
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, January 13, 2004

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on Tuesday, January 13, 2004.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, G.C.M. B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J. P. (Deputy Speaker)
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.)
Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.) Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.) L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of Labour and Social Security)
Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Public Works and Transport)
Mr. R. D. MARSHALL (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)
Hon. A. P. WOOD, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil, J.P. (Minister of Energy and Public Utilities)
Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)
Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House)
Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B.
Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN
Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment)
Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.
Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P. (Parliamentary Secretary to the Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P. (Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)
Mr. R. D. JONES, B.A. (Hons.) M.A. (Ed.) J.P.
Dr. D. C. ESTWICK, B.Sc., M.B., B.S.
Mr. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.) M.A. (Public Finance) (Leader of the Opposition)
Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.) L.E.C., (Minister of Industry and International Business)
Mr. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.)
Dr. W. F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS., J.P.
Mr. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, December 16, 2003.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes so cited be confirmed subject to any/or corrections and/or observations.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or observations, then let those Minutes stand confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report to this Honourable House that I am in receipt of the Auditor General's Report for the year 2003 from the Auditor General.

PAPERS

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

Annual Report of the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited for the year 2002.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Annual Report of the Barbados National Oil Company Limited for the year ended March 31, 2001.
2. Annual Reports of the Transport Board for the periods April 2000 to March 2001 and April 2001 to March 2002.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

Annual Reports of the Barbados Port Authority for the years 1999, 2000 and 2001.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS

Mr. SPEAKER: Questions Nos. 1 to 15, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: (Christ Church West):

To ask the Minister of Public Works:

1. Will the Minister state whether his Ministry has developed plans for the improvement of the road network in St. Philip North, given the ongoing housing and other commercial developments in that area?
2. Will the Minister state what plans, if any, his Ministry has for the improvement of the drainage in the Hart's Gap and Palm Garden areas in the parish of Christ Church?
3. Is the Minister aware that Highway 7 is in a state of significant disrepair? If the answer is in the affirmative, will the Minister disclose what plans, if any, his Ministry has to improve Highway 7? If the Ministry has such plans, will the Minister inform the House of the commencement date of such improvements for the said Highway?

4. Is the Minister aware that operation of the sluice gate associated with the Graeme Hall Swamp has been compromised by the accretion of sand which now blocks the sluice gate? Will the Minister state if there are any plans for the correction of any problems resulting therefrom?

5. Will the Minister state whether there are any plans for the repair of the road from Six Roads through Sunbury to the St. Philip Church? If so, when such repair will commence, and when it is anticipated that such repair will be completed?

6. Will the Minister state when Phase II of the road project at Lowthers Hill, Christ Church is expected to be completed?

To ask the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports:

7. Will the Minister state whether his Ministry has plans to develop sporting facilities at St. Martin's, St. Philip?

To ask the Minister of Social Transformation:

8. Is the Minister aware that during the last administration some floodlights were installed at Ferniehurst, St. Michael but that there is need for a pavilion and a community centre in the area? Will the Minister disclose if there are any plans for the provision of such facilities in this area?

9. Will the Minister disclose whether his Ministry has plans to develop a community centre for the convenience, use and recreation of the residents from the districts of St. Matthias and Hart's Gap in Christ Church?

10. Will the Minister state whether the Urban Development Commission has conveyed any of the lots in the Halls Road Tenantry to any of the qualified tenants? If the answer is in the negative, will the Minister state how soon the Urban Development Commission will convey such lots?

11. To ask the Minister of Energy and Public Utilities: Will the Minister state:

(a) Whether his Ministry has any plans to improve the standard of bus service provided by the Transport Board for the residents of the Kingsland area?

(b) Whether his Ministry has any plans to improve the standard of bus service provided by the Transport Board to the residents of the Lowlands area?

- (c) Whether his Ministry has any plans to improve the standard of bus service provided by the Transport Board for residents of the Dayrell's Road area?

- (d) Whether his Ministry has any plans to improve the standard of bus service provided by the Transport Board for residents of the Rendezvous area?

To ask the Prime Minister, Minister of the Finance, Economic Affairs and the Civil Service:

12. Will the Minister state if there are any plans in his Ministry to designate Tweedside Road a Special Development Area in order to promote the general renewal and development of that area and thereby assist small businesses?

13. Will the Minister say if there are any plans to designate Highway 7 and its environs from the area of the Garrison right up to the area of Oistins a Special Development Area?

14. To ask the Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment: Will the Minister state:

- (a) Whether her Ministry has any plans to build any more rental housing units in the Bonnetts and St. Matthias area?

- (b) Whether her Ministry has any plans to build any more rental units in the Deacons, St. Michael area?

To ask the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports:

15. Will the Minister state when work will commence at Flint Hall on the new school to house the pupils of the Carrington Primary and the Erdiston Primary School?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the rest of this day's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 8 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE LEASE TO SOUTH EASTERN FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETY LIMITED OF THE PARCEL OF LAND AT SIX ROADS, ST. PHILIP

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, the matter before this Honourable Chamber is a Resolution which seeks the approval of the Chamber, to approve the lease of 779.4 square metres of the Crown lands or approximately 8 000 square feet at Six Roads, St. Philip, to the South Eastern Farmers Co-operative Society Limited.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of the organisations which is promoting agricultural activity in the south eastern part of the island. Therefore, it is part of Government's thrust to give impetus to vibrant agricultural sectors.

Mr. Speaker, we at the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, have sought to give support to a number of organisations, some are charitable, some are sports, and others, are involved in areas of economic enterprises but are not themselves large profit-making organisations but are in the nature of co-operatives.

Sir, in these situations where such organisations come to the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment seeking Government land, our approach has been to give support to their area of endeavour by ensuring that they could get access to such lands but at rents that could be described as peppercorn.

Over the course of the last few years, we have given support by providing Government accommodations at very reasonable rates to the Barbados 4-H Club; Barbados Agricultural Management Company; the Amateur Swimming Association; the Association for the Correction of Learning Disabilities; the Barbados Cancer Society; the Citizen Band Radio Association; the Barbados Heart Foundation; the

Barbados Hockey Foundation; the Barbados Lawn Tennis Association; the Barbados National Trust; the Barbados Olympics Association; the Barbados Red Cross Society; the Rugby Football Union; the Shotokan Karate Club; the Spanish Club; the Barbados Table Tennis Association; the Yachting Youth Training Association; the Caribbean Meteorological Organisation; the Police Sports Club; the Soroptomist International; Spartan Cricket Club; the Methodist Trust Corporation; the Prison Fellowship of Barbados; the University of the West Indies (UWI); the Diabetes Foundation of Barbados; the Football Association; the Council for the Disabled, and the 4-H Foundation, at Queen's Park.

Mr. Speaker, one can see a wide range of organisations that are involved in a plethora of social, economic, and other activities, which Government seeks to give support. Therefore, when people complain that not sufficient support is given to organisations, they are not counting the very real value of support that is given by the provision of lands and properties at reasonable rents, in some instances as low as between \$0.75 and \$100 per year.

Mr. Speaker, part of the support regime that we have made is that we are going to use Government properties to allow those entities or a particular group of persons such as the South Eastern farmers that are engaged in activities which could benefit the wider society. This would allow them the opportunity to operate or to compete in the marketplace on an even footing by not having to worry about the payment of rents or access to land or property. Sir, in this instance, the South Eastern Farmers Co-operative Society Limited would benefit from a ten-year lease with effect from December, 2001.

Sir, we are backdating it. The rent will be fixed at \$600 per annum, with a right to review in the fifth year. Sir, \$600 per annum, calculates to \$50 per month. I am not sure of the exact size of the Co-operative but assuming it has more than ten members, then one is talking about a monthly contribution of \$5 per month per person. Therefore, it is entirely within the reach of members and gives support to them in a way that if they had to rent a property for a similar value on the open commercial market, they would not be able to do so at this rate.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, who formally held the portfolio of Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and who is very familiar with a number of those persons in this co-operative, and who, in fact, has fought very hard to get the Government to extend this kind of support on the behalf of his constituents, will speak at length to the kinds of initiatives that have been put in place by Government, to ensure that agriculture remains a vibrant industry.

Mr. Speaker, in a globalised marketplace and trading arrangements, even though the United States of America continues to give subsidization to its agricultural sector, the Government of Barbados, while complying with the rules of not providing subsidies, has still put in place a support regime of concessions, and in this instance, access to property, that allows our agricultural product and the local market to be vibrant but moreover, gives them the kind of base which would allow them to compete regionally and extra-regionally.

Mr. Speaker, this is important in the context of food security in the current international climate, given the threat of terrorism or of biological agents which could be employed to wreak havoc on the population or on specific segments of the population. In fact, some older persons have spoken of food scarcity during the last World War and to the extent to which a commodity such as rice, being a staple food of the Barbadian diet, had become unavailable and of the fact that persons had to travel long distances in order to get rations, so much so that all over Barbados when rice was unavailable, potatoes became known as "big grain" rice. Therefore, the creative language of the masses had found a formulation for the economic and social problems of the time, in dubbing potatoes "big grain" rice.

Mr. Speaker, in that context, Government continued to recognise that with the threat and talk of terrorism on a globalised scale, that it was important, particularly in small economies like ours, to have some degree of autonomy of production of food for our own self-sufficiency, so that in the event of a threat, we are able to sustain ourselves for such period of time as may be necessary.

Mr. Speaker, because of the new trading rules, the agricultural sector is also going into what is very much a new era. We have to fit the agricultural sector in Barbados and to prepare it for the new rules of the trading regime that presently exist, and would exist from 2005, 2007, 2010 and 2015, as various rules would change and as the face of the marketplace would become completely different and more competitive, as preferential rules become a thing of the past.

Sir, Barbados agricultural sector would have to be prepared to compete with products from the United States of America, Europe, Latin America, Asia, and from countries which have larger land masses than we do and are, therefore, able to produce with greater economies of scales. There are also impositions arising out of these rules about the way in which agricultural commodities should be produced. There are now rules that tell you how you must catch fish, and what volumes of fish to catch and the age of the fish. There are rules which apply to how meat should be killed, the conditions in which the animals should be kept prior to slaughter and post-slaughter.

10.40 a.m.

It is critical for us to reach these new targets and standards if our agricultural product is to be competitive. It is not only a matter of the backyard or wayside slaughter or persons who rear chickens for their own use to supplement the family income and meeting the local demands but the impetus will be on meeting the international standard.

I will give an example which is a real one in the marketplace. BICO produces ice cream for sale locally, regionally and internationally. It is a product that meets the highest standard in terms of taste and it is very highly sought after. BICO ice cream is sometimes bought in the region in preference to bigger and better known international brands but it is made from milk locally produced which is obtained from cows from small farms.

Sir, since BICO is producing and selling internationally, it has to meet the new trade standards for quality of milk, the temperature that milk is kept at, the conditions under which the animals are kept on the farm, the extent to which they are treated for bacterial infection and the amount of antibiotics they are given. All the conditions on the farm for raising this animal are important. We may think that we can continue to behave in our agricultural sector as we did thirty years ago but there is a new competitive region out there which compels us to meet the new international standards.

Mr. Speaker, if we hope to compete in the global marketplace particularly where we have products like BICO that is of excellent quality and capable of competing with other international brands, we have to look at every single stage of the production sector to ensure that we are reaching the new international standards.

Therefore, at the level of the primary producer, the man in the street, we are going to have to become more aware of our own responsibility in relation to having the country ready to compete in the new global marketplace.

Sir, with initiatives like these, the Government would say to an agricultural producing organisation or sector that they do not have to worry about rent or land because the Government is going to give it to them at a small affordable sum of money and they may concentrate their energies and efforts on meeting the new international target and putting their financial resources into making themselves or the organisation compliant with new international standards.

Sir, it is not only at the level of this kind of support that Government has been helpful to the agricultural sector. In the Budget of 2002, the Prime Minister enunciated a number of initiatives aimed at ensuring that agriculture has substantial support in Barbados. He enunciated provisions for the revitalisation of the pork industry in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, pork is a critical staple particularly since the catchy Carlton Supermarket's advertisement of "Proper Pork". It has reached a stage where the advertising of pig meat as proper pork has become so popular and ingrained in the culture and colloquial language of the masses that when women in short skirts pass by, in our culture they can be referred to as 'proper pork'.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I have heard it several times and whether it is acceptable or not, time will judge whether the colloquial expression survives. Sir, while in the international market pork is being talked about as the other white meat, here in Barbados, we know that pork is proper and that it has become the meat of first choice again for many Barbadians.

This sector of the agricultural industry is enjoying some degree of comeback because of the advertising campaign together with a short-term programme which was put in place at just over BDS\$0.5 million. Equally, support was given to the poultry industry. Sir, \$62.9 million was given for initiatives to the Scotland District and money was given to ensure that export agriculture was able to be enhanced and meet local targets for export.

Similarly, the Barbados Cotton Growers Association was given support so that the local cotton industry could be revived. Barbados cotton is a brand which has weight in the international market. It is recognised that the need and desire for organic products is gaining greater popularity in the international marketplace and that the quality of Barbados sea island cotton is supposed to be exceptional and hence support was given for the resuscitation of the Barbados Cotton Growers Association as well as support of \$2 million to recapitalise a ginnery in Barbados. Sir, the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation also benefitted from financial support in the 2002 Budget as it relates to agriculture. Sir, what we are seeing is not just mono-focal in relation to Government's initiatives to support agriculture but a well thought-out plan that not only ensures access to land and property but financial concessions, which give stimuli to the market, and support for persons engaged in the agricultural industry.

10.50 a.m.

We have not only sought to ensure food security in strong, local agricultural production but we have put initiatives in place to ensure that the agriculture sector is catering to the new export market as well as to meet the new standards and regimes required by the new international trading rules. These initiatives are necessary if we are to be competitive, as we seek to move from the stage of primary producers to tertiary producers and exporters.

Mr. Speaker, it is significant that in the Caribbean we have always been primary producers. We produce sugar cane and export sugar but many of the refined sugar products which have the high revenues in the marketplace we do not produce. We produce fish but we are not into the value-added products like fish fingers, fish pâté and other refined fish products which have high value for the international palate and hotel cuisine. They are some of us who would prefer to stick to local cuisine like Cou Cou and salt fish but they are others who might prefer to have the fish pâté.

Sir, I can go to countries which produce cocoa as a raw agricultural product but do not produce the value-added refined cocoa powders or chocolates. We have to think in terms of the Caribbean and how we move from low-revenue primary production to high-yield in terms of revenue secondary and tertiary production because those are the products that can make money and create new niches in the marketplace.

Barbadian sugar is recognised as one of the better sugars in the world but the reality is, with a land mass as small as ours, high labour cost and the fact that our land does not allow for broad-based mechanisation, entrants like Vietnam, which has large flat land masses and low labour costs are able to produce sugar, even though as a primary product, at lower and more competitive rates.

Sir, the question is, should Barbados move to the highly competitive boutique-type products or should we sell Barbados sugar as a branded organic product in specialty shops which would yield high value, rather than continue to sell sugar *en masse* to the producers of tertiary sweet goods? Sir, there are issues in relation to agriculture which the country has to face. What is going to be our level of agricultural production and how much land do we need to produce it? Hence, in considering our land use policy, we need to determine the percentage of land that needs to remain in agricultural production. However, the time is now ripe, particularly in terms of the changes in the marketplace, to make a determination under current conditions as to what would be the appropriate levels of land to remain in agriculture. It is a decision that has to be made as more and more people come out of sugar cane production and arable land is left idle.

Mr. Speaker, while there are persons who believe that we should import all of our agricultural needs and spend our time on things like financial services, which may appear to make more money, there is a need for an agricultural sector. There are many people who have made a comfortable living from various stages of agricultural involvement of one sort or another. Therefore, the kinds of initiatives, which I have outlined, are extremely important if our agricultural industry

is going to remain viable, competitive and if we are to ensure national food security.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are able, at the level of the Ministry of Housing and Lands, to give support to the South Eastern Farmers Co-Operative Society Limited with this lease. They would be allowed to construct a building of their own design for their use. Mr. Speaker, there are forty farmers who are members of this Association who stand to benefit from the initiatives before this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, with those words, I am very much obliged.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South recognises that my contribution will be one from which he would have to take notes.

Mr. Speaker, the speech delivered by the Honourable Member for St. James South was rather interesting. Sir, if one looked at the various debates pertaining to agriculture since 1994 to 2003, one would easily come to the conclusion that the Honourable Member was not a member of the Barbados Labour Party but a member of the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, everything that has been said by the Honourable Member was said before in this Honourable House by the Opposition for many years. It is interesting that in the year 2004, ten years after coming to Government, that Jamaica's Prime Minister, P. J. Patterson, and the Barbados Labour Party were able to put programmes in place that are sensible and workable.

Mr. Speaker, this is the second compliment that I have paid the Barbados Labour Party within the last three months. In one of my weekly columns I said that if the Minister of Agriculture could implement the things that he talks about, he would become one of the most successful Ministers of Agriculture to have adorned this Parliament since 1994.

Sir, we are aware that talk is cheap.

Asides.
11.00 a.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, you can go to many associations which I do not do, and you can advocate many things but at the end of the day when these presentations are made, you hear the farmers and others telling you how wonderful they are, and one year later, just before the Budget, you hear the complaints coming from the farmers that the words were good, but they are yet to see the implementation of these wonderful words that have been presented.

I am repeating, Sir, that we in Barbados have to understand that food security is not something that we must play around with, it is a must. We must understand that until we can feed ourselves, and until we can appreciate what we are doing on behalf of the farmers, the fishermen and the vendors of Barbados, we are not going anywhere, and that sounds familiar to your ears. You have been hearing it consistently and that is why I am proud to hear the P. J. Pattersons of Barbados making that particular comment.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: When I say the P.J. Pattersons of Barbados and of the Barbados Labour Party is by no means trying to degrade anyone. It is a compliment.

Sometimes in our political lives, we need to step out and come back. It is clear to me that since the Honourable Member from St. James South stepped out and came back, her vision is much brighter and her pronouncements are in the right direction. It is clear that she seems to understand that her friends are on This Side and it is better to repeat what she hears from This Side than what she is hearing from the Other Side. I congratulate her for that. It is a bold step.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: With friends like us, that is correct. She does not need any enemies and I want to concur with what was said about the Honourable Member for St. James North.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, if this is what we have to gauge what is going to happen in 2004, I am a happy man, because the Barbados Labour Party has started in 2004 to tell the public of Barbados that our agricultural policy has been wrong and that the policy delivered by the Democratic Labour Party for the last nine to ten years has been the correct policy. They have been correct on cotton, sugar and other crops. They have also been correct about what they have said about the beef industry and the meat industry.

Sir, what we have been saying? We have been saying that cotton to Barbados is like oil to the Arabs. Now, I am hearing the Barbados Labour Party making the same statements without actually using the same words. One can only come to the conclusion that the Barbados Labour Party should have listened to the Democratic Labour Party for the last nine years. If they had only listened to the Democratic Labour Party, based on cotton alone, this country would have been much more advanced.

What are we hearing? We are hearing from BS&T that they can find no viable project in which to invest in Barbados, the investment climate is not exciting and the cotton project which should have been in place to encourage companies like BS&T to invest, is not here to invest in, so they have to invest all over the world.

We were saying that the country is doing well and BS&T is moving on but what we need, Mr. Speaker, is to increase our GDP and the best way to do that is where the multiplied effect is much greater. This is why the Government has to be about creating the climate for people to invest. As a layman, Sir, and this is where I claim my identity, it is clear to me that we need to refocus and understand, not only the importance of the BS&Ts of Barbados but the small south eastern farmers.

Sir, do you hear where they come from, the east and you know I have always said that there is a direct relationship between the east and the north of Barbados. In order to get to the east, you have to get to the north.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is not by accident, Sir, that you find so many people from St. Lucy living in St. Philip and still claiming their identity because they understand the importance...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: There was also a very interesting comment made by the Honourable Member for St. James South and that is a comment which will remain with me for a long time. The lady who has four cows in the backyard, if she wants to supply BICO or Pinehill, she must reach the international standards because BICO must export.

Sir, if that lady does not want her milk to be exported, or to be transformed into ice cream, by logic, it means that she should not be subjected to all the technicalities, and she should be free to sell her milk to the next door neighbour without necessarily having to go through Pinehill, in order to sell her milk to the next door neighbour. Mr. Speaker, it is only when she wants to sell her milk on the international market that she should be subjected to international standards.

Sir, why is it that you and many people, including the Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. James North and I, understand the concept of backyard slaughtering, which helped to educate and develop the masses of people, especially in the north, east and sometimes the central and even the south of Barbados. Sir, all of a sudden, we seem

not to understand our cultural heritage and we have allowed ourselves to be enslaved by international standards which are only needed when we seek to market our product in the international market.

