
THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

THE SENATE

Monday, March 22, 2004

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Monday, March 22, 2004, at 11.00 a.m.

PRESENT

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

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

Senator the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, G.C.M., J.P. (Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator the Hon. J. E. D. WILLIAMS, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc., M.B.A., J.P. (Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of the Civil Service)

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

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

Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M., B.A. (Spec. Hons.), M.A., LL.B. (Hons.) (U.W.I.), F.L.A. (Gt. Brit.), L.E.C.

Senator R. W. GRANT, B.A. (Econ.), G.Dip. M.A. (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and International Transport)

Senator the Hon. Miss L. V. EASTMOND, LL.B. (Hons.), LL.M. (Minister of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development)

Senator I. St. C. LINTON

Senator G. P. B. NICHOLLS, B.Sc. (Hons.), LL.B. (Hons.)

Senator Miss P. E. PARRIS, J.P.

Senator G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL

Senator Miss. S. C. HUSBANDS, B.A. (Hons.)

Senator F. J. STUART, B.A., LL.M.

Senator Dr. D. S. LOWE, Ph.D., Dip. Theology, B.A., MED, ED.D.

Senator the Very Reverend H. E. CRICHLow, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.) (Dunelm)

Senator Dr. F. L. CHANDLER, Ph.D., B.Sc. (Hons.)

Senator A. C. FIELDS

Prayers were led by Reverend Father E. Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is in session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I received apologies for the absence of Senator Sir Roy Trotman and Senator Barker who are both out of the country. Senator Trotman is on trade union business and Senator Barker is on Government business.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that Standing Order No. 45 (2) be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to give notice of the following Resolutions:—

1. A Resolution to approve the guarantee by the Government of the payment by Needhams' Point Holdings Ltd. of cost over-runs with respect to the construction of a resort hotel to

an amount not exceeding US\$10 613 732.20; and the payment of debt service to an amount not exceeding US\$7 million annually.

2. A Resolution to approve in accordance of Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228, the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of the parcels of land situate at Drax Hall Green in the parish of St. George in this Island and more particularly described in the First and Second Schedules hereto for the public purposes of housing development and recreation respectively.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move the first reading of the Appropriation Bill, 2004 as amended.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 2004

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, the Appropriation Bill which is before us has been amended on the basis of the requirements that were just circulated. I wish to inform Senators that the appropriate amount is now \$1,186,870,380.00.
11.20 a.m.

As you are aware, Sir, we have come to that time of the year when the Minister responsible for Finance, in keeping with the provisions of Sections 108 and 109 of the Constitution, is required to bring before Parliament, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the coming fiscal year.

These Estimates before us constitute the Government's Budget for the fiscal year 2004–2005. This may take some persons by surprise because we are all familiar with the present state of affairs where some people have a bit of confusion in their minds about what really is the Government's budget for the fiscal year.

In fact, on Friday afternoon when I was on my way home from work, I heard a discussion on the call-in programme where an irate caller was stating that he did not like this recent practice which had crept into the affairs of this country to which the Budget was being brought as late as November. Then, he went on to say that if the Government was a private company in which he had equity, and that company had brought its Budget so late in the financial year, he would withdraw his funds and have nothing more to do with that company.

Unfortunately, though, the moderator was not able to deal with the issue, except to say that as far as he could recollect, the discussion which was taking place in Parliament at this time of the year, has always taken place in the month of March. This did not satisfy the caller.

I believe, Mr. President, that the misunderstanding of what is the Budget and the distinction between the Budget and the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals which, traditionally, have been brought to Parliament after the discussion of the Budget, has its genesis in a discussion which took place way back in 1962 outside of this Chamber.

My research has shown me that during that discussion, Mr. President, the particular person made the point, very categorically, that the real Budget was the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals and that the Estimates were nothing more than a conglomeration of statistics. I think that is where the misunderstanding took place. As you know, we live in a society that when certain persons speak, even though the evidence is on the other side, it is who has spoken, rather than what has been said.

In fact, Mr. President, I still find great amusement when I reflect on my first day of work in the Ministry of Finance, in 1973, as a Budget Analyst, and I was assigned to the section where, on one side there were two individuals sitting, who I refer to as persons who were working with the Estimates, and the two of us on the other side were now being referred to as the persons who will be working with the Budget.

I was appalled at the level of ignorance of those matters which existed in that Ministry at that time. Needless to say that I had great difficulty, in fact, I did not succeed in convincing those persons who held that view that there was no such distinction between the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and the Budget. I am glad to say that today, that is not the prevailing view in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs because the person there knows well that the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure do, in fact, constitute the Government's Budget for the particular year.

Mr. President, as Otto Eckstein in his book on public finance so clearly states, "A Government's Budget is a detailed statement of expected expenditures and revenue" he goes on to say,

"The executive branch of Government reaches its expenditure and tax decisions in the preparation of this document which is before us, and the legislative branch considers the proposals and votes them into law. That is the fiscal plan of Government for the particular year."

Therefore, Mr. President, I trust that after this debate today, there will be no misunderstandings in our society,

especially among the journalists and the host of the call-in programmes, who speak so eloquently on issues about which they understand so little.

Therefore, instead of being a conglomeration of statistics, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure in the Budget of the Government for the year, is that document which reflects the types of activities the Government will be pursuing during the given year, as it seeks to put its plan of action to work.

The document, therefore, is not constructed “willy-nilly” or by accident. Those persons who are familiar with the exercise, know that at the back of the minds of those who are developing the document, and by that I do not necessarily mean the officials, I mean the persons who make up the administration of the day, and who are having a document developed to put their plans into effect, are three broad objectives, which will guide how this document is developed.

These three broad objectives are:

1. To secure adjustments in the allocation of resources in the country.
2. To secure adjustments in the distribution of income and wealth in the society.
3. To secure economic stabilisation in the country.

As I said, these are the three broad objectives which are behind the construction of Budgets, unlike when a budget is constructed for a private sector company. If we keep these broad objectives in our minds during today, and subsequent debates on this document, and the Appropriation Bill, it will stand us in good stead, because it would help us to make more sense from the statistics before us, than would have been the case otherwise.

Sir, depending on the prevailing circumstances, at a given point in time, and because these three objectives sometimes do clash as one seeks to achieve them, it becomes necessary for us to think in terms of choices. What will happen from time to time is that one objective will gain prominence over the other, and as the circumstances change, the emphasis will also change.

Mr. President, resources in any country, at any point in time are finite. Therefore, that causes us to make choices. In this particular case, I speak of choice in relation to what will be done with the resources which are available to the economy, in terms of who will use them and for what purposes recognising, of course, that our ultimate objective at all times is to carry the country forward to a higher level of economic attainment, and to ensure that, as a result, there is an improved standard of living for all the citizens of the country.

11.30 a.m.

What that implies, Mr. President, is that the resources in the country can either be used totally by the private sector or by the public sector. If that happens one way or the other we are likely to end up with an unbalanced situation, so a choice has to be made between what resources will be left to the private sector and what would be used by the public sector.

I want to stress at this point that wherever they are, there is an obligation on whoever is using them to make sure that there are used efficiently, remembering that the ultimate objective is to carry the country to a higher level of economic development. Therefore, any misuse of them whether in the private sector or in the public sector will have disastrous consequences for the country.

Mr. President, one can assume that had those resources been left in the private sector, which experience has shown is driven to a larger extent by a profit motive than in the public sector, that they would have been used more efficiently. That imposes a level of responsibility on those in the public sector who are entrusted with the use of those resources that cases similar to those mentioned in the recent Auditor-General's Report do not occur. There is no place in that thinking for mismanagement of anything. I hope that those public servants who are listening to me would take that to heart.

Mr. President, the rationale for the diversion of resources from the private sector to the public sector is fairly well known. There are a number of goods which the private sector has no inclination or desire to produce simply because the nature of them is such that what we call the exclusion principle cannot be applied, that is, the enjoyment is on a collective basis, for example, maintenance of law and order and public safety. Therefore, the private sector is not going to be interested or willing to provide the goods from which it is not going to be able to exact a fair return and those are the goods that normally fall within the jurisdiction of the public sector. Nobody has an issue with that.

Mr. President, there are some other goods which the private sector will provide and does provide where the exclusion principle can be applied. In those cases they would provide those goods to the point where the market dictates, that is, as long as those people who are willing to pay for them do so. Two good examples are education and health, but public policy may require the Government to intervene.

The private sector does provide those goods and will provide those goods because people are willing to pay for them and those who pay will enjoy them, but those persons who are unwilling to pay for it cannot be excluded from enjoying it. Goods like those are of such paramount interest to the development of this country that the Government as

a matter of public policy would find it necessary to produce them so that all of its citizens can have access to them.

If we start out on the premise that ultimately we want to make use of all the resources available to the country including the human resources that the country at the end of the day will be better off, we cannot allow a situation to develop where some would have access to health care and to education services but a large mass of the population do not have.

Mr. President, we have to develop all of the skills of our people. Therefore, it should not be a surprise to any of us that even in this document before us, health and education account for approximately 28 per cent of the expenditure. Government continues to place an emphasis on the provision of health services and education services for all in spite of the spiralling cost of providing those services.

One of the reasons Barbados, a small developing country with very few natural resources, has made the kind of progress it has made is because a good life of education has been made available to all persons in this community. I am sure all of us here would agree with that.

Mr. President, there are other things that the Government would do from time to time as it seeks to develop programmes with three broad objectives in mind, allocation of resources, the efficient allocation of those resources and the distribution of income and wealth. We see that being done in many ways through the tax policy where you have an income tax system that is progressive, that is, you pay according to your ability to pay.

That system also takes into account those at the bottom so that we have in place a tax credit system where a transfer is made to those who are at such a level that they do not yet come into the income tax net. There are also other transfers of various kinds such as pensions and assistance to the poor. It is in that kind of context that those things should be looked at.

Mr. President, successive administrations have acknowledged that when resources are diverted from the economy as a whole and brought into the public sector that there should be managed carefully and efficiently. That is why I think that the systems of accounting and financial management which we have in place have developed the way that it has. The process which we are undertaking today is part of that system where Parliament is given the opportunity to have a say in how the expenditure takes place and at some point in time to hold persons accountable for how they use those resources.

We have studied the system where we have in place the Financial Administration and Audit Act with its various provisions. We have the Financial Rules and Supply Rules

which set out carefully how people should keep their accounts what they should do and what they should not do. Those Rules do not make any provision for any individual to write off amounts as we have seen.

11.40 a.m.

Mr. President, a role is set out in those pieces of legislation for the Ministry of Finance, particularly the Director of Finance and Economic Affairs, in the day-to-day management and enforcement of those Rules.

Mr. President, there is a role for the Auditor-General to conduct financial act and money audits and to make his report to Parliament. There is also a role for the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. President, all of these checks and balances were developed over time so as to ensure that there is some order in the financial affairs of the country. It has been my experience that it has served us well.

Mr. President, that is not to say that there have not been abuses over time because wherever there are human beings, some of them would become creative in carrying out their business. That is why it is always necessary for reforms to take place and for systems to be updated.

Mr. President, back in 1996, the Ministry of Finance, with the assistance from the Inter-American Development Bank (IADB), started the implementation of what was called a Tax Administration and Expenditure Management Project. I say that the results have helped us tremendously, not because I was involved in the exercise but because the evidence is there.

Mr. President, under the tax administration side, the emphasis was first placed on three major revenue collecting departments which are the Inland Revenue, the Land Tax and the Customs and Excise Departments.

Sir, systems, procedures and processes were all improved at the Inland Revenue and the Land Tax Departments. Staff were trained, the technology required to do the job was introduced and the existing technology was upgraded. We all know the result of that exercise at those two departments today because those two departments are functioning more efficiently than they did in 1996.

Mr. President, the work which was being carried a step further at the Customs and Excise Department had to do with the Asycuda Project which dealt with the upgrading of their computer system. That has served us well but, like all other things, the time has now come for the exercise to be taken to the next stage. In fact, work is now in progress where the department is being upgraded from the Asycuda Project to Asycuda Plus Plus.

Sir, the benefits that will accrue from that software is that when that exercise is completed, those importers who are linked to the system would be able to have their documents processed and payments made without having to visit the Customs Department. This is something that was in progress for some time and I am happy to say that it is reaching fruition.

Mr. President, with the indulgence of this Honourable Chamber, I take some time off to mention a number of these things because I hear persons on programmes and elsewhere, whose concept of reform is a fairly narrow one, saying that there was no Public Sector Reform, if I may use the words of someone who has described the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals as a real budget and to say that this is real reform.

Mr. President, those persons who have to deal with the Customs and Excise Department would know that they have to take their warrants to the Department, put them into an "In Box", and an officer then checks them. If that officer finds that the warrant was not completed properly, he or she puts it into the "Out Box", and at the end of the day when that person returns for his or her warrant, he or she would discover that the document has not been processed because of its incompleteness. Therefore, that person would have to furnish the Department with new information again, which could sometimes take a number of days, if not weeks. Furthermore, when the application is completed, the person then would make the payment.

Mr. President, let us, therefore, think of how it is now being done when information is submitted. Sir, having created an appropriate bank account, having given Customs the authority, payment is made through the bank, then the goods can be cleared by Customs. That is a significant improvement which is part of the facilitation of trade.

Mr. Speaker, it will go further. In the World Trade Organisation (WTO) at this moment, there is ongoing discussion since 1996 when it was first raised at Singapore. There is a discussion of a proposed implementation of a multilateral trade facilitation agreement. When one looks at the number of proposals being made, one will discover that only those jurisdictions which have a high degree of Information Technology, good audit standards, *et cetera*, will be able to agree to some of those proposals. While I am not saying that Barbados would or would not agree, it is anybody's guess and determination when the time comes.

Mr. President, as happened in the case of the Kyoto Convention, even though Barbados was not a signatory to it, in the interest of facilitating trade, we saw it as a wise thing to do, that is, to agree to implement the various provisions and to improve our operations. Therefore, without being a member of any agreement, my view is that we should strive

to have a non-binding agreement, so that one could choose what aspects one would wish to sign onto, or choose what aspects one would want to implement, as we did with the Kyoto Convention.

Sir, even though we were not obliged to do so, we implemented all of the provisions because they made good sense so to do, but this additional piece of software would put Customs in that position. Even if we do not sign onto the agreement, in the interest of running our affairs properly, we would still be able to collect the various bits and pieces of information that we would need to do our shipment audits, *et cetera*.

Mr. President, that is an exercise which is now being put into effect by the Government to improve the functioning of the Public Sector, namely in the case of the Customs and Excise Department. The Inland Revenue Department is going a step further to the point where shortly, persons would be able to file electronically.

Mr. President, within the Ministry of Finance, there is a movement toward multi-year budgeting. The document before us focusses on the cost of the transactions which would take place during the fiscal year 2004-2005 but included in this document would be projects which would have an implementation life of more than six years but all one sees now would be the cost of next year. The Ministry of Finance, over the years, has improved the document before us, to place greater focus on the programme.
11.50 a.m.

When I first joined the Ministry in 1973, the document we used then was a shell compared with this because the thinking was not advanced and the focus was on a few line items but, over the years, work has been done to develop it.

Sir, in future we will have a document that will address the implications that will result from today's expenditure, that is, if you put in an amount for Project A which is going to have a life of five years, you will show the cost over subsequent years so that you would be aware of what you are committing yourself to. Also, once the implementation is completed, you will then have to deal with the issue of the recurring cost.

Mr. President, the Data Processing Department is developing what they call a portal and in due course will be making more information available and accessible to the public.

Finally, in terms of the reforms that have to do with the fiscal management of the country, the Treasury will be moving towards another stage. Under the Tax Administration and Expenditure Management Project started in 1996, the emphasis at the Treasury at the time was

training of staff, developing the physical infrastructure and also the implementation of the project call SmartStream which has to do with the management of the accounts of the respective spending agencies and bringing greater control from the point of view of the Treasury.

Mr. President, if you study how our financial system has developed, you will discover that as we get more and more prosperous and get involved in an increasing number of activities, it becomes more critical for us to put in place systems to ensure that persons carry out their functions properly.

Sir, SmartStream has now settled down. There were some teething problems at first and those who were opposed to changing the system have now settled down to using it. Sir, the Treasury is now getting ready to move to another stage.

Mr. President, the present accounting system which we have in place is a cash system, that is, if today Department A issues a local payment order to firm up Barbados to purchase a book at the cost of \$100, department A will make an entry in its workbook in the column called "Commitments". When the payment is made in six weeks' time, an entry is made in the Expenditure column and the Commitment column is changed appropriately. Sir, the same thing has to be done with revenue coming in.

The change that is about to be made is that of moving from the cash basis accounting system to an accrual system where when the transaction takes place, it is brought to account and if you have not paid for the item it is reflected as a payable. If the individual who owes you has not paid the same day, it is reflected as a receivable.

Mr. President, I have said earlier that change takes place over time and my caution to those who use the system is that it imposes a greater obligation on their part to manage the cash position of the Government lest we end up with huge receivables and bills. If this happens in a private company, the company would be cash-starved and would not live to see the day when it collects that money.

Sir, in my view, persons using the system have to be cautioned against large sums they owe people to be reflected in payables and large sums of receivables without collecting the money. They should not take comfort in the fact that it is documented only and you end up with huge payables and receivables.

Sir, we already have a high degree of arrears due to the Government. You will see from the Estimates before us that it is the Government's intention this year to finance part of

their expenditure by collecting some of those arrears. I will never approve any Government department owing persons in the private sector and elsewhere and not paying their bills on time.

Sir, those are some of the reforms which are about to take place during the coming year that seek to improve the financial management of the country.

Mr. President, the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue for the last fiscal year when presented to Parliament showed a deficit of \$570.1 million or 10.6 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. Simply taken on the basis of the records kept by the Accountant General that is straightforward expenditure minus revenue deficit.
12.00 noon

However, when some adjustments were made, as is the norm on the basis of the approach taken by the international financial institutions, and you net out the amortisation on the basis that you treat it as a financial item, because you get inflows as well, you net out the amortisation from the current expenditure and then net out the commercial operation expenditure of the commercial entities, for example, the Printery. If you end up with a surplus, you add it to your revenue and if you end up with a deficit you add it to the expenditure. Sir, when you do that, you end up with a deficit at that time of \$258.6 million or 4.6 per cent of GDP.

Sir, when these Estimates are presented to Parliament, there are certain circumstances that are involved at that point in time. We will recall that when I was indicating the broad objectives, which are always kept in mind, I said that depending on the prevailing circumstances, one objective may have been given more emphasis than the other. As the circumstances change, naturally, the emphasis is on the various objectives. The Estimates were presented then with that picture.

This Administration has always taken that as part of its effort to manage the affairs of this country, seeking at all times to keep the size of the deficit in the vicinity of 2.5 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. However, if the Government has to keep those objectives in mind and to implement policies to bring about changes to those that are taking place in the economy, depending on the circumstances, after September 11 when we had those unfortunate events and our tourism business sector was affected and other international events were taking place which led to a downturn in the economic performance of the country, Government found it necessary to focus more on the stabilisation function, to which I would have referred to earlier. Sir, that is why I made the point that if we keep these things in mind, these numbers will make more sense to us because they are there for a reason.

The Government has to intervene and place more emphasis on stabilisation by putting additional funds at the disposal of the tourism sector and increasing its spending to take up the slack that would have resulted by a slow down of private sector spending to prevent the economy from going into a broader recession.

Sir, when money is put into an economy, there is something called a multiplier of things. If you spend one dollar, that one dollar gives rise to twenty-five cents more activity depending on what is the situation of people's preferences and consumer habits.

The tax structure is made up in such a way that it has within certain built-in stabilisers and they go to work the same way that your body goes to work when a virus hits it. The organs get together and start taking action to defend it. Therefore, if you look at the income tax system and the transfers you will see what I am talking about. Government had to get involved to prevent the economy from reaching the point that we were at some years ago and to which we will not want to return.

I am very pleased to say that the policy worked. I will leave Senator Grant and others to speak about the significant improvements that have taken place in the tourism sector. My effort here is on the fiscal situation. Sir, that is why the Government has been able to achieve its objective and having achieved that objective, they switched the emphasis from stabilisation to another area and the deficit has been restrictive for the fiscal year to 2.6 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product. That is a significant achievement and that reinforces my point. Sir, there is no guess work here.

Sir, persons in the administration are not in charge of the world. However, they take appropriate action and you leave the rest to the Almighty. If you do what the Almighty has given you the ability to do, you will get the results.

The out-turn, based on what has transpired up to the end of January, the Estimates for February and March, the out-turn that is being projected is a deficit of 2.6 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product on the international financial institution basis, and that is within the realm that the Government said is a manageable deficit.

The Estimates which are now before us speak of revenue of \$1,940.7 million, expenditure of \$172.7 million, that is without those amendments to which I referred earlier, and a net lining of \$257.1 million and a deficit of 2.7 per cent of Gross Domestic Product on the basis of the international institution. Sir, what is being presented is far better a position than the last financial year.

Mr. President, except there are some unfortunate circumstances overtaking us during the coming year. I am sure that at the end of the next fiscal year, the deficit will be

well close to \$2.5 million if not less, depending on the circumstances, because one never knows.
12.10 p.m.

Sir, what is also important, having stabilised the economy by its increased spending, and running a higher deficit than it would normally have done early in this fiscal year, the economy has now returned to a path of growth. We are confident that this growth will be sustained into the foreseeable future.

Therefore, in the next fiscal year, 2004–2005, the Government is projecting a real GDP growth of 3.1 per cent. All of us know what we mean when we say, “real”. There is the nominal growth, when you take into account the inflation, and then you end up with the real growth. The real growth of 3.1 per cent, which we believe is a sustainable figure over a prolonged period of time, so the economy is on its way forward, after the Government having exercised the use of the stabilisation functions.

Inflation for the next year, is projected at 1.9 per cent. As you know, today our foreign exchange reserves stand at a level than many ever contemplated in this country. I recall the days well, when we were at \$11 million. The hardest time that I ever worked in my life was during those days.

Mr. President, gone are the days when every day you have to call the Accountant General. I had to do it and say to hold this, release that one. I had to call the Inland Revenue Department, to ask how much are you collecting today? Pay it in by 2:00 p.m. I also had to call the Land Tax Department, to ask how much they were getting in that day, and the Court Department, to tell them to take \$1 million in Treasury Bills, and so on.

It is so much easier now to manage the affairs of the country, and I wish I had that opportunity but that is how life is. I believe that the hard work of those days has paid off. We can now speak with comfort about planning the affairs of this country and still having 35 weeks of coverage on imports. We have more than 35 weeks now and what we are here saying is that we will carry the country forward and still have a minimum coverage of 35 weeks.

I had longed to see this day that we would be able to allow the country to develop and not having to get into this stop and start mode. You know how it is with engines. When you start up the engine and then you have to stop it and then you have to start it up again, in the end, you use more fuel than if you are able to run smoothly over a long period of time.

I could never believe that it was in our best interest to have every now and again to slow down the economy, because the foreign reserves were under pressure. I always

spoke about the need to get us to the position where we would be able to allow the economy to develop, over a prolonged period of time, but we needed to put ourselves in this position. We are in it now and we are here developing a set of proposals for the next fiscal year on the premise that we will have, as minimum, coverage for 35 weeks of imports. Of course, here again, much of the growth is expected to come from the tourism sector.

During the coming fiscal year, the Government also proposes to make a greater effort to collect some of the arrears which are due, as part of the financing of the Budget. As I said earlier, we will keep the deficit within that target range. It means, however, that a number of the state enterprises expenditure has been capped. They will have to operate more efficiently, and try to recover their user fees, at least the cost of providing the service. This is not a bad thing because this will force them to operate efficiently.

Mr. President, before I move from this broad picture though, and get to that part of the exercise about which I am very excited, and that is the subject of agriculture, there are a few more things I need to say. Sir, every now and again there is a big discussion about borrowings. Mr. President, the Government raises the bulk of its revenue through taxation. Added to that, it gets money from fees and fines. Unless it is a very rich Government, sometimes it has to cover a gap through borrowing.

Let me say though, quickly, that these Estimates of Revenue are prepared on the basis of those tax changes to the income tax system, corporation tax, personal income tax, the land tax system and other changes that the Minister of Finance announced during the last year are in effect, so all of that is taken into account.

Therefore, the Government from time to time has to engage in borrowing. There is nothing wrong with a Government borrowing, in the same way that there is nothing wrong, statistically, with an individual borrowing. The question is how much is the borrowing and what is the purpose of the borrowing.

If you borrow as an individual to keep a party, then you are likely to have some difficulty when repayment time comes, but if you borrow as an individual to purchase an asset that will help you to repay the loan, that is perfect business, good business also. It is the same with the Government. As I said, there is nothing wrong with a Government borrowing. The question then is what is the purpose of the borrowing.

Mr. President, the Government borrows in a number of ways – the foreign market, the international market, the capital market, the Inter-American Development Bank, and locally from citizens in various forms, such as treasury bills, debentures and other instruments.

At the present moment, as indicated by the Minister of Finance quite recently, the total debt of Barbados now stands at about 74 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). As an administration, we feel that a figure of 60 per cent is what we would want to aim for, but remember that earlier I said that from time to time the Government has to get involved and to take measures, depending on the prevailing circumstances, which will cause it to put more emphasis on one of those objectives than the other. When the Government borrowed that money some time ago, as an additional cover for the foreign reserves and so on, that was considered necessary at the point in time.

12.20 p.m.

The intended action, as has been clearly stated, is not to borrow on the capital market this year, and these Estimates are predicated on that assumption. The intention over a period of time is to bring the debt as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product down to somewhere in the region of 60 per cent.

Mr. President, the other matter that has to be looked at is the servicing of the debt and whether that is a burden. Even with the total debt being a fairly high percentage of the Gross Domestic Product, the servicing of the debt poses no problem for Barbados. It was therefore no surprise to me when a few days ago the institutional investor was able to make a statement and said what we have been saying all along.

I said it in this Chamber not so long ago that there was no issue with our debt management and a few days ago the Institutional Investor said that out loud and clear. I know that a lot of people who previously held up the Institutional Investor and spoke glowingly about it will probably now say do not mind them, but they have said it.

Standard and Poor's has said it as well because if you do the analysis of the Standard and Poor's document you would discover that Barbados still has an investment grade rating. In one instance we move from an A minus to an A minus plus. Those fine things, Mr. President, you have to work out, but Barbados still has an investment rating. When Standard and Poor's sees the 2.6 per cent deficit as opposed to what they were contemplating before, I know them well. They will change their views because they are professionals and they go by the facts.

Mr. President, say what you like, Barbados has always had a tradition of good management. There were little squirts here and there...

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: I will leave the years to the historians. However, on the capital market people have always felt confident about dealing with

Barbados and, therefore, they were always surprised sometimes when we got ourselves into difficulties. Just like how that group that is constantly getting itself into difficulty now and has a number of West Indians surprised and wondering how could people who looked so strong on paper are doing so little. What they do not recognise is that mediocrity sometimes shines and causes you to feel that it is a genius, so if you are not careful you would take it for a genius, and therefore that is why they might be surprised.

Mr. President, I was not surprised that a few days ago the Institutional Investor moved Barbados from number 46 out of 172 countries to number 45. Even at number 46, the only CARICOM country that is ahead of Barbados is The Bahamas.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: I am wondering why I am so grudgingly speaking about it. I am told it is at number 43, which is even better.

That is a recognition of good management of the debt situation which is also part of the stabilization function. I thought I should mention that so that persons do not get any wrong impression. We in this Administration are cognisant of the fact that we need to keep the deficit and the debt at a reasonable level and that is how this Administration intends to proceed in the coming year.

Mr. President, if you look at the Estimates, you would discover that the major items of spending for 2004–2005 are as follows:- The work on the Grantley Adams International Airport Project will continue and there is a sum of \$16.2 million for that; a sum of \$3.8 million is provided for the Inter-American Development Bank Justice Improvement Project; \$10 million is provided for the coastal infrastructural programme; \$6.3 million is provided for the road rehabilitation programme by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and \$30.2 million is provided for the EduTech Programme.

Mr. President, I need to pause here for a minute. If we accept that it is in the country's interest to have all of our citizens gaining access to education of one sort or another so that their innate skills can be brought to the fore and they can help to carry this country forward, I therefore find it a little difficult to understand how in this information age when everybody knows that a country that has its citizens prepared in a manner that would enable them to use the technology is the country that is going to take the lead, how then could people speak out against the EduTech Programme which is designed to do just that and to make sure that all of our children, not only those who are able to pay – remember I spoke about the exclusion principle – will have access to the technology. I am now struggling to make use of it because in my time it was not available, but all of our children should have access to it.

In addition to that, there is a programme which is implemented by the Ministry of Social Transformation which deals with setting up resource centres in the communities which need to be regarded in a serious way because it is trying to bring the technology to those people who are not children now and who did not have the opportunity to use the technology at school and who do not have the wherewithal to buy the computers either that they could go to those centres and make use of the technology.

We have to prepare all of our people in this age when the international environment is changing in such a way that you have to make use of the knowledge of your people.

Mr. President, \$11 million is provided to deal with the issue of HIV/AIDS – I know Senator Williams will deal with that – and \$50 million is provided for the University. I am sure that other sums were voted for that not so long ago. There is a provision of \$55.4 million for the Barbados Tourism Authority. There is a provision for the homeless under the Ministry of Social Transformation and then you have a sum under the Ministry of Commerce to do with the development of disadvantaged small businesses, which is a very important exercise. The Minister will speak on that, and a sum of \$400 000 for the planning of the University College of Barbados.

There is a provision of \$3.5 million for the continuation of the West Coast Sewerage Project and \$1 million for the Ministry of Public Works and Transport under the Tenancies Road Programme. This Administration has promised the people in its Manifesto that by the end of the decade every community in Barbados would have a paved road.

12.30 p.m.

Mr. President, we in the Rural Development Commission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Public Works, did a survey recently of the unpaved access areas across Barbados. Our information is that there are in the vicinity of 684 access roads.

Mr. President, the strategy which the Government intends to use is that the Ministry of Public Works, the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission, will work together to make sure that every community in Barbados has a paved road by the end of the decade. Sir, being the person responsible for this development, I would like to see it happening in my watch, and that does not go as far as another decade.

Mr. President, this is an important programme which, in the coming year, Government will be pushing forward. Work will continue on the West Coast Sewerage Project and thereto from the point of view of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. We have a vested interest.

Mr. President, it might sound a bit parochial but we see tertiary treatment from the outflows of the sewerage systems as one way of helping to provide water for agriculture. There is \$100 000 for the Secretariat of the Social Partnership. This gives us some idea of the major areas of activity.

Mr. President, I could not have allowed this occasion to pass without speaking in some detail about the agricultural sector. Unlike a number of persons in this community who have the strange view, and I say strange because it is not supported by any evidence, it is the view held by a number of persons who have had some form of association with the sector in the past, who now try to pour cold water on every initiative they hear about by saying that they have heard it a number of years ago. Sir, that might be true, but my question to them would be: "Why did they not do it?"

Mr. President, I have no problem with persons making such statements. However, my job is not to help find them topics to groan and moan about. It is to fix the challenges of the sector.

Mr. President, there are some very exciting things happening in agriculture, and those persons who are familiar with the sector would say that. Sir, it is known that over the past three years, that Barbados has failed to meet its sugar quota to the European Union (EU) and there are many reasons for that. All of us know the reasons, including the fact that a great part of the land that has previously been agriculture was removed because there were other activities competing for the use of that land, namely housing and tourism.

Mr. President, I do not think it is going to be possible for us to get back to the level where we used to produce 50 000 tonnes but that does not mean that there is no hope for the sector. We in the Ministry of Agriculture, in consultation with those persons in agriculture, have over the past two months, been having useful discussions about the way forward. We have met with all of the stakeholders in the sub-sectors and they have, as a consequence of those discussions, submitted to us their plans to move their respective sub-sectors forward. They have identified the number of areas they would like us to help them with in moving forward.

Mr. President, we are studying those plans because the idea is that at the end of the exercise, all of us who are related to the sector will be speaking to the same plans, so that there would be no misunderstanding.

Mr. President, the last group I have to meet with, which I will do next week, would be the sugar producers. Sir, I have kept them to the last because I was awaiting the results of certain pieces of work that were taking place. On Friday, after a presentation in the office, I visited the Sugar Cane Breeding Station at Groves, St. George, where I toured the

fields and had a look at some of the varieties of canes that are growing there, particularly the ones that are part of the impending fuel cane project.

Mr. President, our sugar industry is under threat, not only from activities taking place in Barbados but from developments that are occurring in the international community. As you know, we now sell our sugar in bulk to the European Union (EU) under a sugar protocol. That is under threat. Sir, some time ago the European Union (EU) entered into an agreement with the less developed countries, commonly referred to the "everything but alms", which gave them market access to the European Union (EU) market on a duty free basis. Sir, a number of those countries produce sugar on a larger scale than us.

Mr. President, that Protocol is about to expire at the end of 2007-2008, and we are currently in discussion with the European Union (EU) about a successor agreement, referred to as a "partnership agreement". In the World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations on agriculture discussions are taking place on the reduction of tariffs on agricultural products.

In the discussions on market access for non-agricultural products, discussions are taking place on the reduction of industrial tariffs as well. Therefore, in both ways, Barbados as a country is going to be affected from the point of view of losing revenue from import duties and from agriculture.

Sir, what that means is that even if the European Union (EU) had not entered the European Basic Agreement (EBA) arrangement, if the tariffs were brought to zero, the preferential arrangements would have had no value. If there is duty-free access when there are tariffs to third parties and all tariffs are removed, then one is at the same level as the third party.

12.40 p.m.

Whatever happens, there is going to be some implication on the negative side. Therefore, cognisant of that, over the years we have taken certain steps and are now at the point where we are about to restructure the industry. There are some interesting prospects and that is why I kept my meeting with the Sugar Producers until last because I wanted to give them the latest news.

When I toured the station at Groves on Friday, I had a presentation on one of the projects which deals with fuel cane. We looked at the numbers in terms of production cost, the yield per acres and so on and I want to tell you that it is a promising project. There are some good varieties and from the trials undertaken so far they will continue to plant at Golden Ridge, Warleigh and Groves because the researchers want to see how the varieties would react under different types of soil, and the growth has been good.

Sir, we will work on this project swiftly and the objective behind it is to use those varieties selected eventually to generate electricity. Discussions are taking place with the producers of electricity, Barbados Light and Power, because the project is expected to make a difference.

Also, in the case of fuel cane, juice will be extracted during the process and from that we will be able to make such items as molasses or syrup. We are not only looking at fuel cane, we are also looking at other things.

Last Wednesday, I had discussions with Mr. Tilby, a gentlemen who developed the technology that was used at Uplands some years ago. He toured Groves with us and we had a long discussion on the way forward for the sugar cane industry. The intention is to have a small separation plant on a trial basis operating in Barbados during the 2005 crop. Here again we are talking about separating the juice from the biomass and a number of downstream activities could result.

The gentleman is also interested in putting his pocket behind his technology. We are working on the details and, in due course, all of it will be made known.

Sir, we have done more than that in terms of restructuring the sugar industry. For some time we have been having discussions with Professor Hollingsworth at Michigan State University. Last week, we had a conference call with him and the next step is to send a team to the University to start talking with him about a Memorandum of Understanding and the way forward.

I am sure that Honourable Members appreciate that I cannot tell you the details because we are talking here about intellectual property issues and if I speak too quickly, someone else will pick up the idea and run with it.

Sir, we are looking at all these things and some of them are bound to emerge as feasible opportunities. I have approached CFTC, the arm of the Commonwealth Secretariat that provides technical assistance to provide assistance to us to do some feasibility studies on some of the projects. As happened in the case of cotton, we in the Ministry are doing the developmental work and once the feasibility of these investment opportunities are established, we will give the information to the private sector and let them run with the project.

Sir, cotton is another project I am excited about. The development work was done at the expense of the Ministry and we have been given a pledge by the Minister of Finance in his Economic Statement that the research will continue so that they can get themselves on a better footing.

Sir, the crop that was just harvested, although only 200 acres were cultivated, the yield has been better in many instances. There are still too many cases where people are

below the average and in a few weeks, the Ministry will be arranging a meeting with the Cotton Growers and others to speak about the measures that will be taken in time for the coming crop where we intend to move from 200 acres to 800 acres.

This morning I spoke to a large land owner who was talking about taking his plantation out of agriculture but he announced to me that he was given instructions to put a few acres in cotton and the plan is that in January we will be reaping 800 acres.

Sir, if we get the average yield per acre up to 1 500, it would be a marvellous thing. At present, some plantations get close to 2 000 but many persons are below the 1 500 yield per acre. Sir, research is still being done in the Ministry and ultimately the plan is to go up to 4 000 yield per acre but we are doing this gradually.

Sir, we are using the WISICO trademark and this company will purchase the cotton from all the countries and then market the product. The intention is that the companies will not sell cotton to persons as was done in the past but they will own the cotton and take it to the final stage of manufacture of the garment.

They have had discussions during the last two weeks with a potential joint-venture partner who has been involved in that field for years. That is a plus for non-sugar agriculture to add to the restructured sugar industry from which we expect great things.
12.50 p.m.

Sir, if that was all, that would have been a great yield but there is more. We have a tremendous opportunity for the export of hot peppers to Canada. The Ministry, through the Agriculture Development Fund has now created a fund to make money available to the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation so that when farmers export to Canada, they will be paid. Previously, the farmers brought their produce to the person that was co-ordinating it and they did not get their money on time. Some of the farmers told me so last year when we had consultations with the farming community across Barbados.

Over the coming months, the Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation will be making sure that those farmers who want to get into the export market can do so with assistance from the Government.

In fact, during the last week, with the assistance from ECA, 15 farmers, along with a Senior Extension Officer from the Ministry and an officer from the Industrial Development Corporation went to Dominica to look at a Green House hydroponic project. We believe that one of the ways through which the farming community can deal with

competition is to make greater use of the latest technology. I am sure that coming out of that visit there would be some benefit.

Mr. President, I met with the food crop producers and they have given me their thoughts on how they can carry the sub-sector forward and the problems they now encounter. We think that part of the answer is to have a processing facility functioning well. A few weeks ago, I was very pleased when I had a discussion with a group of persons who brought me two processing projects that they want to start. They have our blessing. Sir, we are going to be working with them to move that food processing project forward as well. Sir, none of them is in food crop production.

We understand the problems that the farmers encounter in importing produce. The simple approach that some people take is that they say to ban the imports. While they say to ban the imports, they are hoping somehow to export their produce to somebody else, including some of the people that they want us to ban the imports from. If those exporters adopt the same attitude, what do you think would happen? It is not simply to say to ban imports.

We think that part of the answer is to create the facility so that the farmer can get rid of his produce and that value can be added to that produce by somebody else, not necessarily the farmer. The farmer is to farm and be able to sell his produce at a reasonable price. We think that this is where the processing facility will make the big difference.

The Barbados Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation is being restructured to deal with the processing aspect and to work with the farmers. They are already working with the Land for the Landless Programme. They are dealing with the irrigation for the farmers and they are giving them some funds to purchase equipment to deal with irrigation.

Sir, the Land for the Landless Scheme which we see as part of the effort to boost the production – before I speak on that I should say that beside the hot peppers, there are other products that are very profitable. For example, onions are a very profitable crop at this time. However, part of the problem now is, that we grow them for only a certain time of the year because of the ability of the variety to survive later in the year.

The Ministry has been doing a lot of work and they have done some trials on cultivars. They have established that there are some varieties which we can use to grow onions all year round. Recently I had a visit from a farmer who told me that he was very pleased about the cotton which was grown on his farm. He said to me, “cotton, hot peppers and onions, I feel okay.”

We also feel that way so we have done the work on testing the varieties of onions that can grow all year round. It means that we would plant variety “A” at the beginning of the year and variety “B” later in the year. This is a project that the Ministry is excited about.

Sir, we have hot peppers, onions and root crops. At the moment we have a problem with sweet potatoes. There is a virus that is attacking the sweet potatoes and it seems to be doing so particularly on the St. Philip farms and I do not know why. We have taken samples of them and sent to the Potato Institute in Peru to help us identify the virus. Sir, we have a close association with this Institute. In addition, we are also talking to them about having access to some clean planting material and other things that may be resistant to this particular strain of virus.

Sir, for those of you who like chips, Senator Chandler will tell you that there is a variety of sweet potato, which was done in the Ministry, that can be used to make chips and you would not know the difference between sweet potato and white potato. We have a number of root crops that have been promoted.

We have come up with a plan for the sheep producers to set out how they intend to move forward to meet the huge domestic demand that now exists. At the moment, supermarkets require on a weekly basis 120 carcasses. There are several hotels that require just as many and the total industry is producing only 60 carcasses a week. Therefore, you can understand that there is an opportunity for them to produce more. We are working with them and we have developed a plan to do a number of things, including artificial insemination. We are trying to get them up to the point where they can make a dent on the huge gap that is there in a relatively short space of time.

Mr. President, we have done the same thing with the pig industry. Recently, a baseline study was done by the Ministry and we now have the results of that study. A business plan is now being developed in consultation with the stakeholders. The work that is being done is a joint approach, the Ministry and the private sector for example Hipac, A-One Supermarket, the Pig Farmers’ Association and the Barbados Agriculture Society. The business plan that is being developed contemplates an expansion in food production to the point where more local pork will be used in processing a product for domestic and regional export. So we have a plan of action to carry that sub-sector forward.
1.00 p.m.

We have a similar approach to the goat industry. Work is going on between the producers and the Ministry on that, and we have a plan from them.

The poultry industry has also given us their plan and you know that the poultry industry in this country is very well organised. It is probably the most sensitive of the sub-sectors we have to deal with, and in that context, the Government will continue to keep in place the revenue which we now have, to give them a certain degree of protection against cheaper imported poultry products. They are moving forward and we are working with them.

Recently, we had a scare with the development of Asian flu in the United States, from which we purchase our hatching eggs for the industry. I met with the members of the industry to discuss specific measure they would put in place at their respective farms to make sure that everything is done at a certain standard.

The Government has agreed to firstly make Asian flu a notifiable disease. At the moment it is not, and the Government has agreed that the legislation will be amended to do that, and the work is being done by the Attorney-General's Chambers now to make it a notifiable disease, so that in the event that it gets into Barbados, no one will hide it. We are taking measures to prevent it from getting here.

We have put a ban on imports of chicken products from those parts of the United States and Canada, where the flu is presently in existence. It is not in existence in the State where we order from. We have been taking the hatching egg from Georgia, but we are watching that situation.

We also have to seek and obtain approval for legislation to be put in place to deal with the illegal importation of exotic birds. There are a number of persons importing into Barbados these exotic birds illegally. They are hiding them away in rolls of toilet paper. They think they are tricking the quarantine officers at the Airport. Then they bring them to Barbados undetected and unchecked and that is a possible threat to the local poultry industry, so we are putting stiffer penalties in place to deal with those cases, if we catch them.

Sir, I also have to speak about the problems that have been brought into Barbados by travellers hiding planting material in their suitcases and feeling smart that they have tricked the Customs and are beating the quarantine system. Then they let loose various diseases and pests on the farming community. Sir, not only the farming community. Some of them eat anything.

The giant African snail was not brought in that way. We suspect that it came in attached to a container but that loves the hibiscus. It loves sweet potato as well as the slip, so it will eat anything. We are now spending money trying to deal with pests that individuals brought in by hiding away planting material, so we have to deal with that because we

have to protect the agricultural community from these people who are not thinking about the consequences of their actions.

Mr. President, in addition to the earlier sub-sectors, we have been meeting with the 4H Movement. We in the Ministry believe that youth have to be brought on board in our drive to carry the agricultural sector to a higher level. I had meetings with the members of the Leaders' Council and with the Foundation and we have assigned a senior officer in the Ministry to deal with the 4H and the schools.

We feel that the young people in the schools, especially those schools where they have agricultural programmes, have to be brought up-to-date on the latest technology so that they will be experts at using the technology. We believe this is the way forward and we have an officer dealing with the greater use of the technology.

Sir, we have in place a scheme through which students at the BBC and SJPP are attached to the Ministry, to the workshop if they are doing engineering, to the extension officer if they are in that area where they go out, and as announced by the Minister responsible for Economic Affairs in November, we are now putting the mentoring programme in place, where we are making arrangements for them to be attached to farms that are managed on a best practice basis, so that they will be learning the techniques of farming on the job. As you know, benchmarking is one of the things we are putting in place to help people lift their standards.

Added to all of those, Mr. President, we are dealing with issues such as agricultural health. As you know, under the Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Agreements of the WTO, it is the Ministry of Agriculture that has responsibility for ensuring that Barbados reaches its obligation when it comes to plant health and animal health. We are not talking about the things that concern the Ministry of Health. Under the SPS Agreement, it is the Ministry of Agriculture that has the responsibility for agricultural health, plant health and animal health.

At present, we are working on a number of pieces of legislation which will soon be coming to Parliament. Several of them are already in draft, some to do with the slaughterhouses, red meat, white meat, veterinary drugs, markets administration, fish quality inspection and the establishment of a national agricultural health and food safety authority. The ultimate body of that will do the certification in relation to the export of our agricultural produce.

Sir, as many of you may know, the Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Standards which the European Union has set, Barbados is not one of those countries which is on the list that can export without hindrance agricultural produce, including fish, to the EU. We want to be on that list and,

therefore, over the last weeks, through our Mission in Brussels, we have signalled to the EU that we want to be on that list. We now have the questionnaires to answer, which is the first part of the process.

On Friday, I met with all of the persons in the Ministry and persons from the Vet offices and the Fisheries Department to work out how we are going to approach this matter. The legislation about which I spoke, is part of the solution. We are working on that and, hopefully, in the not too distant future, Barbados will be on that list so that we can export our fish and so on, to the EU. We are also on the way to dealing with the problems to do with the margarine, which I am sure Senator Fields knows about.

Mr. President, when I met with a farmer on Friday, he said to me, "You have a Ministry that is so vast," and I am now finding that to be the case. The truth about it is that I could speak the whole day about agriculture, because, as I told a farmer this morning who visited me before I came here, I am excited about it and I know that the farming community is just as excited or even more excited than I am. I have seen signs of a renewed interest in agriculture. I know also that we together are going to disappoint a lot of persons who are eager to proclaim agriculture dead, but who would discover that it is very much alive. I am sure they will be disappointed because they do not wish to see it alive. As I said, we are working on the establishment of the agriculture health and food safety.
1.10 p.m.

As far as the fishing industry is concerned, we have had similar meetings with them and we have discussed with them issues such as product development. We did the same thing in relation to the poultry industry. In fact, in all of the sub-sectors we are emphasising that one of the ways to deal with the competition is to talk about product development, new products and new ways of dealing with the same material and so on. The fishing industry within that context has put forward their proposals how they can move forward and the kinds of things they would want to see done and so on. The same way that the boat owners have difficulties in obtaining insurance, the same way the crop producers have problems when their crops get damaged, the fishing industry has some problems and we are trying to deal with them.

We in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development have looked at a number of schemes that exist elsewhere and we are working on helping them to put in place schemes that will allow them to get coverage in the unlikely event they suffer damages.

As far as the fishing industry is concerned, there are two things I wish to mention now. When I met with those persons who do long line fishing, that is, those who go out and catch tuna and so on, they raised with me certain

concerns. The issue of fish quality legislation and other pieces of legislation that we have discussed with them will cover some of their concerns.

One of the concerns they raised with me was the situation that exists now at the Fisheries Complex at the landing site. A few weeks ago the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development was able to obtain a supplementary from Parliament to deal with that problem because while there was an overall plan in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for the redevelopment of that Complex, I decided to take out that component and put that as phase one.

The contract has been awarded and the construction of the steel frame is going on now, so very shortly that problem will be fixed at the landing site and the area would be nicely paved. It would then become a restrictive area to those who work with the fish and not a thoroughfare where everybody would be passing in and out.

A few weeks ago we also obtained another supplementary to deal with the roof at the Oistins Fishing Complex. The tendering process has been completed and we will shortly be awarding the contract. Unfortunately, we will not be able to spend all of the money provided through the supplementary by March 31, but with the assistance of the Minister of Finance, we are able to get a move in the House to cover the remainder of the work.

