THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on Tuesday, June 8, 2004.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed., G.C.M. (Speaker)

His Honour J. M. Edghill, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and the Civil Service)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.)

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A. (Oxon.)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, LL.B.

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. H. F. LASHLEY (Minister of Social Transformation)

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)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the House)

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. 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 C. Y. FORDE, J.P. (Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, M.B., B.S., F.R.C.S. (Edin.), J.P. (Minister of Health)

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.)

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

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 the Meeting held on Tuesday, June 1, 2004.

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

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

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

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the following Bill was read a first time:

Civil Aviation (Montreal Convention) (Amendment) Bill, 2004.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the following Bill was read a first time:

Barbados Accreditation Council Bill, 2004.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, before we start there is a noise, I am not sure where it is coming from, that clearly would feedback and affect the microphones, because I am having difficulty hearing here far less anyone on the broadcast. I therefore recommend that we take a five-minute suspension to find out what is the situation in relation to it.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for five minutes until 10.30 a.m.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 10.30 a.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.
10.25 a.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. The Honourable Member for St. James South will now make a Ministerial Statement.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on May 11, 2004, a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of two parcels of land situate at Queen Street, Speightstown, in the parish of St. Peter, for the purpose of providing an access road to the beach, was brought before the Honourable House and passed by this Honourable Chamber.

Subsequently, two Press reports and comments by the Honourable Members of the Opposition Democratic Labour Party questioned the reason for the acquisition and the prices paid to the landowner whose land was compulsorily acquired.

The decision to acquire these parcels of land was first approved by the Cabinet of Barbados on July 25, 2002. On January 26, 2004, Cabinet confirmed its decision to acquire the lands but adjusted the size of the parcels to be acquired.

The acquisition of these lands was approved by the Cabinet after residents of this district made representation to the Right Honourable Prime Minister Owen Arthur, the Honourable Member for the parish of St. Peter, as well as the Ministry of Housing and Lands as it was then.

This Ministry also received a letter from an Attorney-at-Law, acting on the behalf of one of the residents, urging that Government intervene to guarantee continued access to Queen Street by the families of the affected district. It also requested Government to provide access for emergency and service vehicles.
10.35 a.m.

The concern expressed by residents was that the acquisition, development and construction of a resort facility on the area formerly known as Fort Dignity but now redeveloped as Schooner Bay would make it impossible for them to access Queen Street. The configuration of the land under development and the placement of a guard wall to enclose the new resort would result in the closure of the residents' traditional access since a portion of that traditional track is on the land of Schooner Bay.

Unfortunately, an error was made in some of the records of the Ministry of Housing during the year 2002, when this process started. As a result of this error, the purpose of the acquisition was recorded in the Ministry's file as being to provide an access road to the beach. This error of wording subsequently found its way into all the formal documentation of the matter including the Cabinet Papers, the Resolution and Acquisition Notices. The Ministry apolgises to this Honourable House and takes full responsibility for this error.

I wish to make it clear that this was a genuine error on the part of an officer of the Ministry and that no mischief or deception was ever intended. I also wish to set the record straight that there was no intention to provide a formal beach access at this location. The acquisition in fact had two social purposes both of which are legitimate:

1. To prevent the residents traditional access being cut off.

2. To allow vehicular access to the area particularly by emergency and service vehicles.

An understanding of Queen Street makes it clear that provision of a beach access at this location is unnecessary. There is, in fact, a public road which gives direct access to

the beach some twenty yards south of the site now under discussion. This road is in good condition, paved and allows for both pedestrian and vehicular access. The road which is usually referred to as the old fort road but is sometimes called the old almshouse gap, allows direct access to the beach front areas of Fort Denmark as well as that beach fronting the Schooner Bay property.

May I also inform this Honourable House that there is a proposal which is now at the planning and design stage whereby the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated will significantly upgrade the Fort Denmark area using lands owned by the Crown. This development will lead to substantial enhancement and expansion of the beach facility for residents of Speightstown and the wider community. It is vital that this enhancement be done at this stage since the development of Schooner Bay has now in reality reduced the level of traditional public utilisation of the beach fronting that property.

There is also another point of importance. The provision of an access from and to Queen Street was triggered by the need to secure a perpetual right of passage for the residences immediately north of Schooner Bay. The irony of the current debate is that if Government was to provide an access road to the beach the very same families who were disadvantaged by the development of Schooner Bay and who are now being assisted by the Government would have to be removed.

It is not the intention of the Government to uproot this traditional Barbadian community nor these families and in requesting Government's assistance, the residents of the area did not intend to disadvantage themselves.

Indeed, the entire exercise was based on the need to stabilise their existence and ensure their continued well-being and way of life.

One other matter must be laid to rest at this time. In order to achieve the provision of secure access to and from Queen Street for the residents involved, the Government has sought to acquire two parcels of land as indicated in the Resolution of May 11, 2004 and the attached Schedules, 188.3 square metres, the property of Fort Dignity Limited, Schooner Bay and 322.2 square metres, the property of Rita Licorish. As the initial step, the Commissioner of Land Tax valued the properties as follows:

Fort Dignity Limited $215.28 per square metre or $20 per square foot for 188.3 square metres totalling $40,536.80. Rita Licorish $76 880 for 322.2 square metres or $238.60 per square metre or $22.16 per square foot. The figures quoted in the Press and attributed to statements made by the Opposition Democratic Labour Party which alleged that Miss Licorish was prejudiced and offered less money than Fort Dignity are entirely false.

In their rush to discover scandal and wrongdoing where none existed, the members of the Opposition Democratic Labour Party have misrepresented the facts. The land of Miss Licorish has, in fact, been valued at a higher rate per square metre than the land at Fort Dignity. It should also be noted that these valuations are subject to negotiations in both cases and that both landowners reserve the right to object to the valuation prepared by the Commissioner of Land Tax.

In addition, contrary to suggestions being made by the public, these two landowners have not and cannot be paid until the Resolution is passed by both Houses of Parliament and the acquisition process is legally completed. As all Honourable Members of this House are aware, the Senate is yet to debate the Resolution to acquire the abovementioned properties and, in light of the error made, a new Resolution may have to be considered by this Honourable House. The Ministry is taking advice from the Chief Parliamentary Counsel on the procedure needed to correct the matter.

In summary, the Ministry acknowledges that an error was made in referring to the purpose of the acquisition as being provision of an access to the beach. It apologies for that inaccuracy and wishes to state clearly that it was a genuine error which was not intended to mislead this Honourable House or the public and any confusion which resulted is deeply regretted.

The real purpose of the acquisition was to prevent the residents' traditional access to Queen Street from being cut off by Schooner Bay development as well as to provide a road accessible to service and emergency vehicles for the traditional residential community of that area. The Ministry, therefore, gives its commitment that in the shortest possible time the correctly worded Resolution will be brought to Parliament.

Sir, I am much obliged to you.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, Sir, that Standing Orders, Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Order No. 2 be withdrawn from the Order Paper. It has now been substituted by Order No. 9.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the Order of the day. Order No. 9.

ORDER NO. 9 – THE BARBADOS ACCREDITATION COUNCIL BILL, 2004

HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to move the second reading of this Bill to establish a new institution in Barbados, the Barbados Accreditation Council. This is more than the matter of the establishment of an institution. It is part of the strategy of the Government to enhance the quality of our education, to further implement the strategies, obligations and programmes which form part of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, a significant part of which is the right and opportunity for the people of the region to be able to move within the single economic space to be created and to ply their various trades and professions.

It also speaks to the reality of the globalisation of education and the need in a globalised world where the rules based under the World Trade Organisation, education is now listed as one of the service commodities and subject to rules of international trade, therefore, the need for institutional mechanisms and strategies to be put in place to deal with that changing reality of education.

Sir, stripped of all that, this legislation is first and foremost a form of consumer protection. Consumers of education like consumers in other areas need to have certain assurances. For the consumers, the consumers of education services are students, education institutions and employers who need to have some indication of what does a piece of paper say about the holder of a certification and what skills and competencies are they bringing to the table. Of course, there is the matter of accountability. Sir, in the case of Barbados, there is the accountability to the wider public because the majority of education is publicly funded and accountability for private institutions in respect of the shareholders from those who provide services.

Mr. Speaker, accreditation within the education system essentially seeks to provide an assurance that the educational provision of the programme that is offered meets certain prescribed standards. There is a standard setting of quality assurance focussed in this whole move towards the accreditation of education.

Accreditation also seeks to provide the information about the quality and standards of the programmes which are offered by the institutions. Not only are the standards set but they must be declared. People must know what are the objectives and standards which are required to be met. Also, accreditation is intended not to be merely a process of an examination and a judgement being pronounced, it is intended to be developmental in focus. Therefore, accreditation provides institutions with a framework within which continuous quality improvement and continuous culture become the norm.

Therefore, it seeks to promote self-examination, research development and innovation, the implementation of codes of good practice in everything, from the choice of academic staff, human resource practises of the institution, the operation systems, the governance of the institution and a range of issues which I will speak to later.

Sir, what would have moved us in Barbados to this point where we would have determined that an Accreditation Council Bill has become necessary? As I indicated, we have the spectre of the changing face of education. I will speak to those changes within the framework of the changes which have occurred locally within the context of those factors within the international environment, which have impacted on education in Barbados, as well as the changes within the region which have led us to this point.

In terms of the local context, over the years we have had an explosion in the area of education being offered, the mode of delivery of education, the expectations of employers, students and the general public of what education should deliver and this has some limitations.

Sir, this matter of accreditation speaks to the post secondary or tertiary environment. It is in this area there tends to be a greater mixture of private and public provision of educational services. After a student has left secondary school where the systems of evaluations through the CXC, management through a central ministry and Boards of Management of secondary schools which are well defined and clear, we get into a less clear area where a wide range of institutions offer a wide range of programmes under different names such as certificates and diplomas and sometimes you are not sure what they are worth. Essentially, that is one of the primary issues that we have.

Sir, currently in Barbados we have forty-four post-secondary or tertiary private institutions registered with the Ministry of Education. This debate is primarily in that area but this is to let Honourable Members know that this is separate from the registration of approximately 20 preschool and nursery schools, 19 nursery schools, 5 combined primary and secondary schools and 5 other secondary schools. These are all private institutions. Sir, essentially, this Accreditation Council Bill will focus on the activities of those 44-plus institutions.

The reality is, in terms of the rationale for registration, once the Education Act specifies that all institutions providing education services must be registered with the Ministry of Education, there is really no other factor which will force one to register. The major incentive for registering is the fact that one would be able to benefit from certain tax concessions as a registered education institution. The reality is, most institutions are registered.

In fact, we have the registration of institutions ranging from computer schools to a school of mortuary science. We have schools of cosmetology, modelling and a range of activity. However, the reality is we are faced with a situation in which – while we encourage and applaud this entrepreneurship and private investment, it must be encouraged because the goal of expansion of access to tertiary level education must ever remain before us. We must also face the reality that the Government cannot, neither does it propose to monopolise and to be the sole provider in the area of tertiary level education.

Sir, let me say at the outset that the Ministry welcomes, applauds and salutes the entrepreneurs who have been involved and will continue to be involved in the provision of tertiary level education. This is why I made the point earlier, Sir, that the establishment of an accreditation council is not a punitive regulatory measure. It is not meant to control these institutions, in terms of restricting their activity and bringing them to view – let me just make that very clear up-front – but it is intended to ensure that all sides have their interests protected.

10.50 a.m.

In fact, Sir, the great value of this Accreditation Council to private providers of education is that they will have a stamp of approval for the programmes they offer. They will have a stamp of approval for the education they run, which is recognised in the Region and around the world.

As I would discuss later, Sir, the world is moving to a process of accreditation. In fact, within the professions, the notions and reality of accreditation has long been known. Honourable Members on both Sides of the House who happen to practise in the field of medicine, for example, would be very much aware of the fact that in Barbados, professions such as the medical, legal, accountants, engineers, even electrical firemen, are all very strict on the recognition of qualifications.

Sir, if you want to be a medical doctor, for example, you could not just go to any institution that claims to offer a medical degree, or claims to train you to be a doctor because the Barbados Medical Council, or even for the nurses, the General Nursing Council, may not recognise you as qualified. They may reject you outright, or they may invite you to take an examination to prove that you have the skills that you purport to have.

The way the world is moving now, Sir, is that outside of the professions, in the general business of the academic and social environment, a wider range of areas of expertise is asking to have similar accreditation arrangements in place. Where this becomes important is with a world in which people are more likely to travel. Barbadian nationals working in Dominica, St. Lucia, Jamaica, within the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME), the United States of America, the Virgin Islands, France, Bosnia, Iran or wherever, need an opportunity to have their qualifications recognised. This mechanism is one which is known around the world and will provide that benefit.

I stress the point, Sir, that this mechanism, though it has certain regulatory provisions is not intended as a means of controlling for negative purposes, but rather providing a clear, transparent framework that institutions, students, employers can be aware. Take an example, Sir, if I take a computer course at a computer school in Roebuck Street or Wildey, and another friend goes to another institution and takes a computer course, how will an employer be able to assess what is the value?

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the reality is that there are internationally accepted means of measuring the educational level of a particular unit of work, or a particular module of recourse and of a given course. More important, one of the things that this Government has committed itself to, is expanding opportunities for people to have access to tertiary education, and further, Sir, expanding the pathways by which people have been able to come to tertiary education.

Long gone, Sir, are the days if you did not make it through your 'O' Levels and 'A' Levels in school, that you could never hope to see a university, even in your adult years. These days, the world of education is moving to the point where multiple pathways of combining academic qualifications, vocational skills and life experience can be combined, properly evaluated and count towards matriculation into a programme of further learning, in whatever area of study.

Further, particularly in the context of the Caribbean today, where we are both emphasizing freedom of movement, as well as maximising the benefits of tertiary education, it must be possible for a student to combine courses taken at the Barbados Community College, the Sir Arthur Lewis Community College in St. Lucia and the

University of the West Indies School of Continuing Studies towards credits in the University of the West Indies programme, or towards credits in a course at Florida International University, so that no aspect of a person's educational endeavour goes to waste.

Sir, you will remember that we had a situation years ago in Barbados where students effectively wasted time and effort, because they would have already covered all of the particular skills and competencies in a given course. For example, there was a time when the Division of Technology at the Community College in their Building and Civil Engineering Programme could not get any advance standing in the Engineering Faculty at St. Augustine, but they could get advanced standing at an Engineering Faculty in Canada.

Therefore, Sir, what we are doing today is really seeking to create a greater level of efficiency in the use of educational resources and providing transparency and multiple pathways into the higher levels of education. Essentially, we are doing the things which are consistent with creating a Caribbean, in which it should be no more difficult to move from Christ Church to St. Lucy, as it is to move from Chapel to Castries. We will move from a situation in which registration is merely a one-stop process and there is nothing more beyond it, to a system where registration and accreditation become the major issues.

Sir, I should say to you though that, again in the local context, this Accreditation Council Bill and the functions which it will perform, will be without prejudice to the right of employers to ultimately make their choice as to what certification they prefer. It is without prejudice, Sir, to the right of the professional bodies established under the Laws of Barbados.

As you know, Sir, the Medical Council is to be established by Act of Parliament, as is the Students Travel Accountants of Barbados, as is the Bar Association and other similar bodies. They will ultimately set the criteria to make a determination as to what represents adequate qualifications for recognition as a professional in their field. This Accreditation Council will assist in that process by providing clear information about courses offered, not only in Barbados but through its international network. Also, about courses offered at universities and other tertiary institutions around the world, such as would provide for a wider range of options.

Sir, the reality is that medical accreditation in Barbados was governed largely by the General Medical Council out of the U.K. It was a Commonwealth body, in a sense withdrawn from involvement in the Commonwealth. By and large, a person who is trained in the Commonwealth, by virtue of the fact that the institution is located in Canada, Australia or some other part of the Commonwealth, is recognised by the General Medical Council and has automatic recognition in Barbados. That does not mean that those parts of the world not known to the General Medical Council are necessarily inferior, they are just not known.

Sir, we have a similar situation in relation to countries within the non English-speaking Caribbean where much is not known about the courses that are offered or the institutions that offer them to allow for persons in Barbados and in other parts of the English-speaking region to make a proper assessment. Accreditation bodies will allow for that kind of assessment to be made.
11.00 a.m.

Sir, always with us is the case of Cuba. We have an increasing number of persons who are taking courses in Cuba. We already have the situation in which a number of professional bodies have indicated that they do not know enough about the programmes in Cuba to be able to provide the kind of automatic registration as is done for students who are studying elsewhere. However, Mr. Speaker, there is an indication from the relevant professional body here that they would recognise engineers from Cuba who are recognised by the relevant body in Canada. So a Barbadian entity is dependent on the professional judgement of an accreditation board in Canada in order to determine the quality and level of a programme. In the case of medicine and nursing, there is no such relationship at this time.

Sir, in advance of the establishment of the Barbados Accreditation Council, the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports and the Ministry of Health have been working with the Barbados Medical Council, the University of the West Indies and other parties to obtain as much deep information as possible. Sir, a visit is planned for Cuba in a very short period, I believe toward the end of this month. This comes at the end of a programme of detailed study and investigation because the Council here wants to familiarise itself with the nature of the teaching that goes on, the quality of the staff, the clinical experience, the governance of the institution, the environment and the conditions under which examinations are set, because that is the basis on which, whether it be Cuba, the United States of America, Canada and the United Kingdom, qualifications are recognised in one country while the teaching is done in another.

Mr. Speaker, this body is intended to provide a repository of expertise both residing within the staff of the institution as well as through its contact with its sister bodies in the Caribbean and beyond so that ultimately when someone in the world queries a Barbadian conferred qualification and the Barbados Accreditation Council says yes this is a degree level qualification, it is accepted.

Similarly, if a qualification offered in the United States of America is queried here in Barbados, the Barbados

Accreditation Council would check with one of the accreditation bodies in the United States of America to be given the appropriate level. Sir, that is the way the information sharing would work internationally. So, we hope that this would certainly make improvements to our local situation here.

Sir, the other aspects of changes which have occurred locally and indeed in the wider region is that we have seen an expansion in the number of foreign tertiary level institutions operating in Barbados and in the region. A few of them by way of actual physical presence, many of them by joint venture and franchise arrangements and several of them by distance education arrangements. So whether it be the Barbados Institute of Management and Productivity offering an MBA on behalf of the University of Surrey, whether it be Ernst and Young offering an MBA via the University of Durham, whether it be the Barbados Community College offering a Masters in internet engineering on behalf of Dalhousie University, there are these involvements, some physical and some structural.

Sir, while we are satisfied that these examples I have cited so far are with reputable well-known institutions whose reputation could stand the test of scrutiny, we still need to ensure that our Barbadian education consumers can have a place where they can go to have an assessment made of an institution which purports to offer Masters, MBAs, Bachelors or whatever because we cannot afford for students, usually they are poor students, who think that they are making an advancement, who spend their money and who invest in advance education only to discover that the certificate is not worth the paper it is written on. At the end of the day that really sums up the benefit in the local context where we have a more open market as far as education is concerned, so we need to put the consumer protection mechanisms in place to make sure that we are getting value for money.

Sir, I want to go on to speak a bit about the international framework. I mentioned earlier that amongst its factors which have influenced us to move to the establishment of an accreditation council is the globalisation of education. Sir, as a man who follows these issues, you would be aware that education has now come under the discipline of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs under the World Trade Organisation and is listed as one of its twelve services. Sir, the insertion of education as one of the services is influenced by the fact that the leading exporter of educational services is indeed the leading economy in the world.

Sir, I checked on the economic value of the trade in education and I will give you that figure in a moment. Sir, it is conservatively estimated in the tertiary level education market that some US$30 billion per year trades around the world in education services. In 2002 there were 2.3 million students studying in the 29 Organisations for Economic Cooperation and Development countries. Sir, this is an increase of over one million over the 1999 figure.

Sir, the reason education is now being pushed as a commodity is because higher education exports account for 4.5 per cent of services exported from the United States of America, which is significant, and earns for them some $15 billion per year. So, Sir, you could understand the push which companies in the United States of America and the United States of America Government would have in wanting to treat education as a commodity and in opening any barriers there might be to the provision of education services.

11.10 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, their approach to education stands in very stark contrast to ours, particularly our higher education. By way of its national philosophy, as well as its practical policies, the United States of America holds the view that the provision of higher education is a private responsibility and that it is largely provided by corporations and exclusively paid for by private individuals. Sir, very limited Government scholarships are available because America sees it as a commodity.

The Government of Barbados believes, and will remain committed to the view, that education is not only a public good but that it is also a public right. Government also believes that education is the single most important component of our development strategy. Therefore, one would find that there would always be a clash of philosophy behind those in the world that follow the United States of America's philosophy of education being a commodity that is open to the highest bidder, whereby those who can pay for it will get it, while those who cannot pay will suffer.

Sir, the philosophy of Barbados and of those countries which follow our direction, is that this is a fundamental ingredient to development and that it is a fit and proper expenditure to be borne by Government as Government seeks to develop this country and its people.

Mr. Speaker, it is in that clash of cultures where the debate on higher education in the global context finds itself. That debate has been played out in the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the World Bank, where those countries that have found themselves borrowing from the World Bank for educational purposes, have found some of these policies enforced upon them as part of the conditionalities in the banking sector, *et cetera*. Sir, thankfully we are not in that situation.

Mr. Speaker, the other important reality is that there is no interest or intention of the Government of Barbados of wrapping higher education in Barbados in any cocoon, or to insulate it from the rest of the world. It is important that we continue to have the enrichment of our academic gene pool, both by foreign influences coming in, in terms of academia, as well as some of our own people being exposed to education at non-Barbadian and non-Caribbean institutions. That interaction is, in fact, part of what has always been what universities around the world have fought to achieve.

In fact, the difference now is that in the past, universities around the world have seen collaboration as being part of what they did. Their internationalism was a point of pride. They have always been extremely useful associations as institutions of higher learning. For example, there is a Commonwealth University Association which has never seen itself as being in competition because the exchange of lecturers, students and systems of administration were the norm.

Mr. Speaker, what is now different is that under International Trade, what was seen as an international public good is now seen as an international trading commodity. What was seen to be once within the realm of domestic or national policy, now stands to be fettered by international rules. In fact, in 1995, at the start of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), a number of countries had to make a number of decisions. There were 44 countries which signed on to the section dealing with the education within the services framework.

I am happy to say that Barbados is not one of those countries that had agreed to any whole-scale liberation of the education sector. Sir, there is no prohibition on involvement by non-Barbadians in education, subject to meeting quality and other criteria. What the whole-scale liberalisation, according to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) would have meant, would be that it would have come to the point where under the most favoured nation clause, where we would have eventually reached, is that foreign institutions could conceivably claim to require and to have the right to the same level of subsidies and Government support which is provided to national institutions and education.

Mr. Speaker, we saw that as being counter to our vision for how we finance education. It would have run counter to our strong support for the University of the West Indies (UWI) as our regional institution, and for our ability to reserve the right to continue to fund it in a way in which we would not fund a university coming into Barbados from Canada or the United Kingdom. Sir, that ends up as being the point of departure in terms of our approach to this and other matters.

Mr. Speaker, where does that leave us in relation to how the University of the West Indies (UWI) needs to respond in relation to this matter? Sir, as we have heard from time to time, in terms of the way that education and services are supplied, we have to understand that there are four means of supplying these services under the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs:

1. Cross-border provision such as distance education, that is e-learning, *et cetera;*

2. Consumption abroad, that is where students migrate from one country to the other to gather education;

3. Commercial presence, that is where a university sets up its presence in a country in which it is proposing to provide its services;

4. The presence of natural persons where foreign scholars, trainers, *et cetera*, would have to come in to provide those services as well.

Mr. Speaker, these four models that we have never thought of in education, now fall under the rules of International Trade. Essentially, we need to ensure that as we expand access to tertiary education in Barbados; through expanding the capabilities of the University of the West Indies (UWI) to provide courses; through expanding the capacity of other tertiary level institutions such as the Barbados Community College and others; as well as through the involvement of foreign universities within the region, that we are cognizant of these facts, and that we do not do anything that will hurt our national or strategic interest with respect to the University of the West Indies (UWI) in particular.

