product development and capital investment to make it thrive.

Sir, I heard that I was a Minister in a hurry and that I was putting my foot in my mouth but I will let the people of Barbados judge who has the 'foot-and-mouth' disease. I have to be in a hurry because when this administration took over the Government we had to take care of a number of things at the Barbados Tourism Authority.

Sir, the chopping and changing in tourism did not start with the Barbados Labour Party administration. It started when a Prime Minister had the audacity to tell a man not to apply for a job at the Barbados Tourism Authority that he had already applied for and legitimately received. Sir, the man was told to withdraw his application for the job. This is where the rot started and it has never been corrected.

Mr. Speaker, we can judge and determine who put their feet in their mouth. The Leader of the Opposition tells Barbadians that there is no need for certification. He talks about JAWS but never could tell us what is JAWS. Sir, I have e-mails on my desk from all over the world congratulating Barbados on the Concorde and people here in Barbados climbed on top of their houses in order to see the landing but the Leader of the Opposition, a would-be Prime Minister, tells the people of Barbados that it is foolishness, that is the kind of rhetoric we get from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West who aspires to be leader.

Sir, the people of Barbados can determine where the 'foot-and-mouth' disease is located.

Sir, the public sector particularly in times of difficulty must play a more entrepreneurial role in the face

of crisis and the downturn in the economy. If the DEMS understood this in the early 1990s we would not have endured the type of pain we did during that period.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. John grandstanding about whether or not the Erskine Sandiford administration was responsible for the crisis. Sir, the economy of Barbados was going merrily along during the year 1988 and 1989 and in the midst of an economic downturn, rather than being able to manage and invest in the economy prudently, they squandered all the money that they had to win the elections, that is where the slide began and which we corrected in 1994.

Sir, every time the DEMS speak they go back to the 1960s and talk about free education and what the Right Excellent Errol Barrow did but we, as people of Barbados, should not let them forget what we went through under that administration during the early 1990s.

Sir, we need more than the consistent, rhetoric about the love they have for us. We need sound alternative measures to be able to deal with some of the issues they outlined.

I listened to the Leader of the Opposition and I heard the alternatives he outlined and I want to say that if ever Barbados needs Arthur, it is now, that is the alternative. Sir, he spoke about leadership and creating the future and I say that the Right Honourable Prime Minister has not only prepared us for the future but he is ensuring that we have a future.

The greatest challenge we will face in the future will be the preparation of the Barbadian society for a new imperialism of the 21st century. This is what we need to prepare for.

21.20 p.m.

Sequence 122

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: Hon. N.A. LYNCH: Sir, we need to prepare ourselves to be more independent as a people to be independent this time around.

Sir, the last time we approached the issue of Independence there were still many arrangements that linked us to our mother country and preferential arrangements that guarded and assured our existence. These will not be around in the future. Nobody owes us a living. I say that we must get it right because we have to virtually do it alone this time.

Sir, the regional, hemispheric and global arrangements will expose all of our vulnerability as a people and region. To carve out a space and a place in a new world, we must begin by knowing whom we are a people. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West articulating the issues of management and leadership. I say that any stance that we take in the future will be wrapped up in our new identity, we must define who and what we are.

Sir, some of us in this Honourable House do not have a problem with it. They say there has never been affirmative action, but affirmative action is what has us all in here today. We must now go beyond that. We will carve out a new space and occupy a new space by our wits, hands, ideas and our creative thoughts. Therefore, what we must do in a pluralistic society is to come together and a breakdown the barriers of intolerance and discrimination.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West grandstanding and beating his chest and saying that he is a real man. In this society if we must go forward in the future, we must break down all the barriers of intolerance and discrimination that we have in our country to forge a new identity for our people. Some of us do not have a difficulty with this but it is difficult to bring together two major classes of ethnicity, an African ethnicity and an Asian ethnicity, within a Caribbean to forge a common identity. We need to be imaginative and patient in order to create what we need.

Sir, this administration has started the ball rolling as it relates to Barbadians creating a new identity in this century. Sir, there were nine years of initiatives that have been structured and focused but the major focus has been on the cultural elements of our existence.

Therefore, whenever we do anything the Opposition 'pooh paws' and laugh at it. We have restored to Barbadians a sense of what Independence means to them with cultural initiatives. We have renewed education. The Opposition also laughed at EduTech and Black Studies. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said that we should dismantle Edutech. We have brought NIFCA and Crop Over to what they are to be.

Sir, when we seek to help organisations at the community level that has started to create an identity and confidence in Barbadians, for example the Israel Lovell Foundation and the Pinelands Workshop, the Opposition 'pooh paws' and criticises. They also criticised the PanAfrican Movement. The concept of National Heroes and the Ministry of Social Transformation have been able to create a new identity for Barbados.

Sir, when this administration does these things, all I am hearing from the other side is laughter. Leadership is about more than management, it is about creating a future.

The reason the Democratic Labour Party has moved from being a mainstream party to not being accepted by the people of Barbados is because there is no grounded political philosophy in that party. Nobody in Barbados knows what they stand for or who they represent. Sir, what we need in Barbados is for people to continue to endorse the vision that has been created on this side by the leadership of the Barbados Labour Party.

Sir, when I was a young boy, I read comics and there was a character in one of these comics called the Rawhide Kid. I became acquainted with him when I was in second form at school. He had a sixth sense and he used to walk around with a gun and he would pull out his gun and shoot men. I have a sixth sense that the people are going to get another chance to speak on this issue and they would have to make another determination. I know how they are going to make that determination. I believe that they are going to loudly endorse the vision and the respect of the Barbados Labour Party. I believe that we do not have to go into long-winded exercises about how they would operate because the people of Barbados have seen the alternatives. They will weigh the two institutions and they would choose again.

Sir, I want to thank the Government for the outstanding job that they are doing for the constituents of St. Michael South. A lot has been happening within my constituency. The people of Field Place are very happy about the natural gas that they are getting and they now have a chance to own the homes that they have paid a lot of rent for over the years. Sir, they are going to buy these homes at a price that is reasonable under the Barbados Labour Party Government.

Asides.

Hon. N.A. LYNCH: If you drive down Beckles Road you would see a play park and we are going to continue to develop a recreational area around the park. The people of St. Michael South are more than pleased about what has been happening in terms of the representation that they are getting from their representative and what this Government has provided.

I share the distinction of having a seat that ten years ago was the seat of the former Prime Minister of Barbados. To understand the significance of being able to control that seat is like, ten years from now a member of the Democratic Labour Party being able to represent the constituency of St. Peter, which I do not think will be possible.

I think that the people of Barbados spoke on May 21, 2003. I am privileged that they gave me back my job. I will end by saying that if the people of Barbados understand that they are living the best existence that they have ever enjoyed at anytime in the history of Barbados, it is because we place the highest regard upon the welfare of our citizens. We hope that by so doing that others would be driven not to work in their own self-interest but in the interest of their fellow man.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I have had the very great privilege and honour in serving in this Parliament, counting my time in the Senate, for the past 20 years. In that period I have had the opportunity to serve with some of the titans of modern Barbados. I served in the same Parliament as Errol Barrow, Tom Adams, Sir Harold St. John, Sir Lloyd Sandiford, Brandford Taitt, Richard Haynes and Philip Greaves, people who will live on as some of the titans of Barbadian politics. In a way invidious to cross time and make comparisons particularly in a Parliament that is as young as this. Mr. Speaker, I want to say that this debate could have stood out in our history as memorable and momentous, not because of the composition of the Parliament but because of the occasion that has brought us here. I would suggest by way of a general assessment and with no attempt whatsoever to the invidious, that it was an historic moment but we did not have an historic debate.