I am saying, Sir, that international standards are good, the development of people is also good but we must understand that backyard slaughtering is a part of our culture. It is when we seek to move the slaughtering to a higher stage that we have to look at higher standards. We must not allow any company to misuse the masses of people in Barbados for their financial interest using globalised concepts to tie in things that are not relevant to ensure that farmers and poor people are subjected to conditions to prop up other people under the disguise of international standards.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying we have to understand that the abattoir is important to Barbados but at a different level. It is not to be used and misused at the grass roots level.

Sir, policy is important. I have always said that the major problem facing Barbados and will continue to face Barbados, is the top down policy. We believe, in this country that once we operate and please the people at the top, we do not have to care about the people at the bottom. Sir, I nearly call it the all-inclusive concept because when you look at it, there is no difference between the all-inclusive concept in tourism and the inclusive concept in politics, that is, once you look after the top, you do not have to care about the bottom, because once you make the top happy, the top has a job then to make sure that those at the bottom fall in line. When you look at the inclusive concept and the all-inclusive concept, you can see some similarities. When you look at what is actually happening to the productive sectors in the country, you can see that it is stifling.

For example, Sir, I alluded to something earlier and I want to expand on it. I have been saying in this Parliament that do not care how much money you give to those at the top, it will not have the same impact. Not only have I said it, I have also written it. I felt so strongly about it that I even put it in black and white.
11.10 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. I have allowed a lot of latitude on this matter relating to agriculture, so I would want you to be mindful of that please, as you continue.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I always obey what you say, but my job in here is to help educate the Parliament of Barbados, so it would be impossible for me to speak on agriculture, farmers and housing if I do not involve

the economic side of it because there is a direct relationship between agriculture, farmers, people and economic development. You cannot speak about agriculture and forget about the economic side of it which includes taxation.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: We are not just talking about kicking football. Sir, kicking football is not just kicking football anymore, it is an economic activity, so if I am to speak in this Parliament, I cannot limit myself to the narrow corners of politics, I must be expansive or not I would be failing myself. This Parliament is about education, being expansive and having foresight, to which I always strive.

Sir, I have said before in this Parliament that the problem in Barbados as it stands right now is that we are running our motor vehicles on diesel and gasoline at the same time. There are certain sectors that do not mind that because the amount of damage that would create, would not impact on them in the same way that it will impact on the masses because they are using bigger engines and they can easily correct any problems they will be confronted with.

Sir, it is clear to me that the consultants, the advisors and the economic gurus in Barbados have not realised what has happened with the introduction of VAT and how it is impacting on our lives. Before VAT was introduced, the 'big six', or whatever one wants to call them, in Bridgetown were tied down by the Government of Barbados, but since VAT was introduced they are no longer tied down, they are now flowing on top of the Government and the people of Barbados because they now control their own destiny. That is why it is important for us to understand the pronouncement that was made this week by the spokesperson from the Barbados Shipping and Trading Company Limited that they are now investing... You can only invest when you have the disposable income that these small farmers are now fighting for.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: We need to understand that we need not cater to the upper end of the economy anymore because we have already given what it takes for them to operate within and outside of the circle, but what we need to concentrate on now are the small businesses of Barbados which would involve the fishermen, the farmers and the vendors. We need now to empower this group that have given up a lot, but instead of us looking in their direction, we are still looking at the 'big six' not realising that we have no more control over them because they do not need any licences or any money from us because when we removed

the 13 taxes from Government, we landed them right into their laps, so they can now do everything that is required.

Sir, we still have a country to put forward and we have to understand that we need to empower the masses of people like the farmers and the fishermen so that they can fully utilise what they have so as to be able to maximise and expand their resources. It is alright to come and lease some land to these farmers, but we need to see something more, but I am not even sure that what we are doing here today is the right thing.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Those south eastern farmers do not realise that while they are calling on the Government to lease them the land that the farmers in the north want to buy their own land because they want to have an instrument so that they can better empower themselves and they want something they can take to the bank so that they can plan in the long term. That is the difference between the farmers from the north and those from the south east.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The farmers in the north want something called a conveyance so that they would know that the land belongs to them and they would not have to go to a third party to get permission to do what they want to do.

In the same way the Government can understand that they need to privatise and hand certain things to the big companies in Barbados, they also need to have a broad-based policy that would suit all. The days of coming to Parliament to lease land to small farmers must come to an end. We must empower these people to have the capacity to buy and to have real ownership, not temporary ownership, because with such ownership they can plan their future lives better. Farming is not about 25 years, it is about being able to do something for a lifetime. The farmers must have the capacity so that when they start to plan they will not have to worry about the Government coming back at the end of 25 or 10 years to get back the land.

If we understand the importance of agriculture we would not be leasing land, we would give the farmers who can afford to own the land, the right to purchase the land. In the same way the Government can see it fit to allow somebody to own the house that they were leasing, the Government must also give the persons the thing that gives them the capacity to own the land. Surely, that should be simple logic. What I am saying is that you cannot have one policy for the real private sector of Barbados and just

because you see small farmers as beggars you have to have a different policy for them. The small farmers are real people and they must be treated as real people.

Sir, about a year or two ago one of our leading farmers in the north of Barbados had to give away many cows and less than a year or two after the same cows that were given away were very much needed in Barbados which meant that we did not have a proper agricultural policy in place.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The persons who were affected at that time were the small farmers of Barbados. 11.20 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, this meant that if a proper agricultural policy was in place, those farmers would have continued seeing farming as a business and, therefore, the herd would have developed to such a stage that we would not now have to worry about the impact of the mad cow disease on our meat flow to Barbados. Instead, we would have had the capacity to supply to the local market and also to ease those countries that would now have a shortage of beef.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the sugar production, one could see a consistent trend that whenever anything happens, we panic and talk about cuts, while never repositioning ourselves to look to the future to see how we could recapitalise on future markets.

Sir, the history of the sugar cane industry has been such that we have always been able to 'ride-out' the problems within the industry, and have always been able to bounce back with a number of good crops.

Mr. Speaker, when Government came to Parliament and talked about cutting the sugar quota, I had worked out the opportunity cost of doing that and had shown them where they were wrong, that instead of cutting the quota they should have encouraged the farmers to grow more sugar cane.

Sir, at that time, everyone said that I did not know what I was speaking about but I have been here long enough to see persons go back on that opinion.

Mr. Speaker, after returning from Australia, I had also pointed out to the Government of Barbados, the occurrence of a rather interesting thing within the world market that I had liked, that is, most of the oil producing countries were selling their oils, using the Euro as the trading currency.

Mr. Speaker, the interesting thing about that is that our sugar production is now tied to the Euro, therefore, if we were trading in the Euro, then automatically we would have stood to gain from that. But again nobody listened to me. Sir, this was discussed in Parliament and can be found in the records. Sir, while I was in Miami, Mr. Edwin Carrington and I discussed it. Sir, suddenly somebody has recognised what is happening and panic buttons have been pushed, now cotton, sugar, and everything else has become important.

Sir, what we are now seeing is that the productive sectors of the country have now become important because if they are not used, everything would come crumbling down because land has out-used its usefulness and cannot be used, tampered with, nor engaged to the highest bidder because there is a limit. Sir, it could not have come from a better person than the Minister of Housing, who has started this debate in this House this morning.

Mr. Speaker, do you know why there has been a panic, and it was not to get better revenues. They panicked because they have suddenly realised that the 'milk cow', which is called land, is not there any more to be milked, and that they have to find an alternative to replace that 'milk cow'. Sir, whereas Government has been able to boost their foreign reserves and has allowed an argument to be knocked down based on foreign reserves, somebody has suddenly recognised there is a limit to that, and that we cannot operate as cosmetologists of Barbados but that we have to get down to real work and look at the productive sectors of the country.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see that we are now going to do real economic planning and are now at a stage where there is going to be a battle of the minds, where the Government now has to show the real mettle. Unfortunately for them, they are about to show the real mettle now that they are about to leave these good lands of power, as they would say, and as we would say, these good lands of governance.

Mr. Speaker, it happens to all governments after two terms. The great Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow had his time and it is time that we might have to rethink and to see how the small farmers in the east would be able to help us.

Sir, a number of years ago we might not have been paying any attention to these farmers because we would not have seen their importance. I would have been in here trying to educate this Parliament of the importance of small farmers but today, I do not have to do that because the Minister has done it for us and must be congratulated for the way in which she has presented the facts to this Honourable House.

Sir, I want to agree with her totally because that is the new P.J. Patterson style. In the way it has happened with the Jamaican politics, I can see it happening with the Barbadian politics. Let us watch the language and the style and the need to get the masses on her side, and the Honourable Member has done a wonderful job in getting the masses on her side.

I must tell my Honourable friend from Christ Church East, who is a very smart thinker and would not allow the educational system to allow him to slip, but he would utilise the system because it impacts on everyone in Barbados. The Honourable Member would use it to his advantage, to make sure that he remains in the spotlight of Barbados.

Sir, what was also very clever at that time when Cable and Wireless became...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, these are all small farmers.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, what has that got to do with the lease?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, in one sentence I will tell you. The Honourable Member has now become so much of a community man, by going to North Stars Cricket, and going all over Barbados...

Mr. SPEAKER: What has that got to do with the lease?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I will explain it. The Honourable Member has recognised that he has to meet with the small farmers who are at the South Eastern Farmers Co-operative Society Limited and, therefore, as he moves around Barbados he has to impact on them, and there is no way that he is going to have a Ministry to impact negatively on him that has Cable & Wireless in it. Instead, he will hold the Ministry of Education portfolio so that he could educate the whole of Barbados, where he could see all positives. He is not going to allow any negatives to come on his plate, and I congratulate him for it.

Sir, his good friend, and he must be his good friend, would take the licks for him, even if it means that one does not have to rent a telephone anymore.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No, I am making a comparison. One no longer rents a telephone but now rents land in order to produce. Mr. Speaker, can you imagine that? They have given away the telephones but still want people to rent land to develop Barbados. Do you understand what is going on?

Mr. SPEAKER: I am trying to understand.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is a very clever thing and seeing that you are trying to understand, it is my duty to explain it to you. Sir, I know when you would want to hear more. If you were to allow them to do what is happening, it would impact greatly on you somewhere else. Sir, do not worry, I will look after you, I have always done that.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you, thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that compounded on this, farmers of the South Eastern Farmers Co-operative Society Limited, would have a problem with water. As one would know we are now in the crop season and it is at this time of the year that much rain does not fall, therefore, a situation would occur where those farmers would have to buy water.

Sir, there are a number of burst water mains all across Barbados and there is the possibility that if we are to follow the international dictates, the cost of water would also increase.

Sir, we have to be proactive and recognise that we cannot continue to burden those at the bottom. As you would have recognised within the last week, the disposable income of those at the bottom, of which I had forewarned and which I know was believed, has now decreased, whereas that of those at the top has increased.
11.30 a.m.

Sir, it is interesting that when the disposal income at the top increases that it does not impact on the farmers of Barbados but when the disposal income of those at the bottom increase, it impacts in a positive way on the farmers of Barbados. We need to understand that we cannot continue to give to those who have, that we should look after those who do not have and increase the capacity for farmers to feel that they are part of the economy of Barbados.

Sir, every time you look around there is a new input in a negative way on the masses of people in Barbados, whether it be new telephone charges, water rates, bus fares, *et cetera*. How long can you continue to punish a man and still he survives? We must thank the masses of people in Barbados for having ten years of hardship and are still surviving. At the same time farmers can hear other people talking about how much money they are investing all over the world.

Sir, there is nothing wrong in the private sector investing all over the world because Government must create the climate to encourage them to invest within. If the private

sector is saying that Government has not created the climate for them, I cannot fault them for doing the opposite to what I expected.

Sir, any new enlightened Government must understand the importance of the masses, their hardships and put policies in place to ensure that those persons are part of the economy not only from the producing side but from the side where they get compensation for their hard work.

Mr. Speaker, I must touch on the players in the poultry industry this morning as well. I had a running debate for almost a year when the poultry industry wanted to cut back. I told them publicly that instead of cutting back, keeping out the small farmers, that they should expand with the small farmers and look towards the external market to export their products. Instead of doing this, they allowed a few persons to introduce tunnel ventilation as a concept to keep out other small farmers, the people who kept the poultry industry alive in times of disease were pushed out, treated badly and no one spoke about it.

Sir, the masses of people in Barbados cannot be abused, misused and then dumped. Government of the day must understand they have a role to play to make sure that the masses who are the backbone of any industry, must be protected because in times of crisis the masses will remain here but those who received the benefits can easily take it offshore and invest to their own comfort.

Sir, we must understand that loyalty comes from the masses and that this country is not far away from certain things.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You will have to judge what I am thinking. I can assure you that when it occurs, the masses will be still here ploughing to make sure the economy is in good shape but those with capital know what to do. Sir, if a house does not have a good foundation and you try to expand it, it will come crumbling down.

Sir, from the 17th century, Barbados and St. Kitts have dominated the sugar industry and we are still producing sugar in the same way as we did then. We have been able to breed sugar cane here in Barbados yet we have declining yields. It seems that we have to go back to the good old men for knowledge because the more education there is the further we go backwards.

Sir, we need some more commonsense in Barbados because it is sadly lacking. We believe we can import every thing and try to implement it without realising that we need

to get good old players who base things on knowledge. Sir, we need more people in Barbados like the late Professor Oliver Headley. We do not honour people like him to the extent that they should be honoured. We need to hold up people like him as examples to Barbados but we simply say he was a great person and nothing else.

Mr. Speaker, honourable men like the late Professor Oliver Headley should be recognised or youngsters in the community will not respect us when we say that they do not want to go into agriculture. Sir, these youngsters do not want to hear about leasing but about ownership, nor do they want to travel the same road of their foreparents. We also say that youngsters are aggressive but that is not true. They are calling for real change and we must listen to the beat of the drums.

We are fortunate that there are still fishermen, vendors and farmers in Barbados because if they reacted based on the treatment they received, this country would be like a sinking ship. They should have forgotten about us but they are loyal citizens and continue with agriculture because they understand the importance of their labour to the development of the country.

Sir, they need not worry, there will always be hope because some of us understand the theoretical side as well as the practical side of what these vendors go through. Can you imagine a fisherman looking for fish today while it is windy?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable member, I know that fishing is regarded as part of agriculture and I am allowing you to expand. Please stick to what the leader of the motion said.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, then perhaps I can go wide and far because if you recall, as soon as I arrived in Parliament, I enquired of you whether we were discussing agriculture as I was listening to the debate while traveling here in my car.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have also allowed you to go wide as well but now you are going across the water too.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, if you do not want me to speak about the fishermen in Trinidad, I will obliged you and not speak about it. If it is a thorny issue, I will please you, Sir. I only want to say that I respect the hard work that the fishermen are doing and the multiplier effect which they are having on the economy.
11.40 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: ..and you would like these young people to work like that.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes. They are all farmers.

Mr. Speaker, I have a problem. South Eastern farmers are farmers too. I do not speak only for the farmers of the Land Lease Project in St. Lucy. The same rights that I call for on behalf of the farmers in my constituency I am calling for on behalf of all farmers in Barbados. I cannot limit myself to a narrow political view by believing that I can only represent the farmers within my constituency. Sir, when I see something like this, I see the connection between the farmers and vendors. There is no difference in the plight of the South Eastern Farmers Co-operative Society Limited and the fishermen at Six Men's.

Mr. Speaker, you will be happy to know that this week the vendors from Oistins were in Six Men's buying fish from the fishermen there. If the fishermen were given the concessions that I called for in this Honourable House the fishermen would be enjoying a better life. We also have to look after the vendors. It does not make sense giving concessions to the producers and not to the people who have to market the produce. It is one thing to talk about it but another thing to see it being implemented. This Parliament is not listening but the people of Barbados are listening. The vendors of Oistins understand the importance of moving from one side of the country to another side to get produce to work with.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, before I came to this Chamber I was a farmer, a fisherman and a vendor.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that we are operating in a globalised world and each sector and player is important. Until we can make that connection, we are not going to be competitive in Barbados. Sir that is why the Trinidadians are going to see our marketplace as the place to come and play. We must make sure that those persons who want to invest can do so but we must have a back layer with the capacity for them to step forward and do the work that others were doing.

Sir, we have a situation similar to what existed in the West Indies Cricket before Brian Lara took over as captain of the team, a few players and no backup for replacement. We now have replacements because we have a good cricket team in Barbados. We can send almost the whole Barbados cricket team to play for the West Indies and be successful.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, we have to understand that there is also a relationship in how we play our cricket and how we run our country. We need to make sure that as players leave the team that we have replacement players in cricket. Similarly, as investors expand their businesses, there is a need for people to want to invest in those businesses. How can we do that if we are only concentrating on the top and do not look after the bottom? I can understand why my friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, can publicly concur with me.

Mr. Speaker, last Sunday the Honourable Member for Christ Church East told the whole world that he concurred and agreed with many of my policies, community tourism and many others, but the only difference between us is that politically I went in one direction and he went in another.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, he understands how to ride on popularity and how to take over and I congratulate him. Being a small man, like I am, he is showing small farmers of Barbados that they also have the capacity to rise up and reach the top. It could not have been spoken by anybody better than that Honourable Member for Christ Church East while he was watching a cricket match between North Stars and Jordans Supermarket Shannon.

Mr. Speaker, in the same way that we want to have hope in this Honourable House, we must provide hope for the masses in Barbados. Sir, the day that we can enrich the lives of every person in Barbados is the day that Barbados can call itself a developed country. Sir, as long as we continue to have the multi-rich and the poor we will never be a developed country. If we do not change our policies, we will be heading in a direction where we would be referred to as a banana republic country. I will not call my country a banana republic because we are too developed as a country to allow ourselves to fall into such a trap.

Mr. Speaker, this debate has been very interesting. The Minister admitted that for the past nine years the Government followed a policy that could have been improved. I do not believe that it was the fault of the various Ministers of Agriculture because from listening to them over the years it would appear that they wanted to do things for the farmers but were unable to do so because they did not have the money.

I remember the Honourable Member for St. James North had some wonderful ideas for agriculture but he could not get the money to do the things that he wanted to do. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South also had that problem. Sir, if I am lying, I think that Honourable Members on the Other Side should get up and tell the public of

Barbados that I am misleading this Honourable House and I will withdraw every remark that I have made pertaining to that.

Mr. Speaker, we need to understand that we have arrived, ten years after being forewarned, at a position where we should have been ten years ago. We need to put policies, instruments and the necessary finance in place to take the agriculture industry forward and to make sure that the masses of Barbados, who are the backbone of this country, can come forward, as the cricket players do, when called upon. In order to do that we have to empower them. It is my regret that we have not been able to do a good job so far.

Sir, we welcome this Resolution but we also want Government to understand that we cannot be selling land to one group and leasing land to another. We have to treat everybody as equal players. Sir, because someone is a small businessman, it does not mean that he is insignificant.

I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. Sir, while I do not want to be disrespectful or anything of the sort, I am of the opinion that when persons come into this Honourable Chamber with a desire to participate in debates, I think that they need to treat the business of this Honourable House seriously. We are approaching a stage where persons in this Honourable House should be told how they should organise their speeches.
11.50 a.m.

We must understand and appreciate that those who listen to the speeches emanating from this Chamber are not only those restricted to here. He made a point that the business of the politicians who come in here should be partly to help with the education process. There are large numbers of persons on the outside listening on and they do not think that some of us in this House take the business of representation very seriously.

I think that we are becoming close to the point where persons have to be told that when they come into this Honourable Chamber, they need to present themselves in a more responsible and professional fashion. I sat and listened to a lot of misconceptions coming from the Honourable Member for St. Lucy whom I imagine can do better. I am going to speak to some of them. Originally, I did not intend to but when he gives the impression that the Government is using certain types of initiatives, in an attempt to enlighten and move the agricultural sector, in various components, forward, he is making statements to suggest that there is something ulterior on the part of this Government.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution which is before this Honourable Chamber today, is one that has a bit of history to it. It is also one that I have been involved in since I became a Member of this Honourable Chamber, so it pleases me greatly that we have been finally able to bring the Resolution to this stage.

The South Eastern Farmers Co-operative which is located in Six Cross Roads, has not expanded to the point that will make the farming community in St. Philip in general as proud as we would want it to be. I will say that one of the reasons is because of the length of time it would have taken to bring this matter to Resolution.

I have some pertinent information on the establishment and development of this Co-op, which I will share with this Honourable Chamber. I can assure you that the South Eastern Farmers Co-op is made up of some very serious farmers who have stuck to the task and steered the course up to this point. Sir, they are now getting closer to the promise land, that is, getting their hands on land, so that they can press on with the refurbishment of the structure. They could finally open the farming outlet at Six Roads, which is a wonderful location for it, and they would see some impetus being added to the business of the South Eastern Farmers Co-op.

Mr. Speaker, all of you would know of the Government's plan for an area like Six Roads. The Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto of 1976, and subsequent Manifestos, would have spoken of the need for us to establish town centres at strategic locations throughout Barbados.