Mr. Speaker, there is a framework which can ensure that we are able to have these institutions operating in our space, while ensuring that they run consistent with our national interest, and this is what the Barbados Accreditation Council will do.

Sir, there is a proposal for there to be a regional accreditation council, and for the individual countries within the Caribbean to have national associations which will ensure that across the region, we are able to take a similar approach, to have a coherent strategy to what will reform all of us.

11.20 a.m.

There are significant benefits to be derived from this liberalisation. It is true that not only do we have to look at liberalisation as being one way but we have to work and

ensure that the UWI as our premier educational institution looks to utilise the openings of the GATTS to expand itself outwards.

There is a clear indication that there is a market for some of the services provided by UWI particularly in the area of Caribbean studies because Caribbean studies is now one of the most popular courses taken at universities in the United States of America particularly in the north east. In fact, every year for the last ten years there has been an ever increasing number of students who come to Cave Hill for a semester or summer programme as part of their credit in the Caribbean studies programme in universities overseas.

This arrangement was always in place but the numbers are now creating a significant demand. The UWI needs to leverage this and establish a footprint by opening up an office in the north east of the United States of America to target international students and children of Caribbean nationals living in the United States of America who understand the value, worth and quality of UWI education. Therefore, Sir, this movement of higher education needs to cut both ways.

Sir, a national accreditation agency such as what we are establishing needs to make sure that as it looks at credentials of foreign institutions which seek to operate here that the foreign provider has a quality assurance programme that is transparent and subject to examination at the national level.

Sir, there used to be a number of products labelled "For Export Only" like insecticides and chemicals and they have now developed a brand of education labelled "For Export Only". In fact, some of the early attempts at having offshore schools were largely in that domain and things they could not do in their country of origin, they sought to do in these offshore schools. Sir, we have to check to ensure that what is good enough for the country of origin is good enough for us as well.

Mr. Speaker, we have to ask whether the programme content of the foreign provider is equivalent to what it delivers at home. If the engineering, medical, or art programme is similar to ours, then we have no difficulty with this. In fact, the Government through Erdiston College were in a programme with Harvard, we would not want Harvard to give us a downgraded programme as compared to what they offer in the United States of America. Sir, these are important tasks which the Barbados Accreditation Council will have to undertake.

Is the foreign provider prepared to engage with local institutions in terms of the articulation of courses and joint relationships? Are the programmes which they propose to offer compatible with the development objectives that we have set ourselves? Sir, at the end of the day, what good is education if it does not fit somewhere within the development strategy for the country? Sir, I am speaking here of development in its widest context, spiritual, physical and environmental but it must be within the context of what we have set for ourselves.

Sir, those are some of the issues on the international side which have created an impact and caused us to move in the direction of a national accreditation council for Barbados. On the regional front there are factors in two areas. First, in terms of a regional strategy for education and secondly, in relation to human resource development as it relates to the movement of people and their ability to perform functions consistent with what is required for the economic and wider development of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Sir, on the educational side, there has been over the years, meetings of Ministers of Education of the region where they have sought to co-operate and co-ordinate their efforts at expanding education in the region recognising that across the region there are difficult levels and approaches. Last week, there was a meeting of CARICOM Ministers of Education. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas attended that meeting and can speak more about the matters which engaged the attention of our colleagues there. Suffice it to say, there is a recognition that this Caribbean chain is only as strong as its weakest link and that across the region there is a mood of co-operation and mutual support which would see us all benefitting from best practices and samples of education that exist in the region.

Therefore, this Accreditation Council is intended to be an effective move by which employers, students and all concerned can give a clear judgement and interpretation as to the value of certification presented anywhere in the region. Sir, if a person has a high school diploma from Dominica or in carpentry from a trade school in Trinidad & Tobago, it should square with our technical and vocational qualifications here in Barbados.

Sir, as we speak in advance of this programme, there has been a functional but less efficient way of doing it where at the minimum there was an equivalency committee at the Ministry of Education which currently performs this function. On a regular basis we receive letters from employers and persons who write to enquire and to have a judgement made. For example, a person is applying for a post of Clerical Officer in the public service and holds a High School Diploma from a school in Idaho, United States of America. However, the qualification of a Clerical Officer is 5 CXCs which must include English and Mathematics and they want to know if the diploma meets those requirements. There are persons with qualifications earned by distance education from institutions that we are not familiar with and we have to make a judgement, some are approved and some are not.

11.30 a.m.

There are persons who would have earned their qualification in Martinique or Guadeloupe, under a French system of education and the equivalency has to be established. Therefore, those are the kinds of tasks which are performed now by the Ministry. We anticipate that under Protocol 2, providing for the free movement of people, particularly in the first instance, the category of graduates from the University of the West Indies, artistes, musicians, media workers and sportsmen, there would have to be an agreed method by which we are able to make an assessment. First of all, that an individual meets the standard and qualification as would justify being classified in the category for the purposes of employment. What is the value of these diverse qualifications? These are matters that have been attracting the attention of Ministries of Education and Ministries of Labour across the region for some time.

Mr. Speaker, Article 35(e) of Protocol 2 concerning the right of establishment, provision of services and the movement of capital under the amended Treaty of Chaguaramas, requires that:

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

Sir, that is as clear as it possibly can be. This requirement is one of the major pieces of legislation and one of the major institutional mechanisms which is required to complete the Caribbean Single Market and Economy process.

Mr. Speaker, the Heads of Government in their wisdom have limited that to five main categories. That is a matter which I would not debate at this time. Let me say that part of what is intended within CARICOM, and the Barbados Accreditation Council is a step towards that, is to have a regional accreditation mechanism functioning in much the same way as does the national mechanism focusing on the same issue but acting as a regional clearing house to ensure that level of smooth and swift co-operation and exchange of information is established but also to be the point of involvement between CARICOM and the wider world as far as qualifications are concerned.

Already there are accreditation bodies in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. There is the University Council of Jamaica and the Committee on the Recognition of Degrees in Trinidad and Tobago. Along with Barbados and other countries which are moving to make these changes, the OECS is working towards a common OECS accreditation body which would involve, Antigua, Dominica and St. Lucia. Guyana has a functioning accreditation body and others are working on theirs.

Perhaps, I should at this stage speak a bit more about accreditation. Accreditation speaks to the matter of the assessment of a programme of study so that you can accredit a course at an institution or if you examine an entire institution in all of its structures and modes of operation, you can accredit the institution. It really speaks to the quality. Does the institution in its operations meet the accepted standards? The matter of equivalency, which is referred to in Protocol 2 of CARICOM, seeks to establish the weight and value to be accorded to a given qualification. For example, how many 'O' levels does it take to make up a high school diploma in the United States of America or how many 'A' levels are equivalent to a first-year programme at a given university? It is that matter of equivalency which educational institutions use to provide advance standing and which employers would use as well.

Sir, of course, there is the matter of articulation. Articulation is a term which you will hear being used in this context and this is a very important concept for Barbados. Articulation speaks to the formal arrangement which institutions of learning will make with one another which will allow for an easy transfer of students from one institution to another, usually with advance standing. Obviously, if an institution is to accept that the teaching and exposure provided by another institution is at such a level as would enable it to grant exemptions from its own programme, then there would be need for consultation and exchange of information and the like.

Sir, I can say that in terms of the practice that already exists in Barbados, if you take, for example, the Barbados Community College which has been a good example of an institution which has considerable recognition of the programme and courses that it offers, it has formal articulation agreements with 14 universities, University of the West Indies and Penn State University, in the division of technology.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has reminded me that the University of the West Indies is a recent one and it happened under the blessing of this Administration. I must say that it is sad but true, and thankfully we have passed those days, that the University of the West Indies was the last university to give articulation agreement and recognition of the courses of the Barbados Community College. The courses of the Barbados Community College were recognised by universities all over the world as being such as would provide exemption before the University of the West Indies did.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Thankfully, since 1996 when the University of the West Indies established the Board

for Undergraduate Studies, that Board has focused on a quality programme within the university and it has been very aggressive across faculties in pushing the issue of accreditation, granting advance standing and exemptions to persons who have done associate degree programmes and things of that sort. The University of the West Indies is miles ahead of where it was a few years ago and the establishment of the Board of Undergraduate Studies has been very useful.

In terms of articulation, the University of the West Indies has moved to the point where at the last meeting of the Council, it was agreed that the University of the West Indies would not only recognise a number of community colleges in the region by the conferment of college standing within the university, but that persons who are in possession of the Associate Degree from a number of those colleges would have advance standing in the Bachelor programme.
11.40 a.m.

Further, Sir, that there is now that mood of co-operation and collaboration where the University of the West Indies (UWI) will grant reciprocal privileges, in terms of library access, access to research material and exchange of staff. There is a recognition of the UWI that there is great value to embracing all of the tertiary level institutions in the region, the Community Colleges, the Sir Arthur Lewis College in St. Lucia and others.

In fact, Sir, through the Tertiary Institutions Unit within the School of Continuing Studies of the University, the University of the West Indies itself has franchised out some of its full programmes. For example, Erdiston College teaches the Diploma in Education on behalf of the University of the West Indies, and several colleges within the OECS teach full programmes on behalf of the University of the West Indies. We are looking at doing Bachelors Programmes at a number of those colleges. Again, Sir, they recognise that great value will be in setting standards, having a Quality Assurance Programme and having the teaching done by others. Articulation, Sir, really is key to what we are seeking to do.

In addition to the University of the West Indies, as I mentioned the Barbados Community College has an agreement with Penn State University, Mount Allison University, Monroe College in New York, the University of North Carolina, the University of Miami, Howard University, Johnson and Wales University, St. Claire College of Applied Arts and Sciences, Wilberforce University, Florida Institute of Technology, Troy University and so on. In addition, they have other articulation relationship with 45 other institutions, as they relate to specific courses and faculties.

I have given that example, Sir, to indicate the value which the establishment of an Accreditation Council would provide for greater opportunities of articulation between institutions for our students. The students at the Barbados Community College have been able to go to these institutions mentioned and complete their degrees in a shorter time, without having to repeat work that they have already undergone at the Barbados Community College, and that really is the great value and benefit of articulation.

Sir, in relation to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy therefore following through on the movement of people, it will be possible for students who have been at the Barbados Community College, whose parents may go to Jamaica or Trinidad and take up a job, to be able to continue their schooling uninterrupted and at an appropriate level.

It will be possible, Sir, for students to be able to complete Bachelors Programmes in their territories, without necessarily having to physically attend the University of the West Indies because they are now, Sir, offering distance education programmes, through their UDEP Faculty, and such are the changes that are occurring in education.

Sir, in terms of the Council that we are establishing, it has a wide range of functions. It will be certifying authority for CARICOM nationals who will be seeking to establish themselves as persons fit and proper under Protocol 2, and under the five categories that I mentioned to work in Barbados.

In fact, Sir, attached to the Bill are the appropriate schedules for making the application and for obtaining the response which will certify. I must tell you as well that there have been several meetings of COHSD which is the Council of Health and Social Development of CARICOM. They have agreed on a framework which would define what criteria would make one a sportsman, a musician and an artiste, because the graduates for UWI are very clear, but not those areas. Therefore, we have already identified the criteria for those areas and they are ready for implementation.

Additionally, Sir, the Council will register all local, regional and foreign-based institutions that offer courses in Barbados, whether it is the Public Workers Academy, the Workers Union College, Harvard University, Barbados Community College, or the Academy of Commerce and Computer Studies. Whatever institution offering courses, will be registered with the Barbados Accreditation Council. The Council, Sir, will maintain a record of all the institutions that are registered, as well as those that are accredited by the Council.

Sir, you might ask what would be involved in granting accreditation to institutions, because not every institution

that is established or registered will be accredited. The function of the institution is to make a determination, so that not every institution may be accredited.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: It is not an automatic process, Sir, so the Accreditation Process would look at the appropriateness of the courses and the quality of the staff, because an institution cannot purport to be able to run a degree programme with people who are not appropriately trained. It also looks at the financial record and the sustainability, because one of the issues we have with private institutions is, can a student have a reasonable hope that having paid his money up-front, the institution will last out the duration of the programme? Those are the realities that students face with private institutions from time to time.

The accreditation process will check as well the means of assessment. How are you tested and evaluated? Is it exams or course work? What are the means by which institutions do their testing?

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: There are some institutions that merely provide training and the testing is done by an external body, such as CXC, Cambridge and where we are satisfied with those bodies, no problem, but where institutions offer their own certification, clearly an examination will have to be made of how they go about doing their testing. Sir, for accreditation, a look is made at the rules of the institutions and their corporate governance, so a very thorough examination is made of all institutions to make sure that they can be accredited.

The Accreditation Council would also advise the public or anyone who is interested on the suitability of foreign institutions. Are they accredited in their own country? What value can be placed on the certification that is offered, whether here in Barbados or elsewhere? It will develop and maintain a unified system of accreditation across-the-board. The given industry, the same standards would apply. Sir, it would also provide advice on the use of the terms like universities, technical colleges and technical universities which can tend to be misleading. Sir, we want to make sure that the freedom which exists in the corporate world does not translate into any potential of misleading.
11.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, you know and I know, that there have been persons who left Barbados to go into something called a university that in truth and in fact, according to objective standards that universities have set themselves, are not really universities because they are not up to that standard. Sir, there are those we hear about, I do not know of any of them. We hear of situations in which persons can get doctorates in three months.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, order, please.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, we even hear of persons who purport to obtain qualifications from universities that do not even offer those qualifications, but I would not sink so low as to get into that debate, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please, order. Please, the Minister seems to have a lot of knowledge about these things, please.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let him speak, please.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, I would take the high road. Sir, those are the realities.

Sir, you know and I know of the stories and therefore...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. This Parliament does not deal with stories, Sir. I do not know how we can accept that as a standard in this Parliament, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. Proceed, please.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I do not know why the Honourable Member is so agitated. I am sure that I was not referring to him in any matter relating to accreditation of qualifications and so on.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: He need not try to defend the indefensible. Sir, that was last year, this is this year, we have gone past that.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that we have seen the pain. There are many parents who mean well who want the best for their children. These parents see a brochure which looks glossy and pretty with photographs and giving all kinds of information that these are the things the institution would offer. The parent then sends the child overseas to one of these institutions and they go and complete the programme

but then nobody in the marketplace attaches any value to that qualification. So we owe it to those children and their families to be able to say to them that from our investigation this institution is not accredited anywhere. Anybody can call anything a university especially overseas. We have not had the problem here as such. Sir, the reality is that strong consumer protection function is one of the principal benefits to this legislation.

Sir, one of the responsibilities of the Barbados Accreditation Council is to enhance the quality of post-secondary or tertiary level education in Barbados. As I indicated previously, the intention is not merely to be punitive. For example, we would not look at you and say to you that we would not accredit you. There is a normal procedure in which the process of accreditation requires the institution to use a checklist to go through a system which usually takes between six months and two years to fully assess itself. The Barbados Accreditation Council would then put together a team of experts for an on-site visit to review the material submitted and to have meetings with those involved. Where there are identified deficiencies, the Barbados Accreditation Council has a responsibility to point out those deficiencies and to provide an opportunity for their correction, so it is a development process.

Sir, a body or a course may not be accredited in the first instance, but the intention is to so raise the bar to enhance the quality of tertiary level education by helping institutions to improve themselves. I think this is a very positive step because it is not just a punitive that you get accredited or you do not get accredited but really to raise the bar.

Sir, the most important lever in raising that bar is the matter of public confidence because the public will for the first time have such readily available information on those entities that have or have not met the accreditation standard that the public would instinctively gravitate toward putting their money, their trust and sending themselves and their families to those institutions. Sir, market forces will dictate that those who want to be in the business must seek to get the accreditation, so the bar will be raised.

Sir, the key in this is that we are not dealing with Barbados alone, we are dealing with a function which is being provided in the context of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. So persons need not fear that persons coming into Barbados to work would be able to present qualifications that may not be what they should be because the Barbados Accreditation Council is here to address those issues. Sir, a certificate offered in another Caribbean country would be judged and evaluated against a certificate, a diploma, an associate degree or a bachelors degree offered here, so there would be an evenness of approach.

Sir, I mentioned equivalency and things of that nature already, but the Barbados Accreditation Council will also be the body which would receive any complaints regarding prospectuses or brochures put out by institutions or any complaints in respect of any concerns that the public has about the quality of the certification which is offered. The Barbados Accreditation Council has a strong investigatory role in that particular regard, all with the intention of raising the quality of education in Barbados.

Sir, in relation to the movement of Caribbean nationals and the appropriate skills, the Barbados Accreditation Council would work very closely with agencies such as the Ministry of Labour and the Immigration Department.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is heckling me.

Sir, at the meetings which have been held at the level of CARICOM in order to prepare for this day, there has been clear indication that the free movement in the context of CARICOM, certainly in the context of Barbados, does not mean that there would be the total absence of regulations and requirements. Sir, whether it be the certification by the Barbados Accreditation Council, whether it be the meeting of security requirements for immigration purposes or whatever those requirements might be, there will still be requirements which would have to be met. Sir, there is no place in the world where one is able to move from one place to another without let or hindrance. Mr. Speaker, what free movement usually entails is that the number of restrictions are kept to a minimum; that every opportunity is taken to remove unnecessary barriers, and that there be institutional mechanisms such as this, to make life easy for those interested persons.

12.00 noon

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is an important step in the realisation of a Caribbean dream. It is an important step in ensuring that Barbadians, whether in Barbados, in the Caribbean region or elsewhere, are able to get value for money, and that the institution that is proposed to be created will be well run, well structured, will have the necessary expertise, but that it will not be functioning on its own but will be functioning as part of the planned regional accreditation body.

Sir, this Barbados Accreditation Council will work closely but without prejudice to the rights of the professional bodies, for example, medicine, law, nursing, electrical, *et cetera*, where, according to the power of law, those bodies set their own criteria for recognition. We will provide supporting work by way of our international contacts and related matters.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend this legislation to the Honourable House. This legislation has benefitted tremendously from consultation over the years. It has been in development for some considerable time now. In fact, the files on this matter carry the comments, in the fine handwriting of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, and coming through to the present day to myself.

Mr. Speaker, it has been discussed with the Association of Caribbean Tertiary Institutions (ACTI), the University of the West Indies (UWI) and with Ministers of Labour at the CARICOM level. It has, therefore, gone the 'full round' and we are satisfied that its introduction is timely and positive, given all that we need to do. It will have its impact on the local level, on the regional level by way of the movement of its people, and on the international level. Therefore, one of the strategies which we must use in this era of rules-based International Trade, would be to put rules in place that suit us and our situation. If we do not have a sensible response, then we are certain to be crushed and run over by the forces, even in education.

I am pleased to say that this Bill and the associated work fit in well with Government's continued commitment to the University of the West Indies (UWI) as our premier regional institution of higher learning, and that without prejudice to the indication by several of our countries in the region to have strong national tertiary level institutions and that we continue to function at the level of university.

The Government of Barbados continues to fully fund the participation of its nationals at the University of the West Indies (UWI). In fact, we are the only country in the region where students do not have to pay the 20 per cent tuition fee, because we recognise the importance of education to the development of our people. Therefore, I certainly would want to urge all Barbadians to use this opportunity and to use it well because it is one which does not exist in Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, nor in other places.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is also committed to the expansion of the Cave Hill Campus. Currently, discussions are ongoing concerning access to additional land in order to accommodate expansions in the areas of medicine, Information Technology and international services. In fact, there continues to be an increase in the number and range of course offerings. I believe the Masters Degree in International Trade Policy will start in September, 2004. There are also future plans to have an expanded medical faculty which will involve not only clinical work but classroom teaching.

Sir, the University of the West Indies (UWI) shares our philosophy and our view that we want to expand tertiary level education such as would give us one graduate member per family by 2020. Therefore, in great detail, we have worked out the numerical expansion required at the University of the West Indies (UWI), the Barbados Community College and elsewhere, which will bring us to this important objective.

Sir, an Accreditation Council, therefore, is an important part in that process. It will make sure that at every possible level, from secondary level, through to tertiary level, through to university level, that we will be making the best possible use of our resources and that our students can graduate with worthwhile qualifications which can not only be used in Barbados but which are recognised and have good value anywhere and everywhere across the world.

Mr. Speaker, it is against that background that I commend this legislation to this Honourable Chamber. I beg to move that the Barbados Accreditation Council Bill, 2004, be read a second time.

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

Mr. R. D. JONES: I thank you. Mr. Speaker, before commencing, I would like to make one small observation. I only hope that Honourable Members are looking to a late lunch by recognising the time which now stares us in this Honourable Chamber.

Sir, I gather that the Honourable Members may stop me but be that as it may, if there was the removal of some of the flesh being placed on a simple bone, which is the Barbados Accreditation Council Bill, 2004, we would have had four or five persons who would have already addressed this issue.

Mr. Speaker, on This Side, we fully recognise that as we move towards cementing a Caribbean Single Market and Economy, that these types of institutions are extremely important and relevant if we are to make sense of what we are doing within this region and how we are trying to elevate our people to some kind of meaningful standard which will impact across the region, from Barbados to places such as Dominica and Antigua.

The Honourable Minister has mentioned that part of this was to enhance the quality of education and that it is, in fact, submerged within the text of this Barbados Accreditation Council Bill. Sir, if we are to enhance the quality of education, then there are many things which we have to do as a people and as a country. In this instance, this Bill is being led by the Honourable Member and by other officials within the Ministry of Education, to ensure that when our people, as part of the movement of Caribbean nationals across the various countries of CARICOM, would not encounter any difficulties as they proffered their various

pieces of certification to the various accreditation agencies in other places. Therefore, one of the first places that we have to begin as we debate this issue, is to look at the quality of what we are, in fact, producing in Barbados, because it will move beyond the mere issuing of a certificate.
12.10 p.m.

As institutions gradually, as a result of their culture, as a result of what they do, as a result of the quality of their personnel, as a result of what professionals put to those who are studying to be able to develop a certain knowledge in the wider world so that whenever they proffer the particular qualification that it is accepted.

In Barbados, the Ministry of Education has a list of relevant universities where Barbadians can study like Harvard, Yale and Columbia in North America and also in Europe. We have to work at establishing other institutions of quality so that once the qualification is proffered any part of the Caribbean, it would not have to go through the rigours of scrutiny which this Bill seeks to establish. We must be focussed on the essence of quality among those persons that benefit from the type of education that we provide in Barbados. This is the premier foundation on which we must seek to establish the various levels of accreditation across Barbados and the region.

The Minister also spoke of internationalisation of education but to some extent for a long time education has been international. There are numerous persons in Barbados who have been the beneficiaries of correspondence courses and have used those qualifications as a means of gaining employment, improving their stature and being promoted in the hierarchy of their various working places.

We are now in a period where distance educational techniques and modules are impacting quite substantially on what we do in Barbados. These have the potential of marginalising many of the institutions we have here because they recognise the time constraints which persons have. You can establish network connections, go online within a self-paced environment to do a first degree, Masters or Ph.D. We are facing a situation where many institutions can be marginalised by the technology and internet-based educational techniques which persons in Barbados are finding more attractive and are willing to pay for the education.

Sir, the work of the Barbados Community College, Erdiston Teachers College, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, UWI should be focussed on being part of the wider international world rather than simply being consumers of the educational fare of other people so that other people can be consumers of the educational fare we have provided in Barbados which has been determined as quality educational fare. We need to use the technology to carry that message and teaching into the wider global context of the world.

Sir, this is part of the total changing realities of the world. No longer can we sit comfortably within our small space and feel that is the world and that what we have here is only for our people. The mental image of people should be projected both as receivers and givers of a particular project.

Sir, a lot of work has to be done. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East has a job on his hands to effectively mobilise the professional cadre of the Ministry of Education and across the various regional institutions to think in a particular way that will bring sense, purpose and movement to things we speak about today relative to this Bill.

Sir, the educational world is an extremely dynamic one but it is demanding a particular level of quality. We have to recognise that dynamism and put in place the means by which that quality can be developed and maintained over time. Sir, within GAT or WTO as identified, Barbados can become known as a destination of quality education and services to offer to the wider world. Sir, this would also improve our balance of payments and things of that ilk.