Vending: Mr. President, I met with the Vendors' Association. There are some vendors who currently sell at the back here in Palmetto Square and in the Estimates before us we have a provision to deal with the renovation of the old Griffith Reliance Pharmacy Building to house them. We have worked out that with them already and that work is going to proceed in the coming fiscal year.

We are also going to move ahead with the construction of vending facilities at Redman's Village and at Bathsheba. There is a little hiccup at Bathsheba that has something to do with a particular site and the historical relevance to the site and so on, but we will deal with that.

Mr. President, apart from those, we will be creating in the coming year a number of outdoor sites across Barbados, the first of which will be established at Spring Garden. With the assistance of the Barbados Port Authority, we went there and identified some land for a number of large vendors. These are vendors who wholesale and formal vendors.

We do not believe it is proper to house those same vendors in the facility where the retailers are vending because they would do great damage to the retailers if the wholesalers and retailers are selling at the same site. In

consultation with them, we agreed that we would allow them to vend on open sites where we would pave the area and put in water and toilet facilities. We took the vendors to the site at Spring Garden and we are now awaiting their response as to exactly what it is they want to do there.

We also have a plan after a number of town hall meetings for other sites across Barbados where farmers who do not want to vend the whole week would be able to go and set up on Fridays and Saturdays and do their vending. We will put them at points where people can move off the road, buy and move on because we do not want to create any traffic congestion.

Mr. President, I know time is fast moving on and I am forced to conclude even though I have much more to say. I think it would be good for me to conclude on this note by saying that last year when we celebrated the World Food Week at Heritage Park that the great harvest which was the last event held there was a resounding success. I was very pleased to see the enthusiasm of the school children as they looked at the black belly sheep and were judging them. The elderly folks who were there were pointing at the heifers and had reasons why this one should be the number one and why that one should be number one.

It was very pleasing to my heart so much so that the members of the farming community, led by the Barbados Agricultural Society, and assisted by a number of other private sector persons, and with assistance from the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, have been meeting now for the last few months making plans for restarting the Annual Agricultural Exhibition from this December.

Mr. President, we in the Ministry feel that at least once a year we should focus the nation's attention on what is happening in agriculture, particularly to the new things, so that is an event we are certainly looking forward to.

Mr. President, with your indulgence, there are three things I must say before I close. Recently Cabinet agreed to amend the appropriate existing legislation to allow the logo which has been developed for the black belly sheep to be registered. The work which the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has started, through the Caribbean Agriculture Research and Development Institute and the University of the West Indies, on studying the DNA profile of the sheep is going to be carried on because we want it concluded fairly quickly.

1.20 p.m.

Mr. President, Barbados previously exported its black belly sheep. In fact, recently too prior to the change of legislation in January which now requires that anyone wishing to export black belly sheep now has to get an export licence, this had to be done because Government has tried to

assist the sheep industry by providing funds to the creation of a feed lot so that farmers could produce the lamb, then pass it onto someone else who would look after its development whereby that farmer could continue producing.

Sir, it hurts my heart to have discovered that recently 100 black belly sheep had been exported at a time when we had to meet a huge domestic demand for lamb. Therefore, I trust that these persons would desist from undermining the developments that are taking place in the farming industry.

Mr. President, if we are able to establish through Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) testing that the black belly sheep is a special breed, we could claim intellectual property rights and claim the black belly sheep as a national resource. We feel that should be done, along with the registration of a log before exporting the sheep so that in the future, anyone who buys the sheep has to recognise the origin of the sheep. Sir, the sheep that we saw running across the highways in the United States of America were not genuine black belly sheep because these had long horns, which is not one of the things we would allow, were we to register the sheep.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: When I checked the history of those sheep, they had originated from Barbados many years ago, but were now crossed with other species.

Mr. President, our way forward for the sheep industry is putting them in a position to establish intellectual property rights and then to expand their production.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Griffith, I understand you are in full flow but would you please wind up during the next two minutes?

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: There is a plan to establish a beef feed lot. We have plans from beef producers who have identified the land and are willing and ready to establish a lot where they will rear one thousand heads of cattle. Sir, we now import 2.6 million pounds of beef and, therefore, through such an operation we can carve off part of that import.

Sir, we must understand that we have to pay serious attention to the issue of food security and to increasing our production but we also have to pay attention to reducing the food import bill. These are some of the things that we in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development are working on, and are designed to:

- (a) Increase the contribution of the sector as a whole to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP);

- (b) Help us to produce more food to feed ourselves and in the process, to reduce the food import bill;

Mr. President, if we put in place an effective land use policy and the water solution which has been developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, this agriculture sector will do well.

Mr. President, I have the assurance of the Honourable Prime Minister that whatever solution is found for the water problem in Barbados that it would include a component to deal with having adequate water available to the farming community.

Mr. President, I thank you.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.30 p.m.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.30 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
1.25 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Honourable Senate is resumed.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, every year, in accordance with the requirements of the Constitution of Barbados Sections 108 and 109, Government is required to lay in Parliament, Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the ensuing financial year. This must be done before the end of the current financial year and is, therefore, done in the month of March.

These Estimates come in the form of an Appropriation Bill which sets out the various items of expenditure which Government contemplates undertaking in the financial year ahead. Accompanying the Appropriation Bill, usually, is a fairly lengthy second reading speech, both in the Other Place and in the Senate, and today was no exception. Sir, to use the word "lengthy" takes no cognisance of the fact that length in the Senate is constrained by the provision of the Standing Orders of this House.

Sir, today, true to form, the Leader of Government Business the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, delivered the second reading speech on the Appropriation Bill for the year 2004/2005.

I had hoped when he began that I would have heard a report card on the expenditure which was approved for the

last financial year as a basis for justifying the expenditures which are being contemplated for the financial year 2004/2005 but I was to be disappointed because we were treated to a very lucid lecture in economics in the first part of the speech and then in the second part of his speech a very excited and enjoyable excursion into the area he loves so much, the area of agriculture.

The speech, therefore, has left a number of questions unanswered. As I sat and listened to the Honourable Leader of Government Business, I from time to time pinched myself to be reminded that the Barbados of which he was speaking was the one in which I live, this very idyllic picture of all things going well, the deficit coming in right, the national debt a little bit off but we are working towards the desirable percentage, 60 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, debit to Gross Domestic Product ratio of 60 per cent against the existing 72 per cent, and all the other platitudes to which, annually, we have been treated over the last 10 years.

Mr. President, my misfortune, I suspect, is that I was, between the period 1994 to 1999, exposed to the same punishment in another place. So, today's punishment just represented a change of locus for me but the pain was still the same.

I do not intend to join the Minister on issues of deficit, national debt and that kind of thing because I think that I understand enough about what is commonly called "positive economics", to understand that there is nothing more to it than explaining how the capitalist system works and what can and cannot be done to keep it in existence. Positive economics in a capitalist system is about how to protect, organise and allocate capital on issues of labour and the socially excluded are only incidental.

I am accustomed to the fictions of what the deficit and the debt to Gross Domestic Product ratio are. As people talk about these things, you get a sense that they are really discussing something that is ordinary. Unfortunately for me, when I go to lime at street corners or go into shops in Barbados I do not hear anybody discussing any deficits. I do not hear anybody discussing any debt to Gross Domestic Product ratio. I do not hear anybody discussing any debt to equity ratio. People's concerns are a little more mundane than that, a little more true to life than these elegant abstractions which seem to attract and preoccupy those who speak on these matters from time to time.

Sir, logicians have a phrase called "the fallacy of misplaced concreteness" by which they mean that there are some of us who have a tendency to take abstractions and so concretise them by the way we discuss them, that if you are not careful you would believe that there are things that you can reach out and touch, live and put in a bag and carry away these fallacies of misplaced concreteness.

Mr. President, a lot of the abstractions we hear about and I heard today really bear no relation at all to the real concerns which I hear from people in Barbados from day-to-day and which are really concerns of mine as a politician with a particular world view.

Of course, I must add that I have lived since I became an adult under two Barbados Labour Party Administration dispensations, one between 1976 and 1986 and the one between 1994 and now. It occurs to me that there is really no fundamental difference between the two that there seems to be a mindset in the Barbados Labour Party that these abstractions have some kind of concrete existence and once you talk about them excitedly people will be swept along by your excitement and it will become reality for them as well.

Mr. President, unfortunately, that is not so and after all we heard before the Senate was suspended for lunch, the real pulsating concerns of the homeless, jobless and other disadvantaged and socially excluded people in Barbados continue to be the same.

Of course, the Honourable Leader of Government Business could not resist the temptation of making a courtesy call on the period between 1991 and 1994. He did not do it too explicitly but in contrasting the bad old days with the good new ones, he had to make reference to the fact about the period when he had to work so hard. He said that he had never worked so hard in his life but things are different now. Sir, that was supposed to be the mark of distinction between a period presided over by the Democratic Labour Party and the present period presided over by the Barbados Labour Party.

I would just ask him to internalise, if only for purposes of humour, that the personnel at the Ministry of Finance are different now from what they were then and that he was one of the chief functionaries at the Ministry of Finance during those bad old days. It was his advice that the Government of the day was taking. If things are so much better now...

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. May I ask what advice was the Government of the day taking from me?
2.40 p.m.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: The Honourable Senator was an official in the Ministry of Finance at the time and that he is not there now, and it may very well be that his absence helps to explain why things are as good as he is describing now, and that his presence then, may well be the explanation why they were as bad as they were then. This is all I am saying. He may internalise only for the purposes of humour. He must not be so hypersensitive.

Asides.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, I believe it was in the year 2000, the then President of the United States, Mr. Bill Clinton, paid a historic visit to Vietnam. I say, historic because I believe he was the first American President to visit that country, since the notorious Vietnam War.

While on that historic visit, President Clinton made a statement, which I regard as memorable, and of deep philosophical significance. He said that he looked forward to the day when Americans would stop seeing Vietnam as a war and begin to see Vietnam as a country. A moment's reflection would reveal that at the mere mention of the word "Vietnam", one tends to think of the Vietnam War. Americans tend to think that way and people outside of America as well. We tend to overlook the fact that, as President Clinton said, it is a country with people like us. People who eat like us, who sleep as we do, who work as we do, who indulge in recreation as we do, and I am sure who make love as we do.

Sir, mention of Vietnam has always tended to evoke images of a war rather than a country made up of highly civilised people. I refer to President Clinton's famous statement only to say that by parity of reasoning, I also look forward to the day when the Barbados Labour Party will begin to see Barbados, not just as an economy but also as a society.

Now, that distinction is important for me, and for most people living in the Caribbean because historians agree that when these islands were invaded in the 17th Century for the most part, they were never designed for social living. They were always and exclusively designed for purposes of production. They served the productive purposes of the invaders over a long number of years. In fact, in the case of Barbados, at the middle of the 18th Century, Barbados was described as the brightest jewel in the British Crown, producing as it did, most of the sugar that Britain needed and was doing all the things that the mother country needed.

Small wonder then that after Emancipation in 1838, around 1950, a Governor Harris of Trinidad and Tobago reflecting on the 15 or more years that had elapsed since emancipation, said that a race had been freed, but no society had been found, because since the islands were never designed for social living, there was no recognisable society, as we understand the term today, and the purposes of production were still being served.

The whole purpose of politics in Barbados, as I see it, given that kind of history, and the efforts of successive Governments of Barbados, has been to try to create here a society, by having regard to the welfare, the concerns, the passions of the less fortunate, or the underprivileged of the socially excluded.

If one must be fair to the facts, a massive initial contribution was made to that effort by the Barbados Labour Party of the 1950s, when an enviable panoply of labour legislation was introduced into Parliament to ameliorate and improve the life and living conditions of workers here. Those efforts were continued by successive Governments, but it is a matter of the gravest concern to me today, that we seem to be back at a stage, or going back to a stage where this Barbados Labour Party Administration is treating Barbados as an economy, and not as a society.

This is where the divide, I contend, between the Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party is to be found, and that is where the battle will be joined between the two sides in the politics of Barbados. Once you get caught up in treating this country as an economy, the economic utterances that we heard in here today, become paramount and, as long as the figures are right, all reality is right.

No effort is made to look behind the figures to see the reality of actual living flesh and blood human beings and how they are making it in Barbados. It all has to do, once we get into that economic mindset, with concentrating on issues of growth to the exclusion of issues of development, and you end up therefore bereft, I contend, of any serious philosophy or ideology, make your pick of development. This is why at the start of this Barbados Labour Party Administration in 1994, the country was told that the dream for it was to have a car parked outside every house. That was the philosophy of development of the Barbados Labour Party, just after it came to power in 1994.

As long as you could have a car parked outside of every house, all was well with the world. That was the best of all possible worlds, to use the words of, I believe, Dr. Pangloss in Voltaire's *Candide*.

Subsequent to that, we have heard about Barbados becoming a developed country by the year 2010. I like to be fair to the facts. I have heard that talk from the Democratic Labour Party platforms as well but nobody has ever explained it to me. I have never heard it explained by the Barbados Labour Party and I certainly have never heard it explained in my own party, so therefore I cannot pretend to understand it.
2.50 p.m.

What I do know is that that concept of development means nothing more, as far as I can grasp anything about it, than satisfying criteria laid down by the World Bank and other such international financial institutions, and bears no relation at all to the actual reality of ordinary people in this country.

We have become a developed country, but we certainly would not be able to attend G8 Summits, we certainly would

not have a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council and we certainly would still be importing needles, pins and nails. Mr. President, so much for that approach to development. Until I get more details on it and until it is better explained to me, I better leave it alone.

Mr. President, I am not interested in these statistical indices that define things like development. Ultimately for me, the maximizing of human satisfactions in those critical areas that make for making people truly human are much more important than satisfying these arid statistical criteria.

I hear *sotto voce*, I am not supposed to take cognisance of asides, that it was not so in 1991. I agree that it was not so in 1991 but the people have spoken and the Barbados Labour Party came to power in 1994 to cleanse Barbados of all of its defilement which is what we are dealing with today. The people have spoken in 1991 already and we are dealing today with the Estimates of 2004-2005.

Mr. President, I cannot discuss the Gross Domestic Product of Barbados without asking how the wealth created by this Gross Domestic Product is distributed. It can make no sense to me if out of a 3 per cent growth in any financial year, 90 per cent of that growth goes to the 10 per cent at the top of the society and the remaining 10 per cent goes to the other 90 per cent. The issue of distribution must figure whenever we are talking about growth and must go to the issue of development as well.

Mr. President, if you are telling me that the per capital income of Barbados is \$15 000, it makes no sense to me and continues to be an extraction. I cannot tell a tenant with a notice to quit who comes to my office with her face hung down navigating between despondency and despair that she has nothing to worry about as she is worth \$15 000 according to the per capital income of Barbados. That is what I mean by extractions that really make no contact with the real life condition of people in Barbados.

Mr. President, if we are boasting about growth, about Gross Domestic Product and about per capita income, the issue of employment, the right and the privilege of people to find work that they enjoy so that they can earn to meet their various needs also has to be factored into the equation. I like to be fair to the facts.

This Government has sought to tackle the unemployment problem, and as I understand it unemployment is just about 11 per cent in Barbados today, but that does not represent perfection by any elasticity of meaning. It does not say that a Minister could stand up in here today and paint a picture as though nothing is wrong in Barbados when, in fact, 10 out of every 100 people who want to find work cannot find any.

Mr. President, the issue of who controls the resources of Barbados has to be a factor that must be taken into account if you are discussing genuine development. It really cannot make for the consolation of Barbadians if they think that in their own country they have no serious stake as control in critical areas of the economy is now located outside of the country and that in terms of control in their country they do not play a mainstream role in the issue of determining their own life chances.

These are developmental concerns that make me step back from the very idyllic and endemic picture that was painted in the speech delivered by the Honourable Leader of Government Business, the distinguished Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development in here today.

Mr. President, I have already said from the Floor of this House that between 1994 and the present that the Honourable Leader of Government Business in the Senate is the most enthusiastic and, seemingly to me, the most intellectually on target Minister of Agriculture the country has had over the last 10 years. He has conceptualised the problem of agriculture and is attempting in a very enthusiastic way in bringing along all of the stakeholders with him to tackle the problems of agriculture in Barbados.

I said that before and there is really no harm in saying it again. I think Honourable Senators saw it in here today as he virtually lost himself as he discussed matters relating to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. He had to be lassoed and pulled back by you, Mr. President, as he went on.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I would not use those words.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: I am obliged by your ruling, Sir.

Mr. President, it is therefore important that we get to the Barbados that the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development elected to ignore. He dealt with the Barbados that suited him but there is a Barbados that he ignored that I think would bear some of our attention.
3.00 p.m.

Mr. President, in spite of all that has been said in here today, the reality is, and I believe the Honourable Minister did make this point, that this year's Appropriation Bill makes provision for spending in the Ministry of Health to the tune of \$242 686 007 and in the Ministry of Education, expenditure to the tune of \$241 931 936, the two largest allocations in this year's expenditure.

Mr. President, there is nothing unusual about that. Over the last 25 years, the pattern of public expenditure in

Barbados has not undergone any fundamental change, certainly not so far as health and education are concerned. Sir, but it must be a matter of the gravest concern for the citizens of this country, not just that we are boasting on the issue of education, for example, but are we getting value for the money that we are spending? That is the issue and that is why I had hoped for a report card from the Honourable Minister, which has not come.

Mr. President, we could have been told how well last year's appropriations were spent and why this year's appropriations are justified. We could have been told about the results that flowed for the people of Barbados from last year's expenditures and how the people of Barbados could look forward to more and better of the same. Sir, we have not heard any of that from the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Honourable Leader of Government Business.

Mr. President, one of the features of the issue of health in Barbados is that whenever one mentions the word "health", one tends to conjure up images of doctors, nurses, hospitals, polyclinics, ambulances, and that kind of thing. In other words, anything connected with medicine tends to be conjured up by the word "health".

Mr. President, put differently, for numbers of years now, we in Barbados have practised what I would call a "medico-centric" practice of health, a model that accords centrality to doctors, nurses, hospitals, ambulances, polyclinics, and those kinds of outlets.

Mr. President, one of the ironies of all of this is that while we approach it that way, the very doctors tell us that a sufficient number of our health problems result from lifestyle practices.

In other words, a medico-centric model is pursued when the causes of the illnesses with which this medico-centric model purports to deal, are socially derived. Of course, there is nothing new about that because the most casual look at the Moyne Commission Report of 1938, will disclose that from as far back as then, the Moyne Commission had associated, after penetrating analysis of health problems across the Caribbean and here in Barbados, the overwhelming majority of our health problems with social and institutional deficiencies. Therefore, the problem is, in fact, not a new one but we have continued to pursue it in spite of the evidence that is available to us.

Mr. President, some time recently there were series of programmes on the national television dealing with what, I believe, were called "The Silent Killers" and as I listened week after week, it kept coming through that these illnesses had to do with lifestyle rather than strictly medical causes.

Mr. President, therefore, the very first challenge I think we face in dealing with health, and in justifying expenditure on health, is determining to what extent this medico-centric model has been serving the country's best purposes. That is an issue to which I will return, but I have to say that since this model evokes images of doctors, nurses, hospitals, *et cetera*, it is absolutely important to address an item in this year's Appropriation Bill that deals with the capping of the subvention to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

This not only has health significance but it also has political significance because the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was an active issue in Barbados over the last 10 years, and in its most recent manifestations continues to be, over the introduction of a Board.

Mr. President, when this Government came to office in 1994, one of the many pledges it made was that life at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would not be the same again, that it would have improved substantially for the better and that it would have been snatched from the abyss in which they alleged the Democratic Labour Party had been sinking it.

Sir, a number of measures were taken which the country was assured would have brought about these loudly proclaimed results for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. For example, I believe it was around 1996 that the Hospital was virtually decapitated by the removal of four of its most senior functionaries, they being used as the explanation for the inefficiencies and problems at that institution.

Sir, not only were they removed brutally, I would say, but along with the removal, some additional monies were pumped into the institution and we were told that with the problems removed, we could look forward to an upswing in the fortunes of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.
3.10 p.m.

Mr. President, the story goes that the four dismissed persons went to court to have their reputations protected. The court agreed they were wronged and damages were awarded against the Government for its conduct, damages which I am assured, up to recently, have not yet been paid so that these wronged persons walk around Barbados with long faces, the Government not having seen fit, according to my most recent information, to compensate them in accordance with the award of the court.

Mr. President, nothing has really changed at the hospital and its problems continue. Waiting hours at the Accident and Emergency Department did not shorten, problems in the workshop did not improve, ancillary staff did not become more satisfied, the morale of nurses was not boosted and doctors continue to complain about the conditions under which they work, sharing the grievances of the nurses as well.

Sir, the most recent act in that scene is that having, like Simon Peter, toiled all night and caught nothing, Government has decided to introduce a board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which is supposed to solve all problems like the four top men.

I know there has been a lot of debate over the introduction of a board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is not the first time that the issue of introducing a board has been mooted. I seem to recall that in 1972 when the Democratic Labour Party was in office the issue of introducing a board at the hospital was the subject of a committee's investigation and the same concerns that have been raised in recent times in relation to the present board were raised at that time by the Committee reporting on its feedback from the staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Suffice it to say, I do not believe that the Government should beguile itself into believing that the introduction of a board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is going to solve the problems of that institution. Sir, there are good boards, bad boards, successful boards and unsuccessful boards all across Barbados and there is nothing magical about the alchemy of a board because, Sir, a board does not change base metals into gold.

Ultimately, a board is manned by individuals produced by a society and there have to be other considerations to dealing with the problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. For all that, we in the Democratic Labour Party wish this new attempt at solving the problem at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital well because we think that the issue of health care is too important to be left in the vicissitudes of that kind of administrative experimentation. We hope that the board can bring that type of stability to the hospital that not just the Government but the people, who are served by the hospital so passionately, need and deserve.

Of course, it seems to me that a careful look has to be taken at the management systems in place at the hospital and the extent to which those systems are responsive in a timely fashion to the challenges thrown up day by day at that institution. Sir, just putting a board in place and leaving antiquated management systems in place will do that institution no good. There has to be a solution somewhere to the problems of long waits at the Accident and Emergency Department.

Asides.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: I am not here to tell the Government what to do. Mr. President, as recently as last night I had to tell a gathering of Democratic Labour Party supporters that we are not here to tell the Government what to do because telling the Government what to do keeps the Government in Government and the Opposition in Opposition. We are not here for that but, certainly, we are

here to highlight some of the problems facing the country for the benefit of its citizens and to call on the Government to address some of these problems.

Mr. President, I hope a close look will be taken at the management systems in place at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and some attempt made to humanise them and make them more responsive to the concerns of those who have to work within the system. Sir, this is the history that dates back to 1994 and has brought us to this juncture at which we now find ourselves.

Mr. President, I was speaking earlier about the model of health care which we have pursued. It seems to me that if most of the more critical illnesses which beset the nation are related to lifestyle, in other words, are socially derived illnesses, that a medico-centric approach to health care may not be the appropriate approach. Sir, I lay no claim to expertise in these matters but I rely on history.

As I said, the problem is not new. Lord Moyne in his Commission Report dealt with it in the 1930s whereas it was social conditions and the housing conditions under which people live, those problems have been solved to a large extent now and the problems now manifest as lifestyle conditions.

It seems to me, from listening to people in the medical profession that a lot of these problems have to do with that aspect of our lifestyle that relates to diet. If these medics are right, and I have no reason to believe otherwise, it seems to me that we are dealing with a social as distinct from a medical problem. This is no different from the problems to which Lord Moyne pointed out in his Report in 1938.
3.20 p.m.

In Barbados in 1938, according to the Moyne Commission Report, 98 per cent of total expenditure on health was spent on the curative aspects of health and only 2 per cent spent on the preventive aspect of health care. In other words, the system was biased in favour of institutional care, doctors, nurses, hospitals, ambulances, *et cetera*, rather than preventing people from getting sick.

I do not know what the percentages are today but it seems to me that when I listen to those who express their concerns in this area, that the situation in Barbados has not changed fundamentally in terms of the model we used since the 1930s. There may have been modifications but, in terms of the emphasis, the medico-centric model still dominates our approach to health matters.

How do I think this matter might be addressed? For example, at present in our schools there are guidance counsellors who deal with a particular aspect of a child's life but I am not aware that this nation's education system makes

any consistent use of the dieticians that we have in Barbados. I am not aware of it and I stand to be corrected on that. I think that in the same way that a school needs a guidance counsellor that, faced with a problem as critical as the health problems, the silent killers that we hear so much about, that every school in Barbados should have access to the advice of a dietician a certain number of times during the school term.

Sir, the resources we have in that area are plentiful at the present time. It is very important that if we are going to deal with this problem, we have to deal with it by starting in the school system and there has to be a cadre of dieticians available to the education system to spread the gospel of proper dietary habits for children.

Sir, that cannot be divorced from the kind of diet produced and prepared by the School Meals Department. In fact, it is my view that the School Meals Department and these dieticians will have to work in close collaboration for the benefit of our children.

Mr. President, our physical education developments at schools tend to, in my view, place a lopsided emphasis on preparing people for games of various kinds and not, as I understand it – it certainly was not my experience at school and I do not know many people whose experience it was, not essentially on the importance of physical exercise.

Those people who are not interested in sports are usually left out of physical education programmes and, generally speaking, the ones who are interested in sports assume more prominence. I am not saying that is so in every school. I am speaking generally because I have taught and I have seen people who were not really interested in sports of any kind, just basically opting out of physical education because they were not interested in what was going on.

It is my view that in addition to preparing people in various areas of sporting activity, the importance of physical exercise, along with proper dietary diets, should be a focus of our education system so that the whole mindset of the physical education departments in our schools would have to undergo some change.

Sir, if all of this is to be reinforced, the work place has to come into this as well. Perhaps, this is where the labour union comes into this as well, because it makes no sense dietitians preaching this gospel in schools if, at the adult level, the parents who have a greater influence are not making their contribution in that regard. They also need to be educated.

Mr. President, it seems to me that the labour movement might have to think of making exposure to

dietary advice at the workplace a certain number of times during the life of a collective agreement, a feature of all collective agreements in Barbados so that they will be mutual reinforcement between what goes on at the work place and schools. I think that might go some distance because it would then influence the spending habits of parents and could lead to a more healthy approach to diet and to living.

Mr. President, it is not simply a question, in my view, of boasting that we are spending this amount of money on health. I think we have to reexamine the health model that we have to pursue and adjust it to fit the challenges confronted by the Ministry of Health.

If I may move on quickly from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Education, another big spender in the Appropriation Bill. Again, history would help us here. Sir, this Government came to power in 1994 and by 1996, I was in the Other Place at the time, a White Paper on Education was laid and fully debated there. That White Paper was the road map which we were all told that we should follow and that would guide the Government in its education policy.

I do not recall reading in that White Paper anything about any project called EduTech, any education sector enhancement project or anything of the kind. The White Paper proclaims: "Each one matters" but nowhere in that White Paper, as far I can recall, is there any mention of or treatment of any project or programme called EduTech. EduTech came after the White Paper on Education.

3.30 p.m.

Sir, education in any country's life is, perhaps, its most important productive sector. There are productive sectors that produce goods and services. The education sector produces people, our most important resource.

Mr. President, there was a time, not too long ago, 40 or 50 years ago, when access to education in Barbados was the big issue of education, the availability of school places to satisfy the demand for those places. Sir, being fair to the facts, both Governments have, over a number of years, sought to confront the issue of the availability of school places. An adequacy of school places was produced over the last 40 years. This, of course, has led, as we all know to the virtual elimination of private secondary schools, which filled a large gap in that area of demand, before the Governments were able to provide these facilities.

Sir, concomitant with that, was a view on the part of the beneficiaries of education that it was to be linked with opportunities for social mobility. In fact, it is still true that when we discuss education and the achievements in education, we link it to social mobility, the fact that it has been the gateway through which people have escaped from one status group to the other.

If places were scarce under the colonial order, that was by design. Education was designed to be scarce, because, colonialism by its very nature, emphasised the subordination of colonial interest and the preservation of metropolitan interest. Those problems were solved over the last 40 years here in Barbados.

Mr. President, I like to remind myself that when we talk about the colonial period, it was not very long ago and very few of us in this House today have not known two National Anthems by heart. I have always reminded myself about that and this is only a reminder that not long ago, Barbados was a colony.

Sir, the question we have to ask in education, it seems to me, is whether the mindset which is appropriate to deal exclusively with the availability of school places, is appropriate to this new social and educational setting.

Colonial education was highly individualistic. Most of us can remember sitting in classrooms and trying our best to make sure that the persons beside us did not get a chance to see what we were doing and how we were doing it, because the whole aim of schooling was to prove that we were better than the person sitting next to us. In other words, the focus of education was competitive between individuals.

Sir, we now live in a world in which the virtues of cooperation are being promoted between nations. The question one has to ask is, if it is cooperation between nations that is going to ensure the survival of all of us as a people, if Barbados needs to cooperate with its neighbours in the Caribbean, for example, in a Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) and with other nations in the hemisphere, in a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) how come that cooperation is necessary at that level, but between Barbadian citizens, competition should still be the ethic that guides us.

It seems to me, Mr. President, that we can only take full advantage of the opportunities offered by cooperation between nations, if we begin by practicing cooperation amongst ourselves. It seems to me that the competitive and highly individualistic environment in the classroom has to yield to a more cooperative ethos, which emphasizes students working together to solve problems, rather than student A, working on the problem trying to prove that he is better than student B.

In my view, this would lead, inevitably, to a respect for other people's aptitudes and will guarantee a more cohesive society, as we move to strengthen our social bases and our regional bases as well. This is the challenge of education. It has to move from individualism to social responsibility and, therefore, the focus cannot be what can an individual get out of the system but, how can he strengthen the society by cooperating with others.

The home will have its part to play, I concede in that, but given the fact that the school has a coercive apparatus right through the day, the school has, in my view, that critical role to play in promoting this idea.

Mr. President, when the Leader of Government Business spoke on EduTech today, he said that only the benighted would disagree that our children need to be exposed in this highly information sensitive world to the most modern technologies available. I heard this repeated often by the Minister of Commerce and Business Development, Senator Eastmond.

I have no problem with any of this. I think the emphasis is right. It is important that man be married to technology for the purpose of enhancing his mastery over his environment, and what better place to start than in the schools. This is how man has always promoted his mastery over nature and his environment, by the creation and utilisation of technology. Technology has always mediated the relationship between man and nature.

3.40 p.m.

However, that is no excuse for a Government introducing a project, without adequate preparation, that has so far gobbled up hundreds of millions of dollars with very little to show the country for it. That is where the divide between the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party comes. This project was proclaimed by this Government but today we do not know where it is and we cannot point to any flagship and say that is the success that we are all aiming at.

Mr. President, when I was at school, the little biology to which I was exposed taught me something about a form of aquatic life called an "amoeba" whose distinguishing feature was its ever-changing shape. If there is any equivalent of the amoeba in the public life of Barbados, that equivalent is EduTech for every time you hear about it, it means something else.

In my view, the Ministry of Education has done the poorest of jobs in reinforcing this nation's faith in that project. As I speak today, my information is that tomorrow six or seven senior officers from the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports will be travelling to Boston to observe the use of technology in Bostonian schools and that next Tuesday the same thing will happen. This is about six years after this project was introduced and six years after we have been hearing all the talk about how well it is doing when all indications are that the project is in deep crisis. However, it continues to gobble up millions of dollars.

Mr. President, in this year's Estimates I believe it will account for just over \$30 million, yet there is nothing really

to show for it. I am given to understand that the Ministry of Education did not factor into the project the cost of replacements and maintenance and that the Ministry was advised by some experts from Israel, I am told, to be cautious in its approach to this project. All of this has gone by the wayside and the taxpayers of Barbados so far are the only losers in all of this.

I had hoped that the Honourable Minister of Agriculture would have spent some time telling us how the expenditure on this project was justified to reinforce our faith in this \$30 million that the Government is allocating to the project again this year. Mr. President, I agree that the children of Barbados have to familiarise themselves with this most recent technology, but this project has been bungled so far and we need a clear statement where it is going and how much it is going to cost the taxpayers when it comes to full maturity. That is one of the major issues in the Ministry of Education today.

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Honourable Leader of Government Business was kind enough to obliquely refer to breaches of the Financial Administration and Audit Act as he discussed fiscal disciplines and checks and balances in the expenditure of public monies.

The other scandal in the Ministry of Education is in the Auditor General's Report of 2003 as it relates to the St. Leonard's Secondary School refurbishment project. I have a particular interest in this because I well remember all of the excitement when the announcement was made that the contract for Phase 2 of that project had been awarded to B. C. C. Steelworks and the circumstances that were given for the award of that contract. There had been some irregularities in the tendering process leading to the disqualification of at least one other tenderer and it was said that since this company was ranked at number two, it had to get the contract.

Mr. President, I am not going to deal with that situation at length in here today because this is better dealt with elsewhere, but the record has to show that the country was told that those irregularities that led to the award of this contract had been referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions and that nothing has been heard from the Director on that matter. The workers on the project have had to complain about their National Insurance not being paid.

The Auditor-General's Report is replete with examples or with instances of breaches of the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the Rules made thereon. The result is that Barbados is paying the Caribbean Development Bank commitment fees of \$29 800 every quarter for what has turned out to be nothing more than sweetheart contract.

I had hoped that the Honourable Leader of Government Business would have told us something about this. The idyllic picture he painted made no mention of any of these issues and the impression has been left that all is well in Barbados, that all was well with last year's appropriation and that we should close our eyes and sail on with this year's appropriation, so nothing at all was said other than an oblique reference to the St. Leonard's School refurbishment project.

Mr. President, I do not know of any previous Auditor-General's Report that has had to treat any project of Government in recent times as the Auditor-General has had to treat the St. Leonard's project in its 2003 Report, so the Government has to provide answers on this project, the circumstances in which the contract was awarded, all of the foul ups, bleeps and blunders that have followed on the award of the contract, the commission fees that Barbados has unnecessarily to pay the Caribbean Development Bank as a result of what went on at St. Leonard's School and how a Ministry of Education could know as many as three years after work had been done on a hard court that work had been done there if there was any commitment to proper standards on that project.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. President, how contracts were awarded for more than \$100 000, in breach of the Financial Administration and Audit Rules, without any reference to a tender. Sir, these are all the things.

I sat here today with baited breath and uncontrolled expectations, waiting on the Honourable Leader of Government Business to tell us something about these things. Instead we heard about the deficit, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the National Debt to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio, *et cetera*. We heard of all these abstractions, the fallacy of misplaced completeness, while trying to give these things a reality for us, a reality over and above the mal-expenditure of the public's monies, and the culpability of the Government in that regard.

Sir, these monies were taken from the Consolidated Fund to pursue that project and we are not able to access Caribbean Development Bank approved funding because we have satisfied none of the criteria that would facilitate access to that funding.

Mr. President, what madness is that? We have heard nothing about these things here today. Therefore, in addition to the policy problems related to the Ministry of Education, the philosophical issues that the Ministry has to address, the Democratic Labour Party is concerned about the EduTech Programme and that project at the St. Leonard's Secondary School.

Sir, these issues are not going to blow away because at a time when strict controls were needed at the Implementation Unit of the Ministry of Education while Phase 2 of this project was going on, a material personnel change took place there that might well provide the explanation for some of these abuses.

Mr. President, the third issue I want to look at, and again the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development was kind enough to have mentioned what is going on in his Ministry and what he intends to do with regards to the issue of Fisheries.

Mr. President, the fisheries development is important to the Barbados economy. We are surrounded by water and fishing has always been an essential part of what we do. Sir, history will help us here again. When the Barbados Labour Party came to office in 1994, it was on a Manifesto that said the most urgent issue facing the fisheries industry of Barbados was the conclusion of the Fisheries Agreement with Trinidad and Tobago.

Sir, 10 years later, the most urgent issue is still urgent because that Fisheries Agreement has not yet been secured. The Democratic Labour Party was held up to public ridicule on the issue of not concluding a fisheries agreement and the country was assured that agenda item number one, so far as fisheries development was concerned, would have been the conclusion of a fisheries agreement with Trinidad and Tobago.

Mr. President, that issue has now become enmeshed in a whole set of issues but I think the record has to be put straight on this. Barbados has a territorial sea of 12 miles. That was made possible by the passage in 1978, to come into effect on January 01, 1979, of a Barbados Territorial Waters Act. Also passed in 1978 to come into effect on January 01, 1979 was a Marines Boundaries and Jurisdiction Act, by which Barbados declared that it was entitled to an exclusive economic zone of 200 nautical miles and where the distance between Barbados and adjacent states made that 200 nautical miles economically impossible, that the medium line between the two states would determine each state's exclusive economic zone. Sir, that was in 1979, twenty-five years ago.

Also in 1979, around the month of August, the Parliament of Barbados passed a Barbados Defence Act. I believe it came into effect on August, 15, 1979. Section 208 of that Act, as far as I can recall, gives the Barbados Coast Guard the power to protect Barbados' resources, not only in its territorial sea, but in its exclusive economic zone. Sir, Section 212 of the same Act gives the Coast Guard of Barbados the powers of arrest in the exclusive economic zones of Barbados. Again, that is 25 years ago.

Mr. President, we hear that this issue which now bedevils the Fisheries Agreement is a 14-year old issue. I say

“No”, it is a 25-year old issue because seven years have elapsed after the passing of that legislation and no serious attempts were ever made by the then Government to sort out the issues relating to Barbados’ exclusive economic zone. Sir, from 1979 to 1986, seven years have passed without any serious attempts being made to sort out issues relating to Barbados’ exclusive economic zone.

Mr. President, therefore, if the Barbados Labour Party cannot conclude a fisheries agreement with Trinidad and Tobago because of maritime delimitation issues, I take offence at the fact that any attempt should be made to try to offload that issue onto the Democratic Labour Party, as a result of something that was supposed to have happened in 1990. Sir, the legislation to which I just referred was passed in 1979, twenty-five years ago, and not in 1990, which is 14 years ago.

Mr. President, I am amused that the Barbados Coast Guard could have the power of arrest, to arrest in Barbados’ exclusive zone and did not know where that economic zone was located. That was an occasion for laughter.
4.00 p.m.

Mr. President, I leave that matter there and say that this Government still owes the people of Barbados and the fisheries industry a fishing agreement with Trinidad & Tobago which the Democratic Labour Party stated was the most urgent issue facing the fishing industry 10 years ago because, if it was urgent then, it is urgent now. Sir, I leave the matter there but I want to make it clear that it is not true that the issue is 14 years old but goes back 25 years to 1978/79.

Mr. President, I move on to the Ministry of Housing and Lands and to the National Housing Corporation which attracted some attention in the Other Place when these appropriations were being discussed last week. Again, history will help here a bit because this Government, when it came to office in 1994, placed some emphasis on the issue of housing policy and in the year 1997, produced a White Paper on housing.

This White Paper was the successor to a Green Paper which was for discussion purposes only. It is now seven years after this White Paper was produced. Sir, this document is already a document of the Senate and seven years ago, at page 13, it said that on average the National Housing Corporation receives some 800 applications annually for its rental units, another 800 for house spots and that it satisfies about 25 per cent of its demand mainly through the reallocation of units which become available.

The reality is that over the last 10 years, this Government has been acquiring land all across Barbados for purposes of dealing with the low income housing problems

of the people of Barbados. The Government has built up what it has been pleased to call a land bank, but the loud and clamant appeals by persons across Barbados, desperately in need of low income housing, are still going largely unanswered by the Government through its National Housing Corporation in spite of the existence of its land bank and all the proclamations contained in the White Paper of seven years ago.

Sir, much concern is expressed about the high levels of liquidity in the commercial banking system and I am here to say today that there is also excess liquidity in the land bank but that somehow the liquidity in the land bank, even though there are demands to use it, is not benefitting those persons who need it most.

The National Housing Corporation is associated with the average person who wants a house spot or rental unit but not with the fulfilment of their expectations but with despondency and despair. Sir, the time has come for the Government to begin to deliver on low income housing in Barbados. I do not think that those who need houses can take the frustration anymore.

Mr. President, in my profession, too often I come across people who are tired of going to the National Housing Corporation who have been going there for years and this explains the present fatigue. There is no indication that their expectations of getting a rental unit or house spot will be met. They are given a reference number and told to bring it when they return. They go back on an unending trek to and from the National Housing Corporation only to be told that they are not ready yet.

Sir, it leaves one to ask what the White Paper was worth. If it were used as a road map, the Government still cannot find its destination, that is, the delivery of rental units and house spots to those who need them in Barbados.

It seems to me that the National Housing Corporation is getting an appropriation of about \$4 million this year and it is time to call on that Corporation and the Ministry of Housing to confront the issue that house spots and rental units are desperately needed in Barbados.

Sir, to be fair to the White Paper, it has acknowledged that as a result of the passage of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act that the demands on the Corporation were increased as private landlords were afraid that if they rent out their lands, they would not get it back, so they became more reluctant after the passage of the Act to rent out house spots to people.

Sir, the National Housing Corporation and Ministry of Housing, so far as the delivery of low income housing is

concerned, have not been success stories over the last 10 years but there has not been a word about it today from the Leader of Government Business in the Senate. He felt more comfortable in the stratosphere of percentage deficits, GDP, debt to GDP ratio and such things.

Mr. President, I go on to the Fair Trading Commission under the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development. I know recently there was a debate in the Senate on this issue and I did not say much about it then for very good reason. I can still remember the amused silence in which I listened to the contribution of my good friend Senator Grant, who confidently expected a heated debate on the issue and when it did not come, he could not contain himself.

I recall him saying that he was glad the Opposition had agreed. However, he still went on to make the speech he would have made if there had been a confrontational debate. Sir, I sat in amused silence as he unburdened himself of the speech he had internalised.

4.10 p.m.

Sir, this issue has been the occasion of ridicule of the Democratic Labour Party and the statement was that the Democratic Labour Party had given away a 20-year licence when all around us people were liberalising the telecommunications sector. Therefore, we were backward and the Government that now embarks so feverishly on this liberalisation of the telecommunication system was entitled to a loud and, perhaps, deafening applause.

I do not begrudge the Government for that. All I want to say is that it is conceded that the telecommunication sectors have been the subject of various forms of liberalisation and deregulation across the Caribbean and the United States of America. I want to use the United States of America as my reference point today.

Sir, one gets the impression that people in Barbados believe that what is happening here represents some grand departure from known reality and that consumers in Barbados forever hereafter are the beneficiaries of privileges out of this sector the result of the liberalised policies that are presently in pursuit by the Government.

I am not being critical of liberalisation policies. How could I be in the context of what is going on in the world around us and in the context of the country's need to make telecommunication cost competitive having regard to the fact that we want to cheapen the cost of doing business in Barbados for those involved in the international business sector.

Mr. President, what has been happening here recently has happened elsewhere as well. During the Clinton

presidency in 1996, a Telecommunications Act was passed in the United States of America as well as one was passed here in Barbados. The same splurge that manifested in Barbados in recent times in the cellular market also occurred in the United States of America. The same interconnectivity issues with which we were battling here with recently also occurred in the United States of America. In fact, between 1997 and 2001, as a result of the passage of the Telecommunications Act, US\$55 billion was spent and circulated in the United States of America in the communication sector. There was a big bubble in the United States of America as there is here today.

Mr. President, everybody was excited about competition coming to Barbados. Sir, by October, 2002, the Chairman of the Federal Communications Commission in the United States of America was saying on the sector that no one is prospering, spending, investing or growing. He was saying that the *status quo* means certain death. Why did all of that happen? Just as is the case in Barbados today, so was it in the United States of America.

People failed to distinguish competition for a market and competition in a market. They mistook all the frenzy and bubble while the competition was going on for the market as what would obtain for competition in the market. Once the market was secured and the competition for it was fought out, the immortal words uttered by the Director of Federal Communications of the United States of America then came into vogue. He had to say what he said and that is "the *status quo* means certain death" because no one was investing, growing, spending or prospering.

While it is true that consumers are getting some fairly attractive offerings out of cellular telephony at the present time, this bubble is going to come to an end as well. Competition for the market is going to come to an end and then we are going to get to the stage where we will be dealing with competition in the market and that is where reality is going to strike.

In the meanwhile I would say this. All those people who believe that more players in the market and competition, *et cetera* will redound to the consumer, had better look at the other side of that coin, at the profits that are going to be raked in from the pockets of consumers as well.

Whereas on the land line telephone, the target market is the dwelling house, which usually contains just one line at a fixed rate, under cellular telephony, the target market is the individual, so you can have in a household of six individuals owning telephones and buying phone cards that is where the difference is.

Sir, school children are now part of that market. It is now routine to watch men and women riding bicycles and

talking on the telephone. There are also people who stand at the bus stops, waiting for a bus and they are talking on the telephone. In fact, one of the more ludicrous examples of what I am saying is, the caller who made a call on a call-in programme a few evenings ago complaining that she drove on a transport board bus and the driver drove the bus using one hand for a considerable distance and the other hand he was using while talking on the telephone. Sir, that is where it is going.

I am given to understand that the cheapest phone card you can get is \$20, but the average individual is not going to just use one phone card in any month, that might be one phone card per week, given the itch to talk in Barbados. The cellular telephone is appealing to an itch that is almost uncontrolled in this country.
4.20 p.m.

Therefore, the profits of those involved are going to be guaranteed, and are going to be much larger than we envisage at the present time. I hear complaints being made, and they are quite justified that steps will soon have to be taken to regulate the use of cell phones, while people are driving vehicles. There is enough evidence of it on the roads to suggest that it is an issue the Government has to give its urgent attention, if there is not to develop a traumatic connection between the use of cell phones and motor vehicle accidents.

Mr. President, I am not as bowled over by all of this talk about liberalisation of the telecommunications sector as others are. I understand its importance as far as international businesses are concerned, but, in terms of the average consumer in Barbados from a poor household, I can see how there is going to be a change in spending patterns as people minister to this itch to talk.

Sir, to be on a bus and calling somebody and saying that the bus is now here by Banks and when it gets further up, they call and say, we are now here by this place, just to talk, large sums of money are going to be spent by persons who can least afford it in this area of activity. I say no more on that for the time being.

Mr. President, the other issue I want to look at, very quickly, is the Ministry of Labour. The appropriation as indicated in the Bill for the Ministry of Labour is \$30 299 649. The Ministry of Labour, Sir, I take it, would be responsible for looking out for the interest of the workers of Barbados. It certainly does for those who work in the Farm Labour Scheme.

It has to be conceded that not much has happened in that Ministry over the last 10 years, of direct benefit to the workers of Barbados. The challenges facing labour today are

greater than at any other time in the last 50 years. This Ministry seems to have fallen asleep as far as pursuing the interest of the workers of Barbados is concerned.

In every Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party since 1971, employment protection legislation was promised to the workers of Barbados. In the last Parliament, an Employees' Rights Bill was introduced and died with the dissolution of that Parliament. We have heard nothing further about it. When we do hear about it, we do not hear about it from anybody in the Government. We hear about it from people in the Employers' Confederation, as recently as some time over the last few days.

It seems to be a matter of greater concern and urgency, not by way of advocacy for it, to the people in the Employers' Confederation than to the Minister of Labour or anybody else in the Government, this at a time when the sense of security at the workplace is at its most fragile.

Now, the form that legislation takes, will surely be a matter for negotiation between the owners and capital and labour, but employment protection legislation, an Employees' Rights Bill is urgently needed in Barbados to, at least adumbrate, and to define the rights of workers in this country, and to reduce tensions at the workplace as employers take full advantage of the absence of this legislation, to wheel power in unusual ways. I know what I am talking about, because most of the cases end up in the offices of lawyers.

Sir, there is employee protection legislation. There is also safety at work legislation, which for 10 years the Government has sat on, and this has remained in the realm of promise, while workers work under some of the most horrible conditions in some cases but with no legal recourse, because of the inadequacy of existing legislation.

As a Party committed to the interest of the workers of Barbados, the Democratic Labour Party considers these two pieces of legislation absolutely important and urgent, and we call on the Government, through the Ministry of Labour, to accord some priority to getting these Bills before Parliament, and getting this law on the statute book, justify for a change, the appropriation of \$30 million to that Ministry, by at least producing something of which the workers of Barbados can be proud.