The Glebe in St. George is a classic example and we have seen how commercial activity has taken off there. Six Roads has also been identified as a town centre and we have seen how the Government has been able to bring commercial activity and other services to Six Cross Roads. There is still a lot more work to be done there, but once we remain committed to the execution of that well-thought-out policy of establishing town centres at strategic locations throughout the country, then we understand how the establishment of a farmers outlet in Six Roads would fit in.

As I said earlier, it fits in nicely with what the Government has been planning for some time, in respect of the establishment of the Town Centre. It also fits in nicely, as the Honourable Member for St. James South would have said in her introductory remarks, to the Government's policy of providing opportunities for small farmers, opportunities pertaining to accessing land to help with the increase of agricultural production.

Persons made mention of the need for us to increase our food security and to produce more. The land for the landless project which started a couple of years ago was driven by the need for us to get a greater understanding of the importance to produce more of the food that we eat.

This need came into very sharp focus, all of us would remember, immediately after the events of September 11 2001. It was thought then that the countries on this side might have experienced difficulty in accessing food and food products from outside. Then, everybody started running fast and furious to get the small parcels of land around them planted up, and everyone was prepared to go back to first principles for us to grow and produce more, and agriculture was the talking point at that time.

Before that, the Land for the Landless Project was conceptualised and operationalised because this Government saw it important for us to give more prominence to agriculture and hence the establishment of the Land for the Landless Project.

Sir, we also said that it was not just about increasing agricultural production, but about providing farmers with more opportunities to display and sell the agricultural produce. Hence, this Government took a deliberate decision to embark on a policy of decentralisation of the marketing and distribution functions for agricultural produce and other produce provided by small business persons.

Sir, you well remember, coming from the Prime Minister that the Barbados Labour Party said around 2001 that we will make that the beginning of an effort which will see the Government refurbishing a large number of our markets, be they landing sites or markets for fruit and vegetables. Sir, we will also expand the market infrastructure in such a way that where it was possible to locate markets, like the one that would be done by the South Eastern Farmers Co-op, the Government will press on and we will establish a number of such marketing facilities.

Sir, the Government's record in this regard is extremely proud, but what is even more impressive about the venture that will be at Six Cross Roads, is that all the South Eastern Farmers Co-op is asking the Government for is an opportunity to lease the land, and they will provide the structure themselves, in the form of a self-help project.

There is some sort of a structure there and they will press on and refurbish it. It is an excellent initiative because they are not waiting on the Government to put up a proper structure, well-appointed, to display and sell the agricultural produce at a very strategic location but all they want is to get their hands on the land, via this lease arrangement. This is why I am extremely happy that it has come to this stage because it is a project I have been fighting for the last three

or four years. The farmers have remained committed to their occupation and have maintained faith with this Government that this project would get to this stage and they will press on and do the rest.

Mr. Speaker, let me give you a bit of history on the South Eastern Farmers Co-op. It was formed in 1989. It was engaged in discussions with the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (BADMCO) at that time.

12.00 noon

The Barbados Agricultural and Development Marketing Corporation (BADMCO), and the extension officers and the Ministry's technical persons, worked closely with this farmers' co-op by teaching them the technical aspect of their trade and pointed them in the right direction to access technical knowledge and small amounts of money so as to get them up and running.

What is remarkable about this co-op is that there are farmers in this co-op who have other jobs. For example, teachers from the Princess Margaret Secondary School are members of this co-op, who are using their time away from school to engage in agricultural activity and to provide leadership in it. So there are not all full-time farmers in this co-op. This is a co-op that will stay the course. It has to develop the management capability for sustainability, and the members would ensure that materialise.

While they were waiting patiently for this effort to reach this stage, the members of the co-op were accessing training provided by the Co-operative Department. The Rural Development Commission carried its small business training programme to the Princess Margaret Secondary School which is virtually on the compound of this land and some of them would have also taken that opportunity as well to be trained. We are talking about a co-op that is poised to move forward and which will get there in much shorter time now because of the opportunity that will be created to them in the not too distant future via the handing over of the formal lease.

Mr. Speaker, the farmers in that co-op had such a liking for the location that from the early 1990s they have been using a part of the area to set up the temporary arrangements for the selling of their vegetables and fruits, and at the end of every day they take down their trays and go away.

I want to see the day when we can have a well-appointed facility there in St. Philip where the farmers would not have to worry about how they set up and when they set up. The building is theirs, it is a self-help project but they just want access to the land. I know that this project which

they will be embarking on very soon will be successful. I am certain that those who live within the environs of where this farming activity will take place, will want to support their own because we are being encouraged more and more to use fresh produce and that is where they will get their fresh produce. So the farmers efforts will be better supported by the housing development that is planned for Six Roads.

Mr. Speaker, before the end of the year 191 houses, it might be private sector led, are going to be constructed as Part 1 of a two-part project at Emerald Park, which is virtually next door to where this farming outlet will be and that increase in housing stock will provide wonderful business opportunities and support with clientele for these farmers. Some time down the road in Part 2 of the project, another 343 houses would be built. Once again, the addition to the housing stock in this location should provide more opportunities for these farmers, which they deserve. They have been extremely patient and they have continued to develop themselves more and more as business persons.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, he is my good friend, I would not deny that, in his exuberance and in his eagerness to ramble here, there and everywhere, which I do not think he did to deliberately mislead the House, made some statements which I cannot allow to escape my reply. At this stage of our development and at a juncture when we are participating vigorously in international discussions pertaining to shaping a new trading environment and as globalisation and trade liberalisation take more and more force, we need to pay closer attention to standards. So it is most unfortunate that an Honourable Member who has been in this Chamber for a number of years can seemingly suggest that regional and international standards are only relevant when we are marketing goods and meats internationally. This is a country that depends significantly, and materially so on tourism. Tourists from all over the world come to Barbados who have an appreciation for food quality and food hygiene and know the sort of standards they would expect of us based to some extent to what they are accustomed when they travel elsewhere. Sir, I do not want to be uncharitable or unkind but that is the biggest set of foolishness I have heard in this Chamber for a long time and I will tell you why...

Mr. SPEAKER: You still cannot refer to it as foolishness because it was said by an Honourable Member. Please use a different word.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I will take it back, but that is an attempt to mislead the Honourable Chamber. Sir, you know and I know that as we further our efforts to increase agricultural production that we have to be extremely attentive to the quality of the food that we grow and to our meats.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that those persons who kill animals in the backyard sell meat that is not good.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has not even mentioned the word backyard.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: But he is referring to something I said, Sir, and by implication that is exactly what he is saying.

Mr. SPEAKER: From what I am hearing, he has not even made the point yet.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Oh, he has not. Well, then when he finishes, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy should know that the lines are being blurred between the standards that are acceptable for the local market *vis-à-vis* standards that are accepted for regional and international markets because regional and international people who consume what is produced locally are people who travel a lot.
12.10 p.m.

Therefore, it is incorrect to say that international and regional standards only become important when we are trying to market our meats and foods on the international markets.

Sir, when international players come here, they have an understanding and an appreciation of what the standards are both regionally and internationally, therefore, standards equivalence are such that despite the fact that we produce foods for the domestic markets, we should raise the bar.

Sir, that is not to say that it is being done without any reference whatsoever to what is culturally accepted in Barbados but to make such a strong statement that international and regional standards are only important when we are marketing goods both regionally and internationally...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House by giving the impression that because something is called international standard, that we have to follow it blindly. In this country called Barbados, every day we consume something which is called lamb that is really mutton, and I have not heard the Honourable Minister arguing against that.

Mr. SPEAKER: It might be better if you rephrase that as a point of elucidation and I will allow you to continue.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Well, on a point of elucidation then.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, again the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has quite unfortunately sought to give the impression that in the sector's attempt to increase its level of productivity through the introduction of wind tunnel ventilation in the poultry houses, that ended up being an attempt to drive small poultry producers out of business. That is a very unfortunate and reckless statement that an Honourable Member in this Chamber can make.

Mr. Speaker, it is consistent with someone who has a very small mentality, one who has a very short horizon, and one who cannot understand but it seems to be consistent with some members of the Democratic Labour Party and how they perceive the path to development. They seem to have a mindset that keeps them locked in a state of not wanting to understand that in order to move forward, one has to come to the realisation that change is necessary.

Mr. Speaker, when I was at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, we sat and discussed these matters at length. Sir, if the Honourable Member were to look at the poultry industry, he would see that the level of technology at the time employed, could not have continued. Its time had passed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House by giving the impression that the poultry farmers who now produce are the farmers who have tunnel ventilation. That is incorrect, therefore, I cannot allow the Honourable Member to give that impression to this Honourable House.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, in the industry there is the recognition that for a long-term horizon for the poultry industry, planning for the industry's future would mandate changes in the utilisation of technology. Therefore, if we are to become more competitive, the poultry industry has to recognise and has to agree that we must introduce new types of technology, and wind tunnel ventilation is one such technology.

I am not saying that all poultry producers in Barbados have already employed wind tunnel ventilation systems. Nevertheless, what I am saying is that they have all appreciated that for units that are above a certain size and in order to move the industry forward, that there is the need to consolidate and to introduce new types of technologies within the industry.

Sir, for the Honourable Member to come to Parliament and to give the impression that the introduction of wind tunnel ventilation was driven by ulterior motives, is wrong, and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy knows it is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I should not be spending so much time on the Honourable Member for St. Lucy but he seems to be unaware of the fact that one could take a long-term lease on land through a financial institution and as long as the other fundamentals are in place, that lease could help the farmer in his or her attempt to access funds.

Mr. Speaker, once again the Honourable Member has this fixation that the only way farmers would be able to get institutional finance, is if they own the land. Sir, it is a simple concept, it happens every day, one gives a man a long-term lease and if the property is profitable within a certain time frame, which could be shorter than the term of the lease, then the banker would look at the other essentials pertaining to the project and would say yes, *et cetera*.

Sir, what the Honourable Member should have been arguing, if he were familiar with these things, is that if it could have been determined at this stage that the Farmers Co-operative Society is here to stay and is made up of serious professionals, that instead of they getting a 10-year lease, they should be getting a 20-year lease instead. Sir, to argue that the farmers have to buy the land in order to get a loan is again foolishness.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is giving the impression that what was requested of me by my constituents, is foolishness and I object to that.

The Honourable Member can make any charge against me but anything that I have been asked to bring before this Parliament. I have said that the farmers on the Land Lease Project, St. Lucy, have requested of me to make the point that they want to own, instead of leasing the land. If the Honourable Member is saying that those persons are ignorant because they have made such a suggestion, I strongly object to that.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I did not mention the folks from the Land Lease Project. I did not know who had spoken to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. All I am saying is that a farmer does not need to buy land in order to access finance from an institution.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please move on.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, let me revisit a point I was trying to make about where this particular activity at Six Roads, St. Philip, would have fitted into the scheme of

things. We said earlier that it is Government's intention to press on with the policy of decentralising the marketing and distribution functions, not only for agricultural produce but for other produce as well.

Sir, I am quoting from the Barbados Review 2002, which is a document of this Honourable House, I wish to point out Government's record in this regard. Consistent with our promise to improve fish-landing sites and to decentralise market facilities, the Barbados Labour Party has provided new markets at Oistins, Speightstown and at the Glebe in St. George where there is a thriving co-op. When the Honourable Member for St. George North speaks he will put the case for the farmers in St. George in the same way that I have put the case for the co-op in Six Roads. This Government has identified a parcel of land contiguous to the existing market at the Glebe where the farmers in St. George....

12.20 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that the farmers' co-op of which we speak was formed yesterday. The Honourable Member, in his own words, said that the co-op was formed in 1989 and not in 1999 but he now wants to take credit for something he found.

Mr. SPEAKER: No point of order.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I said that the co-op was founded in 1989 and that the attempt to get the lease is what I took up with the Ministry of Housing in 1999. Sir, I did not help to form the co-op.

Sir, the co-op at Glebe has to obtain a lease so as to relocate the structure away from the church on to the area which Government has set aside for the sale of small farmers' produce in St. George. At Brighton in St. George is a successful model of the sale of fresh agricultural produce. Mr. Speaker, you know the record of the Government in respect of improving market infrastructure. There are markets located at Weston, Consett Bay, Skeetes Bay, Paynes Bay, Tent Bay, the model at Deacons and the Aberdeen Jones Centre, which helps with the sale of agricultural produce. There are other areas identified which are strategic locations because we want to expand these markets. This Government in this term gave a commitment to establish markets at locations like Belleplaine, Crab Hill in St. Lucy, Gall Hill in St. John, Gemswick in St. Philip, Bathsheba in St. Joseph and the craft market at Six Cross Roads.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member I have given you an extra two minutes for the various interruptions and you must close at this point.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I close by saying that my heart is filled with joy that this effort has reached this stage. I want on behalf of the farmers from the South Eastern Farmers Co-op to thank all those who contributed to this effort because I know it will not be unsuccessful. The farmers have waited patiently and pressed on with other activities to strengthen their management and productive capacity and once they are able to start up the operations, all will be well in that area of St. Philip.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

SUSPENSION

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 1.30 p.m.

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

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

RESUMPTION

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

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to contribute to this debate today with regards to the passing of the Resolution that allows for the leasing of land to the South Eastern Farmers Co-operative Society Limited. I intend to deliver my contribution in two parts. One part will relate to the significance of agricultural development to the overall economic performance of this country and in the other part, I will look at the stewardship of the Barbados Labour Party since 1994 regarding the achievement of their stated objective.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think that there is going to be any real debate as to whether the agricultural sector has performed. I do not think that any Member on the Other Side will contemplate or attempt to debate that there has not been a decline in the performance of agriculture.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have to connect what you say to the Resolution that is before the House.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, the connection is that any attempt to allow for the development of a sector, that is the agriculture sector, since we are talking about allowing small farmers to have access to land to ply their

trade and market their produce, is a contribution to gross domestic production of this country. It is important to appreciate that within the context of the discussion, the development of Barbados and the part that small business must play in it, must be made relevant in this debate. It cannot be simply passing this Resolution for the leasing of land. It must be brought in its broader context.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen development in Six Roads but I have not seen any development at Six Roads after 1994. I grew up in Brereton and went to school at Princess Margaret School. There was a gas station, the Cosmopolitan Complex, a doctor's office, a market and a plantation located at Six Roads. Sir, what is this development that I am hearing about after ten years? The only new entrant at Six Roads in recent time is Chefette Restaurant with a specific redirection of services that should have been rendered long ago to the residents of Marchfield and Six Roads. For example, natural gas that should have gone to Marchfield never came to St. Philip until there was a Chefette Restaurant. Is that the development that we are talking about?

I am happy that the residents of St. Philip will be able to have land to establish an outlet for their produce. However, I do not understand the concept of a town centre expressed by the former Minister of Agriculture. Sir, if the Honourable Member sees the farmers having a small outlet and the same produce that they are selling being sold at Emerald City at a cheaper price, because they can be importing produce from Trinidad or Guyana, then the Honourable Member is fooling himself. It is an indictment on the Honourable Member and his colleague, the former Minister of Community Development, who had the responsibility for St. Philip North. They have both been failures to the people of St. Philip and that is why the former Honourable Member for St. Philip South was unceremoniously removed as the Minister of Agriculture because he has done nothing for agriculture in St. Philip.

Mr. Speaker, if I heard correctly that the South Eastern Farmers Co-operative Society Limited was formed in 1989, the former Minister of Agriculture now the representative for St. Philip South, said that he made an attempt to acquire the land so that it can be leased to the farmers and this Cabinet approved the lease in 2001. I remember when I was canvassing in the areas in St. Patrick that farmers plied their trade in Waldron and Brereton and there was no outlet for them at that time.

I want to ask the Honourable Member and those Members on the Other Side if it took Eastern Land Development five years to acquire Four Square, Groves and Hannahs/Six Roads. I want to know if it took Sir David Seale five years to acquire Foursquare. Sir, what is good for the goose must be good for the gander. I would not accept that it would have taken a Government in power five years to

bring a lease agreement to Cabinet to make sure that the people of St. Philip could have access to a piece of land to ply their trade.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House by seeking to link the time that it has taken to bring this lease to Parliament, which is backdated to 2001 and which shows that the people have been in occupation of the premises. Sir, by seeking to link the development of Foursquare and other developments, the Honourable Member is suggesting that Government has taken a long time to facilitate small businesses but accommodated big businesses very speedily. 1.40 p.m.

In fact, the large businesses of which he spoke are doing private sector developments, the timing of which has nothing to do with the Government. Foursquare is not a Government property. You cannot link the issues of timing and accommodation of various sectors like the Honourable Member is seeking to make. He knows very well that there is some degree of gymnastics in the way he has framed his comments.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, when I canvassed for St. Philip in 1999, through 2003, I would have needed to wear blinkers not to have seen obviously that there was no move by the Barbados Labour Party to develop St. Philip agriculturally. If there were any seriousness regarding agriculture, I would want to find out why so much Government land in St. Philip's plantations are now idle which could have been put into agriculture. It is the concept of development that is defeating the Barbados Labour Party, because to develop St. Philip and Six Roads as a town centre, you need to have a broader understanding of what is development and provide various amenities for the development of that area.

Sir, this is the reason why in 2003 I had to articulate that it was not simply about providing a piece of land for the residents in the area to ply their trade. I told the people of St. Philip that what they needed, in order to have comprehensive development beyond the agricultural development, was a decentralised ambulance service. I told them that must be linked to the development of a fire station and a police station in Six Roads, Mr. Speaker, that is development.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the Order is about the lease of land. It is not really about the development of Six Roads.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I thought it was necessary to link the aspects of development together. I do not think that the land is being leased to the

residents of St. Philip for them not to attempt to develop the Six Roads area.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South spoke of developing Six Roads as a town centre, and that was part of how he perceives development, all I am trying to say to the Honourable Member that is not how you develop a town centre. All of the elements of a town centre were already in St. Philip, so to add, after five years, a small plot of land for farmers to ply their trade, Sir, I am saying is misguided thinking.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the farmers outlets, I want to ask the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and the Honourable Member for St. James South if these outlets would allow for marketing of all produce from farms. I want to know if we are only talking about perishable goods. I want to find out if sales are going to be limited to only locally produced goods. I want to find if there will be meats sold there. I want to find out...

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. These are matters that only the South Eastern farmers can answer. The Government is giving them the property to use and develop for their activities as they determine most appropriate, cost-effective and revenue generating. The Government is not seeking to constrain how they use the property, so it is the South Eastern farmers to whom he has to put these questions.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, that does not in any way preclude the Honourable Member for St. Philip South from asking these questions. The reason this is important is that if you are trying to develop local agriculture, and you create an opportunity where someone can import a pumpkin at a fraction of the cost that it could be produced in Barbados, what are you doing. This is why I asked the question if there would be such a situation developing. If I had anything to do with such a development, I would be trying to push local produce as much as I could, '100 per cent Bajan'. I think this is important.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that the Barbados Labour Party had any interest whatsoever or any political will to advance the interest in agriculture over the last ten years. The statistics have indicated that Sir.

I hope the farmers of St. Philip West and St. Philip North would benefit from this and not just the farmers in St. Philip South. Mr. Speaker, as I said, I hope there would be an open policy where all of the farmers in St. Philip could benefit and I would therefore give it my full blessings.

If there is one thing, Mr. Speaker, that I would want to promote is independence. I have always said that politics today must be about helping individuals to develop their own capacities. Anytime a policy or programme is put in place that allows Parliamentarians to give that opportunity to the constituents, I would give it my wholehearted support.

I just want to say, with some measure of caution that I would want to see this brought into a wider concept of development at Six Roads, so that the eastern zone which comprises of the parishes of St. George, St. John, Christ Church and St. Philip would see the Six Roads area as an area, not only where they can access fishing produce but also their agricultural produce.

Sir, in time, if the town centre does develop, we have to be very cautious that we do not have a negative impact upon the water resources in the area. Farming is a very water intensive programme. I have already heard the management of the Barbados Water Authority condemning the overuse of water over the years, without recognising that in Barbados, over the past 50 years, we have had a reverse urbanisation programme going on in that we were not moving from the outskirts into town anymore, development was going in the opposite way. We never made the proactive management strategies to make sure that you had the upgraded water facilities and distribution mechanisms. I would not want to see the same thing that is happening now in St. Thomas and St. Joseph, et cetera, happening in St. Philip.

Sir, I am well aware of how water intensive agricultural production is, and I am also aware that the desalination plant can supply all the water in Barbados. The problem is that the plant was put in place, without having the appropriate distribution mechanisms in place. It is that sort of proactive thinking about which I am talking.

Mr. Speaker, I will again reiterate my point. When the Molyneux well had been salting up over the last few years in Barbados, those problems could have been solved if they had the piping systems and the appropriate mechanisms put in place. Sir, I am well aware of those mechanisms.

All I am saying is that I am happy for the development of agriculture in St. Philip and I want to see it. I also want to see the further development of housing. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip South speak about 189 houses, but I want to ask him about the impact that type of development would have upon the water resources in the area.