Sir, I know that places like the Barbados Community College and other private-based institutions currently attract persons to Barbados particularly in areas of cosmetology or learning English as a foreign language and there is respect in the region for this but we need to move beyond the region in our offerings to the wider world.

Sir, in the Ministry of Education there used to be a body known as the equivalency committee which looked at qualifications from all parts of the world, examined them and gave them weight and relevance to their currency in Barbados. It is now subsumed in this Bill before the House. There is some basic understanding existing of what we have to do within Barbados.

Sir, one recognises that the Ministry of Education is in a state of flux, persons are changing sometimes gradually and sometimes at a pace that makes one uncomfortable because one might be using a certain quality of knowledge which at this point in time can help to guide the process about which we talk.

There is no condemnation of the Ministry because life is highly dynamic and people will move on for whatever reason to other places and we always have to find quality people to replace them, ... in order to carry out one of the most important tasks of the State; that is educating its people and ensuring that education is of such worth and value that it can stand the glare of light in any part of the world.
12.20 p.m.

I spoke initially of the explosion in the areas of education being offered, even here in Barbados. All forms and types of education, good, bad and indifferent, are being offered in Barbados. I am not talking in this instance about public education but because of the very strong capitalist notion into this service, persons are developing institutions that do not last. They make a few dollars and move on. There are these institutions which we have to pay careful attention to and avidly scrutinise to ensure that the quality which they want to bring is there and that persons who are using these institutions to better themselves and which would ultimately impact on the Barbadian society are not short- changed as a result of the type of glossy advertisement which is being offered.

Mr. Speaker, a comment was made earlier and I did not hear the Honourable Member mention the Barbados 'O' Level Institute. There are thousands of Barbadians who have benefitted from the excellent work being done by the Barbados 'O' Level Institute which was staffed essentially by the general educational sector of Barbados. That institute does not issue certificates. Those certificates are issued by a recognised institution.

We want to use the kind of standard set by the Barbados 'O' Level Institute, and it is not because the Honourable SPEAKER sits here that I make that comment. I did not have the privilege of going to that institute because I utilised the quality education that was offered by my secondary school to ensure that when I left school, I was counted among those persons who did not have one but several certificates, so that I could move on to another institution, the Barbados Community College, which was established by the Democratic Labour Party at that time.

Mr. Speaker, I am not speaking about the Honourable Member for St. Thomas who utilised the educational fare being offered within Barbados to improve the levels and quality of lives of persons. The Honourable Member is the kind of person that I am speaking about. I want to recognise His Honour The Speaker as well. I want to recognise persons like the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and I want others in this country to emulate her. I also want to recognise the Honourable Speaker as well for his contribution to education in Barbados.

There are other people who waste the taxpayers' money in this country. I believe that we provided over $3 million in our Estimates for education and we have hundreds of persons who waste what is provided for them. There are hundreds of Barbadians from an earlier period who did not waste education because they recognised the value of being educated and they grasped the opportunity.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: I am saying that she is one of the quality ones who benefitted from the fare here in Barbados. She is my friend and colleague. We sat together at one of the greatest institutions in Barbados and one of the Deputy Officers, who I see in here today, sat the same place. So I understand the quality of education being offered. Of course, some of them were a bit troublesome, as the Honourable Speaker would understand. They did not spend as much time studying as they should but got into issues of ragging. I remember the Deputy Chief Education Officer deliberately punishing the speaker, who is now on the floor as a result. I was supposed to be a freshman but it has not been forgotten. Time waits for punishment to be meted out to that individual by me.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: The fundamental point that I am making is, we have to improve on the quality and we need more voices speaking to all of our students at the primary, secondary and tertiary level, about what the taxpayers of Barbados pay for in the form of buildings and human resources. They must use every available opportunity to emerge at the end of every stage of the process as quality individuals and adequately so that they can carry their fare not only across the length and breadth of the Caribbean but into the wider world.

I reserve the right to continue, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to move that this House do now suspend until 1.30 p.m. today.

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

The question 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.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, just before we took recess, I was speaking to the issue of quality and studying the Barbadian populace to do whatever is necessary to ensure that they benefit from the educational fare which we are providing in this country, as a means of enhancing their portability across the Caribbean and into the wider world, so that they can earn an income, and they would not be encountering difficulties with their relevant qualification.

There is also one other angle in that as you work towards the question of quality of the human product, you also – I know some work is being done – continue to look

at the infrastructural product through which the human product is delivered. Therefore, it continues to be stressful that where large amounts of money were spent on institutions such as the New St. Albans School, we could still have relevant issues.

Sir, even though I recognise the work of the Minister when he stated that one should feel free to mash up and buy back to get that facility ready, we are still under some levels of stress and, therefore, the encouragement as we look at all of these issues, is to ensure that we get things right the first time and remove the uses of residual resources to correct that which is wrong. This is all part of the overall quality to which I speak. I am sure that efforts will be made to ensure that everything is settled in that institution.

I want to go on and look at some of the provisions within the Bill, relevant to the functions of the Accreditation Council. One area which jumps out at you is 4. (j) and part of the function, Mr. Speaker, is to enhance the quality of our secondary, tertiary and training in Barbados by:

"(i) conducting research, and providing training for institutions; and

(ii) disseminating information ascertained from any research conducted;"

One gains knowledge from past experiences, and there has been some peculiar difficulty with the Ministry of Education in ensuring that adequate research on a whole set of areas are in fact conducted, and that this research reaches those whom it should reach.

Therefore, since this Accreditation Council now is charged, in its own right, with this specific responsibility, one would hope that there is a commensurate relationship, *vis-a-vis*, what research work must be done within the Ministry of Education, which can further enhance the work and the research being done within the Accreditation Council.

It is an important area of activity because I believe that some of the deficits which we have in our policy formulation and, subsequently, in its implementation have to do with the quality of available research that is available to those who have to carry forward the agenda. Therefore, there needs to be the strengthening of the research components within the Ministry of Education, and the enhancing of the research, relative to the Accreditation Council. I want to impress upon the Minister, under whose charge this area falls that he must, as soon as possible, seek to improve what I call those twin areas, one to the Ministry and two to the Accreditation Council.

The Minister has been clear to point out all of the functions listed within this Bill. You will find that in some documents, Mr. Speaker, you always get this very nebulous function being thrown in, such as:

"(p) discharge such other related functions as the Minister may assign to the Council; and"

I believe that is put in there because if something is to be done and the Minister feels that it can be located under the Accreditation Council that it is done, but it creates for me an image that a Minister, who might be uncontrollable, can place any and every function under a particular area. Therefore, I usually have some problem with that very broad function, as placed within a particular Bill:

"(q) do all other things as are necessary to ensure the efficient discharge of its functions."

There is not a problem in ensuring that the Accreditation Council is both effective and efficient but, again, the use of the words, "do all other things that are necessary," creates for me, a certain lopsidedness within the legislation.

There is also, Mr. Speaker, relative issues of enumeration. It is not spelled out in here but I believe that the subsequent schedules would be worked out. I have a fundamental difficulty that from the outset, where you establish only a seven-person Council. If as envisaged and as contained within this documentation, there is going to be a lot of work for both the directorship and the secretariat...

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: ...that has been taken out completely? I thought I had a new Bill.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Even at the level of the Directors, I find seven too small and I find it highly restricted as well.

Let me identify what I consider, Mr. Speaker, to be one or two of the issues relevant to that particular section. Let us start with the one that is quite obvious in the First Schedule.

"1. (c) a secretary, who shall be chosen by the Directors from amongst themselves."

Sir, so that you have already established a seven-member Board but you are saying to them now, choose a secretary from among yourselves. If you recognise the work of this Board, a person who is a secretary does not have much time to contribute to the discussion of the debate, but is certainly a scribe, taking notes and ensuring that what is said is placed down.

I believe that to eliminate the difficulty, there can be a secretary appointed to the Board to carry out the work and functions of that Board. Therefore, there is a need to look at that, rather than to burden a person in his own right as a Director of the Council to also carry out the functions of Secretary.

I also believe that as you spell out the representatives of the Ministry of Education who have at least ten years experience in tertiary education, they might have ten years now but in the process of time, persons move on, persons change. There might be some persons with seven years, who might also have the quality necessary to affect the function. I would suggest that you look at what I call that at least 10 years qualifying criteria of personnel within the Ministry of Education in tertiary education.

I do not know a lot about the personnel at the Ministry now but I know that within the last five to seven years, there has been massive movement out of all the sections of the Ministry, and I do not know if any person qualified at this time, being ten years, would be among the professional staff, those who have the function and task to carry out certain professional activities.

I also believe that there should be room, and it has been I almost think a policy of your Ministry, where representatives of the Trade Union Movement have had an important sacristy on School Boards and, in fact, by their knowledge and experience, stop a lot of difficulties and problems from going any further than those Boards.
1.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, if we want to continue to practise broad-base democracy and to bring people more towards the centre of our actions and activities, room can be made on the Council for a representative of the trade union movement possibly from the Barbados Union of Teachers as part of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados. Along with the seven persons so appointed, that person would be an important addition to the board of the Council.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has two persons in his own right and he might be willing to exercise particular discretion at that point to reach out towards the trade union movement. I know that sometimes in boards such as this one persons use their discretion to reach out to those who have been highly supportive of them in one form or fashion. Sir, in looking at the board which must contain a high level of professionally focussed and professionally minded persons, I am just suggesting that there might be some consideration relevant to that particular point. So I hope the Minister understands the point I am making there and considers it. He could either move the board from seven to nine members to take care of what I called the social partnership philosophy relative to the knowledge.

Mr. Speaker, I believe the Honourable Minister is still the Chairman of the *ad hoc* Committee of the Social Partnership and is therefore at the heart of the total social partnership movement and should seek to have that inserted as part of the delivery of the whole mechanism of the Council. He can also consider the point of asking one of the directors or a member of the board to also act as secretary. We need a Council and a particular staff that is both effective and efficient to deliver what it is supposed to do on time. That is why I am making that kind of statement relative to that because if they do not deliver their decisions on time we are going to have a whole mass of frustration being delivered.

Sir, we on This Side would like to see the establishment of a council which would set the broad framework and the broad parameters out of which the councils, as are established in Trinidad and Tobago, in Jamaica and now the one to be established in Barbados, would have very clear guidelines which would have aided and abetted a relatively smooth transition and start to reflect a certain similarity in what they do before the establishment of a regional accreditation council which would be established at the macro-level outside of what is captured within the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas and other pieces of policy initiatives, otherwise we would not necessarily know, particularly at the outset, if the board in Trinidad and Tobago is using the same type of criteria.

Sir, the personnel might be different, that is understood because we are different people. If Jamaica, Barbados and Dominica which as we know are experiencing some difficulties are going to be able to carry out their function, the whole process of the free movement of people and being recognised relative to their skills and certification can be frustrated if in one part of the wider CARICOM, you are having the work being effectively done but in other parts of CARICOM the work cannot be done because there is no accreditation council or there is an accreditation council established but they do not have the knowledge and those kinds of things to impact. These are some of the issues which would frustrate what we are seeking to do as Caribbean politicians and Caribbean people to effect policy initiatives as established by the CARICOM Secretariat, the Heads of Government Conference and the various pieces of policies and legislation.

Therefore, as we speak in the various fora across the Caribbean region, we have to insert very deeply within the minds of the people that these things must be clear. Sir, I would have gone and established within CARICOM the regional accreditation council out of which would have flowed all of what I would prefer to call the sub-groupings as is the case of Barbados which we are now working on. We have gone ahead of that, but that is a point which I

would have urged persons who are dealing with this matter to consider and to deal with as an important part of this whole endeavour.

Sir, I suggest that having nine members would be a most efficient and effective size. I also suggested that we could include some other persons to add body, strength and a certain know-how. One of the things I must say about the trade union movement in Barbados is that because of its very nature and because of the experience of the personnel, they would have a wide view and a wide understanding of some of the concepts that we are talking about. I am not saying that persons who would be on the board would not have that knowledge. I recognise that there is a lot of talent and experience in this country and we can draw from any other sources to form the subcommittees and things of that ilk. However, I want on time delivery so that people do not feel frustrated.

Mr. Speaker, issues of validation and articulation as dealt with by the Minister would not really become problematic if there is a true understanding. Sir, I am told that there have been some removal of the challenges *vis-à-vis* the articulation between the Barbados Community College and the University of the West Indies. However, I am hearing from some persons who studied at the Barbados Community College that it is still easier to be accepted by a North American educational institution, particularly a United States of America based educational institution, as opposed to the University of the West Indies.

Sir, even though some substantial work has been done, we still need to look at that. We do not want to develop inter-tertiary level institutions rivalry. We recognise that the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and Erdiston Teachers' College is to become part of the University College of Barbados and that there would be writing at least four-year degrees. Therefore, there is still going to be a need for greater articulation and understanding of the work because at the end of the day the University of the West Indies Cave Hill is heavily supported by the taxpayers of Barbados and the University College of Barbados would also be heavily supported by the taxpayers of Barbados. Therefore, the removal of duplicate strategies and programmes should be properly looked at so that you would have a seamless movement between the University College of Barbados and the University of the West Indies whether it is found in Trinidad and Tobago, Barbados or Jamaica.

Sir, the regional validation council should be seen as a melting pot institution to look at all the various strands. Initially, you are going to have some difficulties because we would be searching to find the right mix but gradually you would find that we are phasing out because we would have that pooling of knowledge becoming available to work with the Accreditation Council, so I have no problem with that.

Sir, we would need to know what would be its relationship with the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports. Would it be part of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports or would it be a separate entity from the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports, because sometimes the culture of an institution could impact on a new or emerging institution? There are persons who believe at this stage that the culture of the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports is not as positive or as strong as it could be, but it has nothing to do with the Honourable Minister of Education. However, I am sure that if we look at it, we can straighten those issues out to make it more useful and more important to persons within this country and those who move across the length and breadth. 1.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we recognise that there are going to be five broad groups of persons who would be having access to reasonably free movement, which would be conditioned on certain policies and guidelines. One such group would be that of persons with university education, which should not be problematic because we are using the qualifications of the University of the West Indies (UWI) and from those other accredited universities across the world. Secondly, we speak of persons within the media establishment. Thirdly, we talk of sports persons, artistes and musicians, many of whom will be the transient-type of persons who would come in, perform and move on. Therefore, as transient persons, I do not know that we are going to spend much time in looking at their qualifications and certifications as they try to sell their products in particular locations. What we need to do is to ensure that these persons are not hindered as they sell their various products across the Caribbean space.

Mr. Speaker, by and large, it is an important piece of legislation to add to the whole process of what we are doing within the Caribbean space. It would have been good if we had first discussed the Bill which is before the House with regards to the movement of skilled personnel within the region. That Bill should have come first, followed by this Barbados Accreditation Bill, 2004.

Sir, it seems to be a bit lopsided by bringing this first and then the Bill afterwards because one would have been more able to examine the Bill and thrash it out, than to deal with this Barbados Accreditation Council Bill, 2004.

I am sure others would have something to say at this stage. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I will not be long on this debate. Let me just say that I do not know if it

falls within the purview of the Honourable Minister of Education but I am thoroughly disappointed at the length of time, certainly based on commitments that were given by the Heads of Governments almost a decade ago, for matters of this sort to be dealt with.

Sir, it even disturbs me to even think that very often and even in matters of this sort, that Barbados is one of the first countries to be passing legislation.

I do not know on what this is modelled, whether it is modelled on the European Union (EU), the Organisation of Economic Union (OEU), or on any of the other so-called economic unions but the truth is, I am not interested. I think that we certainly could have found a way to be more creative, to put in place institutions that place less burdens on those persons who would want to function within a single economic space.

I am not talking about the accreditation *per se*, about setting standards, nor about the role of institutions in seeking to harmonise those things. What I am talking about is how the individual Caribbean citizen now has to add another tier of bureaucracy to this process, simply to function within his own space.

Mr. Speaker, he is going to have certification from the domestic professional association. In addition to this, he still has to apply to the Immigration department, and assuming that this is the model for the rest of the Caribbean, a Barbadian who is certified by an institution which Barbados accepts, may very well find himself having to go through that process 13 more times before he can function within the Caribbean economic space.

Sir, to my mind, that is total and complete madness, but it demonstrates the extent to which we are still bound by very insular feelings. I do not blame the Minister of Education because these are standard form programmes where every time a new institution is set up, a Bill such as this would be produced and all that one would do, would be to insert the different objectives.

This formula for establishing a statutory entity is now standard form, in which all they would have added would have been the Objects and Reasons and would have made a number of adjustments here and there.

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing creative about this Bill. There is nothing about this Bill that speaks to making people's lives easier in the Caribbean. This is just another burden, another restriction, another imposition and another shackle on the citizens of the Caribbean. I am talking in relation to the individual who wants to practise his sport throughout the region.

I am not speaking against standards, I very much agree with all of what the shadow Minister has said. I understand the need for accreditation and even in that regard, what I want to know is, are we starting from scratch, or are we accepting those institutions that have already been designated as tertiary institutions in other CARICOM countries? Do we start with them as the institutions that are going to be accredited?

Mr. Speaker, for example, Grenada has the St. George's School of Medicine. Are we required, by the terms of the Treaty, to accept that as a tertiary institution? Sir, we are required to accept that as a tertiary institution because this Bill only relates to a new process? This is a new imposition on persons who are going to receive university degrees or professional qualifications from institutions which have not yet been accepted. Therefore, the next generation of Barbadians are the ones who are going to be shackled by this bureaucracy but those who have already been graduates of tertiary institutions that any CARICOM country recognises...

Mr. Speaker, these things were all done ten years ago. One would have thought that these issues would have been resolved by now, but I know that they are still issues.

Mr. Speaker, the Caribbean Law Institute, in collaboration with Professor Carnegie and I, have done a CARICOM Commission Study in every territory, and the Governments were warned, cajoled, entreated, *et cetera*, to get this right.

Sir, at the end of the day, all Government has done is to shackle the citizens of the Caribbean with more and more impositions. For example, I want the Honourable Minister to look at the application form for Certification of Recognition. Does it mean that every citizen of the Caribbean coming to work here, who is required to be registered under the CARICOM Skilled Nationals Legislation or any other piece of relevant immigration legislation, has to fill out one of these forms and has to wait for the Barbados Accreditation Council to certify that the institution from which that individual has received his or her certification, is going to be accepted within Barbados? Is this going to be repeated in every other territory?

Sir, on the basis of reciprocity, I would assume that since we have legislation like this, that every CARICOM territory is going to put in place a similar arrangement, at least in relation to Barbadian nationals.

2.00 p.m.

That is the big question that one has to ask. What is the purpose of the protocols heralding the new era of the free movement of Caribbean nationals? What does free really mean if people are then shackled by bureaucratic

impositions which have the effect of reducing people's involvement? Sir, this is what the story of CARICOM has been about. The fact that the currencies have not been freely convertible, the cost of movement in the Caribbean is expensive, the requirements to register are onerous, there are all kinds of barriers to participation and instead of trying to tear them down and make it easier, we are seeing the imposition of additional bureaucracy like filling out forms and processes, which, to my mind, will have the effect of not enhancing the free movement of people in the Caribbean.

Sir, every lawyer who wants to practise in another Caribbean country has to get called to the Bar, fill out an Affidavit, produce his university degree, his Practice Certificate, get some people to say they know him and like him and he has to do this in every territory he wants to practise in. In addition, you now have to go through the process of getting this accreditation council to declare that your qualification is acceptable as well as go down to the Immigration Department.

Sir, ten years ago, this Government of Barbados jumped up and down throughout the region and everybody said they were passing CARICOM Skilled Nationals Legislation. I remember going to Grenada where a police sergeant was in charge of immigration but he had never seen the legislation or any form but officially, Grenada was recorded as one of the countries which had passed and implemented the CARICOM Skilled Nationals Legislation.

When you look at the forms that are filled out for CARICOM meetings showing who signed the treaty and who implemented it, there is a black dot next to every CARICOM country which has implemented the treaty but it has gone no further than Parliament because the people who have to implement it do not have a clue how to facilitate freedom of movement within the Caribbean.

Sir, if with all that done so far, it is still tough, then why are we adding another tier of bureaucracy? Could CARICOM not have handled a matter like this so that people can move and travel in the Caribbean as long as they are recognised in the CARICOM?

Thank you, Sir.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, even before I started my working life, I had become aware that in this country in the 1960s and 1970s there was fierce debate in many quarters over this question of the quality of tertiary education, the standards to be met and such like.

Mr. Speaker, you as an excellent educator would recall the days when we would hear that A and B went to universities in North America that were not recognised and that C went to another university which allowed the purchase of degrees and such like. The debate reflected the fact that Barbadians are insistent that within our educational system, there must be inbuilt checks and balances so designed to ensure that we always have the very best. There can be no question that if a person attends a tertiary level institution which grants an award, diploma, certificate or degree and the quality education the person pursued was deficient, you can guarantee that such a person is truly and aptly qualified.

Mr. Speaker, you would recall in the '80s and early '90s in Barbados, there were concerns expressed by many young people who attended tertiary institutions and having been given certificates found when they made applications for jobs and sought to use them as proof of being competent to perform the job, the certificates were rejected.

Mr. Speaker, I recall in the eighties and nineties in Barbados many youngsters going on evenings to institutions which would keep a graduation with a feature speaker and which would take photographs of the event and, at the end of the day, they were given certificates that amounted to worthless pieces of paper. I am going to develop this point because there are a number of us in this Honourable House who, within our political experience, would have been approached by many young men and women and when we check what they said they had passed, the institution they attended was nebulous, their *bona fides* could not be established nor the certificate granted could not be rated or ranked in terms of elementary, intermediate, ordinary or any level. The result of all this is that within the last five or six years in particular, the Ministry of Education has been checking on these institutions.

My colleague, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East said that forty-four institutions are recognised by the Ministry of Education but before I look at the merits in offering proper recognition to institutions, I want to go back to my concern that too many young people in Barbados have paid fees, gone to classes and have been given so-called certificates and diplomas that had no worth and were not recognised.

Mr. Speaker, if a person is going to a particular institution and is told before registration and writing the final exams, that this institution is vouching for that person's subject matter competence and skills, that person's expectation throughout the course is going to be at a certain level. If the person passes and goes out on the job market with these pieces of paper and are told that they are not recognised, then the candidate's expectations are badly dashed. Mr. Speaker, I am a loyal Member of the Government and I want to say that the time has come for our Minister of Education and the Ministry of Education to

re-evaluate the part played by the Barbados Secondary School Certificate Part 1. It was introduced in 1974 to replace the School Leaving Certificate. There has never been a Barbados Secondary School Certificate Part 2, there has never been one. That School Leaving Certificate, nicknamed, the Barbados Secondary School Certificate, was used as a means by which you could enter the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic but it no longer accepts it.
2.10 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I want to be of assistance to this Honourable House but the Honourable Member for St. John, even from his seat and he is not making a speech in Parliament, is making some utterances which are making it difficult for me to be heard.

Mr. Speaker, as an educator, you are aware that before 1974 there was an examination called the School Leaving Examination. It used to be taken at the end of primary school. This was being done for many years going back to the 1950s. In 1974 this examination was renamed the Barbados Secondary School Certificate Part 1. The objective was to have a Barbados Secondary School Certificate Part 2. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George South is an innocent man and does not in any way bear any blame for having brought any complications or frustrations to students in this country.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, we now have to work out whether it makes sense continuing in a situation when we bear cost to keep this Barbados Secondary School Certificate Part 1 and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic is no longer taking it. As I said, its counterpart the Barbados Secondary School Certificate Part 2 never came and there is not an employer in Barbados who is prepared to accept anybody with even 10 School Leaving Certificates. Not one employer is going to employ anybody with a School Leaving Certificate anymore.

In addition, I am also wondering if we in the region should continue to send signals out there, I am referring to the Caribbean Examination Council Basic Exam. Years ago when the Caribbean Examination Council first came into existence, it said that it was introducing a general proficiency exam to enable students to go onto higher tertiary level education. The Caribbean Examination Council said that it was introducing a basic exam to empower people who passed the basic exam to be able to work.