21.30 p.m.

Sequence 123

Thursday, November 27, 2003

9.30 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, there is a sad tendency, perhaps now, for to be a focus driven by the desire to feature in the media, for us in this House to focus the drama, the sideshows, the grand-standing and all of those things which are appealing to people. In my judgment these things, Sir, must be of secondary consideration.

I fear, Sir, that there is the evidence of a dangerous lack of appreciation of the real economic circumstances which face us in today's world. Perhaps, I really must, as I leave this debate of 2003, go back to that issue.

Sir, we live in a world in which the most powerful economy, the United States economy, has lost three million jobs in the last two years.

We live in a world, Mr. Speaker, where the second most powerful economy, the Japanese economy, has been mired in recession for almost a decade.

We live in a world, Mr. Speaker, where the third most powerful economy, the German economy, has an unemployment rate similar to Barbados, has a fiscal deficit similar to Barbados, has recently been chastised by the European Union for failing the targets set under the Treaty of Maastricht.

We have a situation, Sir, where the fourth most powerful economy in the world, the French economy, was similarly chastised. We have a situation, Sir, where the fifth most powerful economy, California, has had to recall a Governor, not because they did not love him, but because of the fiscal situation, and a downturn in the economy of truly historic proportions, and a substantial loss of jobs.

We have a situation where the whole of Latin America is in crisis, where Singapore that used to be held up as the emblem of modern miracles among the developing world is having problems. I fear Mr. Speaker, that our people, if their representatives are evidence of what the people are about, have not absorbed these things.

Mr. Speaker, we are also on the verge of great change. In this first decade of 21st Century, the sugar industry, unless we take great care, can vanish. It has vanished elsewhere. Trinidad has taken fundamental decisions about theirs. It has vanished already from Antigua. It is vanishing from St. Kitts.

Mr. Speaker, unless we take great care, the \$330 million that we are now selling under the preferences to CARICOM, protected by the Common External Tariff to the rest of the world, Sir, the \$330 million can vanish. This is a great moment, pregnant with possibilities for great change. History shall not absolve this Parliament, if this Parliament is not equal to the responsibility of charting this country to safe shores, no matter how dangerous and choppy the waters may be.

Sir, let me therefore say that we had the possibility for a great debate. I am saddened that the sideshows, theatre and drama have replaced what I hoped would have been here today and yesterday, the contest of ideas, Mr. Speaker, because that is what the country wants.

I have given a perspective as honestly and as sincerely as my judgment and training showed me the way. I had been more extensive in it because I felt that they were things that I needed to explain to the country. At least, I have put my perspective before the country. I set it forth in the hope that it could have been evoked and induced, a corresponding reaction from the Other Side which would have allowed us to leave this Chamber satisfied that, no

matter what happens to rest of the world, we would have put this country beyond any risk of sudden collapse.

I speak with more sorrow than anger that this House has not been equal to the moment. I wonder what might have been the outcome had a Branford Taitt, an Erskine Sandiford, a Tom Adams, or an Errol Barrow or others, had been also here at such a crucial moment in this country's history.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank those Honourable Members on my side who added to the substance of what I tried to convey in my original presentation. I even want to thank those on the Backbench who were sharper in many respects and more cutting, in some of their criticisms of the Government than even the Opposition. I would not be invidious if I were to draw particular reference to the really outstanding contribution of the Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney-General, whom I thought refocused the debate after the focus was entirely blurred by the military medium-pace rambling of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

I was really also taken by the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. James Central, who more than justified all the effort that I would have expended to try to get in here. I hope that the public would understand why I went to that extent. Generally, on this side, there was a serious attempt to focus the debate.

Mr. Speaker, in a way, I miss the Honourable Member for St. John because at least, I used to feel challenged to come back to this House and have to respond to the bite of his remarks, although they were never accurate, never well-thought-out and always illogical, but they were always biting. I used to secretly enjoy the intellectual thrill of coming back to this House to participate in giving a response.

I almost have hardly anything to respond to and I am not going to sink to any personal level. Sir, but I really have to say, and I think it would be fair to say that in this House, in this debate, we heard from the Honourable Member for St. Philip West what easily was a lack of a contribution. Sir, to say it was a contribution would be to put it in the positive, but it was a lack of a contribution which plunged new depths in our Parliament's history.

Sir, it came close to pure buffoonery, as it is possible for a speech to come. You must not feel, Mr. Speaker, the ranks of Tuscany are already now starting to be ruffled. Sir, you must not feel that he does it only to this House. He has no regard for his former Leader. He has no regard for his present leader and he has no regard for the Democratic Labour Party. The same buffoonery that you heard here is how he would address the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, I have access to a letter that he wrote to the General Secretary and I would like to read just one paragraph for you to see the quality of his mind, or lack thereof. He was writing in protest because he had been deprived of the rights to a fair contest in the Democratic Labour Party, which tells its own tale.

It was a letter of 10th October, 2001.

Re: Proper protocol regarding correspondence sent to the Democratic Labour Party:

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Oh, yes, I am sure, it has your finger prints on it.

It is from a Dr. David C. Estwick

“Rules and regulations were established in our great Party, through experience of the need to control the egotistical ambitions of individuals who seek to behave as existentialists and premise the morality of their behaviour on the ethic of egoism and not utilitarianism or the categorical imperative.”

Sir, I make it a document of the House...

House 13, sequence 124, 21:40:14

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I make it a document of the House.

Sir, I promise not to make documents of the House, the letters addressed to him about the Leader of the Opposition from a Mr. Skeete and others because I do not think it would be fair.

Mr. Speaker, the House deserves better than rambling foolishness with all kinds of angry gestures as if we have not come in here to do the people's business.

Mr. Speaker, his presentation was not an exercise in sophistry, it was an exercise in pure buffoonery as one could ever hope to come into contact with outside of a comic show, which this House did not deserve. Mr. Speaker, in the same way that pictures which have aspects of nudity and immoral behaviour are blocked off the television, there should be some way to shield the innocent eyes of the children of Barbados from that kind of disgraceful conduct.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John spoke, and I really wish that he would have had a sense of history, in that, in a way he had his one moment in time.

His one moment in time was also at a moment of serious history in this country. He had one opportunity to present his first and only budget in this House in March of 1994. That date, the end of March 1994, was five days before this country, for the first time ever, gave any commitments under any international trading agreement.

Sir, if you read his only budget presentation to this Parliament, you would see absolutely no reference to the context within which his measures should have been framed. The House should have been treated then, as I sought so explicitly and at such great length to do in this presentation, to a serious exposition of the commitments the Democratic Labour Party were entering into in April of 1994, on the advice of the Honourable Member for St. John, to remove all of the protectionist devices that had hitherto protected our agriculture and manufacturing sectors. The House should have been told then that the Democratic Labour Party was giving a commitment that all of the non-tariff barriers and licences that have helped our manufacturers and our industrial people were to be removed by 2004.