Sir, for 10 years, there was nothing coming out of the Ministry of Labour to promote the interest of workers of Barbados. The Shops Act was amended, not for the benefit of any workers, some time between 1994 and 1999. As far as legislation targeting workers' rights and guaranteeing their promotion is concerned there was not a piece of legislation out of the Ministry of Labour.

In this year's appropriation, that Ministry is getting \$30 million of taxpayer's money, a condonation it seems to me of the indolence and non-productivity of the Ministry as far as the interests of the workers of Barbados are concerned.

Mr. President, I listened to the Government's introduction of the Appropriation Bill for the year 2004-2005. I did not recognise the Barbados in which I live in that introduction. Perhaps that meant that there are really two "Barbadoses" and that the Government represents one Barbados and the Opposition represents the other. I am pleased to stand up here today and to let the Government know how the other half lives. I hope occasion will not arise for me ever to stand up in here to let the Government know how the other half dies. We can certainly avoid that prospect by the Government taking cognisance of some of the suggestions made here today.
4.30 p.m.

Mr. President, as is well known, it does not lie in the power of this House to obstruct these appropriations, but even if it laid in the power in this House, we would not be minded so to do. However, we felt we had to raise these concerns and to let the people of Barbados know that what they heard this morning was about a Barbados that they could not recognise and that the real Barbados in which they live and move and have their beings and in which they have to face their challenges is represented by the Democratic Labour Party.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 4.50 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 4.50 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
4.33 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Mr. President, before commenting on the Estimates 2004-2005, I would like to commend the Honourable Leader of Government Business for his presentation of the Estimates earlier today. It was divided into two parts, the first part dealt with the background to the Estimates, which I found to be very informative and interesting. It clearly indicated that he would be leaving much discussions on the line items for his colleagues on the Government's Side.

Mr. President, the second part of his presentation dealt with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development and, as we all know, he is the Minister of Agriculture. He was able to put an enthusiasm and a zeal into agriculture that I have never before seen, and if anybody can get that Ministry to move and to perform, it would have to be the Honourable Senator because he spoke with such feeling and passion and has such wonderful ideas for the development of agriculture, which we all say is a very important part of our economy. We say it but we do not do very much about it. Therefore, I would like to commend him for his comments on the background to the Estimates and to agriculture.

Mr. President, the Estimates deal with Government's operations and the financing of those operations. It is a management tool and in both the private and public sector, what cannot be measured, cannot be managed. Therefore, one would have to study and analyse the figures as contained in these Estimates and establish the relationship between those various figures, otherwise they only remain figures and for all intents and purposes, remain meaningless.

The Estimates show that the current revenue is projected to be \$1 940.65 million. That figure is 5.5 per cent higher than the revised Estimates of 2003/2004. We must not take that figure for granted. We must analyse it in the light of current economic issues and there are several of them. Government is projecting that the real GDP is expected to grow by 3.1 per cent in this year but this would depend on the performance of tourism which has improved after the setbacks suffered with 9/11, and the SARS epidemic in Canada and tourism is on the up again.

International business tends to be stagnant because Governments of developed countries are under pressure to prevent their companies from setting up offshore operations because they feel a lot of revenue is lost, therefore, that sector is not growing as rapidly as it should.

Manufacturing seems to be improving again and a lot of thanks has to go to the imaginative 100 per cent Bajan campaign and it is showing signs of improvement.

In agriculture, I was thinking in terms of sugar cane. We should see the sugar industry as producing raw sugar for export. We used to produce over 100 tons, it is now down to 50 tons and this year the projection is 40 tons. I am glad to see that the thinking in the Ministry of Agriculture is to see what other usages can be made of the sugar cane plant so that more foreign exchange can be earned.

Then there is the integrated regional cotton industry which is a move in the right direction. The Minister with great enthusiasm referred to plans to improve the production of onions, hot peppers and livestock. He mentioned hydroponics which I have some experience in. I have a word

of caution that we should be sure we know what we are doing with hydroponics. I was growing tomatoes and it took me two years to determine the right variety and mix of nutrients and I had a lot of conflict.

The WTO, with the advent of China on the world scene, industries have relocated into China from the United States of America, Canada, Japan and other developed countries because the wage rates in China are 10 per cent of the wages' rate in United States of America. For that reason alone, it is a very attractive place to relocate a business.

We cannot deal with the international outlook without taking into account HIV/AIDS and international terrorism. Only two days ago, we had the bombing of a train in Madrid and only today, the Leader of the Palestinian movement, HAMAS was killed in the Gaza Strip. We may say that it happened on the other side of the Atlantic but no place is safe in today's world.

In summary, the world is now experiencing what economists call a "synchronized world" which means that very soon, we may have growth in a few developed countries and decline in others, but forces have come together and economic growth today is taking place in the Americas, Europe and Asia. Sir, how long it will last, we do not know but we can only be the beneficiaries of this.

All economic outlooks predict increases in competition and the need for higher levels of productivity. The estimated current revenue of \$10 940.6 million seems reasonable but all outlooks are subject to many uncertainties and to potential risks.

Sir, talking about the revenue is one thing. It is important but we must remember that the collection of revenue is also very important.
5.00 p.m.

I would like to refer to the Report of the Auditor General of 2003, section 3.4, dealing with the Inland Revenue Department and a coding:

"The Inland Revenue Department submitted a statement showing arrears as at March 31, 2001, of \$143.8 million. These arrears comprised \$28.4 million in Income Taxes due from individual taxpayers."

Sir, I can only assume that over the last two years that the total has increased.

Sir, Item 3.7 deals with the Customs Department:

"The Customs Department submitted an arrears statement for the period ending March 31, 2003. The total was shown as \$92,927,548.82..."

Sir, Item 3.9 deals with land:

"The Land Tax Department reported arrears as at March 31, to June 30, 2003 of \$104,011,167. ..."

Mr. President, other arrears would be taken into account. The total arrears were in excess of \$380 million, as reported by the Auditor General.

Mr. President, this is what the Auditor General had to say in Item 3.17:

"The management of arrears continues to be a growing problem for Government Ministries and Departments. Based on information obtained total amounts due to Government are in excess of \$380 million. Efforts must therefore be made to allocate an appropriate level of resources, and to put adequate systems in place to properly manage receivables."

I am sure that every one in this Honourable Chamber would agree with that.

Sir, we now turn to the expenditure side. The current expenditure shows \$2 172.49 billion and the estimated capital expenditure is \$257,000,052.00, which is a total expenditure of \$2,429.5 million. This represents a 5.6 per cent increase over the revised Estimates for the previous year, 2003/2004. There are no significant changes in the Estimates for 2004/2005 from the previous year with respect to the amounts allocated to the various Ministries as percentages of the total current expenditure.

Sir, it is hoped that both the number and the amounts are sub-dramatic, brought to the Other Place, are greatly reduced in 2004/2005.

The Auditor General highlighted many areas where there were breaches of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. There were a lack of public internal accounting and proper controls in many cases. There were long delays by many statutory entities in submitting financial reports to the Barbados Audit office.

In section 2.1 the Auditor General said:

"Many of the statutory entities whose accounts are audited by the Barbados Audit Office continue to submit statements long after they are due. It has been eight years since the Samuel Jackman Polytechnic submitted financial statements for auditing and there are other statutory Boards that are several years behind in their submissions. This is an area of concern."

I am sure that we all are in agreement with the Auditor General's sentiments. However, he said that there was

considerable improvement in the timeliness of the financial reporting of Ministries and Departments. He also commented on the repetition of the many weaknesses and deficiencies previously reported. He went on to say that from the taxpayers' point of view, this is not satisfactory. This is taxpayers' money that is being mismanaged.

Finally, he commented on the recently constituted Public Accounts Committee. I am quoting from the new Public Accounts Committee Act, Section 1.15.

"The Public Accounts Committee has been reorganised and expanded with the passing of the new Public Accounts Committee Act, 2003. In accordance with Section 7 of the Act, the Committee is required to report to both Houses of Parliament on any matters in the Auditor General's Reports which it considers should be drawn to the attention of Parliament."

Mr. President, I am one of the Senators on that Committee. I am happy to report that our first meeting which was held last week was constructive. There are 13 Members on that Committee and 11 Members were in attendance, and that is a good sign and the decision was taken that we would meet monthly or more often, if necessary. I think it is going to be the last Thursday in every month.

I now move to the Government operations and financing as shown on page 3 of the Estimates. The estimated fiscal deficit is projected at \$488.89 million or 8.6 per cent of the nominal Gross Domestic Product and the market price is estimated at \$500 663.3 million. When converted to international financial institutional basis, the fiscal deficit is projected at \$153.6 million or 2.7 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

I believe that the Honourable Leader of Government Business has already commented on that. However, we have to see how that deficit on the Accountant-General's basis of \$488.89 million will be financed. It will be financed by the foreign debt in the amount of \$111.892 million, or 32.9 per cent of what is required and the domestic debt is 7.1 per cent amounting to \$377 million.

The national debt is the accumulation of past budget deficits and services and there are the more simpler and accurate definition of the national debt. It means that over the past years any Government spending more than it was receiving, so the net deficit, even though some years they may be surpluses, it is the national debt which has to be funded.

The national debt, as per the Central Bank of Barbados as of October 31, 2003, was \$4 226.8 million, an increase of \$267.6 million or 6.7 per cent over October 31, 2002. In that same period, international reserves increased by \$352.2 million or 19.9 per cent, to \$2 121.0 million.

The domestic component is 68.6 per cent or \$2 898.5 million. The foreign debt is 31.4 per cent, roughly \$830 million, amounting to \$1 328.3 million.
5.10 p.m.

At the present time, the national debt represents 74.6 per cent of GDP. The Honourable Leader indicated the Government's intention to reduce it to 60 per cent, naturally over time, because it cannot be done overnight, but I applaud that objective.

At its present level, the national debt is both satisfactory and manageable. I would like to see it come down to 60 per cent of GDP. However, the composition of the national debt, between the foreign and domestic components, and its amount as a percentage of GDP, needs to be very carefully monitored, and not allowed to deteriorate. I am sure the Government is fully aware of that and is watching it carefully.

Mr. President, I would like to commend the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance for announcing recently that greater emphasis will be placed on strategic planning in the future, to cover a longer period, whereas on the present focus, the Estimates cover just a one-year period. The Honourable Leader made reference to that, and he also referred to half yearly. The present cash basis of accounting will be changed to an accrual basis which will give more accurate figures in the Estimates.

I will now like to make some general comments on a matter which came to my attention, from reviewing and reflecting on the Estimates. First I would like to deal with improvements. In spite of what some people say, many roads have been updated. I can think of Culloden Road, Pine Road, Bay Street, Roebuck Street, Dash Valley and many others, but much work remains to be done.

Years ago when those roads were built, I do not think they were meant to carry loaded 40-foot containers. I do not think they have the foundation to carry that weight, so there will always be buckling, twisting and turning, so a lot of money needs to be spent on roads, even though a lot of money has already been spent.

Sir, if I may be permitted, I would like to describe the worst stretch of road in this island which I drive on it practically every day, from Cliff Land in St. John, Landcox Hill, Church Village on the left, Chapel Land on the right, pass St. Philip's Parish Church, pass Chapel Plantation, pass Sunbury to Six Roads. If anyone knows of a worse road than that, please let me know. I have been driving on that road for years, so this gives me an opportunity to comment on it.

Secondly, there has been an increase in the housing stock.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, could you please move a little closer to the microphone. They are having some problems with the recording. Thank you.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Yes, Sir.

There has been an increase in the housing stock in this island. Many low and middle-income houses have been constructed by contractors in the private sector and the Government, notwithstanding that there is still a large unsatisfied demand remaining.

Quite often, people who know that I have to be in the Senate, come to me and ask me to do something to get a house for them or to get them moved up the list. I tell them that I am helpless in that regard, thank you for the Honour but there is nothing I can do about that situation. Sir, there is a frustration out there.

Another improvement is the extension to the Grantley Adams International Airport. Tourism is the most important element and it is important that we have a modern international airport. This is exactly what the Grantley Adams International Airport will be, even though it has been very inconvenient to the travelling public during the construction period.

We have also had the reconstruction of the Hilton Hotel at Needham's Point and 350 rooms have been added to our hotel room stock, as well as significant convention space. This will boost up, not only the Hilton Hotel, but all the hotels on the south coast that are close to the Hilton.

I just regret that the late Sir Harold St. John did not live to see the completion of the Hilton Hotel. He had a tremendous interest in it, and up to his last days, he was following its progress.

I would also like to refer to the maintenance of law and order. There have been considerable successes in combating trade in illegal drugs, on both land and sea, and I commend the Police Force for the excellent work they have been doing. I also hope that the Report of the Law and Order Commission, would be acted on. There are some very distinguished people sitting on that Commission, under the Chairmanship of Sir Roy Marshall. I would hate to think that it is just another report that will collect dust on somebody's shelf. I do not think so, but I hope not.

Then, Sir, there was the establishment of the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) which was long overdue but, better late than never. It was established to ensure fairness and transparency in business transactions, for the protection of consumers, and we are all consumers, and we all want protection, but also for the protection of businesses. Frivolous stains can be brought against businesses by unscrupulous people. While we think this is only for the

protection of consumers, it is also for the protection of businesses.

While talking about the improvements, Sir, I have to talk about a few disappointments and water would have to head the list. There are frequent unavailability, and poor distribution of potable water. I do not usually blame the high percentage of leakages, which I have heard estimated up to 50 per cent – I do not think that is realistic – and the very low mains that they use to distribute the water. I have been informed that failed valves and pumps, and an antiquated distribution network that mixes the inter-reservoir connectivity to that of the consumers' distribution system, are also a cause for the unavailability of potable water.

This situation causes closure of schools, great inconvenience to households and hotels, and tourism is still our number one industry, so we cannot treat our visitors that way. It also causes disruption of business, so I hope priority will be given to the water situation.

Next, I come to traffic congestion and inadequate road signage. We, as Barbadians are familiar with the roads, at least in the areas where we live, but imagine a visitor to this island driving around in a mini moke. I am surprised that there are not more accidents.

Today, driving up Broad Street to come here, I noticed the double crosses needed painting, and the lines in the middle of the road needed painting. We really need to do more to improve the traffic flow. This would be inexpensive in relation to having to build new roads to relieve the congestion.

Then, Sir, there is the overcrowding at Glendairy Prison. I believe it was constructed, a long time ago, to house 350 inmates. I am told that today there are more than 950 inmates in that institution. This is not healthy and it is not good. Something needs to be done about that situation.

Sir, I must also deal with the disappointing performance of the Commission for Pan African Affairs which has been allocated, \$900 277 in the Estimates for 2004-2005.

Sir, especially disappointing is its continuing failure in Government's programmes as part of its mandate relating to the nation's population groups and institutions of the continent of Africa and the wider African Diaspora. Part of its mandate relates to the fostering of relationships, cooperation and interaction in the areas of economics, trade information and other aspects of culture that will be implemented in collaboration with existing departments of government. This is clearly outlined under Head 13 that deals with the Prime Minister's Office at programme 040 subprogramme 051. In my opinion, the Commission

for Pan African Affairs seems to function unfettered as an alternative Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. 5.20 p.m.

Mr. President, I come next to Parliament Building. Right across the courtyard is the West Wing, a magnificent building which has been abandoned for a long while. I think a lot of work has been done on the roof as it should have been, but it is put to no use. It needs to be considered. Here it is that we have in Barbados over 350 years of Parliament. The suggestion I want to put forward is that the West Wing could make a wonderful museum of Parliaments throughout the Commonwealth and democratic countries. It would cost some money but I believe visitors to this island will be prepared to pay a fee to visit it, so it would be almost if not totally self-supporting. I just do not like to see that magnificent building staying there idle.

Next I come to the Greenland Landfill which has been a deafening silence after millions of dollars have been spent on digging that hole previously. Surely there is a need for the application of improved technology in incineration or gasification. I am not getting into the very technical areas. While those options would have been considered unwise some years ago, the forms of technology are improved to such an extent now that some serious consideration could be given to one or the other.

Mr. President, I now come to public sector reform. I have had someone described that to me as an oxymoron. That might not be fair. I do recognise the achievements that have been made by certain government departments which cannot be denied. However, I would like to say something that the Director of Public Sector Reform has reported to have said. He said that all of the improved systems, environmental conditions, raises of pay and the work system would not make a difference if persons have no interest in making a meaningful change in the delivery of quality service.

Mr. President, he could not have said it any better. I believe there are good policies and strategies within the public sector, but the processes and structures regarding the effective implementation of those policies and strategies seem almost to be a disease in the public sector and frustrate the objectives of any Government in office irrespective of party.

I next come to the growing disregard for discipline and responsibility in the society generally. We all recognise it, we read about it daily, we watch it on television and we hear on the radio about the vandalism at the schools, in public transport, on the roads and highways and in places of public entertainment. PAREDOS is doing good work, but that is just one Non-Governmental organisation.

We need more public and private sector support for providing parental guidance and training in conflict resolution and the management of affairs. It all comes back to the home. Before we blame the school or anybody else, we should come back to the home. Unless there is parental guidance and control, what happens after that would never be too effective.

Finally, the apparent growing indifference to the environment and noise pollution is of great concern to many. Litter is being thrown in the canefields, in the gullies and at the sides of the roads. We are becoming a very noisy society. This may be a reflection of my ageing, but I do not think so, Sir, because I heard this from persons of all ages. I suppose it is a certain amount of nostalgia to a former age where it was more peaceful and more quiet. I am not knocking change, change is inevitable, but all changes are not necessary improvements.

Finally, Sir, I come to the opportunity where I must deal with HIV/AIDS. Twenty years ago HIV/AIDS was unknown. Since that time over 60 million people worldwide have contracted HIV/AIDS and many have died from it. Today, it is estimated that there are some 42 million people living with HIV/AIDS. Two-thirds of that 42 million live in South Sahara Africa. The Caribbean is the next most infected region on earth in relation to population.

The Government received US\$15.15 million for the period 2001-2006 from the World Bank to provide antiretroviral drugs and to upgrade treatment and care programmes, which are highly commendable, but the year 2006 is only two years away and I do not know if there is any assurance that such aid would continue.

Government spends a lot of money on the HIV/AIDS programme. Apart from the funding of the HIV/AIDS Commission, we see as we go through the Estimates the amounts provided to each ministry dealing with HIV/AIDS, which is commendable. However, it is not too early to start thinking about financing the requirements and the sourcing of financing for after 2006, that will be the last year for the draw-down of that World Bank loan.

Mr. President, I am suggesting that the private sector has a serious responsibility to the society and in its own enlightened self-interest to join the fight against this scourge. Only today I read in the newspaper that a UNICEF spokesman said that Barbados could have a prevalence rate of 20 per cent in 10 to 15 years. The prevalence rate in the Caribbean today is 2.3 per cent which, if it is correct, is a frightening prediction. We therefore need to enlist the support of the private sector and I will urge the Government to assist the private sector by providing special financial incentives to the business community.

There is nothing like an incentive to get some action. If it is just treated like another good cause or another charity, the private sector would not respond in the same way. I am of the private sector and I think I know how the people in the private sector work.

Mr. President, I am a patron of the Special Olympics and I would like to make a plea on its behalf. It receives an annual grant of \$15 000 from Government which is not very much, yet it has to take care of over 500 special athletes who are mainly young persons with mental disabilities. Today, they have their big sports programme at the National Stadium, and I should be there, but to me this debate takes priority over that.

Mr. President, I also happen to be a patron of the Caribbean Dyslexia Association which receives nothing from Government, yet it is estimated that one in every 10 children is dyslexic. That does not mean that they are stupid or foolish. Many brilliant persons have been dyslexic. It is a learning disability.

Those children have to be specially taught how to learn with that disability and teachers have to be trained so that they can impart that knowledge to those children. I am not asking for a lot of money. The Special Olympics/Barbados and the Caribbean Dyslexia Association are two very deserving causes.

5.30 p.m.

Mr. President, I would also like to share an experience I had at the St. Cyprian's Primary Boys' School a few years ago, in relation to mentoring. We older folks are so quick to criticise the youth, what are we doing about it?

Sir Conrad Hunte, Ronald Smith, others and I, were invited to the St. Cyprian's Boys' Primary School every Friday morning to have a chat with the boys after prayers. There we would talk about nationhood, family, responsibility, duty, *et cetera*. Sir, it was a joy to be interacting with these boys who were between the ages of 9 and 10. It was a wonderful experience to be doing that, and I think I probably learnt more from them, than they have learnt from me.

Sir, there were two occasions that I will never forget. After meeting with them I asked them what they thought was so special about that coming Sunday. One little boy replied that it was Mothers' Day. I told them all to go home and on Sunday morning, go into their mothers' bedrooms and give each mother a big hug and a kiss and tell her how much he loves her, and to thank her for all that she has done for him.

Mr. President, I cannot tell you how many mothers I have met afterwards who have thanked me for what I had done to their little boys. Sir, I used that to demonstrate how important the mentoring role can be. I am referring to older men mentoring young boys, and older ladies mentoring

young ladies. It costs us nothing and I believe it is a responsibility that many older persons would be very willing to discharge.

Finally, Sir, the Cricket World Cup. That is a challenge. I know that a lot of work has been and is being done but this would mobilise this society, not only Barbados but the Caribbean as a whole. I am not going to talk about the performance of the West Indies Cricket Team at this time. That may cloud the discussion but hopefully by 2007, the team would be performing better. However, I do hope that the West Indies Cricket Board would not make the same mistake that it has made with this one, and would introduce a surcharge on English visitors. It is wrong, it is discriminatory, and I am wondering whether or not it is constitutional.

Mr. President, Barbadians have so much for which to be thankful but we should not take past successes for granted and assume that they would continue automatically well into perpetuity. Barbadians must recognise that developing a culture of performance is a prerequisite for growing and sustaining a service economy. I submit, that developing such a culture in an age of rapid change is important.

Mr. President, I thank you, and I do support the Estimates debate.

HER HONOUR SENATOR Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I wish to express my strong approval of the Estimates and to praise the Honourable Minister of Finance. He has maintained economic stability, has reduced the deficit, and has demonstrated masterly ordinary fiscal skill, at a time when the world economic order is presenting many difficulties for some countries. At the same time, the Honourable Minister of Finance is able to continue fulfilling social and other developmental needs of our citizens.

Mr. President, as usual Senator Stuart was eloquent but I think that in some instances, some of his statements collapsed under the weight of his philosophising and misunderstanding. Sir, I will allude to a number of them. I remember very well because I had to take some young school children in when the Democratic Labour Party put 14-year olds out of schools. There is now university education up to the age of 16. There is an Alleviation of Poverty Programme. There is the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission.

Mr. President, I wish to refer to Senator Stuart's comments on physical education and to assure him that physical education is compulsory at primary level. There are syllabuses for it and it is separate and distinct from any programmes of the National Sports Council. Sir, every class, from nursery level to class four level, must do two periods per week, and at the secondary level it is part of a compulsory course in the lower schools.

Mr. President, a new Physical Education syllabus has been introduced for Caribbean Examination Council Examinations. There is also an officer for Physical Education attached to the Ministry of Education.

Mr. President, I wish to look at the Ministry of Social Transformation and to two of its mandates. As Honourable Senators know, the Ministry of Social Transformation has been allocated a sum of \$76 612 776. I wish to refer to the National Committee on Ageing, which I have the honour to chair.

A new committee was appointed last year and its terms of reference are very wide. If effectively carried out, they can help to change the quality of life for senior citizens. There is a Green Paper in draft, on which the Committee is going to review and express its opinion, before it goes to Cabinet.

Mr. President, the terms of reference are as follows:

- (a) To make recommendation to Government on all matters relating to ageing and to the quality of life of older persons by identifying and valuing various governmental and non governmental programmes of both direct and indirect concerns to older persons.
- (b) Working with the Ministry of Social Transformation and other relevant governmental and non governmental organisations, to ensure improvements in the quality of life of older persons, and reviewing and making recommendations on relevant research and other reports.
- (c) To propose and support activities which will:
 - (i) Recognise the contributions of older persons;
 - (ii) Provide for the continuing education of older persons;
 - (iii) Contribute to healthy lifestyles among older persons;
 - (iv) Provide for the cultural development of older persons;
 - (v) Provide for improvement in the quality of life for older persons;
 - (vi) Assist in identifying areas of research on ageing.

Mr. President, it has now become commonplace that in the year 2015 we should have an ageing population and therefore, we have to plan for it since the dependence ratio will have more seniors. We also have to plan so that people

would live out their lives, while continuing to make a good contribution wherever possible and to be well looked after where there is an inability for them to look after themselves.

Mr. President, it gnaws my heart to see or to hear of the neglect of older persons. I was particularly concerned, as I would expect all Honourable Senators would be, when I heard about an elderly person who had been abused by being placed in inhuman conditions.
5.40 p.m.

I know that others are living in circumstances of squalor, socially abandoned by their relatives and alienated from society. People in the society must be vigilant and bring such cases to the attention of the social services authority.

We have to envisage a time when we shall be looking after the needs of the elderly equally as well as we now look after the youth and children in our society. Sir, because of this trend, the dependency ratio will have more senior citizens than youth. I think there is a need for a comprehensive elderly legislation through which seniors can be protected against maltreatment and abuse in the homes and residential centres. I am confident that this caring Government will address this as soon as possible.

The advent of the Senior Games which was so well publicised is an excellent idea. It evokes much interest and support and is now a family event. A special committee has been appointed to organise these games and another exciting, well-organised fulfilling day is anticipated very soon.

Mr. President, the National Committee on Aging will be looking for innovative ideas to carry out its mandate successfully and to work with other organisations. Our Committee comprises persons with a wide variety of skills and experience. Both men, women and youth are represented and are already displaying much enthusiasm. Moreover, the committee is interested in getting male seniors to be actively involved in this development programme.

We have a problem which is universal where the male participation in senior social recreational activity is low. The males need to get the message that they can have a better quality of life on retirement if they become involved in community, organised social and recreational activities.

I am sure that Senator Collymore will agree with me that BARP is playing an important role in the society and is to be praised for the work it is doing.

We are also aware that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has an alternate care for the elderly programme which plays an important part in the provision of care for the elderly. It is important for us in the society to pay close attention to the quality of service being provided by elder caregivers. Just as

children can suffer neglect or abuse, so can the elderly if they are placed in unsuitable homes.

The National Assistance Board has been kind in giving accommodation and a secretariat for our committee and the Minister of Social Transformation along with his officers, in his usual dynamic and humanitarian approach to the concerns of the elderly, should also to be commended.

I wish to turn to the Bureau of Gender Affairs. Among other things, the Bureau of Gender Affairs is charged with the responsibility of:

“Facilitating gender mainstreaming of national development policies and programmes so that the quality and equity between men and women can be achieved.”

The mission of the bureau is to:

“Ensure the integration of gender and development into all areas of national development, plans and policy so that men and women can benefit equally from existing opportunities.”

During 2003, the Bureau continued its gender sensitisation programme for its focal points. It also continued its educational programme in HIV/AIDS.

The workshop held in collaboration with the Maurice Byer health discussion group of Christ is the Answer Family Church on September 29 was a most successful HIV/AIDS programme held during the year. This workshop attracted 99 men and 23 women.

In an attempt to highlight the issue of masculinity, the Bureau held a seminar entitled “Men in Caribbean Societies” in collaboration with the Centre for Gender and Development Studies.

In addition, it held a nutrition and health function “Men Embracing Families”, which focused on the emotional, health and nutritional issues of men. It brought together a wide cross-section of men, their partners and spouses as well as children. Approximately 200 persons attended, 30 per cent of them being men.

The Bureau, in an attempt to help empower men and women to become more productive in the quality of their lives, collaborated with the Barbados Professional Women’s Club and MESA to facilitate a number of self-development workshops for men and women. MESA’s programmes sought to help men in listening and supporting other men providing a forum to share experiences and ideas to assist in the development of young males spiritually and to identify and help some of the specific needs of youth.

Sir, I want to mention domestic violence because I understand there has been an upsurge of it. The Bureau, because of this, sought to sensitise secondary schools to the issue of domestic violence and conducted programmes with three secondary schools, Springer Memorial, Princess Margaret and St. James Secondary. The Government has implemented a number of programmes aimed at eliminating violence against women. There is a provision of services for victims and offenders. The Royal Barbados Police Force had a victim group established. It is a nonprofit making organisation and any new recruit has to be trained in domestic violence intervention.

There are plans for an activity to be held in June around Father’s Day to emphasise the role of men in families and society and a public education programme will be developed to bring awareness among the public of gender issue and gender management systems adopted by Government to integrate a gender perspective into national development and programmes.
5.50 p.m.

Mr. President, I understand that gender inequality is a critical factor in the increasing incidences of HIV/AIDS in Barbados. I noted with interest that Sir John mentioned HIV/AIDS. Sir, because of power relations, our economic situations that force women sometimes to make desperate choices, women are more vulnerable than men.

In terms of legislation, we know that nothing discriminates against women but ideological and cultural practices where women are seen in traditional roles still form a guard against women’s progress so that general sensitisation and training seem to be two of the main answers, and gender mainstreaming is one of the main tools to bring about gender equality and sustainable development.

Sir, often complaints are made about the inadequacy of staff at the Bureau of Gender Affairs but, of course, it is a matter of priorities. I must say that there has been an increase in the staff and I trust that more will be done to strengthen this institution when it is feasible.

Mr. President, \$241 931 936.00 is allocated to Education. In spite of some flaws, the standard of education in Barbados remains high and the system is one of the best managed in the world. I said that before and I make no apology for repeating it. This standard is due to the financial priority placed on it, along with health, by successive Governments. It has been heightened by this Government through its vision, proaction, physical ingenuity, and its offering a universal education for 5 to 16 years.

In addition, there is a new concept that each child matters. Hence, this Government is ensuring that no child is denied the opportunity to make a contribution to the economic and social development of Barbados, including

those with special needs, intellectual deficits, physical deficiencies and psychological challenges.

Significantly, in the last five years more children have come out of school with certification. It must also be remembered that education is a continuum. School is only one aspect. It provides the basics and the right attitude.

Sir, I refer to the Sir Winston University of Halifax. I mentioned it before in this Honourable Chamber and it is continuing its training of approximately sixty of our teachers in Barbados in a Bachelors and Masters programme in special needs in order that teachers will acquire the knowledge and skills and, therefore, be better able to face challenges which these children have.

Sir, furthermore, all the schools which were refurbished under the EduTech programme now have ramps to facilitate access to the buildings and bathrooms which were specially designed bathrooms for persons with disabilities. This was never done before. It is not only a matter of economics, although we need that to bring about these reforms, it is also a matter of social justice.

Sir, I want to say something about EduTech as at March 2004. Mr. President, \$30,221,469.00 have been allocated to education and from what I have observed, it is money being well spent. May I remind Honourable Senators of its objective. The primary goal of EduTech is to increase the knowledge of citizens contributing to the sustainable, social and economic development of Barbados. Its specific objectives are to prepare students who are creative, literate, well-trained and readily retrainable at any point in their development.

Also, to ensure that all students understand the necessity of being able to live and work harmoniously with other persons in their environment and to increase the efficacy of the teaching/learning process by encouraging teachers to shift to child-centred learning and more collaborative forms of learning in their classrooms and ensure that all children leave school with the basic qualifications and abilities that are required to participate productively in the skilled, information-intensive job market.

I wish to stress that the project is a comprehensive school improvement programme designed to help the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports implement the form of the national curriculum teaching methodologies and assessment procedures.

Sir, it encompasses four interrelated components and in light of the programme's magnitude and complexity, it requires seven phases for full implementation of the programme, and I think that is important to remember.

Sir, there is the civil works which involves the physical refurbishment, upgrading of classrooms and other facilities which include the retrofitting of specific classrooms to accommodate installation of various educational multimedia resources.

Sir, there is a human resources development component of the programme. The aim is to train approximately 3,000 education sector professionals in an effort to make maximum use of the resources available. The majority of training is site-based wherever possible. As at September 30, 2003, between 120 and 176 teachers had completed the first and second courses respectively to support the full operation of the programme coordinating unit and to boost the capacity of specific ministry sections to implement various aspects of the programme. That is one of its components.

The procurement and installation of hardware and software are the fourth one. This component involves the purchasing of learning technologies and associated applications for use in the school system. A test and fixed approach is being done throughout the implementation of the programme.

Mr. President, as at February 2004, 31 schools have been completed.

In Phase 1 Public/Primary, and I should mention them, Cuthbert Moore, Deacons, Westbury, Sharon, Irvine Wilson, St. Joseph, St. Mary's, South District and Christ Church Boys', an impressive number; Public/Secondary, Combermere, Ellerslie, Alexandra and St. James Secondary and Private/Primary, St. Gabriel's; Private/Secondary, Metropolitan.
6.00 p.m.

In Phase 2, ten primary schools have been completed under contractual arrangements with Ajax Construction, Edu-Systems and CRS Building and Maintenance. These schools were Mount Tabor, St. Matthew's, St. Luke's, Pine, St. Paul's, Grazettes, St. Jude's, St. Andrew, St. Bernard and St. Cyprian's.

There is work in progress at Princess Margaret Secondary, Coleridge and Parry, St. Lucy Primary, West Terrace Primary and Bay Primary.

Curriculum reform is also part of EduTech. Field testing at the revised curricular at primary class four and secondary level four, continued. The revised curricula for Primary Class Four, physical education and religious and moral education are to be completed. The Second Level Four, religious and moral education is to be completed. All the other revised curricula have been completed and training for teachers to use the curriculum is ongoing. I think that should be enough to allay any fears or completely destroy any sort of misunderstanding.

Now, I wish to say something about the University College of Barbados. It is in its embryonic stage but some criticism has been launched about that, not here but I have heard it, and I wish to say something. The proposed University College of Barbados will be the institution formed from the amalgamation of the Barbados Community College, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and Erdiston Teachers' Training College.

Mr. President, there are many benefits to be derived from this amalgamation. One administrative organisational structure, providing services for any University College of Barbados students will be more cost effective than each campus providing its own administrative services. It will also reduce duplication of programmes. Programmes will be offered in the applied sciences and arts which the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill Campus at present does not offer. It will increase access to world-class tertiary education. It will respond in a proactive way to the demand for existing programmes and curricula will be upgraded.

Obsolete and deteriorating facilities will be improved and its object is also to improve the delivery of programmes to include business trends, so that the concept of enterprise learning, and this is important, will help to focus the instructors and students on the recognition of new opportunities in traditional subject areas.

It is suggested that the organisation of the University College of Barbados (UCB) is based on clusters of excellence to provide identities to the four campuses of the institution as follows:

The BCC: Languages, cultural arts, graphics and performing arts and communication technology.

SJPP: Applied technology, environmental engineering and resource management.

Erdiston Teachers' Training College: Health science and education.

Marine Gardens: Hospitality, tourism and international business.

At this stage, the Ministry is examining the reports of the subcommittees set up to look into the UCB.

Sir, I wish to address the problem of oracy which over the years has been one of my concerns. It has been said that speech is one of the greatest gifts given to man and it represents, perhaps, the highest form of human achievement.

Mr. President, in return for the vast investment in education, our people need to value it more than they seem to do nowadays, and they need to support the Ministry and the schools in the quest to keep standards high. Regrettably,

the standard of broken English has declined. Therefore, it is receiving the urgent attention of the Ministry and the schools.

Oracy is an integral part of the language arts programme and the Ministry, together with a panel of teachers, is designing an oral language programme, beginning with the early childhood stage. It is at that stage that language is most easily developed. Cabinet fully supports these programmes and more than four years ago, they directed that the language of the classroom should be standard English.

If one is not able to exploit the language, communicate effectively and express our feelings and thoughts, it denies access to many other experiences. Perhaps the fundamental requirement for oracy is to have the vocabulary, idiom and structures suitable to situations which one is most likely to meet in life to be able to use instantly what is appropriate and, furthermore, recognise what is inappropriate.

The rationale behind the language arts syllabus at primary level states, and I quote:

"A balanced language programme should promote competence in each of the four language arts, listening, speaking, reading and writing and the programme must be so structured that students are able to benefit from the inter-relationships that exist among these four processes."

Just knowing the elements of language is not enough. Students need exposure to a number of opportunities which allow them to use language in its many contexts, such as formal situations, informal situations, writing and speaking. In addition, students must develop competence in presenting argument logically and critically.

Many people do not seem, nowadays, to regard competence in language as important, and this is unfortunate for this is a social and emotional use of language, including the development of self-esteem. Some people seem to see English as a language for only a limited number of people in the community. Emphasis on oracy will build the bridge which allows for a smooth transition from natural proficiency in dialect. Sir, no one is saying that dialect does not have its place, but children do not have to learn it. It comes naturally but they have to try and be bilingual, so they can move from that natural proficiency to full communicated competence in standard English.

Some of us may have been looking at cricket today, and here is where we will see that dialect takes its place, nobody is going to shout out, "why don't you hit the ball well".

6.10 p.m.

Some of us may have been looking at or having a peep at cricket today, and here is where we would say dialect has its place. Nobody is going to shout out: "Why don't you hit the ball well?" They would come out and say: "Man, hit the ball". There you see where dialect comes in sometimes and where you need formal language for certain situations.

Mr. President, before I leave the area of education, I wish to make a fervent appeal to the teachers of English in Barbados to revive the association for the teaching of English and for that matter specialist teachers in other subjects to revivify any associations that have fallen into disuse. In the past, the Barbados Association for the Teaching of English was a vibrant and influential organisation in which the clear voice of the teacher of English and the lover of English was heard, and it needs to be heard today just as much as it was heard years ago.

Finally, Mr. President, I turn to another of my favourite interest which I think is important for Barbados, that is sports. Participation in sports worldwide is greater today than it ever was. It is advantageous for the sports person and the spectator. Sports is a great leveller. For the average sports person it provides opportunities for travel thereby broadening his or her experience.

I will not go into the financial aspects of it and those benefits, I dare not. It is an educator teaching one how to win with humility and how to lose with composure. Further it instills discipline which is so much needed in our society, co-operation and perseverance as well as being conducive to good health which is important even to the reduction of some chronic diseases.

Senator Stuart spoke about physical education and that is where that would come in. In addition, it provides recreation and entertainment. For all these reasons it is important to a nation and deserves the unqualified support of governments and citizens.

We have been fortunate in Barbados to have governments who have been strong supporters of sports, in general, not only cricket. At the same time I would say that where our people are concerned that our country needs to be built up to support athletes and that sports must become an extremely important part of our lives not just sports for fun as some people regard it.

The National Sports Council plays an integral role in the development of sports in Barbados. It continues to be very active and to carry out its mandate. Its aim is to develop an active, healthy and fit society through sports and physical activities in line with the overall efforts of the Government in nation building. Please note that.

Two of its main objectives are to develop and improve the knowledge and practice of sports in the interest of social

welfare of the individual and the enjoyment of leisure among the public at large and to achieve excellence at the national, regional and international levels of competition with a view toward enhancing national image and goodwill.

Mr. President, the National Sports Council has a staff of over 267 persons and an annual budget of \$13 million. With 14 active disciplines, the Council has been under pressure to deliver high quality coaching in addition to assisting at the national level. Happily there has been an improvement in the academic and professional performance among the coaching staff. This has been the result of the desire on the part of the staff to improve themselves and to avail themselves of scholarships. Added to this, there has been an improvement in staff training.

Interestingly, too, is the International Sports Administrators Course which was held in Atlanta in 2003. Participants in order to qualify had to have an administrative sports degree. Fifty-five participants were chosen – they had to be chosen, they could not just go, from all over the world – to take part in the course. There were only four from the Caribbean. Adrian Donovan from Barbados was among them and he emerged top of the class with 95.5 per cent.

During the past year table tennis was expanded by the appointment of two coaches after the retirement of the person who has held the post, so more children are being exposed and working very closely with the Barbados Table Tennis Association. This I found of particular interest when I did my research.

For the first time there is a coach for women football at both the primary and secondary level. The training section started in October 2002 with about 30 females between the ages of six and 30. The numbers have now increased to 65 and continues to grow, such is the popularity of the sports and the enthusiasm of the participants.

This augurs well for the players since there are opportunities of obtaining scholarships all over North America. These players are preparing to make their first official visit to Trinidad and Tobago this year. A female basketball competition was also held for the first time and 11 secondary schools entered. Coleridge and Parry defeated the Garrison Secondary to take the title.

Mr. President, eight Cubans are on contract and have been assigned to the National Sports Council to coach in swimming, boxing, hockey, volleyball, table tennis and track and field. I understand that they are doing a good job training not only the students at the primary and secondary schools but are working with the elite athletes through the national association.

During the period April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003, fourteen associations used the services of the secretariat. In addition, 26 associations were given special grants to assist them in sending teams to participate in regional and international events. The total sum was \$462 956.00 and the sum of \$864 602.00 was received from 21 companies – I am sure Senator Fields and Senator Sir John Goddard would be pleased to hear that – who sponsored either events or provided financial assistance for programmes. The National Sports Council also received donations from a number of companies for the Women's 10K.

Mr. President, among the National Sports Council's plan for 2004 is to improve the skills and quality of athletes by intensifying coaching at the primary level, carrying out capital works programmes within the budget allocated, providing funding for the dominoes and whisk world championships in July this year, the Olympics in Athens in August, the Pan American Hockey Club in April and continuing the promotion of road tennis development.

The National Sports Council plans to complete the following activities during this financial year:– the construction of hard courts at Bridgefield, the Ignatius Byer School, Seaview, Ruby and Indian Ground and the resurfacing of the hard courts at Jackson, Blenheim, St. Christopher and the Police Boys' Club. In addition, a number of lights will be installed on a number of existing hard courts and playing fields throughout the island.
6.20 p.m.

Mr. President, pavilions will also be constructed at the following places: Boscobel, Archer's Bay, Glebe, Foster Hall, Green's and Rices. Playing fields will be developed in Green's, Gemswick, Yearwood Road, Foster Hall, Arsenal and Cane Vale.

Mr. President, the resurfaced playing field at Dover, Christ Church, is of particular importance at this time. It was recently handed over by the Urban Development Commission to the National Sports Council. It is important because, as is generally known, it is a venue used by many foreign sporting teams to practise and to train.

In addition, it is going to be the place where Cricket Fest, which is supposed to be a big one-day event taking place on March, 31, 2004, the day before the Test Series in Barbados, will be held. It has primarily been organised to attract the estimated number of visitors who will be arriving.

There will be documentaries of past West Indies teams, and this present team will be making a guest appearance. The Fest is also going to be a mixture of cricket, the performing arts and education, and has the support of the National Sports Council.

Mr. President, the National Sports Council has celebrated its 25th Anniversary last year and owes much to its directors, chairmen, board members and staff, over the years.

Mr. President, in conclusion, I wish to utter words of praise. Under the heading of Public Sector Reform, which, of course, I am going to leave to Senator Williams, but since this is something that touches me, I want to mention it. Sir, the Accountant General deserves much praise for the initiative, reasonableness and sensitivity, which she has shown in reducing the amount of life certificates that pensioners and retirees have to sign. Sir, perhaps sterner penalties might have to be introduced for anyone who tries to beat the system but, I am sure, there are many retired persons in my age group and below, who are very grateful to the Accountant-General for this innovation.

Mr. President, I also wish to laud the staff at the National Insurance Office. They have recently had a big problem with the changing over of the system. I know it was very difficult because I too suffered somewhat during this change-over but I must say that from all I have seen and heard, the Staff took it in the manner in which good civil servants should behave. I would, therefore, like to commend one lady in particular with whom I dealt, Mrs. Vivian Nurse, for her courtesy, patience and cooperation.

Mr. President, with those remarks, I support this Bill.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss L. V. EASTMOND: Mr. President, I rise to speak in what is my first Estimates debate in this Honourable Chamber. The matter before us is the Appropriation Bill, 2004, and we are considering the Estimates for the period 2004-2005.

Mr. President, I would first like to congratulate Senator Griffith, Leader of Government Business, for the presentation he has made this morning.

Mr. President, in response to Senator Stuart, I would like to say that in looking at the Estimates as a whole, one must recognise that the entire document not only focusses on economic development but also on social programmes. Indeed, the good Senator was the one who went on to point out, as Senator Griffith had done previously, that the largest allocation had been made to Education and Health, those two areas being the areas that would ensure our human resources capacity remains at the level that it is today.

Mr. President, in terms of economic development, this results in jobs for more people, which means that increase in spending capacity for them and their families. It also results in Government and businesses being able to earn more revenue, which Government then is able to tax. When that

happens, it means that the Government can collect more revenue in order to support its social programmes, some to which other Honourable Senators have already spoken.

Mr. President, therefore, I do not believe that it is a fair assessment to suggest that on the Government's Side, our focus is only on economic development. It is a critical part of everything that we do in Barbados because at the end of the day, we do need to make money in order to support the programmes that are put in place, whether they are of an economic, political or social nature.

Mr. President, I would wish to put my presentation into a broader context. We have heard some reference made to globalisation. For example, this period of globalisation to which we are now referring has been fuelled in large part, by the technological revolution in which we are now participating. Sir, this technological revolution brings with it many challenges but it is my submission that it also brings opportunities. The technological revolution that is before us allows us to do many things. It certainly allows the world to communicate in a more effective and rapid fashion than was previously done.

Mr. President, with that it also brings issues such as financial contagion, and we have all heard about the ageing crises and how these crises are no longer limited to any one country but can move from country to country. We have also heard that because individuals are able to travel more efficiently and cheaply than before, that we can also have the transportation of diseases around the world in a more efficient manner.

Mr. President, similarly with respect to diseases that affect our livestock or poultry, we have had experiences with those, and because the world is now more interdependent than it was before, all of the developments in communication have allowed us to carry these various matters, whether they are good or bad, around the world more quickly, more effectively and more efficiently than previously. Therefore, there are challenges but all of that efficiency also brings with it opportunities.

Mr. President, it is within that context that I would argue that the developed world saw opportunities for encouraging the rest of us to engage in a process of trade liberalisation, which is also one of the other major effects. Another major challenge in which we are now engaged, is the process of trade liberalisation which we are encountering at several different levels in Barbados.

6.30 p.m.

In fact, within the CARICOM communities our countries are probably engaged in the most intensive set of negotiations. This is because negotiations at the WTO are going on at the same time as those at the FTAA, as we negotiate new arrangements with the European Union and as

we seek to implement the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

I believe within our history we have not been engaged in such intensive negotiations previously certainly within the context of the entire world. I believe CARICOM countries should acknowledge that what they are engaged in is a feat of magnificent proportions that most countries are not engaged in and we should give ourselves credit for it.

I would like to focus on the Caribbean Single Market and Economy within the context of its negotiations. Obviously, much could be said about all of the other negotiations but we have always regarded the negotiations at the level of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy as being extremely critical because we believe that the creation of a single market will position CARICOM countries in such a way that will make us more ready to compete at the hemispheric level and at the world level. I believe this theory is still sound.

However, in more recent times, there has been some concern about the future of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy because of the dispute over fishing. I believe that our concern might have to do with the fact that our relationships within the Caribbean Single Market and Economy must be now regarded in a more formal way than previously.

While it is true that in the Caribbean context, we are used to an informal way of life, the truth is that within the WTO, FTAA and EU context, a formal way of doing business will be the order of the day but it will not be the informal way that I believe is fundamental to the culture of the Caribbean. I believe that relating to each other within the context of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy provides us with an opportunity to start learning and paying attention to these formalities so that we do not find ourselves at a disadvantage when we start to operate within the context of the WTO and FTAA.

Sir, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is seen as more than a trade arrangement. In an ideal world within CARICOM, there should be no difference between how St. Lucia operates with Barbados or how, for example, someone from St. Michael operates with someone from Christ Church so that even though one lives in St. Michael, he is free to set up a business in Christ Church within any borders. In order to do that, a lot still has to be done within the context of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Sir, the fact that the Treaty of Chaguaramas, in my view, includes an elaborate dispute mechanism should suggest that disputes were anticipated. I would like for us to promise that we view all disputes with a level head because in any relationship there will be

dispute and that is why there is such an elaborate dispute mechanism within the Treaty of Chaguaramas itself.