Mr. Speaker, there are only a few employers in the region who would employ anyone with certificates at the basic level and the taxpayers of the region are still paying funds towards a basic exam that cannot earn you a place to any tertiary education or the world of work, but an exam that is costing our people money.

There are secondary schools in Barbados that you could never persuade to enter anyone in an examination at the basic level. There are secondary schools in Barbados that have already rejected the Basic Level and do not permit their students to do that exam. Some schools that use the Basic, use it as a type of trial run for students who would do the General Proficiency Examination in the future but the exam needs re-evaluation.

I am sure that if you work out the cost of the administration of the Basic and Barbados Secondary General Certificate Part 1, then our taxpayers are carrying a burden in circumstances where we as officialdom are issuing worthless pieces of paper.

Mr. Speaker, if all the money spent on the Barbados Secondary School Certificate Part 1 and the CXC Basic was retained to subsidise and assist worthy institutions like the Barbados 'O' Level Institute, then, perhaps, education in Barbados would have been further revolutionised beyond where it has come.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, it might not be too late for somebody to work out how much money we have wasted on the Basic and the Barbados Secondary School Certificate Examination. Sir, we should hold the money, identify the deserving institutions, whether there are in Bank Hall or wherever and give them the type of technical and other support that they need.

Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central chose deliberately not to enlarge this debate to look at every facet of education and I will follow suit. I will not be looking at the whole educational system. Mr. Speaker, in line with the very commendable stance taken both by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, this debate is about standards in education. Even if the debate is not about primary education or secondary education. It is about standards in education and I repeat my point. If we are looking at standards, we are looking at standards not only at 44 private institutions. We are looking at standards in the public sector, whether at the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic or the University of the West Indies, and we assess these standards against the background of clear objectives.

We have to reassess the extent to which we have permitted prejudice to affect our judgement. There is an able young man in this country who went to Canada to a polytechnic which in the vast area was not well-known in

Barbados. He did electricity and electrical engineering to polytechnic level; his school was not known about in Barbados and as a result he cannot practise as an electrician so he had to go into pig and sheep farming to make a livelihood.

Sir, if we had systems in place in this country by which we could have registered the institution which the young man attended and if we had a system by which we could have evaluated his qualification, that man would have been able to practise his profession of first choice.

Mr. Speaker, there have been instances where the prejudice went on the converse where at least two people in the history of education in Barbados ended up working at the Ministry of Education in circumstances where the institution that they attended and their qualifications were nebulous. They have been at least two people, in this history of education in this country, who worked in the Ministry of Education who were not well qualified and the institutions from which they received the qualifications were institutions from which you could purchase paper.

Mr. Speaker, our country does not want our young people to qualify on the basis of financial means. Even though of necessity, cost is involved in pursuing an education, it must never be said that the sole criterion on which a degree is conferred is one's capacity to purchase it.

I once wrote to a university in England called Knightsbridge and I told them to verify the fact that they were a recognised university, Knightsbridge never responded. When I checked, the British, United Kingdom and the European Council of Colleges could not vouch for Knightsbridge whose principle claim to fame was that you can write your alleged story, prove that you were gainfully employed for five years and send a figure of a certain amount of money. We do not want that Mr. Speaker. Sir, we want systems that are credible and systems that are secure. We want that when our young people go to school they are properly educated. I criticised CXC's Basic just now and I am now going to commend CXC. Where CXC made an important contribution, was when they took into account the fact that there are many able students who, in a situation of a one-off final examination, often panic the day of the exam and do not do well. It is to CXCs credit, that a system of continuous assessment called School-Based Assessment was introduced.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, if I may speak using the anecdote, there was a contemporary of mine called P. G. Jordan. He was an excellent student but could not do a one-off examination. He failed all but during the course of his time in school he exceeded all of us. He was methodical, he did all his homework, he would write well. If he had been allowed a system of School-Based Assessment in Barbados between 1965 and 1970, he would have remained in Barbados and qualified in Barbados. He fled and went to the United States of America. He did not go to a university that sold degrees, this time he went to a university that was accredited, where he could do some studies and today, he has a Ph.D. from a recognised university in North America.

Mr. Speaker, it goes beyond that, into the question of where are we today in education in Barbados and in this region? I mentioned the case of P. G. Jordan who apparently is known to the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. He was a fine athlete and if I remember his times in the 200, they were better than anything the Honourable Member for St. Michael South ever achieved.

Mr. Speaker, permit me to say that we also have in our Caribbean culture, a type of person who will never want to grace the corridors or the classrooms of a polytechnic or a community college but would prefer to develop skills on the job.

In our culture, to date, much as we have embraced persons who have gone to the Barbados Community College and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and those who can come back with their City and Guilds and other certificates as proof of competence and skills acquired, there are still those who learn on the job. Many a motor mechanic in Barbados learned under a tree. I am not suggesting that a tree is a primary or principle institution or anything like that, but many a mechanic learned on the job. Many a person who did tiling learned on the job, under a system of apprenticeship, however informal, supervised by a senior. Mr. Speaker, we have now come to recognise that we have to embrace those people as well.

Therefore, by March 2005, the Technical Vocational and Educational Training Council (TVET) will be launching the National Vocational Qualification. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, in November in this the instant year of our Lord, 2004, in the common era, the TVET Council will be doing a special pilot programme. I will deal first with the pilot programme and then go on to the one which will take effect in the first quarter of 2005.

Mr. Speaker, painfully aware that in a culture where tourism has asserted itself to a considerable degree, and also aware of the need to enhance systems of training for customer service, in November this year we are doing a special pilot programme where we will award a few National Vocational Qualifications to persons in the area of customer care, front office operations and such like. They are special pilot projects to run for three months that will work closely with the Barbados Institute of Management and

Productivity. We will be doing our utmost to send a very strong signal that this Government is going to take serious, the allegations that we are weak on customer service and we are going to fund programmes by which we train people to be able to interact better with the public.

Sir, come March 2005, we are going to launch, in a big and heightened way, the National Vocational Qualification consistent with the wishes of the Heads of Government of CARICOM which, as a Government has proposed that in the era of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) – I will not be speaking very much on that because there is a lecture tonight on it by an expert, not far from here – except to say that we are going to have to look closely at the reality that labour will move freely and we have to uphold the wishes of the Heads of Government who have required us to introduce a means of technical vocational training for Caribbean people.

Our Technical Vocational Educational Training Council is one of several in the Caribbean. The Jamaicans call theirs HART, not TVET. Other Caribbean countries call theirs TVET. A TVET is established to acquire money and to fund training in technical and vocational areas. Jamaica and Trinidad have somehow had a headstart on the rest of the Caribbean.

Today, Barbados is third in line, but we are proposing, Mr. Speaker, to equip persons who gather job experience and training on the job to be able to demonstrate competence in their professions, in their careers, in their vocations, so that if they are minded to leave their country of origin or residence in one Caribbean country and proceed to another, they will be demonstrating a qualification which their counterparts in other Caribbean countries who have undergone similar training will have. There will be a level there of uniformity.

The Scottish Examination Board came here and assisted the Technical Vocational Educational Training Council with the means by which we should be able to do our assessments in Barbados and award these qualifications. We in Barbados will, within three years by 2007, have established for the first time, qualifications for electricians, plumbers, tilers and masons, who would not have gone to a formal tertiary level institution, but who would have learnt their craft and skill on the job and received funding and technical support from the Technical Vocational Educational Training Council to train, empower and qualify them.

Mr. Speaker, there is an aspect of this debate which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East dealt with very skilfully. We are also into a very interesting era. Time was, when in the absence of a University Campus in Jamaica, in the absence of a University Campus at St. Augustine and one at Cave Hill, our people went to universities in the metropolitan world, and lo and behold, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church East has said, there are many accredited universities coming to us through so-called distance learning programmes.

If there were Honourable Members in this House who went to Cricket when England was down here a few months ago, they would have seen some universities from England advertising at Cricket, in an attempt to attract people to do courses with them. We are now seeing education, Mr. Speaker, in a light where there is such a thing as an export of education. Clearly if the University of Bristol is offering a training programme to a person resident in Barbados, the University of Bristol is marketing this programme outside of its country of origin and is marketing its programme to somebody resident abroad. It is clearly most likely looking to help that person to achieve a qualification but could as well be looking at the bottom line in terms of raising funding for further university programmes by selling education abroad.

2.30 p.m.

Sir, I do not remember the exact figure that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East mentioned in terms of the global figure which is now made when universities export educational ware abroad, but clearly our people in the Caribbean have to bear this in mind.

Mr. Speaker, if the University of Bristol or the University of Luton is trying to attract Barbadians through their distance programmes, why cannot the University of the West Indies go abroad and market its programme. The University of the West Indies has high standards. Mr. Speaker, why cannot the University of the West Indies press us into providing assistance to it for further research especially research in non-traditional areas. Mr. Speaker, research work has gone on in the University of the West Indies in History, English Literature and possibly in Spanish, but there are a myriad of other fields like medicine and engineering that the University of the West Indies must consider looking at for purposes of research and development.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who is yet to speak in this debate has been saying *sotto voce* that the University of the West Indies should be looking to do research in every area, and I agree with him.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, something happened on the radio this morning which has been on my mind for a while. Mr. Speaker, in this culture of ours, we are very weak on establishing institutions to do publication. This morning I heard that Austin 'Tom' Clarke, a legendary wit and outstanding novelist, is lamenting and bemoaning the fact

that we are guilty of not establishing enough firms to do publications. We have to look realistically both at where we want our youth to go and at how we should best empower them. Mr. Speaker, for the future, a Caribbean that is not given to producing research is going to be a backward Caribbean. In the future, a Caribbean that is not willing to establish publishing firms is going to be a poor and backward Caribbean. A Caribbean which is not sufficiently cost-conscious to bear in mind where it is mis-investing funds in education and where it ought properly to allocate funds alternatively in other forms of education would be a Caribbean that would be condemned as being very wasteful.

Mr. Speaker, as I support this measure before this Honourable House, the one thing that must be said to our people, especially our young people, is that the way the world has stilted, education has to be a lifelong process. Mr. Speaker, as a politician I become very impatient with constituents whom I cannot persuade to go and do a little course. Mr. Speaker, I get very impatient when a girl comes to me at age 21 with four children and her only perception for progress in life is having a job as a beach ranger or transporting meals by hand through a school as a school meals server.

Mr. Speaker, I often make my constituents sign a contract that if I go out there looking for jobs for them that in return they have to undertake to do a course. Doing a course does not mean doing biochemistry or microbiology, it could mean going to the Hotel Training School and doing a course that would permit that person to be able to have some skill. In fact, in 2004, one skill per worker would not be enough. We have to have a multi-skilled workforce. In a changing world where governments will increasingly be under pressure to cease being welfare governments and where governments are going to be pressured into making people practise self-help and in circumstances where governmental budgets may have to be cut to ensure that governments remain able to deliver, our people have to recognise that they cannot de-emphasise, overlook, undermine or take for granted educational training.

Mr. Speaker, I conclude with a small observation. Mr. Speaker, bearing in mind where our culture has come, we also have to look closely at the affective side of education. Most of us focus on the cognitive side of education. Mr. Speaker, I once heard an outstanding Barbadian say that in a matrifocal society when women lose their way, society loses its way, that is true. We have to work on the attitudes of those young people in this country who disrespect schooling, who disrespect authority and who feel that education is foolishness. We have to work on a programme of attitudes to uplift our people by letting them know that education not only passes knowledge and skills but that education edifies, lifts up and liberates.

Mr. Speaker, we have about 15 000 to 20 000 people in this country who do not care anything at all about school. Some of them parade under the name of parents. Mr. Speaker, if those people who parade under the name of parents had to get a testimonial, a birth and baptism certificate and two photographs before being permitted to be parents, they would not be parents, therefore some of our social problems would not exist right now. Sir, if certain people had to undergo a test of competence or some test of attitude to become parents, they could not make it.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of the problems that affect learning are caused by bad parenting. Mr. Speaker, I sense in this country that there is beginning to evolve the unfortunate episode of conflict between school and home, which is bad for this society. When I was going to school, my mother and grandmother were prepared to delegate to the school an authority to help me in areas where they could not help. Nowadays a child goes home to its parent and tells the parent that the homework looks hard and the parent would tell the child not to do it. The principal then calls the mother or the father and says that the child has not done the homework and the mother or the father would tell the principal that they told the child not to do it. Where are we going?

Mr. Speaker, we have a culture in Barbados evolving where bright young people are going to school, and to good schools at that, who are essaying not to go back to school to check to see if they pass an exam. Mr. Speaker, this is happening in sovereign Barbados, a Barbados I love. I know many a bright girl and many a bright boy who having gone to fifth form and having obtained five or six CXC certificates at general level and who are well touted by their parents to be bright, have deigned not to go back to school to check their results.

Mr. Speaker, when I was at school there was a myth that the results used to be transported by special transport, so we used to sit waiting for the results and every van that passed, a fellow called Michael 'Fats' Bynoe used to shout results and we used to jump up to see if the results were actually coming. However, Mr. Speaker, we are living in a Barbados where young boys and girls in need of guidance and badly parented are not interested in the outcome of their ten years in school. Where are we going, Mr. Speaker?

Sir, some politicians must get up and be candid. A neophyte politician serving a first term may not wish to be that candid for fear of offending, but when you reach my stage, Mr. Speaker, guided by God's help to be in here for this length of time, somebody has to speak out because our attitudes are beginning to foul up our morality. My friend will tell you where good men remain silent what happens.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: You have not read the Bible today pastor?

Asides.
2.40 p.m.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, we have a situation in Barbados where there is evidence that reading has declined. The Honourable Member for St. George South will tell you that he has seen people coming into court, who cannot read the Oath. We have a situation where not only reading but also homework has declined. We have a situation where none of us sitting in authority seem able to convince the young people that of necessity, part of being educated involves some degree of self-sacrifice, if not some pain.

We seem to live in an instant age where very often a student would saunter to school at 10.30 a.m. Yesterday I saw a teacher rushing to get to school before 8.30 a.m, fearing that he was going to be late. I told him to hurry but to be assured that about 200 children will come to school at 10.00 a.m. or 10.30 a.m., to which he replied that it happens everyday. We cannot allow this to continue. On another occasion, about 8.00 p.m., I saw a school boy still dressed in uniform 'ducking' under a box where the *Advocate* used to be on Broad Street.

Mr. Speaker, much of the stresses and strains in education are demonstrating themselves because of an incipient and developing conflict within the school and the home, where the poor child in that conflict is going to be confused. For instance, the teacher is telling him two plus two equals four, while the mother is telling him that she could not care anything about him, and is prepared to show him her means of raising support for him, which is outside of conventional means.

Sir, we have to pull back. I do not think all hope is lost. I think the Ministry of Social Transformation, given the resources and support, can help. I, therefore, welcome the Welfare to Work Programme and pledge my support to the Ministry of Social Transformation to see what can be done. This Ministry recognises that to give someone a fish once a week, is to give him a fish once every seven days, but to teach that person to fish, is to give that person a particular skill.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Vocational Training Board stands ready to work with the Ministry of Social Transformation on a programme by which persons who, through no fault of their own or through other circumstances, are not possessed of skills, who would be able so to do.

Mr. Speaker, we have to recognise that Your Honour, even though you cannot speak but listen, would have paid a tremendous role through your counselling, tutelage and guidance. Sir, many a woman in this country who had the misfortune of becoming pregnant at sixteen or seventeen, has recovered, has been to the Barbados 'O' Level Institute, has gotten seven certificates, has prospered in the future, and has been able to find work.

Mr. Speaker, a young man by the name of Ward told me that his school had ejected him at age l4 because he appeared not to be an achiever. He said that he then went to the Barbados 'O' Level Institute and got six 'O' Levels. It jolted me and threw me away.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip North knows of my excursions and adventures into the realm of purgatory, the Honourable Member can tell you that notwithstanding the fact that he has traded politically, that persons of my ilk will want to see a Barbados with a labour force that is multi-skilled, a Barbados with a labour force that is sensitive to international development affecting the labour force and a labour force that is productive and efficient.

On the other hand, we want a school system that so delivers education as to be able to do with what the Ancient Romans put better than I can put in Latin, ***a deux cari*** in Latin has a better connotation than in English. It means to lead a person out of the dark realms and regions of ignorance into light.

Mr. Speaker, the motto of the University of the West Indies (UWI) is, therefore, most relevant: **"Enlightenment flowing from Western Parts**." I would like to see that in consequence of this Bill, more enlightenment and education coming to our people to help them to build this our nation and indeed our wider region.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a very brief submission on this Bill. First, I would like to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. James North for truly what has been an excellent submission today. As I watched and listened throughout his presentation, he has not only edified and uplifted this hallowed Chamber but Barbados as a whole, and I hope I can continue to learn by his example.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak not in general terms but in a focussed sense with respect to this Bill. The Honourable Member for St. John has spoken of it as an additional shackle, and I am sorry that he is not in his seat but that is normal. Instead, I want to see this Bill as a key to opening doors and specifically to members of my profession. I will explain.

Mr. Speaker, there are seven young dentists who have been trained at Mount Hope in Trinidad and Tobago. These

seven young dentists have not been able to return to the land of their birth to practise their profession.

This is totally unacceptable as far as I am concerned. At present, they are qualified to be working in Trinidad and Tobago. They have been told that for them to return and to work in Barbados, they would have to do an examination which would be set by the General Council of Dentists in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is absolutely ludicrous. I must say that I think this Bill cannot come fast enough to accredit those young dentists who are already practising in Trinidad and Tobago, to give them an opportunity to return to the place of their birth, which, through the taxpayers of Barbados, have paid for their education through the University of the West Indies (UWI). Sir, this is because the General Dental Council in Barbados has said that those seven young dentists need to do an examination because they do not consider Mount Hope to be an accredited University or the course to be an accredited one.

I would hope and would expect that as soon as this Barbados Accreditation Council comes into force, that the first order of business must be to accredit our own University at Mount Hope. Sir, what are we saying? Are we saying that the people of Trinidad and Tobago have harder teeth to extract? Are we saying that they have more difficult dental diseases? It is not so, these are people who are practising. This is a University that has produced graduates such as Doctors Marie Agard, David Pilgrim and Pamela Phillips, who are presently operating in Barbados for, I believe, over seven or eight years and who are providing excellent service to the people of Barbados.

Therefore, now for the Barbados Dental Council, I must unfortunately say, to tell these new graduates that they have to take an examination, after Barbados has accepted degrees from persons as far away as Nigeria, Egypt, and from universities of the United States of America and the United Kingdom, and are now telling our own people that we cannot accept their degrees as being *bona fide*, and that these graduates now have to take a local examination.

Sir, this cannot continue and, therefore, I would hope that as soon as this Barbados Accreditation Council comes into force and accepts a university degree as being accredited, that it would bind all other Councils such as the General Medical Council, the General Dental Council and the Barbados Bar Association to accept it, because as long as the Barbados Accreditation Council can prove that it is an accredited degree and that it is accepted by the Barbados Accreditation Council, it then should be accepted by all others. Sir, we have a habit in this country of not accepting our own and thinking that it is second best.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we have some of the best brains and some of the most excellent scientists and intellectuals. The practice in this country of not accepting our own has to stop. This country has invested heavy in education and through this we have spread our wings and provided services not only in Barbados and the region but in the United States of America and England. Barbadians must recognise that we have homegrown talents that are just as good as those abroad.

Sir, we pride ourselves on our excellent education system which has served us well and will continue to do so.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill is excellent. The Honourable Member for St. John spoke about it being a shackle but I completely disagree with that comment. It is a door opener and an opportunity for people to move from border to border and to gain accreditation for the work they have done and we must move towards it.

Sir, I give it my complete support.

I thank you.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments to make but I do not intend to get engaged in the substantial educational debate. This Bill seeks to do three things but a lot of it has been lost in the welter of words that we were subjected to. It deals with accreditation, registration and the examination or verification of certificates to CARICOM nationals.

This is a new initiative that is removed from the essential nature of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy requirements. This is required under the agreement of the heads of Caribbean States. The genesis is to examine and verify certificates for non-Barbadian CARICOM nationals who want to come and work in Barbados. I have learnt a lot from the Minister of Education who spoke this morning and I received a lot of information I did not have before which I can use for future reference.

I want to raise a few points. I am concerned about the viability of the UWI in the face of increasing competition for educational services in the new global trade arrangements and I am interested in hearing more about this. Over and above the articulation agreement with foreign universities, there is the question of non-Caribbean universities and educational institutions purveying their services to Caribbean people in competition with the UWI. I have heard the Minister say that the Government of Barbados spends more than $80 million a year on the UWI. They should spend more and long may this continue. The Government will not be spending money on non-Caribbean institutions to deliver education in Barbados.

I am concerned about whether the new international trading arrangements will make it difficult, if not impossible, for our country to subsidise post-secondary education. The whole question of subsidy is a sore point in these negotiations and a lot of it has not yet been resolved nor the issues surrounding education as a service.

Mr. Speaker, what is the position of Barbados, will the question of subsidies come into play? Sir, sometimes you have to dig deep to get information on such issues. It is being argued already that it is not fair competition for Barbadians to have free university education, that it is a massive subsidy by the State.

Sir, the United States of America does not do anything out of altruism and they are principally pushing the argument that it is unfair competition because they are not concerned about our position. They have an ethos that is self-centred but it has an element of wickedness to it. It is born out of the capitalist system or as ignorant people say, the bottom line, whatever it means but we have to know these things.

I remember when the Democratic Labour Party was in power that they began to introduce cost recovery in education. They said you could not get education free from the Barbados Community College, Erdiston College, the University of the West Indies or Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic any more. Sir, they were considering cost recovery in the Ministry of Education where people would pay for some of the educational services that were delivered so they may not find it as anathema as I find it.

Sir, whenever I hear the Honourable Member for St. John speak in Parliament, I get a feeling of sadness that someone who is so able can dissipate his ability to silly partisan mutterings. The only thing he could contribute to a debate of this nature is the kind of froth that we listened to this afternoon.

I hope that Honourable Members on the Other Side would have the courage to return to the wisdom of their founding father, a man who saw Caribbean integration as a religion. Sir, when we speak in here of politicians of one generation and then speak of my generation, it is time for me to go because politicians of my generation were fired up with an abiding confidence that our region could only see its truest and fullest potential if we did things together. I would wish that the other Honourable Members would remember the late Errol Barrow, how he lived, led and wanted and get out of all the silly bellyaching over issues that do not require partisanship.
2.58 p.m.

Sir, I am digressing because I was talking about subsidies. I would wish the Minister, who is extremely knowledgeable in these things, to tell us how is the University of the West Indies going to be affected if the United States and its sidekicks continue to pursue the position that education is a service, that it must compete internationally, that schools, universities and colleges must compete against each other and that one country must provide a highly subsidised service while others have to pay. How is this going to affect the University of the West Indies that is so critical to everything that we believe in? That university is an important institution in our development and even more important is the accessibility that the children from Drax Hall, Ellerton, Greens and other areas of St. George can know that their children will still be able to have access to free tertiary education to enable them to go over some of the hurdles, some manmade and some natural, that are placed in their way and over which they can move with grace if they have the opportunity to a university education. That is at the heart of the development of this country.

There is nothing more important than the development of our people than an education. Sir, that is not anything profound. Just look around the society and you would see it. Look in this Parliament and you would see it. I want to hear about that.

I also want to hear about the question of these standards that we are setting for our people. Before I am finished I hope that someone would remind me to talk about the contribution which the Honourable Member for St. James North made regarding the Barbados Secondary School Basic Examination.

We have a problem in our society by marking ourselves harder than anybody else. One of the toughest courses to get through is at the University of the West Indies.

Asides.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I did not go to the University of the West Indies because I could not afford it. I got in but I did not have the money to go to Jamaica in those days but I have two children who went there. I am telling you that the intellectual exercise required at the University of the West Indies is higher than most places in the world. If you want to achieve you have to work hard. These standards were set in the early days because it was a new university and in order for it to get international credibility it had to set standards so high that everybody would stand up and notice and they did that. Sir, having achieved that, they would not give the poor students an ease and drop the standards a little bit.

We are going to set standards for the accreditation of qualifications offered in Barbados. When I hear my friend

the Honourable Member for St. James North, whose heart is always rooted in the right place, I was alarmed when I heard him speak about the CXC Basic Certificate. I am also alarmed when I hear my friend the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, a former member of the teaching profession and Head of a union, speak.