I have sought in this debate to level with the country by saying to the people that we are about to go into a Caribbean Single Market and Economy, that we are negotiating with the Free Trade Area of the Americas and what is involved, that this is a global trade strategy and what treating with the European Union may involve for Barbados, because I take this House seriously, but he comes in here with his usual carping, biting comments. I have described them in the past in the words of Alexander Pope: “Yet let me flap this...”, but I will not use it again today, Sir, because I am not in that mood. Mr. Speaker, this is that same kind of moment in the history of this Parliament where this country is on the brink of doing something that could bring far-reaching changes. He did not had the vision in 1994 to say to the people that this is what lies ahead, but my presentation is couched in those terms. Therefore, I dismiss what he has said this evening as being part and parcel of the same trivial and foolish way in which he addresses serious matters. When he is prepared to engage in a serious way and stop treating politics as if it is a joke and use those great talents that he has to help us to get the people to understand what lies ahead, then I will take him seriously.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West need not fear about anything I have to say this evening because I have a duty to protect him. I want to see him as the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party for a very long time. He is a loyal, supportive constituent of mine. He has helped me to secure a larger majority even though the constituency has been reduced and I thank him for it, so I will do nothing whatsoever to discredit him in the eyes of the people of Barbados. In fact, I do not have to do that because he does a wonderful job of it on his own. The

Honourable Member for St. Michael North West set this debate in the context of leadership. Perhaps that is the correct platform at which the debate should have been located because it is all about leadership. If he is going to try to convince the country that it is about leadership, then he has to begin by getting a team together and get them to come to this Parliament as if he is serious. I say that with no wish whatsoever to be invidious to him, but because the Opposition, under his leadership, has not yet turned up as an Opposition.

As the first elected Parliament in the 21st century, this Parliament has been in existence for almost six months and every week the Members of the Opposition come to this House looking very fanciful, posing for the cameras and enjoying all of the facilities of the House, but they have not yet brought one parliamentary question to this House. During the election campaign, they were all in Charnocks, Carrington Village, the Farm, Church Village and Chapel telling the people they were going to come in here to represent the poor people, but almost six months have passed and they have not brought one parliamentary question or resolution before this House.

Before they came here to this House, we heard that there were to be commissions of investigation into the GEMS of Barbados and then the Leader of the Opposition said to hold off the inquiries, that he would come and deal with it through the Public Accounts Committee. Therefore, we changed the Law pertaining to the Public Accounts Committee to give every facility to the Opposition but they have been, if I may be allowed to use the words of Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "As idle as a painted ship upon a painted ocean." They are drawing the taxpayers' money under false pretence. They should be arrested as a group for loitering in Parliament, Mr. Speaker.

What are they going to say to the people of Carrington Village in St. Michael, Church Village in St. Philip and Charnocks and Lodge Road in Christ Church? I will forgive two of them because they have had their own fear of the situation, but what they are doing is not good. This is a 'poorakey' Opposition. They are bad. They are as if they are all on leave. Sir, I am begging them to come back and stop drawing the taxpayers' money under false pretense and to pull some weight in here. They should bring the commission into the GEMS of Barbados. They should invoke the Public Accounts Committee and let us deal with the National Housing Corporation and the Urban Development Commission. Sir, I am begging them to do some work.

Sir, the Leader of the Opposition who has problems with credibility should be aware of gimmicks. The Leader of the Opposition started his presentation by saying - of course, he was reading copiously from a typed text as the rules generously allow him - that on his way to the House,

a maid saw him and told him that... Sir, I do not know by what magic he would have been able to rush back from coming up the stairs of Parliament to retype the text to say what the maid told him.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Sir, I am suggesting to the House that the maid in question would have been as much a concoction as the JAWS of Barbados. Sir, I consign her to that same position of historic significance in our history as JAWS, the product of an active but unproductive imagination.

House 13 Sequence 125

9.50 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am begging him to show a little life. Sir, I am feeling the pulse, the pulse is not beating.

Mr. Speaker, I obviously would suggest to the Honourable House that given the peculiar circumstances in which the Leader of the Opposition finds himself, we could easily discount by a factor of 50 per cent all of the hyperboles in his statements which were intended to keep the spirits of his troops high. The statement that Barbados is worse off than it was 10 years ago, et cetera, is a hyperbole, intended as we know, to be discounted, merely because he has to keep the spirits of the troops high and because if he does not show a little aggression, he might be overthrown. Therefore, I have discounted a substantial part of what he has said because there was no viciousness intended.

The speech was not a speech without some merit in some respects.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, proceed. Please.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, there were a number of issues that were raised in this debate, to which I need to respond. There was again the attempt, unworthily so, by the Opposition, to try to make it appear as if the Barbados Government is involved or has entered into some secret arrangement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF). That seems now to be the mantra of the modern Democratic Labour Party and they would not rest until such time as they could find some obscure evidence to suggest there is a secret deal. They come to this House as if they would not learn, 'hard-ears', to put that before the public as if it is something that could stand.

Mr. Speaker, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an institution of which Barbados is a member. That membership and relationship is enshrined in the Laws of Barbados. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is entitled, under the Law, to carry out what is called an Article 4 consultation in which it examines the situation in Barbados and publishes a staff report.

They make it very clear, Mr. Speaker, as they did in our staff report, that the view expressed in the report are those of the staff and do not reflect the views, even of the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Mr. Speaker, I would have had cause to say that unless a country is actively involved in a formal International Monetary Fund (IMF) borrowing programme, that while the International Monetary Fund (IMF) could make recommendations and offer advice, is in no position to cause that country to accept those recommendations or advice. Barbados is not in any agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) whereby we are borrowing from them, therefore, we are under no compunction, whatsoever, to accept any advice rendered by them.

Mr. Speaker, I told the Honourable House that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) Fiscal Affairs Department has, at this year August 2003, prepared a report on us entitled: "Barbados, Further Reform of the Indirect Taxes", and I now make this a Document of the House. At page 75 under Summary of the Options, its principal advice was that we should do two things, they are:

1. To increase the standard VAT rate from 15 per cent to 17.5 per cent and;
2. To increase the VAT on tourism from 7 per cent, to 10 per cent.

Sir, we said thank you but no thank you, we will continue our way because we no duty to you.

Sir, the staff report makes even more interesting reading. I will go through the principal recommendation contained in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) staff Report to the Government of Barbados for this year. They have recommended that the Government of Barbados should implement a wage freeze. May I repeat, Sir, they have recommended that the Government of Barbados should recommend a wage freeze.

Sir, we have heard from the Opposition that the Government and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had entered into an agreement to cut wages but the Report says that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) did not ask anybody to cut wages but to freeze them.

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

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Prime Minister is seeking to mislead the House on this matter. Sir, we never at all indicated that the recommendation was to cut wages.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: We said, as is contained in this Report, that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as at page 14, paragraph 35, says:

"The public wage bill declined by .05 percentage point of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during the financial years, 2004/2005 to 2006/2007."