Sir, we have globalisation. We know that communication is easier, that there are opportunities and challenges, that we are negotiating trade arrangements and I would not like us to underestimate the importance of negotiating the appropriate trade agreements. Sir, negotiating trade agreements is not a sexy topic and nobody wants to discuss how you negotiate trade and many people consider it too boring. You can spend an entire day discussing one paragraph or negotiating one sentence, but the implications that one or two sentences can have on an entire economy is so far-reaching that it is worth the amount of time spent in those negotiations.

Sir, some people wonder why the Senior Minister and the official from the Ministry of State are always travelling but these negotiations do not take place in Barbados and in order to negotiate a text to preserve our interest, we must be there at the table to ensure that a comma does not go where we do not want it to go, as it would make a big difference to our economic circumstances.

Sir, the Government of Barbados has encouraged the private sector to also ensure that it follows these negotiations. A private sector trade team has been established and if you look at the Estimates you will see that the private sector trade team has been allocated \$250 000 in order to ensure that they are ready to participate in those negotiations.

Sir, one of the stated positions of this Government is that it expects the service economy to continue to drive the Barbados economy. There are some individuals who criticise this position without recognising that the Government's programme does not actually discriminate against any of the larger sectors, but supports services, agriculture and manufacturing. The fact of the matter is that if you look at our statistics, you would see that services already drive the Barbados economy. And from what we can see down the road, they will continue to do so, in tourism, international business and financial services and we expect to see the growth and development of other services such as professional services.

6.40 p.m.

Mr. President, some of the other services that I am sure will come onstream as well are services in agriculture and the enhancement of manufacturing, which we do not pay any attention to. In terms of the expertise in agriculture, to say that we can actually develop a cadre of individuals that can provide services in Barbados, the region and the rest of the world in agriculture, I believe is not far-fetched.

Mr. President, that is part of the services economy as well because the truth is, there are many areas – even in environmental services. Sir, when we were doing our research with respect to the services sector in the Barbados economy, we were surprised at the number of professionals resident in Barbados, that provides environmental services around the region and even in North America.

The services sector is actually a big and active sector. Unfortunately, we do not have the statistics we would like in order to identify the specific services that are actually bringing foreign exchange into Barbados.

In order to help support this, this Government, in collaboration with the private sector, has seen the development of the Barbados coalition of service industries. If you look at the Estimates with respect to the Ministry of Industry and International Business, you will see that Government has allocated \$500 000 to that particular enterprise. I believe that this is an extremely important initiative.

Sir, one of the areas in which Barbados can be competitive from the perspective of exporting services is in those professional services areas, in construction, engineering, architecture, dentistry, medicine, nurses and legal services. We would see that Barbadians already provides these services throughout the region. They have been doing that for many years, and some of them are also providing these services further afield within the hemisphere and internationally.

Sir, one of the problems that businesses face is that they tend to be small. There has to be a facility for doing marketing and promotion of services, seeking out contractual agreements in other territories, while at the same time doing your business at home. Regarding architectural firms, there would simply be one architect. There may be an assistant and a secretary or you might have two architects working together. The truth is, it is very difficult for them to get on a plane and travel to a promotional tour or to countries in order to seek out new contracts. We expect that the Barbados Coalition of Service Industries will help to facilitate that.

There are a number of similar agencies that come from Europe and North America to Barbados, and the Caribbean, and meet with the private sector and Government, and it never crosses our minds to think why is it that they would come to a country of this size to get contracts for companies in England. Sir, this is because they go all over the world and if they can pick up one or two contracts in Barbados, one in St. Lucia and one in Dominica, it means that they would have achieved what they want by getting contracts for their people in the United Kingdom or the United States of

America. We believe that this is what the Barbados Coalition of Service Industries should be able to do for our service providers in Barbados.

Sir, I would also say that within the context of the development of international business and financial services, Government now sees that even though it is recognised that it is a specialty area, we recognise that Barbados must reach the stage where it is seen as a full-fledged service centre.

There is absolutely no reason why Barbados cannot provide the full range of services that we see in other countries and large cities, such as the United Kingdom and New York. For example, when you go to London and you look at the range of services being provided there, yes, they provide international business services and financial services.

There are many who argue stridently that they provide offshore financial services in London but they also provide educational services, for example, the University of London. They provide medical, entertainment, culture and the arts, museums and historical sights. They provide almost every service that you can think of within that small geographical space called London. Therefore, that economy is exceptionally vibrant and that is why they are able to charge high prices as well.

Mr. President, it is exceptionally vibrant and everybody wants to go there. I do not see that it is beyond Barbados to also seek to achieve similarly where we would have a wide selection of services being provided in Barbados both for the domestic and foreign markets. That is why this Government is also focussing on developing culture, cultural services and the arts. I am sure that Senator Williams will speak on that particular point. That is all part of the development of the services economy in Barbados.

Sir, all of this is being facilitated by this Government through a number of initiatives. This is why I am encouraging us to look at the Estimates within that broader context. Sir, when we look at the programmes within the Estimates document we will see that they are all working towards a goal of enhancing the economic development outlook of Barbados as well as the social and political outlook.

There are other initiatives that Government has taken which should be viewed within this context. Usually we hear them being discussed separately but there are all going towards that end.

For example, the reduction in corporation tax that is to facilitate business, also ensuring that we have the appropriate intellectual property legislation on our books which will help to facilitate business as well, so that Barbados is fully compliant with the trade related aspects of intellectual property agreement, the World Trade Organisation agreement.

Mr. President, all of these measures which provide assistance to business development are being put in place to help reposition the Barbados economy so that the economy can take on the challenges that it will be faced with through more liberalised markets. Also, it must not be an economy where we are always in a survivalist position. We wish to move to a position of prosperity, to a position where wealth creation is something that we speak about every day.

I believe that in the same way that individuals can agree that a whole nation can share in poverty, I believe that an entire nation can share its wealth if we all work together. Government has put these policies in place, for example, the financial initiatives that have been taken with respect to the Enterprise Growth Fund, the implementation of the Special Developments Act and the Small Business Development Act. All of these initiatives are focused on enhancing the Barbados economy.

Sir, Government has done its part and we know that all of the initiatives taken by Government have not all worked well at the outset.

The Government is also in a position where it is prepared to listen to any suggestions that come from the general public, or from the individuals that we wish to target who would benefit from these initiatives, to advise us, if there is anything that we can do better. Sir, that is the context within which the work of my Ministry is framed.
6.50 p.m.

Mr. President, my Ministry has the responsibility for overseeing what is clearly a transformative period in our country and more narrowly, our economy. I believe that the main reason we are here is to carry the initiatives taken by our Government to work towards improving the quality of life for Barbadians and this is part of the mission of my Ministry, through the facilitation of commerce, entrepreneurship and the protection of consumers.

Sir, if you look at your Estimates, you would see that my Ministry has been allocated \$13 276 740 to do quite a lot of work. The areas that fall within my Ministry include, science and technology, promotion and development, information communications technology, utilities' regulation, insuring standards, price and quality, the promotion, setting and enforcement of product standards, oversight of matters concerning insolvencies and bankruptcies, business development, especially the provision of technical assistance for persons that are suffering from HIV/AIDS, in the development of their own businesses.

We are also responsible for cooperatives and the regulation and development of cooperatives and credit

unions, and also with respect to monitoring import licensing, betting and gaming. This is quite a lot, Mr. President, and obviously my Ministry is extremely efficient to get all of that done.

Mr. President, I would like to start by looking at the cooperatives and credit unions, which have been allocated approximately \$791 000 for the regulation and development of the cooperative movement in Barbados. There are some 39 active credit unions in Barbados. We have four farming, one fishing, and four transportation cooperatives.

With respect to the credit union movement, I was having a discussion with one of my colleagues and I was pointing out that the credit union movement in Barbados is very much an unheralded success story for Barbadians of all walks of life. I believe that it is not as readily acknowledged as it should be. This is an enterprise that has seen success which has been developed where its progress has been monitored by ordinary Barbadians.

The credit union movement can now argue its success in real statistics, having some 109 401 members. In Barbados the population is approximately 265 000, so you understand the high percentages that you are talking about. The workforce in Barbados is about 180 000, so the success of the credit union movement in Barbados is absolutely remarkable.

I believe in this age, when we are talking about challenges, when we are believing somehow that we cannot succeed in this new world of economic order, I think that we can look to credit unions and we can say well, if ordinary Barbadians have achieved this, what then of those of us who consider ourselves to be a little bit more than ordinary.

What it said is that Barbados, if it puts its mind to anything, it can achieve it and the credit union movement has done this very quietly. It now has assets in excess of \$644.3 million.

Now I had the opportunity to speak at the launching of the Barbados Workers' Union Cooperative Credit Union Branch in Speightstown in St. Peter recently. It was a very enjoyable occasion and part of the discussion we had there had to do with the fact that out of all the cooperatives, the credit unions have been successful but what about the other cooperatives that have not been as successful.

One of the things that my Ministry would wish to do is to try to determine what has driven the success of the credit unions and to see if we can transform this or translate this over to the other cooperatives. I believe that the cooperatives' solution is a good one for the situation we now find ourselves in, with respect to small business development.

Often small businesses do need to collaborate with each other, but it is also the case that within the Barbados business culture, especially at the small business level, small business people do not like to enter into partnerships or form companies with other individuals.

It is my view that the cooperatives' legislation, certainly provides a facility where individual companies or enterprises can get together in a cooperative movement, determine the areas in which they can collaborate, maybe in terms of identifying inputs for their business, sourcing inputs at reduced cost because they will be able to buy in bulk, certainly they will be able to do marketing and research as a group, and provide facilities by which they can market and, indeed, sell their goods or services more effectively through that collaborative process.

Therefore, one of the things that we would like to see is for that success to be translated into the other cooperatives and I know that the transport co-ops and farming co-ops have been working, or they have shown a renewed interest, certainly when we met with them, in terms of looking to see where they might have failed in the past, and looking to enhance their efforts.

With respect to the cooperatives and credit union movement, my Ministry will also be working on a new piece of legislation in order to essentially ensure that the regulation of the industry is as effective as it should be.

In terms of our discussions, we have met with the Barbados Cooperative Credit Union League on more than one occasion, because I believe, it was felt that this piece of legislation would be extremely contentious and that a resolution could be brought to the issue. The truth of the matter is that the credit unions in Barbados did have some concerns about the legislation and the other truth is that it was a draft.

7.00 p.m.

What the Barbados Cooperative Credit Union League did was to present Government with a document where it went through the draft legislation, highlighted the sections with which it had a concern and identified their alternative position to the Ministry. Therefore, we were able to have very sensible discussions about what our views were as a Ministry and what their views were as cooperatives.

At the moment we are still in consultations with other ministries but what I would say is that we have been able to develop a good relationship with the League, especially since this was one of the first projects I was involved in when I came to office. It does not mean that the members of the credit union movement are necessarily happy with all of the positions of the Ministry. What it means is that we have

come to an understanding where we recognise that dialogue is the key to resolving many of the issues which, no doubt, we will face in the future and I hope this new piece of legislation can come before this Honourable Senate very soon.

Mr. President, I wish to go on to speak about business development. However, I will not say too much on it because I believe that one of my other colleagues may also wish to speak on it, so I will just point out that Government has allocated a subvention of \$350 000 to the Small Business Association which we have done in the past and \$1 million with respect to the special project for the HIV/AIDS initiative.

We in Government are concerned that some of the individuals who are HIV/AIDS positive have suffered from discrimination in the workplace and one of the ways that we are seeking to address this is to ensure that they can have a role in terms of setting up their own businesses, so the Ministry in association with the Small Business Association is going to work towards putting that particular initiative in place.

I move on now to look at the other aspect of my Ministry dealing with insolvency and bankruptcy. As I said before, my Ministry has been mandated with the oversight of a number of new initiatives in Barbados. The establishment of the Office of Supervisor of Insolvency is not one that gets very much attention, but I cannot say that I am unhappy about that. It is good not to have a contentious department in your Ministry so people can just get on with their work. However, when this department was going to be established, there were some who wondered if the individual would have enough work to do, but believe me the person does have enough work to do.

As you know, Mr. President, there is a matter going on at the moment where this piece of legislation is being used for the very first time. Our Supervisor of Insolvency is Miss Greenidge, which I am sure every lawyer of my vintage would know as she was a long-standing institution at the Corporate Affairs Department.

I must commend her for doing a really excellent job under sometimes trying circumstances because often what happens in Government is that we establish the post, we employ somebody and then we find where we would put them to sit, that probably happened in her situation. She has worked very hard and very well. She has had to be the person guiding this whole process because this legislation is new for everyone. It is new for the attorneys and the judges involved, therefore she has had to do quite a lot of work.

Mr. President, this piece of legislation is important because it seeks to ensure that there is an environment where a company can effectively make an arrangement with all of

its creditors and hopefully, providing that the circumstances are right, can actually trade itself out of the insolvency which is similar to what is obtained in the United States of America Under Chapter 11, so this is really an innovative piece of legislation that Government has put in place. It was put in place under the last set of Estimates not this one in case people may be thinking about getting a report card. A lot of these matters would have been implemented under the previous Estimates provision or the current one we are now in.

Mr. President, I will go on to look at the promotion and enforcement of product standards. The two departments in my Ministry that deal with this particular issue are the Barbados National Standards Institution and the Department of Commerce. The Barbados National Standards Institution has been allocated just over \$1.5 million to deal with the matter of standards. The issue of standards I believe is one of the most important issues that we would have to contend with in this new environment, from two perspectives.

One of them has to do with the entry into Barbados of goods and services because the Barbados National Standards Institute would not only be responsible for standards with respect to goods but also with standards with respect to services. From the one perspective there is the entry of goods into Barbados and from the other perspective there is the desire of Barbadian producers of goods and services to sell their goods and services in the foreign markets.

Those foreign markets would definitely have standards especially if they are within developed country markets. I believe this area to be one of the most important because it is going to be used for two purposes really. In its less sinister guise, it is going to help regulate and protect your market and your consumers, and in its most sinister guise it would be used as a trade barrier.

Mr. President, there are a number of practices that many of the developed countries have become well schooled in over time. For example, if you want to send a product to a foreign country, you would be told what the standards are, so you would have your label in English and Spanish and what the contents are, and as far as you are concerned you have followed all the standards that they have asked you to follow, but then they may come back to you and say, for example, say it is fruit juice, that you have a picture of a guava on the label, but when they look at the contents, you do not have any guava juice in that particular product.

Now you have already sent off 20 containers and when the standards inspectors inspect your label, he or she would say that they do not see in your contents that you have a guava but you have a picture of a guava on your label.

The other thing that they might say to you is that you have written on the label "Eastmond Juices" and when they looked at the label it may have "Eastmond" in lower case letters and juices in capital letters, and they would say to you that all of it must be in capital letters, so you find yourself in a situation where they may send back the goods to you or if they do not do that, you would have to spend a considerable amount of time proving to them that under their legislation you do not have to have "Eastmond Juices" all in capital letters, or that it does not matter if you do not have guava juice in the particular product as long as you have not stated it on the label.

7.10 p.m.

Mr. President, at the end of the day, some might be able to prove that they were right but this might be after six months. Sir, there are some countries which practise this art very well. What usually happens is that they would be able to frustrate smaller suppliers because an individual cannot afford to have a container load of juices somewhere where he or she is not able to sell them in order to have the business going. Even though we might be big in Barbados, we are small within the global context, therefore, we have to ensure that we are always on the frontline in terms of standards because of the myriad of things that one might have wanted to do.

Sir, if it might reach a stage where our entry into foreign markets is going to be frustrated, then we might have to reciprocate as well but one has to have the legislative framework in order to provide oneself with the facility.

Sir, I am not and will never advocate that Barbados breaches the rules. We do not believe in that but there is something call reciprocity and Barbados would certainly believe that if it is carrying out its best endeavours to ensure that we facilitate trade, the same thing would be done for us.

Mr. President, we come to one of the issues with which I know many members of the business community are concerned, which has to do with not only the establishment of standards but their enforcement. Sir, the the Economic Statement of the Honourable Prime Minister did refer to the fact that Barbados has to put in place an enforcement agency.

At the moment, the Department of Commerce is involved in the enforcement and policing of standards to some degree but obviously there is a lot more that we need to do. Therefore, my Ministry will be working on a proposal to ensure that we put the appropriate policy framework in place, to ensure that there is not only the establishment or enforcement of standards which the Barbados National Standards Institute (BNSI) has been doing well for a number of years. There are 44 mandatory standards in place but we

also have to ensure that the standards are enforced and policed.

Mr. President, in addition to establishing that particular entity that would be involved in the enforcement and policing, we must also recognise that at this point in time, there is a great need for significant upgrade of the Barbados National Standards Institute (BNSI), which was established around 1973, both in terms of its physical circumstances and its human resource capacity.

Sir, when speaking to its physical structure, not just the accommodation for staff but when dealing with standards and measurements there are certain types of laboratories that are needed, in order to ensure that the work can be carried out in a sterile and effective environment, and in a productive manner.

Mr. President, this is what some of that funding will do. We have already had discussions with the Inter-American Development Bank with respect to this project and are hoping that very soon we will be able to get approval, so that we could move ahead with enhancing the Barbados National Standards Institute (BNSI).

Mr. President, one of the other initiatives will be the enactment of what is called a Legal Metrology Act. Sir, there is a Weights and Measures Act but the Legal Metrology Act is a much needed piece of legislation which seeks to deal with all aspects of measurement. Sir, as one would have recognised, measurement is not defined only to weighing salt or sugar but there are other things that require measuring, for example, there is a piece of equipment that measures one's blood pressure.

Mr. President, what the Barbados National Standards Institute (BNSI) does, is that during inspection, officers go around Barbados and ensure that the scales that weigh people's goods are accurate. Their work tend to be limited to that area but, as I said, there are other kinds of measurements.

Mr. President, under the Legal Metrology Act, we want to ensure that all equipment which is used for measuring, that there is a piece of legislation that mandates either the Barbados National Standards Institute (BNSI) or some other enforcement agency, to go around and ensure that those pieces of equipment meet the required standard.

Mr. President, I would invite any Honourable Senator to pay a visit to the Barbados National Standards Institute (BNSI) because it would be quite interesting. They keep and safeguard the measurements for the country. These measurements are taken off other measures in other

countries where the standard is set. When taking up this portfolio, I saw it when I visited the Barbados National Standards Institute (BNSI).

Mr. President, much has been said about consumer protection and, as Honourable Senators know, the Fair Trading Commission has responsibility for consumer protection, along with the Office of Public Counsel.

Sir, a lot of good work is being done in this area and I think that one of the very significant and important steps that has been made is that many of the disputes are settled before they ever reach the consumer claims tribunal. We do have a consumer claims tribunal and I am pleased to advise that the decisions that so far have been made under the Consumer Claims Tribunal are posted on our website. Therefore, if Honourable Senators wish to read them, they can go to the Ministry of Commerce's website, www.commerce.gov.bb to see what decisions have so far been taken.

Mr. President, approximately \$4 million has been allocated to the Fair Trading Commission but since we have had quite an extensive debate on the Fair Trading Commission previously, I would not go into it in any great detail, except to say that I believe the sum is justified, bearing in mind the type of work this institution has to do. It is one of the most important new institutions that has been created by this Administration.

Mr. President, I would also like to refer to the area of Information Communications Technology. There seems to be a debate as to who has done what between the private sector and Government. Sir, Government has implemented a number of initiatives such as the SmartStream System, work in the Customs and Excise Department, the Inland Revenue Department, the Land Tax Department, more Ministries now have websites, including this Parliament, where many of the Bills passed or debated are posted.

In the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Department, technology has been implemented there. In the Ministry of Industry and International Business, there is the enabling environment for private sector investment projects, which has been going on for some time. There is the Community Outreach Programme under the Ministry of Social Transformation.
7.20 p.m.

My Ministry will seek to develop information communications technology (ICT) policy for Barbados. This policy will help to determine our actions at the national, regional and international level and what actions should be taken.

Unlike other areas, information communications technology, in my view, will not fall to any one Ministry as different Ministries will have different perspectives on what

is important for them to implement at any given time. For example, my Ministry has no desire to take over the work that the Ministry of Social Transformation does but we feel it is important that there should be a comprehensive policy with respect to ICT initiatives and that will be the focus of our work.

There are a number of initiatives which have been taken by Government in a number of different areas to ensure that these matters come to the public of Barbados. In housing, I am particularly happy with the programme Government has implemented which has allowed individuals to purchase units which they have been living in for a number of years. I believe that is fantastic and I would urge those individuals living in those units to find out the information they need in order to make sure they can purchase these properties.

Sir, we know the price of land is going up each day. I visited Palm Gardens in St. Philip recently and even though they have questions, many of those persons are happy to purchase those units.

The Minister of Rural Development and MTW will do quite a lot of work in terms of roads in Barbados and I look forward to this because we had administrations before who did not think it was important that those people who live in tenancies needed roads. This Government, through the Rural Development Commission, has a perspective that will see those people not having to put plastic bags on their shoes to get to the bus stop to get to work in a clean manner. This is the wonderful thing about this Administration that we must not take for granted.

Finally, I want to speak briefly on some of the initiatives for the youth and for people who are at the risk of being excluded. I make no secret that I have a great interest in St. Philip West because I was born there and I have a responsibility to ensure that the constituents are looked after. Sir, there is a grave need for sporting and recreational facilities in St. Philip.

St. Martin's is a prime example of a place where lots of people go to watch games without the appropriate playing facilities. On Sunday there was the Anthony Wood cricket competition and there was a great response. There were many people watching that match without the appropriate playing facilities and they tell me that they have been waiting for some time.

Sir, I believe in a short period of time their request for a recreational facility will be granted by this Government through the good office of the Minister responsible for Sports. The Prime Minister said he would ensure that every community has an appropriate playing field. After that has been done, we can install the lights and the pavilion.

Sir, unlike Members on the Other Side, people understand that they cannot get everything at one time but would be happy to get the basic facilities.

I believe that Project Oasis is an extremely important one. We say we want to see Barbados move forward and that we should all move forward together. Sir, there is a group of persons called "the boys on the block" but, personally, I am not happy with the term because it helps to marginalise them. Project Oasis has \$800 000 allocated to it which will help to provide training for those individuals in the areas of farming, computer repairs, small engine repairs and bobcat operations. It is my understanding that the Ministry will be sending individuals into the various communities to visit youngsters who would be interested in these activities.

Mr. President, in closing, I would simply like to state that I certainly support the Appropriation Bill and the Estimates laid before us and commend them to this Honourable House.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I rise to move the Suspension of this Sitting. Before I do so, I wish to draw to the attention of Honourable Senators that this is a suspension and not an adjournment. This means that the Senate will start promptly at the time set and we will go straight to Public Business. All Honourable Senators are, therefore, expected to be on time so that we can have a quorum to proceed with our business.

I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow.

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR Miss P. E. PARRIS: Mr. President, I treasure this opportunity to serve in this Honourable Chamber as a Government Senator and to make a contribution in this my first Estimates Debate, and to lend my support to the Appropriation Bill.

I would like to congratulate the Leader of Government Business for the eloquent manner in which he presented the Bill yesterday. In reviewing the Estimates it is clearly seen that these were prepared to assist with the social upliftment of all Barbadians and at the same time give them the

opportunity to be part of the development of this country. I would like to laud the efforts of this Government as it continues to provide a better life for the people of this country through the many programmes outlined in the Estimates.

Mr. President, during the last year, I was working in some of the neighbouring Caribbean islands and one could not help but feel proud to be a Barbadian, after hearing the same sentiments echoed over and over again as it relates to the good governance of this Administration and the development of this country. Sir, this achievement is a result of the prudent management of this country's economy, under the astute leadership of the Right Honourable O. S. Arthur.

Mr. President, this is in contrast to the mortification I felt during 1992 and 1993 while working in these same countries. It was during this period that this country's economic situation was the laughing stock of these persons. Mr. President, it was worse yet, when one tried to exchange Barbadian currency. This was during the Democratic Labour Party's management, or should I say mismanagement of this country's economy. It affected all Barbadians. How could we forget the 8 per cent pay cut, the layoffs and the many persons that lost their homes, as a result of this? Oh, the pain and grief that were caused to Barbadians. In the last financial year, Barbados, like so many other countries, was faced with economic challenges, yet we were able to reduce our unemployment figures.
10.10 a.m.

Sir, the Ministry of Education recognises the importance of training and would be conducting workshops for the benefit of teachers and parents. Mr. President, the adolescent period of a child is a very difficult one. Therefore, parents and teachers should be able to support the children when they are going through this period and not just dismiss them and say they are disgusting as we oftentimes hear. I have witnessed many a parent with a child at this stage becoming very frustrated and saying that they do not know what to do with the child and pleading with teachers for support. Sir, the parent is very often not aware that this child is at a very difficult stage in its life and all he or she needs is love, attention and all of the support possible.

Mr. President, we see some children becoming very violent and aggressive. We also see some who are withdrawn and just want to be left alone. The Ministry of Education is cognisant of this and would be conducting behaviour disorder workshops for both parents and teachers. Sir, I am sure that at the end of those workshops we would have teachers and parents who would be in a better position to deal with these children as they would be able to detect any problems they are encountering. Mr. President, I am quite sure that this type of care will help children in the transition period to adulthood.

Mr. President, we have witnessed many changes in our society. One such change that readily comes to mind is that parents no longer prepare lunches for their children to take to school. A parent with a child at a primary school readily gives the child \$1.00 a week which allows the child to have lunch every day at a low cost through the Ministry of Education's school meals programme. Sir, these lunches are of high nutritional value, but the Ministry of Education is not stopping there. In these Estimates they are seeking to further enhance the nutritional value of these lunches.

This enhancement would be of benefit to the local market as well since 60 per cent of the foods used would either be locally grown or produced. Four of the island's primary schools, St. David's Primary, Vauxhall Primary, Hindsbury Primary and St. George Primary will be provided with flavoured pasteurised milk. We are all aware of the importance of milk in our diet especially in the diet of children. These are just some of the benefits to be derived as a result of the implementation of an enhanced nutritional plan being undertaken by the Ministry of Education.

Mr. President, I had the opportunity to visit one of these centres where I witnessed the preparation of a day's meal. Sir, the preparation of these lunches was done with the highest health standards being adhered to and the best quality foods being used. During this financial year every effort will be made by the Ministry of Education to ensure that the lunches are delivered to the schools early. Classes are disrupted and valuable teaching time is lost when the lunches are late, not to mention the fact that the children are hungry. The Ministry of Education is making every effort to ensure that the delivery of late lunches does not exceed five per cent.

Mr. President, we are living in an ever-changing world. The training of staff in the School Meals Department is ongoing thus giving them the opportunity to be updated with the latest food preparation and food handling skills and with an opportunity to enhance their knowledge and skills.

Sir, occupational health and safety standards are of paramount importance to this Government. The Ministry of Education is concerned with the number of falls within this department annually. In this fiscal year the staff of this department would benefit from training in occupational health and safety standards. Again these are the actions of a caring Barbados Labour Party Government. I would like to implore the staff of this department to take this training seriously and to make full use of the safety equipment given which is done for their own safety.

Sir, I would like to commend the management and staff of the School Meals Department and the school meal centres for the good job they are doing in making sure that the children across the length and breadth of this country are

provided with quality lunches. In order to achieve this, some of them have to be at work from as early as 4.00 a.m.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Education believes that each one matters. However, they cannot achieve all these programmes without the assistance of both the parent and the child. Parents have a part to play in their child's school life and development. A child's school life does not begin and end with the 11-Plus Examination. Parents must sit with their children and ensure that they do their homework. Parents are to attend form level meetings where they can ask about the progress of their children. Parents need to become active members in the schools' Parent-Teacher Association. We often hear some very poor excuses as to why parents do not attend Parent-Teacher meetings. You hear things like "I have my house work to do", "they say the same thing over and over at the meeting" or "we are only going there to hear about fund-raising". I want to say to parents that this is an opportunity for them to make a difference at that PTA meeting. They should go to the meetings and make their input. They have to make sacrifices for their child's development and not leave everything to the Ministry of Education or to the teachers. In any given day most of the child's waking hours are spent at school, and if parents have no contact with their child, how do they expect to know what is happening to the child?

Mr. President, as a former deputy chairman of a secondary school, I am deeply concerned with the acts of vandalism and lawlessness done on the school's property by students. Parents need to educate their children from a very early age that the school furniture should not be vandalised. They need to tell them that when they destroy the furniture it is the taxpayers' hard earned money, and as parents they are taxpayers. We are all aware that if Government has to be constantly replacing furniture, light fittings, desks and chairs that are destroyed by these acts that the money would have to come from somewhere.
10.20 a.m.

Sir, I now turn my attention to the issue of Social Transformation. On page 55 of the Barbados Labour Party's (BLP) Manifesto "Every Bajan a Winner", which is a document of this Honourable Chamber, in the section "Eradicating Poverty through Social Transformation", this Government has pledged to provide computer training and access for low income communities.

The Community Technology Programme is doing this. Sir, to date, 10 Community Resource Centres are in operation across Barbados, providing a 13-week training programme. This module teaches Introduction to Windows, Introduction to Word Processing, and Introduction to the Internet.

It is not every home that could afford to purchase a computer and this gives the children who are living in these

homes, the opportunity to visit these centres. It would also assist them in preparing their homework projects. Access to these Resource Centres is between the hours of 9.30 a.m. to 9.30 p.m. Monday to Saturday. One could not want better, Sir.

Mr. President, since the introduction of this programme in July 2002, approximately 1 121 persons have been trained but of this total, 833 or 74.3 per cent were females and 288 or a meagre 25.7 per cent were males. We are constantly hearing that females are given more opportunities than males but Sir, here is an excellent opportunity for both sexes. However, the males are not embracing it. This is an opportunity for young men to become computer literate and to become gainfully employed. Young gentlemen, this could be your moment in time, grab it! When you enroll in this programme at a Community Centre in your area, you are doing yourself the world of good and are making yourself marketable.

Almost all job vacancies require computer skills. Sir, this is quite evident in the number of persons who enrolled in this programme in 2003. Of the 1 121 persons trained, 702 or 62.6 per cent, were either full-time or part-time employees. They have realised that computer skills are vital to one's survival in the world of work. To be a telephone receptionist, one must have some knowledge of the computer; something as simple as mixing paint is now done with the assistance of a computer.

This Government, through the Ministry of Social Transformation, is coming on the doorsteps of citizens in this country, in an effort at providing them with these skills. Young men do not be left out, get on board!

It should be noted that we also had an 83-year-old female pensioner who has graduated from this programme. Mr. President, this clearly shows there is no age limit to enrolling in this programme. This is an opportunity to all those persons who did not have the good fortune of the EduTech to become enrolled in the programme.

Our senior citizens have made an invaluable contribution to this society and the Ministry of Social Transformation is cognisant of this. That is why it continues to provide for them through its many programmes. Mr. President, the Ministry of Social Transformation operates 13 activity centres across this country, giving senior citizens an opportunity to interact with their peers and to reminisce about old times. One only has to visit any of these centres on any given day and it becomes an educational experience as one listens to the stories told by these senior citizens.

Mr. President, with regard to the items of craft that are produced by these persons at these centres, the quality is very high. This year's Estimates would see an expansion to

the introduction of computer courses to the elderly and the opening of two additional centres which would be of benefit to more senior citizens. I do not believe that as one gets old, one should be put aside or should be made to go in a corner to spend the rest of one's life.

Sir, I am rather confused as to how the Opposition views the Manifesto. We have heard them saying that it is not a social contract but as recently as last week, we heard an Opposition Member in the Other Place contending that a Manifesto is a social contract between the party and the people.

Mr. President, a Manifesto is viewed as a social contract between the Party and the people when it is convenient to the Opposition but then, why am I surprised? Sir, in taking a look at the cover of the Democratic Labour Party's (DLP) 2003 Manifesto, I thought that I was looking at a "Calvin and Hobbes" magazine. Sir, it had a bunch of mock-looking people on the cover. I was not inclined to go any further, as I believe the contents were like the cover, nothing appealing or nothing catering to the masses or to the development of the people.

Sir, this is not the case with the Barbados Labour Party. We take our Manifesto pledges seriously. In this year's Estimates, we will be fulfilling our Manifesto pledges in the area of health. Rehabilitation services will be upgraded at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH). There will be a decentralisation of the ambulance service and an increase in the number of nurses to be trained.

Sir, these are but a few of the Manifesto pledges that the Ministry of Health would be honouring as pledged in its Manifesto, "Every Bajan a Winner".

Sir, at present, the hospital is encountering problems in relation to the late delivery of meals to patients. In this year's Estimates, the Ministry of Health would be refurbishing the kitchen facilities. It is hoped that when this is done, patients would benefit by receiving their meals on time. The equipment and the refurbished facilities cannot function on their own and, therefore, the workers of this department have a role to play, to ensure that patients would receive their meals on time. They should also look at these patients as one of their very own.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Health and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital continue to be attacked when patients are told that there are no available beds. Sir, one of the reasons for this is that we have persons who take their older relatives there and would abandon them, not even giving them the pleasure of a weekly visit, or who would only visit them at the hospital to get that pensioner's National Insurance cheque signed.
10.30 a.m.

They should not even be benefiting from the monies from the National Insurance because they are not caring for these pensioners. After these persons have recuperated and reached a stage where they can be cared for by their loved ones at home, the hospital staff cannot put them on the street but must continue to care for them. During this time, someone who is in need of surgery or some other form of medical attention requiring constant nursing care is in need of this bed.

Mr. President, this is a passionate plea for family members to go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and bring their abandoned relatives back to their care. These persons need your care and attention so do not say you cannot be bothered with them because they assisted you and nurtured you in your early days. It is now your turn to repay them for what they have done for you and give the hospital that much needed bed space.

Earlier I spoke about the Ministry of Social Transformation's recreational activities centres and these elderly persons can be enrolled at one of these centres and give them an opportunity to enjoy the benefit of their labour.

Sir, in this year's Estimates we see improvement to the emergency ambulance service programme. I welcome the commencement of the decentralisation programme of this service with the pilot project starting at the Arch Hall Fire Station. With the implementation of this service no longer will someone living in St. Thomas or St. James have to wait until an ambulance comes from Bridgetown to take them back to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Sir, I look forward to the decentralisation of the ambulance service at the District Police Station in St. Joseph as well.

Mr. President, Senator Stuart spoke yesterday about the low staff morale at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but may I remind Senator Stuart that there would be some percentage of low staff morale in any working environment. Even in a political party there will be low staff morale and I believe that Senator Stuart is in a position to speak to this.

Sir, if the morale is as low as the Senator says it is, nurses would not be volunteering to work with the management of the Hospital in an effort at alleviating some of the problems being experienced as a result of staff shortages. Mr. President, these nurses are committed to patient care and I want to commend them for the good job they are doing.

Sir, in driving around this country I took a look at our signage and minor roads and I was shocked to see the number of signs on one pole advertising businesses. Sir, I have seen as many as nine signs on one pole and it did not

include the legitimate Ministry of Public Works' sign that told you where to go. These signs are being erected in any form and fashion and is very confusing to road users especially if you are travelling and depending on them to give directions.

We need some uniformity and specification if this method is to be used by businesses as a form of advertising. Businesses should not be allowed to erect signs on poles to obstruct the vision of legitimate road users or the sign erected by the Ministry of Public Works. I am used to driving in this country and it confuses me so I am sure that visitors are more than confused.

Mr. President, it appears to me that these signs are being erected without the authority of the Ministry of Public Works and I am calling on the Honourable Minister of Public Works and his staff to undertake a clean-up programme to remove the overgrown bush from around these signs. I am also appealing to all those businesses which erect these signs to first seek permission from the Ministry of Public Works. I believe that the erection of these signs should be done under the supervision of the Ministry of Public Works at a cost to the businesses.

Mr. President, over the years we have seen a number of video stores being operated in this country. I am aware that these video shops provide employment for persons and I would not want to deprive persons from receiving this income that supports their family. However, I am deeply concerned that there are no guidelines in place governing the operations of these video shops. They are accountable to nobody and a child can walk into a video shop and rent any tape and proceed to watch it. I am reminding these video shop operators that they have a duty to the society and that they should not rent X-rated or violent movies to minors because it is defeating the efforts of the Ministry of Culture and the Film Censorship Board.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Home Affairs is concerned with the high incidence of passports being lost both in Barbados and when people travel overseas. Sir, passport holders are not securing their documents and this has resulted in them falling into the hands of unscrupulous persons.

The Ministry has computerised the process and this would minimise the incidence of forgery. This will be completed during the next financial year at a cost of \$1.4 million. Passport scanning would increase border security at ports of entry... This is on schedule at the seaport, and would be completed at the Airport on the completion of the airport expansion project, at an estimated cost of \$1 326 388.
10.40 a.m.

Sir, with these words, I wholeheartedly support this Bill and I am urging all Honourable Senators to do the same.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Deputy President will take the Chair at this time.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Fields.

SENATOR A. C. FIELDS: I thank you, Madam President. It is a great honour and a privilege for me to be able to stand in this Senate for the first time, and participate in the debates in these Estimates.

In the business community, one usually pays a lot of attention to the economic statement made by the Prime Minister which in past times used to accompany these Estimates. Therefore, I really never took the time or the trouble to dig into the Estimates before, as I have done this year. It is quite amazing really to think that for the Government to collect revenue of almost \$2 billion, it literally means that every man, woman and child in Barbados contributes \$10 000 each. It is an awesome responsibility to ensure that this money is used wisely and here I would like to touch on the Auditor General's Report. It was well ventilated yesterday so I am not going to go into great detail, except to say that if there are some \$300 million shown by the Government, as receivable for monies not collected, I just wonder how much of that is a genuine receivable, and how much is uncollectible.

I say that, Madam President, because as a member of the National Insurance Board some 11 years, I am aware that monies which cannot be collected, cannot be written off, not even the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister of this country can agree to write off debt owed to National Insurance. It has to be done by Parliament.

I do not know if this obtains in Land Tax, I do not know if this obtains to the Commission of Inland Revenue but I think it is something that is worthy of note because I wonder honestly, of that \$300 million, despite the best efforts of the officials in this country how much is really collectible and how much is there as a false sum that will never be collected.

Madam President, I would like to touch on some areas that really, in a very practical and pragmatic way, reflect on the ability of this country to grow its economy. The GDP is predicted to grow at 3.1 per cent and for those persons in this community who think that we have not had an economic recovery, I think it is clearly evidenced by the listed companies which are required by law to publish their results in the newspapers.

Over the last several months, we would have seen most of the listed companies publish those results and we would have seen a dramatic improvement in the performance of those companies, including tourism. I know there is one individual who seems, on a daily basis, to try and pull down the results of the increase in economic activity in the tourist market in Barbados. Let me say that I can speak from empirical evidence in my business capacity in my association with two hotels in Barbados, they have had the best two years that they have ever enjoyed since we started them.

While it is true that after 11 September, 2001 a lot of hotels had to reduce their rate to continue to attract customers to this shore. It is also true that you do not think you would have found that the restaurants, the vendors, the hair braiders or the jet ski operators reduce their rates, and those of you who may want to go to a restaurant, either on the South Coast or the West Coast, would have found out that you cannot phone up at 4.00 p.m. and say, "I want to come there tonight", so Barbados has experienced a rebounding of the economy without any question or doubt.

Madam President, I would like to touch on some matters that are very dear to my heart and I will start with the Fair Trading Commission. I wonder if such a complex institution as this is, with such a challenge ahead of it, was started on the right foot. I wonder, if in Barbados, we are trying to invent the wheel, on this occasion.

Those of us who have a long memory, will remember a guy called Rudolph Crook, and another gentleman called Mr. Tintun, I think he was a Burmese, who came to Barbados and set up our Central Bank and ran it in its formative years and the likes of the Kurleigh Kings and the Courtney Blackmans, the Calvin Springers, the Winston Coxes and the Marion Williamses, carrying on a tradition that is enviable in this entire region. It is one of the better run institutions in this region.

I wonder if you would remember that there was an Englishman, I think his name was Jeff Shepherd, who came here and set up the BIDC which has also had an enviable track record in Barbados with developing institutions and developing companies, and providing space for manufacturers, especially in the 1960s, to operate.

I wonder if you would remember the guy from India who came up here and set up the ICB, despite the fact that this insurance company started with a captive market, with all of the Government's business, an institution that is now so envied that you cannot even buy shares in it.

I wonder if as complex a thing as the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) is really designed to cover the Utilities

Regulation Act, the Fair Competition Act and the Consumer Protection Act? I just wonder if we have the right person with the right skills or if it were not better, if it had been properly set up with people with the knowledge that could hand over to those well-qualified Barbadians, who could work with them and come behind them, and create an institution of which both the consumers and the business persons can all be proud.

As I understand it, this entity is supposed to be a fair trading commission, and is supposed to treat to both fairness for the consumer and fairness for the business. In addition to that, I think it came into its own, at a time when it was immediately thrust into utilities regulation. I honestly wonder if the public discussion, and conducting their affairs in the Press with such open public discussion, is the right thing to do. I wonder if it does not place an unfair psychological burden on the Commissioners, themselves, in reaching their verdict on matters that have come before it, with the Utilities Regulation Act. As far as the Fair Competition Act is concerned, they talk about monopolies. They are suggesting that if anyone has more than 40 per cent of the market, it is a monopoly.

My understanding of a monopoly, Madam President, is that there are two in Barbados, the Barbados Water Authority and the Barbados Light and Power Company. I am not aware of any legislation that precludes anybody else from setting up businesses to compete with existing business, other than the two of them.

Since 1994, the Prime Minister of this country has been urging the business community to prepare for an open market, globalisation, and liberalisation, and to do so we have to get the necessary economies of scale. We can only do so by merging, acquisitions and strategic alliances. It is all very well to say that in an open market, even with just the CSME, we have the possibility of having 10 million consumers.

We must remember that other countries in the CSME, are also being told that when the market opens, they have 10 million consumers. The pie is not any bigger, it is 10 million consumers and if every country is going after those 10 million consumers, in truth and in fact, the market is not going to be any bigger than the market we enjoy today, unless we can grow by acquisition, mergers and strategic alliances.

I fear that the perception out there is that the Fair Trading Commission, under the Fair Competition Act and possibly under the Consumer Protection Act, would see events that have businesses participating in growing their businesses to get economies of scale, are detrimental to the consumer, and that those businesses should be punished in

some way. I am not saying that was the reason it was set up. Certainly, I know the Minister does not think so, but it is a perception that there is some tool to hamper businesses and to help consumers. I think they have made a step in the right direction by going into the schools, but I wonder if they are giving them the appropriate message. In telling the people that businesses must refund them their money if the item is faulty or shoddy, I am wondering if they are also telling them that they have to keep their receipt as proof of purchase.

10.50 a.m.

In a large company you do not give a lot of flexibility to the staff that the customer interacts with, you have policies and procedures. Often someone would come and say that they bought an item in the store yesterday but because they do not have the proof of purchase, a staff member cannot necessarily make a refund, so the education has to be on both sides.

Madam Deputy President, having said that, I must repeat that the Fair Trading Commission is a powerful tool and it is certainly something that Barbados needs. However, it should make sure that it understands that it has to perform various functions. In my opinion, when it is acting as a regulatory body it should not be out there in the public domain, a big part of it should be in camera. I do not think it is fair to the commissioners to be exposed to the call-in programmes and all of the other pressure on them to come to a verdict that an ill-informed public which is not legally trained seems to think is the right decision to come to.

Madam Deputy President, I would like to turn to the Barbados National Standards Institute, but I would not like the Minister of Consumer Affairs to think that I am focussing on her Ministry only. I would like to support a lot of what she said yesterday. I am happy to see that an additional \$169 360.00 is being voted for the department because the Barbados National Standards Institute is of critical importance to Barbados and our way forward. It is there as a bulwark to protect consumers from shoddy, harmful and faulty imports. It is there to ensure that appropriate mandatory standards are in place. In a liberalised open market it is certainly going to have a huge impact on the goods that can and should come in here and it has in a way to protect us in this market.

Madam Deputy President, yesterday I was inclined to believe that the Minister was on the payroll of the Pine Hill Dairy and I did not know it. When she was talking about Eastmond Limited and the guavas and the picture not on the juice, that is a very real experience. The Pine Hill Dairy attempted to export a fruit punch to a country to the south of us and one of the items on the photograph was not among the ingredients and the whole container load was completely rejected by that country.

Madam Deputy President, I would also like to share another story with you. In the early 1990s when I was more closely associated with Banks Brewery Limited than I am today, we attempted to export Banks beer to New York. Because we were not allowed to export Banks beer outside of the English-speaking Caribbean, we had to develop a new brand called Bajan Beer. We had to be introduced to the Alcohol, Firearms and Tobacco Agency (AFT) which is the National Standards Institute of the United States of America. We sent up the bottle with a label on it but it was rejected because the font on the script was not of the right size. We corrected the font and sent it back up and again it was rejected because we did not have the deposit for Mississippi. We had the deposits that were legally obliged to be honoured in other States but we left out that one. It went up and it came back again with yet another fault. Madam Deputy President, that happened seven times over nine months. The last time it was rejected was because we had the average content as 33ml. They came back and told us that ml was a scientific designation not an abbreviation and that it required no punctuation mark after it, and it took us nine months to get that label approved.

Madam Deputy President, we in Barbados would accept anything that is packaged in North America and sent here if it is not on the restricted list, it does not matter what it is, what the language is or what the package looks like. Having 44 or 45 mandatory standards are only the tip of the iceberg. At one time the Barbados National Standards Institute was far more well-supported by the private sector in Barbados than it is today. The private sector used to make significant contributions to the Barbados National Standards Institute but I do not think that those contributions are made in the same manner today as they were many years ago. I think the private sector became disillusioned, not with the staff of the Barbados National Standards Institute because they do very good work, but because the process does not come to a definite conclusion.

When goods come in here that should not be coming in here and you complain to the Barbados National Standards Institute, if it is appropriate, they would agree with you that those goods should not be here. You would go to Customs and Customs can be told by the Barbados National Standards Institute that they should not be here but there is only one individual in the Ministry who has the ability or the authority to police these goods and that individual is a very busy individual who has other work to do. What we need in this country is the ability to police the mandatory standards to see that they are being adhered to.

Madam Deputy President, I welcome the fact that there is more money in the Estimates and hopefully that money would be used to employ more people so that these mandatory standards which protect us can be enforced because up until now it is not being done. I honestly believe

that the will is there, I believe people know what they have to do but the Ministry is woefully lacking in the number of people to police these standards that would be crucial to this community as we go forward whether it is in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, the World Trade Organisation or the Free Trade Area of the Americas. I also believe that if that happens, the circle would be complete. If you have the mandatory standards that are agreed and legislated and you have the ability to police them, I believe you would see a renewed interest in the Barbados National Standards Institute, and seeing that appropriate standards are in place I believe you would see a renewed interest with the private sector in supporting the Barbados National Standards Institute.

Madam Deputy President, I would now like to turn very briefly to some aspects of agriculture. First of all I would like to commend the Leader of Government Business in this House, the Honourable Erskine Griffith, for the wonderful presentation he made at the start yesterday, but more importantly for his obvious excitement and enthusiasm in bringing fresh wind into the Ministry of Agriculture. I would like particularly to commend him for the work they have done in engaging the private sector in getting together to have vertical integration in the cotton industry. The evidence over the last two or three years has shown that Barbados can make good money from cotton. I would also like at this stage to commend Senator Francis Chandler for the voluntary work she has done in this industry. Many people do not know the amount of work she has put in to getting us here even in our embryonic stage with the cotton industry.

Madam Deputy President, year before last we had a good crop which was very encouraging. Last year we had a disaster, because the seeds were of very poor quality and they did not germinate properly. The Barbadian farmers planted cotton three times in Castle, St. Lucy. Senator Chandler has taken it upon herself, voluntarily to monitor the cotton from field, to gin, to seeds, and I am hoping that this year we would have a better crop. In fact, there is evidence that we are going to have a better crop this year. The problem with cotton this year is that the early morning showers make it impossible to pick the cotton when it is due to be picked because one may appreciate that cotton has to be absolutely bone dry before it can be picked.

Madam Deputy President, I applaud the Government's initiative. I am happy to say that the private sector oversubscribed the amount of money that was required in capital to get it off the ground. Management is being found and put in place and I look forward to the day when we will have not only a viable cotton industry in the context of growing cotton where Barbados is concerned, but in the context of turning it into a finished garment which I understand can fetch as much as \$700 and \$800 for a shirt in other parts of the world.