We have heard in the last few years that we have an uncertificated society, that people were coming out of school without certificates. The only certificates we were given were the CXCs, 'A' Levels and the Associate Degree from the Barbados Community College. There are a lot of children who would never reach that level. I believe that the North American system is creeping into the class schools in Barbados. I do not mean class by quality of education but by where you come from.

Sir, even nursery school children receive a graduation and a certificate. They finish nursery school at three-and-a-half years, dress up pretty and then stick a certificate in your hand. Certification must be certifying what level you have reached. You cannot say that if you do not reach CXC General Proficiency and do not have five certificates that you should not be certificated. Certify me for what I have achieved. There are some children in this society, as in every society in the world, who will never, with the best will in the world, reach the level of CXC General Proficiency because we do not all have the same level of intellect.

If you doubt that look around in here. Sir, you hear some speak in this Honourable House, some bright and some not so bright. Some talk a lot like Old Man River. They must know some but they do not say anything.

I do not understand the argument that says to get rid of Basic Proficiency and everybody must get General Proficiency. There is no country in the world where every child can reach that level. There are some countries in the world where they struggle to reach Basic. Barbados has done well and is doing well. When my friend was talking, I was not sitting next to him or I would have whispered a few things to him and he would have veered and change direction.

Mr. Speaker, he was talking about reaching standards to enter university. That is the universal criterion, certificates to enter university. There are other people who are doing other things and because they have not reached that level they do not matter in the society.

I am concerned about the question of a local accreditation body and the kind of standards that it will set. Nowadays you have Town Hall meetings to hear the views of people but I do not go to Town Hall meetings so I am making my point now. I want somebody to write it down for the Town Hall meeting whenever it is held. We must not set standards at a level to exclude the vast majority of Barbadians. I am not talking about the ones that are worthless, do not study, do not care and do not go to school. I am talking about those who go to school everyday, work hard and try to please their teachers, parents and selves but there is only a certain level that they can reach because their intelligence portion that is given to them by God says that they can go so far and no further. It will be the criminal indictment of this society if children of that level are cast aside because they are not endowed to certain levels of intellect. I want to know what kinds of standards they are going to get and I also want to say, Sir, we must not get ourselves too carried away by new institutions like this new Council. This is merely a requirement of CARICOM and I go along with it because, as I say, I belong to the generation which believes that the integration of the Caribbean is something so vital that all of us should be in it but, in all this, we must not try to reinvent the wheel.

3.10 p.m.

The Ministry of Education as far back as I remember, back in my time, more than 25 years ago, had a Committee that dealt with these things. If somebody came in with a certificate from one of the Bible Colleges down in the Southern United States, you went before this Committee that would check it out and see that the standard is right and make recommendations. Other ministries used to write to the Ministry of Education and say that we have a man here applying for something as a psychologist. He says he has a degree in so and so from this university and, if we do not know anything about it, we will check it out. The Ministry of Education has been doing that quietly and unsung for many years.

There is no big fancy Council with Chairman, a billion members, a big fund and all these statutory powers that is going to make the slightest difference, in my view, because the professionals inside this group have to do the work. It seems to me that, were it not for the demands of meeting our requirements under the CARICOM agreements that perhaps expanding the Ministry by two or three people and paying them to do the work was all that we required.

Sir, who is looking at the standards of colleges outside of Barbados on an ongoing basis? Although we do check each case that is put to us, it would be useful if we could determine before hand, generally, what should or should not be recognised.

In the United States of America they have, for instance, the widest divergence of educational standards in tertiary institutions of any country in the world. If you can go from the top, the Ivy League colleges, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Harvards, the Yales, the

Princetons and the Stanfords, there are a lot of little ones scattered all across the face of the country, that if there is anybody who wants a degree, especially if you could run, could get one. If you could play basketball or any other sports, you can get a degree. I heard the reference made earlier to it, and I would not be wasting the Parliament's time in referring to it yet again.

Everybody in Barbados now seems to be a doctor. They are getting doctorates, left, right and centre. They tell me that somebody has a Ph.D. from the University of Nong Ping the capital or North Korea. We have no evidence of any Barbadian going there but we hear that people got Ph.D.'s from there. Every week when I open the newspaper, I read that I have to call this and that person doctor now. They were not doctors last week but they are doctors this week.

If we are going to be serious about our Council, and be responsible for accreditation of qualifications offered in Barbados, and if we are to examine and verify certificates from CARICOM States, let us look seriously at the question of examination and verification of certificates from the world at large.

Sir, those are the few points I wanted to make, in relation to this debate because an educational debate is long overdue and, I hope something else comes up that we can engage ourselves in Parliament with a serious look at a number of depressing educational issues. This is not only to inform ourselves but can give the Minister of Education the benefit of our thinking, so that we can bring into the common pool, a number of excellent ideas, in relation to education that are floating about out there.

Sir, I expressed the view that I do not know why somebody does not do me the favour of collating all my speeches in here. I cannot do it, but I wish somebody would do it for me. You, Mr. Speaker, can use your resources of The Speaker to get somebody to collate the things I have said in here over three decades, some of which when I read it, I would be ashamed, but a lot of it, Sir, I will be proud. I think that we need to engage in a serious debate, because education is so critical to everything we do, everything we aspire to and every aspect of our development. It is crucial and I hope that at another stage, Sir, when we are doing something less directly focussed than an Accreditation Bill, we can have such a debate.

I am grateful to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I want to take a few minutes to contribute to this particular debate, one that I consider to be rather important, because it establishes a set of fundamental frameworks within which and under which the Caribbean Single Market and Economy necessarily has to function.

I, like many other Honourable Members have some concerns regarding the fact that this whole business of accreditation is necessary, when one considers that there is a threat to the integrity of the educational systems that can easily be eroded, if we are not aware of the variables in all of the various curricular and the certification worldwide. If we are not conscious of the fact that we need to set our own standards and hold other individuals worldwide to our standards, then we are going to be looking for serious problems.

Mr. Speaker, societies change and as a result of that change, whether it is because of forces of inter-culture relation or acculturation or any other method of evolving society, by extension, the educational methodologies must also change. It is therefore important that we see accreditation, not as a static entity but it must be dynamic enough to be able to respond to the necessary changes that would be involved in social development and social change.

Therefore, I would want us to appreciate that even at this time, while we are determined to establish a Barbados Accreditation Council under this Act, we keep cognizant of the fact that we are in a dynamic situation, and what obtains now, may not obtain at a later stage. Therefore, I would want to start my submission by looking very closely at the impact that this Accreditation Council can have, regarding the development of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. I believe very strongly that the human resource capital that will be moving freely within a Caribbean Single Market and Economy must have a yard stick by which to measure that human resource capital. We must be able to analyse the educational input to determine how best to utilise that human resource capital. Therefore, I agree with and I will support an Accreditation Council.

3.19 p.m.

Sir, there are one or two concerns I have. I am not sure that we are not putting the cart before the horse. I would have thought that it would have made more sense to have established the regional body first that would allow for the integration of the various national councils and input from those national councils so as to allow for effective determination at the local and national level. The reason I say that is because of the question raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church West regarding the students from Mount Hope Dental Complex and the Dental Council which brings me to consider this particular angle. Mr. Speaker, you have a Council of about seven members and you have a multitude of disciplines that this....

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

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was saying that in addition to the directors, we have seven councillors who will be responsible for this accreditation council. Mr. Deputy Speaker, you cannot send an engineer to accredit a dental facility. You cannot send a dentist to evaluate and accredit a medical facility and you cannot do it with any other set of disciplines. Therefore, it is necessary that there be a series of national or sub-councils that would feed into the central council in order for this to make sense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with respect to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, it means that your national councils must necessarily feed into the regional council in order for this to make sense. That is why we had the problem with those students from the Mount Hope Medical Complex. Given the situation that you had dentists who graduated from the Mount Hope Medical Complex which is part of the University of the West Indies St. Augustine Campus and given that in the early stages, year one, year two and year three, there would not have been a track record from which you could determine the capacity of the various graduates, it was absolutely ridiculous that after ten years of putting out graduates that have functioned without any significant problems in terms of their capacity in Trinidad and Tobago where the Trinidad and Tobago Dental Council accepted those persons and registered them to work in Trinidad and Tobago but they would not be registered here in Barbados. That is a fundamental problem because there is no national or regional accreditation system to allow for a resolution of this type of problem. That is why I said that we should have gone the route of establishing the regional council first before we brought this piece of legislation here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Owen Arthur Administration has responsibility at this stage for the development and further integration of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. I have expressed concerns in this House before with respect to the rate at which the Government of Barbados continues to introduce legislation after legislation and is opening up this Barbadian economy and markets in ways where such reciprocity is not occurring with respect to other CARICOM members. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is important for us to stop and analyse what we are doing because throughout the whole CARICOM region there is significant variance between the legislative and administrative capacities of the various territories.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you at Time X decide to put various pieces of legislation in place, and you and your neighbouring territories are not able to introduce those administrative or legislative framework within the next ten to fifteen years, you are opening up yourself in a very serious way. You cannot expect to get reciprocity in a significant and tangible way. So I would again caution this Government with respect to how it is opening up the Barbadian economy to these sorts of situations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the establishment of this Barbados Accreditation Council will have little impact unless all of the associated pieces of legislation that allowed for the effective movement of people in the region to occur are in place. This forced me to go and do some research, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I went and looked at the submissions from 1989 when the CARICOM Heads of Government met at the Grand Anse Declaration of work programme. I looked specifically for areas that were supposed to be completed about ten to eleven years ago. I was shocked to find out that the CARICOM Heads of Government agreed at that meeting that by January 1991 there were going to be allowances for the free movement of skills and professional persons as well as contract workers, seasonal workers and workers on a project basis. So from 1991 that piece of legislation was supposed to have been put in place. Sir, 13 or 14 years later we have not yet put those pieces of legislation in place. Therefore, I have to ask the question, what the bringing of this Accreditation Bill at this stage is going to do because it is not going to advance the sort of process that is required.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the same Grand Anse Declaration indicated that there was supposed to be an elimination of the requirements of passports for CARICOM nationals travelling to other CARICOM countries by December 1990. Mr. Deputy Speaker, 14 years later we are still at the stage where we have not brought the legislation to Parliament and we have not established the administrative structures at the Immigration Department. So to underscore my point again, what is the sense in bringing this Bill at this stage while all of those other fundamental elements of legislation are still languishing somewhere in the various ministries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I looked at Article 46 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas, and again I have to ask myself the question, what is the sense of bringing this piece of legislation to the House of Assembly today when a citizen in one of the member states has no right to employment within another CARICOM member state. They have the right to seek employment, not the right to have employment.

Sir, we are here today debating an Accreditation Bill as an underlying premise by which they are going to integrate a regional grouping to allow for the development of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy, an economic union, but yet from the 1973 CARICOM legislation and the establishment of a common external tariff that we established in the 1980s, up to now 2004 we have not yet given citizens from member states the right to have employment. Your right is to find employment.

3.30 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why that is a dangerous premise and has to be spoken about, is that it allows the system to frustrate that individual who is looking for employment. That now explains to me why it is that we have never brought the type of legislation that would have not only allowed the elimination of passports but would have allowed for the use of photo identification as the medium for travelling within the Member States.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was supposed to have been a requirement for sometime now. Sir, by June 2003, all Member States were supposed to accept photo identification for travelling amongst CARICOM States. It makes good sense to me now why we do not have the administrative structures at the Immigration Department and why we have not yet brought the legislation that will allow for the removal of passports and other impediments to the free movement of people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, why am I debating this legislation today? I certainly do not understand it because there are more fundamental pieces of legislation that need to be brought before this Honourable House that would have underpinned any seriousness about integration. Therefore, I am beginning to have a number of difficulties this afternoon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would want to remind Honourable Members that in an integration process there are about four stages, the first stage being a Free Trade Area, which we have already gone through. This allows us to have a set of tariffs on goods and services that are different from intra-regional goods and services.

We then established the second stage in the 1980s, a Common External Tariff. After that, we moved to what is called the Economic Union, where CARICOM is supposed to be that, but that is not the case because at no time has CARICOM, in its legislation at the Heads of Government, allowed for the free movement of labour. It does not give one the right to leave Barbados tomorrow and go to Jamaica and find employment, all that it gives an individual is the right to go and look for work.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, within that context we have not yet put in place legislation that harmonises fundamental elements such as social security, labour, labour laws, and policies, that is why I am having a real difficulty here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must understand the importance of first putting the regional bodies together, for example, the Caribbean Court of Justice and integrating the Caribbean Congress of Labour in the process so that the regional labour laws, policies and programmes could be effectively harmonised within the region. Sir, instead of doing that, here we are starting at the other end, and that is where I am having my problems. We are starting at the wrong end and going back to where I first started in this debate regarding the Accreditation Council.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe very strongly that we need to concentrate on a regional accreditation council that would allow for our national councils to feed into, and as a result of that, we can have our local experts in particular areas to assist with determining what type of criteria we would require to allow for that person to work effectively in that particular area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I still have a number of problems, our educational system is under threat largely because of resources but also because of changing attitudes which can be underpinned by value changes. Therefore, value changes do not simply occur, one has to learn values instead of them being fed to you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if our educational system and the attitudes of our students are such that we are having difficulty in educating them, in getting them to appreciate the significance of developing their own capabilities, and we have gone to the stage in Barbados where we are removing the individual's responsibility for his own actions.

Sir, suddenly we have a young man or woman who goes to primary school, who in the majority of cases would be taught by his or her parents about wrong and right, that individual would go to a secondary school, and one would get an individual who is involved in deviant behaviour for whatever set of reasons. Whenever this happens, it is always said to be society's fault.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we could find every sociological reason to rationalise why it is that this individual has gone astray, when, in fact, for the first 12 years, as long as that person is not mentally deficient, that person must take some level of responsibility for his or her own action. But we have developed a system in Barbados where we blame the teachers and anybody else for people's mistakes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is important because it will underpin whether we are going to be successful in getting our students up to a level where we would not have to lower the standards to allow them to compete regionally and extra-regionally.

Sir, I was living in the United States of America during the 1980s. I remember there was a big scandal in the NCAA, where there were a number of black students who were being admitted to college. The academic requirement then was 3.0 to 3.1 GPA, which is a B to B-plus, but it was accepted to lower the standard to 2.1 GPA, in order to allow individuals to come in to get an opportunity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I mentioned that to ask the question: "Who are we helping in the long run?" Therefore, we in Barbados must recognise the importance of going back and developing the type of initial standards that I as a boy, have grown up with. Sir, some of these standards are long-standing cultural ones, where our forefathers have left us a legacy of pride and industry, which has been built on thriftiness, on hard work and on a capacity to cut and contrive. However, I will blame some of the modern-day politicians here today and will now speak from my own experiences.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many politicians who, on a quest for power, have corrupted and bastardised the process. I heard the Honourable Member for St. James North lamenting, and rightly so, about the problems in the educational system, about certifications, *et cetera*. I cast no blame one way or the other on either party but I concur with what he has said.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would be fooling ourselves if we were to think that in some way, while our young men and women are in primary and in secondary school, we have instilled in them the type of values that are necessary for their continued development and success into the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I always make the point that if two children, one from Barbados and the other from China, at a young age, were to go to primary school, were to develop the same; were to go into secondary school, their development would largely be the same, but there is something so fundamentally wrong after secondary school. After secondary school, as one relates to other students getting into tertiary institutions, there is a thirst, not only for learning but for ingenuity but something is fundamentally wrong in Barbados because the natural ingenuity and creative skills are beaten out of the children when they go to primary and secondary school in Barbados – and young men and women tend to lose their confidence to understand that they could build the next space shuttle, that no one in China is brighter than they are and that they have the same capacity because knowledge has no size attached to it.
3.40 p.m.

Sir, we can extract knowledge from any part of the universe because it belongs to no one, but somewhere along the line our people believe that we are a culture of smallness and that this means smallness of mind and capacity. Sir, all these things are important to accreditation. If standards are not at the level where they can provide the human resources capital for your private sector and public sector development, then it would have to be found elsewhere.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say in conclusion that we are attempting to develop the Caribbean Single Market and Economy upside down. If you add up the skilled and unskilled persons in the region, Sir, the unskilled persons would amount to a significantly greater amount than the skilled persons. Sir, in a process of free movement of labour as an integral component to allowing capital to be used in its most effective way, this Bill and future ones should allow for movement of unskilled labour first and then integrate skilled labour.

I believe strongly that people should have a right to employment, not a right to seek employment. We are dwarfing the process by allowing many essential pieces of legislation to languish in the system and we need to get them to Parliament before we start to engage our minds with the Barbados Accreditation Bill. Sir, as important as it is, it is pointless when the other essential pieces of legislation have not been put in place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in this debate because I believe that in this term, this piece of legislation will come to be remembered as one of the most fundamental pieces of legislation, not just for economic reasons but for social reasons in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill proposes to set a framework that will allow persons living in Barbados pursuing a course of study in this country to be able to go to that course of study and do it with the confidence that when it is completed, it would stand for something not just in Barbados but wheresoever in the world they may go. Barbadians may go and do a course in computer skills at a private college and we want to encourage private entrepreneurs to establish educational institutions but when Barbadians leave that college, however good the quality of tuition they receive, it will stand for nought if there is not a system by which that degree, diploma or certificate can be assessed and having been assessed, have a value put to it that would mean something.

The reason why we go for educational institutions is not only the acquisition of knowledge, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because the acquisition of knowledge can be done by individuals on their own as has happened throughout our history but when there is movement of people, not just within the Caribbean but within North America, Europe, Africa and other areas of the Commonwealth, there must be a mechanism by which you can determine the currency and assess the value of the qualification in order for the person to get the returns from their investment in that qualification.

Therefore, when this Bill starts to take root, it will mean that all manner of persons who would have invested their money either directly through fees or through the State

indirectly will have the ability to have these qualifications assessed and be able to stand for something not just within the boundaries of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there may be employees in this country who may be prepared to take a course done from a particular college because they know the owner and the tutor of the college but outside of the geographical boundaries of Barbados, that intimate and personal knowledge of either the institution or the person teaching does not obtain. Like with other factors of production, you need an architecture that would allow people to be able to make independent assessments that can count and stand for something.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is the simple reality of this Bill. It has implications domestically for our own economy and society but also creates the platform by which we can facilitate movement of people within the Caribbean region. The Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas clearly sets out at this stage, an indication for the movement of certain categories of people. I too, like others on This Side, feel very strongly that the sooner we move to the date of completion for the freedom of people within the region as one of the factors of production and not just skilled labour, the sooner we would have embraced the dream and reality of a Caribbean nation in which people can truly be able to benefit to the maximum of their abilities in the locations where opportunities exist.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for reasons best known, a gradual approach has been taken. The Prime Minister, the former Leader of the Democratic Labour Party signed the Grand Anse Declaration in 1989 committing to establish the Caribbean Single Market and Economy to facilitate the movement of factors of production. They limited the movement of people to skilled labour in circumstances where they felt that was manageable. Our Prime Minister has been one of the strongest advocates in the last two years for the complete movement of people within the Caribbean region, skilled or unskilled, that is the position of the Government of Barbados. Until we have other parties agreeing to the further revision of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas to say that, then we are at least committed to facilitating the movement of skilled nationals as defined by the graduates, artists, skilled media workers, sportsmen and broadcasters of the region. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the last speaker and I must confess that he speaks to these issues as if he is truly a novice to them. One would want to suggest to him that he would do well to go back and read and see what was achieved in relation to the European Union as a single market from 1958 or 1959 when the Treaty of Rome was signed and, indeed, when the Treaty of Maastricht was signed.

3.50 p.m.

Sir, in spite of all of the resources available to the European countries and in spite of all of the frameworks that they had available to them, it took them in excess of thirty-three years to even move to some of the points that the Caribbean has been able to move within fourteen years, from the point of decision within the relationship to the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. Perhaps, it is a fact that his thought often lags behind his speech and that is why he may want us to do things the wrong way in relation to the preparation of the work for the establishment of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

The first thing that one must do within a single market and economy, which contemplates the movement of skilled graduates, is to ensure that the qualification with which they are moving is capable of being assessed and determined such that there can be a seamless integration into the market that they are going to work in. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is basic commonsense and really does not require any tertiary level degree to understand why it is critical that a mechanism for an assessment of those qualifications be in place prior to the actual facilitation of movement on a large scale.

The work on this goes back to 1996 when there was a Standing Committee of Ministers of Education. In 1996 and 1997 it was understood that we would have a small flexible regional mechanism but we would not invest in a large bureaucracy because it was inevitable that national jurisdictions would need their own mechanism. Then you would have a regional clearing house that would take the information from each national certification authority and, therefore, allow for that kind of information to move between territories in circumstances where you would not have to recreate the mechanism at the regional level.

Sir, I say with all sincerity to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West that these are the things that inform this process and to suggest otherwise would be to want simply to make a political point for the sake of making a political point. I understand the tremendous pressure that the Deputy Leader may be under to support his current leader and, therefore, he needs to create a political scaffold on every speech that he makes.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I specifically said a scaffold and not a platform because I believe that the scaffold may be more approximate to a gallows.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: The Honourable Member also made the point that 14 years have gone and a CARICOM passport has not been passed. The reality is, a passport has serious fundamental implications. In a

post-September 11, world, especially where we are required to adhere to even higher standards of security, the issues pertaining to the free movement of people, the issuance of passports and other travel documents have to be treated to with a level of seriousness before opening up the system and being unable to track the movement of people in circumstances where they can constitute a security threat.

Sir, 18 months ago I would have indicated, when we were having difficulties with a spate of crimes, that there was a *modus operandi* where people were being brought in from other Caribbean countries to commit crime and being taken back out of the country within 24 to 48 hours, such that if the police got any form of description of them, there was nobody on the ground fitting the description and hence it created a potential threat to your country's stability in relation to that free movement of people without sufficient counterbalances to ensure that you could treat to security issues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why I will also equally dismiss the comments of the Honourable Member for St. John. Sir, for him to grandstand in this Chamber today and indicate that this is nothing but another bureaucratic shackle on Caribbean people, is to suggest the cavalier manner in which he feels that we should make our societies open and vulnerable to security issues that can fundamentally alter the stability of this country.

The position taken by the Honourable Member for St. John is further weakened by a convention ratified by the Democratic Labour Party in 1967 from the International Labour Organisation which called on countries to be able to set up a framework to be able to maintain records of migrant workers so as to ensure that they do not become the soft underbelly of the society and create an underclass or be subject to levels of abuse that would be unacceptable by the standards of the society.

Therefore, I dismiss the speech of the Honourable Member for St. John as nothing but his weekly flight of fantasy in here because I do not see him for longer than 15 or 20 minutes at any time a day in this Chamber.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: His speech started in stark contrast today to the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central who spoke with a level of maturity and who at least understood the aims and objects of the Bill and engaged the Honourable Minister of Education in a responsible way.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: This Bill has implications for every Barbadian going into education institutions and, therefore, it has far-reaching implications. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what does the form say at the back? Let the public judge for themselves, Sir.

The Third Schedule is what the Honourable Member is complaining about as constituting a bureaucratic shackle. I trust that the members of the media who have printed formats would print it for the public because they need to see it.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: All that we are saying is that you fill in your name, Mr, Mrs. or Miss. Then you say what is the basis for the application by ticking a box, media worker, artist, sportsman or musician. Then state your date of birth, nationality, place of birth, passport number, marital status, occupation, permanent address, telephone number, registration with any professional agency and previous employment, if that applies, and your last professional activity undertaken because those who may be accountants or members of a profession may have to put that, whereby the sports people may not do so. You have to state your intended place of employment, two references and then you swear that what you have declared is the truth.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, can that, in any right person's mind, constitute a bureaucratic shackle in times where in the region there is already evidence of criminals collaborating across borders to destabilise and undermine law-abiding societies?

4.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the kind of political harangue or duplicity that I say cannot be a part of our debates in these Chambers, if we are seriously to move forward in the interest of the people in this country. He is not even here to dispute it and that is my difficulty.