1.50 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is not the issue here now, you know.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: That is part of development, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: But not part of this land lease.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, if there is an attempt to reduce this debate to a set of statements about the lease of land, well then we are wasting our time in this Parliament. This Parliament must necessarily allow individuals to broaden any context of discussion that allows for not only the relevant... I am sure that I have not been irrelevant in this House.

Mr. Speaker, in the final analysis, I would give this Resolution my support because there are many farmers in St. Philip West whom I hope would benefit from it. I also hope that they would have the opportunity to ply their trade and their wares. I hope that opportunity would not only be given in the Six Roads area but that it would be repeated around several associated areas in St. Philip.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I take it that I would have to give you either an assurance or an undertaking that I shall address the Resolution at hand and that I should lay the foundation for what I am about to say in such a way as to suggest that it be connected...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, there is no need for that. The Chair does not attempt to restrict any speaker. This morning I have allowed every speaker much latitude. I took the cue from the leader of the motion and much latitude was given, but there comes a time when that latitude cannot go so far and wide and I would have to bring you back, so proceed, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I rise to indicate to you and Honourable Members of this Honourable House that I see this Resolution as facilitating a particular type of business unit namely a co-operative. I am seeking your lead to make the point that in Barbados there is still room for the co-operative movement. I am going to subject my six or seven minutes, I am not going to use more than that to this whole question of the critical role co-operatives can play if one takes into account Barbados' history and culture and I would seek to restrict what I have to say to this and to the lease.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, there are various forms of business units. You can get one farmer farming on his own as a sole proprietor. What I want to say is that it is heartening that farmers in different parts of Barbados have realised that the philosophy as enunciated by the Rochedale pioneers is still of relevance. The Rochedale pioneers

would have been that group way back in history who encouraged small people from the masses to band together to pool resources and expertise in the interest of their own welfare. This would be the central theme of what I have to say today.

Mr. Speaker, one of the finest examples of a co-operative that has really strived is not a co-operative in agriculture, but the taxi co-operative operating at the airport. There are other specialised co-operatives that have signalled clearly to Barbados that when ordinary people work together, and that is cooperation, certain objectives can be achieved. The finest examples of co-operatives that have done extremely well are the financial co-operatives of Barbados, namely the credit union movement for which this Barbados Labour Party, in successive administrations, have offered a variety of concessions.

In circumstances where small farmers have always found it very hard based on certain institutional prejudices in Barbados to access funding in the ordinary commercial world, it is laudable that some working-class persons from rural Barbados can band together in the interest of promoting an enterprise, which from every indication is not only viable but has provided evidence that it will be successful.

Mr. Speaker, if farmers go to seek finance especially where they cannot show collateral they would find that finance is not easily forthcoming. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy made a very good point when he said that all farmers deserve security of tenure. There are cultures in this world, Mr. Speaker, where on the strength of a long lease, you can access capital. We in this culture, Barbados, have to recognise that a lease is property. There are cultures where leasehold is taken as collateral security. I would therefore like to work with any group of persons who would go abroad mentioning that we should set the stage for more and more long leases for farmers and at the same time permit these long leases to be seen as properties worthy of being assigned for the raising of capital. Where farmers find, especially where there are working-class persons from rural areas, that they cannot readily get loans from the banking sector, they have no real alternative but to turn to themselves and use their thrift and their capacity to cooperate to launch their objectives.

I am told that in the last 12 to 15 years a number of farmers and fishers have looked at the system of co-operatives as a way out. In an era where the limited liability companies, sometimes called the corporations, are very much taken as the desirable structure for business, the point has to be made that sometimes there is a very high cost in funding a limited liability company and very often forcing the small man into no other circumstance but to form the co-operative as a cheaper mechanism, certainly at the start-up stage.

Mr. Speaker, I laud this Resolution because it gives a group of farmers an opportunity to know that for a term certain, they are going to have security. My only advice to them would be to transcend the production stage in their operations and look at the critical area of marketing their produce which is another point that was skilfully raised by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Farmers would tell you, Mr. Speaker, that at the Farm Gate they are compelled, in the interest of getting rid of perishable goods, to sell their goods for 'next skin to nothing', but then some specialist retailer imposes a 300 per cent or 400 per cent mark-up and gains more from retailing the produce than the farmer who grew the produce. So my advice to new farmers producing would be to find some system of distribution to cushion the impact of being exploited. When a farmer sells a product for a dollar and then sees that very product on the market being sold for \$5.00, he wonders whether he has gained the optimum from his efforts because the risk entailed in farming is greater than the risk in retailing.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, when a person engages in farming, he or she is faced with risks and uncertainties such as problems associated with the weather, such as droughts or excessive rains, praedial larceny or seasonality.

It, therefore, cannot be fair to persons who are adding to the national food production, to invest money, time and labour, then to complain that they are not getting the maximum efforts for their labour. We, therefore, have to do our utmost to give encouragement to business persons who show a proclivity to produce.

The other point I wish to make is that there is no Honourable Member who would go against a tide that has been in existence in Barbados during the last 15 to 20 years. That tide I am referring to is the question of enfranchisement and empowerment. We have seen bright, young Barbadians lamenting the fact that historically we have not had enough of the masses empowered in business in the world of commerce, industry, or finance.

Mr. Speaker, there is no Honourable Member who would speak out against empowering our people and I, therefore, would want to urge that there is still a role for cooperatives, where small business persons who are looking to invest, while using the relatively low start-up cost, could consider co-operatives as a structure or as a business unit in which to invest, while bearing in mind the philosophy of banding and working together in the interest of one common league.

Mr. Speaker, a number of Honourable Members seem to have suggested that this matter has been long in coming but I am assured that when the lease is formally executed, it is going to be backdated to effect two years. I therefore feel, that with this particular formality executed, all that remains is for all Barbadians to give encouragement, not only to those farmers in St. Philip but wherever farmers are, so that they could recognise that we have honoured and have respected their contributions, while recognising that they have often functioned in situations where they are either not fully optimising their returns or making sacrifices in the interest of this country.

Mr. Speaker, with these remarks, I wish to support this Resolution and would want to repeat that the cooperative system of business organisation still has a place in this culture and in this era.

I thank you very much.

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. First, I want to submit that the lease gives the opportunity to farmers in St. Philip to participate in the agricultural sector in this country. I want to submit that we must also create an environment so that these farmers could maximise their production and, indeed, survive in this economy.

Sir, I want to respectfully state that Government should provide whatever technical assistance or expertise to these farmers in relation to the marketing and distribution of their produce. Secondly, Government should provide whatever technical assistance or expertise to these farmers in relation to the distribution of their produce, and should assist them in the financing of their business, so as to ensure that they could become successful.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbadian farmer would now have to function in an environment of increasing global trade liberalisation, as a result of very serious international competition, therefore, there would be the need to increase the level of the international competitiveness. We would not only have to defend our domestic markets but would also have to compete for international markets. In such a situation, we have to educate that farmer. Sir, with the proposed establishment of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, what then should be the focus of the entire farming community?

Mr. Speaker, we would need to shift the mindset of the Barbadian farmer from considering Barbados as the limited boundary within which he or she has to operate but instead, should consider the entire region as his or her economic space or market. I would submit that the farmers in St.

Philip, St. Lucy and in St. John, would have to consider the entire CARICOM region as his or her production space.

Mr. Speaker, the issue that bothers me also, is that some time ago in the area of St. Philip North, there was much talk about land for the landless farmer, particularly in the area of River Plantation. Sir, I can recall that persons from the area, including young men and women who wanted to pursue a serious career in farming, had then approached the former Minister of Agriculture. Sir, to this day we do not know the status of the land for those young men and women in St. Philip North who wanted to contribute to the agricultural sector and who wanted to make a contribution to the landscape of this country.

Mr. Speaker, we now want those persons in St. Philip North to have an economic outlet, as one is now being provided at Six Roads, St. Philip. Certainly if these persons from St. Philip North had the opportunity, they would today be smiling because they would have had some degree of success and an outlet for them to market their produce.

Sir, I want to say that there would be some benefits and employment opportunities in this project for the people of St. Philip but I want to submit that I am of the firm belief that we should carry out a serious educational programme, informing those farmers how they should get their act together with the proposed establishment of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Mr. Speaker, some factors would have to be taken into account, and one economist has submitted that there are certain push factors that must be taken into account when we look at the advent of trade liberalisation which is taking place in the marketplace, certainly with the penetration of domestic markets with imports.

2.10 p.m.

We have to look at the lost of preferential commodity markets, the degradation of natural resources and how we should respond to these challenges.

Finally, I want to submit that there must be an improvement of the quality and delivery of services to the sector so as to improve productivity, thereby making the agricultural output more competitive in this global environment.

Mr. Speaker, in the circumstances, it is my humble submission that we do all that is necessary to ensure that farmers have the necessary expertise to market their products effectively and assist them in the distribution of their products. The mindset in Barbados is that we should not take any aspect of agriculture seriously because it is not seen as one of the traditional careers and we have to educate

students at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels so that they can have a career in agriculture. We have to provide scholarships and training for those persons who want to pursue a career in agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, I hope we have a report on the status of those people at River Plantation and the various areas of St. Philip who want to make a contribution in relation to the land for the landless in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a contribution to this important debate. As I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, I am aware that they are not *au fait* with what is happening with the farmers' co-op at Six Cross Roads. I hope that very soon they would get involved with the activities of this co-op.

I remember in 1999 when the Honourable Member for St. Philip South became the new Member of Parliament for that constituency, the first thing he did was asked for a lease for the co-op in St. Philip. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy pointed out this morning that the farmers' co-op started in the 1980s but by 1999 found itself in the cold because it was a small operation outside of the Princess Margaret School. The lease we are discussing today will provide tremendous benefits to the farmers of St. Philip. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Honourable Member for St. Philip West must know that a number of farmers in these areas are members of the co-op and have received tremendous benefits not only in terms of education materials but also financial and marketing benefits.

The extension officers of the Ministry of Agriculture go from parish to parish, educate the farmers and the co-op has monthly meeting for the purpose of educating farmers and the crops are marketed at the various outlets.

I want to salute the co-op movement at the Glebe in St. George, which has grown over the past ten years to be one of the most successful co-ops in the island. I understand that last year they had a gross figure of \$2 million. The co-op is located outside of St. George parish church and consist of members from St. George, St. John and St. Michael.

We have provided a lease to the farmers' co-op in St. Philip and the St. George's co-op movement has asked for a lease from the Ministry of Housing and Lands for the lands purchased two years ago which established the Glebe market. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy was here at the time and supported the Resolution. The land was purchased from the Diocesan Trustees more than two years ago and the land was leased to the St. George's co-op as well

as to three or four individuals or companies in the area to provide marketing activity.

We have an additional acre of land in excess of what was needed for the market established by the Ministry of Agriculture. I hope that the technicians within the Ministry of Housing and Lands would see it fit to provide a lease to the St. George's co-op, as well as provide the opportunity for those three or four other persons desirous of owning the land and that the matter is brought to resolution soon.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that these legal matters take more than two years to come to fruition and that the time has come where we have to look at some methodology to shorten the process because from conception to implementation of these ideas take too long and the process needs to be shortened. Sir, while this happens people suffer because the Six Roads Co-op cannot get the concessions promised by the Ministry of Agriculture two years ago.

Sir, now that this Resolution has been passed in Parliament I hope that they would soon receive the lease.
2.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister mentioned a number of other associations that were given leases over the last ten years. I know that farmers in St. Philip are waiting for this particular lease so that they can withdraw funds from the Ministry of Agriculture to help finance their project.

Sir, it is important for us to understand that it is not always necessary to purchase land for the agricultural sector. Sometimes a long lease will provide a measure of security. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West spoke of security for the farming community but a long lease can be used as security by the bank. Sir, long leases have been used as security on many occasions at banks. The Government has also given cooperatives, NGOs and sporting organisation the opportunity to obtain leases at peppercorn rents.

Sir, when we came to office in 1994 many organisations were complaining that they were paying high rents. This Government made a decision to assist them by allowing them to lease land at a peppercorn rent.

I believe that this Government should be complimented for taking this decision because a number of organisations have accepted the offer of leases. I also believe that this is the way to go because there are several pieces of government land that can be used, not only in the St. Philip but in Oistins and Deacons Road areas.

Sir, I support this Resolution and call for a lease arrangement for the farming community at the Glebe, St. George and look forward to seeing such a lease arrangement being brought to this Parliament very soon.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, it would be remiss of me if I did not wish my colleagues and yourself, as one who sits in command of us, the best for 2004. I am sure that all the constituents of Christ Church East Central would join me in that wish.

I want to applaud the farmers of South Eastern Farmers Co-Operative Society Limited in seeking to have access to land on which to construct a facility to dispose of their produce and possibly the produce of some of their contemporaries in that part of Barbados.

We are debating this Resolution as a result of some failure on the part of the Barbados Labour Party Government in acting speedily to bring a measure of relief to the farmers of South Eastern Farmers co-Operative Society Limited. We are debating an issue, which we are told by the Other Side, that has been on the agenda since 1999. We are now in the year 2004 and this Resolution is now before the House. I believe that this would have passed across the desk of the Honourable Member for St. George North sometime before. The new Minister of Housing and Lands has now piloted this Resolution and I congratulate her.

Mr. Speaker, it somehow suggests that there might have been some incapacity on the part of the previous Minister of Housing and Lands to deal with these substantial issues as they relate to those who provide the bread and butter for their families and seek to feed the people of Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, according to the Rule 28.9, I do not think that you are allowed to make such a comment on the conduct of the Minister whether it is true or not.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, it is so withdrawn. The basic tenet of my argument would be to suggest that I do not care which ministry you occupy, no one can sit on an issue such as this for five years without having to be spanked by those who concern themselves with the interest of those who seek to feed the nation, that is the point that I am trying to make.

I believe that anyone who is put in place to develop policies and to move programmes forward in the best interest of all concerned, should do that with a certain level of alacrity so that we would not have to be debating a Resolution to vest this piece of land in the South Eastern Farmers Co-Operative Society Limited which should have been done sometime ago.

I do not think that the Honourable Member who previously held this Ministry could hold himself for congratulation. I would leave that for the Honourable

Member who now has taken the opportunity to seek to deliver what should have been delivered before by someone else.

Mr. Speaker, I am not persuaded that the planting of these myriad farmers markets and kiosks can truly address the needs of the farming and vending community in Barbados. We somehow seem convinced that by planting these physical structures we are doing something on behalf of the people.

2.30 p.m.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that you and many of the Honourable Members of this House are quite familiar with the produce being delivered to your homes in the past, by old men and women on donkey carts and horse carts. There was tradition in Barbados where yams, eddoes, breadfruit, pork and beef and all kinds of produce in our villages were delivered to our homes. I would argue that there was a greater level of earning by those persons than by people we now seek to make stationary in one spot and the people must come to them, when they face competition, as in this instance from directly across the road where a plush complex is located, where the display is beautifully set out, where everything is polished and glossed. You are saying to people, stay there and the people will come to you. I do not know if this makes sense.

Part of the culture of farming in this country is the movement of the produce to the people. Sir, at seven o'clock in the morning, you would hear: "Call, I am out here." You had prepared the night before to purchase, and you go and purchase and pay, because I believe what you eat, you should pay for up-front. I want to see a situation, and I heard my colleague from St. Lucy call for it...

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South earlier today, as he stood on his pulpit spoke about the relevance of some people and we are having a bit more of that. The Honourable Member does not understand the notion of technology. The donkey was the technology of the 1950s. The moving vehicle, is the technology of now. Sir, that kind of argument emanating from the individual who should have delivered this land, previous to 2004 should cease, and let us get serious about what I am talking. This is foolishness. I am not saying that his words are but this kind of behaviour should be outside and not in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that you cannot tie down the people. People must be able to move their goods and services, especially at this level to those who want it, but we are asking people to move themselves.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: I already wished the Honourable Member a Happy New Year. I am sure he does not want that again. His gluttony is becoming a bit too much. I would ask him to be calm. I believe that this must be the trajectory...

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order I have not said a word in this debate. Therefore he would withdraw that because there is nothing on the record because I have not spoken.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Have you withdraw?

Mr. R. D. JONES: There is nothing to withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER: You did refer to the Honourable Member.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I follow your guidance always, as a soldier and a gentleman, I withdraw, but it is well heard, so even though I withdraw, but even though I withdraw, the people of Barbados have already heard.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central were ordered to be expunged from the record.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I never spoke in the debate, there is no such thing on record about what he said and it should be withdrawn and struck from the record.

Mr. Speaker, he should not make reference to the people of Barbados about it because I never spoke.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order please.

The Honourable Member has withdrawn and I will now ask that the comment the Honourable Member made with reference to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South be struck from the record.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Your ruling, Mr. Speaker, is of course appreciated.

I wish to continue, Mr. Speaker, on this issue of the movement of goods and services of those persons whom we

refer to as farmers, the agricultural entrepreneurs in this country, people who put their feet and hands in the soil to feed the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and all of us in here. Some people might be more comfortable going to those places that shun the farmers and import from hither, thither and yon, but I am comfortable with supporting each and every farmer in Barbados, who has made a determination that this would be his livelihood.

Sir, since they have made that particular determination, we have a duty and a responsibility to support them to the fullest extent. We have a duty and responsibility as leaders of the nation who speak in this House to ensure that we support them and encourage every person in Barbados and support them in their various endeavours.

Sir, we will support this particular Resolution but we have to speak against shackled of this entrepreneurial spirit, this kind of behaviour which says that if you take up your product and move it to the cluster areas to be better served that there is something wrong with that, as if they are moving their produce somewhere that they may be involved in criminal activity or criminal behaviour.

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, and this has been a failing of Government, they build these structures, even though the persons at the South Eastern Farmers Co-op will be constructing their own thing, but I am talking of places like the Farmers' Market at Six Roads which is in a despicable state of disrepair. We are saying that wherever they put up these structures, there is no maintenance.

I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would know of the conditions of the Farmers' Market at St. George. I am not aware that he visits that place. I am aware that the Honourable Member established some markets in the Glebe, St. George and caused a labour unrest in Barbados.

I am also aware, Mr. Speaker, that they have gone to Oistins and just where the water runs along the canal into the sea, they have constructed some very pretty coloured mini structures. Every time I pass there I look for them to be open and there are still closed. I am hoping that someone – because invariably they are not going to be filled by people from Christ Church, they might be filled with people from St. Philip or they might be filled with people from St. Michael – who need those colourfully constructed things, would you remove them now, because the people of Christ Church demand better on each and every occasion. I will not stand here, Mr. Speaker, and allow those. Prisoners were put in those things when they misbehaved. I do not know if you want to see the people of Christ Church or anybody who uses them...

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: That is what they are called, sweat boxes. I think that we need to do better. We need to see agriculture as the sustaining part of the development of Barbados. The Minister of Tourism – the guru, because he has said that in the past, one of the best Ministers of Tourism ever, his words, – must begin to understand the linkages between tourism development and the produce of the people, our nutritionists and our culinary artists, who prepare our foods and display them before those who eat right here at our tables in our hotels, rather than getting up, boasting, thumping the chest, buttoning up the shirt and all kinds of things, and really believe that we are developing Barbados. 2.40 p.m.

It has already been said on This Side that we face difficult times, but if we can strengthen the base of the economy at the level of our farming community, we will be able to ride out the quest of this wave successfully. The Honourable Members on the Other Side believe that they can take up a holey basket – and I am not talking about with Christ meaning Holy in this instance, I mean a basket that is full of holes – place all their eggs in it and walk with it on their heads shouting hallelujah, hallelujah, but they are wrong and would be making a fundamental mistake relative to the development of Barbados.

Some of us were fortunate to be able to use a hoe and a fork. We were able to turn the soil, till the land and plant produce for sale in our villages or to our supermarkets. If you ask some of the Honourable Members on the Other Side what is a turnip, they would not know because they never had the privilege or opportunity to be at one with the soil and that is why they make the kinds of mistakes they continue to make.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I truly like the Honourable Member for St. Philip South. He is a good Bajan member of this House. However, at one time he sat as the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development and if you check the records you would see that every single thing in agriculture has declined. They talked about proper pork, but people are scrambling to get pork, not proper pork, because the production of pork has declined. The production of chicken has also declined. We had a situation late last year when supermarket proprietors were complaining that they were not getting any chicken, but that is not the fault of the present Minister of Agriculture, that is the fault of the past Minister of Agriculture because of the lack of policies and adequate programmes.