Madam Deputy President, over the last five years in my capacity as chairman of the private sector agency I became very involved in a lot of the aspects of business in Barbados more so in agriculture in the wider sense of the word, so when I talk about agriculture, I am talking about fish, about rearing pigs, cattle and poultry. Madam Deputy President, I was very happy to hear the Minister say yesterday that more was being put in place to protect the poultry industry.

Madam Deputy President, we live in a small island way out in the Caribbean where we are not even able to see another shore from our island. If we have a situation with the foot-and-mouth disease in one country, Creutzfeld/Jacob or mad cow disease in another country and the Asian bird flu or the avian flu in another country, where would we get our food from?

11.00 a.m.

I think it is vitally important that every country, especially small island States like ours, protect the right to feed our people insofar as possible with our limited resources. Let us not for one moment believe that if this market were opened to cheaper imports, that we would benefit in the long-term. In the short-term, the consumer might get a cheaper price on the imported meat but in the long-term it would be devastating. Not only would thousands of small farmer be out of work but we would also leave ourselves very vulnerable to any impediment of how to attract business to our shores to feed our people. In addition, I would say that in a very short space of time those very cheap goods would increase in price.

Madam Deputy President, I think it is vitally important that despite whatever agreements we may have, whether it is the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Free Trade Area of the Americas or Caribbean Single Market and Economy, we recognise the importance of agriculture in this country, as it has been recognised in Europe and in North America, where subsidies of over \$1 billion per day are given to the United States of America agricultural community, which, of course, we do not have the wherewithal to give. Were we to give the subsidies to our farmers like those that are given to farmers in other countries, this current revenue would have to be multiplied by millions of dollars.

Agriculture also employs the small farmer. It is very easy and is not capital intensive to become involved. The Land for the Landless Programme has helped a lot in this area but these people are not re-trainable to work computers. To do this would take decades to change an agriculture-based country into a service-oriented one, and while we have many bright, young persons coming out of the University of the West Indies (UWI) who can fall into these service areas with some alacrity and professionalism, we have to be conscious of the fact that we do have many persons over 40 years old who are working the land and

who might find it far more challenging to become part of the service industry in such a short space of time. We need that time, we need that change.

Madam Deputy President, within the past several weeks, there was a concern that we might have to stop bringing hatching eggs from the United States of America because of the avian flu. Where were we to get them from then? We were scrambling all over. I believe that resource was found in Holland but it is not something that could happen overnight and if that could have happened to us with hatching eggs, imagine what could happen to us with the wider agricultural industry.

Madam Deputy President, I would now like to turn to Public Sector Reform. In my 40-odd years in business, managing change of one kind or other has been the most difficult task that I have ever undertaken, whether it is managing changing technology, managing change in the way we do business, managing change from one type of business to another but worst of all was managing a change in culture.

Madam Deputy President, I would say that culture is not in bricks and mortar, nor in the desks and walls of the business, it is something that is inculcated into a person. A person comes into a company and after it is generally recognised that within 18 months to one year, that person becomes part of the culture of that company. Therefore, to change a culture from the inside is an almost impossible task because we are talking about changing the way in which people think and about the psyche of the individual.

I would say that while Public Sector Reform is a laudable effort and that much progress has been made, it has been made almost impossible by the fact that people are asked to change themselves with little outside force. If one were to ask persons who want to change their culture themselves, it would never happen or it would take an inordinately long time.

As one interacts with the public sector on a daily basis, one could see that there is a huge discrepancy in the quality of service that is rendered. One could go to the same department twice on the same day and would meet two different people who are offering the same service but who are completely at variance with each other in how that service could be offered. They might even be at variance with each other with what you are entitled to receive. As I said, it is fresh in my memory where I had to interact with a department of the Public Service. There, one individual wanted a lot of information and had made it almost impossible for me to get what I had wanted. Going back one hour later, I met another individual who satisfied my wants immediately.

Madam Deputy President, there are a lot of good people in the Public Service who go the extra mile to make

sure that what has to be done is done, but there is a great need to re-enforce and to speed up the Public Sector Reform which was started several years ago.

Because one does not criticise a person for what he or she has done the day before, I think we have to understand that people tend to come to work every day and to do exactly what they had done the day before. They would think that they had done a good job yesterday and would come to work today to do the same thing as they had done yesterday.

Madam Deputy President, we are living in times of rapid change and the only way we are going to achieve change is if we are prepared to do something different today. If the normal individual who comes to work and watches a clock, and is only there for a pay cheque at the end of the month, would come to work and would be satisfied that what he did yesterday was acceptable, then the danger is that when he comes to work tomorrow, he will do the same things over and over again. That is why there is such a great challenge in the Public Sector Reform and I would urge Government to recognise this challenge and do whatever it takes to ensure that the reform goes apace.

Madam Deputy President, I would like to commend the Honourable Prime Minister for the initiative he has taken in offering not only the \$250 000 to strengthen the public sector trade team which, incidentally, the private sector matches, but also to commend him for the \$100 000 he has offered to strengthen the Private Sector Secretariat. I am not sure in what form that money is going to come, whether it would be cash or in kind, but the move is welcomed.

Madam Deputy President, in another forum I recently had to say how embarrassing it was for me to have recognised that only 1 per cent of the private sector makes any contribution to help themselves. There are over 23 000 registered businesses in Barbados and only 1 per cent or 200 businesses belong to any organised structured private sector association, whether it is the Small Business Association (SBA), the Barbados Tourism Association, the Manufacturers Association or the Employers Confederation. Of that 1 per cent, only 10 per cent or 0.1 per cent of the 23 000 ever put their hands into their pockets to support any initiatives that need support.

Therefore, I would like to use this forum to call on the wider private sector to support the initiatives of the private sector so that it could be better informed, so that it would give a better and stronger voice in all of the negotiations that are so germane to our future in this country. If more people would put their hands into their pockets, there would be less asked of the few that contribute. The few who contribute are becoming frustrated and have reached the end of their rope

because everybody expects them to give, whether it is to charities, to associations, to organisations or to putting research in place so that the Government could be better informed of the private sector's needs. They are coming to the end of their tether and need support from the rest of the private sector.

Madam Deputy President, once again I want to commend the Prime Minister for supporting the private sector trade team and for going further and offering the \$100 000 to strengthen the Private Sector Secretariat. What I would say though, is that all is not doom and gloom. I still think, in the context of the Caribbean, that Barbados is probably better placed to respond to the Government's requirements, to understand the private sector through two initiatives which are the social compact between labour, capital and Government, and the mere fact that we have taken the initiative. We do have a trade team, even if it is not properly financed or staffed. At least the genesis is there and we in Barbados are trying to do what is right. Therefore, I think that we all should be congratulated on that.

Madam Deputy President, in passing I would like to mention the National Productivity Council and the good work that it is doing. I would also like to encourage unions and businesses not to pay lip-service to performance-related pay increases but to do more.

11.10 a.m.

I would like to encourage employers to open up their books to the unions in good faith. I would like them genuinely to make an effort to understand and use the benefit of the National Productivity Council to start measuring the work that employees put out so that they can be appropriately awarded.

It is easy in the context of manufacturing to measure output in arriving at a pay award suitable for the increase output. It is not so easy in a clerical context but it can be done and there are people in Barbados who can do it. The National Productivity Council has come a long way in this arena and I encourage unions and businesses to stop paying lip-service to performance-based awards, make it a norm and this would prove hugely beneficial to this country.

I was privileged to be asked to sit on the Commission of Law, Order and Justice currently chaired by Sir Roy Marshall. Madam Deputy President, it was an eye-opener. At every town-hall meeting two things were obvious. People in the room wanted hanging to come back and more discipline in school children, especially those who took mini buses and ZR vans to school. When you hear the deviant music that is played on these vehicles, it is unbelievable that in a society like Barbados it could be going on and blessed by the law. I understand there is a loophole in the Road Traffic Act which allows them to get away with it.

I well remember that three or four years ago an attempt was made by the Licensing Authority not to issue a licence to a mini bus or ZR van if it had an instrument in it to play music but it was overturned and, to this day, it is still going on. These school children get off the bus with this deviant music in their heads to go into the classroom to do work in school. This is absolutely amazing and should come to an end as soon as humanly possible. Madam Deputy President, the Commission had a lot of encouragement to try and stop this behaviour.

Finally, a lot has been said about the boys on the block and programmes for these boys but I wonder why we never see girls on the block. Madam President, are you aware that the average student going to university in Barbados is a 26 year old unwed mother? It is almost impossible to get into the University after four o'clock in the evening and an analysis should be done to find out why only boys are on the block, why there are no girls on the block, what could be done to get the boys off the block and into a more productive capacity.

I was heartened yesterday to hear that there are programmes for the boys on the block and hope there would succeed in making these boys productive persons in our society.

Madam Deputy President, I am much obliged to you.

Senator Miss. S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Madam Deputy President, as a citizen of Barbados I am extremely pleased to participate in these deliberations to examine the philosophy that informs the Appropriation Bill which we are discussing and looking at the strategic planning which has gone into the preparation of these documents.

Madam Deputy President, the average Barbadian does not always understand why certain things are being done and with all the change they hear about, they are confused about what it means and what are the implications to their lives. They hear buzz words like globalisation and trade liberalisation, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and so on and the average Barbadian is not aware of the implications or what response he or she may need to make as an individual. I see this inability to respond not only in individuals but in businesses as well where they are not aware of what to do.

I must say that I was surprised to hear my colleague, Senator Stuart involved in the confusion as well because he expressed the views that in the discussion on the fiscal policy and initiatives to build the economy, foreign reserves and keeping the debt down, that he saw a direct disconnect between that and the everyday life of Barbadians. At first I thought he was politicking but later I realised there was a

reason for it. When he spoke about education, he expressed the view that EduTech had accomplished nothing so far, that he saw it as a failure and that it had consumed a great deal of money. I realised he did not have the necessary information and was therefore not able to make a clear assessment of the role of EduTech.

Madam Deputy President, in the 60s and 70s many Barbadians were not aware of the performance of the economy and what it meant to their daily lives. The early 1990s taught Barbadians much when they experienced the tragedy during the Democratic Labour Party Administration. They learnt quickly about low foreign reserves and a high national debt and connected it to homelessness, joblessness and not being able to advance their lives. Today, Barbadians are much more cognisant of the relationship between those seemingly abstract positions and what it means to their everyday life. I would not like Senator Stuart to be confused. I would want him to be aware of those connections so that when next he is talking to the citizens of Barbados, he can assure them that all is well.

11.20 a.m.

I want, primarily, to help the citizens of Barbados to understand what is the background of the initiatives in the Appropriation Bill. Yesterday, the Minister of Commerce very eloquently spoke about many discussions, dialogues and negotiations that are taking place, and the initiatives in terms of intellectual property. Barbadians need to understand why we have to respond in the way that we do.

When Barbados became independent in 1966, what we achieved then was political independence, which was prompted by some visionary sons of the soil coming together and looking at the way forward for Barbados. They presented that thought to the population. The population was in agreement, and then these sons and daughters of the soil went forward and crafted Independence. It was a political independence. They then set in place the institutions to help run, govern and manage the country and this was very important in our history.

Independence took place during the period of the Cold War which was the time when the communist and capitalist systems were competing against each other across the world for supremacy and for control over the markets of the world. And so, the foreign policy coming out of the Cold War during the time when the Caribbean was becoming independent, was targeted at encouraging countries to adopt a particular ideology.

The position that the Capitalists took towards the Caribbean was that these countries are becoming independent but in truth and in fact, they do not have the wherewithal to take care of their economies themselves.

If we allow them to go under, it is going to create the kind of social unrest that will lay the ground for political unrest which will give birth to communism. They shaped a foreign policy that was aimed at every time our economies began to bottom out, they would make an interjection and it would cause the economy to turn and come upwards.

Some of the ways in which this was done were that these small Third World Countries were given access to loans so that, for example, if you were having serious unemployment, you could go and get a loan and start a programme, such as building roads, schools, airports, hospitals, what have you. This would create employment which would allow people to earn. The earning then would flow through the economy, causing business to gain profit and the Government to be able to get taxation. Therefore, every time the economy bottomed down, you would go and get a loan to try to get it to come back.

It was relatively easy to access these loans. Unlike commercial banks today, to qualify you had to be in need. Without radically changing the way in which we do business, without radically changing the way in which we manage our economies, without radically changing how we behave as citizens, managers, workers, consumers, the economy could turn and come back up, without us doing anything differently. And so, the Barbadians built up a disconnect between the quality of life that they experience every day with their behaviours every day and there was no need to make any change.

Not only were we given easy loans, but they were also provided with technical assistance when required. Also, under the trade agreements with LOMÉ, these countries were guaranteed the ability to earn foreign exchange. In truth and in fact, these nations did not have the economic independence where they were able to develop goods and services that were competitive on their own in the international market and able to attract foreign exchange in their own right.

Therefore, the policy was, whatever we produce, regardless of quality, regardless of whether they needed it or not, they would guarantee that they would absorb those things into their markets at no duty being imposed. This was how we earned income, from year to year, allowing us to purchase the goods and services, with that foreign exchange, to build the economy, to provide the roads, schools, to bring in medicine, clothing, bicycles for our children, *et cetera*.

In addition, there was an immigration policy which allowed the excess labour that could not be absorbed, where people could not find work, they could then emigrate to the USA, London or Canada and find work. When they got

there, they could bring a brother, sister, aunt, uncle, father, mother, which eased the social pressure from these economies during that period of the Cold War. This was the era in which Barbados had Independence.

We had political independence, but in truth and in fact, we were not ready or able to carry our own economic independence. Now what has happened, since that time in 1966, as we come into the late 1980s and 1990s what occurred in world history, was that the Cold War ended. Communism no longer was a threat to the capitalist countries and hence, those countries no longer saw the need to prop up or to lift up these economies when they got into trouble.

We then saw a change that then ushered in a new world order that was now going to be governed by the World Trade Organisation rules that now said we could no longer enjoy a privileged position, in having guaranteed access to their market, but we now had to come in and compete on the same basis as anybody else, that we would not be able to access loans, unless we could demonstrate the capacity to pay back. Our people could no longer move as freely in obtaining visas, and permission to move abroad, and to be able to live abroad, in a way that they had enjoyed before.

What this meant for these small countries, was that it was no longer business as usual. It meant that every Third World Economy was now faced with the massive challenge of changing the basis on which its economy operated and performed. This change required more than the Government putting structures and programmes in place. This change towards economic independence needs the active and full participation of every single citizen to make it work, because the change has to go all the way down to the level as to how we behave as citizens, down to littering on the streets.

This change in policy, then causes governments to look at how they were going to craft a way forward, an economic strategy that is going to allow us to provide meaningful lives for our citizens and to allow them the opportunity to grow and develop. Along with that whole change in the trade policy, a whole set of regulations came down governing things like taxation, and governing things like Government procurement, movement of labour, movement of capital, changing the whole way in which we do business. This is the dilemma that countries found themselves in, needing to craft a new way forward to be able to build their economies in a different way.

It means that:

1. There has to be a serious transformation of the economy, and to do that, economies would have to look at developing a mix of economic activity

that would be competitive at the local, regional and international levels.

2. You would need to change the fundamentals of business practice in Barbados.
3. You would have to change the critical structures that support economic activity, and this includes Government departments and statutory corporations. It also includes labour attitudes and labour practices.

These are some of the things that are required, if we are going to be competitive.

How are we going to achieve this objective? If we look at the Appropriation Bill, and if we look at the strategies outlined there, we would see the effort being made to deal with all of those elements necessary for repositioning the economy. To change the mix of economic activity, is going to be critical to identify activities for which there is demand and for which we have some level of competitive advantage.

We also need to look at providing high quality produce and service at the lowest cost commensurate with the quality. We need to aggressively secure local markets and then thrust into the regional and international markets, the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

11.30 a.m.

We have to broaden the entrepreneurship participation of Barbadians and deepen the growth of those enterprises to an optimum size for sustainability and involve as many Barbadians as possible because this new world environment is not going to be necessarily labour-friendly. This new world environment is calling for people to find their entrepreneurial skill to understand that jobs are not guaranteed and that if capital is going to find the best possible conditions to maximise profit they are not going to be necessarily concern with maintaining employment and so on.

They want to be able to come and set up in Barbados but if they hear things are better in Asia they will pack up tomorrow morning and go without regard to the foreign reserves, to employment and to the social dislocation that results behind because nobody is going to be looking out to see if we are going to get lunch, we have to look out for that ourselves. So you have to broaden the participation of the Barbadian into their economy through entrepreneurship and self-employment where possible to help deepen and strengthen the economy.

Madam Deputy President, I propose to go through some of the major things that will be done under the various heads as opposed to focussing on any one in detail so that we

can get an understanding as to why we are doing the things that we are doing and why we have to do them the way in which they are being done. In developing activities that have a demand, the Government has taken a position to look at the transformation of existing traditional activities, things that we have done before but we need to do in a different way. The second thing is to identify new activities, things that we have not thought of but which we have the capacity to approach.

Madam Deputy President, under the heading of Transformation of Existing Traditional Activities, we heard the Minister of Agriculture speak so eloquently yesterday about the various initiatives taking place in that traditional sector. He looked at cotton, sugar cane, vegetable crops, the black belly sheep, pork production and arboriculture in the Scotland District. We see that a lot of support is going into the manufacturing sector to try to help it to become competitive. One of those initiatives is the establishment of an industry research unit which aims to fashion policy to help grow the competitiveness of our manufacturers, because as you know, Sir, we are not as competitive as we should be as things cost too much in Barbados. It would take a really long time to explain why that is so but a lot of it has to do with the speed at which we work. We have not been able to communicate to people that the longer they take to execute a function the more expensive it is. Therefore, the expense of Barbados has to do with inefficiency as opposed to quality. This is something that can only be addressed by changing the work attitudes and practices of labour and changing the managerial effectiveness of business owners and managers.

Madam Deputy President, the industry research unit also has to seek to protect the local market until transformation comes. Yesterday the Minister shared that one of the ways to do that is how you use and apply your standards. The third aim of this unit is to improve product quality. Now this is not the only initiative in manufacturing. The Barbados Industrial Development Corporation has set up a technical assistance programme and an incentive for export programme which was capitalised with some \$15 million with the aim of targeting manufacturing concerns that have the capability for export and to give them access to the technical assistance that they need whether it was technical capacity in terms of production, accounting skills or human resource or marketing skills so that they can improve their businesses and become much more competitive. To date some 101 manufacturers have benefited from this particular programme. A decision has been taken to extend this technical assistance and incentive for export programme to include services. This would be consistent with the policy of Government that is seeing services as one of the areas that we have competitive advantage.

Madam Deputy President, the Industrial Investment and Employment Fund was established to provide financing for the retooling of the manufacturing sector so that those

sectors can become competitive. This support programme was put in place by the Government to help the manufacturing industry to retool and to get new equipment. What is critical is support for marketing. Marketing is probably one of the greatest challenges businesses in Barbados have. Having enough capital to sustain marketing to be able to put a highly developed marketing strategy out to attract more business is one of the weaknesses you would find in both the small business sector and in the larger businesses.

Madam Deputy President, there is a private/public sector initiative taking place to establish a trade and marketing company to promote Barbadian products. I cannot tell you how important that is. From the Small Business Association perspective, I know that is one of the challenges that we have. To be able to get support in marketing is going to be vital, and I really want to commend Government for this public/private sector initiative which is going to be funded by the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. To go a step further, they are planning to have two seminars in which they are going to be inviting small businesses and large businesses to look at participation in the export market.

Madam Deputy President, one of the things I have noted in the business sector is that there is a tremendous need for retraining and for awareness programmes for business people. Most business people get caught up in the everyday management of their businesses and do not take the time to get the necessary information and the continuous training that they need in order to do better business. If one thinks back to maybe 15 or 20 years ago they would recognise that governments had a tendency to put some loans into a fund and to say come and borrow the money and do what you have to do, but without the technical assistance and without training, those loans did not benefit those small businesses and just created another noose around their necks. So I am very happy today to see that more of the financing institutions and Government policy is reflecting the need for technical assistance and training to help those people to build better capacity in terms of their skills in managing their business, which really is to be commended.

Madam Deputy President, the international business and financial services sector is another sector which has been growing at a steady pace. It has its ups and downs, but it represents something close to 40 per cent of the tax intake of Barbados, so you can understand how important it is that we continue to grow there. Part of the Government's recognition of the importance of the financial services sector is demonstrated in the fact that they have just appointed someone in North America whose job would be to go and actively seek and promote the financial services sector of Barbados to gain more exempt insurance business for the country, which is going to be important to our earnings.

Madam Deputy President, we already heard from both the Minister and Senator Fields about the Barbados

Coalition of Services and on Barbados' private sector trade team, so I do not necessarily need to spend a lot of time on them. I just want to say that part of what needs to happen in Barbados is that as businesses we need to grow up and there has to be a maturing in the business practices in Barbados. The establishment of that private sector trade team is a demonstration of that growth because as businesses we can no longer sit and expect that Government is going to do everything, that Government will work on the Free Trade Area of the Americas, that Government would deal with the World Trade Organisation and that Government would do X and Y.

Madam Deputy President, part of our maturing and coming into genuine independence is being able to rise up and take responsibility and to participate and play our part in what we need to do for ourselves to ensure that we are able to build strong businesses. We not only need that maturing among labour, that maturing must come within the business community. The establishment of the Barbados private sector trade team is one such example of our beginning to come into that level of maturity. Sometimes people find it difficult to understand the initiatives that Government is putting in place in terms of understanding why you are doing this.

11.40 a.m.

Madam Deputy President, part of the implication of the World Trade Organisation rules and the changing environment around us, is that Government is going to be forced to lower taxes and to establish a level playing field in terms of taxation. This would mean that the current high level of taxes in Barbados have to come down, to allow the economy to be more competitive and to interact with other economies.

Madam Deputy President, the implication of this is that if we continue to do business in the way we are doing, Government's intake is going to be less. If Government's intake is less, then Government cannot support the size of the public sector. Government will not have revenue to put into activities to stimulate employment and economic activity. If Government's intake is less, it would result in unemployment, and unemployment in the public sector is going to trigger unemployment in the private sector because the public sector servants would not have money to shop, which would mean that those other businesses would suffer and would have to lay people off.

It means that any sensible, thinking and caring Government, is going to put in place a policy that seeks early to safeguard its revenue base for the benefit of the nation, and to safeguard the job creation opportunities and to stimulate that policy. A small nation like Barbados with such limited resources – and bear in mind a very small window of opportunity in which to make this transition – would, therefore, have some critical decisions to make as to where one applies one's resources at this time.

Madam Deputy President, there are going to be social, physical and economic needs within any society and, therefore, when acting wisely and being faced with a situation, it would become imperative for Government to allocate a significant portion of its resources into such activities that would stimulate and build economic activities so that its tax intake could rise and it would have the revenue to respond to the social needs of housing, roads, education, social transformation, *et cetera*.

Government must also protect the availability of jobs and multiply that availability so that people could earn. Therefore, Government's tax revenue would increase so that it could take care of those marginalised and vulnerable persons.

Madam Deputy President, this is a very delicate balancing act and what Government has sought to do in trying to safeguard its revenue and to offset the loss that it would incur when it has to change its taxation policy, is that, Government has been giving, and continues to give its support to tourism, to keep its revenues up. It has also looked at investing in a number of activities that would allow Government to increase its revenues.

Madam Deputy President, Barbados' private sector tends to be relatively conservative and our banking system tends to be extremely conservative as it relates to investments, *et cetera*. Therefore, it means that where there is a deficit in the economy, it has to be made up by Government and would require investment to make it work. Therefore, because of that, Government would have made some investments into some very critical tourism projects, to shore up some weaknesses within the tourism industry. The aim of that investment would be to position that sector so that it is able to increase its foreign exchange earnings which is critical to the nation. Therefore, the Government has stepped in and played that role.

Madam Deputy President, some initiatives work well and some work less than well because Government has no greater protection than a private enterprise engaging in business. Business is always a risk. Government would also be challenged in having to release certain functions in which it now engages as a part of its commitment to the society. Therefore, Government has begun to look at activities in which it is currently engaged, those activities that are less injurious to the population but which have commercial potential, Government has sought to commercialise those activities, to create profits and to reduce operating costs.

Government will still earn revenues from its commercial activities such as the Post Offices, the Airport, the Seaport and in health services, while looking at the formulated policies for health management enterprises, retirement villages, *et cetera*, and using those health services as a means of developing revenue.

We also have, for example, another area in which Government is making that kind of initiative which is in

education. Education has commercial value. Our exercise of going through the EduTech Programme means that we are going to build consulting capacity to be able to help other nations to implement similar programmes. Therefore, our teachers now can start to look at the possibility of getting into private enterprises or engaging in commercial activities through Government, and in offering EduTech consulting services to other nations.

Madam Deputy President, all of these initiatives are important. When Government has an enterprise that is doing well that is earning revenue and has limited resources, Government might sometimes shed some activities that can stand on their own, simply because Government will receive revenue from its profitability. Government would then take those resources that were put into that enterprise and shift it into something else that urgently needs attention. These are some of the strategies that we see taking place and which are designed to help the nation to transition onto new economic activities.

Madam Deputy President, in relation to changing the fundamentals of business practice, because traditionally we tend to be conservative in Third World countries, Government tends to take the lead in terms of economic activity as opposed to the private sector driving that as it does in First World countries, some of our businesses tend to be inward-looking or conservative and the evolution of businesses in Barbados under a Cold War policy did not help to change that.

In many businesses, there was little focus on efficiency and cost of operations because if the product was an export one, such as sugar or rum, one was guaranteed to get a market for it and, therefore, it was not a big problem. If Government got revenue, was able to keep the population going, people got money, and there was a small market in which people had limited options and limited choice, a business did not have to focus on giving value for money, *et cetera*. Therefore, this impacted on how we do business. Not only was there little focus on efficiency and cost of operations but poor customer service was a problem. There was little innovation and creativity, poor business and competitive practices, and very weak human relations management. Even our most successful businesses in Barbados, without some major change in how they do everyday business, would find it difficult to be competitive. If we took some of our most successful businesses and put them, for example, in Atlanta or New York, they would have a difficulty being competitive without making radical changes to the way in which they do business.

Therefore, Government has sought to stimulate a change in the fundamentals of business practice by some of the legislation that they have put in place to seek to regulate

how we do things. A basic one is the legislation that is being put in place to manage the credit unions. At these institutions people are controlling hundreds of millions of dollars and therefore Government has stepped in to make sure that these unions are properly regulated so that they could properly carry out their functions in a practical and safe manner.

There is the Fair Trading Commission legislation, which was already spoken to in terms of consumer protection and fair competition. These pieces of legislation actually force businesses to grow in terms of their practice. I have seen the effects in the small business sector, of how some of our members have taken the time, for example, to change their policies, to look at how they do their refunds, to be more focussed on how they do quality control, *et cetera*, and it has helped them. It may be challenging or difficult but it has helped them to mature in terms of their practice.

The Intellectual Property legislation is another piece of legislation to help us to grow and to do business in a more effective way. I want to commend Government on that initiative in terms of encouraging us to change the fundamentals of practice.
11.50 a.m.

Madam Deputy President, on the issue of broadening participation and entrepreneurship, any growth in jobs in this economy is going to come from the small business sector because large businesses already have a structure that they can easily absorb an additional three or four hundred thousand dollars in business without having to increase significantly their staff complement. Madam, an increase in a small business of 50 000 will of necessity force that person to hire two or three more persons, so any real meaningful expansion of the job base is going to come from small businesses.

Madam Deputy President, I want to say that in a small economy like Barbados, small businesses are important to large businesses and this inter-dependence needs to be understood by the wider Barbadian population. Small businesses not only hire people but purchase goods and supplies in their own rights as businesses and as individuals. Small businesses are the customers of big businesses and, therefore, the survival of small businesses is also critical to the survival of the larger businesses. If there is the closure of 50 small businesses, it will shake down the economy in a significant way and we need to work together in strategic alliances that allow us to maximise what is happening in Barbados that gives us the footing to be able to penetrate into the wider markets of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and the FTAA.

If we are going to broaden participation in entrepreneurship then certain critical things need to be done. This is reflected in the Appropriation Bill and this is why I feel proud of what this Government is doing because it shows thought, understanding, courage and the ability to see

what needs to be done and to do it. As I said, it is important for Barbadians to understand what is informing that policy so that they know what to do in response to it.

Sir, there is more participation in the creative, technological and professional services and so on and we are seeing a growth in the number of persons engaging in entrepreneurship. I want to state that traditionally Barbadians take up entrepreneurship because of need. Barbadians became self-employed because things were hard and this is still reflected in the trade services today and because of this, Barbadians have been reluctant entrepreneurs and some are simply focussed on making a dollar for the moment and not necessarily on how to grow the business.

I went to a fish fry recently and those people could not fry the fish fast enough to meet the demands of the persons who were there to buy but the accommodation for the customers was appalling. Although the person was operating there for years yet he had not seen it necessary to create a more congenial and attractive environment for his customers. Madam, he was making a dollar so building the business to another level to make it successful in the long-term was irrelevant to him. These are some of the attitudes that people bring into entrepreneurship and it must be changed.

I have noticed over the past five years that more persons are coming into entrepreneurship by choice. Many persons have left lucrative jobs or retired early to get the opportunity to express their entrepreneurial creativity because they feel that before they die, this is what they have to do. We have a growing group of potential entrepreneurs who want to engage meaningfully in this economy and Government has the responsibility to broaden the participation and ensure that people can contribute to the development of this country. Therefore, the initiatives that have been put in are helpful. The Government will continue in 2004/2005 to create a generation of new entrepreneurs.

Sir, I am extremely proud of the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme because the officers work hard and long and are able to stimulate young people between 18 to 30 years old. These young people are given such support that if it were available ten years ago, many businesses would be more developed. They receive technical assistance with marketing, accounting, legal problems *et cetera* and there is a mentor, someone who has done well in business to work with them in this area to encourage and guide them. There is also a business development officer who helps with business from one stage to the other and there is assistance for them to obtain loans.

I have seen young people graduate from that programme and take their businesses to another level and are today members of the Small Business Association. I am proud of the fact that they were able to make it thus far and that they have the commitment to build a business.

Two other initiatives which helped to generate new entrepreneurs is the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission which have assisted small entrepreneurs in obtaining loans. These are people who do not have security or collateral but have business ideas and they assist them in getting small loans to take their businesses forward. Sir, they have helped several hundred Barbadians. The Rural Development Commission processed 87 loans in entrepreneurial... They have also engaged in providing the training necessary to help those entrepreneurs do good business in association with the Small Business Association to provide training in business startup, cost management, marketing, computers *et cetera*.

Having stimulated and created opportunities to motivate people to get into entrepreneurship the next step would be support for that growth through the access to finance. This was always a bug-bear for small businesses, being able to access finance because they are often turned down by the financial banks because they do not have collateral. What the Government has done through the various Funds that it has in the institutions of Fund Access, EGFL, *et cetera*, is make available close to \$50 million for entrepreneurial lending, whether via equity or for loan financing and you can find a Fund that will suit you.
12.00 noon

One of the things that would make it very difficult for businesses to obtain capital, is the issue of security and collateral. In Barbados, banks want to have something tangible that they can pick up and cash in, if you should default on the loan, the bank operates on the principle that you are going to default, so I am going to make sure that I have something that I can get back my money.

This is very different from the procedure used by American banks. American banks are not so much interested in collateral. They are interested in cash flow. If you can present a business plan that demonstrates that you can create sufficient cash flow to pay back your loan, then that bank is willing to take a risk with you and support you.

The banking system and the investment enterprises in North America tend to be much more of a partner for the development of their businesses. This is why their small business groups grow so much and are able to provide serious employment in North America, but the methodology used in Barbados actively discourages entrepreneurship.

The truth is, Madam President, you can go to a bank today and get a loan to buy a living room suite for \$3 000 and if you wanted to borrow \$2 000 to start a business, you would have difficulty getting that \$2 000 loan. This is the reality that happens in Barbados and it is something that has to change.

The Government has made an attempt in not only putting the funds in place but in seeking to work with the reality of the banking system, Government has put in place the Small Business Credit Guarantee Scheme. Now this Guarantee Scheme allows entrepreneurs to go to a finance institution, present a good business plan and if they do not have enough security to secure the loan, they are able to have it backed by the Credit Guarantee Scheme up to 90 per cent.

Now, for years, the banking system refused to use the Scheme. So, that meant that small businesses were still locked out from access to capital. They complained that the procedures were too involved, too long, it took them too long to recover their money and they do not want all of the headaches with the paper work and the backwards and forwards. They want to be able to have situations where they can access their money quickly.

To the credit of the Central Bank, the Governor mandated the agency to look at making it easier, revamping how the Credit Guarantee Scheme is used, and making it more friendly for the bank to operate. I cannot say that there has been a huge rush by the commercial banks to use this method. What I can say is that the Central Bank then extended the ability to use the Credit Guarantee Scheme to the credit unions and that is a wonderful thing.

It means that where a commercial bank may refuse you, small businesses can go to the credit unions and get their business loan, and have it backed by the Credit Guarantee Scheme. I am telling you that in a few years down the road, that is going to make all the difference to our small businesses being able to be capitalised in the way that they need to be successful.

In the Small Business Association, we have struck up a strategic alliance with the Public Workers' Credit Union to be able to offer business loans to small businesses and to have it backed by the Credit Guarantee Scheme. I really have to commend the credit union for its vision, foresight and commitment to the genuine development of small people in Barbados.

The Public Workers' Credit Union has not only come forward but, right now, we are completing a Memorandum of Understanding with a commercial bank which has also expressed willingness to use that Credit Guarantee Scheme. The reason why both were necessary is that we have a number of members, who are limited liability companies, who do not necessarily want to borrow money in their personal name, which is what they would have to do if they got the loan through the credit union. They prefer to be able to borrow on the name of their company, so that they have the protection of incorporation. This is why it is necessary to have both instruments available to small businesses.

I am telling you that in five years time, you will see a major difference to small business development in Barbados, because businesses will have access to capital backed by the Credit Guarantee Scheme.

The Government has also been extremely supportive of the Small Business Association and its initiatives. As a result of its financial support and the partnerships that we have engaged in towards strengthening the small business sector, a number of things have happened. We have been able to develop some institutional strengthening so that we can develop research capability to be able to access what is going on in the sector.

Right now, our membership stands at about 450 members, Madam Deputy President, and we have three group associations with an additional 300 members. What we have been able to do through the institutional strengthening provided by the Government, is to be able to build our membership base. We have divided that membership base into sectorial groups. Those sectorial groups come together for three major reasons:

1. To be able to identify the problems that they are experiencing in that sector.
2. To be able to sit and brainstorm on what is needed.
3. To be able to provide solutions to deal with those problems. Some of those solutions help to inform Government policy and we are able to pass that on to Government in the shape of policy.

Those sectorial groups also provide an opportunity for benchmarking and for learning from each other. The groups are looking at things like bulk purchasing and joint marketing. Right now, I am very excited about what is happening in our construction group because they have started training to look at improving quality. We are going to be doing research on establishing some building standards that we want everybody to operate by, thus being able to raise the quality and the speed of construction in Barbados so that we can control cost.

Through the support of the Government, we have been able to establish our Professional Business Advisory Service. Unfortunately, the service is not free because they are all professionals who are offering a service, but they are able to offer it at below market cost. They have been able to help about 32 of our members, who had problems with debt management, who needed refinancing, who needed professional services, and this has been a great boon to the Small Business members through Professional Business Advisory Service (PBAS).

The SBA, has also been working on establishing some financial services. Those are not completed yet but there are just a couple that I would like to mention that we have in place, which would assist the development of small businesses. We have a programme where we can do discounting. This is a problem that the Government needs to address. Small businesses have cash flow problems, and when the Government takes too long to pay a small business person, very often his business is jeopardised. First of all, if he has to pay VAT, he cannot pay his VAT and he incurs a penalty at the VAT level, despite the fact that it is the Government who owes him, because he does not have the cash flow to cover the VAT.

They are not able to pay their rent, or make their bank payments because the Government owes them and there is low cash flow. If the Government delays by two or three months, in the interim they may have to send home people, they may have to give up a vehicle, they may lose the rental on their place. All kinds of things happen when the Government takes too long to pay small businesses. This is something that public sector reform needs to address urgently, because it retards the development of the economy, and the economy cannot afford it in this new globalised environment.

What the SBA has done though, is set up a relationship with a financial institution where if our members have an invoice that they presented to Government and it is taking too long for them to get their cash, we are able to take that Bill and advance them the cash that they need, through this financial institution at a discounted rate. This allows that small business to get on with what it has to do, and that finance institution will collect the monies later.

We also have been able to assist our small businesses who bid for Government contracts, who ever often need performance bonds and security bonds. We have been able to put a facility in place that they can obtain performance and security bonds to enable them to be able to access Government contracts, *et cetera*. We also have equity financing.

Another institution that I need to mention in terms of its commitment and fight to aid small businesses, is the BIDC. I mentioned them earlier but I want to mention them here again. The BIDC offers tremendous support to small businesses in Barbados. They have a technical assistance programme, an incubator programme, and free business services, and they provide training and support to small businesses to show that the Government is deeply committed to the broadening of participation of entrepreneurship and to supporting those businesses.

12.10 p.m.

I would like to commend the Government for its provision in this year's Estimates of \$1 million to help the people who are living with HIV/AIDS into becoming self-employed to be able to create their own work. Madam Deputy President, when I attended the HIV/AIDS consultation I was moved as I listened to the plight of HIV/AIDS sufferers and the level of poverty that they experienced as a result of the disease. The Government's programme of the anti-retroviral drugs has done a lot in terms of extending their lives, but we have brought them back alive to a life in which they are ostracised and a life in which they cannot get employment which creates its own stresses as people try to cope with the isolation, the loneliness, the fear and the poverty that they now face knowing that they are no longer going to die, so how do they cope with this? Listening to that presentation really moved me and I am so happy that Government has taken this step to be able to provide \$1 million to help put in place a programme to help them to re-engage in economic activity, which is to be highly commended.

Madam Deputy President, as my time is passing, I want to move to changing the critical sports structures.

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You have three minutes in which to do that.

SENATOR Miss. S. C. V. HUSBANDS: I will endeavour to do that, but the truth is I can speak for quite a long time.

When I started my contribution I said that 1966 was the year of political independence, but the 21st century brings us to a stage where we now have to craft economic independence. Political independence was something a committed team of persons went forward and was able to craft with just the passive assent of the general Barbadian population; but economic independence is different. For these initiatives to take shape and to have life and meaning and for our businesses to change and become competitive, it is going to require from management back down to the person sweeping the floor to change their attitudes toward their work and to think about continuously improving their processes and thinking about profitability. Profitability is everybody's business.

Madam Deputy President, a story has been sent across the Internet about a problem on an Intensive Care Unit ward of a hospital where at a particular time the patients on a particular bed would die and they could not understand what was causing the problem. It seemed like something supernatural was happening, why would people on a particular bed at a particular time die. When investigations were carried out, what they observed was that the part-time janitor working on the ward would come in and needing a plug to plug in the vacuum cleaner, he would unplug the life

support system, plug in his vacuum cleaner, vacuum the ward and then plug back in the life support system and leave the ward and soon after that the patient would collapse.

Madam Deputy President, when I look at that story, I thought it was so eloquent of what is happening to us in our nation that in truth and in fact as Barbadians we are not aware of how our everyday behaviour affect the entire structure that makes up the economy. We do not make the connection between being late, not producing, high absenteeism, poor customer service practice and theft. We have not made the connection between that behaviour and the impact that it has on the economy. Therefore, if we are going to be successful in transitioning the economy, the Barbadian population has to engage deliberately and actively in this process, otherwise it will not work.

Madam Deputy President, as I end, I want to quote Paul Robson who said:

"We realise that our future lies chiefly in our own hands. We know that neither institution nor friends can make a race stand unless it has strength within its own foundation. In order to succeed, it must practise the virtues of self-reliance, self-respect, industry and perseverance."

Madam Deputy President, I cannot think of a better quote to exemplify what is needed in Barbados in terms of the change in the labour force.

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: And a fitting way to end.

SENATOR Miss. S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Thank you so much, Madam Deputy President.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Madam Deputy President, I rise to make my contribution to this debate on behalf of the Opposition, the Democratic Labour Party, and certainly on behalf of the people of Barbados who I am sure as the Honourable Prime Minister made his presentation would have had a number of questions and a number of issues that they would have hoped would have been articulated further by the Members of both Houses.

Madam Deputy President, I have for a long time observed this exercise from a distance pondering at times if I would ever have the opportunity to participate in such. I consider this moment of participation to be a mere transition point to another place and I have every endeavour to continue my pursuit on behalf of the good people of Barbados in general, but specifically of the good people of the constituency of Christ Church East. I speak not as the representative of that area as yet, but, Madam Deputy President, I assure you that with the inspiration I am gleaning from this exercise it must come to past one day.

Madam Deputy President, the Estimates debate is an exercise provided for through the Constitution of Barbados and it is the time when the leader of our great nation seeks to inform the public how he and his Government propose to spend our money. As one who would sit by quietly or actively and listen to the Estimates debate, I am quite sure that questions must arise. There must be the question as to why Government would choose to spend our money the way it chooses. There must be the question of how would the Government spend the money we give it approval to spend. There must be the question of where would this money be focussed and there must be the question of what would be the result of these expenditures. The question of what would be the result of these expenditures is a pivotal question because you would discover, Madam Deputy President, that in all of these exercises Government does not choose to bring a comprehensive report card to the people telling the people how the previous term of expenditures were accomplished.

Madam Deputy President, I have heard some of the Honourable Senators of this Chamber speak about manifestoes and about the difference in the covering of the manifestoes of both political parties. I am always amused because those who only choose to use the cover to judge the content of a document speak to perhaps the depth of which they choose to go into the heart of the matter. It is important that Government takes the time to tell us whether or not the targets it sets are being met by the expenditures it offers in those areas.

It is important in any enterprise that at the end of the fiscal period the reporting process reveals the accomplishments obtained by the activities, that the reporting process reveals the shortfalls in any of the critical areas and that the reporting process suggests efforts to remediate the deficit in the process.

12.20 p.m.

Madam Deputy President, I want to suggest efforts to remedy the deficits in the process. I want to begin by suggesting to this Honourable Chamber that the exercise of the Estimates must be one where the Government takes the time to encourage the masses at all levels of the society. I would want to suggest that the confidence we place in the Government must be associated with the Government's disposition to give us every opportunity to understand, not only where we are going, not only what we will accomplish but how our lives would be changed for the better.

I heard an Honourable Member say that the Estimates is about political outlook, social transformation, and the improvement of the quality of life. Sir, in the Other Place, I recall that in the spreading of the Estimates, it was noted that there were two pivotal tenets that should be related with understanding the Estimates, they are stabilisation and social transformation.

Madam Deputy President, I would expect the Honourable Minister and Leader of Government Business to elucidate in closing but my understanding of stabilisation is that it is a moment where one seeks to reintroduce normalcy. For example, if a patient is picked up along the way as a result of an emergency, it is the responsibility of the emergency unit to try to stabilise that patient until he or she could reach a position where the transition to normalcy is attained. Prolonged stabilisation has some kind of dysfunction attached to it, I would suggest. I would believe that once one has been stabilised, then the next step would be to restructure, so as to ensure that those areas that are expandable are expanded, and those areas that must be curbed are curbed.

I would also suggest that Government go through a re-engineering process of the economy which allows it to maximise its opportunity to ensure that individuals in the country would feel the impact of what the Government intends to achieve in their lives.

Madam Deputy President, I, therefore, would want the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Leader of Government Business to help me to understand. I do not profess in any great shape or form to have any great grasp on matters of economics. I am just shedding my moments of lack of clarity on the matter and I want to know specifically, and I am quite sure others would wish to know whether or not the Government, now nine years old, is still in a mode of stabilisation or if they have moved onto the stage of restructuring.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Madam Deputy President, I hear people on the Other Side whispering. I expect that to be the case. They have just come into a moment of illumination, and that is the reaction to that moment. Therefore, the exercise of Government in this particular activity is about safeguarding the economic, physical, social, psycho-social, cognitive and spirited well-being of every Barbadian. I understand that it must use its economic base to feed this root instinctiveness of man to ensure that at the end of the day every individual could recognise or could realise the full blessings of what this great nation has to offer.

Madam Deputy President, another endeavour associated with this activity would be to craft an economic environment where every penny spent in this country is accounted for, and that it also achieves maximum social benefit for all. Eight years later, we still find citizens who would have lived and toiled for many years still living in sheep pens. Eight years later, we still find individuals earning at the very bottom of the pay scale because Government has not seen it fit to date to introduce minimum wage legislation.

Madam Deputy President, nine years later into the Administration of this Government, we are still finding that there are individuals who find it extremely difficult to live day after day because while some of us, perhaps those of us who engineer policies, have been blessed sufficiently to have escaped the scourge of poverty. There are those who now sit in the enclaves of poverty, who find it difficult to raise their children and to put food on the table. Therefore, I am asking the Government of this great country to understand that what might have escaped those who make the policies have not escaped those who must live by those policies.

Madam Deputy President, out of this economic environment must flow policies and programmes that protect and promote the economy of Barbados but perhaps most importantly, must promote the children, the adolescents, the young adults and the elderly of the society. It does not matter how air-tight a country's economic policies are, if there is a society in disorder, Government would find it difficult to maximise the benefits of that economic standard. Therefore, it is my humble opinion that we need to be able to understand, in the most clear ways, that if the system is going to work, Government must guarantee us that the system will function at a level of efficiency that is second-to-none.

Madam Deputy President, I remember so very clearly when, in 1994, this Government went to the people asking them to divest their interest in the Democratic Labour Party because this Government had, at the time, rendered the Democratic Labour Party not fit to govern the country. This Government had insisted that they would have offered an alternative that would have been guided by fiscal prudence. As a matter of fact, one of the critical planks of their platform at the time was that they were going to root out the evils of fiscal management of this country and would have put in place, as though it had descended from above, this magnificent rule that would have ensured that this country would have fiscal management, undergirded by prudence. Madam, I am waiting until the other Honourable Senators on that side rise to the occasion and answer some important questions that 23 others in the Other Place have not answered.

Madam Deputy President, if the sun sets on this most wonderful occasion and the question that still bother the minds of the masses are not answered, something that borders on the rim of injustice may well have occurred.

Madam Deputy President, on the economic side, Government must focus on engaging in a comprehensive analysis of all key sectors, so as to determine the level of efficiency, productivity and competitiveness that is associated with the same. I must admit that whenever I hear the Honourable Minister of Agriculture speak to matters of agriculture, I feel a sense of hope that something is going to occur.

We on this Side have no difficulty in applauding the State for the things it does well, for after all, it is only moral and decent so to do. Madam Deputy President, I do not feel obliged to come in this place and repeat what is said to the Other Place giving flight to my own sense of conscience. I accept that governments do good things and some do not but when good is being done on either Side, it should be applauded. There are reasons for us to antagonise the presentation of the State to ensure that we ferret out those issues that the average man on the street would ask us about because it is my obligation as an Honourable Senator in this Chamber to ensure when I leave this Chamber that I can give answers based on the fact that Honourable Members on the Other Side have chosen to respond to those issues.
12.30 p.m.

Madam, the protection and advancement of industry is an important activity. We have gone through a period in this country where there has been more industrial unrest than ever seen before with the exception of 1937. Madam Deputy President, we know that the industrial unrest in this country at present has the capacity to hurt the industry they represent because if the environment for workers is such that they cannot enjoy a good quality of work life, it will impact upon productivity. If workers feel that coming to the job is drudgery and only represents an opportunity for pay, then it must impact negatively upon the sector they represent.

I hope in all of Government's spending that it takes time to contemplate the need to address the labour relation issues in the public sector where day after day there is an element of unrest in the sector. If things are going so well and the Government has so much money to spend I expect that the things that happened in the 1990s should not happen now.

Madam Deputy President, the full development and protection of wealth creation that accommodates the aspiration and dreams of all Barbadians is important. I cannot boast of coming from a wealthy family or from what we would call a well-to-do family in the country. I am proud of my heritage which includes some difficult circumstances. The circumstances were so difficult that I had to forfeit part of my formal education to help support my brother and sisters, ten of us.