Let me go further, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because this debate is very important. It therefore has implications for our national economic and social development but also implications for the framework that needs to be put in place for the satisfactory completion of Barbados' obligations under the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can understand that there may be legitimate concerns in the country on other aspects pertaining to the question of the movement of people. Let us speak about that, but to suggest otherwise and to go down that road, weakens the platform under which this Bill has been brought to us.

I want to say to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we ought also to be careful about standards. When we were settling the policy on this Bill, we had to take a decision as to whether or not we would try to duplicate things. At

that time, as the Honourable Minister of Education said in his comprehensive delivery this morning, the University of the West Indies was busy setting up a Board of Undergraduate Studies and Quality Assurance Mechanisms to ensure that they had a level of self-assessment to guarantee the quality of programmes that they were offering their students, because they understood that they were no longer operating in a monopolistic environment in the region, because all kinds of universities, such as St. Georges University are now getting people to register with them. Therefore, the quality of degree, or qualification offered by the University of the West Indies would be measured against whatever was available in the market. The Government of Barbados took a deliberate decision, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we would not seek to duplicate processes where they legitimately and validly existed. This is why this Bill speaks specifically to the fact that where an institution at Section 6, already can satisfy the Accreditation Board that it has either an internal or an independent assessment exercise that is valid, it can be exempt from the provisions of this legislation.

The other critical point to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that this legislation only makes it mandatory to register your educational institution, but what it does after is that it effectively says that you accredit your programme or your institution. Sir, a time will come when all right thinking institutions will want to be accredited because it allows them the ability to have greater currency attached to their qualifications.

Sir, you would not have an issue with being accredited, if you are satisfied that the standards which you are adhering to, are top of the line. You will only have an issue with accrediting if you are not capable of meeting the standards that an accreditation Board deems to be necessary. If you do not meet the standards, I certainly will be advising my constituents that they should not spend their private money to participate in any institution, a year or two from now that has not validly sought accreditation from the Barbados Accreditation Council. Sir, even within the public service of Barbados and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central will know that the Ministry of Education has a Committee that meets on an *ad hoc* basis, called the Equivalency Committee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many teachers and public servants who have done courses, and cannot receive any kind of recognition for the courses that they have spent their money doing, and it has been a source of great concern for all of us in the system. The Committee then tries to do the work of what this Accreditation Council will be doing on a full time day-to-day basis.

The Committee involves civil service members, education members and union members which meet two to three times a year and in all fairness, they cannot get through the work load. Therefore, the public servants continue to be prejudiced, cannot draw the additional increments, in spite of having done the additional course of study, in circumstances where they have a legitimate expectation that upon completion of the study, they would get recognition of the qualification.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it does not end there. The Honourable Minister spoke about articulation. Articulation I used to describe as the unsexy but critical issue of education. I do not know what the current figures are now, but I know that the disparity between the unit cost for the University of the West Indies and the Community College was in excess of $10 000. When I was there, it used to cost us about $4 500 a student at Community College, and the University of the West Indies about $16 000 to $17 000.

There were students leaving the Barbados Community College, going to University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, a few miles away, who had to do over courses that they had completed at Community College, and the Government of Barbados paying $17 000 a student, when they would have already paid for them to do it at the Barbados Community College at $4 500 a student.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I became the Minister of Education, the articulation discussions had been going on for 11 years, when the Senior Minister was the Minister of Education. She started them in 1984 or 1985 and it went through a whole Democratic Labour Party Government and nothing happened.

One of the first things we did, Mr. Deputy Speaker, was to meet with the Principal of the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill and the Principal of the Barbados Community College. We set up a Committee and gave them six months to give us an articulation framework for at least 12 programmes of study.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they did them but the natural sciences remained to be done, and I am not sure whether or not it has been completed. There were legitimate concerns on the part of the University of the West Indies, and we told them to sort it out because it cannot be right. This is one of the reasons why the Minister of Education is saying that the University of the West Indies has now taken a decision that wherever the TLIs, the tertiary level institutions in the Caribbean can deliver post-secondary programmes or tertiary programmes, they should be allowed to do so, subject, of course, to the quality assurance mechanisms being put in place. The reason being that those tertiary level institutions do not have the same cost levels as the University of the West Indies, for obvious reasons.

Therefore, it is cheaper to deliver some types of courses at the tertiary level institution than at the University

of the West Indies itself, which can be getting into more research, more post-graduate work and that kind of thing that will elevate its presence and its usefulness, not just to the region but to the hemisphere and to the wider globe.

These are the issues that I would have expected the Opposition to raise. Unfortunately, other than the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, they remained outside of the parameters of this debate. Mr. Deputy Speaker, these are the things that people face on a day-to-day basis. Every family almost has somebody at some level of educational institution undergoing continual training. These are the people who are going to suffer, if we do not put this framework in place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it may sound esoteric but it is the most fundamental piece of legislation, in my view, that we have brought, in relation to social and economic benefits at the same time, since we have been the Government over the course of the last year. The complementary pieces of legislation that will come from the CARICOM community perspective will supplement what is here, in relation to our regional obligations. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to you yet again that were there no Caribbean Single Market and Economy, this Bill would still be before this Parliament today because Barbadians when they finish studying do not only remain in Barbados to work. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the same way that the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports and the Student Revolving Loan Fund advises students going overseas that they should not attend an institution that is not accredited, equally we must now ensure that we adhere to the very same standards in Barbados.
4.40 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not mind the *sotto voce* comments of those who are still neophytes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to congratulate the Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports for bringing to this Parliament a piece of work that has been in progress for nine years. I look forward in the near future to the regional mechanism which would give greater flexibility and currency to this national council.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, comments were made glibly about standard forms for institutions. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there must be normative reference for the establishment of an institution. What nonsense am I hearing? Institutions must have systems of financial accountability and other forms of accountability. They must have a framework for who would manage them, for how policy would be directed to them and a framework for whether they can raise capital on their own or whether they are subject to the control and direction of other entities for raising capital.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, separate and distinct from that, the Bill speaks to broader issues that are peculiar to accreditation, articulation, registration and equivalency. Therefore, the purpose of this Bill is to provide the framework for regulation that we have put in place, as the Central Bank has in relation to monetary policy and as the Securities Commission has in relation to the trading in securities and capital markets. Therefore, this Bill is to education what the Securities Commission is to the capital markets and what the Central Bank is to monetary supply and regulation in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it simply means that an educational system that has done well for itself and that continues to recognise the need for modernization and reform has admitted now, by the establishment of this institution, that we cannot only cater to people as if they would spend the rest of their lives in Barbados alone. It means that we must reflect within the framework for the educational system a commitment to ensuring quality since Government is not the only provider of education, that in circumstances where a higher percentage of persons are now pursuing tertiary and post-secondary education there is a need to make sure those quality standards are met and that to the extent that people would travel outside of Barbados that there is a need to give them a framework such that that which they have earned within the domestic shores of Barbados is worth something when they go to other countries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I make these few remarks cognizant that this is a Government keeping its commitment with the people of this country making sure that they benefit individually. Equally, this Government is making sure that at the same time we do this that we are keeping our commitments regionally to create the framework for a Caribbean Single Market and Economy which would give us new opportunities for sustainable economic development in this country beyond that which can be provided by our limited population and geographical size.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we understand that and we understand what is the motivation behind it, then we would realise why it is critical for us to be able to pursue these policies some of which may appear to be difficult at first but which are absolutely essential for the survival and the thriving of this country's economy and our sustained quality of life.

I am obliged to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to lend my support to this Bill.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West said in his presentation that politicians have corrupted and bastardised the process of education, but he has not explained or elaborated on that comment. Mr. Deputy Speaker, having been given the privilege to be here to represent the interest of the people of St. Thomas and coupled with the situation where I have come here in support of a very distinguished party that has given yeomen service to the people of Barbados for the last 60 years, I have a tremendous difficulty with that comment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I shall not allow the Honourable Member who walked in here for just a year to tear down the work of distinguished pioneers in Barbados. Some politicians have come in here as teachers, some as lawyers, some as ordinary civil servants and some otherwise who have made tremendous contributions to the growth and development of education within the last hundred or so years. So I would like to know from the Honourable Member what he means when he said in a blanket statement, politicians. He did not say the Democratic Labour Party politicians, but I suspect those are the ones he means. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a difficulty with that because I believe that there are Honourable Members of the Democratic Labour Party who have made outstanding contributions to the growth and development of education in Barbados where Barbadians at all levels have benefitted.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you are talking about free education as bastardising it and corrupting it according to the Democratic Labour Party and if you are going to talk about education at the level of Sir Grantley Adams and those who started to look at our welfare programme by the introduction of free school meals, milk and biscuit, the text books loan scheme and things of that nature that we know have helped Barbadians especially poor people's children to develop, I have a difficulty with that statement. Therefore, I am not going to be associated with any category of persons who have come into this Honourable Chamber and who have in the various ministries and otherwise sought to corrupt or bastardise education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are people in the Caribbean who boast of the high quality education that this Government of Barbados and indeed successive governments of Barbados have offered to its people, and I support it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, persons, especially children, teachers and other skilled people, from Barbados who go to other parts of the world are always respected and praised for their high quality level of education. So I have a difficulty when the Honourable Member makes that kind of blanket statement. If he wants to say, as another Honourable Member said about a week or two ago to criticise what happened in George Street when he probably meant somewhere else, I have no problem with that, but he needs to explain what he means. I am feeling very upset about it. However, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to use the limited time accorded to me in a more positive way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to say here on the Floor of this Honourable Chamber so that the people in Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean will hear me that it is a pity that the Honourable Member who just spoke and talks about a quorum hardly comes into this Honourable Chamber. This is something I really have to bring to the fore in another forum because if we are here about the people's business and if people make a sacrifice...

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central comes and leaves as a visitor in the Gallery would and then criticises what is going on in this Honourable Chamber. It is unfortunate that this Honourable Member who is a young person that other young men and women would be looking at for full assembly in this Honourable Chamber would come here once in a blue moon and then says little or nothing that would be of relevance to the people up in Marl Hope Gap and the other communities that voted so resoundingly for him. I have news for him, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I will use on a political platform not in here, I am discussing the business of the people in here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to praise the Honourable Minister of Education for his very comprehensive presentation this morning. I recognise that this Barbados Accreditation Council Bill is a real comprehensive piece of legislation that is very timely and very necessary at this time.

4.20 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North has spoken to a number of issues, many to which I lend my support. Sir, I want to add that one of the challenges which many our young people have is not with parenting but with the misplaced value system which other parents have given them.

Sir, there are older persons in our communities who we would expect to be supportive of these young persons, but who have already reneged on their responsibilities and are not giving back to the society in the way that I would have expected them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is also the lack of pastoral care, not only coming from the schools but from the homes as well. We have many young people who have challenges and who are experiencing much trauma but there is no or little assistance being given to them.

We have a number of children who might not be up to scratch with a number of skills and, therefore, a number of individuals, parents included, have failed to work on a one-to-one basis with them but instead would send them to school, expecting the teachers to do it. On the other hand, some of these teachers are from the same system and, therefore, do not know how to improvise by using that hidden curriculum to touch areas where the children can benefit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a number of serious challenges and in the education reform package, this Government has sought to include areas such as black history, the PEACE Programme and the CHECKS Programme, in which Government knows that these programmes can make a contribution to these young children.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is unreasonable for many of my generation to give others the impression that when they write examinations and fail, that is the end of life. We all know that we have grown up in an age where we did not have the opportunity to have written two or three General Certificate of Education (GCE's) but that in most instances we had the opportunity to have written one. If we had been successful in passing that one examination, we were given another opportunity to take that examination, until we were able to pass all of them.

Sir, I am a firm believer that if I have done the examination five times, I still have the same amount as if I had taken it at different times, but we give the young people the impression that when they have failed at this point, that they are a failure for life. People in other cultures are not as hard and as cruel to others when they have to write examinations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard other Honourable Members speaking of the Barbados 'O' Level Institute and I want to say that I am a proud member of that institution where in the early 1970s, I would have pursued a number of courses. I also understand that the Honourable Member for St. Philip North would have been one of the beneficiaries of that institute. Sir, I know that there are a number of other forms of certification in Barbados that deserve to be accredited.

Asides.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am giving the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central the opportunity. When he had his chance to speak today, he did not last ten minutes and I hope he would give me the chance to make my simple contribution to this debate in my own way.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member has been a teacher for many years and, therefore, knows that manners maketh man, and would give me a chance to complete my presentation to this discussion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have learnt from the Honourable Member of the large number of private institutions that are offering certificates. We know that this Council will serve as a validation agency for certificates granted because we know that the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and the free movement of skilled nationals have begun to come into effect. Therefore, we are cognizant that these large numbers of persons who would be criss-crossing territories, will come with various forms of qualification and we would therefore, need to know what are the values of these qualifications. Hence, this Barbados Accreditation Council Bill, 2004, that is before us will help with the authenticity of these individuals certification.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Barbados Accreditation Council, 2004, will justify the quality of these certificates in order to uphold good standards. We know that the Caribbean Examination Council examinations, the Caribbean Advance Proficiency Examination (CAPE), *et cetera*, are accepted in other jurisdictions. Therefore, it is important that we get the system going in a more systematic way, in order to have the accreditation sorted out.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, sometimes young people come to the constituency clinics, of which all Honourable Members I am sure would be faced, and would talk about doing courses such as customs, Information Technology, cosmetology, music, hospitality, supervisory, and other technical areas. We know there is need now for us to be able to ensure that the quality and high standards are there in this area of certification.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, presently there is no comprehensive registration process in place for post-secondary institutions in the island. The Education Act requires that all institutions are to be registered with the Ministry of Education, but Your Honour would appreciate the inability of the Ministry of Education to manage all of the processing because there is no individual group set there to ensure that this whole process is undertaken.

We know that many post-secondary and tertiary institutions want to be accredited because they will qualify for tax exemptions, funding, Government grants, *et cetera*, and therefore many of them would want to apply but I think it is significant that we make it abundantly clear to them that in order for them to be accredited, and persons could gravitate towards them to get the certificate that would help them further in life, these institutions be registered. We know too because there are substantial delays within the

Ministry with the assessing and processing of these qualifications that it takes quite sometime for responses to be given.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that it is Government's responsibility to ensure that consumers are well protected and that adequate standards be maintained in order for recognition to be given to the institutions and to the programmes offered, in order for the qualifications to be of any value. I think this Bill seeks to effectively and efficiently address some of those issues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see the Barbados Accreditation Council, 2004, as first to provide a means to create a common accepted standard. The Barbados Accreditation Council seeks to standardise the quality of the educational institutions within the region and we know that persons are coming with a wide number of skills and, therefore, that issue needs to be addressed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I logged on to a site on the Internet where I was told that if I needed to have a Doctorate, all I had to do was to give some basic information and I would get my Doctorate within two weeks' time, and I was not asked to write an examination.

Sir, we know that in the past – and perhaps it is still happening – quite a number of Barbadians were posing with bogus pieces of paper which said that they have a Doctorate. I believe this Council would be able to address such issues so that all of us would be able to understand where we are, and the value of that certificate which we are holding.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would know that if I had to use these certificates that I have earned while doing a community course, that they would not have that much value but there are some young persons who do not understand and would say that they have a certificate in bereavement, in early child health education or in floral arrangement.
4.30 p.m.

I think that this institution would help individuals to better understand that these certificates only show that they have participated in the programme, not that they are skilled in any particular respect and that it does not allow them to secure employment. Therefore, the accreditation council will be able to examine these certificates and bring a measure of validity to these certificates being given to the individuals.

Sir, a few weeks before the general elections, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition made the comment that qualifications and certificates are not important. I thought it was wrong and it will come back to haunt him because the message that was going out to individuals was that they should not worry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I spoke about the fact that I was a recipient of the training and high quality of teaching at the 'O' Level Institute. I want to make this point because too many of us have forgotten the bridges that we have crossed. Sir, when I entered the teaching profession, teachers were leaving the country to go to the Bahamas, Cayman Islands, England and the United States of America and many teachers were brought into the system who had one or two certificates only but it gave me an opportunity to upgrade myself. Sir, the thrust for further training was important then as it is now and even today, the more retraining the better because we are looking for individuals who are multi-skilled, multi-talented and on the cutting edge. The world is changing and there is a need for persons to have more than one skill.

Sir, many Barbadians need to become multi-skilled and ensure that they train and retrain if they are to remain effective whether in the school system, legal system or whatever area of work. There was a visitor here today who has received his Ph.D. as a result of training in Barbados at the 'O' Level Institute. Therefore, I want to praise the Speaker of the House for more than thirty years of hard work in ensuring that the institute remains current and attracts Barbadians to meet their needs so that they can take advantage of opportunities for employment in Barbados and the rest of the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Ministry of Education Youth Affairs and Sports has been meeting with agencies, particularly the Ministry of Health to make sure that we bring a level of understanding and clarity to students studying in Cuba. Every year, the Clement Payne Movement in association with the Ministry of Education lends support and guidance to individuals who go to Cuba to pursue studies in medicine, engineering and languages but there is a challenge when they return to Barbados.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church West spoke eloquently about the challenges which dental students have when they go to Mount Hope and I am sure that this accreditation council will help to resolve some of these challenges. Sir, it is unfortunate that we put millions of dollars into education to prepare our people for the world of work but students do not come back to Barbados to give of the skill they have developed. Sir, the Cuban challenge will be examined in the whole exercise to bring a level of appreciation and recognition to those individuals who benefit from that system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. James North mentioned the value of CXC Basic Certificate and the School Leaving Certificate. I must say that the Ministry of Education in its reform has examined those issues and, indeed, all over the Caribbean the leaders are looking at the work of the CXC General and the School

Leaving Certificate to see how best they can come up with a certificate to replace it that would be recognised for employment and further education. I also want to make reference to the national diploma in education for school leavers and those individuals who reach the secondary level. Sir, it is not a replacement for the CXC General but complements it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in other jurisdictions, national diplomas are offered to students at the end of their secondary studies and ours will seek to give status as to where persons have reached in the educational level and also give the opportunity if persons have not reached the required level, for credits to be recognised and used later if those persons have to stop going to school because of illness or some social challenge. The core subjects to be certified are Mathematics, English, Science, Social Studies, Conversational French or Spanish, two electives and one enrichment programme. The enrichment programme will deal with the period of time and the activities that individuals are involved in within the school systems. These are Scouts, Guides, the 4-H Club, Toastmasters, the Photographic Club, the Debating Society and things of that nature which we expect all children to participate in if they are to become good, wholesome citizens, ...having a knowledge of where they came from, where they want to go and what is expected of them as good citizens. That is what the enrichment programme is about.
4.40 p.m.

Sir, I think that is the route that we should go because many of our older folk have lost the touch of understanding what their role is and have never known the benefits of working in a nursery school, volunteering an hour or two per week in an old people's home or working with a community group or helping young people with their homework, drama, dance and visual arts. This particular enrichment programme would help them in this respect. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the CXC General Proficiency certificates are still the requirements to pursue post-secondary and tertiary education.

Sir, I shall close by extending sincere thanks to the Minister for the hard work and commitment in bringing this Bill to this Honourable House today. I also, extend thanks to all those individuals within the Ministry of Education, the Permanent Secretary, technical officers, those who will be serving on the Council and those who worked as consultants and contributed in helping us reach this level today, where we have a standardised system, where recognition is given to the various forms of certificates and qualifications that would be useful and important in making the difference in the lives of those who now face challenges because of the loopholes in the system. Sir, this standardised system would be recognised as our people move from within the Caribbean to any place in the world.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it certainly would be remiss of me if I did not make a full contribution to what I consider to be one of the most important debates that this Honourable House would have engaged in since I have been an Honourable Member of this House. It has been over five years that the good people of St. Philip South would have sent me to this Honourable Chamber.

Sir, this business of accreditation and our efforts to ensure that standards are maintained in education is one which I think every Honourable Member of this House should treat with some seriousness. Let me start by saying that I am a little disappointed, knowing that the Leader of the Opposition has benefitted handsomely from the high level of education delivered in this country, has not found it suitable enough to come into this Honourable Chamber as a responsible Leader of the Opposition to make some level of contribution to this very important debate.

Sir, at the outset, having heard several Honourable Members speak, let me deal with some very critical issues pertaining to this Barbados Accreditation Council Bill by seeking to put this Bill in its proper context. I would like to use the time allotted to me to focus on a few things. First, as I seek to put this Bill in its proper context to look at the importance of it in facilitating and strengthening our labour market. Secondly, how this Bill can help tremendously in the harmonisation of labour markets in the region as we seek to establish the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and thirdly, how this Bill will help us with continuing to maintain and, indeed, enhance standards in education.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East made mention of the fact that we could use the occasion of the debate on this Bill and the occasion of the establishment of the national accreditation body in Barbados to do a stocktaking exercise in education. This stocktaking exercise would be important so as to ensure that the right quality of education in Barbados is secured.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things that this country can be justly proud of is the quality of our human resources, human capital and social capital. Over the years successive Governments have spared no resources in ensuring that the quality of our educational system is one to be proud of because it has helped us to provide the right type of human capital to facilitate our national development.

We as an administration, especially in more recent times, have said that in order for Barbados to maintain and enhance its level of competitiveness as a nation, compete in the regional economy and certainly compete in an international and hemispheric economy, which is being

more and more open, that as a matter of deliberate policy we have to ensure that the quality of our human capital is right.

Sir, apart from placing a lot of emphasis on strengthening the university and expanding it to allow more persons to gain entry into the university, we said that in order to promote balanced development and create opportunities for persons who are not necessarily prepared for the university that we need to put some emphasis on the vocational sites.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have created more opportunities at institutions like the Barbados Community College and Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. We also said that in order to create opportunities for persons, notwithstanding the fact that persons may not be able to enter those institutions, that they should have access to some level of training.

Sir, we recognise the importance of training across-the-board. We come into this Honourable Chamber and say that we want persons to pursue some level of business activity. We said that the civil service cannot absorb all these persons and that the private sector might not allow everyone to gain employment and, therefore, we should encourage some level of self-employment but we should also prepare self-employed persons properly.

Sir, we have been engaged in training programmes for small business persons who previously may not have wanted to get involved in training because they wanted to go the quick route of getting involved in business. We know that in order to sustain these businesses these persons should be trained and, therefore, we have provided the training for them. Sir, to move them from one level of business to another level, small, medium and large-scale operation, it is vitally important that they are grounded in training.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us look at the issue of the harmonisation of the labour markets in the region. This speaks to a very critical issue as we move closer and closer to the establishment of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. Honourable Members would have spoken to the need for equivalence in standards, to ensure that when we train a Barbadian, he is sufficiently well equipped and we want the courses that they would have pursued in Barbados to be so well recognised elsewhere to the point that all of us can feel comfortable that when persons move beyond our shores, ...when they are questioned about the level of qualification and the rigours for the courses that they would have done, we know that they would stand the test of time. There will be rapid movement of persons in and out of Barbados in a Caribbean Single Market and Economy, and it is vitally important that tremendous attention is paid to this issue of standards in education.

4.50 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not want to hear persons in Antigua and anywhere in the region questioning the quality of qualifications that are gained in Barbados. At the same time, we want to ensure that those seeking employment in Barbados who did not pursue courses at our institutions that what they present to us would have been properly accredited.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me spend a couple of minutes looking fairly deeply at this issue of the role of education in economic development. Let me remind myself that in a branch of economics focussing on the growth process, there is a stream called, endogenous growth theory which is perhaps the best aspect of this branch of economics, which places in proper perspective and brings into short focus, the role of education.

We have grown accustomed as the identified factors of production, thinking about land, labour, finance and access to finance, *et cetera.* There is voluminous literature in the area of growth theory which focuses on the importance of getting the skills mix correct, and the importance of human capital.