Mr. Speaker, that implies that by some means, there would be a reduction in the public sector wage bill over that fiscal period. There are other parts of the Report which I will wait and bait the Prime Minister on, and then I will speak to them.

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

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, we have heard about agreement in principle to trim wages and about sending people home.

Mr. Speaker, I want to read what the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has said that the Government said because the International Monetary Fund (IMF) can put any projections based upon what their staff might want to have. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said to freeze wages and the Government said no, that we accept the need for wage restraint but we were reluctant to agree to any recommendation to freeze wages but that we would agree to have reasonable restraint in wages in the context of plans to reduce personal Income Tax in Barbados. That very position by the Government of Barbados has been accepted even by the unions. It is here at Paragraph 15:

"The authorities acknowledged staff's concerns that public wage increases for 2001 and 2002 exceeded productivity gains and inflation, and put pressure on private wages, which may have helped erode Barbados' external competitiveness in a very difficult external environment. The authorities agreed on the need for restraint in the next round of wage negotiations but were reluctant to accept the mission's recommendation for a wage freeze in the next two fiscal years. The authorities stated that they would restrain public sector wages as much as possible in the context of plans to reduce personal income taxation as part of direct tax reform (paragraph 29). They pointed out that unions already indicated their willingness to make concessions on wage increases if the Government provided

income tax relief. The authorities also intend to streamline public employment through attrition.”

Paragraph 16 says:

“The authorities shared the mission’s concern about unsustainable deficits in the operations of the water authority, transport board, Government hotel and agricultural enterprises and other enterprises. They are calling for a review of financial operations of public enterprises with a view to moving them toward cost recovery and cutting back subsidies and transfers from the Barbados Central Bank Government. They agreed with staff that action needs to be taken as soon as possible and plans to have proposals for new rate structures that cover operating costs submitted to the Fair Trading Commission.”

Mr. Speaker, you know how the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is, if the Government employs a maid, it is a bad thing but if the private sector employs a maid, it is a good thing. They have an ideological position that the Government should not be involved in productive activities, that if the Government spends, it is bad but if the private sector spends, it is good. That is their view and, therefore, they come every year and would want us to increase water rates, bus fares, et cetera. The Government says very clearly - and I want to repeat what is in this Document - that any representation in relation to increases has to be made to the Fair Trading Commission and has to be supported by presentation to the public of Barbados that they are justified upon the basis of cost.

Mr. Speaker, we told them that any proposals for rates structures to cover operating cost must be submitted to the Fair Trading Commission but all across Barbados, there is the view that we have this secret arrangement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to increase bus fares .

Mr. Speaker, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) argued that the Government should stop spending money on building the Hilton Hotel, the \$150 million that even the Opposition has agreed with last year to improve the quality of our tourism product. Therefore, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has an ideological position we do not accept.

Mr. Speaker, worst of all, at paragraph 17 of this Report, they wanted us to increase petroleum prices.

Mr. Speaker, this is the core of the issue. We have just taken this economy through a period where because of the Gulf War and other things, petroleum prices have risen to historic levels but the Government has made a decision that we were not going to disrupt our productive systems

nor penalise the Barbadian public by passing on the full increase to them. In the circumstances we felt it was wrong.

Sir, at paragraph 17 of the same report, it states:

“Staff advised that retail petroleum prices be allowed to vary directly with import costs to protect revenue collections from specific excise tax on petroleum. The authorities were not receptive given their concerns about distributional consequences and the risk of strong public reaction to higher fuel prices. They were also concerned about the impact of a sharp rise in petroleum prices on transportation and energy costs for business.”

Sir, have you heard with what we were concerned?

House No.13(126)9.50 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Sir, we were concerned with the impact on people, distribution issues and the cost of doing business in this country but that is not the impression that the Leader of the Opposition gave yesterday. He said that we had an agreement in principle with the IMF.

Mr. C.A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Again, I never said there was any secret deal because it is a public document and I did not have to wait for the Prime Minister to make it a document of the House. I wish the Prime Minister would read paragraph 34 because this is not about any one-upmanship because this is a serious matter Sir, paragraph 34 reads:

“Deficit reduction after the fiscal year 2003-2004 would be accomplished through wage restraint and attrition in public employment and reduction of Government transfers to public enterprises owing to improvement in their finances from structural reforms.”

Mr. Speaker, attrition means that when someone resigns in the public sector, that person would not be replaced. Therefore, I am suggesting that there was an agreement in principle, according to the Report, to the reduction of the public sector wage bill and the amount of wages paid by the number of persons employed. Sir, this has nothing to do with wage restraint.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I told the Honourable Member to read the Report properly before he makes a fool of himself. This Report starts by saying that the views expressed in it are those of the staff team. Sir, they are projections by the staff, not by the Government and the staff can say whatever they want. The Honourable Member should have told the House what was at paragraph 27 which I will read:

“The authorities reiterated their support for employment rights, severance and unemployment benefits and do not see them as impediment to labour market flexibility.”

Sir, that is what IMF Report said. Sir, what are those rights?

We have put in the Constitution of Barbados the rights that the workers of Barbados employed in the public service cannot be dismissed or have their terms varied to their disadvantage as was done under the Democratic Labour Party. When they spoke about attrition, we told them that we were reiterating our commitments to the rights of the people of Barbados to work in the public service of Barbados and also the rights to severance and unemployment benefits. We also told them that we do not see guaranteeing constitutional rights to the people of Barbados to work in the public service as an impediment to labour market flexibility, that is the way our views were expressed.

Sir, I want to say to the House that we will pledge to be faithful to the people of Barbados because we know what the IMF is about. Let us as Parliament agree that at whatever sacrifice, we will so manage the affairs of this country as to never, never, put our people's welfare in the hands of the International Monetary Fund again. Sir, we said no to the IMF in this Report but this is not what the country heard yesterday from the Leader of the Opposition.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West raised issues concerning the privatisation of the Barbados National Bank and Insurance Corporation of Barbados. Sir, I am getting tired in these wind-up sessions because I have to be like a commentator who reports a Democratic Labour Party's own goal. The debate becomes silly. If there are things which were done in the past, the contemporary Democratic Labour Party should not be embarrassed by appearing to take strident positions about what the country was committed to.

On June 10, 1994, prior to elections that year, a team led by Mr. J.L. Reid went to Washington to discuss the investment sector loan with the IMF. The loan was the IADB's contribution to the stabilisation of the early 1990s and the umbrella under which all our arrangements with the IADB were couched.

This Government inherited certain things from the Democratic Labour Party which we have had to honour. One of the things we inherited were commitments given and signed on June 10, 1994, which I will make a document of the House. Sir, it is a memoir of the discussion, terms and principles concerning the financial sector. The Government was represented by Mr. Reid, Mr.

DeLisle Worrell and Mr. Sam Chandler and others. It reads:

“Representatives of the Government of Barbados and the bank agreed that the bank should divest its interest in the Barbados National Bank as soon as possible. The Barbados National Bank would be privatised within a three-year period and the Barbados Development Bank will be closed within one year.”