My grandfather worked hard in what was then called the Road Board. I remember very well in those days they would tar the road without wearing shoes and would come home with soles blackened by the activity of their labour. Before he passed, he said to me that he worked hard because when the day came for him to move on, he hoped to leave a path that would allow me to escape from this type of labour that I must now go through.

Madam Deputy President, my father is now in his late sixties and he is still working as hard as my grandfather. I cannot boast that my life is so far removed from that struggle although I consider myself to be a man well-educated, a progressive thinker and a master in my profession.

I want to make this point about education again. There is an element of classism attached to the reality of making your move in this society where the distance between what you can dream and what you can attain in that dream is still wide for many of us.

I want to make the point that this Government came into office with every intent to shed those struggles and to create the concept that everyone should be a winner. I hope and pray that at the end of the day those of us who float the concept that everyone should be a winner when you go into the area that you have an interest in, that there are no losers in there. If you happen to find people at the bottom of the ladder, I hope to the good God Almighty that a way will be found to return them to the successes that this country has offered for others. The economic environment must involve the promotion of optimum productivity and must be unrelenting in benchmarking standards of human and organisational efficiency.

The public service of this country is demonstrating an inability at this stage to offer services at the capacity level of the workers. The Honourable Member who spoke before made the point that if you go into any public sector office, you would encounter a level of service providing that unless you have a real need for the service, you would turn away from that office. I must say truthfully that it happens in some private sector areas as well. I had an opportunity to work in the banking system for a brief period and some of the worst service you could get in this country is when you walk into commercial banks. It is not just the public sector but we have these issues in the private sector although they have been able to engineer mechanisms to minimise those types of deficits to better ensure that customers get the best benefit of what they have to offer.

Most of us do business in the public sector, whether to pay land taxes or go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for health care and the service quality needs to be looked at. You cannot achieve efficiency when the service quality is mediocre. The Honourable Member who is involved in tourism is probably chomping at the bit to get up and make his representation on the issues but I want to say that people come to this country as a destination to enjoy themselves. I hope and pray that with all the injection going into tourism that we understand that the real clincher to a tourist returning is the quality of service he receives. I will get to tourism a little later.

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Lowe, I am sorry to interrupt you. I do not think you mean me when you used the word "you", and I know you cannot speak directly to another member so please try and either rephrase it, address the Chair or be more impersonal. Thank you.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Madam Deputy President, thank you, I am obliged for your ruling.

Madam Deputy President, I hope that the Honourable Senator would take heed to some of the pointers I will give to him on the matter of tourism.
12.40 p.m.

When we look therefore at the economic side, we must then move on to what the Prime Minister referred to in the Other Place, as social transformation. I want to make the distinction here, that there is a difference between achieving social transformation and social comfort.

Social comfort is where the Government put mechanisms in place that match the conditions of those persons in their social locations. For example, what creates social comfort for those at the top is going to be very different, in proportion to what creates social comfort for those at the bottom, because all that the bottom perceives to be needing is a toilet, a well dug.

I heard the Social Transformation Minister walked around and boasted about the things that he is doing to create social transformation, but he is creating social comfort because one's state of life only becomes transformed when that individual has the capacity, through empowerment and enablement, to transform those circumstances himself. It is the concept of giving an individual the hand up. Once you get a hand up and you are given the appropriate support, you can move on and then accomplish whatever level of social transformation, or transforming you need.

I believe that if you look carefully at the mandate of the Ministry of Social Transformation, you are going to find that there is no clear representation of a philosophy of social transformation. What we have basically done is create another social welfare arm in this country. I want to make it very clear, that we do not hold the Minister of Social Transformation responsible. We hold the framers responsible for that, those who would have engineered the concept.

If we are not alleviating poverty, and there can be no measures to suggest that it has been alleviated in the lives of those who have made contact with the Ministry, and there is no report to suggest that in the year 1994, there were x number of poor people in this country, and in the year 2004 there has been a dramatic decline, what is the threshold that

you are using? We want a report. We want results or else, we are going to have a hand-out Ministry that enables people to what they call, "learned helplessness". We want to move from that stage in this country. We have to make the distinction between social comfort and social transformation. On the social side, the Government must fix its gaze on working to improve the life chances of others.

I remember the time, and I heard my colleague make the point that before the current political climate, when there was the late Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams and the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, those men understood moving a society, not creating comfort.

When people get comfortable where they are, chances are they will stay there, but those men understood the importance of creating a platform where the masses of people of this country could see a path to get from point A to point B. Kudos to the late Sir Grantley Adams for starting the process and the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow for continuing.

I am saying if that could have been accomplished then, what is the road map that we have now and where is it leading us and how can we be guaranteed that our destinations would be fixed sufficiently where we can realise self-actualisation in this life in terms of where we are going. I want to say that before you can assemble any social programme, you have to understand what the key tenet of a social care programme is all about.

Number one is education. I heard Senator Husbands and others speak glowingly about education. Let me say that Barbados has boasted one of the best systems of education the world over. Now, education is one of the major consumption of the Government monies and I want to spend some time on education. Madam Deputy President, education is the engine to achieve:

1. The economic good.
2. The social good.

I want to focus on the social good, because it is my view, it is my contention that as long as we understand the connection between education and social progress, we will be able to carve out an economic path to accommodate the needs associated with such, and of all the money spent on education, \$30 million more is being injected into EduTech.

Now, let me say this very clearly. The Democratic Labour Party has never condemned the concept of EduTech. It is a fantastic concept. We have never denied that, what we have suggested is that the current path of EduTech will not permit it to accomplish its maximum social benefit to this country and we want to reiterate that in this debate.

When it came on stream, everyone understood it to be a technologically driven endeavour to put technology in schools. As a matter of fact, there was a big shebang made about the influx of laptops. If after \$300 million and the only thing I could boast about as a substantive measurable outcome is putting laptops in the hands of children, then I must ask myself if I have maximised the benefit. We are refurbishing schools, and that must be associated with the maximum social benefit of the project.

I believe that someone is suggesting also, either in This Place or the Other Place, that part of the offshoot of this concept, is putting the technology resource centres. Wow! Have you gone to a resource centre since the opening? Have you measured the extent to which the resource centres can link with schools to accomplish the objective of the EduTech programme? I would like to know the link, because there is no interconnectedness in terms of the technology. They are stand-alone sites, I am sure, and I speak under correction. If any teachers from the various schools that those resource centres represent are in those resource centres, complementing what the schools are doing to make sure that there is continuity in the learning, I am wondering.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Please, could I have silence. Dr. Lowe, I like your rhetorical style but this is not a question and answer session. Please continue, Senator Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: I am much obliged.

I want to know whether or not, with the injection of this \$30 million that the public can be assured there will be a comprehensive progress report as to what is being attained at this time, as to what targets have been met, and about the projections for the completion. I would like to think, and I do not boast to be any master of technology in any way, shape or form, that the generations of technological platforms are short lived. If you are going to tell me that it is going to take an entire decade to accomplish this objective, by the time it is accomplished whatever platforms were put in place at the beginning would now become obsolete. As far as I understand there is no attachment to the programme that really teaches any individual how to create the software or how to repair the hardware. These are important elements that would buttress the success of the programme because we do not only want our children to be users of the technology, we want them to be part of the building of the technology, that is the point I wish to make in that regard.
12.50 p.m.

Madam Deputy President, let me move on. I accept the advice that this is not a question and answer session. While we are busy trying to elevate the greatness about education, I want to make the point – and one of the Honourable Senators made the point earlier – that right

now many of the schools of this country are becoming the flagship for disorder, for violence – we are talking about education and its relationship for the social good – drugs, chronic performance problems and a declining international literacy rating. Let me throw in there that if the statistics on HIV/AIDS are true, and I believe they are, they are now becoming a suppository for HIV infected persons, that relationship is logically formed.

Madam Deputy President, let me throw in there what an Honourable Senator talked about in terms of the relationship between the transportation to and from school and the behaviour of our school children. Madam Deputy President, we have to focus some of our attention on seeking to alleviate these problems. There has been much discussion in this society about the problems facing schools, but I have not heard a modicum of explanation out of the Honourable Minister of Education, so we are waiting for the Minister of Education to come forward and tell us what the Ministry plans to do to arrest these social viruses that are having a negative impact on the result of learning in the school system.

Madam Deputy President, perhaps part of that \$30 million need to be spent on trying to put systems in place that would not only be preventative in nature but would be interventionist because there are things that now exist in which we must intervene and there are things we do not want to occur. There are teachers in the school system who are afraid for their well-being because of the kinds of violent and out-of-control behaviour expressed by children in the schools. That is a fact of life. So while we go around trying to flaunt an EduTech Programme and trying to achieve a goal that seems to be elusive, our school grounds have now become the playgrounds of rebels.

Madam Deputy President, I am a Barbadian and I have travelled and Barbadians all over the world have been recognised for their intellect, their manners and their deportment, a tradition that I never want to see go. Therefore, I am saying that in all of the platitudes around education, we have not really penetrated the real issues and we need to go and get to the heart of it. If all of us are conscious Barbadians and we are not bound by political partisanship, we must therefore rise up and join hands and try to save our next generation.

Madam Deputy President, teachers in Barbados have taught for years at salaries much more meagre than what they are getting now and they were proud to be a part of the profession, but all of a sudden they do not wish to be and are leaving the country to go to other places to work, even though some proclaimed it to be an international trend. I want answers on that. I had hoped that the Honourable Leader of Government Business in this Honourable Chamber would have at least paid a courtesy call on those issues.

How much more time do I have, Madam Deputy President?

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You have 20 more minutes.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Oh, lovely! I have a lot to talk about.

There is a connection between the economic good and the social good. In looking at education as one of the connectors of that social good, it must be able to allow us to instil in our children the values of our culture, self development, understanding who they are, where they are going and healthy living so that they can promote healthy lifestyles and take on board some of the cautions given by people in the medical profession and in law enforcement because at the end of the day an unhealthy next generation would put more struggle on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which has been in labour for some time and it has not been able to deliver. I do not know if it is pre-labour pains or post-labour pains, but it just cannot deliver. One would expect that any ease in delivery would perhaps occur best within the confines of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but it cannot.

Madam Deputy President, we need to understand that once we promote or raise the bar of self-worth among our young ones out there – I interact with them all the time. I travel frequently throughout my area and other areas and I understand that a lot of young people out there are in great struggle. Part of the resentment they have is not toward individuals as much as it is toward the system because they feel there is a distance between what the system has promised and what it has delivered to them, that is why they are waiting on Project OASIS. Believe you me, Madam Deputy President, we have a lot of young men on the block in my area.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: What is my area? Thanks for asking Senator Eastmond, my area is...

MADAM DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Silence, please, may I have silence. Please continue, Senator Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: There are a number of young men and young women out there who are on the block. I would hope that this programme has the capacity because of its vision to penetrate the real issues that underlie the disconnection between the formal system of the society

and these young people. They are not bad people, they need focus, support and the ability to be able to connect to the system other Barbadians are connected to. They need to feel as though they have a fair chance to survive in this society. They need to know that the system their forefathers and their fathers have endorsed as a democracy is a system that is fair to them. Therefore, I implore the Government to spend time thinking through the paradigm of Project OASIS because Project OASIS is only responding to a need created under present circumstances. If we get a grasp on what is happening between the system and these young people who have somehow fallen off the system I believe we would be able to make a significant impact on that. Education teaches us responsibility and accountability.

Madam Deputy President, I want to know when will the Government of the day respond to the issues raised on the St. Leonard's School. I do not intend to spend a protracted amount of time there but it deserves a stop off. I have the greatest regard for every single member in this Chamber and I know that at the end of the day they would rise to the occasion and they would help the country understand why should such questions be left unanswered. If you are asking the young men on the block to be responsible and accountable, they will take their lead from those who lead. Therefore, it would mean that after all, they would expect those who give advice to live by the same advice given.
1.00 p.m.

Madam Deputy President, we have seen this document entitled the Auditor-General's Report, and so far what I have surmised is that here we have a case where the Government sets rules of engagement relative to the tendering and the awarding of contracts. Madam, the same Government who sets those rules is the leading culprit in the breaking of these rules because individuals were given contracts and some of the important measures that were to be put in place to ensure that the Government receives service for pay, were not in place.

As we all know, the contract was awarded to an individual who makes no bones about his political allegiance. We also know that individual had to be dragged off the project and the project had to be rescued...

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: On a point of order. Madam Deputy President, the Honourable Senator is misleading this Chamber. The contract at the St. Leonard's School was not awarded to an individual. The Auditor-General's Report speaks to the contract being awarded to a limited liability company.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: A corporate person, therefore, an individual.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Well, if it speaks to a corporate person, a corporate person cannot be dragged off

the premises of a work site. A corporate person is a legal fiction.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Madam Deputy President, I regret that the Honourable Member does not fancy hyperboles, perhaps he would... Madam Deputy President, let me move on.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I think it would be better for you to do so, Senator Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: The individual who represents a corporate entity, who received the contract, had to be asked to move on, as you have so honourably asked me, and the company which has now moved in to rescue the project, has recently been dragged through the coals.

This company was able to go and pick up the pieces of a lagging, lingering, limping and loosely-managed situation, to bring life, hope and conclusion to the project. Therefore, let us not allow the sun to set on this debate, having gone through 23 Honourable Members of the Other Place, and let us go through this Place, without one of the Honourable Members getting up and responding to the Auditor-General's statement. I believe in the context of trying to suggest that we should give the Government every opportunity to spend our money. We should also demand that Government give a detailed account of how that money has been spent.

Madam Deputy President, I want to suggest another tenet of the structure of achieving that social good through our economic policies would be that of health. Madam, my colleague has made a very explicit contention about health, suggesting that it should be shifted from the "medico-centric" model, to one that is now more holistic in being, one that takes into account that health care is not simply about the absence of diseases but about creating an environment where individuals in the country can come into contact with the best total wellness concepts and practices. That is why the contention that physical education... I do not know why we are pulling ourselves off to what is mandatory and what is not. The fact is that most medical experts in this country who deal with pediatric care have been advising that we pay attention, not only to the dietary practices of kids but also to the recreational routines of those kids.

Therefore, in looking at it from a holistic perspective, it is our contention that any restructuring or reforming of health care must take into account from the cradle to the grave. We have to look at neonatal care, at prenatal care, at pediatric care, at adolescent care, *et cetera*, because that is important in helping the country to curb the need to respond to so many preventable illnesses. As soon as those systems are put in place, it would help to curb the occurrence of sicknesses in those areas.

Madam Deputy President, in 1997, I have had the privilege of being a consultant in the Ministry of Health at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, where I was providing people management services in the area of stress management, *et cetera*.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: I will swipe that glee away. Madam Deputy President, after going through the process, there was a litany of explanations by nurses, orderlies and ancillary persons as to why the conditions of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital existed. At the heart of those explanations was the incapacity of the institution to pay strict attention to good human relations and good people management services and practices.

Madam Deputy President, whenever we talk about health care, we talk about what is or is not working but I am saying that one of the reasons why services will dip in their quality is when the persons who provide the service have lost contact with the satisfaction of practising their profession. This is something to which we have to pay attention so that those who manage, or the Board that is now in place to manage or proposes to manage the institution, must understand that it is not a bureaucracy they are managing, it is a place that is defined by constant human interactions and other dynamics. They must understand that at the end of the day what would cause it to rise above its extended labour is the fact that we must collectively take people into consideration, and that there is no social class in the system where doctors feel that they are better than anybody else. Those persons who are responsible for human relation management must also understand that they need to put the kind of systems in place to change the culture of the institution because the culture of the institution is at the heart of what obtains in the practice of that institution.

Madam Deputy President, we also need to do the necessary research to understand what is happening that is causing nurses and other practitioners to be leaving the system. We have to stop speculating and do the definitive research, empirical study and otherwise, that would allow us to understand the connection between the disconnection of the people from the system.

Madam Deputy President, the health care system in this country used to stand as a beacon in this region or in the hemisphere.

Asides.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Do I need to ask for protection, Madam Deputy President?

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Just continue, Senator Lowe.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Madam Deputy President, one cannot expect to speculate on the reasons why people are leaving. I am saying that there is much speculation in this country. We are hiring high-powered consultants to do everything and at the end of the day, they are not producing the kinds of results that could be definitively represented in the public's domain.

Therefore, I wish to make the point that the Government needs to do a comprehensive research analysis of the system. Government needs to look at the systems of the health-care providing institutions, to see what is working and what is not working. They need to look at the changing of the profiles of the patients of the institutions to see what new demands are being placed on the health care system. They need to look at those persons who are coming in to provide services and they need to look at their options for treatment.

1.10 p.m.

I need to make the point that because our view is a holistic one, they perhaps need to begin looking carefully at alternative medicine as one of the modalities at the institution. At the end of the day, we must do whatever is necessary to ensure that those persons who have given their sweat and blood for this country's survival must not die in subhuman conditions, that they must have every single opportunity to access services that are responsive to their concerns so that they will be able to enjoy in their latter years, the best possible quality of life.

Madam Deputy President, all of us are journeying toward those latter years and the systems we put in place now will serve us later. I want to suggest that whatever we do, let us do it with a good conscience so that twenty years from now we can look back and say we did the right thing.

Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Member, you have five more minutes before the sun sets on your presentation.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Madam Deputy President, as I bring this presentation to a reluctant closure, I want to say that I believe, at the end of day, that we are all working towards a common good. No man or woman in this country should be penalised for their ideas, opportunities or wealth. This country should be a place where anyone can pursue his or her dream and have the grand assurance that every decision made by the State is made with his or her interest in focus. I want to suggest to all honourable men and women in this Chamber that whatever we do, we should make sure that we build a betterment for the next generation as well as for ourselves as we journey to the end.

I am much obliged.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Madam Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.20 p.m. today.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Madam DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR THE HON. J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, I believe this is the tenth occasion that I have had the privilege and good fortune to reply to an Appropriation Bill in this Chamber. I must admit that this is one of a number of things which make me feel very proud as a Barbadian to be able to speak to these Estimates.

Let me begin, like all the other Honourable Senators who did so to heartily congratulate the Leader of Government Business in the Senate for the eloquent way in which he presented the Estimates. I believe, certainly for me, over that ten-year experience, it has been one of the most outstanding that I have ever observed.

Mr. President, we also heard the response from the spokesman of the Democratic Labour Party, Senator Stuart, and the only thing I can say is that in his presentation, he drifted far and wide. Sir, he drifted so much that he even drifted into the Tobago waters. I am not quite sure what he caught there, but it is the one and only thing that I can remember in terms of his presentation. It is remarkable that not ever for a second, did he collide with the Estimates. I believe that we were all taken up by the philosophical constructs and so on and maybe at some point in time, some people may be able to extrapolate them, but I had a certain difficulty.

I really could say the same for his colleague Senator Lowe. He waxed warm, Sir, and from time to time he sought to put the best political spin he could on matters that would best suit the position that the Democratic Labour Party would want to take with respect to the matters before us. Nobody can envy him for that, so I may say that he spoke tangentially to the Estimates.

Sir, in furthering my presentation, I will just make reference to one or two other contributions. One particularly from Senator Sir John Goddard, where he made reference to the Pan African Commission, and I believe, it behooves me if I have the time to speak to that in some detail and to Senator Fields, who, in his presentation also commented on the question of public sector reform, as he saw it. Again, as

you know, Sir, it is an effort that falls under the Office of the Prime Minister and so, I do have some responsibility for that.

Sir, I started my presentation by saying that I felt good as a Barbadian when I listened to, certainly the Leader of Government Business, as he presented the Bill, and to recognise the sorts of achievements that we realised during 2003-2004. It has been nothing but a remarkable performance on the part of this Administration, through very difficult circumstances.

I believe if we had a similar level of performance in 1991-1992, everyone within the Democratic Labour Party would have been hailing the praises of their then Leader. Sir, that was not to be, and what is also interesting is that what we had undergone between 2001 in particular, and 2002, was significantly more difficult from the 1991 period from an economic perspective. Yet, the result that we have in 2003, has been one that is very outstanding and we must be honest with ourselves to say so.

When you can set targets for yourself, and then exceed those targets, those things just do not happen by happenstance. They happen because of hard work. You are talking about an Administration that said to itself at the beginning of the current financial year that we would have recorded a deficit in the region of 4.6 per cent.

We recognise that the economic stability of this country is paramount and we, as the Barbados Labour Party Government, will do nothing to undermine that long-term stability of our country. We recognise that deficits of the order of 4 per cent and 5 per cent cannot be sustained, and what did we do?

We sought to show fiscal prudence, so much so that rather than recording deficits to the level of 4.6 per cent, we expect that at the end of the current financial year, we will be talking about 2.6 per cent or 2.7 per cent, a remarkable performance and one that must not go unnoticed.

May I also say to you, Mr. President, the performance of this Administration is one that is clearly understood by the people of Barbados. We failed, sometimes we forget that only last year we had an election, and, believe you me, what we had was a vote of confidence by the public of Barbados in this Administration. It virtually said, "you took us through difficult times and we believe you deserve yet another term".

This confidence was well placed, Mr. President, that is why the public can now be the beneficiary of the kind of report card that speaks to a deficit now of 2.6 per cent, and 2.7 per cent.

It is not our intention to sit on our laurels and remain there. May I say to you that we will continue to do the right thing. We will continue to make sure that there is always a delicate balance between our fiscal stability and the economic transformation and re-engineering of our economy.

Much has been said, Mr. President, about the growth that we had in the economy for 2003, 2004 which I believe will come in the region of 2.1 per cent. This, of course falls below what we believe is desirable in the region of 3.5 per cent. We are happy to note that both tourism and international business continue to perform well during the year. I, like Senator Fields, am also happy to note that in the area of manufacturing, we are already seeing the benefits of our efforts. As you know, a tremendous amount of effort has been made to put some of our companies in a position to compete both in the regional and international marketplace.

The Government continues to have confidence. We have been giving on a yearly basis, some \$5 million though the BIDC and I believe this year, that has been increased. We are confident that once those companies are able to re-engineer, and change their processes, they can compete within the region and beyond.

Mr. President, I have to comment that some weeks ago, I believe I heard Senator Stuart speaking about the Standard and Poor's report and the report card. I can say to him today that we were satisfied then that Standard and Poor's was not using the kind of information that would have led them to the right conclusions when they put out their most recent pronouncements, but certainly the Institutional Investor has got it right now, and I am satisfied that by the next time they have to make a comment on Barbados' current position, they would find favour with the way things have been going.
2.30 p.m.

Mr. President, unemployment in our country in many respects has stabilised around 10 per cent and continues to move in the right direction. During the very difficult period of 2002-2003 we saw some increase, but it certainly was nowhere in the region of that which we saw back in the early 90s when we went through a period of recession. Ours was a case of making sure that the people of this country were kept in employment. That is both a credit to the Government, to the private sector and to the social partners because the unions were part and parcel of this as well. It is a credit to the unions that we have set up for ourselves the social partnership and have been able to achieve what we have achieved, which cannot be taken lightly and must be underscored because the Government could not have done it alone, so they all must be congratulated.

Mr. President, our unemployment level in Barbados is about 10 per cent, and the big industrialised country

Germany is at 9.5 per cent, so may I say that we are doing well, but we want to see that figure come down even further. Mr. President, I just want us to understand how much we have been able to achieve when we compare ourselves with others. I spoke earlier about the whole question of the deficit which stands at about 2.6 or 2.7 per cent but when we look at other industrialized countries, the United States of America has 4.4 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, the United Kingdom 3.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, France 4.2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product and Germany 3.9 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, you can see and understand that our achievement has been significant and has to be underscored. Mr. President, we are satisfied based on the Estimates before us that we will continue to see growth in the coming financial year, providing all things remain equal, there is nothing which we cannot anticipate coming around the corner. We can expect to see growth in the next year as well.

Mr. President, the achievement of our country over the last year is the report card to which Senator Lowe refers, and as far as the management of our economy is concerned, we would have to be given a high grade for our performance in 2003-2004.

Mr. President, I turn quickly to look at some of the areas that fall under my responsibility in the Prime Minister's Office. I want to speak a bit on Subprogram 70: which looks at activities like compensation to churches, the Community Independence Celebrations Secretariat and the 375th Anniversary Celebrations of the City of Bridgetown. With respect to compensation to the churches, I have had occasion recently to speak to a settlement after much discussion with respect to the Moravian and Anglican churches. For the benefit of fellow Senators the compensation to churches has to do with the repairing of properties which were formerly used as school buildings which are now handed back to the churches. As one would expect, one would have to hand back those buildings to the churches in a state of proper repair after having used them for such a long time. This meant having discussions with the Moravian, the Anglican and the Methodist churches to arrive at satisfactory settlements. We have been able to bring closure to the buildings belonging to the Moravian Church and hopefully Cabinet would take a final decision to bring closure to the others. There are only two remaining with respect to the Anglican Church and we are hoping to address those in the coming financial year. There are also two remaining with respect to the Methodist Church that are being considered for compensation and we will continue to have discussion with them at least to bring this whole issue of repairs to the buildings that were used as schools to a closure.

Mr. President, since the 375th Anniversary Celebrations of the City of Bridgetown started in July of last

year with an official launch, we have been having a number of monthly concerts where we were able to recognise a number of outstanding Barbadian artistes from as far back as the early 60s and 70s. At this time, Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to thank corporate Barbados for the assistance they have given to us to make these events possible. We are hoping that the closing event in early July of this year would be befitting the City of Bridgetown and the importance and the significance of the 375 years of celebrations in terms of the City.

Mr. President, may I say that this event will also require the assistance of the public particularly corporate Barbados. Senator Fields said this morning that there are only a few agents of corporate Barbados who would be willing to be involved in helping with such activities. That is true, Mr. President, because we seem to be going back to the same people all the time, but that is the way things are. However, I am still asking corporate Barbados to help us to have a tasteful climax to these activities.

Mr. President, there are a number of activities that we are going to continue in terms of our community independence celebrations. The upcoming year will see us having more training with respect to the committees as well as the parish ambassadors committees. There will be the official launch of the Community Independence Celebrations, our parish and talent shows and our Lighting Ceremony.
2.40 p.m.

Mr. President, with respect to the Lighting Ceremony, we are hoping to extend it to include places such as Speightstown, Six Roads, Oistins and Holetown, to provide a visible representation of our nationhood. It is important that we take that Lighting Ceremony from the City and move it to such places. It is a question that our Independence becomes a mind set that pervades all Barbadians. We want to do these things, not only at Independence but throughout the year. Our focus must be on all areas in terms of promoting these things for them to happen both at the community and national levels.

Mr. President, this year will also see us looking at acquiring the services of an events coordinator who can plan key events. That, in a sense, will free up a lot of the field officers for them to be able to go out and work with the communities. It will allow them to have a greater focus for the community support programme.

Mr. President, we will look at restructuring the Parish Ambassador's Programme. We are hoping that we can see that starting as early as February. This would allow the Parish Ambassador not only to be seen as a contest at the end of the year but that greater emphasis would be placed on the project associated with that programme.

Mr. President, the Mini Parks Programme has so far been an outstanding one. It is our hope that we would be able to carry that programme into every parish in Barbados. This would be done through the Parish Independence Committees and other Government agencies such as the National Conservation Commission, the Ministry of the Environment, *et cetera*.

Mr. President, the Community Independence Celebrations Secretariat, as I said, will continue to focus on ensuring that the importance of Independence is something that is understood and appreciated by every Barbadian.

Sir, within the Department of Culture, recognising that the management of our cultural development is an extremely sensitive thing, and that culture is becoming more and more prominent in the 21st Century, the cultural section has now been restructured and very shortly, we would be seeing a cadre of persons who will have a full understanding of all the issues that drive culture and who are able to coordinate, research and plan, to be able to advise us as a Ministry and as Government, as to the appropriate action which should be taken on a number of current issues.

Mr. President, the new cultural section will primarily focus on policy and research but it will also take into account the mandate for the cultural section in terms of advising and formulating our strategies. These, of course, will be aimed at promoting cultural diversity.

We have to work with other countries in a way to ensure that when we talk about our cultural products and services, that they are kept in a way that we do not see cultural goods and service being treated in the same way as other goods and services. Therefore, we will continue to attend those international fora where we will make sure that the cultural products of Barbados and other developing countries, are not viewed in a way that would see an influx of other goods coming into the country in a way that would impact negatively on our own.

Mr. President, we will continue to focus on the management of issues relating to culture and trade with respect to the treatment of those cultural goods, both at the regional and international levels. We will continue to protect Barbados' tangible and intangible heritage and, certainly, we have to ensure that we are able to tap on the institutional memory of the older persons who have stories to tell in terms of our history and our past.

Mr. President, we will make sure that we understand the very important relationship between culture and sustainable development. What I am basically saying is that the remit and mandate of the new cultural division is a very important and critical one as we seek to ensure that we are

able to establish an industry that in itself could support and complement the other sectors such as tourism, manufacturing, agricultural and others.

There are some countries that paid absolutely no attention to the development of the cultural industries, but having done so, they are indeed reaping the benefits. Sir, I can point to Canada, where their cultural goods and services bring in billions of dollars each year. We believe we have the potential to have a good, sound and sustainable cultural industry in Barbados and we are prepared to put our money and investment in the area of developing cultures in this country.

Mr. President, we are hoping to be able to address the question of the Rock Hall Monument. As you know, Sir, during last year, we were able to complete the design of that monument to commemorate the first free village in Barbados. We have been able to award a 1st prize to the person whose design was accepted. Now it is a question of erecting the monument. Again, some provision is made in this financial year to erect that monument.

Mr. President, last year there was \$1.498 million voted for the HIV/AIDS Commission. This year it has been increased to \$1.67 million, an 11 per cent increase.

The HIV/AIDS Commission is responsible for our multi-sectoral expanded programme, which ensures that all Barbadians are empowered to respond effectively to the threat posed by HIV/AIDS. The Commission also has the responsibility for strengthening and coordination, capacity building activities, as well as monitoring and evaluation, which is one area to which we have to give particular attention.

We believe we have achieved a lot by way of treatment and care. The evaluation is important because we have to ensure that the interventions that we use are appropriate and relevant. This is one thing that has come out of some of the review that were done in association with the World Bank.

Mr. President, as you know, the Commission also has responsibility for managing the World Bank project. Before I deal with that project, may I say in terms of statistics because it would be good to allow Barbadians to know what was the position in terms of the prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Sir, these figures were at the end of September, 2003.

The statistics for Barbados in terms of the adult prevalence is 1.8 per cent which we consider unacceptable. Since our first case back in 1984, between September 1984 and 2003, the total number of persons who tested positive for HIV/AIDS stood at 2 738 and the total number of reported

HIV/AIDS cases now stand at 1 699. Regrettably, 1 213 persons have died from the disease and this tells us that we have a lot of work to do. Prevention activity remains the mainstay of the programme over the year 2002/2003. 2.50 p.m.

I am pleased to say that the highly active anti-retroviral therapy treatment has shown significant results and has encouraged persons to seek to understand what their status is because they recognise that they no longer think in terms of inevitability of an early death and more people are coming forward to be tested.

Of course, we need to continue to heighten our prevention campaigns because we recognise that once people understand they are not resiled to death because they can be treated that there is a tendency for complacency to step in and we have to guard against this.

Sir, the Speak Sister campaign was put on in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the Bureau of Gender Affairs as well as the National Organisation of Women. These groups came together and were able to come up with this programme which targeted women so that they were able to understand how to address issues as they relate to women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. In our minds, the programme raised the level of awareness of women and allowed them to engage actively in the fight against HIV/AIDS and gave them the tools with which to protect themselves against the virus. During that period, the female condom was also launched and there were a number of multi-media components to the programme and six workshops were held to address a number of things that affect women and to help them to understand the risk which they face.

Sir, last year with the assistance of the Ministry of Education, the Council for Substance Abuse and UNICEF a series of billboards were mounted at primary schools. These billboards sought to promote abstinence and the need for children to adopt positive values. We also recognise that depending on the circumstances, what we use should include abstinence, behavioural change modification, communication and awareness and as part of the programme we promote the concept of using condoms and having safe sex.

In terms of 2004/2005, our main objective will continue to be 50 per cent reduction in HIV/AIDS mortality rate and also 50 per cent reduction in incidences of the disease in the next three years. Our focus will be three-pronged. It will be geared against prevention and control; care, treatment and support and management and institutional strengthening in order to enhance our effectiveness.

I want to comment briefly on the World Bank Project because our national response is supported through a loan from the World Bank of US \$15.1 million and Government has agreed to contribute approximately \$17 million to complement that loan from the World Bank.

Sir, as I close in terms of contribution on HIV/AIDS, Senator Sir John Stanley made reference to encouraging the private sector to support the effort and suggested that we should come up with a way to sensitise them so that they would want to contribute toward the effort. I understand the point he is making but may I say that it is not just a Government response. The Government has taken the lead and has so far carried all the funding of the effort. I want to say that the private sector draws its human resources from the society and it has a responsibility to be equally committed to the effort just as the Government. I do not believe that they should look at responding and contributing from a backdrop of incentives but simply recognise that it is the right thing to do.

I have read of the experiences of other jurisdictions. On Sunday, at the summit of young people here in Barbados, the consultant said that in some jurisdictions all the teachers were lost to HIV/AIDS. This is a pandemic that can have the most serious impact on the society. If people believe that they should sit back and wait on the Government, it is wrong because, at the end of the day, if we do not respond the way we ought to, we would have no society and there would be no people from which the private sector could draw in terms of the human resources they need to run their businesses. 3.00 p.m.

Yes, I understand that it would be good to have these incentives but they also have a commitment, just like the Government. I really believe, quite frankly, that they should be matching the efforts of the Government with or without incentives.

If I can quickly move, Sir, to the Ministry of the Civil Service, I believe that Honourable Senators would expect a comment on the job evaluation exercise. It is still ongoing. We have the report from the consultants, but it has not been reviewed by Cabinet, simply because it is still at the discussion stage with the unions. At such time as the unions are able to fully discuss it and make their recommendations, Cabinet would be in a position to make a final determination.

As a quick backdrop in terms of the exercise,. It was in 2000 that approval was given for a comprehensive job evaluation exercise to be carried out for the public service. It was also felt that it should not just include central Government but, in truth and in fact, it should include the statutory boards that depend on the Consolidated Fund for their financing.

The exercise was done, Sir, in two phases. The purpose of the evaluation was to provide a rational basis for the design and maintenance of what is referred to as an equitable and defensive pay structure to help in the management of the relativities that exist between the various jobs in the public service, and more important, to provide consistent decisions with respect to the grading and rates of pay.

It is equally true to say that the last comprehensive job evaluation exercise was carried out in 1989. Prior to that we had one carried out in 1975, 1968 and one in 1948. There were a number of difficulties that were associated with the 1989 exercise, so much so that people were dissatisfied with the outcome. It was never universally accepted, and it was viewed by some with tremendous scepticism. The failure, of course, to gain acceptance, led to a situation where there were constant requests for adjustments to specific posts and, indeed, groups of posts in the service. Those requests came both from individuals, as well as from the unions.

May I say, Sir, that with the passage of time, the requests became louder and louder. On top of all that, there were a number of other posts being established but because there was always a skills efficiency with respect to the evaluation techniques, the placement of some of these new posts, within the opinion of some people, further eroded the confidence of the system. The Government therefore saw that there was need for a new job evaluation exercise, and sought to have external consultancy services to assist in completing that exercise.

I indicated earlier that it was done in two phases. The first phase was to understand the causes associated with the dissatisfaction of most of the stakeholders. During the first phase the intention was to make recommendations for the appropriate methodology to be used when we were conducting the exercise in Phase 2.

A number of interviews, workshops and contextual research were done to ensure that whatever we were able to use in the second phase really related to the situation that faced us in the service.

Phase 2, of course, Sir, related to the actual evaluation of the jobs themselves. It was done in a most systematic and professional way. There was a Steering Committee that was chaired by the Head of the Civil Service, to give strategic direction to the process. They had oversight of the entire process from a strategic perspective. The Steering Committee also saw representatives from the Ministry of the Civil Service, the Ministry of Finance, the Chief Personnel Officer, a representative from the Office of Public Sector Reform, CTUSAB and NUPW.

Then, there was the Evaluation Committee, which was made up of five representatives from CTUSAB, four members from the General Civil Service and four members from the Ministry of the Civil Service. The Committee underwent extensive training in the theory and practice of job evaluation methodologies because we wanted to be sure that we got it right. We wanted the people who were actually going through the exercise to be able to understand what it is that they were doing to make sure that at the end of the day what we got bore clear relationship to what existed in the service. There were a number of universal factors that were used in accessing each job.

We are hoping, Sir, that in the shortest possible time, the final review could be completed with the unions and the Ministry of the Civil Service, and that Cabinet could be the beneficiaries of the final set of recommendations. We are also hoping that a lot of what would have found the disfavour of people in the past, would be something of the past, because we have been very careful in our approach. We tried to get it right on this occasion.

As I said, from my own experience with job evaluation exercises, at the end of the day, you will not satisfy 100 per cent of the people. That is a reality of a job evaluation exercise; but we are hoping that the process, methodology and things of that nature would be something that people would be able to accept. We tried to do it in the most transparent way that we possibly could have done, and as I said, we made sure that all the stakeholders involved and affected, were part of the process.

Sir, with respect to the public service, we are hoping that the enactment of a new Public Service Act would become a reality during the first half of the coming financial year. One of the aims, of course of that new Act would be to improve the management of discipline within the public service itself to ensure that any system of discipline is swift, fair and transparent.

The document is presently with the Attorney General and we are hoping that this new legislation will be one that would cover what is expected in a public service for the next 20 years or more. Indeed, it should be drafted, and it was our intention that it is drafted in the context of a vision for the public service. It is long overdue and outstanding, and we believe that if we are to have well-managed, trained and motivated people, then it is important that we have the kind of new Public Service Act that would make this a reality.

The last point I would want to make, with respect to the Civil Service, has to do with the conversion of casual workers to public officers. To my mind, the greatest achievement in the improvement of conditions of service to Government employees under this present Administration has to do with the converting of casual workers to public

officers. These persons are no longer considered second class employees who only work when there is work to be done. These persons are now guaranteed year round employment. Their security of tenure has all been enhanced which is something that would allow them to be able to get credit and to buy homes and so on, something that was strictly difficult prior to achieving that status. Their retirement benefits in most instances would have doubled. These are individuals who in the past if they retired at age 60 would have had to wait until they reached age 65 to be able to receive a pension. Now, they are going to be able to get a pension at age 60.
3.10 p.m.

Sir, thus far some 4 000 workers have received letters of appointments to the central service. This represents 99 per cent of those who are eligible to be transferred and be made permanent. An additional 106 posts would be included in the draft Civil Establishment General Order of 2004. I am also happy to report that some of the statutory corporations that are impacted by this decision of Government to have these people made permanent who were a little bit slow to get off the mark are now responding the way that they should.

Sir, much has been said with respect to public sector reform. The Office of Public Sector Reform undertook a number of key activities during the 2003-2004 financial year. They addressed things like developing strategic plans, conducting organisational reviews, reviewing and upgrading systems, and focus was also given to things like customer charters. I am pleased to say that the Land Tax Department launched their customer charter in 2003. There are a number of other departments like the Inland Revenue Department, the Registration Department, the Licensing Authority, the Immigration Department which we hope will come on board shortly, the Airport in terms of all services as well as the Corporate Affairs Department, which are involved and are supporting the effort. It is good that these departments of Government are willing to develop charters which tell the public the time in which they are going to respond to their needs. May I say that the success of the customer charter effort and programme depends on strengthening the customer service sections within the different Government departments.

Mr. President, a lot has been said about the kind of service that you get within the public service. I have worked in the private sector and I have worked in Government and I think sometimes we are more than harsh when we seek to compare the level of customer service in the public sector with the private sector because we are drawing people from the same society. Someone mentioned this morning that when you go into some private sector companies that the level of customer service is far below what is expected. That, too, has been my own experience. It is true that it has

all to do with changing the attitudes of people. This is why you would find that our focus going forward in terms of public sector reform will be on the individual, because it is all about individual behaviour.

Mr. President, my own experience in the private sector in terms of change has been one where it is difficult for people to move out of their comfort level and to do things differently. If that is true for the private sector, it would be also true for the public sector. We in the private sector believe that it can be done and it can also be done in the public sector. Someone also said this morning that sometimes you go into a department and you deal with two different people and you get two different responses, but that is equally true for the private sector. All I am saying is that the level of customer service in Barbados is something that has to be addressed at a national level. It is also true that there are ongoing efforts to deal with raising the level of customer service across the country. This is a clear recognition that something must be done not just for the public sector but for everybody. That is only taking place because it is that recognition that things are not as they used to be no matter where you go, but of course it is a reflection on the society itself.

Mr. President, I know that I would be encroaching on your good office but I just want to say, before I close, that Senator Sir John Goddard made reference to the Pan African Commission as an institution that does not have a programme going forward. I am basically paraphrasing him and if I take a wrong construction on what he said, he can so correct me. May I say that the Pan African Commission does indeed have a very challenging programme going forward and for 2004-2005 as part of its mandate which includes facilitating exchanges between personnel in Barbados and their counterparts in the African diaspora. These are things that we will continue to do.

I want just simply to say that last year through the efforts of the Pan African Commission we were able to send a local long distance runner to Kenya in order to give him exposure. Through the efforts of the Pan African Commission we also brought a top Ghanaian textile artiste here to help our local artistes. There is also work going on with respect to the establishment of a Pan African trade centre. This is a collaborative approach between the Pan African Commission and the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation as well as the Caribbean African Association of Barbados which is a non-governmental organisation. Businessmen facilitated through the Pan African Commission continue to make contacts with persons on the African continent, and the list goes on.

Sir, I know that style and approach is equally as good as what you do. I know that some people may have a difficulty in terms of the style of persons associated with the Commission, but that is another matter. In terms of what it

is intended to do and what it has been doing, may I say that it has been doing a tremendous amount of good work. We have things like primary school quizzes. Books are donated to the schools and the questions for the quizzes come from the books themselves. The winners, through the City of Bridgetown Credit Union, are given saving accounts to allow them to understand what it is to save.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. President, I wish that I had the opportunity to have spoken to the things that were going on within the Commission itself but another opportunity will present itself.

Mr. President, may I say to Senator Sir John, that the Commission has a mandate and certainly from where I sit, I will make sure that it follows that mandate and that, at the end of the day, I get good results.

Mr. President, I thank you for your kind facilitation. I am obliged to you.

SENATOR Dr. F. L. CHANDLER: Mr. President, before I turn to agriculture, I would like to make a few general comments on the Estimates.

There seems to be a need for improvement in the accuracy of the Estimates, based on the fairly large Supplementals that are requested at the end of each financial period. This continues year after year and now seems to be accepted as being the norm. The initial Estimates, therefore, do not give an accurate picture of what Government's spending would be in the coming year. In my opinion, Supplementals should only be required after natural disasters and other unforeseen events.

Mr. President, yesterday Senator Sir John Goddard mentioned that what one cannot measure, one cannot manage. I believe he was referring to inputs but I would like to add to that the need for some measurable output to be identified for each item of expenditure so that it is clear what the benefit to the country has been from the expenditure incurred. This should also overcome the problem of the rush at the end of the year to spend unused monies, which often leads to a waste of funds on unnecessary and unjustifiable items.

Mr. President, with regard to agriculture, I share the enthusiasm and excitement of the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. After many years of talk, at last we are seeing some very positive actions.

It is heartening to note that the promotion of national food security has been identified as the objective of the work programme. Food security was deemed important during the two World Wars and it is no less important today. If we do not ensure that we can produce our food competitively, our

agricultural industry would disappear and our food supply and prices would then be dictated by other countries.

Mr. President, the Government is to be congratulated for putting in place a number of incentives which should assist in taking the agricultural sector forward in its goal to achieve this objective. In order for the agricultural industry to develop and to achieve the stated objectives, there are a number of things that we need to be in place, the first being land. Therefore, every effort must be made to put a well defined land use policy in place, to ensure that a critical mass of good agricultural land remains in agriculture. The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development has assured us that this is being done.

Mr. President, water is another critical input into agriculture, to which the Minister had also alluded. We are an island and are surrounded by water, albeit salt water. However, as far as we all know, desalination of water is now a common practice. Although the cost might be higher than that from a more conventional source, efficient methods of irrigation should compensate for this increased cost. Sir, the use of new improved technology is essential to achieving competitiveness but advance technologies are usually very capital intensive.

I note that another objective of the plan for agriculture is the creation of a business environment conducive to investment in the sector. The sector is in dire need of investment in new technologies if it is to be competitive in this era of trade liberalisation.

In the non-sugar sector, I am pleased to note that farmers are making use of the incentives offered by Government to put new technologies in place, an example of this is production under greenhouse conditions.

With regard to cotton, a recently incorporated private sector-led, vertically integrated, sea island cotton company is another shining example of the private sector responding to the creation of a conducive business environment by Government. As we know in the past, our output from agriculture, including cotton, has been shipped overseas as raw material. The aim now of this company is ultimately to carry out all the operations along the value added line in Barbados so that the profits remain in the island. Again the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development is to be congratulated for the initiative taken in making this company a reality. I have stayed fairly close to its operations and would say that it is progressing very well.

Mr. President, good management and productive labour must go hand in hand with the investment in new technologies. It must be recognised that farming is a business as opposed to what many people think and therefore, farmers

must be trained as managers, as well as in the technical aspects of growing crops. We must have productive labour if we are to be competitive.

The support of the Social Partnership is vital in this regard. Many farmers are finding that Barbadian labour is scarce or unresponsive and are replacing the local labour with imported labour. We must find out what will motivate local labour to produce.

Mr. President, with regard to sugar cane, the plans for the restructuring of the sugar cane industry should be welcomed by all involved. Although the Government has continued to support the industry over the years, for the first time in many years the support appears to be meaningful and sustainable. The country now seems to have a very focussed mission to look at a diversified sugar cane industry with many possibilities which could be systematically exploited. I look forward to the timely implementation of this plan since time has not been on our Side.

It is worthy of note that although the sugar desk and the sugar task force have paved the way for the present action being taken in the sugar cane industry, the stimulus for action, in my opinion, appears to have originated from a call from one young farmer within the industry, who about two years ago was adamant that the industry could survive. This young farmer had put forward recommendations for reducing costs and increasing productivity in the industry.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development must be congratulated for taking the initiative to hire a private company to bring together all of the stakeholders in the industry at a strategic visionary retreat, the output of which was used to prepare the business plan which is now being pursued.

Mr. President, technical support is vital to the development of agriculture. This includes diagnostic services, research and extensions. When it is noted that about \$2.3 million is being spent this coming year for staff cost, food crop research and development, and extension services, the question must be asked: "Can we measure the output which is derived from this expenditure?"

While there might be pockets of research being done, in my opinion, not enough new information is being supplied to farmers. Farmers have complained that the Graeme Hall Station is not a research station. It is a grower of crops which competes, to some extent, with those private growers. Those farmers who could afford it seek professional help from universities and private consultants as well as source the Internet. Input suppliers are also a major source of information to farmers.

Mr. President, the budget for the information service is in the vicinity of \$1.5 million, which should be adequate to ensure that information reaches farmers. I would say that the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development needs to ensure that research, extension and information staff are more knowledgeable than farmers and should always be at least one step ahead of them. Staff must be encouraged to be as enthusiastic as the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development is about the development of agriculture.
3.30 p.m.

With regard to the onion industry, the research I did from my Ph.D. thesis in 1995 resulted in the selection of a variety which would provide year round production. In my opinion, what is needed now is research on weed control and development work in the area of drying and storing onions which would give farmers more flexibility in marketing their crops. At the moment, the crop is at the mercy of the weather and in the wet season it creates a big problem.

A number of project documents have been prepared on the topic of drying and storing onions but I assume they are in their final resting place collecting dust. In the last few years, the dreaded blast disease which affected onions very severely appeared to be under control and the more efficient farmers have been producing outstanding yields which should put them in a position to compete with the imported onions for at least some time of the year.

Sir, with the advent of free trade in agricultural produce, we have seen an increase in the number of exotic pest affecting local groups. The strengthening of plant quarantine services is an important aspect of dealing with this problem and staff must be properly trained to identify the new pest so that corrective action can be taken. Stiffer penalties must be put in place for those who are guilty of illegal vegetable and animal produce. The Honourable Minister stated yesterday that this was being dealt with and I am glad to hear this.