Sir, almost all of those theories have been written. The empirical work has been done for industrialised countries, small developing countries, large developing countries and the impact of human capital on the growth process is sound. The evidence is unmistakable and very compelling. Therefore, we know that it is extremely important that you not only expend the resources on the human capital but you must get the skills mix correct.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this brings me to another point which is the relationship between national and regional manpower, in this case, planning and programming at the educational institutions. I am firm in the belief that educational delivery should be demand driven. Far too often, you will ask students a simple question, such as why have you chosen this option? Why have you chosen to come into the Economics Department? Why have you chosen to do something in the faculty of Social Sciences, as opposed to Natural Science, Arts or General Studies? Do you have any idea of what the labour market requirements are? Has your choice or choices of study become driven by what the labour market needs? The student wants to know if you are crazy and replies, 'why do you ask me a question like that?' My friends came into the faculty of Social Sciences. I studied with them in Sixth Form and I am going with them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there comes a time when we have to make Economics more competitive, even if the students continue to think so, because it says something about how those students are spoken to at the level of the secondary schools, in respect of career choices.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it also speaks more fundamentally to the manpower requirements and the

discussions informing manpower planning at the national level. Sir, the results of those discussions are fed into the planning at the educational institutions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even if the students are making choices not based on what the labour market needs, I am submitting that the Governments in the region have a duty to make sure that given the dynamics of labour markets, and the need for us to speed up the rate at which we seem to become more competitive, that the information on the labour markets' needs should be sent at rapid paces to those who plan at our educational institutions.

Sir, and recognising that educational delivery should be demand driven, the architects of our educational programmes should be very mindful of the fact, I am not saying that it is not happening but I am just using this opportunity to drive home the point that if it was ever important, it is now, because as we go forward, we must get it right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we must ensure that the needs of the labour market are known. We must make sure that we are able to get the educational systems to respond in a timely manner, so that we are able to produce the quality of workers, sufficiently focussed, sufficiently well equipped that these positions can be filled from within. It is a very fundamental point and I would encourage all others, when they speak, if they think it is sufficiently important, to make contact with this particular issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me give an example and I am not using this opportunity to criticise. I am just using the opportunity to give some advice and encouragement.

In the 1985/1986 academic year, I was attached to the planning section of the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill as a research assistant. One of the tasks I was asked to undertake was a survey on the placement of graduates. An aspect of that exercise brought me in contact with those who employed graduates who I was able to trace that were located in Barbados.

We asked them some searching questions during that survey. One of the things that stuck with me, because 1986 is about 18 years ago, and as you get a little older, the memory does not remain as good as when we are young. The fundamental question that we had the most interesting discussions on was the suitability of the graduates to their organisation at the time they arrive. That is, how is the university preparing the students for the world of work?

Sir, I got some very strange results, but it told me, some 16 years ago, that there was a greater need for strengthening of the relationship between the world of work and the world of study. I am saying it now, I have not said it to too many people, but what came out to me from those folks was that on entry, quite apart from the qualification that the immediate benefit to the employers from engaging a student from the University and engaging a student directly from Harrison College was not substantially different. Mr. Deputy Speaker, obviously at that time it speaks to the need to rethink the type of approach which was used for the undergraduate training. Of course tremendous strides would have been made since 1986 in that regard.

5.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another point I want to make in this regard is that we have made sure in very recent times that the manpower planning information is fed into the building and the structuring of the educational programmes. For the last couple of years now this region has been heavily involved in the negotiations in different spheres in theatres of negotiations. We have been involved in the Free Trade Area of the Americas, in the World Trade Organisation discussion, in discussions with the European Union to shape a new partnership arrangement and we have been involved in discussions at the level of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy. In earlier times we were always confronted with the reality of not having sufficient technical capacity to allow us to prepare ourselves in the most meticulous way for engagement in these discussions which focussed on international trade negotiation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am happy to see that quite recently the University of the West Indies in partnership with the University in Canada started formal programmes in building capacity for participation in the international trade negotiations. We focussed on international trade law, international economics, diplomacy, *et cetera*. These things started not very long ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill is probably one of the most important Bills that would have come to this Honourable Chamber for us to discuss. Sir, any discussion in this Honourable Chamber which speaks to standards is one that we should take an extremely close look at. As we speak more about regionalisation and internationalisation in every sphere of economic activity, standards are important, so those who would want us to believe that is not the case, must think otherwise.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, not very long ago just as the educational planners were engaged on this issue from an educational viewpoint, I would have been involved in similar discussions but the focus was on the agricultural sector for participation in the regional economy and in the global economy that is becoming more and more open.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just as the educational planners and the ministry's officials are busy making preparation

for the establishment of an accreditation body in Barbados, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development is busy planning for the establishment of a national agricultural health and food safety agency. At the level of CARICOM, just as they are expected to put together a regional accreditation body which of course would work closely with the national accreditation bodies to ensure that the coordination work is done properly, to ensure that where technical assistance and other types of assistance are required that they get it, there are discussions which would eventually lead to the establishment of a Caribbean agriculture, health and food safety agency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a matter of fact, about two years ago I attended a Council on Trade and Economic Development (COTED) meeting. That meeting focussed on the Caribbean agricultural health and food safety agency. They were going on and on about that and then an intervention was made by Barbados. The Senior Minister and I were there and my intervention focussed on the need for us to get it right.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the level of the national economy, we have to build structures and systems, so the focus should be what we are doing here in trying to get our act together in respect of establishing this national accreditation body and the focus back then was on establishing a national agriculture health and food safety agency before we went on in getting the cart before the horse in putting up this regional agriculture health and food safety agency and then they do not have anything on the ground to coordinate or to oversee. So I think we are using the right approach in our efforts to get the national body going first while at the same time working toward establishing the regional body.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, mention was made of competition in education delivery in the region. This obviously is an extremely important topic at this time. In an era of internationalisation and globalisation, we can no longer rest on our laurels and no longer can the University of the West Indies think that there is some monopolisation on educational delivery in the region. It is a fact that we have to face up to.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, recently our new Pro-Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of the West Indies, Professor Beckles, spoke very eloquently on this issue. He mentioned that we need to be a little more creative, that we need to stave off the competition and that the university has to ensure that what it is offering is what the governments and the region want. However, it does not have a lot of time to do it, so there must be a rethink of how things are being done at the university so as to ensure that relevance is maintained, that the programmes become more and more attractive and that if persons are asking for further decentralisation in the delivery that the university is prepared to do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East made mention of the fact that the University of the West Indies, through its distance education programme and its more decentralised approach now to delivery, is allowing more and more of the teaching to occur in non-campus territories. Mr. Deputy Speaker, tremendous strides have been made in distance education. The university has utilised the technology quite effectively in order to facilitate distance education.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if opportunities exist where the teaching is going to be more cost-effective and if more and more persons could stay at home and take some courses, the programme that deals with the quality control issues which are vitally important that this Bill speaks to, is to be encouraged because others delivering programmes would encourage it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was at the University of the West Indies I was involved in a wonderful programme which the St. Lucian Government had asked the University of the West Indies Cave Hill to put on.
5.10 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the St. Lucian Government has seen the need to retrain many of their senior-level civil servants simultaneously. Sir, I was invited, with the University of the West Indies (UWI), to do a special Bachelor's programme in Management and Administration. This meant that lecturers had to be despatched over to St. Lucia approximately every six weeks to do teaching in blocks. This course was done by both first-year and second-year students. We used to ensure that when we were not there, that the tutors on the ground were doing the correct thing because we had seen the importance of facilitating. Sir, that is what I meant when I said that the university must be creative and co-operative so as to ensure that the training needs of those in the region are met.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in response to the challenges brought to bear on the educational institutions in the region, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East would have made mention of the fact that in 1996/1997 when the Board of Undergraduate Studies was established, on that occasion there was a Quality Assurance Unit based at Mona, headed by Professor Elsa Leo-Rhynie. Sir, what became extremely important, and will become more and more the case, is the issue of quality assurance in education to assess the quality of our certificates and the suitability of our self-worth, so that as others would want to come into the region, we would be in a similar position with regards to the human resources for engagement of employment in any part of the region.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I want to speak to is the importance of an accreditation body's work in better providing the link of one level of qualification to the next level. If we put everything in this perspective, we would be putting the system in a better position to not only articulate clearly those in the school system but those who might want to engage in some other type of qualification. Therefore, as this body will be taking charge of that type of operation in such a way that it lends some credence and legitimacy to what it is doing, then the movement from one level of qualification to another could better be understood and appreciated.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to close by saying that this Barbados Accreditation Council Bill, 2004, has my full support. It is a very important issue that we have been called upon to debate today. We may look back on it in any number of years and say to ourselves that this was perhaps one of the most important things that this Honourable House was asked to consider during this term.

It has certainly paved the way for what we all look forward to, that is to pave the way to ensure that our standards in education are maintained and enhanced, and that we produce a quality worker in every field of study who we can be proud of, not only through the potential contribution that person could make within the region but outside the region as well. It also protects us from what others might want to do in the name of dumping.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am obliged to you.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, just a short intervention to lend my support for this measure before the Honourable House. Sir, first I would like to congratulate the Honourable Minister of Education for what I consider to be a step that strengthens our ability within the region to create a true Single Market and Economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have listened carefully to a number of speakers on both Sides of the aisle who have expressed their collective opinions on this Bill and on the aspects of the Barbados Accreditation Council.

Sir, let me first treat to some of the remarks that were made by the Honourable Member for St. John, who would have spoken about this being another bureaucratic shackle. I believe that this is ultimately a necessary move which is a first step that goes way beyond a simple Accreditation Committee, one which now exists in the Ministry of Education.

I am not going to be as scathing in my remarks as some other Honourable Members on This Side were regarding the Honourable Member for St. Philip West in his own assessment of how one seeks to create a regional body. I think that before we can integrate the existence of a regional council, that we have to have something to integrate.

Sir, we may disagree on the way in which we go about creating a Regional Accreditation Council but what must happen is that we must have a regional accreditation council and if I am not mistaken, that is what the Honourable Member for Christ Church East would have said this morning in his presentation, that is, we are leaning to a system of having a regional system of accreditation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that this is not another level of bureaucracy but I believe the Council will encourage and ferment an environment of accreditation locally and then across the region.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if there is one thing which I think is important in the Bill is that it is creating an environment for equivalency and accreditation across-the-board both in Barbados and in the region. I do not think that environment totally exists now, even though we may have this Accreditation Committee within the Ministry of Education.
5.20 p.m.

I believe that the work of this accreditation council goes beyond the simple issue of being able to create standards of equivalency. The Bill speaks to registration, record maintenance, re-accreditation, development and maintenance of a unified system and establishing relationships with national and regional accreditation councils. Most important, I believe that the concept of enhancing the quality of tertiary education in Barbados is at the centre of the work of the accreditation council.

Sir, this is not new ground for those who are responsible for the delivery of education because, as the Honourable Member for St. George North said, this is a standard of accreditation which can be categorised and compared to standards elsewhere in the world and we are on the right path.

Sir, this creates an environment for confidence at many different levels. It allows an employer to hire someone and be sure that the person has the proper skills and education. Also, the confidence of the bearer of the qualification is fundamentally important to where he goes in the future relative to qualification. I would not advise anyone from the Bayland or anyone doing post-secondary work to apply to classes on the block or to a college which is not accredited to this Council because we must create a new environment of accreditation to ensure that we are equivalent with the standards set.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this becomes important when we deal with the free movement of people and skills across the region. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West said that it goes beyond accrediting people at all levels and ensures that they can practise when they move across the region where many bodies do not allow people to practise within their jurisdiction because of where they gained their qualifications so this legislation moves us in the right direction.

Sir, the bearer of the qualification must prove his or her competence but the person must be assured that the qualification is to a certain standard and will allow the work to be carried out in an appropriate way. In a society where education is the basic currency for how people are promoted, it demands that everyone carries some level of certification which proves that the person has reached a certain level.

Sir, I do not usually disagree with the Honourable Member for St. James North but in this particular case, I disagree with his approach to the CXC Basic. Sir, this elitist view of the world seems to be creeping into our society, is pervading it more than it did in the past and speaks to an issue of having an academic qualification to get into a university. Sir, this is something that should be eliminated totally from the psyche of Barbados as we seek to progress as a nation.

Sir, I was a teacher at the time when the school based assessment was introduced under the CXC system. The Honourable Member made the point of a student who is not good at taking exams but if there were School Base Assessment, he would have been able to pass or become certified. The issue of certification is important in our system because some students would not reach the level of General Proficiency but it is important that they be certified for the standard they have reached. I do not buy the point that people in Barbados are not employing people with the CXC basic qualification because an employer determines the level of persons that he employs and CXC has its place in our society for certifying people in the same way in which the school leaving certificate did.

For example, a high school diploma is important in the United States of America. If you left school for ten years but did not have the High School Diploma, you could go back and do the High School Equivalency because education is the currency of that society for upward mobility and it is important that persons be certified.

Sir, the disconnect between family and education that the Honourable Member St. James North speaks about where people have no serious appreciation for education is born out of the issue of a number of Barbadians leaving school without having any kind of accreditation or certification at all. We are reaping the sweets of an era in Barbados where people were eliminated rather than being brought back into the system to be certified and it has bred disdain and disrespect for education. Sir, people went to school for a number of years but ended up with no certification in their hands.

Sir, many of the parents who the Honourable Member for St. James North spoke about do not have any certification and do not have respect for the system because they left the system without being certified for the level they had reached. When we can certify each Barbadian for the level of education reached, it is in itself important.

The United States of America has been able to create a better system of embracing education than we have and this has to do with constantly seeking to bring people back into the system so that they can receive high school diplomas at the age of eighty and ninety. Sir, my grandmother would never think about going back to school because she was not qualified in anything.

Sir, there are people in this country who are intelligent without being intellectual and people need to have a sense of confidence in the system so that it pushes them upward. The United States of America values its high school diploma and this is important and the strength of their socio-economic development has been based on their system of post -secondary education. For example, the GI Bill allowed people who participated in the war to get back into a system of tertiary education because at the end of the day whether you went to Harvard University or the Barbados Community College, the issue is about tertiary education. Sir, the concept of constant certification and being embraced by the system is important.

5.30 p.m.

I believe that we are heading in the right direction with the kind of legislation and initiatives that we bring to this Honourable House. The more tertiary education that we have in Barbados, the more we empower our citizens. The Principal of the University of the West Indies has already commented that there should be a graduate in every household. Sir, this is not anything new. This is what the United States of America tried to do, whether it is with the basic opportunity education grant or the GI Bill. They tried their best to get more people back into a system of education. Sir, education does not stop when you leave high school or university with a Bachelor Degree but goes beyond that. I think that we are heading in a new direction which this particular piece of legislation seeks to strengthen.

Sir, in my opinion, the University of the West Indies has started to spread its wings in the age of globalisation relative to marketing its services outside of this concept that exists in these hallowed halls of higher academia.

Sir, today I heard someone say that if you can run, play football or basketball you can get a degree. Why should someone who can run or play basketball not be able to use that particular skill to engage himself or herself at a level to get a degree? What is wrong with that?

The concept of not having nine 'O' Levels or three 'A' Level certificates to be able to get into a university is nonsense because we need to open up the doors of the tertiary institutions for everyone in our society to have an opportunity.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: What the Principal of the University of the West Indies is doing relative to using, for example, cricket as a tool to be able to get people into tertiary institutions is laudable. Sir, you can be intelligent without being intellectual. There are a lot of people who have a lot of sense, intelligent and who should be certified in some measure and should be able to corral that knowledge into some basic principle that they can utilise in the future. I have no problem with opening up the doors of institutions to everyone.

I commend the Honourable Minister and his team for the outstanding work that they have done. I think that it gave Barbados the opportunity to be the first in passing this piece of legislation in Parliament in this region. Again, pioneering the concept of moving us towards creating a true single market and economy. Even though people may think that it has been long in coming, once it is here we have to stop lamenting about how long it has taken us to reach this stage and seek to engage our minds as to how we can get this legislation to work into the fabric of our society.

My commendation goes to the Minister and his team. As a Barbadian citizen I lend my support to this piece of legislation that I think is going to be fundamental to developing the citizens of our society and this region.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I join this debate late in the day and, therefore, the business of my debate is going to change. I wish to say that I have listened and this concept of accreditation seems to be rooted in notions of quality but I suspect that there are concerns with respect to quantity, that is, if you permit an individual who is not accredited but may be competent, then that individual would be denied of an opportunity under a system of accreditation. Simply put, the emphasis seems to be on the delivery of quality here and, therefore, in some sense a restriction on the quantity of workers that may be permitted in whichever area of endeavour we speak to.

I wish to suggest that in light of that, we define adequately what we mean by skills because I have not heard anyone capture in this debate what is meant by 'the community skills'. I also wish to argue that skills go beyond post-graduate or post-secondary school skills, training at tertiary institutions and persons who are carpenters, masons, steel benders and painters are, in fact, extremely skilled workers.

I make that point because I can take anyone from this Honourable Chamber to Westmoreland, strip a house at Westmoreland of its complex roof. Then, if I ask any one of these Honourable Members, as a carpenter, to rebuild such a roof, they would not know where to start. There is no Member in this Chamber who can put a roof on the top of a house at Westmoreland, because of the complexity of the houses there.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, notwithstanding that some Honourable Members might have been introduced to the concepts of Pythagorus, concepts of angles, concepts of how we should angle the roof because of wind resistance and all those things that may be theoretical but they would not be able to start to construct a roof of any house at Westmoreland.

Sir, I say that because I am very conscious of the fact that at the tender age of 14, I was a trainee carpenter during one of my summer vacations. The man who taught me had no idea of the concept of Pythagorus but he was able to put down a piece of line, measure 3 feet from one place to another, measure from one corner to another and then measure that this line should be 5. In fact, he was employing the concept of Pythagorus that if we square this line and make it 9 and square this 4 and make it 16, add the two together and get 25, that the square root of 25 is 5 and, therefore, the angle here must be a right angle.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: He never did trigonometry but in making a house square, he knew exactly what to do make a house square and he employed the concept of Pythagorus without knowing anything about Pythagorus. Therefore, I am saying that we need to understand what we mean by skills in this particular Bill. Sir, what do we really mean by skills?

Sir, I sat and listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and I could not believe what I was hearing. About a year-and-a-half ago I said that academic qualifications are overrated and the Barbados Labour Party sought to castigate me.

Asides.

5.40 p.m.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I said that they are overrated, with respect to the appointments at the Fisheries, that you can bring an individual with about two or three CXCs and install that person on top of someone who has 20 to 25 years experience. I could not understand how that could have happened in this particular instance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very serious because I want to develop this argument, in light of what we are seeking to accomplish here. I am not going to spend too much time on the accreditation, because this is just part of a concept to satisfy the wider building of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and to get standards throughout the region. I am concerned about the human capital side and the labour requirements within the context of where we are going as a people.

Let me therefore start from the point that unless we get correct information, we are going to suffer as a people and I am going to site one example. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Barbados, we are hearing today that there are 14 000 people unemployed. We do not know if those persons are skilled, or unskilled, so in actual fact, how can we plan to get those persons employed, given what we are currently pursuing. Are we planning for unskilled persons or are we planning for skilled individuals? We have no notion of whether or not they are skilled or unskilled.

Let me also say that the difficulty I have is that on another hand the population census tells us that there are 84 000 households in Barbados, and there are supposed to be 13 000 persons unemployed. It means, therefore, that for every six households, there is only one unemployed person in Barbados.

Sir, we do not believe that. Having canvassed your constituencies on a monthly basis after the election, you cannot believe that across Barbados there are only 14 000 persons unemployed, when there are 84 000 households in Barbados, giving us a ratio of one for every six households in Barbados. I do not believe it and I know it is not true.

I am saying, therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need to plan from the very basics. What are we seeking to accomplish? We need first of all to establish what we mean by skills and I am very serious on this matter. Do we mean accountants, doctors, lawyers, architects? Are we excluding the carpenters and artisans who are extremely skilled persons and that is why we have been paying so much for them recently.

Sir, if we look at the existing attempts in CARICOM, we are restricting the persons who can move to a group of musicians, artistes, sportsmen and professionals. Therein lies my difficulty, because there is no way in which we can be truly contemplating integrating the region and restrict the movement to such skills.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Do not mind Sir Lloyd at this stage, that is 1989, and we were looking ahead. There was a vision, he articulated the vision and we are following. We respect, I admire, I love Sir Lloyd. We all know that, so there is no need for that.

Sir, what we need to do now as a new Parliament is to establish the basis for truly creating a Caribbean Single Market and Economy. The discussion here is how are we going to take this process forward and until we can determine how we can do it, then we are going to be in difficulty. I want to make the point that you cannot restrict your movement as we have done to date to five categories of persons. Having said that, let us be realistic. You can plan only in accordance with what resources you have. That is why it is causing such a major debate now in Barbados.

Sir, this whole question about the Guyanese is as a consequence of what is in it for me as a Barbadian. Is the migration going to cause me to have less opportunity in my country of birth? Am I going to have less access to a job? Is it going to cause greater pressure on my housing stock? Would it have social implications? Would it mean, even family implications? Would it have implications for driving down the Wages Bill or the wage rate in Barbados? Would it have implications for the overall standard of living?

Therefore, there are several matters that we need to deal with as a country. We are small and outside of Singapore, perhaps the most densely populated country in the world. In fact, there is evidence even in a recent report to show, that when compared to Guyana, Barbados' population density is substantially higher. Therefore, let us be mature about this whole question of the movement of people, because herein lies the real issue that is affecting Barbados at this time.

Why are the Guyanese coming to Barbados, and are they bringing skills? With the establishment of a national accreditation council, will that be restricted in the sense that we would now have greater constraints on these individuals, in terms of what they bring to these shores? Would it be adequate or wise to impose such restrictions on these individuals? Then, we need to ask some other questions? Why it is that the Guyanese are bypassing Trinidad and Tobago and coming to Barbados?

I ask that question in all fairness because we are seeking to establish a Caribbean Single Market and Economy. Therefore, Trinidad is just a parish in a wider country called, CARICOM. Barbados is just a parish in a wider country called, CARICOM. Sir, what therefore would drive a Guyanese pass Trinidad and Tobago to the shores of Barbados?

Sir, in Trinidad and Tobago, they are now experiencing a whole set of liquidity. The increase in oil prices would push Trinidad to become even more attractive. They have financial resources where they have sought to invest all throughout the region. The potential for growth is there. The opportunities to solve social problems are there, so why would there be a movement from Guyana, pass Trinidad and Tobago, unto Barbados, where there is less land space, where there is high population density, where there is less opportunity to own land and homes?

Sir, this is where this whole debate of an Accreditation Council really is, because it is beginning to talk about skills but what kind of skills. What are the skills which are being brought to Barbados that are not available in Barbados? If we are serious about a discussion, are we therefore talking about planning for the future of Barbados, within the context of the free movement of labour and capital? If we are talking about that, we have to make sure that we are not now imposing a constraint on the process of integration that cannot be justified, because this contradicts the whole question of free movement. This is why I said at the start that the Accreditation Council is rooted in the notion of qualitative issues, where you are seeking to impose standards, so as to ensure that persons who graduate or qualify in one country would be able to ply their trade across the entire region and that seems to be the issue.

Sir, the truth is, if someone is competent to do a job and has so demonstrated, would this Accreditation Board seek to impose its will, and restrict that person on the basis of lacking skills? What do I mean? My best friend is a carpenter. Does he not possess the skills to practise and ply his trade across the region as a carpenter even in this new Caribbean Single Market and Economy? Would he now have to go to the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic to acquire a certificate to justify that he is qualified to exercise his skills across the region? Are we speaking to new entrants into the labour market or are we speaking to those who have been there before? That is an important question that we need to ask and to have answered.

5.50 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we certainly cannot expect my 45-year old best friend to have to now go and seek to get accreditation on the basis of the skills which he possesses. In the event that there is a potential boom of construction in Trinidad and Tobago, what should stop him from going down there and offering his services to that economy because of the skills that he obviously possesses? Sir, he is one who would have assisted in putting the roofs on top of the houses in Westmoreland.