We came to office in 1994 with the agreement already in place to close the Barbados Development Bank within one year because it was technically bankrupt and to close Barbados National Bank within three years. Sir, I had to play the hand I was dealt. By 1997, I came to this Parliament and said how we would do it. I said that if we had to divest ourselves of it, we will first put the shares on the market to staff, consumers, credit unions and other institutions of Barbados and after that we would offer it to a strategic partner and the Government was extremely faithful to that strategy. We offered the shares in Barbados National Bank first to the general public of Barbados at \$1.80 a share.

Sir, you know what is cute about the arrangements, two things. While certain members of the Democratic Labour Party, whom I shall not embarrass because I think they are patriots and were doing a good thing, were telling the public not to buy the shares, they were buying them. I believe they would like to buy some more and I would encourage some more. Sir, the Leader of the Opposition stakes his reputation for financial soundness by saying that those shares were worthless and that there was no way they would increase in value.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbadian public listened in some respect to the view that there was a danger in buying the shares at \$1.80 and did not buy any, while the Opposition went ahead and bought the share. They are good shareholders and I am glad they are getting capital gains which they can put down for their children. Sir, it is a good thing and I want to encourage it.

Sir, the same shares that the Leader of the Opposition predicted were going to fall in value, within one year were being sought by Trinidadian interest at \$3.45.

H13/22:10

Sequence 127

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Continuation of: Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR:

Mr. Speaker, I am in no position whatsoever to accept any tutelage on privatisation from the Democratic

Labour Party because as I said that the commitment to sell the Barbados National Bank and the Barbados Development Bank was theirs first of all. I had nothing to learn from them in relation to how one proceeds with privatisation because they sold our shares in Cable and Wireless under conditions that gave Cable and Wireless a twenty-year monopoly, to 2011, and we now having a lot of difficulty liberalising our telecommunication sector.

Sir, a previous Barbados Government gave Cable and Wireless property. Sir, a twenty-year licence is massive property. If you want to get out of it, we can do one of two things. We can buy your way out of it and pay them all the profits that they would make for the years that they cannot function here in Barbados or we will negotiate terms.

Sir, that is why we have had to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Cable and Wireless to get them to give us that extraordinary eight years of excessive property that the Democratic Labour Party conferred on them as part of their effort of privatisation.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party sold Heywoods and they sold it under conditions that they would close off access to a beach in my constituency, a very popular beach. In a year's time Heywoods was able to cite a market value for its property that was about three what it bought for, without them having to spend that equivalent in capital improvement.

Mr. Speaker, they took The Arawak Cement Plant and sold it to Trinidad. The Barbados Labour Party administration came along and said that it has been done already but we said that we have to find the best way to make it work even better. We gave concessions to Arawak Cement Plant to change the energy source that it was using in St. Lucy in order to give them a chance to succeed. Our view was that one Government sold it but we had to make it work because when you privatise an asset the asset is still here and we have a duty that once it is here to make it work.

Sir, we inherited the privatisation of the Barbados National Bank, that is not the point. I agree with it because I feel that the responsible role of the Government in relation to a financial institution is to properly supervise the entire sector. Sir, once Government is an owner, then issues of conflict become apparent that create a very important disparity. We also had the situation, as happened in the early years of the operation of Barbados National Bank, where a lot of political loans were granted to people and we said that we want to supervise the financial sector.

Sir, the most important point is, once Barclays and CIBC got involved in the creation of a mega financial institution, all the other small financial institutions in the market could not offer the range of financial products.

Therefore, a strategic partner had to be sought for the Barbados National Bank to allow it to compete in the same kind of market as the new First Caribbean Bank.

Sir, I have said already that the age of the retail commercial banking as we know it is going to come to an end, and not a moment too soon, because the commercial banks are very conservative in the management of their portfolios. We need to have business people involved in this country in a range of financial institutions that offer something like a supermarket-approach to the customer, where you should be able to go into a financial institution and pick the services that you require.

We want institutions to do what the First Caribbean Bank is now doing, BEING aggressive in its investment banking and deal with pre and post financing and offer potential customers, not the small range of financial services but the broad range of financial services now appropriate to a modernising society. Sir, the best way to get the Barbados National Bank AT that level was by way of getting involved in a strategic partnership, and our country has benefited to the extent of \$190 million from it.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: It is here with a strategic partner, that was awarded in Trinidad a national award for being the best national institution where its relationship with the small business sector in Trinidad was concerned. Sir, even in these difficult times with our relationship with Trinidad we have to encourage it here.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Development Bank was closed because it was technically bankrupt. It had an accumulated deficit of over \$77 million that had completely eroded its capital. Its capital eroded not because it was allowed to extend a loan in astonishing circumstances to a former Personal Assistant and former Democratic Labour Party Prime Minister and a former Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office. That did not crash it but there were other factors that helped to crash the Barbados Development Bank. If those things were to have happened when the Barbados Labour Party was in office and the persons did not repay the loan, there would be a most fierce and nasty controversy in this land.

Mr. Speaker, we did not have the capital immediately to meet the need for development financing in this country to create a new development institution out of the ashes of the Barbados Development Bank but in the interval we would still helpED all of the productive sectors. We created an Agricultural Development Trust by putting the bound rates into it; a tourism loan fund; a loan fund was created for small hoteliers; a loan fund for innovation and a big fund for the industrial sector. Slowly but surely, we are

building up Barbados' capacity to once again meet the needs of development finance.

Mr. Speaker, we are planning, Properly, a new institution to provide development finance for Barbados but we are not going to replicate what the old Barbados Development Bank was. The Barbados Development Bank was an institution that gave people loans and that was it.

Mr. Speaker, a new development institution must not only be providing loans but it must be able to provide a package of supports that can enable people who come in contact with its services to have a chance to be viable. This should also about help them with technical assistance, training, financing, risk and a whole range of other things that go beyond what the Barbados Development Bank

did. Mr. Speaker, if we are taking our time to do it properly, it is only because we have been burnt by the experience of history of having a financial institution collapsed in the past and we are not prepared to go that way in the future.

Mr. Speaker, the issue was raised about corporatisation. Let me be clear about what it is and why we want to do it. Corporatisation and privatisation are two different things. Privatisation is when you take an institution out of the public's hands and put it into the hands of the private. Corporatisation is when you take what was essentially a government department and you transform it into a corporate entity. There are many commercial functions that the Government is performing or has performed historically but have functioned them as government departments but that is not the way to run commercial enterprise. Sir, airports provide a commercial function and the best way to run airports all across the world is as have their own corporate entities.

Mr. Speaker, my Government is serious about two things that our National Insurance must always be viable and we want in an aging society to have a new group of institutional investors that can invest the pension funds that we are asking people to now create by the new legislation that we brought. If you create these new long-term pension management institutions, you have to create investment opportunities for them.

We have made it clear that we would love to see our National Insurance not only to sending our people's money abroad for investment opportunities but using some of our people's savings as a partner to help develop our seaport and airport that is what we are talking about. We also feel that the pension funds that we are going to create in Barbados should, if we have a seaport or airport operating on a commercial basis, be given an opportunity to look to that as an investment opportunity rather than to send the money of the pension fund to be invested in the Cayman

Islands or in other people's ports in other parts of the world. Sir, that is all we intend to do by the concept of corporatisation.