When it comes to sugar, we are sugarless, we are lost and we are in disarray. They are shutting down every factory. They do not know what to do or what to say relative to those kinds of things. What are they doing? Some of the best sugar come from this part of the world. All like now I can hear the anger in the voice of the Honourable Member for St. George South. He addressed this matter some time ago. They shut down Buckeley and Foursquare factories and now they want to shut down Andrews factory. They are just pilots of shut downs. We need sense to be attached to the development of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: I am passionate about this because I come very solidly from an agricultural background. Many times I got up at 5 o'clock and tilled the soil, and when others were sleeping I was watering. I cleaned many a pig pen. I carried many a sheep into the pasture and fed them at midday. So the level of respect which I hold for farmers cannot be denied by those who are able now to buy suits off the sweat and blood of their foreparents. They can now scuff their noses, but they should be chastened with stripes, but one day coming soon, those stripes shall reach their backs. The people of Barbados must understand that in their glory and adulation of themselves they truly do not care about those who sweat in the sun, who sometimes are incapable of turning back the grass from invading their fields and the produce, maybe the carrots, which they planted and the rain came down and wash them away so that there was no germination.

They talked about praedial larceny but they do not care about those farmers who sweat morning, noon and night and who pray that in two days they could take their produce to market before somebody comes along and reap them on their behalf and sell them to those who might not have any conscience. They talked about this on the radio. Every Thursday you can hear about the horrors which they have to undergo from this destruction of their livelihood.

Allied to that is the notion of collaboration and cooperative action among our people, a notion I strongly support, because that is also important and essential to Barbados in this 21st century. We need more and more co-operatives of this type. We need more and more of our people working together. When I refer to our people, Mr. Speaker, I do not mean our people of colour, so I am not talking about black, white, yellow or brown, I am talking about all the people of Barbados working together to turn back those clutching hands which want to squeeze the lifeblood out of our country.

We urge and we argue that more and more of our people must start to work together. They should put their few shillings, their few ha'pennies together. I am sure you

are familiar with the word ha'penny, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member for St. George North might be unfamiliar with those words now, but a ha'penny is just a few cents. Our people should put their efforts, their skills and their resources together to build and to work firmly for the development of themselves and their families because that is how our country can further develop to minimise the ravaging impact of the World Trade Organisation, the Free Trade Area of the Americas and even the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

I heard the manager or the CEO, as he is called of the Barbados Agricultural Society screaming blood in our newspapers about lettuce from Guyana coming into Barbados. I know the gentleman for a lot of years, he is very intelligent, but as I read the article, I said, does he not understand that he is wrong, the lettuce from Guyana is lettuce from the Caribbean. Some of our people need to get up and go to Guyana where the land stretches way beyond your sight, Sir, or mine, – I only have about 10 acres – and turn some of that soil into producing products which could then come back to Barbados. We are tying Barbadian farmers to land in Barbados. A Barbadian farmer is an individual with an attitude, with a skill and with knowledge, so wherever he farms he is a Barbadian farmer. Once we get the movement between these islands, the produce could come to Barbados or go to Timbuktu.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we have got to stop narrowing the vision and stop complaining about things such as 100 heads of lettuce that came out of Guyana, *et cetera*. Sir, there are some persons who are not going to complain about the number of chickens that come from somewhere else but instead, would complain about a few heads of lettuce coming from Guyana.

We need planned, sensible production to maximise the returns to the farmers of Barbados, not prices which would cause the consumers not to purchase because it must be understood that if it is priced too high, no one would buy.

Mr. Speaker, I am not an economic guru but I feel very strongly about this. If one wants to look as healthy as the Honourable Member for St. James North, one would have to eat, and one could only eat by those persons who produce. One still has to eat even though it is genetically produced and, therefore, one still has to support genetically produced foods or they would waste.

Mr. Speaker, we, therefore would support the Resolution but I want all those persons who now sit on policy, to accelerate things on the behalf of the working people of Barbados, now that we will pass this Resolution

which will go to the Other Place, so that these things could be fast-tracked.

I am sure that when called upon, my two colleagues from St. Philip North and St. Philip West would give them all the support necessary. They could also call on me, to lend to the fullest extent, whatever knowledge and skill I have to bear on the development if those Honourable Members cannot because we are all next-door neighbours, friends and colleagues.

Sir, I would not leave out my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, because St. Philip is an interesting part of Barbados and even though my Honourable friend sits across the isle, I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, as a person who has learnt quite well from a good Democratic Labour Party's family, would also use his knowledge and skills to assist in the development of those persons from the South Eastern Farmers Cooperatives Society Limited.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.
2.50 p.m.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I join this debate, having listened to a number of outstanding presentations from This Side of the Floor and also the issue pertaining to corporatisation, along with several other matters.

Sir, I would want to ask a number of questions because I am constantly hearing discussions with respect to the quality of debate in this House and I sit and wonder whether or not I am in the same Chamber as some persons who have been asking those questions.

Sir, I am very satisfied that the debates in this House has reached such a level that there is no one who could criticise, if persons were following debates over the last ten years in Barbados. Therefore, nobody could dispute that the Honourable Members of the Democratic Labour Party have lifted the level of debate in this House considerably since May, 2003. If one wants evidence of this, one only has to read the debates, going back to the Budget Speech and onwards. That is a fact, the public has been saying it. Therefore, there is no need to question the quality of the debates.

Mr. Speaker, in light of that, in the presentation from the Honourable Member for St. James South this morning, we should have been privy to information, not with respect to the leasing of 8 000 square feet for the South Eastern Farmers Co-operative Society Limited but with respect to how much produce come to the Co-operative; at what cost are these farmers producing the various produce; at what

price are these produce being sold and how effective would they be in an era where they have to compete increasingly with produce coming from regional and extra-regional markets.

Mr. Speaker, we have been asked to support this lease, which we are doing, but it would have been far more informative if the debate could have been given the privilege of information.

Sir, no one is disputing the need to enfranchise or to empower farmers in the south/eastern part of Barbados but I would only wish to ask, what really is the policy of Government. Is this going to be the policy that wherever we have cooperative establishments such as agriculture, financial, taximen, *et cetera*, especially in these most difficult times, to give an opportunity for such individuals to band together and to confront this new global reality?

Mr. Speaker, we are supportive in this Honourable House of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy because we understand only too well that without the integration of the Caribbean, that the future is not going to be very bright.

Sir, it is because the new global reality more or less dictates to us that we need to come together and form alliances across the Caribbean. Therefore, this is a microcosm of what should be happening both regionally and domestically. This has always been preached in this Honourable House for a number of years by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, as a step in the correct direction.

In fact, while he was speaking, an Honourable Member on the Other Side said that he was virtually repeating the sentiments expressed by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, over the last number of years in this Chamber. I do not know if he heard but she said it, and we on This Side have heard it.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned because one becomes confused by this Government. I have to recall the episode in St. Michael North West. I recall it, not to be contentious, but to demonstrate the need for, or the lack of a policy. In essence, even though those young men might not have been organised in the same way, to me the spirit of coming together was, in fact, the genesis of their advance to come together at that time.

Sir, they wanted to cooperate among themselves and in their own informal way had basically said that they could begin to experiment in the area of selling commodities to persons in the Black Rock area.

Sir, I thought at the time that it was a very laudable idea and had made advances in writing. I had received approval in sound. I will learn from hereon in that is not the way to go. Persons of authority came and said it was a very laudable idea and that we could continue with the effort, only for it to be recognised that perhaps it might have redound to the political benefit of Clyde Mascoll.

3.00 p.m.

Therefore, the kiosks caused chaos in St. Michael North West and were removed. The principle upon which this decision to lease land in St. Philip is being made in the same one that would have informed the thinking in St. Michael North West at the time. I am hoping that this Government would have crossed the rubicon with respect to establishing a policy framework in which Barbadians are aware how far they can take an initiative.

What was most instructive this morning was when the Minister of Housing listed a whole host of organisations that have benefitted from the corporate spirit in Barbados. I cannot recall them because they were many and it would be difficult to do so. Is it now a structured policy of Government to encourage the establishment of co-operatives across the length and breadth of Barbados once they are legitimate that persons can become involved in, irrespective of the kinds of endeavours?

Sir, another thing I find instructive is that we have to come to Parliament to approve the leasing of a piece of land of less than 8 000 square feet but there are other areas in which Government is permitted to lend to organisations outside of central Government, substantial sums of money without seeking the approval of Parliament. I find this very difficult to digest because even if we believe that a certain amount of latitude should be afforded to the Cabinet of Barbados then there has to be a limit to the extent to which any such body would be permitted to utilise the funds of the taxpayers without seeking parliamentary approval. Mr. Speaker, in that context there is need for a bigger debate on the question of policy formulation within Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, let me get to the substance of my contribution sometimes I wonder if Members on the Government Side live in Barbados because I heard the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central suggesting that there is perhaps need to take produce into the community for sale and he referred to the donkey cart. He drew a response from the Other Side that seemed to suggest that it is a backward movement.

Perhaps the Other Side is not aware that there are quite a few young men and women in Barbados who ply their trade selling fruits, ground provisions and other produce in Suzuki vans in communities across Barbados and that the

idea of taking the produce to the community rather than asking people to come the market is an extremely laudable idea. The Other Side does not know that commercial banks and insurance companies in Barbados are now going into communities offering their services from Suzuki vans. Sir, to suggest that it would be a backward step for persons involved in selling agriculture to take produce into the community is a lack of understanding on the part of this administration of what is happening in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I ask whether we should not have been privy to some information on the potential of this project because it is being carried forward in an era where there would be increasing competition. We are asking for the co-operatives to be established at a time when we are opening up our markets to allow further competition to come.

We know that unless there is proper planning in agriculture, then you can have these co-operatives confronting a harsh market and therein lies the need for Government not only to give a lease to south eastern farmers but also to provide some degree of intelligence with respect to an understanding of how these types of markets work.

Sir, agricultural products are special. You cannot, as in manufacturing put your product down and hope to fetch the correct price some time in the future because the products are perishable and the question of glut and shortage become extremely important to persons operating in the agriculture sectors. Sir, it is not the same as in manufacturing entities where products last a long time.

The question of proper and adequate management is important so that farmers understand what are the best products to bring to the market and the time they should be brought to the market.

It is an important matter with respect to the agricultural sector because it is widely known that even now farmers rush to produce the same product at the same time thus inducing a glut, when they could be better planning to get a better return on their investment.

There is then the overall question of cost. Would this co-op be permitted to buy in bulk for its members and, therefore, pass on benefits to its members? If it is that the co-op is only establishing an outlet, then it does not address some of the needs of the farmer with respect to the overall costs of doing business in Barbados.

I am suggesting that if we could reach the stage where we could lease land to a co-op of this nature, is it possible to encourage this co-op to go beyond its existing level so that it could compete more effectively in the global liberalised market.

At this time, there is going to be need to assist these farmers at a deeper level such as should be the case with the experiment in Deacons Road. It was not simply a question of allowing the young men to utilise the land. There was a plan to get produce from the country, purchase a vehicle and distribute the product to which they had access. Therefore, there was a full plan to assist these individuals from start to finish.

3.10 p.m.

Sir, I am suggesting that even in this case where Government has made the step to assist farmers by leasing land for a ten-year period, charging only \$50 a month for rent, there is need for greater commitment to the co-operative. The co-operative ought to be established in a way that permits it to purchase commodities in bulk and be able to pass on benefits to its members.

Mr. Speaker, there is a reality of life in Barbados that we are producing less food crops and we have been doing so for the last few years. However, with the advent of liberalisation there is going to be increase competition as a result of the opening up of markets in the area of livestock.

Sir, if we check the Central Bank reports we would recognise that credit to the agricultural sector has declined substantially in the last four years. The credit to food crops section has moved from \$6 million in the first quarter of 2000 to \$3.4 million in the first quarter of 2003. As at September 2003, the credit to the food crop section in the agricultural sector declined from \$5.6 million to \$1.3 million and we will recognise that there is reduced activity in this area.

Sir, we are encouraging a good thing by allowing farmers to establish a co-operative at Six Roads, St. Philip but we also have to point out that the environment in which these farmers are going to be operating is an environment in which there is a reduced output on the part of farmers across Barbados. It is an environment in which there are increasing inflows of competition from regional territories and an environment in which the potential for profit is going to be made more difficult because of the changing circumstances of the agricultural sector in Barbados. Sir, what we have before us is a challenge for this co-operative. In as much as we are seeking to encourage it and promote its efforts, it is going to be extremely difficult in an increasingly harsh agricultural sector.

Mr. Speaker, to compound the problem, around 1998, the Government of Barbados, under the leader of the then Minister of Trade, implemented surtaxes and bound rates on agricultural produce from abroad. At that time the attempt was to protect as much as possible sensitive areas in manufacturing and agriculture. They skillfully and

politically delayed the removal of the bound rates which were supposed to be removed but this has not happened. According to the dictates of World Trade Organisation, by the year 2005 manufacturers and farmers are expected to be fully exposed to international competition. The last thing that we wish is for farmers to become involved in a process where their profit levels are going to be reduced.

Sir, again, on This Side of the Honourable House, reference was made to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, particularly to Guyana. Recently it was reported that some agricultural produce were imported from Guyana and this caused some degree of difficulty in the local market. Mr. Speaker, if we are accepting the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, then in the same way that we are now permitting Trinidadians to come here and invest in the financial sector and insurance companies, Guyanese should also be allowed to export goods to Barbados.

We denied Trinidadians the opportunity to acquire Pine Hill Dairy, which would have been in the interest of Barbados. If it were possible for Trinidadians investors to acquire the Pine Hill Dairy, it would have exposed our local agriculturalists to a larger market and greater opportunities because Trinidad has a great amount of influence over production processes, distribution and retailing within the OECS. Mr. Speaker, Barbados did not encourage Trinidadians to get involved in the manufacturing entity but we have now succumbed to the pressures of these new regional arrangements that permit the free flow of capital and labour.

Sir, Guyana like other countries in the region, is ripe for the inflow of financial resources because it has the land space. It must be known that in the 1960s Guyana was the food basket of the region. The potential of Guyana was way beyond any other regional territory at the time.

Sir, the demise of Guyana is the result of a poorly managed economy, politics and other circumstances. However, Guyana still has certain natural resources that can be exploited if it is going to be part of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy. We cannot complain about the flow of labour from Guyana to Barbados. We have to encourage the flow of capital from Barbados to Guyana in an attempt to expand the potential for agriculture development in Guyana. Barbadians have to get involved in investments in Guyana and our people have to understand that opportunities within the region go beyond the immediate shores of Barbados.

Sir, it appears that we have no choice but to embrace the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, notwithstanding the difficulties that we are going to encounter in trying to establish the institutions necessary for advancing the region's activity.

Mr. Speaker, no one wants to deny south eastern farmers the opportunity to progress but I think that like everything else in Barbados we need to tell them what they are going to encounter. They have not been educated about the World Trade Organisation or the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. We need to identify any opportunities or threats associated with this new global order.
3.20 p.m.

Sir, we are certainly not doing it in terms of educating the people and we have not been able to identify in detail, opportunities and threats associated with investing in this new global order, opportunities and threats associated with the influx of labour and capital from other places. We have not done any of that work in any meaningful way, even though we have had the last ten years to do it, Sir.

I wish just to send a word of caution that while we want to encourage, and rightly so, the establishment of co-operatives, we also have to be aware of our responsibilities to demonstrate and explain to persons who are getting involved in any kind of investment, what the difficulties would be in this new global reality, called globalisation, and it starts at the regional level.

Therefore, I feel that in all fairness in this debate, we should have been introduced to more of the issues involved in the establishment of a true co-operative at Six Roads, which is intended to provide benefit to the agricultural sector in the south eastern part of the country, but we have not been given the privilege of that.

Sir, the other thing is that the whole question of pricing is extremely critical in the agricultural sector. It is unlike manufacturing, distributing or retailing. You can have shortages. You can have the influence of the weather on your produce and overnight. You can have a situation in which you get less than what it actually cost to produce.

Therefore, is it not going to be possible for the Government to provide any price support, if we permit other co-operatives to be established, I suspect not because of the new global arrangements that would be deemed as subsidising our agricultural produce, but no one can stop you from removing taxes on inputs in the agricultural sector, in a meaningful way. It has been alluded to in the last couple of Budgets but again, we know what happens with our financial statements, a lot of laudable, highfalutin things are said but when you check the implementation of these policies, you recognised that the Government has been short in the implementation, and that the actual impact or effect of these policies would not have been seen across the intended sector. There is no merit in looking back at the Government's record to see whether or not any such initiative had redound to the players in the respective sectors.

Agriculture is on its way down. It has been admitted in this Chamber that the sugar industry is almost on its death bed. The manufacturing sector is lying waiting. The international business sector in which we had put so much hope, is now also under considerable scrutiny and pressure, and Barbados has innocently returned to a period where it now has to depend almost fully and solely on the tourism sector. This is a position that we ought not to be in, and a position that certainly is going to undermine our economic prospects in the medium to long term.

Sir, we have not been able to manage this economy to really reposition Barbados within the context of what we are experiencing regionally or internationally. In that regard, I think that perhaps this administration needs to revisit how it sees the future, what vision it has for Barbados and start to really put in place, not just the public relations, but the infrastructure required to allow our small businesses in particular, to be able to compete more meaningfully in a new global environment.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I think we have had an interesting and wide-ranging debate. Some questions were raised which can be answered in the Chamber and others which cannot.

With these words, Sir, I would beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 9 – RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$8 309 257 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. 8, 2003-2004 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTE TO HEADS 18 AND 28 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN SCHEDULE II TO THIS RESOLUTION

HEAD 14 – MINISTRY OF FINANCE – \$332 643

On the motion of Hon. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, the items under Head 14 fall under three Heads, one for Budget and Public Expenditure Policy, one for Financial Control and Treasury and one for Revenue Collection.

Sir, these matters are properly the subject of supplementaries which would not have been anticipated during the course of the year. They are matters which would need to be addressed before we close this financial year.

First of all under Tax, Administration and Public Expenditure, as you know, Mr. Speaker, the Government has moved, over time to use information technology to automate several of its processes within the area of financial management. Specifically, the instrument of the SmartStream Financial Programme has resulted in increased efficiency in expenditure management, as well as it has improved the entire financial management within the Government.

It has eliminated many of the aspects of manual processing which had been associated with the payment of salaries, the procurement of goods and supplies and several similar and related matters. More recently, the SmartStream personnel management module has been added and there is now a more direct linkage and an easier way to track the movement of officers for purposes of payment and for purposes of ensuring that salaries and other employment related expenditure is applied to the appropriate department and the appropriate Head and generally to ensure as one would expect in any well-administered enterprise that there is a correlation between the number of persons employed, where they are posted and the salaries and other pay.
3.30 p.m.

Sir, the Government always attempts to lead by example in terms of the way that it makes use of information technology. The Government cannot at one and the same time introduced legislation to protect intellectual property and on the other hand be engaged in pirating software. Therefore, the Government has a policy to ensure that it uses only approved software and that where the payment of licences is involved that the arrangement is put on a very square footing.

The payment of annual licences is paid on the basis of the number of points of use. Of course, the overall cost would increase by the more points which are used, but the cost per user would decline. That is so across a range of enterprises in Government. In fact, what we have done in several areas in terms of the use of software is that, whereas in the past individual departments merely purchase their software and install it on a computer or two in the office, and this is duplicated across the system, we are using a more centralised approach of which the Government gets into the

arrangement with the supplier, be it Microsoft or any other supplier, and indicate the number of licences which we wish to procure and engage in serious negotiation which results in pretty good prices, thus ensuring that the Government would not be exposed by way of liability to be sued for any pirating

Therefore, as a result of the increase roll out of this SmartStream programme both in its financial management unit as well as in the human resources unit, we have added during the course of the year an additional 194 licences and we therefore need to make provision for the payment of these licences under these Heads. The amount which was approved under this Head was some \$289 250 and the additional expenditure which is required is \$226 131 which would give a total of \$515 381 which would ensure that for the year, given the increased use in information technology, we are fully compliant with our licence obligations. That amount falls under Program 110 – subprogramme 113 – Tax Administration & Public Expenditure.

The Treasury Department, as you know, Sir, is one of the principal occupants of the Treasury Building. Much of the expenditure associated with the management and maintenance of that building falls under this subhead. Over the last several years, as you would have observed, significant work has been done on the Treasury Building not only to maintain it as a viable and structurally sound entity but also to enhance the comfort of persons who occupied the building. All of the windows and the airconditioning units have been changed. If one goes into the various offices, as Honourable Members sitting in here would have done early last year to pay in their deposits and by the fact that they are here they would have perhaps gone back to collect that deposit, one would have noticed the improvements which have been made in the offices as compared to the previous years.

Sir, one of the downsides of the physical enhancement and improving the aesthetics is that you can have increased cost. For example, not only is there better lighting in the building but there is also lighting on the exterior of the building and improved air-conditioning. The bottom line of that is that we face increased electricity cost in that building and provision has to be made by way of this supplementary expenditure for \$65 993 in order for us to meet the full projected cost of electricity for that building for the year and so this additional figure requested today is intended to take care of that.