Sir, what would stop a mason who is capable of coming into this August Chamber and so constructing the soft bricks that we see here in order to create such an art? Do you feel that the guy who created the art there went to the University of London? Do you feel that you could build a scaffold or some other construction in order to form that art and make it so uniformed? It just cannot happen that kind of way. It is not a question of stretching anything, it is that we have to determine what we mean by skills. So are we going to restrict skills to mean skills acquired in an institution at a post-secondary or tertiary level arrangement where there are skills that go way beyond the skills acquired at the institution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, nobody can talk to me about skills with respect to academia because I am aware that the only reason people refuse to listen to what was being said with respect to my comment is because of the source from which it came because they had me viewed as a little academic. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am aware that there are several persons who may not be academic in nature but who are extremely intelligent and can do the kinds of jobs we want done in this country without having to have that kind of certification.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in planning for the future of this country, we need to identify the manpower needs of Barbados in a new global environment. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I suppose by now that the average Barbadian must be in tune and in touch with certain comments being made by officials in this Government. We just experienced a decline as was admitted by the Government. Only our tourism sector realised any growth in the last year. We have seen a decline in manufacturing. We have seen a decline in agriculture and we have seen a decline in international business, yet we are hearing that the unemployment rate has fallen over the last year.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must be living on Mars because I cannot believe that having admitted to such a decline, that we are now hearing that unemployment has declined. I have just proven with respect to the amount of households in Barbados that there is no way in which they can only be 14 000 people unemployed in a country of 84 000 households which means that one out of every six persons in a household is unemployed.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: In Barbados where I live. It has to be madness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me go to the substantive point here because I need to discuss this at greater length. Mr. Deputy Speaker, nobody has introduced the quantitative aspect because the people in the region are in favour of integration, but the technicians need to be able to create an

environment in which there is growth in which people could share a bigger pie. We have to have a situation in which people can engage in opportunities across the region because we have to be our brother's keeper.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am all for integration. I do not believe in restricted integration. If we are going to say that we are having a Caribbean Single Market and Economy, then every country is simply a parish. Therefore, you cannot stop me from leaving St. Peter and migrating to St. Michael neither can you stop me from leaving St. Peter and going to St. John. Therefore, in a true integration process you cannot stop anyone from leaving St. Lucia and coming to Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you also ought not to be afraid that because there is so-called integration or regionalism that people are going to uproot themselves from any country and go to another, it is not going to happen so simply. Therefore, that fear ought not to be entertained. There will be opportunities of course. Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the basis of our adequate management of our resources, there will be a desire on the part of others to come to Barbados to seek a better way of life, that is a natural reaction. Do we really believe that there is going to be a mass influx?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is why we are constructing all of these other institutional arrangements which are designed to be the constraints to the political objective of regionalism so that each and every State would have a justification for restricting the influx of workers. These are in fact non-tariff barriers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are simply imposing constructs to justify why it is that persons cannot freely move around the region, that is what this is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not going to be party to any movement that restricts the movement of my carpenter friend, masons, painters, steel benders or the fisherfolk because I see no extreme special skill in getting a first degree. I see no extreme special skill in doing post-secondary work. I see everything now in life as a discipline and if you have the discipline and you apply, you could achieve.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: So therefore work on discipline. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you do not work in putting back some discipline into our young men, that is where we are going to suffer. Mr. Deputy Speaker, economics is a discipline. Theology is a discipline. Engineering is a discipline. Law is a discipline not by accident, it requires discipline. That is all it requires but it is not anything magical about this new world. In fact, we as a people would have expected by now that we would have moved in such a direction.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, my mother who is arguably brighter and smarter than I am, I know that because I listened to her wisdom over the last 40 years, has never had the opportunity to become certified. So therefore if the new generations have such an opportunity, it is because of the work that has been done by the older generation and not because of anything magical on the part of young people being brighter. Young people have greater access, an exposure and an opportunity, that is all it is. So we ought not to confuse ourselves about all this certification.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am convinced that there is too much emphasis on certification. Every time you talk, it is a certificate. What we need is people who could get the job done. Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us be honest. Someone goes and studies for four years in a discipline and then comes out from the university, but how much of that four-year discipline is used in their daily life.

Asides.

6.00 p.m.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would now hear people saying that Mascoll sounds as though he is going mad. It is not that I would be going mad, it is that we have to ensure that we do not put too much emphasis on all of this 'studiation', Bruce St. John said: "Studiation beat education." Sir, some people would be academic but let us not reduce the skills that people acquire.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even to cut a lawn with a weedwacker requires skill. Again I invite any Honourable Member of this Honourable Chamber to take up a weedwacker and I will put you next to a young man who engages every day in cutting lawns. You are going to take ten times the time that this young man would have taken, in doing the same job.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Because it is a skill.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: You do not feel that you should do it, therefore, you would not acquire that skill. I am saying that there are different levels of skills. You are not going to be engaged in the hot sun, nor in that kind of work, but I do not want you to underestimate the kind of work that is required in doing certain kinds of jobs. I think that as a people, we are very guilty of trying to categorise what skills are required and, therefore, the more academic it becomes, the higher we feel is the skill level, which is not necessarily true.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, therefore, have grave difficulty in understanding what we mean by skills and in categorising skills. I have grave difficulty in this notion that only certain skilled persons would be allowed to ply their trade across the region. Therefore, until I can be told what this means, then I have severe difficulty with it.

If one wants to substantiate what I am saying, there have been quantitative surveys done on the Caribbean Single Market and Economy in relation to the freedom of movement called: 'The Cornerstone of Caribbean Single Market and Economy', written by Peter Wickham, *et al* for the Caribbean Development Research Services. I do not want to recite the findings of the document but it was done in January, 2004, and shares certain sentiments about categorisation. This institution is concerned about the categorisation of skills just like we all should be. We understand that there cannot be that floodgate approach but one cannot, however, seek to impose one's will on the people of the region with respect to the integration movement, and therein lies the concern.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it talks about skilled and unskilled persons. The other issue is that in our employment statistics, there are categories called skilled and unskilled as well. I have never seen a definition of what is meant by skilled and unskilled workers, therefore, I do not like the classification.

I know that in the population census that workers are classified but they are not classified along skilled and unskilled lines but are put into very broad categories of workers in the population census data. In fact, this is where the unemployment data derives its population. If the Honourable Members of the House do not understand, a sample survey is done by the Barbados Statistical Service. The sample may be of 1000 persons from across Barbados. It is then blown up in accordance with the information provided by the census data. This census data is on over 260 000 persons, whereas a sample is a mere 1000 persons. Therefore, I am saying that I have reached the stage where I have to question those bits of information on the basis of other information provided in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not want to criticise the Barbados Statistical Service but I want a reason as to what is meant by the numbers. I want a reason as to what is meant by skilled and unskilled workers. I have grave difficulty and the emphasis and Objects and Reasons in this Bill is on skills. And I read at (c):

> "The examination and verification of Certificates of Recognition of Caribbean Community Skills granted to Community nationals by their own country for the purpose of giving effect to Article 46 of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas."

Sir, Article 46 identifies quite clearly five categories. I have major difficulty and do not know what is meant by that. It goes on at (d):

> "The granting of Certificates of Recognition of Caribbean Community Skills in accordance with the provisions of the Caribbean Community (Movement of Skilled Nationals) Act, 2004."

Sir, what do we mean by skills? Until skills can be defined, this piece of legislation is not worth much because it seeks to categorise and to classify individuals on the basis of perceptions rather than on reality.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know who came up with the classification but let me show Your Honour something. There are five categories in the so-called movement of labour and skills around the region but they are so defined, that one is hardly going to get anybody to move permanently because a musician who plies his trade within the region is not going there to live. An artiste is not going to live, he is just going to that region to play a gig, then to come back. A sportsman is not going across the region to live, therefore, the five categories of persons which were identified within Article 46, are not going to be permanent workers. Yes, we are providing movement because there are university graduates who could be permanent; there are musicians who could be permanent; there are artistes who would hardly be permanent; there are media workers who may be permanent; and there are sportsmen who will not be permanent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, therefore, these persons are not like the Guyanese, the fear that we are now having in Barbados. If Government is going to permit people to move, as was said in this Chamber, those persons would have a right to seek work and not to live, but if we are going to further classify workers according to skilled and unskilled, then I need to know what does skilled mean before one begins the process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I end by saying that while the notion of accreditation seems to be rooted in the notion of quality of worker and, therefore, an imposition based on a person not qualifying on a basis of quality, there is an implicit constraint on quantity because persons who might have the ability and competencies, might not qualify on the basis of a certification and, therefore, would be restricted in terms of their movement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have identified those classes that I regard to be highly skilled workers but who might not be certified. If one cannot certify, according to this Accreditation Bill, then one is not going to be able to assign a standard to that individual, whereas those persons would have been working for 30 years or more doing extremely

skilled work but not being recognised by way of certification.
6.10 p.m.

I end by saying that there is too much emphasis in this new Barbados on certificates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can understand why the Honourable Leader of the Opposition waited until so late in the day to speak because he was trying desperately to get his thoughts together and even after a long gestation period, he still failed to do so. Sir, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition clearly missed a very fundamental point. I followed his line of argument. I support the perspective of the importance of skills, the dignity of all human labour and the need for us to give due respect and acknowledge the worth of craftsmanship as a society.

Sir, craftsmanship does not have to be verified by a certificate because it speaks for itself. The boatbuilders in Oistins and Silver Sands are not depending on any institution to certify them as being able to build a boat that sails for many years but in relation to this debate the parameters are clearly set, not by us in this Chamber or the Government of Barbados but by the Heads of Government of CARICOM to determine that they would only deal with five categories of workers at this time.

If the Honourable Member has expressed the view that he did not support the Heads of Government in that regard that is okay but to seek to make the ridiculous suggestion that this Administration or the workers in the Attorney-General Chambers who drafted the Bill have some bias against craftsmanship or that the operations of the accreditation council will in some way work a mischief against craftsmanship, is totally without foundation.

Further, if the Honourable Member had been in his place earlier in the day, he would have heard a full exposition from the distinguished Honourable Member for St. James North who is more in touch with the grassroots than the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Sir, I was very impressed with the enthusiasm, obviously born of recent discovery, which the Leader of the Opposition now has for craftsmanship. The Leader of the Opposition has clearly identified as his principal characteristic a love for academia and disdain for things non-academic and he castigated anyone who is less qualified than he is. His public life, so far, has been one where he has been almost contemptuous of anyone less qualified, academically speaking, than he is.

I am very pleased that Saul of Tarsus has come along the road to Damascus and that we now have Paul as the Leader of the Opposition. He has now discovered that there is dignity in all forms of human endeavour and I am pleased to see that he has just discovered what you and I, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have known for a long time. Sir, we have both known for a long time that the man who wields a cutlass in cutting canes is a man of skill so is the man with a weedwacker and the man who lays blocks. Sir, I am pleased that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has come to see the light. I hope this is not a fleeting moment, that something of the moment of revelation sticks on him and that he would be a new creature from this point forward in his life.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member missed the fundamental point that this specific matter relates to the five categories only and people have debated whether these categories should or should not be from the time they were identified.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. James North spoke about a system of national vocational qualification (NVQs) which will be created by TVET Council and where persons have learned their craft outside of a framework of an academic institution where for the purposes of employment, travel or some other purpose, they want to have for the benefit of a third party verifiable proof of their level of achievement, TVET Council will in a range of practical trades identify relevant skills levels and issue those certificates. Sir, the accreditation council will recognise those interviews. It is not the business of an accreditation council to create and issue certificates. The accreditation council will not be devising its own 'O' Levels or 'A' Levels nor devise its own standard for carpentry or psychiatry. It will look across the panorama of the various qualifications in every given field and speak to how a certificate in carpentry offered by the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic compares to one offered by a private institution or another institution in some other country.

Sir, that brings me to another concern raised as to whether we mark ourselves too hard and whether we have set high standards which will be impossible for our people to attain. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not the business of the Accreditation Council to be setting technical standards. The Accreditation Council will not make the determination about the level one should reach to attain a Bachelor's Degree. If there is any concern about educational standards, it cannot be thrown at the feet of the Accreditation Council. In fact, it is the market which would make a determination as to whether it believes that qualification is too tough to achieve or too low to be worth anything and the Accreditation Council will be essentially an honest information broker. It will not be the Accreditation Council that would set the standard for the granting of degrees of the University of the West Indies, the Barbados Community

College or The Sir Arthur Lewis Community College but rather, the Council would be able to speak to what is the relative value of those degrees that are granted.
6.20 p.m.

Sir, earlier in this debate a suggestion was made that this accreditation council would do nothing more than what was done by the Ministry of Education 25 years ago and that is not so. Sir, what happened twenty-five years happens today. The Equivalency Committee meets and looks at a qualification offered in another place and compares it with what is happening here and you get a response. Sir, that is only one function of the Committee. The Ministry of Education or the Equivalency Committee never had to undertake the task of assessing an institution or its programmes. If an institution, for example, Academy of Commerce, on XYZ Street, Barbados, applied for accreditation to the Accreditation Council, it would look at its philosophy and objectives, which must be clearly stated – what is the purpose of the institution and what are the objectives to be achieved? It would look also at the operations and the administration of the institution. Sir, no committee in the Ministry of Education does that now nor twenty-five years ago.

For example, the institution would be required to have a board or a governing body whose functions are spelt out and certain examinations would be made to ensure that the board or governing body functions in accordance with the rules which is an audit-type process. The programmes of the institution would also be examined. Is the programme in terms of its content appropriate for the subject area mentioned in terms of the curriculum? Is the content of the curriculum appropriate to the level and objectives that are set for the programme or programmes? Is the duration appropriate?

Sir, if you are offering a Ph.D. programme, it cannot be a three-week programme because you cannot do the work that is required to obtain a Ph.D. in a three-week time period and any reasonable person would know that is not possible. Sir, then there must also be balance between theoretical and practical work because if you are doing a pure course, then it could all be theoretical but clearly, in the case of the gentleman that the Honourable Member and Leader of the Opposition mentioned, he was functioning in an applied area. Once you have the rule you apply the 3-4-5 rule and you have your Pythagorus, your right angle. You do not have to worry about the proof that a person who is doing a pure course in Mathematics would need to prove.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: If you are applying for accreditation it is not just a matter of equivalency. It is full examination, Sir, in terms of assessment, how does an institution assess its courses? How are the examinations taken? Is it all course work? If there are examinations, what is the security? Is it one of those institutions that students can see the examination paper before the exam, practise them the night before and only come in a ritualistic way to complete the exam or is it one in which there is a strict security on the papers when they are set? Are there independent first or second markers? Is there is a means by which one can be sure that the exams grades are not changed after the fact? Those are the things that are looked at in doing accreditation of an institution. Sir, you do not accredit individuals.

The Honourable Member and Leader of the Opposition spoke about having his forty-five-year-old friend, the carpenter at Westmoreland being accredited but we do not accredit individuals. Sir, it is not about accrediting individuals or roofs for that matter but institutions which would be granting their own certification.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: In terms of staff, in looking at the accreditation process, an examination would be made of the institution. Does it have the number of staff with the appropriate qualifications to teach the courses that it purports that it will teach? Sir you cannot be teaching counselling and do not have persons whose training reflect that they are able to convey the knowledge and skills therein. Also, in terms of students, the Council will look at the enrolment and selection policy.

In other words, a total examination is made of the institution but this was not done by the Ministry of Education over the last twenty-five years. Sir, the equivalency will continue to be done but it goes beyond full institutional appraisals.

This Council will look at what is happening at foreign institutions. The question was asked, who will look at the foreign institutions and give Barbadians a view as to whether they are worthwhile or not and this is the agency that would do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition again tried to bamboozle this Honourable House with statistics. He likes to come with some interesting things. He was using a case where he was seeking to call into question the capacity and ability of the Statistical Department to generate meaningful statistics for decision making on a national basis. Sir, this is an almost elementary level analysis. He speaks of 84,000 households and 14,000 persons unemployed, therefore, there is only one unemployed person in every six houses.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: He is seeking to appeal to persons out in the community who would know of at least 2 or 3 houses where there is more than one person unemployed. Sir, to cause the average person by way of casual observation, to call into question the accuracy of the statistics.

Sir, clearly, that is a misuse of expertise by the Honourable Member because he knows that working out a simple average does not mean that average applies to each and every unit in the sample that he is dealing with. Therefore, once it is statistically correct, once it is a descriptive statistic to say that this means that in every 6 houses one person is unemployed, he cannot make the leak of illogic, he cannot jump off the precipice of reason to come to the miraculously false conclusion that there is something inherently wrong with the statistics that he used in the first place because he knows from walking in a given area that there would be more persons unemployed in that area. He would not go on to say, even in his constituency, where he might not find a single person unemployed. The reality is that even though according to the last Census, the average household size is approximately 2.8 persons per household, we know that there are some houses where there is one person living in it and in other houses there are 12. In fact, Sir, in the latter pages of the Census document, they recognised perhaps what the Honourable Member might have wanted to get up to, and they give you housing statistics that give you housing by type of materials, type of roofs, number of persons in the household, number of rooms, number of bedrooms, so we know where to go to verify the information.
8.30 p.m.

I am making the point, Sir, that we have to ask ourselves, as we listen to this debate, how much value can be put on the other arguments advanced, numerical arguments in particular, of the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, given his propensity to miraculously extrapolate some unusual details and conclusions from statistics which properly used, would lead reasonable persons to a very different conclusion.

I really would have hoped that in his Paul-like conversion on this road to Parliament back from the funeral that he went to this afternoon, Sir, where he suddenly found value in the work and dignity of human hands, that the conversion would have extended to his use of statistics, but I live in hope.

I want to say in closing that I believe we had a useful debate. This Accreditation Council, Sir, will not be all things to all people. It obviously will not, in terms of the movement of people in CARICOM, deal beyond the five areas that the Heads of Government have set for it, but I want to say that in relation to Barbados where the argument of the Leader of the Opposition falls, is that it is his Side, the Honourable Members of his Party, who have been the most severely critical of the Government.

It has been his Party, Sir, that has even, in my estimation, orchestrated the chorus of opposition that we are hearing these days, to the presence of skilled CARICOM workers in Barbados. Therefore, Sir, it is not the interest, intention or the practice of the Government to do what he is accusing us of, because the practical experience on the ground would indicate that perhaps, working with his 45-year-old best friend the roofing man at Westmoreland, that already there, even in advance of any Accreditation Council Bill, any certificate for skilled CARICOM nationals, would be some skilled CARICOM nationals working along there, using the 3-4-5 Rule and other devices known to tradesmen. Therefore, perhaps on his visit of the site, he might report to us what is the reality of the situation.

Sir, Barbados is committed to the full implementation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy process. We, like other Governments in the region have committed to putting certain institutional framework in place, including the certificate for the movement of skilled nationals. All Caribbean countries will implement this, and Barbados does not propose to use it as any barrier to entry in and of itself, Sir, but just to ensure that persons are what they purport to be.

For example, the Heads of Governments endorsed the definition of media workers in 1993. The Council for Human and Social Development in January of 2000 approved the definition of sportsmen which will be drawn, based on the criteria as set out by the National Sporting Federations in each of the various disciplines, such as professional athletes, coaches, cricket coaches, football coaches, track and field coaches. Sir, in January 2000, COUCHED agreed on the definitions that one would use for musicians, artistes, visual, plastic, performing, literary, folk, carnival artistes, technicians, stage managers, light and sound managers, support staff, art educators and those details have been gone through.

I look forward to the day, when the Heads of Governments will expand the range of skills which fall under the framework for free movement within CARICOM, because I am an unrepentant regionalist. I believe that the future of Barbados is inextricably bound to that of the region. Barbados cannot be a bright shining star in dark murky Caribbean waters. Our star will only shine as brightly as the waters and the lands around us. Therefore, Sir, Barbados is not going to be making great sacrifices and doing great harm to itself by becoming more deeply immersed in CARICOM. It will, in fact, be ensuring that there is a solid future for our people and this is an important step in that direction.

This Bill, if approved by both Houses of Parliament, will come into force by way of Proclamation, and that date

will be set based on the conclusion of other matters. Honourable Members will be aware that other legislation, relating to the implementation of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is on the way. In fact, some Honourable Members have their views on what should be done first and what should be done last, but there is the Caribbean Skilled Nationals Bill and other CARICOM legislation which will be debated in the House shortly, and this really forms part of that package.

I really want to thank Honourable Members for their contribution today. The Bill is there for our fullest consideration, and I will certainly urge Honourable Members' fullest support. I want to thank the members of my staff who have worked along with the staff of the Attorney-General Chambers in drafting of the legislation, and those persons who have been involved in a consultative role, as we sought to develop the policy.

With that, Sir, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Dr. W. F. DUGUID, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 5 were called and passed.

Clauses 6 to 10 were called and passed.

Clauses 11 to 15 were called and passed.

6.40 p.m.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Chairman, I think it is necessary for me to speak again in the Committee stage to express a view in respect of Clause 16, given that Clauses 16, 17, 18, 19 and 20 are all linked in one concept. Clause 16 states that:

> "The Council may, with the approval in writing of the Minister responsible for Finance, borrow money from the Government or any person by way of a loan..."

Mr. Chairman, I have a concern there. If it is the intention of the drafters of this Bill to indicate that loans could be achieved from a commercial bank or via some guarantee of some bond or some debenture, I can accept that. However, I would want to find out what is meant by any person and how it is used in this particular clause. If I am supposed to interpret it outside of a legal paradigm, I would have to ask the Honourable Member if a loan could be achieved from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East on a personal basis. Mr. Chairman, as a result, I would want to have some clarification and I am calling for that area to be reviewed with respect to the particular clause.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, this is a standard form of drafting. The Honourable Member cannot in the process of debating a Bill indicate that he would not consider it in a legal context, how else can you interpret the law other than in a legal context.

Mr. Chairman, a person cannot only be a natural person but a corporate or legal person. Therefore, a commercial bank is a legal person. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the style of drafting would change from time to time. This is a form of drafting which is not new, it is contained in several other pieces of legislation. The intention clearly is not for the director of the accreditation council to go down the road and stop a friend to borrow a piece of change to put into the accreditation council, so there will not be any $200 or $300 loans from the Minister or from someone down the street.

Mr. Chairman, this is a form of drafting which is so comprehensive in covering the types of entities from which loans may be sourced that one does not then have to go on to list entities.

Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Clauses 16 – 20 stand part.

Clauses 16 to 20 inclusive were passed.

Clauses 21 to 25 inclusive were called and passed.

Clauses 26 to 28 inclusive were called and passed.

The First Schedule was called and passed.

The Second Schedule was called and passed.

The Third Schedule was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Hon. G. A. CLARKE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to HIS HONOUR, the DEPUTY SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Hon. G. A. CLARKE, the Bill was read a first

and second and third time and passed and cited as the Barbados Accreditation Act, 2004.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 22, 2004 at 10.00 a.m. in the morning.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, June 22, 2004 was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

6.50 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 1

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 2

1. Civil Aviation (Montreal Convention) (Amendment) Bill, 2004.

2. Barbados Accreditation Council Bill, 2004.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTER

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON 2

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 3

Suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of the day's Sitting.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 3

Order No. 2 on the Order Paper was withdrawn.

ORDER NO. 9 – BILL ENTITLED AN ACT TO FACILITATE THE FREE ENTRY INTO BARBADOS OF CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY SKILLED NATIONALS TO FACILITATE THE MOVEMENT OF SKILLS WITHIN THE CARIBBEAN COMMUNITY PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 46 OF THE TREATY OF CHAGUARAMAS AND FOR RELATED MATTERS 4

Hon. R. R. Farley, 4, 52; Mr. R. D. Jones, 14; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 19; Hon. R. C. Eastmond, 21; Dr. W. F. Duguid, 26; Mr. L. R. Tull, 27; Dr. D. C. Estwick, 30; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 33; Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde, 38; Hon. A. P. Wood, 41; Hon. N. A. Lynch, 45; Mr. C. A. Mascoll, 47.

COMMITTEE 55

Hon. R. R. Farley, 55; Dr. D. C. Estwick, 55.

SUSPENSIONS 2, 16

ADJOURNMENT 56

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 56.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

DUGUID, W. F. (Christ Church West)
EASTMOND, Hon. R. C. (St. James North)
ESTWICK, Dr. D. C. (St. Philip West)
FARLEY, Hon. R. R. (Christ Church East)
FORDE, Hon. Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
JONES, Mr. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)
LYNCH, Hon. N. A. (St. Michael South)
MASCOLL, Mr. C. A. (St. Michael North West)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
ROETT, His Honour I. A. (St. Michael Central)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)
THOMPSON, Hon. Miss H. E. (St. James South)
WOOD, Hon. A. P. (St. Philip South)