Mr. Speaker, we want to transfer government departments into commercial enterprises and use them in part to provide an opportunity for new long-term investments for those institutions in Barbados that are mobilising the people's savings.

22.20 p.m.

Sequence 128

Thursday, November 27, 2003

10.20 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, our Central Bank now is having to allow more and more Barbadian long-term investors to invest more of our savings abroad because there are not enough investment opportunities for long-term capital in this country. If the Government can take its existing commercial enterprises and find a way to help keep more of our people savings in this country to help build the country, I am prepared to stand condemned by the Opposition for making that a possibility, and that is what corporatisation is about.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition raised issues concerning our use of the recently borrowed loans. Let me put that in context again. September 11th 2001 introduced a new dimension in the international economy. It was a threat, not just to New York but to the world's largest industry, tourism, because it undermined people's confidence in being able to travel.

One of the real consequences of September 11th 2001 is that nobody knew in its immediate aftermath how long its consequences would affect tourism. Tourism is the centre of our economy and was in a climate where one did not know how long the crisis would last. We heard the talk at that time, but people could not anticipate how long it was going to last.

Sir, there was the view of going to the market and take a loan to prepare for any eventuality. The view was also, to keep it in a bank account. Once it became clear to us that the response could be managed and that the crisis was not going to be overwhelming, the question arose, does it still make sense to take \$300 million and put it in a bank account, not earning a penny, to have to repay it some day in the future. Could we not find some foreign exchange generating use to put to it? Sir, lo and behold, Sir, we had two major projects, that we would have had to borrow more money for, the expansion of the airport and the building of the Hilton. We decided, rather than going to the

market and incur new loans to finish these two major projects that will generate foreign exchange, create jobs in this country over the long term and help us to pay back the loans, to take that money which is laying in a bank and use it for that purpose.

The Opposition and the IMF told us that we should take the \$300 million, Sir, and put it in a bank account and just sterilise it. I say to the House, Sir, that the very argument of the Opposition about keeping the funds sterilise, would have caused us to increase the very debt that they say we have a duty to decrease.

A sterilise loan, Mr. Speaker, cannot generate the long term reflows to repay it. You have at some stage to take up some of the money, and put it to work in a foreign exchange generating capacity to repay the loan, again, Sir, that is all we do. There is a benefit to the country that we have used the proceeds to finance those two things but the point is that had we not done so, we would have had to borrow additional amounts to put into the airport and Hilton, which would have added to the very debt that the Opposition has come to this House to cry crocodile tears about.

Sir, that argument is foolishness at a high level because I am absolutely sure that there is nobody in this Parliament who would take \$300 million that you have to repay in foreign exchange, and put it down there just lying idle for an indefinite period of time, unless you are overtaken by some acute form of mid-summer's madness. I give the House the assurance that this does not attend this Government.

Mr. Speaker, I accept the criticism that has been made to this House and the wider society that we have to pay more attention to matters pertaining to implementation. I agree that more has to be done in all spheres of the Government. We have to take it seriously. I would have induced implementation issues for the first time in this presentation. I feel that seriousness about implementation is as important as soundness about policy.

I give the House the assurance, Sir, that the Government has instituted new mechanisms to improve the implementation of its economic policies. We will be setting, Mr. Speaker, new charters for the institutions who need them.

We have created an economic council, Mr. Speaker, and they would have already heard my views as to some of the ways in which people feel that implementation should be proceeded with, in the public sector of Barbados.

I will be spending more of my time as the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, ensuring the smooth, efficacious implementation of Government's policies. My

entire Cabinet knows how we feel, as a Government, about this particular matter. We leave this Parliament and this debate giving the country the pledge that these measures have been brought here, not because we want to bring measures here for their own sake, but these measures have been brought here because this Government is determined, Mr. Speaker, to change things in this country for the better, at a time of fundamental change.

At this moment of change, Mr. Speaker, we have to become not just conceptualisers, the Government must become doers and everybody in this Cabinet knows that there is an obligation upon them to lift their performance. Sir, that is the assurance with which I leave this House and I give to the country that this programme is conceived, not only to safeguard the future of Barbados but its prosperity and that the Government is resolved to commit to it.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how much longer I have in public life, but I do know one thing for sure that in this third term, I shall work harder to make sure that our economy is more successful than it was ever was, in the previous two terms.

Mr. Speaker, it would be fitting of me to leave this occasion by thanking the people of St. Peter for their generosity, including the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, in allowing me the opportunity to join this House again in this capacity.

I use this opportunity, Sir, to thank the people of Barbados for again vesting they full confidence in this Government. We shall make this term count and the presentation on Tuesday was the first exercise in making it count.

Happy Independence Barbados and God Bless our fair land, now and forever.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 9 – TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR, the House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. R. D. Marshall in the Chair.

House 13, sequence 129, 22:30:14

Thursday, November 27, 2003

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

(a) RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$3 198 636 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2003-2004 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 5 2003-2004 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEADS 13 AND 37 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN SCHEDULE II TO THIS RESOLUTION.

HEAD 37 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT

NOW THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

\$3 198 636

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, this sum of \$3 198 636 is required first to pay for the new interim Barbados Building Authority which has been established. This amount is also needed to pay the members of the advisory committee.

Mr. Chairman, this sum is also needed to carry out work activities before the Hurricane season next year. It is envisaged that the sum of \$16 699 will be needed to do that activity.

Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Building Authority would also need furniture, computer equipment, a refrigerator and a few other items. The amount needed for these is \$14 927.

Mr. Chairman, a sum is also needed under this Head to pay a consultant. The Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation will be providing a consultant from the month of January and the sum of \$24 000 is needed to pay for this.

Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$5 000 is needed to cover the cost of hot mix to do pothole patching on the roads throughout the country.

Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$1.8 million is needed to facilitate payment to the utility companies such as the Barbados Light & Power Company and Cable and Wireless Bartel Limited for services rendered at Wharf Road, Swan Street and Baxters Road.

Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Water Authority and the National Petroleum Corporation have not submitted a claim as yet, therefore we cannot put a figure in this amount for them.

The sum of \$312 205 is also needed to pay for professional services that were rendered by the engineers of Errol Clarke Associates Limited, Edghill Associates Limited and Maycock Associates Incorporated.

Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$500 000 is also needed for the road rehabilitation projects at Newcastle in St. John, Green Hill in St. Michael, Rose Hill in St. Peter and Club Morgan in Christ Church and for a possible cutting of rocks at Gun Hill in St. George.

Mr. Chairman, we also need to purchase equipment for the Drainage Unit and the sum of \$6 000 is required to facilitate such. All these sums bring the total that is required under this Head to \$3 198 636.

Mr. Chairman, I beg that Head 37 stand part.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on this supplementary and to make it known that even though we welcome the \$500 000 which is included for the work which is to be done from Rose Hill to the Charles Duncan Oneal Roundabout, as phase one, we find it very interesting that this road only connects to the Duncan Oneal Road in St. Lucy, but that the actual work would be done in St. Peter.