As Honourable Members can also see, work continues today on the building and the Government is quite clear that it intends to continue to provide routine preventative as well as restorative maintenance. Every concrete structure will over a period of time have some evidence of slight lifting of concrete in some areas as the steel in the building will from time to time swell. The work which is going on in the

building now, where small bits of concrete are being chipped off, the treatment applied to the steel and the restoration of the concrete, is consistent with what happens in concrete buildings, on bridges, on skyscrapers and structures around the world. This is intended to ensure that the building continues to be put to good public use within this central Bridgetown area.

This building also houses the Inland Revenue Department. That department over the last several years has more efficiently employed, in order to improve the efficacy of the processing of income tax claims and returns... All of us I believe can testify to the more speedy turnaround in claims. The ability of the department to track both individual and corporate taxpayers has improved and part of that involves expenditure on equipment which is necessary to generate everything from the computer labels for the mail out of the tax returns to other matters. Essentially, there is a need for a high speed printer which we need to purchase. Some funds have been provided under the Head of Plant, Equipment and Furniture, to replace this high capacity printer which has been constantly breaking down during the course of this year but this was not enough. Therefore, in order not to slow down the work of that department, which slow down will obviously have a negative impact on members of the public who have to do business with the Income Tax Department, we are requesting a supplementary provision of some \$29 500 which would be used to replace the high speed printer and which would bring that vote under that Head to \$149 500.

Sir, under the Customs Head, an additional sum of \$11 019 is required in order to supplement their vote which is used to make payments for travel, for two reasons. One is the increase in the travelling rates which are payable to officers and the other is the fact that from time to time officers who are assigned to those departments which normally are engaged in travel may not be available and substitution would have to be made. Therefore, the deployment of what is called non-shift staff who may be required to work at the airport and seaport during peak periods to assist if there is a low shift turn-out, also means that additional travel expenditure has to be incurred.

3.40 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, we are requesting this addition of \$11 019 to add to the \$200 000, which is already provided for in the vote, in order that the work the Customs Department... could proceed smoothly and in order that those officers who travel, would be reimbursed for expenses incurred.

Mr. Chairman, we are, therefore, asking that the Supplementary asked by this Parliament could be approved so that we could make the expenditure as proposed.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make my contribution. Some years ago, we were told that supplementaries would have been a thing of the past. This is now the eighth Supplementary since May, 2003, where they have reached a grand total of \$29.37 million over the last eight months.

Mr. Chairman, we know how it is with politics, when persons are on the opposition, they say one thing but when they become government, they do another. Sir, rather than being a thing of the past, supplementaries have now become very regular, in fact, they constitute the major time spent on debates in this House.

Sir, what disturbs me is that we have heard about the SmartStream Financial and Human Resources System, and would like to believe that sometime in the not too distant future, if the system is put in place, supplementaries would become a thing of the past.

Sir, I say this because I am aware, and I doubt others certainly on my Side are aware, but there has been a comprehensive study of the tax administration system of Barbados, where a report was finalised last year.

I would think, Mr. Chairman, that such a report would have formed the basis of a major debate in this Chamber. The SmartStream system is designed to computerise most of the systems and processes of Government and if properly implemented, hopefully might deliver the goods.

Sir, the problem we have with this administration is that while they try to deny the existence and the involvement of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the affairs of Barbados, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is very active behind the scenes in recommending all kinds of initiatives to the Government.

Mr. Chairman, the Caribbean Association of Industry and Commerce (CAIC) and the Caribbean Regional Technical Assistance Centre (CARTEC) are two organisations that have been commissioned by this administration to do a comprehensive study of the tax administration of Barbados. As I have said earlier, the study has been completed and the final draft has been delivered, but I suspect no one in this Chamber knows about it, with the exception of those persons who are directly involved.

Mr. Chairman, if I were to ask the Honourable Member for Christ Church West whether or not he knows of a tax administration study, he would have to say no. If I were to ask the Honourable Member for St. Michael West if he knows of a study on tax administration, he might say yes,

and then bite his conscience. But I know that most Honourable Members on That Side and certainly those on Our Side, would not be privy to such information.

Mr. Chairman, in a very serious way, I say that this Honourable Chamber ought to be informed of such a significant study because the intention is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the way in which we do business in Government and of the processes that we are able to manage.

Mr. Chairman, I know this only too well because in 1991, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had determined that it would not have entered into any programme with the Government of Barbados unless the Government was able to reconcile its accounts, therefore, since the Barbados Central Bank is the banker for the Government, the accounts between the Treasury and the Barbados Central Bank would have had to be consistent. Therefore, unless one could fully reconcile how Government expenditures are being financed, one cannot say truly what is happening in the public sector.

Sir, therein lies my major concern because each year, the two Houses of Parliament become engaged in extensive discussions which last for one week, and is called the Estimates of Expenditures, where provision is made in each line item for 'X' amount of expenditure and, where over the course of the year, it has to be spent in accordance with the Appropriation Bill.

Sir, whenever one sees a supplementary, one would know that something has exceeded its limit or that there has been an introduction, perhaps of a new item that might have been unexpected, for example, bad weather causing flooding across the country.

Mr. Chairman, I say this because it is a major concern to me, that even though we have recently had a Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposal, we are not very sure of the financial status of Government because we have never received a full explanation, seeing now that there is confusion over whether or not it is a financial statement or a budget. Therefore, there is no elaboration on the way in which Government is spending or is collecting funds.

Sir, another point is that it comes so late in the financial year, that even though one sits in Parliament, one really is not sure of the true state of the economy or of Government's finances.

Mr. Chairman, let me put that in a more vivid way, three years ago, we borrowed extensively for a rainy day and had put those funds with our banker, the Barbados Central Bank. In some areas, it is technically called sterilising.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House and I am sure that on reflection, he would agree with me.

The Honourable Member cannot make an assertion that we, in this Parliament, are not given full information on the public finances of this country, when this Parliament is the place where the reports of the Auditor-General and of the Accountant-General, are laid.

In the Economic and Financial Policies of Government, there is a section in which the Honourable Prime Minister and Minister of Finance gives a summary of those documents. The Honourable Member does not have to depend on that because the source documents are presented to this Parliament.

Therefore, on reflection, the Honourable Member would want to come from another angle but he cannot make such an incorrect submission that we, in this Parliament, are not given enough financial information on the financial affairs of this country, when the statements are, in fact, directly laid here.
3.50 p.m.

To really demonstrate my point as I was saying before I was interrupted, we borrowed a lot of money in the post-1998 period of Barbados. In fact, Mr. Chairman, we borrowed so much money that of December 2001, the Central Bank of Barbados held a special deposit for the Government which contained as much as \$476.1 million which comprised of borrowing made from Trinidad and other places. By the end of the following year, we had reduced this special deposit to \$142.7 million. This meant that we spent well in excess of \$330 million out of this deposit at the Central Bank of Barbados.

Again, Mr. Chairman, there is hardly a Minister of Government who could stand in this Chamber and explain with any degree of comfort what happened to this \$330 million withdrawn from the Central Bank of Barbados Special Deposits over the course of the year.

Mr. Chairman, I go further and say that all of the supplementaries before us indicate a level of spending that was not anticipated by the Government.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member while he is trying desperately to make a point. The Honourable Member might not have been in his seat but certainly the Ministers on This Side were in our seats when the Minister of Finance in a debate in this Parliament indicated how the proceeds of the same loan were utilised. Sir, it is in the *Hansard* record where the Prime Minister in his wind-up

speech indicated the fact that having borrowed the funds, rather than going on the market again to finance the airport *et cetera* that the funds would be utilised. The Honourable Member, as a Member of this House, should not try to say that it is a secret, that not even Members on This Side know that the Minister of Finance took up the money, that there is sleaziness and nastiness going on. The Honourable Member cannot do that, Sir.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I want to state categorically that I have not implicated anyone on the Other Side with respect to anybody running away with money. I simply want to know, like any other Member of this House and the rest of Barbados, how these funds are being spent. At the start of 2003, the same account contained \$142 million and as at October, according to this report it still contained \$142 million. Mr. Chairman, I would like to tell Parliament that the outstanding balance on this account must have gone below \$15 million as at the end of December last year. Whereas at the start of the year 2002, Special Deposits at the Central Bank of Barbados contained \$473 million, at the end of last year, two years later, the Special Deposit account contained less than \$10 million, as I speak to you. Sir, this is the major concern that in spite of the spending we heard about, the revenue we were told about, the good times we have enjoyed, the buoyant financial resources of Government, the excesses of revenue collection and the low fiscal deficits that the Government of Barbados has had to use the special deposits at the Central Bank of Barbados which were put aside for a rainy day and have so withdrawn these deposits that they now contain less than \$10 million after having as much as \$476 million as at January 2002.

In a two-year period in excess of \$460 million have been withdrawn from the Central Bank of Barbados special deposits when the Government of Barbados has been boasting about healthy finances. All I require is for the Government of Barbados to tell me how the special deposits were used that were put aside for a rainy day. Have we had a flood, a thunderstorm or a cyclone? What has happened in this economy that could have encouraged the Government to withdraw in excess of \$460 million from the Central Bank of Barbados special deposits over a two-year period when those funds were borrowed for a rainy day.

I want to know, given that we are coming to Parliament once again for a supplementary and that over the last eight months we have come for \$5.2 million, \$5.1 million, \$0.3 million, \$0.9 million, \$3.2 million, \$5.6 million, \$0.6 million and now \$8.3 million making a grand total of \$29.3 million over the last eight months. While we are coming back for more money to spend, we are also withdrawing the proceeds put aside for a rainy day.

Mr. Chairman, the Resolution said that the supplementary funds are requested to meet additional cost of

194 licences required to use various modules in SmartStream financial and human resources systems. I hope this is the beginning of a process to refine the management of our finances and put the processes necessary in place to more efficiently and effectively manage our resources. Sir, since it was said earlier that supplementaries were supposed to be a thing of the past, there has to be a time when it will be so. We also know it is impossible given the system of Government for any Government to say that supplementaries will be a thing of the past.

Mr. Chairman, that is not my concern. I am concerned with the excesses of numbers... Sir, we have had one Supplementary per month since May, 2003 but concomitant with coming to Parliament for Supplementaries, we have had the withdrawal of all of the deposits from the Special Account of the Central Bank when those funds were put aside, having been borrowed to deal with globalisation and the restructuring of the economy.
4.00 p.m.

Sir, I recall the debate on the Resolution when it was said that these funds were being put aside in order for us to cope with the impact of globalisation and to reposition the private sector in such a way that they can effectively cope. Now, we have had the withdrawal of almost every cent out of the Special Deposit at the Central Bank and nobody can really say where these funds have gone.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, please wind up. Your time has expired.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I am going to wind up by saying that at least \$145 million went to the GEMS without parliamentary approval but where has the remainder of the money gone? I want to know in this debate, if we could be privy to what has happened to all these funds.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, as I wrap up under this Head, I want to take the opportunity to remind the Honourable Member, as I indicated in my point of order, that if he was doing the work for which he is being paid he would have been here in the wind up of the Budget debate when the...

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. I was here. I even interrupted the Prime Minister.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member raised a number of points. There are a few things that we have to bear in mind. On the matter of

Supplementaries, if we are to focus on the things that he wants us to focus on, we will miss the essential points. This Government, even in tight fiscal times, has been able to change expenditure plans when necessary during the year, came to Parliament for Supplementaries while at the end of the day ensuring that at the end of the financial year the fiscal deficit is kept within control. Sir, in fact, in one financial year we were able to reorder our expenditure, taking account of new priorities, where we had approximately one hundred million dollars in supplementaries but at the end of the day...

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Sorry to interrupt you, Honourable Member. When the Honourable Member rose to speak he said that he was winding up the debate and nobody rose. Honourable Member for Christ Church East please continue.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, at the end of that year the fiscal deficit was even lower than what we had projected at the beginning of the year. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West knows that during the course of the financial year, particularly in terms of how we manage it, midway through the financial year we make a check to see what programmes are on course, what programmes are in advance of their spending and what programmes are unlikely to spend the sums which have been allocated to them during the course of the financial year.

For example, we might have projected that we would have constructed a road in a given location, however, because of delays in the tendering process or the acquisition of land it would clearly indicate that in terms of the project we would not be able to spend that money during the financial year. In our system of government, we cannot secretly shift the money from one project to another without coming Parliament for approval.

In terms of managing expenditure, if we know that we are not going to be spending \$30 million which was allocated on a road project, this means that we have \$30 million that we can use in the form of supplementaries for other expenditure. Therefore, the size or frequency of the supplementaries is not the key issue. The public finances will not be cast into disarray by coming for Supplementary expenditure to ensure that proper programmes of Government are able to proceed. However, at the end of the day, what would put this country in peril is if the fiscal deficit were to be out of line at the end of the year. We have proven by our record that we are able to do prudent expenditure management. We would shift our

priorities during the course of the year while keeping the big picture solidly in mind.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member, as is his usual custom, sought to project some similarity that Barbados currently has with the International Monetary Fund to what they had during their term of office. There is a difference between a master and servant relationship, which is the one which they had with the International Monetary Fund, and the one which we have, Sir, where we are members of a club.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central does not know that Barbados has been a member of the International Monetary Fund for many years. He clearly does not know that members of the International Monetary Fund are subject to a review of the economy under Article 4. He does not know that the International Monetary Fund gives a commentary on the fiscal and economic affairs of its members and publishes it for all to see. Members can choose to follow the recommendations of the International Monetary Fund or not to follow them, except when those members are in dire straits and they become the servants of the International Monetary Fund.

Sir, the Honourable Member knows about the kind of relationship with the International Monetary Fund where a staff member of that financial institution was in residence at Government Headquarters to direct activities on a daily basis. Sir, that is the relationship that he knows about.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I believe that he was brought into Central Government in the Ministry of Finance as the understudy of that International Monetary Fund agent in Barbados because his philosophy and approach to economics are heavily influenced by being the understudy to the last International Monetary Fund representative in Barbados. WI4, a representative of the International Monetary Fund has not been in residence in Barbados since this Government took over the running of this country. The bottom line is, that from time to time the International Monetary Fund and several organisations, some by invitation and some on their own accord, will do various studies on Barbados. We will review them and would make a determination as to whether we will accept the recommendations or not. The fact that there may be a review or a recommendation by the International Monetary Fund is neither here nor there.

Sir, the matter which the Honourable Member, continues to push is that there is some secret or mystery about Special Deposits at the Central Bank. I suspect that

the Honourable Member is, perhaps, getting confused or hoping that others will get confused. Members of the general public are fully aware of the key indicators of economic performance in this country. They know that when the Honourable Member speaks about Special Deposits that he is not speaking about our foreign reserves. For example, for the first time ever our foreign reserves have reached the \$2 billion mark and it continues to hover around that amount. I know that the Honourable Member would not breach the rules of this Honourable House by having malevolent intent. However, I want him to know that there are people out there who are very much aware that there is no threat to our foreign reserves. These deposits he is talking about have nothing to do with our ability to pay our way in the world and that is the first point I want to make.

4.10 p.m.

Sir, hovering around the \$2 billion mark and continuing, those special deposits are the proceeds of some international financing and was clearly indicated that at the time those loans were obtained, a deliberate judgment had to be made.

Sir, you go to the market while your credit rating is good, funds are available and the rates are low, in order to ensure that in a volatile market, in a situation of uncertainty, when analysts' predictions were that it was likely that funds to developing countries would be harder to get, the interest rates would rise and, therefore, our ability to finance future capital development projects would be severely compromised, that we went ahead to the markets at the time when the window was open. It so happened that the window had remained opened longer than analysts had predicted.

Sir, if the window had closed, what would the Honourable Member had said then?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East is misleading the House. He is suggesting that you do not have to seek approval to use funds borrowed. The funds that were borrowed from overseas...

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: They are part of the Consolidated Fund and you spoke about it. You said that I am saying that people unlawfully use funds. If you consult the Financial Administration and Audit Act, you will see that all revenues of the Government go into the Consolidated Fund. It is known, so I do not mind the old talk in the public.

Mr. Chairman, I quote from the Financial Administration and Audit Act, Cap. 5:

““Revenue” means all levies, taxes, rates, duties, fees, penalties, forfeitures, rents and dues, proceeds of sale and all other receipts of the Crown from whatever sources arising, over which Parliament has the power of appropriation, but does not include the proceeds of short term loans,”

Mr. Chairman, let me explain this is section 1, part 1 of the preliminary of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, Cap. 5, but does not include the proceeds of short term loans. Long term loans, however, go into revenue and become part of the Consolidated Fund of Government.

Mr. Chairman, short term loans are like the ways and means. Do you remember when the Sandiford administration broke the limit? That is a short term loan. What I am saying to you, Mr. Chairman, is that all other borrowed proceeds of Government, go into revenue which form part of the Consolidated Fund and it says:

“...over which Parliament has the power of appropriation...”

Therefore, anytime you are seeking to appropriate the special deposits, you have to come to Parliament for approval.

Mr. Chairman, this debate has raged for the last year and a half. Unfortunately, I do not have the Press on my side to put the case for the Democratic Labour Party, but I know I am correct. Several other people who have entered this Chamber and the Accountant General of Barbados know that I am correct, but when you do not have the media to support you on issues like this, it would appear as though the PR continues to reign.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East, please continue.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West continues to fail to understand one very simple thing, perhaps it is too simple for him. He dwells with both feet firmly planted in the cloud, so anything below that level is not within his grasp.

Sir, it is very simple. Items in the Below the Line account...

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, the Special Deposits in the Central Bank, form part of those accounts in the Below the

Line accounts, and the Honourable Member continues to misinterpret that section of the Act. We have legal advice which is entirely different from his, and our knowledge of the practice of Government, is very much different from that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, I make the point that those accounts in the Special Deposits at the Central Bank, the utilisation of those funds was very carefully and meticulously explained before this House, where you already have acquired funds from the international market, why go for additional funds when there are works for the positive future of Barbados to be developed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes to wind up.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, the bottom line is that those funds have been employed for their proper public purposes to finance the construction of the expansion of the airport which is coming on very nicely. Our departure lounge looks better than any international airport in the world.

They have been employed in the construction of the new Hilton Hotel which is adorning the skyline of Bridgetown and which will, in due season, be housing its guest in the more than 300 rooms and bringing valuable revenue and employment to this country.

We made a determination, Sir, that in the wake of the events of September 11, 2001 that it was not the time for this country to retreat. It was not a time for the state to retreat. It was a time for the country and the state to build and to be entrepreneurial, and that where private capital was reluctant to build earning capacity for the future that we, as a state, would undertake it.

It was a time, Sir, to invest in earning capacity, expand our airport, expand our seaport, build hotel rooms and invest in other productive investments. Therefore, we will be able 2004, 2005 and beyond to earn from these monies which were drawn from the Special Deposits at the Central Bank and the fullness of them have been given already.

Mr. Chairman, contrary to the impression that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West might have inadvertently given, Sir, that there is some slight of hand in the shift of this money, or that the country is broke because this money has been invested in productive activity. This is far from the truth. There has been \$2 billion in foreign investments, a fiscal deficit that is manageable and we continue, Sir, through this process of supplementary

expenditure to do expenditure shifting, so that at the end of the financial year, we will not necessarily have spent more money than was intended, but certain items of expenditure will be frozen and new items added from time to time.

I thank you, Sir.

I beg to move, Sir, that Head 14 stand part.

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

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

4.20 p.m.

HEAD 18 – AUDIT AMENDMENT OF EXPLANATORY NOTES

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, Head 18, Amendment to Explanatory Notes, is one of those technical things that has to come here. Under the heading of Plant, Equipment and Furniture the Explanatory Note should be amended to read as follows: “Item 625 – provides for the purchase of a podium and chairs including chairs with tablet arms.”

This is related to an expenditure for a conference room which is used by this office which is in a building which also houses the VAT Office, the Corporate Affairs Office and others. Essentially, these items are to replace those items which were previously listed under the Explanatory Notes as being the items that were to be bought under Plant, Equipment and Furniture.

I beg to move that the Explanatory Notes to Head 18 as amended stand part.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: I beg to second that.

The question that the Explanatory Notes to Head 18 as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 23 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH – \$6 025 545

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, the expenditure on this Head under program 360 – Primary Health Care Services relates to the South Coast Sewerage Project where there are a number of items that are required which would require additional expenditure.

Mr. Chairman, as you know, this project has been going on for some time, we are coming to the end of it, and

in order for us to be able to complete the proposed works during the course of the year a number of additional items of expenditure are required. It is for this purpose that we are approaching this Parliament for its approval of a supplementary expenditure in the region of \$7.5 million. Some \$100 057 of this sum is required for the payment of utilities which is required to meet the estimated cost of running the Project Office, and for the increased cost for electricity and additional telephones which were required for the offices. Part of this cost relates to the fact that the Treatment Plant at Graeme Hall, which had been constructed but which was not utilised until the start of processing within the project, is now fully operational and is doing what it is required to do.

Under Structure, much of the \$6 025 545 which is the bulk of the expenditure under this Head, relates to the contract 2b which is the one that has been originally awarded to Soares DaCosta. However, there were some changes and that project is now administered by another company. This is the contract under which sewers and service connections were done, of which an additional \$1 million is required. There is also the matter of the completion of work on a number of the shafts as well as the final hook-ups.