The provision of nutritious and safe food has been listed as an objective of the agriculture programme. This means that not only locally produced food but imported food must be tested for various characteristics including pesticide residue. It is imperative that testing of produce be done at both ports of entry. There is mention of this project in the Estimates and I trust that necessary staff and equipment would be put in place as a matter of urgency.

Sir, if local farmers are expected to compete with overseas farmers, they must have access to pest control measures and the playing field must at least seem to be level. We must ensure that the Pesticide Control Board performs efficiently and that farmers are able to access the new environmentally-friendly chemicals which are coming on the market.

The matter of the accuracy of published statistics on agricultural production has been a matter of concern for some time. I know that approximately \$200 000 has been budgeted for conduct of statistically sample surveys and commodity surveys and I trust that the outcome of this will correct that problem.

The age-old problem of praedial larceny continues and I look forward to the day when it will be dealt with in a serious way. Today, I saw in the newspaper that someone was put in prison for six months for stealing sugar cane and I assume that this might be a start to serious action being taken.

Sir, I have never understood the meaning of a landless farmer as this is equivalent to a surgeon operating without an operating theatre or a manufacturer without a factory. I am, therefore, pleased to see that the Land for the Landless programme is proceeding well. Sir, this is an exciting time for the agricultural industry and I trust there will be co-operation among all stakeholders to achieve success.

Mention has been made about road signs by more than one Senator and before closing, I would like to enquire whether the Ministry of Public Works follows up when road signs and lamp posts are destroyed during vehicular accidents and whether it makes sure that the signs are replaced at the expense of the insurance companies. I trust that the taxpayers do not have to pay for these replacements.

With regard to energy, I have heard but I do not know if it is true that neither the new Hilton nor the Grantley Adams International Airport will be using solar heating. I was wondering whether there is a good reason for this since I was under the impression that we were to achieve 40 per cent self-sufficiency renewable energy by the year 2010. If this is so, it would seem to be a giant step backward.

Mr. President, with those remarks, I would like to lend my full support to the Appropriation Bill before us.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Mr. President, I rise to support the Bill before this Honourable Chamber. I want to say in opening that we should congratulate the Leader of Government Business, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture for his outstanding delivery of the introduction to this Honourable Senate.

It is clear that he has a good understanding not only of economic and fiscal matters but relating to his portfolio, agriculture, and like all other Honourable Senators, I believe he has a deep understanding of the matters facing agriculture. We are confident that he will continue to address these issues in the interest of all Barbadians as we seek to reposition the agricultural sector.

Sir, as a young person I remain confident that he will continue to do an outstanding job. It is indeed refreshing that we have someone, not trained in agriculture to the best of my knowledge, but trained in matters of finance who brings an understanding to the issues of the Ministry. We need not fear because it is clear that we have to restructure agriculture and make a number of important decisions in that Ministry in order to have it grow in the direction we want to see.

I also want to congratulate the Minister of Finance and his team for again taking the time out to prepare a comprehensive programme and package the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure in a concise form while staying close to the course and ensuring that Barbados maintains another record year of growth in this coming year.

Sir, it is without doubt that the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure represents the continuance of sound, economic, fiscal and social policies being pursued by the Barbados Labour Party Administration. Indeed, they have been doing this since 1994, and with each succeeding year, we have seen growth. We have seen a Leader, committed to the success of Barbados and committed to the economic development of Barbados, one who has been able, through a combination of confidence and credibility to guide Barbados successfully for close to ten years.
3.40 p.m.

There is no doubt, Sir, that this Administration's policies are by far the most important determinant of its economic credibility. Governments all over the world and in the Caribbean are faced with challenges from time to time. In Dominica, there has been several challenges and they had to seek the assistance of Barbados and we, along with other CARICOM countries, kindly assisted them. Jamaica, with a Finance Minister like Omar Davies, who is well-trained in Economics as well, also has challenges. Antigua and Barbuda, notwithstanding the small growth that they projected, the economies of St. Lucia and St. Vincent and of late, Trinidad and Tobago which in the last quarter, realised growth of 3 per cent compared to about 6.1 per cent in the previous year, also have challenges.

Sir, when we look through to the global economy, and we heard Senator Williams made the point not so long ago, that the economies of France, Germany, the United States and, indeed, the UK are being managed sometimes not so successfully, if you have to apply the economic indices to measure their growth.

When we in Barbados speak to the Estimates and the development of our country, all of us, regardless of our political persuasion should remain confident. We should be proud, Sir, that we have a Government led by somebody who

understands finance, who understands economics, who understands the social agenda, somebody who has the vision to take Barbados from what it is today and set as a target, a goal that we should become a developed country.

We are fortunate, Sir, that we have a Prime Minister who is trained, who will never allow us to repeat the mistakes of the past but who would allow us to continue and go in a direction that all Barbadians can be proud of. We can rest assured, indeed, we can rest comfortably at night knowing that the country is safe in the hands of, not only of the Leader of the Barbados Labour Party, the Prime Minister, but all the Members of the Cabinet who contribute to the economic, financial and social decisions of the day.

I made the point earlier that Governments will continue to be challenged, Sir, with issues of great and fundamental importance. What functions, for example, should the Government perform? How large a role should the Government play in a society? How much help should the Government give to the poor? These are all issues that this Government is addressing and they will continue to be the driving force and motivation of a Government which is interested in its people, caring for its people and a Government which is prepared to do what is right, in the interest of the common good of all.

Sir, I have had the opportunity to go through the Estimates over time, and I also enjoy reading Hansard because it prepares us when we have sometimes to go back on the playing field, being out there, or in this Honourable Chamber when we have to speak, but there are some interesting components. Whenever you are looking at the post-1994 period, you can always tell that there is a well-thought out agenda and you can see it when you do a detailed review of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

We can see that this is a Government, indeed, an Administration interested in reform, in the face of global competition, making the Government more businesslike to improve efficiency, effectiveness in both process and operation. We have a Government that is leading a coordinated strategy to create economic expansion in Barbados.

We can see, Sir, that we have an Administration whose focus is on creating an entrepreneurial spirit, a Government interested in fiscal discipline, a Government that is prepared to align its spending to human capital development, and a Government that will not stray the course in terms of managing its carrying capacity. Sir, I will come back to some of these issues very shortly.

We can, Sir, from some of the components, and as we read the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, see what is emerging as an economic model and that is what the Government has been able to do through the leadership of the Prime Minister. He has essentially been creating an economic model, not only for Barbadians and students of economics and others who are interested in the study of politics to review, but those in the wider Caribbean.

It should not therefore surprise us, when we have leaders throughout the region, who will obviously look to our Prime Minister for his assistance or the Government's assistance in any way possible. Yet, Sir, we hear from the Opposition that they wanted to hear the Government's score card and they were not interested in statistical indices, and that the issue of growth and development should be examined, but I will come to some of those shortly.

Sir, the Estimates will also set out to do a number of things, as I said, maintain an effective human capital programme of high quality education, training in health care, and a programme to deal with the problems of the poor, which is very important and I will look at that relative to the issues of social transformation. I spoke about deficit reduction and we can see the fiscal discipline in operation. The expansion of trade, as we heard Honourable Members speak about that, and what is becoming now a very liberalised trade environment, the implementation of a rational approach to matters of regulation, specifically the FTC, the restructure of agriculture that I spoke about earlier but, also to manufacturing and I will come back to that as well.

Sir, I believe the Estimates were set out to create a platform to reshape the Government. I talked about maintaining confidence and credibility, but not only that, Sir, we can see that there is a tourism expansion programme. We can see, Sir, that we have very good reserves, \$2 billion, \$1.5 billion in foreign reserves and another \$500 000 million in the banking sector. On top of that, we have been able to maintain low levels of employment which is good in a developing society. At the moment it is just under 10 per cent which is remarkable, but if one goes back a couple years one would notice that the Barbados Labour Party has been very successful in maintaining low levels of unemployment. We cannot say that for a period leading all the way through and concluding around 1994. We have had challenges and we should not take joy in the fact that another Administration had significant levels of unemployment because we should all recommit ourselves, regardless of political persuasion, to ensuring that we have and are able to maintain low levels of unemployment.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. President, I want to respond to some of the charges made by the Opposition with reference to the Ministry of Health. For example, the question was asked if we are

getting value for money for in his opinion nothing has changed at the hospital. Sir, I would be the first one to tell you, and I think all Honourable Senators would agree, that there has been leadership changes at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and in the Ministry of Health. We have a Minister of Health who is a trained surgeon. He understands the delivery of health care in Barbados and knows and understands the system well.

Sir, let me go through the facts before I come back to respond to this charge. The Ministry of Health has been allocated more money under a Barbados Labour Party Administration when compared to a Democratic Labour Party Administration. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital in particular has been the beneficiary of substantial increases when compared to the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, if you review the Estimates from the 1994-1995 fiscal year right through to the 2002-2003 fiscal year, you would notice that the Government has spent approximately \$1.87 billion on current expenditure within the Ministry of Health. From the 1994-1995 fiscal year right through to the 2002-2003 fiscal year they spent \$408 million on capital expenditure. When we look at the provision in this year's Estimates you will notice, I believe it is at page 68, that there is an allocation of approximately \$115 million to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Reference was also made to the fact that there is a cap of \$115 million. This year we would spend \$31.7 million on the Barbados Drug Service.

Sir, in addressing the issue of a cap to the hospital of \$115 million we would have to go back and review the record of the Democratic Labour Party. In 1991 the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was allocated \$65.1 million; in 1991-1992 it fell to \$64.4 million; in 1992-1993 it fell to \$59.4 million; in 1993-1994 it rose to \$63.1 million and in 1994-1995 it rose to \$63.3 million. Thereafter, when the Barbados Labour Party was in full control of the Government it went to \$70.9 million. In 1996-1997 it rose to \$71.8 million; in 1997-1998 it rose to \$74.4 million and in 1998-1999 it rose to \$81.2 million. Today we are at \$115 million that is strictly on the basis of a transfer from the Government.

Sir, like I said, there is new leadership in the Ministry of Health. We have a dedicated and committed son who is capable of leading. He has demonstrated his leadership ability by leading the hospital through some very difficult periods. He has been able to create the hospital board which I believe is the most significant step in re-engineering operations at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in the strict interest of delivering health care in Barbados. There can be no doubt about that.

The delivery of health care is the first major step in re-engineering at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Board will bring corporate governance; it will bring accountability; it

will bring a structure of a board of directors for its proper execution; it will bring an organisational structure and it will bring an executive management team with strict objectives of delivering health care in Barbados. When we look at it seriously, we can see that we are putting an executive management team in place, we can see that there is a Board of Directors in place and we can see that governance is already in operation.

Sir, I saw recently in the newspaper an advertisement for a director of engineering. I believe they have already appointed the human resource manager. When you look at the challenges and at the composition of the Board, you can see that this is somebody who is serious and very interested in the delivery of health care to Barbadians. Sir, at the moment there is a consultant engaged to review an expansion or refurbishment of the hospital. There are information technology developments and linkages are taking place with the polyclinics.

Sir, other Honourable Senators, particularly Senator Parris, spoke about the improvement in the delivery of the ambulance services and the fact that in the forthcoming financial year they are going to decentralise the ambulance service in Barbados starting in Arch Hall in St. Thomas, I believe. Sir, this is a Ministry that understands the delivery of health care because when a Minister who is in charge of health can come forward and say he will decentralise an ambulance service, that is somebody who is interested in saving lives so he will bring enormous benefits to all Barbadians who will have to use that service. There are also other improvements some of which have already started like the operating theatres, the installation of a new emergency generator to replace the one that was there, I believe, for the last 40 or 42 years and the installation of new dialysis machines. Mr. President, you no longer see long lines when you go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital pharmacy because they have corrected that problem with the hiring of three pharmacists.

Sir, I made the point earlier that the Government is proposing to spend \$31.7 million in the coming financial year in the Barbados Drug Service. The Drug Service which has been a problem in Barbados for some time has been brought under control. The pharmacists in Barbados are no longer complaining about not being paid on time. I want to ask Honourable Senators when is the last time they heard anybody from the Pharmaceutical Association complaining that they have not been paid on time. They have been paid on time and the Minister did not have to bring any supplementaries to Parliament to support the Barbados Drug Service in this financial year – the Opposition can contradict me if I am wrong – and there has been no shortage of drugs as well. On top of that, people are getting quality drugs. We have a situation where there are new standard operating procedures being put in place to deal with the Drug Service.

I believe in this coming fiscal year, for the first time in about 20 years, we would be having new contracts concluded.
4.00 p.m.

Sir, in relation to the Barbados Drug Service, one of the most important things is that we do not have long lines in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's pharmaceutical division. Government has paid attention to those issues, has diagnosed some of the problems and has corrected them by putting systems in place.

Mr. President, the numbers for the training of nurses are being increased from 30 to 90. We then talked about further training in customer care for supervisors and managers, and persons would want to say that nothing has changed at the Hospital. Sir, the Hospital will not only get better but will move from strength to strength.

Sir, Government has been successful in ensuring that the appropriate services are offered at the polyclinics, to take some of the pressure off the Queen Elizabeth. Therefore, there would not be that need for someone to make an appointment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital for something that could otherwise be dealt with at the polyclinic.

Mr. President, in relation to revenue collection, the Ministry has now put in place a revenue collection programme which is necessary. Sir, as a serious organisation, if we are going to go forward and deal with the issues at the hospital, we have to look at the issue of revenue collection.

Mr. President, my view is that we have several workers in Barbados who through negotiations with the unions and other institutions have benefit packages, for example, medical programmes which will cover room and board at the hospital, physician visits or surgical procedures, who would not utilise some of that medical benefit and assign such benefits to the hospital.

Mr. President, I believe the time has come that in politics we have to be serious about our roles and responsibilities. Sir, I am not saying that poor people should pay for hospital benefits but I am of the opinion that if there are persons who have medical insurance programmes that could easily assist them, for example, medical insurance coverage, that there is nothing wrong with persons using that medical coverage to help offset medical costs.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Please address the Chair, Senator.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: Sir, people talked about nothing being changed at the Hospital. I want to make it clear that on the few points I have mentioned,

that there can be no divide on health because we are all beneficiaries of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital or the health care system of Barbados.

Mr. President, I want to make the point that from what I have said, we could see several benefits and changes occurring at the Hospital, where all of us can feel proud and confident. Sir, I have every confidence in the Minister of Health, in ensuring the delivery of the provision of health care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and throughout the health sector of Barbados. Sir, I do support all of the efforts at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and what is being done across the Ministry of Health.

Mr. President, I want to tie in on another point because when I talked about the components, I also talked about helping the poor and about social transformation. The Opposition said that we are treating Barbados like an economy and not like a society. Sir, when we sit and analyse, one would have recognised that there are a number of achievements taking place but in order for a society to enjoy the benefits or provision of social services, there must be a strong economy.

Sir, recently I have read a book written by a Mr. Reuben, a former Treasury Secretary under Bill Clinton's Administration entitled: "From Wall Street to Washington", a book which I would recommend to all Honourable Senators. When we read that book, we must understand that we have to have a strong economy. It makes no sense in having a weak economy because we would not be able to provide the level of social services for the benefit of the wider society. Therefore, if the Opposition would want to suggest that we are treating Barbados like an economy and not like a society, I respectfully differ because we are building an economy, we are putting it on a platform so that we can maintain social services in Barbados for the benefit of all Barbadians.

Mr. President, what are the facts? If we go to the Ministry of Social Transformation, one would recognise that in 1999-2000, the Government would have spent \$20.5 million; in the financial year 2001-2002, it was \$28 million; in the financial year 2002-2003, it was \$28.7 million and it is proposed in the financial year, 2004-2005, to spend \$76.6 million.

Mr. President, we are not spending money in social transformation because the Government wants to spend money. The Government is spending this money on a programme in the Ministry of Social Transformation because it is absolutely necessary that we maintain certain things for the benefit of those in our society, who are less fortunate and who are not in a position to acquire or to benefit from certain services in our community.

In the Ministry of Social Transformation there is a Community Development Programme, targeted to community arts career. There is a Community Technology Programme. There is a Night Shelter. Government is spending a lot of money to maintain efficient child care facilities in Barbados.

4.10 p.m.

Sir, I encourage those in the private sector when they are building new plants that they may want to consider day care facilities like the Government has done at the Ministry of International Business where a new complex is being built at Newton and with provisions for day care facilities.

Sir, a lot of workers in the hospitality industry have children and perhaps the time has come for us to look at daycare facilities for the South and West Coasts of Barbados.

Sir, there is a programme to deal with children with disabilities and we should pay particular concern to this area. The Government is not only talking about disabilities but is assisting those persons who have disabilities. I know that Government is very focussed on this and I would say that attention needs to be paid to the layout of the physical plant and design the buildings in such a way to offer significant ease to persons with disabilities. This is already being done and will continue as a gradual programme. I also know that the Transport Board has made it a deliberate policy that with any replacement programme there will be a number of buses specially fitted for those with disabilities. We are expecting an order of five buses and it is anticipated that those buses will be specially fitted to accommodate those with disabilities.

Sir, this is a Government interested in its people, this is a Government that is treating all Barbadians as part of a successful economy and we remain confident about this.

Mr. President, I want to move to the area of tourism. It is without doubt that tourism contributes much to the economy of Barbados. Indeed, I believe it is the main contributor of economic growth in Barbados. I am involved in tourism and when I read the latest information, I can tell that Barbados is on a sound course with respect to its tourism. Indeed, we have seen leadership coming through in tourism from the Minister responsible and his Parliamentary Secretary who will go into this matter in depth. When we look at tourism, we can remain confident that we have a bright future. I was fortunate quite recently to come across some bench-marking information in the hotel sector from an accounting firm outside of North America. Sir, if you review the information you will see that in 2003 it was reported that occupancy levels went up in the Caribbean to 78 per cent.

There are a number of factors responsible for the growth in tourism within the Caribbean region. The

geo-political tension, the situation in Iraq with the security concerns, the scenario where there are exchange rate fluctuations and where economies in the world's major outbound markets like United States of America, Japan and Germany compounded decline in repeat visitor arrivals from traditional areas like Europe and the Mediterranean and in the Caribbean we have been able to benefit because there is no SARS in Barbados. In Hong Kong and other areas like Singapore they have had significant problems and we have benefited from some of those travellers who would have gone to other destinations.

Sir, resorts in the Middle East are experiencing significant dips and when you are in a position to compete with Bali and get repeat guests, it tells the story. So, tourism, in my opinion, is in safe hands.

I agree that there is a problem with the state of our physical plant in Barbados. It is a fact that the hotel plant is tired and in dire need of refurbishment, and Government, in its wisdom, piloted the New Tourism Development Act and offered a number of initiatives to hoteliers to improve the state of their hotel operations. Senator Husbands made the point about the conservative nature of the banking system in Barbados but Government will have to play a more entrepreneurial role in the development of tourism. Whether we want to accept it or not, in the face of an environment where there is conservatism, where tourism is the main economic contributor in Barbados and where the banking system is somewhat conservative, it is imperative that Government undertakes an entrepreneurial role with a quick and clear exit strategy.

This improvement in new hotel investment would engineer the creation of new jobs, expanded economic activities, hotel shops, restaurants, *et cetera*. Sir, a whole range of economic activity will be created with new tourism investment. We have land at Paradise which the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated and other parties are looking at and there is land at Needhams Point and Hastings.

Sir, a few hotels which are currently closed will soon come back on stream. I want to make the point that entities out there should make the decision and get involved in tourism. It is unacceptable that we have tourism as our main engine of growth and our main foreign exchange earner and there is a lot of land available in Barbados but it is not being utilised to further the development of tourism in Barbados.

Mr. President, if you walk from Needhams Peninsula and come down the coast, you would find coastal land but there are warehouses, a car dealership and a police station on that coastline where we can create a new tourism economic

programme to further sustain Barbados and take it forward with new hotel investment. It can be foreign, Sir, it can be local, Sir, but at the end of the day, there is no reason why we should have our coastal land opening, not even opening, sometimes closed, Sir, as warehousing facilities, when we can create an economic spirit in the land of Barbados.
4.20 p.m.

Sir, there is no reason why we do not have a hotel in the City of Bridgetown. It is long overdue. These are the types of opportunities that we would want the private sector to join with the Government in insuring that we maintain our new tourism plant.

There are also opportunities, Sir, for investment in hotels. I know of some entities that will build a hotel. They are not hoteliers so they are not in the business of managing hotels. They will lease the hotel and monthly, they would collect, what we call, a rent check. You run the hotel, it is your problem, I have the rent check. If you lease my hotel for five years, at the end of the five-year period, it is my property and I also have enough money. If some of us were smart in the business, Sir, there are many opportunities for people to form, what I call, capital market companies, or joint venture companies. Sir, they should construct new hotels and collect the rent check but, yet still own the hotel at the end of the day. There are significant returns to be gained from the returns of investment.

Sir, you would see on occasion, maybe, less than six weeks ago, where a hotel on the west coast, in accordance with listed obligations, published its P&L and you would realise, that the benefits and the profits that they also recorded and the dividends paid to shareholders. We have to become more responsible. We need more tourism investment and the more tourism investment we have in Barbados, the more economic opportunities we create, the more jobs we will create and indeed, Sir, the Ministry of Agriculture would not have to worry too much because you would have an opportunity, where the farmers in Barbados will be able to sell fresh produce to the hotels in Barbados and further cement their base in Barbados. It is absolutely necessary.

When you look at airlift, we have seen an expansion in 2003. We have six major carriers coming out of the USA, eight carriers out of the United Kingdom, four carriers out of Canada and two out of Europe. We have a new Airport Expansion Programme. The Government had the wisdom to see it fit to engineer the development of a new airport facility. On top of that, we have seen increased traffic coming through the gateways of Canada. For example, we have seen a scheduling capacity by 10 per cent out of Canada, 38 per cent out of Europe, 13 per cent out of the UK and 2 per cent out of the United States of America.

Tourism is making a substantial contribution and I am sure that Senator Grant would make this point more forcibly than I have been able to this afternoon. I also want to speak about the GEMS Project, because there are some people who believe that you should not talk about GEMS, but I am not afraid to speak about it because at the end of the day, I think it will, and it is showing, based on my information, to be a very successful project. There is absolutely nothing wrong with the Government getting involved on an entrepreneurial basis in the development of hotels, with a very clear exit strategy. The key to any hotel development in Barbados is to keep your gearing down. Once you keep your gearing down, and a well-managed plant, you will smile all the way to the bank. I will not go into cruise.

Asides.

SENATOR G. P. I. GOODING-EDGHILL: I am fortunate to have been in Jamaica with a group of investors who were looking to acquire property in Jamaica, and I met the former operations manager, Mr. Fraser. He was in the Marriott system then, which is a very good system, and from the time I heard the announcement that he was appointed in Barbados, I said, "Very good." He has gone on now because, obviously, Sandals came and offered him perhaps a better package. The point of the matter is that he has been able to bring it together, package it in such a way, re engineered the operation, created efficiencies and the GEMS of Barbados would be seen as a very successful model. Despite all the criticisms of the GEMS Project, I am convinced, Sir, that the Government will live to be the victor at the end of the day.

Sir, there has been some talk about Labour. I am not going to speak about the issue in detail, except to say that we have been able to maintain and keep unemployment at a low of 10 per cent. We have seen an expansion of the Government Wage Bill in this year's Estimates, essentially because of negotiated settlements, so the only thing that we need to do is to continue to improve productivity, not only in the public sector but in the private sector, so that we could drive improvement and productivity across Barbados.

If the country maintains its productivity, then we would continue, Sir, on a course of sustaining our competitiveness in the marketplace. It is indeed challenging, where a country has to pay above inflation increases and, if we are to continue paying above inflation wage increases, it is absolutely important that we have associated growth in productivity.

Sir, time would not permit me to go into some other areas. I must confess that I thought it would have been a little difficult for me, but quickly I want to touch on tourism education. In the hospitality sector, I recognised in the Estimates that there is a programme designed to implement a Bachelors Degree in Culinary Arts. I would want to compliment the Ministry of Education and the Hospitality

Institute at the BCC for that. It is a wise move. It is long overdue and I am sure it would save a lot of Barbadians and their parents a lot of cash, when they have to go and fund their external training in culinary arts at Johnson and Wales University and all the other Universities. The only thing I would like to add, Sir, and I hope they would make provision for those workers in the industry who cannot pursue full time study, but would want to pursue part time study.

Sir, in reviewing it all, the fact of the matter is that in Barbados, we have been able to achieve a 3 per cent rate of growth. We have been able to increase our tax revenue, and it is projected at some \$1.9 billion this year. This will be achieved despite a phased reduction in personal income tax.

Mr. President, I want to join with all those present, indeed, this is my first presentation in speaking to the Appropriation Bill, in this Honourable Chamber but I would want to say, I remain confident that the people of Barbados would continue to be very well served. The Government has done an outstanding job, in particular the officials at the Ministry of Finance, in putting together a successful programme for the future of Barbados in the forthcoming financial year. I will want to join with those on This Side, Sir, and others in supporting the Appropriation Bill before this Honourable Senate.

Sir, I am much obliged.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Sir, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for 20 minutes to resume at 4.55 p.m. today.

The question that this Sitting be suspended to resume at 4.55 p.m. today, was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
4.30 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. President, the occasion of a debate on the annual Estimates is the only one on the parliamentary calendar that allows Honourable Senators to go far and wide in the points they want to make. I think, however, that it is important that we concentrate on the actual Estimates themselves. While the programmes and policies require some consideration and should be taken seriously in our various positions, I think that the actual Estimates themselves on this occasion deserve a few minutes of attention.

Mr. President, the Minister in making his presentation and according to what I see in the reports from the other House stressed that a cap was being placed on some major items of expenditure and the Memorandum introducing the Estimates identified major caps of over \$53 million on three specific items. The grant to public institutions has been reduced somewhat, the subsidy has been reduced and so has the item Retiring Benefits.

Sir, while there may be merit in such reductions in order to meet the objective of narrowing the gap between revenue and expenditure, I think that history and the reality of some of these changes are probably misplaced as an item of reduction. Let me take the area of pensions as this is one which I consider to be one of the greatest. Pensions refer to payments made to former public servants and officials. In 2002-2003 the sum appropriated on the revision for pensions was approximately \$118.6 million. In 2003-2004 the sum revised is approximately \$136.1 million and the provision in the current 2004-2005 Estimates of Expenditure is for \$117 million.

Mr. President, there is a natural increase in the number of retirees in the Public Service annually, probably up to 300 to 400 a year and those who go off the pensions roll are usually considerably less than that. Pensioners have been granted a small increase of 1.3 per cent in respect of the period 2003-2004 and two per cent to 2004-2005, so factored into the cost of pensions in the Estimates should be that 3.3 per cent which has been legislated by Parliament. It is unrealistic to suggest that you could have a pensions bill of \$117 million in 2004-2005 when the one for 2003-2004 was \$136 million. What have we sought to achieve by making those reductions?

Mr. President, later in the financial year it will be necessary to make adjustments within the item without coming to Parliament because pensions and all the allowances of pensions, once they have been granted under the Constitution automatically form part of what is charged in the Consolidated Fund.

Mr. President, you cannot therefore reduce pensions once they have been granted, therefore, the adjustment can be made in the figures. There are two sub items under pensions, one is the statutory one and the other is the allowances. You could always increase the statutory one and reduce the allowances. Indeed, that seems to have happened in each year in the last four or five years since I was in this Chamber. So to reduce pensions by \$20 million is to be totally unrealistic.

Mr. President, the other item which I want to deal with in this question of reduction and what seems to me to be a decrease of under-budgeting is the question of subsidies. Every year it has become necessary to come to Parliament

for a supplementary for the Transport Board and each year the provision that is first appropriated is always inadequate. It was \$1 million since I have been in here. Mr. President, anyone who has been associated with the Barbados Transport Board knows that the Transport Board cannot operate successfully on its returns from bus fares which have been at \$1.50 for the past 13 years when in 1991 a World Bank consultancy indicated that the bus fare that would be an economic fare for travelling from Pie Corner, St. Lucy or from Bathsheba, St. Joseph to Bridgetown would be \$2.50. If in 1991 that was considered right and in 2004 bus fare is at \$1.50, unless a substantial subsidy is given for the purpose of keeping the Transport Board afloat, that \$1.50 is wholly and totally inadequate.

I think that the Government has indicated, and there is such provision I believe, that the assessment of bus fares will become a matter for reference to the Fair Trading Commission. I am not here presuming what the Fair Trading Commission would do, but if it does a good job of assessing we can look for a substantial increase in bus fares. The Transport Board staff are miracle people and we need to consider this.
5.00 p.m.

Mr. President, we need to consider this when they have a list of persons who owe, which runs into millions of dollars. We need to consider also their ability to keep the system afloat where, for example, when one creditor threatens to discontinue service, for example, for fuel and this business has to pay that bill instead of another. They have to go on doing this in order to keep the business afloat. Mr. President, when the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Social Transformation which are supposed to be provided with funds to meet the subsidised fares of school children in the case of the Ministry of Education, and older and disadvantaged persons in the case of Ministry of Social Transformation, and a whole financial year could go and those departments would not receive all of that money.

Mr. President, it is all right to talk about efficiencies and imposing on them the necessity to be efficient. There is no greater frustration than that inability to meet one's debts and I am sure that some of those persons at the Barbados Transport Board who can do better, will get out at the first opportunity. Let us not delude ourselves that \$400 million is going to achieve anything. It is alright to sit in our ivory towers and tell the people to be more efficient. It is an impossible situation to run the Barbados Transport Board on the small and insignificant returns that they get, on a fare structure that allows them \$1.50 in 2004. It is alright to talk these things until one has to deal with them.

Sir, the other thing about the Barbados Transport Board, and I make this with all seriousness, is that for some time, perhaps not now, the Transport Board has been an

employment agency. Therefore, if the staff is increased without consideration, there is going to be that inability to meet the pay. They would also have more troubles.

Mr. President, one speaker referred to the fact that people are employed in the public service and to the fact that there is always money and permanency in the service. Sir, many public service workers do nothing but stand up instead of working and when asked why they are not working, they reply that they have no material with which to work. Therefore, these workers are being paid a salary but have no material to do the work and we have to be very careful when we start examining these matters.

Mr. President, I am not asking a question, I am saying it in the form that I would expect a response. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital has been granted \$115 million. There is no provision in the Estimates for capital and I have heard of a tremendous capital programme upon which they will embark. I believe that as a statutory board, it can enter into arrangements for borrowing but the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, as far as I can recall, even with the best will in the world, even with the collection of arrears, can only collect on revenue less than 10 per cent of the cost of expenditure. Therefore, if they are going to borrow money, it would be as if the Government is borrowing the money for capital works.

The Government, like they did for the Barbados Tourism Authority which does not make money, will have to underwrite and repay any loans to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Therefore, with the Hospital not seeing it as capital and I am not hearing how it is going to meet its capital, as long as it is going to be doing those works of which I am hearing, there would be a charge on the public purse.

Sir, we hear a lot about the relative provisions to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital between 1991 and present. I am not going into the merits or demerits of what was considered to be a small allocation in 1991 but I would like that when Honourable Senators speak of this \$115 million, for them to remember that there have been nine annual salaries and wages increases since 1994, and that by far the greatest cost to the Hospital is personal emoluments with a staff of 2 000. Therefore, anytime that staff is given a salary increase no matter how small, accumulatively they become a substantial additional cost to the hospital.

Sir, as a member of the Committee that did the review of the Hospital in 1998 and had recommended that it should be converted to a Board, and I stand by that, I warned, however, that the greatest mistake that has been made in that conversion with which the Board has not been able to deal up to now, but which has to be dealt with by the Public Service, is that the 2 000 workers there are civil servants and nobody can direct them to go to work with a Board.

Sir, the Haynes Commission has allocated a whole chapter of its Report to the matter of transition, identifying that as the greatest problem for the conversion to a board. I am still to hear that anything specific has been done to recognise the importance of the transition process.

Mr. President, I referred to a similar operation in the 1980s where the Barbados Water Authority was created and the Water Works Department's staff were seconded to the Barbados Water Authority to keep it running. Ten years had elapsed before the matter in relation to their transfers could have been settled. At the time, the Barbados Water Authority had much less staff who could have qualified for any argument that they could not have been transferred because most of them were casuals and unestablished staff, yet it took 10 years to get that converted.

Mr. President, everyone who is working at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital under the existing arrangements holds the position as a public officer under the arrangement that applied in the late 1990s to convert these temporary, casual and unestablished posts, to that of public officer. As a public officer, nobody can transfer you without your concurrence. Therefore, the problem at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in size and in complexity is far greater than anything that is obtained at the Barbados Water Authority.

I believe that if the powers that be had taken note of that chapter that spoke of the transition and what should be done, probably we would be nearer to that transition than we are now.

I think it is to be complimented that the staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital continue to give reasonably good service and in some cases, excellent service. Sir, that tells me that it does not matter who is the Minister, the Permanent Secretary or the Government, that people who are motivated to work will work, especially in disciplines such as medicine and nursing.

I, therefore, think that we should not gloat about the Queen Elizabeth Hospital being so good or having changed so substantially. I hope that commonsense would prevail and that the whole concept of secondment, which has been avoided, would be worked out, otherwise this matter would remain hanging for a very long time.

It is difficult when a trade union takes up a position of resistance in one case, as it does with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, while in another case like the Grantley Adams International Airport, it sits on the Board of the new Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporated and is able to accept that people should be transferred.

5.10 p.m.

I want to touch on the matter of policy. As a citizen I have some concern about the health segment of Government. At this stage, it is a topic that has been avoided for far too long. It is garbage and waste disposal. We are going to be buckled under garbage in this country if we do not deal with it urgently because in a few years Mangrove Landfill will be full. It is not only the fact that Greenland has remained unopened but the fact that we have to find a way to deal with garbage. This should be appreciated by the Government and dealt with soon because the solution is not short-term. There could be an interim or medium-term solution but the full solution is not short-term.

We are quite rightly, getting ourselves ready here to become a fully developed country and we have not been dealing with something as crucial as garbage disposal. We are talking quite glibly about hosting the World Cup in 2007. A lot of infrastructural work needs to be done which will benefit the people of Barbados and just because we are looking to host the World Cup.

Whilst there can be praise for some of the roads in Bridgetown area as they have been completely refurbished, the road network in Barbados is awful. If we have to be bringing people from the South Coast and the West Coast into the centre of the city for World Cup between now and 2007, more work has to be done.

Mr. President, I want to discuss the subject of signage again although some Senators have referred to it. Sir, our signage is awful. As I go through Barbados and see signs misspelt and pointing the wrong way, there are many things wrong with our signage. All sorts of things get stuck on our signs and the Road Traffic Act and/or the Highway Act makes provisions for this to be an offence but it is not being policed as such.

Another matter of infrastructural consideration is our potable water supply. This is again important to our achieving the status of complete development and to our hosting the World Cup in 2007. I heard that one of the problems is the question of leakage. I heard this from the CEO of the Water Authority and other people, and if that is the case, we need to put finances in place and replace those pipes on a phased basis especially in highly built-up areas in order to ensure that this wastage does not occur. These are matters which have to be addressed not in a political way but towards the achievement of the development which we want.

Sir, I was impressed with the exposition given by the Minister who lead the debate on the Ministry of Agriculture generally. I only say to him that there have been 13 Ministers of Agriculture since 1954 when we had ministerial status. One Prime Minister said that the only Minister of Agriculture is God and the other one asked if I knew of any successful Ministry of Agriculture.

It was not because these Ministers did not have good views or that they did not want to achieve. I support Senator Chandler's point about irrigation, that if it does not rain, our food crops and other crops will fail and that we need to put systems in place which will ensure that some of the areas of Barbados that produce food have a supply of water. In the early 80s there used to be a programme called the Integrated Rural Development Programme which identified certain areas where there sought to improve roads, housing and above all make provision for agricultural production. So, high on the list of agricultural production then was irrigation.

I wonder what are the new arrangements for the Rural Development Commission and the divided authorities in matters of rural development and what is the coordinating mechanism to ensure that these areas identified as falling within the purview of rural development have a coordinated approach.

I think that the objective of the Rural Development programme is a noble one but the implementation might not be so noble. Sir, we were always building tenantry roads from time immemorial and 151 tenantry roads were built in a two-year period but what is the Rural Development Commission's role in matters other than housing and roads? What percentage of its allocation at any stage is given to these matters?
5.20 p.m.

Sir, I could not make my short intervention, without touching on a matter that is very dear to me. It has to do with personnel matters in the public service. It is common that people at all levels, trade unionists, politicians and everyone, say that the biggest problem with the civil service is the 1974 Amendments to the Constitution. This might be true. I do not know.

I say that it allowed Ministers to make decisions on personnel which they otherwise had not been able to do. I do not believe that Ministers are necessarily bad judges of these things, but they may have a particular motivation. We now have a situation where there are more than 28 000 people in the public service. I read this in the Regrading Report. Sir, please pardon my referring to it.

I was talking to an actuary who did work for the public service and he told me it is more like 31 000 people in the public service. Sir, if I take the average, let us say that there are 30 000 people in the public service, if you have all of them, as the Government has done, now called, public processors, meaning that their appointment, promotion, discipline is reserved exclusively for the Service Commissions: Public Service Commission, Legal Service Commission and the Police Service Commission, except appointment to certain top positions for which consultation is required with the Prime Minister, his Deputy, Heads,

et cetera. Only consultation with the Prime Minister, so he cannot decide who should be appointed. I have been Head of the Civil Service and I know that if the Commission makes a recommendation at the Head that the Prime Minister does not like, they review it because the Prime Minister does not like it; and I served two Prime Ministers. Therefore, one recognises that the Prime Minister has to have a say in certain things. Certainly, a normal Minister should have a say in determining who is his or her secretary, not that he will go and pick out one, but you give him six names and he chooses the one he wants. He might tell you one of the names to put on that list, but that does not matter. I am practical on these things.

Sir, no Minister has any authority, and that includes the Prime Minister, under the present arrangements where this Government has made all the casuals and unestablished staff, and public officers, within the name of the Constitution, and therefore, not subject to the appointment, promotion, discipline of any Minister. If the system works, the 1974 Amendments that relates to this, is no longer a problem. Let the system work.

The other point I want to make, has to do with the job evaluation exercise. I have looked forward to this really earnestly and I would like to say that each time the Estimates were presented here since 1999, reference was made, in great detail in some cases, to this exercise which was going to be the mother of all regrading exercises.

I have said before that there is no one way to job evaluation. Indeed, there are four major ways and what evaluators, if I can call them that, do is sometimes marry the various ways into what they call, "a unique evaluation", for a particular client, whether it is a quantitative or a qualitative evaluation. The qualitative evaluation is classification. The quantitative evaluation is where you have points, and various factors which you then subdivide into sub-factors and give points for each one. Which every way it is done, a large measure of value judgment still has to apply.

How do I know, as this last evaluation did, that in awarding points, the Auditor General or the Director of Public Prosecutions should have a lower rating in points, not in salary, than a Permanent Secretary. In our Constitution these two are the only public officers that have a unique Constitutional provision. Therefore, they are totally responsible for their actions. This merits special consideration.

Therefore, I cannot understand this cultural thing that people who know nothing about the whole question of the Constitutional position, come and make some recommendations. Fortunately, they did not recommend, and they could not recommend any down-grading for them, but

job evaluation, although it has the same factors, whether it is classification, or points rating, has the same basic factors. Whether you do it one way or the other, the whole question of value judgment has to arise.

I would like to know the cost of this last exercise. Given the fact that you had two sets of consultants, and that it took over three years, that you utilised the services of 13 public officers, which is a cost in carrying out this exercise.

The noble idea of people being part of this thing cannot be refuted. In the other exercises that I know, people were involved as well and with some trained abroad, not only in Barbados, but they did not remain in the agencies that dealt with these things for longer than a few years. Therefore, the constant training and retraining of new people to do this exercise is absolutely necessary.

Let me say that I have been involved in this matter from 1961. I was conscious of the whole question of the Adams Report of 1948, and each salaried Commissioner that came to our shores was given, as part of his terms of reference, to carry out some aspect of job evaluation. In 1961, it was a man called Jacobs. In 1966, it was a man called Gardner Brown. The one who did the earlier salaries revision and some job evaluation in 1956 was W. D. Godsall. In 1969, a person was engaged called, Pusinelli to do only a regrading exercise. This has nothing to do with the ones we attempted – let's say we attempted – in 1974 and 1989. Never yet has a job evaluation exercise been accepted by everybody and will not be accepted on this occasion either.

Sir, let me tell you something. The last one must have been very good. The only major change in this recommendation has been for the police and other security services and in the context of what has been happening in Barbados in crime and that sort of thing. The sophisticated crime that we now have, and the change in crime, the police can always justify an upward regrading.

Therefore, the 2 000 persons that constitute the police, fire and prisons, including temporary policemen, which we have to regrade as well because they get a basic salary, constitute 2/3 of the posts recommended by this new exercise or regrading.
5.30 p.m.

Mr. President, I have often said in here and elsewhere that the greatest accusation levied against the last regrading exercise was that it dealt only with those at the top of the civil service, but that is far from the truth. I have given the history and the facts that only a couple of posts were upgraded because there were two grades of the same post. We felt that you could not have two grades of Permanent Secretaries when the Permanent Secretary running the

Ministry of Health, the biggest budget, or the Ministry of Education was getting less than the Permanent Secretary running – I am not casting anything – the Ministry of Social Transformation.

You cannot have a Ministry with 4 000 or 5 000 employees in 18 different branches and say that the Permanent Secretary of that Ministry's job is less than that of somebody running a smaller entity. In addition, all Permanent Secretaries are subject to transfer, and they have no say. Today, you could be in charge of the Ministry of Social Transformation and tomorrow you could be in charge of the Ministry of Health, so we felt at that time there should be one grade of Permanent Secretary. Except for those who were in the lower grade and went up to top, nobody at the top of the civil service got any regrading in the last exercise.

Mr. President, on this occasion they have been recommended for substantial increases and therefore the question of responsibility and the question of the nature of their job have been given a very high rating on this occasion. I am saying to beware that it will not be accepted by, not the people involved... I am not here thinking he loved them and saying they do not deserve it, I am not saying that. I have been one for 20 years and I understand these things. When you are putting people in those positions, you need to be sure they can do the work especially at this sort of grading that has been recommended.

Mr. President, I want to identify with the view of some people that it was not a very good exercise. It lacked consideration of the cultural and constitutional peculiarities of Barbados. It has to have some degree of value judgment otherwise it will not be generally accepted by people who have not benefited from it. Two hundred posts have been recommended for a downgrading and I think that is in order. What I would say that out of those 200 posts more than half of them were created since the 1989 exercise. I heard somebody say that it was the absence of standards that they were graded on, but give me another, Mr. President. I am sorry to use that term, but give me another. That could be true, but a lot of those posts were graded without the concurrence or even the total examination of the agency that is responsible for looking at those things.

Mr. President, the one thing that the 1989 job evaluation people stress was that not to go and grade posts willy-nilly because it upsets the whole apple cart. I do not only feel that it is those 200 posts that are to be downgraded that were created. Many of them were posts that were converted from the casual and unestablished staff to the permanent positions and something seems to have gone awry at that point of conversion. Even this exercise that was just concluded referred to that as a problem.

Mr. President, job evaluation is not a scientific perfect thing. I have seen job evaluations done in Canada where the computer models and everything else were put in place and it was not accepted. I had some training in England on this matter and one method that might be suitable for one industry or one particular organisation is not suitable for another. This Report refers to jobs with the same title but doing different work. The fact that the public service is made up of so many departments and agencies and employs so many skills, you cannot cross the public service to evaluate on a rating system that is rooted primarily in arithmetic.

Mr. President, while I am not putting up my ammunition on this exercise, because I would await what would happen when the trade unions discuss it with the Government, I feel justified in whatever part I had to play in the 1975 and 1989 exercises. I am justified because these people have only been able to identify 3 000 posts, 2 000 of which came up in one group, the P scale, and a lot of them have been posts that were created since then and fixed. We must have done a good job that as a public service of 24 000, 6 000 posts received upgrading and less than 200 are to be downgraded. I say nothing was wrong with the police but the police can justify and they have justified each time 61, 66, 69 and onward some different grading because they used the argument of the difficulty of the job and the fact that they are exposed to these dangers and they can always bring cases to prove that.

Mr. President, let me say that while I am particularly impressed with the presentation of the Minister on Agriculture generally I did not hear as much as I would have liked on marketing and extension services. Within the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development there are still the same eight extension officers that existed there for 20 years. Is there any other agency, be it the Rural Development Commission or the Barbados Agricultural Society, that has extension officers? We need to ensure that farmers have the opportunity to consult with these extension officers. When I was a boy, and that was a long time ago, I used to belong to something called a judging ring and every week we would travel with the extension officers to Jerusalem in St. Peter, Haggatts in St. Andrew or the Home in St. Philip and we were required, because we were given certain information, to judge the quality of animals whether it be sheep, goats or cows. We were required to learn something about food production and vegetable production as well. As I said, that is a long time ago. Is that sort of thing being done now at all?

Sir, when we start talking about figures we need to be careful, because there is a quote which I hope I do not misquote that talks about "more statistics than dammed lies". Figures are dangerous things to rely on especially if you are not making equal comparison on the same things at the same time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator even though the word may be unparliamentary, I think the source is quite reputable, so I would permit it on this occasion.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Thank you, Mr. President. I hear people talk about lunch and the quality of school meals and so on, I am glad for that. I have had more grandchildren than children that benefited from that. I went to school at secondary school in 1942 and my lunch money was four cents. It did not do much to harm my progress or my enjoyment. I hear about children now getting \$10 a day. Money is a strange thing to compare. I think that is too much, but still that has nothing to do with what I am trying to say. 5.40 p.m.

I remember when the Right Excellent Errol Barrow was looking at the question of a uniform bus fare, I had a discussion with him and proffered the view that to bring one bus fare was wrong, that it did not recognise the cost. He said to me: "You have joined that *bourgeoisie*. We are doing this and we are supplementing it by subsidies to ensure that the average person can get to work from wherever they are. It will be \$0.25." I told him that when I travelled from St. Lucy to go to school, the fare was \$0.26, and I went to secondary school in 1946.

Mr. President, what I am saying is that one has to match these things against the times and, therefore, what one could have gotten for four cents then, one probably has to pay \$2 for now.

Mr. President, I think the last point I need to address has to deal with the elderly in our society. The elderly in our society, measured in terms of pensioners, is about 40 000 persons. When measured in other terms, it is more. The elderly constitute 13 per cent of the population at this stage. They have serious problems, not only in terms of vagrants descending upon them and beating them up in some cases to get what they have but also having serious deprivation inflicted upon them by their own relatives, such as withholding their pension cheques. This is happening at a time when we are moving towards a full development status.

Mr. President, the Barbados Association for Retired Persons (BARP) had the opportunity to discuss with Sir Roy Marshall, the question of law and order. We have identified the need for a Protection of the Elderly Act as a very urgent matter. At that time, we had identified about ten instances where the elderly are being disadvantaged. This was not done willy-nilly, a Committee headed by Mr. Justice Frank King, including a former Commissioner of Police, now a

practising Attorney-at-Law, Mr. Orville Durant, and a former welfare person to look at this. They came up with these ten matters as being important, to be addressed by the Government and by legislation to protect the elderly from the ravages that are being inflicted upon them.

Mr. President, I want to think that when this report reaches the higher corridors of Government that this matter would be addressed urgently. The Barbados Association for Retired Persons now has over 9 000 members, with the objective of getting 10 000 by September 30, 2004. Mr. President, we propose to use all the influence and pressure at our command, to ensure that some of these things are done.