Mr. Chairman, I think it is rather regrettable that since 1989 this Government came into the constituency of St. Lucy in the area of Colleton and started some work around election time and up to now that work has not been completed. Therefore, I am calling on the Minister of Public Works to change this Estimate and to put enough money in it to complete the work that has to run from Six Men's near to Port St. Charles to St. Lucy's Church and Crab Hill in his road repaving programme because that work that was left undone since 1999 is a very dangerous piece of work and it can easily cause accidents especially in the Colleton area next to St. Peter. The regrettable thing about this is that if the section in Colleton was in the constituency of St. Peter, we would have seen an amount in the Estimates for it, but just because it is in St. Lucy this

work has been left undone. The people of St. Lucy are not happy about it, neither am I happy about it.

Mr. Chairman, I have said already in this Parliament that we have abused the Estimates in this Parliament and that those Heads that can be divided should be divided on a ratio basis per constituency. Mr. Chairman, every year we are getting Estimates and Supplementaries and we are coming to this Parliament and voting for them but we are not sure how much of that money is going to be spent in any particular constituency.

I am calling on the Minister of Public Works - he is new to this position - to adopt the policy that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South adopted when he was in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, that is, to divide the money fairly between constituencies. If that policy is adopted, no parliamentary representative would have to come in here and complain. Every year I have to come to this Parliament and complain to get money for my constituency, but yet I am expected to vote in this Parliament for Estimates that are of no help to my constituency.

I am calling for a change in the Estimates. I am saying that if we want to eliminate the problem, all we need is fairness. Therefore, there would be no need for all of this talk about local government, because we do not need to have local government. I do not think that it should be too difficult for a Government to offer fairness to the country, so I am asking the Ministry of Public Works to provide fairness. He is new to the Ministry and he should not allow himself to be bogged down by old principles. All he has to do is to make sure that these Heads are divided along constituency lines as it relates to demand.

We voted and agreed to over \$10 million to be spent at the various depots for equipment, but I am yet to see the equipment that is needed in my depot in St. Lucy. I cannot continue to support money that does not benefit my constituency.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: I am saying that the depot in St. Lucy should be well-furnished with the necessary equipment. I do not want to hear anybody in Barbados again blaming the workmen for not working when sometimes they lack material and equipment with which to work. I have evidence which suggests that when there is equipment and material, the work is done. In three weeks time, the workmen at the depot in St. Lucy were able to complete half of work on the Fryers Well Road because they had the equipment and the machinery. So people must not blame the workers, because once they get the equipment and the machinery, the Ministry of Public Works would like good. I have over 110 roads to be

completed in St. Lucy and once you give the workmen the equipment and the machinery, we will get the work completed, because I will go around and I will make sure that it is completed in good time. So give us the equipment and the material and we will complete the work.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

House 13 Sequence 130

10.46 p.m.

Thursday, November 27, 2003

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Chairman, I promised that I would be brief. This is just to thank the Honourable Minister of Public Works for going ahead and getting the road at Club Morgan done. Mr. Chairman, this goes back to when you were Minister of Public Works. In fact, for over 20 years, the people of Club Morgan have been asking to get this small bend sorted out, and I am very happy to report that it has been done.

Mr. Chairman, I would want him to go further because there are other roads in Christ Church West, such as Jarvis Road, Bradshaw Road, Jones Road, Pile Road, and several roads in Sergeant's Village, Presnett Drive, Rockley New Road, et cetera, which need to be done.

Mr. Chairman, I do not want to prolong the time in the House but I would want him to look at those other roads for me. I thank you.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I would want to let the Honourable Member for St. Lucy know that we are practising fairness on this side and that we would hope that Phrase 2 would include those roads which the Honourable Member has identified.

With those remarks, Mr. Chairman, I beg that Head 37 stand part.

The question that Head 37 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Explanatory Notes to head 13 and 37 be amended, as set out in the Schedule 2 of this Resolution.

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

On the motion of Hon. Hon. G. A. CLARKE seconded by

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one money

Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. G. A. CLARKE seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY the Resolution was read a first and second time and passed.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of this Sitting of the Honourable House. It has been a long Session, we started at 4.00 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon, and it is now 10:45 p.m. on Thursday.

It, therefore, would be remiss of me if, on moving the adjournment, I did not seek to thank you, Your Honour for what has been a marathon session for you, for presiding over this debate, as well as all of the other Officers of this Honourable Chamber. I thank particularly all of the Staff who have seen to it that we can just come here and speak and who, therefore, by their efforts, ensured that the security, the catering, other needs in terms of research, et cetera, are all taken care of.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to thank those who have the responsibility for the shorthand which has now been transformed into a modern system of digital recording. Mr. Speaker, this will be the first Budget debate that we would have had the new system in, and I notice that the operators have been learning as they go along with us. I believe they should be commended for ensuring that there were no glitches with the new system during this period of time.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, all that is left for me to do is to thank all those persons for allowing us, as Members of Parliament, to be able to come here and do the people's business by speaking without having to worry about other things that are necessary for us to speak.

Mr. Speaker, for some of us, there is Cabinet tomorrow morning at 10:00 a.m., and for others we move into what really is a long weekend of Independence activities. I could only hope that on all sides and across the country, we would have the opportunity to reflect during this weekend on the 37th Anniversary of our Nation, and to be able to recommit ourselves to those noble goals that were set for us some 37 years ago and in so doing, also be able to enjoy each other's fellowship and that of our families.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I wish all a Happy Independence and thank all for rendering service to us.

I beg to move that this Honourable House be now adjourned until Tuesday December 09, 2003, at 10:00 a.m.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. House No.13(131)10.48 p.m.

CONTENTS

RESUMPTION

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY.....	1
1. Value Added Tax (Refund) (Special Olympics Barbados) Order, 2003; and	
2. Land Tax (Rate of Tax) (No. 2) Order, 2003.	
Rev. J. J. S. Atherley, 1, 2, 3; Mr. M.A. Lashley, 5, 6, 7, 8; Dr. W. F. Duguid, 5; His Honour J. J. M. Edghill, 8, 9; Hon. R. D. Marshall, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14; Mr. R.D. Jones, 14, 15, 18; Hon. R. St.C. Toppin, 18, 19, 20, 22, 23.	

RESUMPTION

Hon. G. A. Clarke, 23, 25, 26; Hon. Miss C.Y. Forde, 27, 29, 30, 31.

PLEASE NOTE THAT AT THIS POINT THE RADIO BROADCAST AND TELEVISION TAPING WERE DISCONTINUED.

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL.....	32
Mr. G. W. Payne, 33, 34; Mr. R. L. Sealy, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40; Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 40, 44, 46, 47; His Honour J. J. M. Edghill, 40; Mr. T.A. Prescod, 40, 41, 43, 44; Mr. L. R. Tull, 48, 49, 51; Dr. W. F. Duguid, 51, 52, 53; Dr. W.F. Dugid, 53; Hon. H.F. Lashley, 55, 56, 57, 58; Mr. M.A. Lashley, 56; Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62; Hon. A.P. Wood, 62; Hon. K.D. Symmonds, 62, 63, 64, 66; Hon. D.D. Marshall, 67, 70, 71.	