Essentially, the major work which is to be done under these structures relates to making a number of final connections. As you know, Sir, this project was undertaken in several phases. The first phase was the construction of the outfall pipe which goes from Graeme Hall along the coast out to sea at a point off the Hilton Hotel. There was also the contract for the construction of the collection system which again runs along the entire length of the south coast from Enterprise right through to Bay Street where it meets the Bridgetown Sewerage Project.

Sir, the third part of the project relates to the connections. What we have done in this project is to make all of the connections from the road onto individual properties part of the construction of the collection system. Therefore, all that remains now is for individual property owners to connect to the system. They would not need to go into the public highway to make that connection since the pipe is already on their property. Government has made the connection to residences. A social survey was done to make a determination as to those who are able to pay and who will have to reimburse Government and those who are not able to pay who would not have to reimburse the Government. Therefore, part of the cost of the overall project relates to the cost of these connections. Commercial businesses, such as hotels, are required to pay for their own connections into the system.

Additionally, in the Needham's Point area certain decisions had to be made concerning future usage of the system. Information had to be obtained on what the new

Hilton Hotel would look like so as to be able to make determinations on the capacity of the piping that was required there. Information also had to be put forward concerning what would be the possible future use of the now vacant Mobil site and other changes within the Needham's Point peninsula so that sufficient capacity could be put in place in order to cover this particular expenditure. All of these items form part of what this additional expenditure is all about.

Sir, the final component of this project is a smaller sum of \$1 369 755 for professional services which relates to the payments which are required to be made to the engineers, Earth Tech/Reid Crowther. The scope of the work which they were required to perform in the course of this capital project has been expanded because of areas in the Needham's Point peninsula which were added to the work and other aspects of the work which were assigned to them. These sums are therefore required in order to ensure that the Ministry of Health is able to make its commitment under the South Coast Sewerage Project and to bring this matter a lot closer to completion.

The timetable, barring no unforeseen circumstances, for the completion of this project is March 2004. Therefore, these sums would be among some of the final payments. I really would not want to pronounce final rights on it. However, as with major projects from time to time there would be other claims and other expenditures which would arise, but certainly this expenditure of approximately \$7.5 million will bring the majority of matters relating to the South Coast Sewerage Project to closure.

Mr. Chairman, I must say that the system is working. Sewerage is being collected from along the coast. It is being treated and discharged. There are no reports of major difficulties with the system. Most of the residences are connected. There are some individual businesses that remain to be connected, but we anticipate that those businesses would all be connected in the shortest possible time.
4.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I anticipate that over the course of the next several years, we would see the kind of improvements in the near-shore marine environment that we are seeing around Bridgetown, more certainly around the area of the Bridgetown Fishing Terminal and that area off Trevor's Way, where we are now seeing some sea life which we have not seen for many years. This is as a result of the fact that, a number of years ago, Cowell Street used to be an area where sewerage was dumped. Also, along the coast where hotels would have had treatment plants and septic tanks, we know of the great possibility of leakage and seepage. Sir, certainly among the principle benefits of this project would be that of improvement in the near-shore environment.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 23 stand part.

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

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, to have had eight supplementaries in nine months, to the tune of over \$29 million, can be described in no other terms than poor budget planning strategy and expenditure mismanagement.

Mr. Chairman, I want to expose...

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West were ordered to be expunged from the records by Mr. CHAIRMAN.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is clearly in breach of the Rules of the Honourable House. The Honourable Member cannot impute improper motives to Honourable Members.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I am not too sure what improper motive I have imputed on the part of Government.

Mr. Chairman, I will rephrase my statement because I will not be shut up on my campaign to do the business of the people of this country, and if I have to hold a public meeting in Independence Square, then I would do it.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. That is a reflection on the Chair. Nobody is shutting the Honourable Member up. All the Honourable Member has to do is to learn the Rules of Parliament and then the Honourable Member would know what is allowable.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much, Honourable Member for St. James South. Honourable Member for St. Philip West, you may proceed if you so wish.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I will have to be very reflective and more protean in how I decide to deliberate in this Honourable House.

Sir, Government has a responsibility on an annual basis, to engage in Estimates exercise, where the various Ministries meet with technocrats. Government then comes to this Honourable House with Estimates of Expenditure.

Sir, if I am to accept that I am dealing with professionals who understand and are executing their work with fidelity, then I would have to assume that the Estimates

that were brought originally were Estimates that could have been trusted and could have been used to plan Government's business. However, that has not been the experience that I have had since I have been in this Honourable Chamber. I have seen nine supplementaries in nine months, to the tune of over \$29 million. I am indicating that suggests to me that there is either an understating of the revenues or that there is an understating of the expenditure.

Mr. Chairman, as a result, it also suggests to me that it may be indicating a strategy that is being used by Government to understate their Estimates, so as to cast the deficit numbers that they have understated...

Sir, that is the point I wish to make because if, after nine months and Government is going to come back to this Honourable House for \$6 million, I would want to find out whether or not there has been any new projects that were implemented and were not indicated, or whether or not it was a strategy not to indicate that \$6 million should have been in the original Estimates, so as to affect the deficit.

Mr. Chairman, if I am to accept and to support the increase estimations to the tune of over \$6 million, I have a concern regarding how Government has implemented the various projects which they have attempted in Barbados. There has not been any projects that this Government has implemented that has not had significant cost overruns, or where the project was completed five or six years after the projected completion of that project.

Mr. Chairman, it is the taxpayers' money, so Government does not feel that they have to account for it, they believe they could come to Parliament for supplementaries whenever they want.

Sir, I can call out the number of projects in which Government has been engaged: the Greenland Landfill; the renovation of the St. Leonard's Boys' School; the renovation of the Glebe Polyclinic; the National Housing Corporation at Warrens; the National Housing Corporation headquarters in Country Road; the purchase of Eastry House – and I am still trying to find the renovation, and the GEMS projects. Sir, these are all projects that have been implemented under the Barbados Labour Party, in which Government has come for supplementary after supplementary.

Sir, in any logical analysis, can that indicate that projects have been prudently implemented in the interest of the public? It cannot be.
4.40 p.m.

Sir, I reiterate the point that the whole business of understating the estimates is a strategy to mislead...

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West is continuing

to err. He cannot accuse the Government of seeking to fool the public by underestimating the Estimates. The Honourable Member must desist from constantly imputing improper motives to the Government.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. Philip West, you heard the Honourable Member for St. George South when he said that you are imputing improper motives to the Government and I rule that you withdraw and desist from making those remarks.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw the remarks but the sentiments have not changed.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West, there is something called patience and when you withdraw the remarks you do not have to go into your personal feelings. Please continue the debate.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, the significant point here is how can you ask me or the public to have confidence in this document, the Estimates 2003/2004, if every single week we come to this Parliament for additional expenditure. Sir, something is wrong because \$29 million in nine months is more than one per cent of the GDP of this country. Sir, the honourable economist can do the calculation. I do not want to impute any derogatory characterisation of anyone or grouping.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member cannot read into the record bad mathematics. In a \$5 billion economy, \$29 million is not one per cent.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, it clearly indicated the point I want to make. Whether it be one per cent, half of per cent or ten per cent, the point remains the same. If I am to have confidence in this document, we cannot come to this Honourable House every single Tuesday for a supplementary.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. You cannot on the one hand say that since May last year in nine months we have come for nine supplementaries and thirty seconds after then say that we are coming for a supplementary. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was correct when he said that we have come here for nine supplementaries in nine months which is one per month. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West now says that it is one every week. We want to know which Honourable Member is correct.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I will not respond to that remark because the point I am making has

been understood, I will wind up by saying that it is important that when Ministers and their technocrats sit down to prepare a set of documents that come to this House, at that time that I would want to see a narrowing of the gap. I do not want to see the percentage error or the degree of variance in standard deviation. I am concerned about the variance and the random error because I do not know how the money is being spent or how it has been conceived.

Sir, I rest my case.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, I do not envy the Honourable Member for St. Philip West for his exuberance. I must say that in 30 years in Parliament I have never in one single year seen a lack of supplementaries. Sir, supplementaries come every year and as long as there is a Parliament, supplementaries will come.

Sir, if at the beginning of every year, I could personally work out my annual budget with a one per cent error, I would think I am a genius. There are all kinds of changes and unforeseen circumstances that arise during the course of the year so the Honourable Member should not say that he wants to know how the money is being spent. Every time there is a request for a supplementary, it is set out and put in the hands of every Member of Parliament. We do not debate supplementaries in a vacuum.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West, like all of us, knows exactly what the money is for. I would be more persuaded by his exuberance if he were to say that he does not see why the money should be spent on the particular matter for which the request. If that were the substance of his argument, I would listen to him.

To say that a number of unforeseen circumstances have arisen between last March and January the following year and that something is wrong in meeting the expenditure of these particular circumstance, I do not think the Honourable Member is serious. He likes to make a stir because that is his style and I will not quarrel about it.

Sir, we have to get serious sometimes because the more things change the more they remain the same. I have heard the identical arguments which the Honourable Member is using today used by almost every new person who comes into Parliament. I have heard the same argument over and over again *ad nauseam* because it sounds good but makes no impact whatsoever. We have allocated over \$2 billion in the Estimates of Expenditure for 2003-2004 and to suggest that almost towards the end of the financial year that we have had \$29 million in supplementary expenditures is derisory and laughable.

4.50 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Sir, for the Honourable Member for St. Philip West to work up such energy and show so much passion into something as straightforward as that...

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Sir, to say that ten years ago the Prime Minister said that he hoped to bring an end to supplementaries is equally a waste of my time. I am saying that there has never been a case where there has never been supplementaries. One of these days, if there is some miracle, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West will be in a position where he would bring to bear all that passion on his Minister of Finance to make sure that it does not happen, and he would not succeed in doing so.

Mr. Chairman, I rise to say that I do not get into these debates that seek only to put a few dollars extra to meet Government's expenditure. I think that I should put it on record that these things will happen. They have always happened and will continue to happen because no Government cannot in the month of March accurately forecast in exactitude what would be spent over the next twelve months.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman,...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, I think that you have started on the wrong foot. Honourable Member, before you start your speech, refrain from those remarks. I would like you to withdraw those remarks now.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central were ordered by Mr. CHAIRMAN to be expunged from the record.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, we need to consider the larger point. We on This Side understand that an estimate is just that but surely some reason must apply. We have had a number of supplementaries since we have been in here. It has almost become a weekly exercise but one would expect that it would be a rarity rather than something that occurs on a regular basis.

Sir, the item of structures for the South Coast Sewerage Project is an excellent idea of what we are talking about. We are told that this money is needed for costs relating to

work being done on shafts that were left uncompleted by the former contractor, *Fomento y Cubiertas*. I believe that Formento y Cubiertas was fired in 1997/1998 and we are now hearing that there is an outstanding invoice in the amount of \$6 million for a contractor that was fired years ago. Sir, something is amiss. Are you telling me that when the Estimates were being calculated at the beginning of the financial year that \$3.7 million was the amount but we are now seeking almost double the original vote to pay for outstanding works going back many years? Mr. Chairman, it does speak to a measure of inadequacy in the Budget Administration Department, let us accept that.

I believe that is the reason why...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. George South.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is misleading the Honourable House. As far as I understand it, the \$6 million is not to pay contractors who were fired six years ago but to pay for expenses that are being incurred now. I believe that the Honourable Member also understands that but in his own inimitable style, he thinks that everybody else is stupid and he alone is bright and he is misleading the Honourable House by stating that this money is to pay the contractors for 1997/1998.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: One moment please. Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, I listened carefully and I was wondering whether someone from the Other Side was going rise on a point of order. The Honourable Member said that this money is to pay a contractor that was fired years ago. It says here – Structures – \$6,025,545.

“The increase in contract costs relate to various new sewers and additional service connections, the changes in ductile pipelines for the forcemain as requested by the Barbados Water Authority, increased cost of completing shafts partially constructed by the terminated contractor (*Fomento y Cubiertas*), additional no-dig work...”

The supplementary does not say that it is for payment to a contractor that was fired.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: I never suggested that the \$6 million was going to the fired contractor. I never said that.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, please take your seat for a moment. I am not going to call for a copy of

your speech now but you said that contractor was fired years ago and this supplementary is to pay for work done, that is how you started, that is what I heard and I would ask you to withdraw that. Let us continue.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: I withdraw. It said work associated with uncompleted works by the contractor that was fired six years ago. Sir, the Portuguese contractor came in shortly after the project. Mr. Chairman, I am only saying that we are approaching the end of this project and it seems a little strange that the Estimates can be out by such a large quantum.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James South is on a point of order.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House. It is entirely possible, reasonable and foreseeable that the Estimates could be out by such a large sum or a larger sum because the practise in these projects and any other project is, that the contractor who is executing the works gives a billing and then the engineers and quantity surveyors would have to certify it. There are often disputes over the quantities and how money should be paid. Sometimes it takes several months for an agreement to be reached on what sum should be payable under the contract or bill. It is entirely possible and has nothing to do with improper budgeting but merely the contract process.

Sir, people who are members of the public and do not understand the contract would not recognise that, but as an engineer, the Honourable Member should be ashamed to be attempting to mislead the public in such an awful manner.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, please continue.
5.00 p.m.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, in the same way that you hire professionals to settle claims, you also hire professionals to forecast costs. I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West is correct. It is a pattern with this Government that in every major capital project, the only thing that seems to be in common is that there is always this excess expenditure, and we need to be concerned about that. We are not saying that supplementaries do not exist but we are seeing these large sums all the time.

What I am saying, Mr. Chairman, is that we have to account to the people of Barbados. This is the same Government that put out a Manifesto with more than 65 pages and had one sentence about accountability, there is no wonder they feel that they do not have to give an account when it comes to spending money. They give the impression that if it is Below the Line, they do not have to come to Parliament. They can spend the money how you feel like and then come to Parliament for supplementaries. They are making light of this matter, as though \$29 million is no big deal. This is the sort of folly that has people fed up.

Mr. Chairman, do you remember when we were debating the GEMS of Barbados?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: I am only saying that we have to account to the people of Barbados.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central. We are not into GEMS. We are debating a supplemental for the South Coast Sewerage Project. Let us keep on that and keep it quiet, please.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Chairman, the issue of accountability stands and the Government stands prosecuted on that and the people of Barbados know that. Sir, we need to consider something else as well, that is the business about the Barbados Water Authority (BWA) asking about changes in the pipes that were used. I assume that Earth Tech/Reid Crowther (ETRC) are quite competent and do not lack for payment because I see that they are getting \$1.3 million in professional services. I would assume that whatever conditions were obtaining, they would have specified the necessary pipe. I do not know why the BWA would have to come back after the consultants and change the pipe, so that is just a question of note.

Mr. Chairman, we raise these issues on This Side and sometimes do not get any joy, and other persons on the backbench have now taken it upon themselves to repeat things that we raise during debates because they are looking to score political points.

Mr. Chairman, I would only say that if we could hear in here that settling claims with these large projects, years after the fact to the tunes of millions of dollars is no problem, I hope that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East would check the Auditor General's report in front of him. The Auditor General, not the Democratic Labour Party or any member on This Side, also had some concerns about the way in which capital works projects have been executed by this Government. Nearly half the report is about the

madness that was going on at St. Leonard's Boys' School. This is something that we must consider.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that the lessons learned from the experience in the South Coast Sewerage Project will be taken to the West Coast Sewerage Project. I recognise that a sewerage project is a very serious type of project and obviously it requires some unique management.

I hope that in the same way they are so enthusiastic about settling these claims years after the fact, that the claims of those residents and small business persons as well – the Honourable Member for Christ Church West knows what I am talking about – will be brought to this Parliament with an equivalent amount of enthusiasm. The dislocation from that project is still being felt in those communities.

I hope that would be considered and I sincerely hope as I said that when it comes to preparing the Estimates for the next financial year 2004-2005 that with the Smart Stream on programme, perhaps what has been occurring for the last 30 years would not continue to occur and that Supplementaries, if not all together eliminated, could at least be minimised.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Chairman, it is my view that the Opposition has a legitimate function, in terms of raising questions or concerns with reference to Government's expenditure, and no one can deny that this function belongs to a duly elected Opposition. However, I would personally have to express disappointment in the last two submissions coming from the Other Side, both with reference to their tone, as well as to their content.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West suffers from the dilution to which some people are subject, which is, that extreme language gives force of point, or that extreme language reflects either validity or accuracy in argument. I believe it is a sense of dilution from which he is likely to emerge in due course, when he is duly chastened in these hallowed Chambers.

I would want, Mr. Chairman, to speak briefly in support of the Supplementary before the House under this Head for a couple of reasons. I am glad to hear that the project is approaching its final stages and that there is an anticipated completion date in March. This has been a project long in the making. The fact that it is finally coming to conclusion is something to be pleased about. I am certainly pleased about that, and additionally for this reason, that the money which we are being asked to vote for here, will assist in facilitating some rather important works to bring this project to a final stage of completion.

The training of the Barbados Water Authority's staff to properly run and maintain the treatment plant is an extremely important undertaking, and it should be supported. The process of monitoring the environment to achieve a bacteriological condition that conforms to accepted international standards, would be a process with some imperative attached to it in today's world. The reinstatement and repairs to householders' properties until the completion of the period of liability at December 2003 also is a matter that Members of this House would want to see taken care of in the proper fashion.

Sir, I would have thought that amidst the expression of legitimate concerns coming from the Other Side, there would have been a moment taken to spare a thought for some objectives which have, to the extent that a project has been completed today, and which, with a final completion of the project and the functioning of the system, will continue to be realised. These are things of importance because we talking about geographical areas of Barbados which is absolutely vital to our tourism product. The system upon which these large amounts of money have been expended therefore serves a vital national interest in protecting the tourism infrastructure and environment along the south coast.
5.10 p.m.

The protection of our marine environment is very critical because of the domestic economic activity associated with it, the foreign exchange capacity that it holds for this country and the social activity, to which many of us give ourselves from time to time when the occasion is found, that it facilitates.

The protection of our coastline is a major asset because it conduces to and facilitates a quality of life of significantly high proportions in value of which this Government is interested in creating and preserving. So whatever infrastructure we can input along the south coast, as indeed as anywhere else in Barbados that would serve toward those ends, is to be highly valued and should not only be considered as having been an item to incur expenditure but should be regarded as an area of vital investment for this country. So the system would serve to enhance the quality of life and the quality of the varied business product which is offered along the south coast.

I would have thought, legitimate though the concerns may be coming from the other side, that a moment would have been found to reflect on these things and to recognise that what we have here is not simply some monies being expended beyond what was projected but indeed a large investment being viably inserted in an area which would give us significant returns over time.

With those brief remarks, I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, how we utilise the monies of the people of Barbados must be of some concern to us. I am not going to be caught up in the issue of if we should come every day for additional expenditures on whatever Head or issues of that type. I am more concerned with how monies which we take from the people of Barbados are utilised.

I believe that as a Government we have not been as prudent as we could be. Some people would argue that this issue or the question of how we get involved in projects cannot be seen down the clearest path and therefore we can avoid mistakes or some of the challenges which are presented. Let me say that some can and some cannot be avoided. Those challenges that can be avoided should be avoided in order to spare the taxpayers of Barbados these large amounts of money which are spent and which cause us as a nation some concern.

We, on This Side, have spoken already and I do not have to repeat what was said because the average Jane and Joe in Barbados speak every day when they feel their own hunger of the hundreds of millions of dollars over the last nine years which have been liberally spent on myriad projects in Barbados many of which are still uncompleted which are testaments to what is happening within Barbados.

The South Coast Sewerage Project is in an area which I reside and is a project that caused substantial dislocation, but sometimes we argue that we need to experience some pain to have some gain in the future. The Minister of Public Works has already said in this Parliament that as soon as the new financial year commences, they will be busy fixing the roads, not only Highway 7 but those side roads which were dug up and just patched by the persons who had the task of patching them. I have seen some cold-mix being put into many holes where I live and in other parts of Christ Church. I am going to keep the Honourable Minister to his word and on each and every opportunity I have to speak, once that work does not commence, I would speak to it.

Mr. Chairman, I live just off of Highway 7 in Maxwell. Pipes were laid and connections were placed to homes that are just off of Highway 7, a 100 to 150 yards in. Where I live is almost like a cul-de-sac, and for some strange reason some people thought it not necessary to extend the same sewerage pipes 150 yards down to have another seven or eight houses connected. To me that was a sign of madness, but then some people consider extreme sanity to be insanity or extreme insanity to be sanity, so I do not question that. When you operate on the extremes, it is either one or the other. Maybe all fresh water and no sewerage comes from those seven or eight houses which would go into the sea just off Dover and Maxwell. Maybe they would return and dig up the road again and make the attachments because what

they did, did not make any sense whatsoever. Water is running in this direction from the highway, but because you live below in a cul-de-sac, they felt that they could not come in 150 yards down and make those connections. That was a form of insanity which should have been better treated in the constituency.