RESUMPTION

Hon. Dr. J. X. Walcott, 71, 72, 73, 75, 76; Mr. D.J.H. Thompson, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81; Hon. N. A. Lynch, 81, 83, 85; Rt. Hon. O.S. Arthur, 85, 87, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94; Mr. C. A. Mascoll, 89, 90; Hon. Miss M.A. Mottley, 94.

ORDER NO. 9 – TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.....	95
---	----

HEAD 37 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT

NOW THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS

Hon. G. A. CLARKE.....	95
Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, 95, 96; Dr. W. F. Duguid, 96; Hon. Miss M.A. Mottley, 97; Hon. R. R. Farley, 97.	

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

ARTHUR, Rt. Hon. O.S.
 ATHERLEY, Rev. J. J. S.
 CLARKE, Hon. G. A.
 DUGID, DR. W.F.
 DUGUID, Dr. W. F.
 EDGHILL, His Honour J. J. M.
 FARLEY, Hon. R. R.
 FORDE, Hon. Miss C.Y.
 JONES, Mr. R.D.
 KELLMAN, Mr. D. St.E.
 LASHLEY, Hon. H.F.
 LASHLEY, Mr. M.A.
 LYNCH, Hon. N. A.
 MARSHALL, Hon. D.D.
 MARSHALL, Hon. R. D.
 MASCOLL, Mr. C. A.
 MILLER, Hon. Miss B. A.
 MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M.A.
 PAYNE, Mr. G. W.
 PRESCOD, Mr. T.A.
 SEALY, Mr. R. L.
 SYMMONDS, Hon. K.D.
 THOMPSON, Mr. D.J.H.
 TOPPIN, Hon. R. St.C.
 TULL, Mr. L. R.
 WALCOTT, Hon. Dr. J. X.
 WOOD, Hon. A.P.

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

EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

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

Q3. Dates in the text. The source gives 'Thursday, November 29, 2003' (29 November 2003 was a Saturday). The weekday and date do not agree; printed as in the source.

Q4. Budget debate, Hon. H. F. Lashley's speech. In the middle of Hon. H. F. Lashley's speech one passage is labelled 'Mr. M.A. LASHLEY', but the speaker continues 'we, in the Ministry of Social Transformation will also strengthen this programme', which suggests the label should be Hon. H. F. Lashley. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Budget debate, Mr. M. A. Lashley's speech. Mr. M. A. Lashley's speech opens twice: 'I rise to make my contribution to this debate' and, after an aside, 'I rise to make a submission and to support the Leader of the Opposition'. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Budget debate, speech labels. Several labels spell members' names in different ways: 'DR. W.F. DUGID' beside Dr. W. F. DUGUID; 'Mr. L.C. TULL' beside Mr. L. R. TULL; and 'His Honour J.M. EDGHILL' beside His Honour J. J. M. EDGHILL. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Committee of Supply, report of the Resolution. The procedural sentence reads 'On the motion of Hon. Hon. G. A. CLARKE seconded by' and is broken off, with the rest ('Hon. R. R. FARLEY, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported ...') typed as a separate paragraph. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Committee of Supply, Head 37. Below the heading 'HEAD 37 - MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS AND TRANSPORT' the source has a second heading, 'NOW THE MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS'. Printed as in the source.

Q9. Adjournment. The closing procedural sentence ends with the take-slip reference 'House No.13(131)10.48 p.m.' run into the text. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly resumed on Thursday, 27th November, 2003, with Mr. Speaker in the Chair, to continue the debate on the Prime Minister's Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals; the Deputy Speaker presided for much of the afternoon. Reverting to Government Notices, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley laid the Value Added Tax (Refund) (Special Olympics Barbados) Order, 2003 and the Land Tax (Rate of Tax) (No. 2) Order, 2003, and gave notice of a Resolution to grant \$3 198 636 from the Consolidated Fund under Supplementary Estimates No. 5, 2003-2004.

Government speakers supported the Resolution. Rev. J. J. S. Atherley spoke on the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and the case for agriculture and food security; His Honour J. J. M. Edghill set the Statement against the deadlines of the Single Market in 2004 and the Free Trade Area of the Americas in 2005; Hon. R. D. Marshall praised the Prime Minister's record; Hon. R. St.C. Toppin noted that no new taxes had been imposed and was reminded by the Speaker of the rule against anticipation when he spoke on the Fair Trading Commission; Hon. G. A. Clarke reported that \$44 187 000 had been lent to 2 641 people for housing between 1994 and 2003, with a further \$10 million in \$5 000 loans to 1 962 people; and Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde spoke on employment opportunities for women and on the record of 1986 to 1994.

For the Opposition, Mr. M. A. Lashley supported the Leader of the Opposition's reply and drew a point of order from Dr. W. F. Duguid; Mr. R. D. Jones called the proposals a wish list; Mr. R. L. Sealy questioned why the property transfer tax reductions took effect only from 1st April, 2004, and drew a point of order from Hon. Miss B. A. Miller; and Mr. D. St.E. Kellman argued that manufacturing and agriculture had not received the support given to tourism. Mr. G. W. Payne, speaking for St. Andrew, commended the Statement as a whole but criticised the property transfer tax. Mr. T. A. Prescod spoke on behalf of the poor black majority and on evictions without a social survey.

In the afternoon the Speaker had the broadcast stopped and rebuked the Member for St. Michael West Central over his earlier remarks on decriminalising homosexuality, buggery and prostitution and over leaving the Chamber; Mr. R. D. Marshall apologised and the Speaker accepted the apology. The debate continued with Hon. Miss B. A. Miller on economic transformation and fishing rights with Trinidad, Mr. L. R. Tull on culture and

tertiary education, Dr. W. F. Duguid in his first budget speech, Hon. H. F. Lashley on sustainable livelihoods, credit unions and the Year of the Family, Hon. K. D. Symmonds on the Single Market and Fund Access, and Hon. D. D. Marshall on exporting Barbadian culture. The House was suspended until 8.00 p.m.

After the resumption, Hon. Dr. J. X. Walcott spoke on health and the hospital unions. Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, in his eighteenth budget debate, said that the Minister of Finance had a fixation with the horizon and that people were being 'repositioned out of Barbados'. Hon. N. A. Lynch also supported the Resolution.

The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, replied. He said that the views in the International Monetary Fund's Article 4 report were those of its staff, not of the Government, and he was met by two points of order from

Mr. C. A. Mascoll, who quoted paragraphs 34 and 35 of the report on wage restraint and attrition. The Prime Minister defended the use of the \$300 million borrowed after 11th September, 2001, accepted that more attention had to be paid to implementation, and the Resolution was agreed to.

The House then went into Committee of Supply with Mr. R. D. Marshall in the Chair. Hon. G. A. Clarke explained the \$3 198 636 under Head 37, including \$1.8 million for the utility companies for work at Wharf Road, Swan Street and Baxters Road and \$500 000 for road rehabilitation. Mr. D. St.E. Kellman asked for funds to be divided fairly among constituencies, and Dr. W. F. Duguid thanked the Minister for the road at Club Morgan. The Head and the amended Explanatory Notes were agreed to and the Resolution was passed. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley thanked the Speaker and staff, and the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 9th December, 2003 at 10.00 a.m.