We have to be more conscious of how we utilise our monies. We are facing difficult times and will continue to face difficult times in the future. A penny save is a penny earn. That has been the philosophy of the sages of old, of the Honourable Member for St. George South and also part of my philosophy. Even though in his retiring years, the Honourable Member for St. George South would speak with calmer tones, I know that in coming to the House, he too would have to be concerned about the constant repetitions; we need more careful management, we need more careful prudence, we need maybe a little more time studying the projects that we are going to implement and how they are implemented and who we choose to work on the projects that we have put in place.

At the end of the day we want to develop Barbados. At the end of the day I want to see the public servants of Barbados working in conditions which are just as good or even better than those in the private sector. I want to see a situation where public servants would run to work rather than to feel the agony of sick buildings out there and where they have to stay home because of medical certificates which they get from their doctors in relation to their health. Therefore, I do not condemn these policies but I condemn what could essentially be referred to as the mismanagement of many of our projects.

I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: We will go for the fairer sex.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: When I go home I will have to take another look in the mirror after the comment by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central just now in his aside.

Sir, I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South being an economist would speak to some of the project management issues. I sat this evening and heard with some amusement matters that I had heard raised ten years ago when I first came to this Chamber. September this year would be ten years.

Asides.

5.20 p.m.

Sir, the reality is that while the debate on the Other Side has ranged far and wide, I would wish to return to the

South Coast Sewerage Project. There has been much talk by Honourable Members on the Other Side but let us understand what this administration was faced with when we became Government in 1994.

Sir, the South Coast Sewerage Project was already designed and the contract for the loan with the Inter-American Development Bank was already signed sometime in early 1993. Therefore, when we came to Government in 1994, we were receiving the South Coast Sewerage Project designed as a *fait accompli*.

Sir, having been charged with the responsibility of the Ministry of Health, the instructions which were given to me by the Prime Minister, were to start execution immediately. Therefore, even though there were some concerns about the designs, questions were raised as to why we were going to secondary treatment as opposed to tertiary treatment immediately, even though the system does have the capacity to be upgraded from secondary to tertiary.

Sir, these concerns were raised at that time and I would have preferred to have done a redesign of the project, given a number of things that I had seen, and with which I was not entirely happy. However, because we had a signed contract with the Inter-American Development Bank, and at that time not a stone was turned with respect to the execution of the South Coast Sewerage Project because as you know, the Government had serious financial problems and those were the days when there were both personal and political crises.

Therefore, this administration had taken a decision that whatever our concerns, we would have had to attempt to make the corrections as we go along because by the time that we had become the Government, the taxpayers of this country had already paid out more than US\$1 million in commitment fees, as the rules of the Inter-American Development Bank required that where a loan has been signed for and has not been drawn down, then commitment fees would have had to be paid.

Sir, the instructions to me were to start executing the project immediately. The contract was awarded to a company called *Fomentos y Cubiertas*. Again, we go back to the Inter-American Development Bank rules which required that where there is a bid on a contract, as long as the company meets the pre-qualification criteria, the lowest bidder was to be awarded the contract. Therefore, as a country, we would have had to determined that if we did not want to follow the Inter-American Development Bank rules, then we could not have borrowed money from them.

Sir, *Fomentos y Cuibertos* bid was in excess of \$20 million lower...

Mr. R. L. SEALY: On a point of order. The Honourable Member has said that the contract was awarded to *Fomentos y Cubiertas* by the previous Government. She has since said that under the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) rules, we had no choice but to give the contract to *Fomentos y Cubiertas*.

I think if that is the case, the Honourable Member should be very clear on it because there is this usual thing where every time something goes wrong in the Government, it is the Democratic Labour Party's fault.

I am, therefore, not going to allow the Honourable Member to get away with saying that we had awarded the contract when, by her own words, it was the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) that had awarded it.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member must know that the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) does not award contracts. This was a loan that was accessed from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB). The Inter-American Development Bank (IADB) had stipulations that when money was borrowed from them, the borrower would have had to follow such stipulations. Therefore, even though the Government had awarded the contract, it was awarded in consonance with the stipulations and criteria that were set by the lending institution.

Sir, the public understands that. The Honourable Member is only trying to confuse the issue because when an individual goes to a bank to borrow money, for example to build, the bank sets out certain instructions and stipulations which the borrower has to follow.

Sir, I am trying to find the exact figure by which *Fomentos y Cubiertas* award was lower...

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It was US\$12 million, therefore, we had to go with them.

Sir, questions could be raised as to if John Brown bids \$10 million and others bid \$30, \$35, or \$37 million, then clearly all of the other bidders would have seen that the project could not have been executed at a certain sum because there were all within the same zone but the stipulations would have required that one goes with the lowest bidder and so it was.

Sir, we were not happy with the execution of the contract and it was terminated, I believe in 1996. At present, there are remaining disputes between *Fomentos y Cubiertas* and the Government over what sums should actually be paid out to them. These matters have been referred to attorneys-at-law and arbitrators for a resolution and correction of the sums and, at some point, we would have to bring to account the final bill for the monies owed to *Fomentos y Cubiertas*.

Sir, we then subdivided the contract and awarded it to various companies. Sir, where a long time has elapsed between the initial start and cost of a contract, project costs would escalate and, therefore, some of the sums for the new contractors varied, they went back to the zones originally bid when the contract was first put on the market.

Therefore, what was perceived or what is now being cast in the context of a reckless cost overrun, was not, in fact, a reckless cost overrun but that the new contracts came very close to the sums that were originally bid, which were higher than the *Fomentos y Cubiertas* awards. Sir, again we had to award to the lowest bidder of those who would have bid in the higher zone.

Sir, in addition, a number of other things caused changes. An engineer can make projections as to what he or she anticipates a working environment to be like and, therefore, what the cost would be of building something in water or in marshy conditions but climatic conditions on the ground, could serve to vary any conditions that are anticipated and would, therefore, affect cost. That was one of the challenges that we encountered on the project.

Sir, we had also found that when the contract was first bid for and signed in 1993, that by 1998 and 1999 when we were executing the property connections, the evaluations that were made in 1990 and in 1991 on people's properties were no longer relevant. At that time, a house owner might have added a powder room; a new bedroom; a new bathroom; might have started a small business at the side of his or her house; built on a laundry, *et cetera*, so that the state of properties had changed tremendously between the time the initial assessments were done under the Democratic Labour Party and when we came back to execute property connections.
5.30 p.m.

If the project were to be done properly, we could not tell the householder then when the assessment was first made he only had a two-bathroom house and that there are now three bathrooms so we will only connect two bathrooms.

There were a number of properties which required additional 'hook-ups' which were not in the original contract because they did not exist at the time the contract was signed

but existed at the time of the execution of the work and it incurred a cost overrun.

Sir, the matter is being represented as if the Government is 'licking out' money for the sake of doing so, and spending it as it liked but the way in which this project was executed was to the benefit of individual Barbadians and the economy as a whole because our near-shore waters and reefing structures will benefit from the existence of a south coast sewerage system.

One of the costs of this contract arose out of a direct policy decision. When the Bridgetown Sewerage Project was conceptualised and implemented initially, it was not compulsory to hook-up and a person could hook-up when so desired. In fact, some people never bothered to hook-up at all so the full benefits of the project were not realised. We took a decision that rather than wait for people to hook-up, Government would do all the property connections itself, that Government would put all the equipment in place the householder would make the connection from the house to the sewerage. The 'hook-ups' were compulsory hence ensuring that the benefit intended by the project inures to the individual and the country and that people could not escape connections.

There is another important thing that this project is bringing that Honourable Members on the Other Side have totally ignored in their attempt to quarrel with us today. Some 23 000 properties in the project were connected from Bay Street to Oistins. It was discovered that approximately 300 or ten per cent of the properties did not have water toilets and Government made a conscious decision not only to ensure that all the benefits to be derived from the execution of the project were realised but that persons who did not have the benefit of having water toilets in their homes would have them built at Government's expense. Also, as a result of this project 300 households in Barbados who previously did not have water toilets would now know what it is to have water toilets in their homes. This was the kind of social planning that went into the project that was not part of the original contract, which came afterwards, when we recognised the number of persons who had no water toilets in the project area and they had to be connected at a cost that was not built in to the original contract.

Mr. Chairman, if the Democratic Labour Party is quarrelling because we gave 300 water toilets to households and are complaining that it is a cost overrun, they must say so specifically. They should not talk about project overruns and wasting taxpayers monies when that is the kind of social good we were attempting to do by way of the execution of this project.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and it is

a reckless thing. No one on This Side spoke to the issue of 300, 400, or 500 having access to waterborne facilities. The Honourable Member would be imputing improper motives to the speeches which emanated from This Side and that kind of comment should be withdrawn and possibly struck from the records.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: the Honourable Member for St. James South, as the Honourable Member said no one on That Side said that. You can probably rephrase if you want to say something to the public.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, I did not say that either. I said if it were in fact what they were quarrelling about they should say so specifically. If they now want to accept that particular cost overrun, it is another matter.

Sir, we concede they have been challenges in the execution of this project. One of the critical things this project has served to do is the fact that we are to implement a sewerage project on the west coast and this is serving as a valuable lesson and guide as the errors not to make in the execution of the west coast sewerage project and the things that need to be done if that project is to be effected within budget, in a timely fashion and without the level of discomfort that the South Coast Sewerage Project caused.

Sir, I will close by making the point that when I hear the talk from the Other Side about reckless expenditure and wasting taxpayers money, they will come to know that you do not get money from the Minister of Finance easily, that every supplementary is not approved, that you have to go through a process of analysis and justification of the expenditure before the Minister of Finance will agree to it, that things come to this Chamber only after the most exacting review process and where it is felt that the request for a supplementary is in the nature of an extravagance or something unnecessary, it is rejected.

Mr. Chairman, I have had to speak in defence of what I think is a good project. There are things that could have been done differently. If we have had the opportunity to design it, it would have been completely differently designed but we came at a time when the contract was signed, we were bound by what was before us and the fact that we did not want to expend any more millions of dollars in commitment fees and we had to start construction immediately even if we did not think we were dealing with an ideal design.

Government in the circumstances has done the best that it could. When Fomentos played the fool, we fired them using the IADB procedures. We got competent people who had experience in the field because Fomentos had serious

problems in the way they executed the project in Jamaica. The Jamaican Government did not fire them and ended up paying millions of dollars which they cannot recover and Fomentos is still on the job.

Sir, the Barbados project was very well executed in the circumstances.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise to wrap up the debate on this Head. We have had an interesting discussion even though some of it was ill-informed. I should remind Honourable Members on the Other Side first about the complexity of the project which, had they done research, they would have known about because it started back in their time. This project is a project that stretches from Dundow Lane in the City to Enterprise Road, Christ Church. This is a project that involves 3 000 properties, a treatment plant, a 1.1 kilometer outfall, approximate 40 kilometers of main sewer-line under the roads of the south coast as well as some microtunnelling, the no-dig works. Approximately 5 kilometers of that which would be used in the heavy hotel districts, heavily business districts and heavily traffic to reduce the amount of road digging that was required, as well as four lift stations at different areas along the coast. Sir, this is a complex project.
5.40 p.m.

Sir, there was some discussion about Contract #2 but there were several contracts. Contract #1 was for the construction of the treatment plant which was completed in 1997. Contract #2 was the ill-fated, *Fomentos y Cubiertas*, which the Honourable Member for St. James South spoke about. Sir, *Fomentos y Cubiertas* as the first company constructing the main sewer-line and we had to fire them. Contract #2A, was for the 5 kilometers of microtunnelling. Contract #2B, the other part of the work which was done by *Soares Dacosta*. Mr. Chairman, much of that work was for the laying of the main sewer-line which was completed in August 2002. The work of the final hook-ups to properties has been done and property owners have already made connections to the sewerage system.

Sir, Contract #3, which was for the 1.1 kilometer outfall, done for marine operation, was completed in 2002. Under Contract #4, approximately 2,500 property connections were made and 37 000 of the 40 000 water meters have been installed across the island. The delay in installing the remaining 3 000 meters is due to difficulties encountered in location of some domestic pipes. Part of this agreement that was signed between the Democratic Labour Party and the Inter-American Development Bank was that water meters would be installed as part of this project. The Inter-American Development Bank financed 70 per cent of the South Coast Sewerage Project, the Caribbean Development Bank 15 per cent and the Government of Barbados 15 per cent. Contract #5 deals with the supplying of materials and supplies. There were also contracts for the

monitoring of water quality to ensure that we maintained a good quality supply of water.

Mr. Chairman, surveys were done dealing with tides and the movement of water which can have an impact on the marine outfall. There was also an Operation Assistance Programme which involved the training of the Barbados Water Authority's staff. The knowledge gained from the Bridgetown/South Coast Sewerage Project would be used to ensure that the West Coast Sewerage Project, administered by the Barbados Water Authority, will be a smooth one and that the ongoing operations of the South Coast Sewerage Project will go smoothly. There was also the upgrading of toilet facilities, supervision and administration, which were mentioned by the last speaker.

Sir, I gave this overview to remind Honourable Members that this was not a weekend project. This was a major undertaking which was complicated and complex. Therefore, there was need for us to come to Parliament with Supplementaries from time to time, particularly in those areas. Mr. Chairman, we do not know what we are going to encounter when we dig into the ground.

However, I want to draw Honourable Members' attention to a very important point. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central sought to suggest that the Supplementary for \$6 million is the result of our incompetence. Sir, when the Honourable Member read the Addendum, rather than partially selecting items, he would have seen that there was a range of activity included under that Head.

In fact, the breakdown of that \$6 million states that \$3.5 million was for the sewerage connection system, Contract #2B and the remainder was for the final hook-ups. The increased cost of the final hook-ups is the difference in time the survey was done and the date of connection to the sewerage project. We would rather be correct than consistent. Correct in that, if we discovered that there were more facilities at the time of connection we would connect rather than merely seeking to be consistent with an engineer's report which was done years in advance.

Therefore, the additional cost of the Sewerage System, approximately \$3.5 million in perhaps a \$100 million contract is not substantial.

Sir, the point was also raised as to why the pipes which were used in the Graeme Hall area had to change. The Honourable Member is again seeking to suggest that, perhaps, less than competent engineering was used. The Honourable Member, as an engineer would know that one has to be sensible and that available technology will change. While the engineer design had recommended the use of ductile iron pipe in the Graeme Hall area, which would have required wrappings, a decision was made to use the new

high density, high strength plastic, which is now being used by the Barbados Water Authority for their water mains and in difficult areas. This kind of plastic pipe was not readily available at reasonable cost at the time of design. Sir, this was a situation of responding to new technology and making sensible decisions at the point and time in the contract. Therefore, the cost changed as a result.

In closing, I am making the point that the project, notwithstanding the difficulties encountered in terms of following the international tender rules of the Inter-American Development Bank and the fact that the soil conditions are difficult, particularly in the Rockley area where there was substantial difficulty when the earth under the road was exposed, this project will still be able to bring within a hair's breadth of conclusion.

5.50 p.m.

I want to salute the project management staff, Sir, that have been involved in this project. It is not widely known, Sir, that the Ministry of Health, with our local staff, has provided project management service. Earth Tech/Reid Crowther (ETRC) was the Consultant Engineers to those project managers but it is really to the credit of all of us as Barbadians that we have been able to execute such a complex project. The labour involved has been substantially Barbadian, and we are constantly learning from the experiences of the south coast so that when we start on the west coast, we will have fewer problems.

I would also want to thank the Barbadian public for their patience and understanding which they displayed during the times of obvious dislocation. It is not easy to build in an already fully developed area. There must of necessity be some dislocation and I look forward to the completion of the reinstatement of the area with the ultimate repaving of Highway 7, so that those of us with Christ Church interests will be able to have a smooth and happy commute to and from Christ Church to Bridgetown.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 23 stand part.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS – \$429 339

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Chairman, there are four or five items of supplemental expenditure being brought before Parliament, a total request of less than \$½ million.

Sir, one of these relates to the Central Emergency Relief Organisation, under Personal Emoluments. This has

to do with compensation for overtime hours by staff and others related to CERO activity. It is a policy that any mass event which is attended by a thousand or more persons in Barbados, there is a CERO presence for obvious reasons.

Therefore, activities such as our major festivals, whether it is Oistins, Holetown, Congaline, Crop Over, or regional cricket, there is a CERO presence. Of course, the duration of these events and the times in question, often would be the occasion for use of overtime by those involved in this activity. A small amount of \$4 000 is being requested to supplement the original vote of \$47 000 approximately.

Under sub-programmes 2 and 3 relative to the operations of the Fire Service Department, is the second largest amount being asked for in this supplemental. This has to do with outstanding payments under the contract to Angloco. Honourable Members would be aware that the Government of Barbados is in contractual arrangement between the fire service and Angloco, with respect to supplementing its vehicles from time to time. In addition to that, there is a contract for the supply of spare parts, and the conducting of maintenance work on the fleet of vehicles operated by the Barbados Fire Service.

The total contract requires a payment fee of approximately \$270 000 per annum. There is a vote already approved for \$175 000. The amount therefore, Mr. Chairman, being requested to supplement this and therefore to facilitate the full payment would be \$94 000. Provision for this was inadequate from the inception.

There is a very small amount under Programme 203 for the Government Information and Broadcasting Services. This has to do with utility payments. There is an anticipated utility expense of \$63 000 between October 2003 and the end of the current financial year. The balancing vote would be insufficient to meet this and, therefore, the occasion for requesting a small supplemental of just over \$11 000.

Under Sub-programme 254 relative to the Government Industrial Schools and more specifically the operations of Summervale, there is a request for about \$24 000 to supplement the current original vote of \$265 000 towards supplies and materials for the operation of the Government Industrial Schools.

As you would know, there is an average in residence at both these schools, between 30 and 40 wards at any one time, but it is the occasion, weekly, for other persons to be remanded by the courts to the Government Industrial Schools, both Dodds and Summervale. Therefore, those who are on remand there have to be looked after as well. Hence, from time to time there would be the need to supplement this vote according to numbers.

In addition to this, there has been some attempt made to address the actual conditions under which the wards there function. One of these relates to the matter of dress, especially in reference to the girls, and there has been a change made in what the girls are requested to wear. This has also been the occasion for some additional expense. The vote therefore of \$23 760 is being requested to supplement the operations at the Government Industrial Schools for the provision of supplies and maintenance of the wards.

The largest amount of this vote being requested is asked for on behalf of the Government Industrial Schools as well but this has to do with Object No. 6 Ex 23 Structures. Specifically again, in reference to Summervale, you may be aware, Mr. Chairman, that there has been substantial refurbishment work undergone at Summervale. Such that the facility has undergone a radical transformation. If you had gone to Summervale a couple years ago and you take a visit there now, you would be amazed to see the physical transformation that has taken place at Summervale. Repairs have been done to the classrooms, the living area, kitchen area, dining area, work rooms, reception area and the library for the girls at Summervale. The place has been given a total facelift.

The sum of \$296 124 represents monies outstanding to contractors which should have been brought forward from the end of the financial year 2002-2003 into the current financial year but was not done. We are trying to rectify that situation so we might be in a position to pay outstanding arrears, in the smaller case approximately \$76 000 to Phoenix Building Services and in the larger case \$220 000 to A D C Building & Maintenance for contracts which are due to be paid, some from an arrear position and some from current dues.
6.00 p.m.

The above renovations have made life much easier for wards as well as for the staff. This is all part of the effort to improve and modernise the context in which we pursue penal policy at the level of our juveniles in Barbados who falls outside of the law and therefore come under the hand of the law in this regard. These are the four or five items for which this supplemental is being brought to the House. Therefore, it is my duty to ask that Head 28 stand part.

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

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

HEAD 28 – AMENDMENT TO EXPLANATORY NOTE

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Chairman, there is an amendment to the Explanatory Note for Head 28. It involves

no change in expenditure. We have to provide for the provision of two holding cells as well as improvements to waterborne toilet facilities and wash basins. This is a necessity both for the comfort of the wards as well as the staff. Therefore, we are asking that the Explanatory Notes as amended and as indicated in Schedule II also stand part.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: I beg to second that.

The question that the Explanatory Note as amended stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 50 – POST OFFICE – \$51 918

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is not a matter that should detain the House because it is simply to address the issue of payments of National Insurance contributions due in relation to overtime work put in by our postal service people much of which had to do with the business of dispatching the election circulars in the recently concluded elections as well as a small amount for the Philatelic Bureau to supplement the vote to pay National Insurance Contributions.

I beg to move that Head 50 stand part.

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

The question that Head 50 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Hon. A. P. WOOD, 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. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Hon. A. P. WOOD, the Resolution was read a first, second and third time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, that concludes Government Business for today, I therefore beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, January 20, 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, January 20, 2004 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
6.07 p.m.

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