Mr. President, I will not be addressing the question of pension in detail, except to say that the Government has set up a committee to look at the review of public service pensions. The committee did the National Insurance pensions and now is doing the public service pensions. The Government gave good reasons for having this matter urgently examined, the chief of which was cost. Therefore, in a situation where people are living long, in a situation where the number of persons who have to pay taxes is reducing because less people are coming onto the job market, one cannot wait for the danger to hit but have to plan, therefore, because of this reason, not only the cost but the desirability that pensions be funded. As they are now, pensions are charged on the Consolidated Fund under the Constitution and, therefore, as long as one gets to the stage of earning pensions, it has to be paid from the Consolidated Fund. Other countries have moved towards the question of funding and contributory pension, that is to make the worker pay a part of the contribution to the fund or pensions in payment. Under the Barbados Constitution, this cannot happen unless Government changes it and enforces on people the necessity to make a contribution to their own pension in the public service.

Sir, a consultant came around and recommended that persons be made to pay. It is so important in these matters that Barbadians who know guide these consultants. I, therefore, would like to give way to one of my colleagues if it is possible. I promised I would have given him 20 minutes of my time, I hope I have not gone too far.

Mr. President, to recap my presentation, I wish first to say that the figures in the Estimates are misplaced in some respect; pensions cannot be reduced; they cannot say that they are not giving a subsidy to the Transport Board unless they want Barbadians to stop working and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital urgently needs to have capital funding. If a loan has to be raised, then raise it quickly. I think the whole question of the transfer of Staff from a hospital to a Board has not been handled properly and would not succeed

unless persons come to grips quickly and first get workers seconded, then in the meantime, ask them if they want to work with the Board, *et cetera*, and in terms of the rules and service, make it so agreeable that they would want to come over.

Mr. President, many workers at the Hospital cannot work anywhere else, while many of them can put up their plates and practise things other than medicine, while some of them, especially nurses, are in demand elsewhere. Therefore, we have to find a way to ensure that we can get that transition working, and soon.

Mr. President, I am thankful for the opportunity to make these comments and I am obliged to you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before calling on Senator Newton, I wish to make an observation which perhaps I should have made before. I would like to ask Honourable Senators to desist, as far as possible, from walking around the Chamber to converse with other Honourable Senators during the course of the Sitting.

It is a distraction to the Chair and in particular to the Honourable Member on his feet. Honourable Senators may use the anteroom. The Marshal, I am sure, would assist you in sending an appropriate signal to the person with whom you wish to converse.

I generally ignore isolated cases but I thought I should mention it today.

SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, I will take the advice of the Honourable Senator who went before me and not go on an excursion dealing with figures, especially if they might be taken out of context.

Mr. President, however, I would like to start my contribution by mentioning, as others before me have done, the Report of the Auditor-General for 2003. Sir, the most shocking revelation was that there is an estimated \$380 million in arrears, of which \$114 million are contributions due from individual taxpayers.
5.50 p.m.

There is no difference in this Report from the others that have gone before. Sir, I was privileged a few weeks ago to sit in on an Estimates exercise in another capacity in which I heard the Prime Minister constantly speaking of accountability and best practices and of a need for public funds to be well spent. I do not think it was mere rhetoric but in spite of all this, year after year we continue to receive reports from the Auditor-General pointing to slackness in aspects of our public accounting. I wonder what the problems are, whether there is insufficient staff to deal with

the matters, which I doubt or whether it is training or simply that persons responsible for accounting matters are careless because it is not their own personal funds they just do not care but I am not sure.

Mr. President, I would like to move on to the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. Sir, tourism is our lifeblood and for a long time it has been evident that changes were needed at the Airport not just for visitors to be comfortable but for Barbadians travelling to enjoy those same comforts. Sir, the in-flight check-in area is too small and has been this way for a long time. The staff of several carriers usually double up to find space. The arrival lounge is too small to accommodate traffic especially in the afternoon when several international flights are in. The old departure lounge, even with the recent addition becomes crowded early in the day. The canteen and coffee shop in the departure lounge is not only expensive but too small and there is no alternative. There has also been a decline in recent years in the standard of maintenance at the Airport especially in relation to the washrooms.

Mr. President, after several months of inconvenience, Barbadian travellers cannot be proud of the improvements made so far at the airport. The redevelopment projects spearheaded by the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc., a company incorporated in 1988 is about half-finished. The objectives of the project were:

- to extend the useful life of the airport, increasing passenger handling to accommodate passengers up to 2 000 by 2015.

Mr. President, it is expected that around \$170 million will be spent on the airport expansion by the time the exercise is finished. The departure hall is almost complete and I am told that the company has been receiving compliments from visitors and the Barbadian travelling public on its attractiveness and the easy way travellers feel when they are going to other places. A new arrival hall is being constructed that will have high-capacity baggage carousels along with increased floor space for Immigration and Customs. It is expected that the arrival hall will be opened in 2004. The ticketing area is also to be expanded and should be operational soon.

Two very admirable features will be to facilitate the need for handicapped travellers and in keeping with national efforts towards conservation, to treat all waste water generated by the Airport and use it for irrigation and re-flushing purposes. I think this is an important feature given the fact that we are a water-scarce country and it is likely to get worse within the next few years as massive building continues.

Mr. President, I am satisfied that the airport expansion project when completed will be one of the most attractive and functional in the area but, I am of the view, that given our scarcity of land, the design could have been such that the expansion went upwards instead of outwards. Hopefully, upward expansion at a later date is possible. We must, however, ensure that the Airport, like all other international airports, has multilingual signs and diagram as at present there are too few and that the quality of bathroom maintenance improves.

If the problem is one of supervision or too few staff, whatever it is, it ought to be addressed because the first impression given of a country when you arrive is the state of the bathroom facilities at the airport.

Sir, the car park needs to be extended as well. I am not sure whether plans are in the works for that but attention should be paid to the car park.

Mr. President, this brings us to airport management. A few months ago, there was a widely publicised case of a letter written to a North American offering him a job as airport manager at a salary which caused many Barbadians concerns. At the time, based on the information in the Press, I too felt that the salary mentioned was too high but I caution that airport management, like hospital management is a highly specialised area and that persons who head these institutions should be well paid.

My question is whether in the time that has passed, the Airport Authority has done anything about identifying a Barbadian to train for the position

There is the question of landing fees but we have to be careful to make sure that the airport as a destination is not out-priced because our neighbours are competing with us for the tourism product.
6.00 p.m.

Mr. President, having said those few words on the Grantley Adams International Airport I would like to congratulate the Government and I am not sure when the conceptualisation started, but whichever Government it was, I think it was a good idea to conceptualise and support the project. I would like to thank the Airport Authority, the contractors and the workers on the project for what seems to be going well. I say that because I have travelled a few times in the past few months and each time I got the impression that whatever needs to be done to make travellers feel comfortable is being done, and I think that is highly commendable.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Sir, I move on quickly to the National Library Service.

The National Library Service is operating under legislation that was drafted at the turn of the Century, and the library regulations were drafted in 1954. The Act speaks to the library and the museum being under the governing structure, which has never been the case. If there is one piece of legislation on the statute books that needs to be removed is the Public Library Act.

Mr. President, many developments in the area of librarianship and information provision have taken place since then and a new Act is very urgently needed, with regulations that take into account modern day information provision.

Also needed is a public policy-making body. The days are past when you had one person in a library serving a large population making all the major decisions. Even in the small library of which I am in charge, there is an Advisory Committee to which I must report and which helps me make decisions. It ought to be the same in relation to a National Library Service and archives services as well, because they all fall within the same rubric. Both of them serve large sections of the public and I would say are in need of assistance which a body, comprising of persons with different expertise and experience in various areas could provide.

Mr. President, I move to the Police Complaint Department which is provided for under Head 30, sub Head 238. Provision for the establishment of the Police Complaints Authority was made in October 2001 when the Police Complaints Act was passed. This Act was a result of submissions made to the Constitution Review Commission. I remember the debate on the need for a Police Complaints Authority continued in the Press after the Commission made its report.

The Authority was set up and may I read, Mr. President.

“To supervise the investigation of any complaint alleging that the conduct of a police officer resulting in the death or serious injury to some other person, any other matter, whether or not the subject of a complaint, referred to the Authority by the Commissioner, which in the opinion of the Commissioner should be supervised because of its gravity or its exceptional circumstances.”

The Commission was also mandated to monitor the investigation by the Police Force of any complaint with a view to ensuring that the investigation is conducted impartially.

Mr. President, the Complaints Authority legislation, as I said, was passed in 2001. When I checked through the Estimates to decide what I was going to comment on this time around, and I called to find out what was the delay because I noticed that \$213 302 had been set aside to set up the Commission, I was told that Commissioners had been identified and a Chairman but lo and behold, the Act had not been brought into force.

Sir, I know that in a department such as the Attorney General's where several other major pieces of legislation are drafted and discussed in the course of any one month, it is possible for such things to happen. It is also possible that some legislation may get overlooked and not brought into force because nobody considers it their particular responsibility to look after these things. I would hope that urgent attention is given to bringing the legislation into force, so that the Commission can get started and do its work.

I was also told that the Commission's Headquarters had been identified, and I was gratified to be told that the plan is to move it as far from the Police Headquarters or any police station as possible. After all, we are involved in transparency and while substance always takes precedence, in my view, over form, on this occasion, I think the two should go together. We would not want the public to think that the police against whom they are complaining are just next door and in any position to influence decisions made by the Commissioners or any procedures to do with the complaints that they are going to make.

Mr. President, I am hoping that the Commission will soon be able to get started on its work. I am told that there are a fair number of complaints waiting for this Commission and I am hoping that it will ensure that its decisions are made available to the public so that Barbadians who are concerned about aspects of police operations, especially in relation to how citizens' complaints are handled, will get an opportunity to feel that fair play and justice are going to prevail.

I hope that the Commissioners, and this is a subject on which I spoke a couple of weeks ago, are not persons who will be influenced by the need to be seen as one of the jolly boys and girls, will not ask the right questions and will back down on matters of principle, but will do what, I am sure, the Attorney General is hoping that they will do, that is, ensure that matters of the public interest are dealt with fairly and justly, and without fear or favour.

Sir, having said those few words, I just need to say that I am not like Senator Collymore, versed in dealing with figures. Therefore, I will not attempt to say whether or not enough money is allocated to any one ministry, but I would

say that there are a few ministries that one cannot help but say that they seem to be doing a commendable job. Sir, just as we are quick to criticise, we should be equally quick to praise when we think that the situation merits it.

Mr. President, on the Ministry of Housing, I would hate to be the Minister of Housing at this time because the housing needs are so complex and great that anything a Minister of Housing does, is likely to bring criticism. There are just too many needs to be satisfied from the public purse. I would not want to say that the Government has given the impression that it is there to satisfy all the housing needs.

I would say that I think that "needs tests" should be applied fairly strictly to make sure that housing, financed from the public purse, goes to those persons who are most in need and cannot afford to do for themselves.

We also have to continue on the path of high-rise housing because of our land scarcity. Mr. President, it should not be that housing is allocated for persons for ever.
6.10 p.m.

If you qualify for a Government unit in 2004 at a salary of \$300 a week and four or five years later you are making a salary of \$2 000 or \$4 000 a month there should be some mechanism for revisiting those situations to make sure that those people who could afford to help themselves move out of the Government subsidised housing and go and do their own thing and let other people have an opportunity.

So I am sure the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment is going to have a hard time. That is the reason why in some countries persons who are Ministers of Housing and probably Ministers of Public Works and Transport are not elected representatives because sooner or later their colleagues, their enemies and everybody will get at them because they cannot satisfy all the needs that are out there and then sooner or later their own constituents might turn against them as well. These persons are in a very difficult position and they cannot be seen to be favouring their own constituents. They cannot do enough for constituents of other representatives as well and then they are between a rock and a hard place, but that is just my perspective on the issue.

Mr. President, notwithstanding the comments made in the Auditor General's report which I think ought to be looked at seriously, I think the Ministry of Housing is really trying to make a difference in terms of housing in Barbados.

With those comments, Mr. President, I thank you very much.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Mr. President, I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in the debate of the Appropriation Bill 2004-2005. Sir, the Government's fiscal agenda would precede the upcoming financial year on the basis of a budget of current revenue of just over \$1.9 billion and a total expenditure of around \$2.5 billion.

Sir, as a member of this Honourable Senate I am mindful of the constitutional prescription that limits the Senate's ability to effectively go into the broad heads of the Estimates, but I believe that our deliberations over this Bill are important in this society as a small society and an emerging democracy. Our ability to be an effective check on any legislative excesses has manifested itself by the contributions of Honourable Senators, particularly by the Independent Senators who spoke.

Sir, our power is really to review the broader concerns of Government's fiscal policy and agenda for the coming year. Indeed, the revision of the Public Accounts Committee by allowing Members from this Chamber to sit and review the operations of Government's expenditure over a period of time is a welcome reform measure. Indeed, it goes even further to allow that Committee to look into the affairs of corporate entities in which Government owns significant shareholdings.

Sir, as we speak, the economic outlook for Barbados in the coming year is projected to be better than the current year. A lot of discussion by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition in this House focussed on the lack of Government's ability to really snap out a strategy to deal with social concerns. It was unfortunate that the Government of Barbados has been criticised by Senator Stuart on the basis that the Barbados Labour Party looks after the economy and not the society. Sir, that is an unfortunate distinction that was made by someone who I believe should know better because an economy is made up of people, not of esoteric figures or contrasts.

Sir, we refer to concepts such as the marketplace where people come together from various sectors of the society and undergo certain relationships where they are preformed in a particular manner. It is an unfortunate intellectual somersault to try to bridge a divide between two political parties in this country. This is part and parcel of the kinds of politics that the Right Honourable Owen Arthur, the Prime Minister of this country, has spoken about when he spoke about the politics of inclusion because we cannot afford in a society like Barbados to develop these artificial philosophical cleavages to define two populace political parties as being different from each other. That is why I said that it is unfortunate that the Honourable Senator has brought about these intellectually dishonest somersaults on these issues.

Sir, the projected economic growth for Barbados for the next financial year is about 3.5 per cent which is an improvement from the growth of 2.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product that we experienced in the current year. A major plank of the Estimates this year is to narrow the fiscal deficit. We have been able to achieve our projections where we have narrowed the fiscal deficit by 1.2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product to 4.5 per cent. Sir, it is important in this debate, given the context in which our society has developed that we confront these terms, and I would deal with that a little more.

Sir, our country, like every other economy in the world, has had to grapple with what the economists call the first synchronised downturn of the new global economy. We have had to battle all of the challenges like every other society in the world. Our economic growth, though small, has been led by one sector while other sectors have been relatively underperforming under the weight of the new changes in the international economic order that exists. It is not a form of incestuous back-patting that we speak about the management of the Barbadian economy and about the good performance of the tourism sector. It is a fact that the tourism sector in this country has led Barbados' charge to get out of the sticky situation we found ourselves in two years ago. The Government quickly responded by creating the emergency package to tour operators and to hoteliers who were faced with cancellations of forward bookings. Sir, the Government did not only stop there by plugging money into the industry, it created the Tourism Development Act which created a scheme of incentives to encourage persons to come to Barbados and invest in our tourism product, especially in the area of creating new attractions to a mature tourism destination like Barbados in which we were in danger of becoming a stale tourism destination.

Sir, we spoke about equity financing a couple of months ago when we dealt with the subvention to the Barbados Tourism Authority, but we must repeat some of them because when we look at the true Barbados economy what really exists touches and concerns the lives of everyone of us. So to try to divide political thinking in this country between a society and an economy is really ludicrous. That is why I am taking my time in going through the logic behind Government's strategy for maintaining the level of social services that are provided for our people.
6.20 p.m.

Mr. President, in respect of equity financing, instruments under the Enterprise Growth Fund, the Small Hotels Fund and the Tourism Loan Fund, have also provided an opportunity for that sector to be able to finance its operations in a situation where there was high liquidity in the commercial banking sector. Sir, the commercial banking sector has always shown a reluctance to get involved in risks in terms of non-conventional means of doing business in this country.

Sir, for the Year 2004, the outlook for tourism is even brighter because as up to the end of February we have had a better year in 2004 than we have ever had in a long time. This is as a result of the Government leaning on the local sector because it needed the help, not only that we could have grown but that we could have maintained the *status quo* in terms of the Government and the State's responsibility to provide a means of economic development and social engineering through its fiscal policies.

Mr. President, it is projected that the surge in spending in this country by the several English tourists over the next coming weeks is so important that it would mitigate against the projected rise in terms of our imports into this country.

Mr. President, Barbados is a society that could be considered a net import and when economists could forecast that as a result of the British tourists coming to Barbados to watch cricket, that it has a significant impact to mitigate against the increases in terms of our net retain imports and the fact that our domestic export sector is struggling under the weight of trade liberalisation and globalisation, it is important that we confront these issues head on.

Sir, there is also projected to be a boom in the construction sector and the economy is expected to grow and as Honourable Senators on this Side have spoken, especially Senator Husbands, the expansion of the economy would mean more jobs. It would mean that people would spend more money, businesses would earn greater revenue and Government could also collect more taxes from its workers and from the businesses that are making profits.

Mr. President, as a Government there are a number of challenges that we have to face and, therefore, I applaud the enthusiasm of the Leader of Government Business. Sir, the agricultural sector faces a number of challenges of which we do not like to speak. The Barbados Labour Party came to office at a time when this country was committed to a number of international trade arrangements and at no time did the then Government come honestly to the people of Barbados and said to let them discuss the way forward because the changes in the international economic environment that were projected would have significantly impacted upon the way in which the agricultural sector, which has functioned for over 300 years as the backbone of the economy, could no longer function.

Mr. President, yet the same Democratic Labour Party can tell the people of Barbados that the Barbados Labour Party is guilty of treating this society as an economy and not as a society, when they had neglected to bring plans and programmes which would have helped this country to plan ahead, while at the same time they were committing the

Government and the people of this country to the changing obligations in international world trading system.

Sir, our agricultural sector, our soils in Barbados are very thin and we are having less and less rainfall every year. Our trade preference ratio in terms of our economic activity to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is very great. Our agriculture and manufacturing sectors have operated in an environment in which a lot of trade preferences have been given to them and subsidies by the Government to allow them to be competitive. We can no longer operate in that environment because of the changes in the international economic environment. Therefore, Government must put plans in place that follow the rules of international trade and not to offend the treaties and obligations to which we are committed but at the same time must try to protect the quality and standard of living that we enjoy as a people.

Sir, there are adjustment costs that are associated with these kinds of arrangements that impact significantly on the people in the society. That is why I say it is an unfortunate slur and an unfortunate attempt to try to make that kind of philosophical division where it does not necessarily exist in practice. I suppose that I am new to this business and am not yet a qualified politician and that I do not understand that there is need to make political points every time one speaks.

Mr. President, as an economy, we have to be more competitive. I think one of the biggest challenges is how do we become competitive, while at the same time maintaining the current commitment to the social services sector which we undoubtedly believe is the reason why Barbados enjoys being the third ranking State in the Western Hemisphere, in terms of the human development index.

Mr. President, the current system of Government's allocation of expenditure and collection of revenue has come in for recent criticism. Sir, the Estimates are limited to setting out the sums which are calculated and will be disbursed in the year to which they apply. It is true that the Estimates do not show the value of the assets that are owned by Government, nor the extent of the liabilities that Government must face from a previous financial year, or those to be spread over years to come. Sir, that is why the accrual system, which is an accepted system of measuring one's assets and liabilities over long periods of time, have been used in the private sector and not simply recording one's revenues and expenditure on a cash basis, by closing one's entries and recording the revenue in the period in which it is earned and one's expenditure in the period in which it is spent.

Mr. President, the accrual system would give a more comprehensive picture of the programmes of the Government by linking the resources consumed with outputs produced.

It is something on which I believe we must have more discussion. I am mindful of the Leader of Government Business who spoke about an increase in the obligations of those managing the collection of Government's revenue, to make sure that we do not end up with too many. There is also the equal obligation of those who are in charge of spending to make sure that we do not expand the size of Government.

Sir, in my reading since we have come to this debate, I looked at what obtains in other Commonwealth jurisdictions. In fact, in England, the country from which we borrow much of our institutional arrangements in terms of our Parliament, the House of Lords discusses the Appropriation Bill but only as a formality. It is done in one day. In fact, the Estimates are not even prepared or printed for the Members of the House of Lords. It passes as a formality and the last time Estimates were discussed in the House of Lords in any substance was in 1907. Sir, we are fortunate that this Honourable Chamber can afford some time to deliberate over these issues. I think we need to look at some of the jurisdictions to which we bear some similarity in order to find the model best suited to Barbados in terms of the fiscal reform process.

6.30 p.m.

Sir, I return to the criticism of the Government that this document is only about economics. Every Government which has run the affairs of this country has used fiscal policy as a means of engendering social and economic development for its people. I say that particularly where the private financial system in the country has been less than kind to emerging new enterprises. Government has played a central role in creating an enabling environment to facilitate the financing of entities not currently serviced by the financial services sector. We can think of the creation of the Barbados National Bank in the 1970s and a host of other arrangements such as the Small Business Association and the Enterprise Growth Fund to which I referred to earlier.

Government has also spent money in the EduTech programme, created the Ministry of Social Transformation, the Urban Development Commission, Rural Development Commission and directed resources to these entities to service the needs of these people. There is nothing esoteric about the fiscal policies contained in these Estimates because they are real and relate to people but because of the current international environment that exists Government must design the Estimates in order to manage the country because it is charged with the obligation of looking far down the road.

I want to draw reference to a statement made by the Leader of the Opposition when he was in this Chamber in a previous Estimates debate in March 2000. He said at that time that everything else depends on how well we are able to

forecast revenue and expenditure in the Estimates, that if we do a bad job there will be further turbulence in Barbados and in the economy and that there will be greater difficulties and layoffs.

Mr. President, the Leader of the Opposition when he was in this Chamber understood the need for the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure to play an important role not only in collecting revenue and spending Government's money but in terms of forecasting a long-term strategy so that Barbadians could maintain the high quality standard of living that we fundamentally believe is our own right.

Sir, this position is not taken by the Honourable Senator Stuart. When he spoke to the gallery, he was political savvy and created an artificial distinction that bears no reality to how a Government in 2004 ought to operate Sir. He departed fundamentally from his Leader.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party, as a Government, recognised the need for change, and for many, change happens in small, gradual, evolutionary steps. The overall objective of the Government is to make Barbados into a full-fledged economy based on the delivery of high value-added services. This process is contemplated at a time when the prevailing international economic environment to which many Honourable Senators referred, presents significant challenges in terms of the loss of trade preferences and our ability to get concessional loans to build infrastructure in this country.

Sir, by 2005, the Barbadian economy will have to function in an environment in which we must remove all barriers to trade in goods, services and investment within the hemisphere. By the end of this year, we will have to begin the process by which the Caribbean Single Market and Economy creates new opportunities to the way in which we have functioned for over 400 years as a single economy in this region.

Sir, by 2007, our ability to export sugar, rum, agricultural and manufacturing products to the European Union would change because of the new economic partnership agreements that have to be in place.

Sir, 80 per cent of the \$300 million domestic export economy of this country comes under the auspices of arrangements under the Caribbean Basin Initiative. The kind of change required to meet the challenges of economic development is not an evolutionary process because it requires the kinds of changes that would bring the sort of qualitative and quantitative leaps in the way in which our society organises itself and, Sir, the Honourable Senator Eastmond spoke to this last night in her contribution to the Estimates debate.

Sir, it has to be a non-evolutionary change in order for us to grasp the benefits of the new international, economic environment that confronts us and which we have never had to deal with before.

6.40 p.m.

There was not a word, Sir, from the Opposition on how this society will grapple with these changes, not in their Manifesto and not from any of their spokesmen. Sir, if you hear the Shadow Minister of International Business speaking anywhere on the International Business Environment, any first level economic student, any first level political science student or law student would be ashamed. You cannot compare the Barbados International Business Sector with any country that has international business companies and I believe Senator Eastmond spoke to that in our tribute to the late Sir Harold St. John.

When the sector was being created in Barbados, there were fundamental qualitative differences in the international offshore sector back in the 1970s that we decided we would implement in this country. It stood the test of time because we were able to make distinctions in terms of Barbados being a low tax regime that conforms to the regulatory framework of all standards that could be plausibly employed to manage the sector.

Sir, to point to the reduction of registration of international business companies as a failure by the sector is nonsense; but this is the kind of criticism that would come to persons who seek, not necessarily to get involved with the issues of the day but to make political points, and to frighten Barbadians into believing that this Government does not know what it is doing.

I welcome the day, Sir, when there could be serious intellectual challenge to the Government's development agenda. We are not saying that the Barbados Labour Party has all the ideas, and for the Honourable Senator Stuart to say that the Opposition is not in the business of bringing ideas to the table, but keep saying that because they like being in Opposition, brings no development to the people so that there can be a debate. The Government cannot proceed on the basis that everything that we do is right. Bring a challenge to the issues. Tell us how are you going to defend our surrendering up of certain service sectors in respect of our FTAA negotiations. What is your idea in respect of what services should be protected and what services ought to be liberalised?

There was not a word from the Democratic Labour Party on these issues in 2004 and I warn, Sir, that you will hear this for the next five or six years from them, because they seem not to want to grasp these issues and to define them as an economy that the Barbados Labour Party is dealing with.

Sir, in 1976 the Barbados Labour Party set in train the process by which the economy of this country could be diversified in a very large way and, because of that process which was set in train we are able to sustain the level of social service on which Government in these Estimates can spend the taxpayers' money to provide for our people.

When the Airport to West Coast Highway was being built in this country, people criticised that development as a means for drug planes to land in this country and they scoffed at a highway that would open up the belly of this country and facilitate infrastructural development and access to all of the major areas in this country by our people, visitors and people who do business in this country. That idea was scoffed at. But, could you imagine Barbados without a highway?

Sir, could you imagine all the traffic that comes from Grantley Adams International Airport to the West Coast would have to go either through the country or through Bridgetown? Suffice it to say that the stage is really set for how our society is going to manage this process of change which I feel is non-evolutionary. It is not gradual and it is not small. Giant qualitative and quantitative changes need to be confronted. Sir, I am not going to leave it there, because I am going to explain what I mean by these giant steps. Thus, historians have summed up societies across the world over time, and those societies which have made the transition in a number of ways. There are three things essentially that they say you must do. You must have:

1. New forms of organisation.
2. You must have new production technologies.
3. There must be a transformation of human values as a cultural response to the challenges ahead.

I deal, Sir, firstly with the new forms of human organisation. This Barbadian society can only become a developed economy if we have new forms of human organisation which will enable our society and our people to manage efficiently and effectively our human and physical resources.

We cannot do business like we used to, that is why the process of public sector reform is so critically important to that development process. This is why the EduTech programme to bridge the digital divide in our educational system so that those persons whom we are training to come into the labour market and help this service economy function, would be able to compete successfully with those other persons in the western hemisphere and all the other economic relationships that we enter into that our people can compete.

Sir, 30 or 40 years ago, the East Asian economies particularly were way behind economies like Argentina. Labour was shoddy and cheap and the GDP was way below, as I said, countries like Argentina. They embraced new technologies and new forms of organising their society and today, Japan as a society enjoys a better economic outlook than Argentina which 30 years ago had a GDP twice that of Japan's. A country like Argentina, as rich as it was 30 years ago, in terms of social, human and other capital, did not embrace a fundamental change in the way in which the society was organised.

Sir, the good thing is that the potential to utilise and manipulate technology is not sacrosanct. It is not a monopoly that is enjoyed by a particular country or region or class of people. It can be utilised and manipulated by everybody. I urge the Barbadian people to join the Government in looking at ways in which we can be more competitive and productive. I am calling particularly on the labour movement, to embrace the concept of fundamental change and stop holding on to the historical baggage of a past era in which economic, human and social organisation in this country was fundamentally different from that which we confront now.

Sir, the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister, the Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur in his introduction of this debate in the Other Place, spoke of the Government's plan to be more entrepreneurial. He sets out a number of criteria which, in his mind are essential, in terms of making sure that this Barbados economy is able to stand the test of time. The first was that there must be sustained investment in social and human development. Sir, all the Honourable Senators on this side who spoke made the point that this year's Estimates commits over half of Government's budget to the social sector, and I want to re-emphasise that point. Sir, over \$242 million will be spent on health in the Barbadian economy this year. Over \$76 million will be spent on social transformation, some \$242 million on education, \$88 million on housing and \$47 million on public works. That amount has to do with the infrastructure and things like that. 6.50 p.m.

Sir, there is a commitment on the part of this Government to maintaining the high level and the sustained investment in the human and social capital in this country. Nobody can walk away from this debate saying that the Government has reneged on one of the fundamental tenets of the governance contract between the governed and the people that make the decisions on the behalf of the Government.

The second criterion which the Prime Minister set out is that we must practice an open economic system, that is, that we must commit ourselves to the full integration into the real economic. We must not hide from it and we cannot tell

our people that when the Government goes away to negotiate on their behalf it is only concerned about economics and not social policy. Sir, in my humble opinion that is rubbish and we must move beyond that.

Sir, we must agree to the process of liberalisation because as I said earlier in this Honourable Chamber Barbados cannot stand splendidly in isolation and opt out of the international economic environment because the very basis of an organised society in this country, as the Honourable Senator Stuart spoke, was to integrate this economy three or four hundred years ago into an Atlantic trading system that was dominated by a monopoly capitalism that was operating in the European continent. So we cannot now in 2004 disengage ourselves from those dynamics so easily.

Sir, the third feature of what the Prime Minister is saying in terms of this economy and making it ready for the challenges that lie ahead is to create an enterprise culture which deals with the psychologic, as Senator Doctor Lowe would tell you in respect of fashioning in people the desire to be more productive thus creating a productionist impulse in people which is endemic.

Sir, a society must have a cultural response to the whole question of development and if the society cannot engage itself in such qualitative changes in the way it perceived that it can function, then the battle is lost. So, we must create in this society an enterprise culture in the country.

Sir, the fourth tenet of that principle is that the Government must play an entrepreneurial role. The State must take reasonable risk to create and broaden the scope of opportunity for all. It must create an enabling environment that is facilitative of all classes of entrepreneurial activity. So the Government must take the lead and build those institutions that can carry the load and the commitment to our people in terms of the sustained investment in the social services sector.

Sir, I say that against the backdrop of criticism of the sale of the Barbados National Bank. Sir, this is a Government that believes fundamentally that we must make a distinction on the optimal size of the State. We must make that distinction now because we cannot continue on the basis of rhetoric or nationalistic sentiment because those are not necessarily relevant in terms of our country's long term survival. Government must be able to divest itself of interests in institutions that at a particular point in their own development are designed to make a profit.

Mr. President, when Government divests itself of those institutions and sells them to the private sector, Government must therefore set the policy, the standards and the

parameters in which the divestment operates so that the social gains that were achieved by the ownership of those institutions are not lost to the people. That must be fairly said because we operate in an environment in which all around us our domestic financial systems are adjusting to the changes of globalisation. We saw it with the merging of Barclays Bank and the Caribbean Imperial Bank of Commerce. The Bank of Butterfield has now brought the Barbados Mutual Bank and it looks like the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago is buying the Caribbean Commercial Bank.

Mr. President, none of the institutional investors in Barbados saw it fit to make an offer for the Barbados National Bank in the same way none of them are making an offer on the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, but a Government must be entrepreneurial. The Government must make a decision that it is better to divest itself of some of the interest in a particular asset, notwithstanding that it is earning, and look for strategic relationships such as the private sector who can better run it to allow that entity to strive in a changing market and to be able to compete rather than owning a set of institutions in this country that are making profit and is still committed to the sustained level of investment in human and social capital.

Mr. President, Government has to make a distinction between pumping funds in the Barbados National Bank so that it can compete on a regional level and indeed on a hemispheric level and on building a school or repairing a police station. These are the fundamental questions that we have to answer. Therefore, I think it is time to scotch the heresy that Government sold the Barbados National Bank because Government sold some of its shareholdings but retained a significant portion of that shareholding so that the new majority shareholder cannot trigger the takeover clause in the Companies Act and buy the entire bank. The Government is committed to maintaining this size of its shareholding. As I said, the Government can set policies and standards so as to make sure that the social gains that have been earned as a result of owning the economic assets are not lost overnight.

Sir, when this Chamber can decide to debate the issues as they presently stand, the people of Barbados would not be fooled and some of the nonsense you hear on the call-in programmes about Barbados selling off the Barbados National Bank to Trinidad and Tobago and Caribbean Commercial Bank being sold off to Trinidad and Tobago and all of that will not take place.

Sir, it is important that we understand that the carrying capacity of this Barbadian society is coming to a stage in which Government must make critical decisions about its size. When I talked about the size I am not talking in terms of the numbers, I am talking about the ability of the State to

provide the basic level obligations to its people. We have reached the stage where the receipts from our export of goods and services are far less than what we pay for the things that we import, so while the fiscal deficit is manageable or it has reached manageable proportions there is a deficit in what the economists call the current account which is a cause for concern.

7.00 p.m.

Sir, the Barbados Government has determine the way forward is for us to have strong, private capital investment in this country to support the Balance of payments situation that we have. Therefore, we must embrace the concept of strategic alliances and mergers in the critical sectors as a means to trouble-shoot the effects of globalisation.

Sir, the other entities that practise in the private banking sector are doing it and, therefore, why should Government hold onto the Barbados National Bank and have to make the hard decision as to whether we should capitalise that institution so that it could effectively compete at the expense of the investment in social and human capital. Why should the Government be making that decision in 2004? It is an asset.

Mr. President, the same credit unions in this country who were complaining that Government did not bend over backwards to sell them the institution, as soon as the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago opened its doors, went and sold their shares. These are the same credit unions that said Government should have given them first option before selling the Barbados National Bank who instead sold their shareholding in the Barbados National Bank to the Republic Bank and made a fat profit doing so.

Sir, an entrepreneurial Government must be able to make those kinds of decisions while, at the same time, give the people the commitment that it will not do anything to break their trust in terms of that sustained investment in human and social capital.

Mr. President, I want to respond to a comment made by Senator Fields in respect of what he feels is unfair criticism about mergers in this country. Sir, we must have a situation in Barbados where businesses merge and do not bring the kinds of economies of scale that would result in low prices to the consumers of this country. There is a tendency in which mergers are operating in this country, and there is a form of oligopolies that are taking root, in which there is a limited amount of certain entities in the sector which operate in very much the same way as though they were one entity. What the Government has done in respect to the Barbados National Bank, is to approach a strategic partner, who has throughout the Caribbean been

performing in the banking sector in respect of other transactions other than the commercial banking which we know in Barbados. Sir, I am speaking about the venture capital arrangements, merchant banking and other facilities that are being offered by Republic Banks in other jurisdictions which have recognised the need for strategic investors.

Mr. President, the insurance industry is also part of our financial arrangements in this country. We also have a strong offshore sector but when we look at the kinds of performances, qualitatively in terms of our domestic financial services sector, there is a significant lag in the kind of sophistication, synergies and operations, when one makes the comparison between our domestic financial services sector and the offshore financial services sector.

Mr. President, I want to spend some time, if the clock would permit on...

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is a little time. It is about eight minutes more.

SENATOR G. P. B. NICHOLLS: Mr. President, when one looks at the life insurance industry in Barbados, there is in excess of \$5 billion in that economy. On a per capita basis, the sums insured are high, relative to the average earnings in this country. The premiums as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is 7.4 per cent, which is called insurance penetration. Therefore, what we have in this country is a relatively small population that has a significant investment already in the insurance market and a significant number of insurance distributors in the market. Therefore, the only growth for the insurance industry is to look outwards.

Sir, there is tremendous potential in other countries whose insurance penetration do not reach the level of Barbados and again I beg the question, does Government make the decision to capitalise the Insurance Corporation of Barbados at the expense of any of the other heads in terms of the social services sector in this country? The Government must be entrepreneurial, there must be change in the society, and we must make the decisions. We must be honest with our people.

Mr. President, therefore, there is a need to form strategic alliances and again I issue the warning, which is not necessarily mergers and acquisitions which do not bring any economies of scale to the operations but strategic alliances which would improve the market share; which would acquire a crucial supplier and which would link one's distribution systems and mesh the emerging technologies in respect of Information Communications Technologies.

Mr. President, at the end of it, this Barbados Labour Party Government is going to make the right decisions in respect to the management of the affairs of this country. The

people are not worried about our commitment to the continued social investment that every government makes. We have had 10 years of the Barbados Labour Party in Office and people can go to work tomorrow without worrying about whether or not this Government would continue to commit itself to education, housing, and to those things which we feel are fundamental rights to all Barbadians.

Sir, we must caution that in the bringing of this Appropriation Bill at this time, the Barbados economy cannot continue to function in the way it has functioned in the past. There are serious challenges ahead and we must confront them. We must develop strategies to how we want to develop.

Sir, I issue the caution that we must confront those hard decisions about what is the optimum size or what is the carrying capacity of the State and like any other entrepreneur would, should the State exercise its right to make strategic decisions in respect of its income generating assets.

Mr. President, those are the kinds of questions with which this debate should concern itself. The people who have to work in this society, those people who are at school, expect nothing less than that. I have before said that there are young people in this country who do not necessarily feel that the State is the absolute provider of everything for them and that decisions must be made on the level of what is best for all of Barbados. Therefore, because we pay taxes, we cannot continue in a situation where everybody believes that the State owes them a job, a house, free education or free health care. There must be change and we need to grapple with the fundamental and qualitative change that would ensure the fruits of development which are called progress.

Sir, I believe when the Right Honourable Prime Minister set out his vision for the Barbadian economy, he was moved by the words of the New England Poet, Robert Frost, who said:

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep."

Mr. President, I am convinced that the policies of this Barbadian Government are in keeping with the kinds of words that Robert Frost would have written when he wrote the poem called "The Weary Traveller". We are weary travellers, but we still have far to go.
7.10 p.m.

Sir, the challenges are formidable. They are not the sort of challenges that can be resolved at Glenburnie over a

bowl of pudding and souse. They are formidable challenges but the Barbados Labour Party knows that the woods are wondrous, dark and deep. Sir, we have promises to keep and miles to travel before we sleep.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until Wednesday, March 24, 2004 at 10.00 a.m.

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Mr. President, I am very delighted to be present in this Chamber to take part in this debate of what I, like the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, believes is the real budget of the country. Sitting in other places with responsibilities, the matter of the Appropriation Bill is the way things are done, that is, you look to see how you will manage your expenditure, and that is what this Appropriation Bill before us is doing.

Mr. President, I say to you and to Honourable Senators here today that Barbados stands at a crucial point in this world in regard to where its future lies. Everyone of us as Barbadians have a responsibility to this country more than ever before. I want to congratulate the Honourable Leader of Government Business, Senator Griffith, for the erudite way in which he presented this Appropriation Bill and for his deep knowledge and understanding of economic matters. I also observed that he has great faith in God because he made a profound statement in his presentation on Monday, which is, that we as Barbadians must do our best and leave the rest to the Almighty. I am going to return back to this point later.

Mr. President, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister of Barbados, for so ably leading this country for the past 10 years. We have discovered in the halls of administration, not a tall man but a giant for a Prime Minister, a Minister of Finance and a professional economist.

Mr. President, I want to look at this country in relation to its management and the way the finances have been managed in this country since Independence. Independence

brought upon us as a people tremendous responsibilities to find our way in a world with a small open economy and without much natural resources. The greatest resource that has been to our benefit is our people, and that is magnificent.

Mr. President, the economy of this country has been managed by our Finance Ministers many times on a knife-edge. We have had a history of deficit financing and to have achieved what we have achieved in this world, we must appreciate all of our Finance Ministers in this country over the life of our Independence.

Mr. President, there was only one occasion that things got out of hand and I do not want to dwell on that only to say that that one occasion should be an oasis for us in understanding the difficulties that can come upon us as a people in this world. I want to say from this point what is the fiat in the presentation of the Minister of Finance at this present time. Have we catch it? I followed the debate in the Other Place and I am sad to say that nearly all of the Members of the Opposition and some of the Members of the Government seem not to have caught the message.

Mr. President, it is important for us to understand the message that came to us from our Leader, the Prime Minister of this country. I myself seem to have caught that message, which is fiscal reformation. You cannot reform something that does not exist. Fiscal reformation calls for many things. It calls for efficiency and accountability. It calls for the best behaviours on the part of every Barbadian, on the part of the private sector, on the part of Government itself and its managers and on the part of the trade union movement.

Mr. President, we as Barbadians have been blessed with a trade union movement whose maturity stands out in relation to its commitment to Barbados and its people. Fiscal reformation also calls for the strengthening of institutions – I am going to come to those things as I go along – therefore, it is important for us as individuals to personalise the message from the Minister of Finance, the Prime Minister of Barbados.

Mr. President, as an individual I must manage my family. I have grown children, but I still have to assist them from experience in managing themselves and on being responsible citizens of this country. I have to be efficient in that. I have to be accountable and I have to behave.
10.10 a.m.

Mr. President, I want to put before the people of this country the question of behaviour. Only last Sunday I went to give a Biblical study at a mother and her daughter's home and before leaving there, like a father, I sat that young lady down and spelt out what were the dangers to young people

Sir the greatest danger for the young people of today is sex because it is used as a weapon for murder, as regard to HIV/AIDS. Therefore, we as older persons in this society, in our various responsibilities at Church, in the various organisations, within the families, teachers in schools and as managers, we must be able to be exemplars in our life in relation to our behaviour. There are husbands who leave their wives for extra sexual relationships, and in some cases bring home the weapon. Some wives have died from the weapon that the husbands have brought home, and *vice versa*.

Sir, the question of HIV/AIDS stands between us and whether we are going to have a Barbados. When we get the information of the devastation that HIV/AIDS through sex has brought to Africa, almost the inside of the habitation of these countries are gone, older people are alive and there are many young persons without mothers or fathers. In Barbados we have to get the message about how we behave in this manner.

Mr. President, I want to give kudos to the private sector in Barbados whose response to the mission of this Government has been excellent. They have acted maturely. Sir, let me give an example. This Government came to office under the Honourable Prime Minister, Owen Seymour Arthur, with its first objective of job creation. The Honourable Prime Minister said that he wanted to create 30 000 jobs, since the unemployment rate stood at over 21 per cent.

Mr. President, during the late 1980s, the Honourable Prime Minister was challenged by the Opposition that he was padding the public service. This is now 10 years. The public service has created approximately 6 000 jobs out of the 30 000, with the private sector creating the others. On the Call-in programmes I hear callers knocking the private sector of this country daily and in spite of it all, history has been that the private sector has been the greater employer in this country from the time I was born. Indeed they have their particular ways because we cannot do without them because of the investments they make and the risks they take.

Sir, in this world in which we live, nobody owes us anything. When we consider that because of the management of our Finance Ministers and the political parties in Barbados, the Democratic Labour Party and the Barbados Labour Party, have both brought this country where it is today, that is from a developing country to being very close to a developed one.

We must understand that when the World Bank graduates us from concessional loans, nobody has anything for us as a people. It is us that must chart our course for a future Barbados. Therefore, as adults and older persons like

myself, we must be determined to support a country that stands firm and on its ideals and characteristics to the younger people.

Mr. President, in this wise I want to talk to young politicians, both in the Other Place and here, about what is set for them all, about how responsible they must be and that, as an exemplar in honesty, efficiency and maturity, would strengthen the institutions of this country for the future. I want all of you who are in these Assemblies and those outside who are looking forward to getting into either one of these Houses of Parliament, to think on it. The course is not going to be easy and, therefore, from now on, they must all put their backs to the wind and prepare to take over and to prosper this country for their sons and daughters, for my grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Mr. President, I am on this tenet because as a matured person, I want to be real and to set a tone of being positive as I have this opportunity. I was really disappointed yesterday but I am going to forgive my good friend Senator Stuart for what he said in response to an aside from me in particular.

Mr. President, when asked to give us an idea or to put something on the table, his response in essence was that the Democratic Labour Party was not here to keep the Barbados Labour Party in power. Sir, I have forgiven him for that indiscretion. Sir, I think he would have scolded himself on that statement, so we forgive him for that.
10.20 a.m.

Mr. President, if what he is saying is what he means, it means that the people of Barbados should not give the Opposition any seats in Parliament if they are not prepared to be part of Government, and as he said, and build a society. Having forgiven the Honourable Senator, I look forward for something on the table.

Sir, for 10 years the Opposition did not table a single Bill to Parliament. I would like to challenge the Leader of the Opposition, a well-qualified person in economics but I know that he is not very great in politics but certainly his skills are akin to develop a political mind that would be positive and that can be challenged to bring before this Assembly some of the things that they have put in their Manifesto.

Do not wait until the Barbados Labour Party is in Government because we on this Side are not going to forfeit the Government to the Democratic Labour Party as they forfeited it to us. We did not take it from them. They forfeited it by their own conscience that they had done a bad job. Sir, if they want a formula to remain in Opposition in the forfeiture of Government, do not bring matters to this Honourable Senate and the Other Place that are not for the development of a good society.

I am going to live long..

Asides.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: I am going to live long and I am going to wait until you bring it. I am going to come and shake your hand. I am going to come and say thanks because I am looking forward to it.

Sir, let me look at a few areas in sections of the economy of Barbados. I must first speak on the question of the policy on persons with abilities though having disabilities. I had the privilege of working for one year on that committee of recommending a policy for persons with disabilities and something has been done. I also had the privilege to sit on Sir Henry Forde's Constitution Review Committee.

In that particular Report, we worked hard to get something on that because what was coming through to me was – I wanted a Bill of rights for persons with disabilities. There were Members who felt the country could not bear it but you cannot deny persons who have problems the rights that they should have from the State.

Sir, I have some ideas but I do not have the time now to say what there are. A Green Paper came to this Honourable Senate and a White Paper is being promised. Mr. President, about two weeks ago, the Prime Minister gave his thoughts about what he holds for persons with disabilities at the opening of the Council for Disabilities. That is a good start.

However, I want to register that this car must not start without a battery. It cannot be jump started. It must have a spark. It must have something on which to go and, in my view, the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Minister, whom I love, are too slow. I want some movement. I want something done, more than what is being done for a people that have been disadvantaged, not by their own doing, some may have, but if you were born with disabilities somebody has to help you.

I have a disability but I was not born this way. I was born with a problem that would have eventually become what it is. I was determined that in spite of my problem nobody can sit me down. I was determined that whatever I can do for myself nobody would have to do for me. I want to appeal to persons with disabilities, while you need help, get up and use what ability you have for yourselves.

Sir, this country, though it has done well for its people of disadvantage, there are too many of us, I am not just referring to persons with disabilities, who expect that the Government must do everything for them.

Mr. President, during the debate in the Other Place, the Opposition said that the economy is in shambles and that

nothing was happening. Do you know something? Not one of them said not to spend anymore money on this or that. Do you know what they were saying? They were saying to spend more. Give us more. The old people want more. This body wants more, more for the hospital and education. They went around in circles and yet the economy is in shambles.

Sir, to oppose for opposing sake is a crime. Again, I want to call on the Opposition to be mature and call a spade a spade. The Democratic Labour Party came to power in this country in 1961 but they seemed to have a character which I want them to get rid of. They believe that Barbados popped up somewhere between the Atlantic and the Caribbean Sea in 1961 and when they are out of office it goes back down. They do not recognise the history and success that this Barbados Labour Party, over 60 years of existence, has brought to this country.

Sir, in three tranches of Government, in every case that they governed, they governed with success and the country has always been better off when the people take the Government away from the Democratic Labour Party.
10.30 a.m.

I do not have the time to tell you, Mr. President, and the Honourable Members here and those who are listening, if you would research the record of the development that took place in a single five years, 1956 to 1961, which is significant that it took place between 1976 and 1986 and is taking place today, 1994 to 2004. The Barbados Labour Party has always done sectorial development in this country.

There are many examples but I will use two because I do not want to lose any time. The seaport and the airport. In 1958, I worked at the airport development and at the same time, there was the building of the port at the Harbour, in an economy that was less than \$50 million in revenue. At the same time I left the Airport and went to work at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I want the Democratic Labour Party to write them down somewhere and remember them.

They said that when the Port was built that the great patriot Moses, the late Rt. Excellent Sir Grantley Adams, I think that somebody should visit his grave and collect the dust that still remains and put it in an urn and put it somewhere that everybody could see, because the late Rt. Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, who was seeking to become Premier, and if you all knew him as an Opposition Leader in Barbados, go back and read it and consume it, he was not easy and he was powerful as an Opposition Leader. You had to take him on, and one of the only people who took him on was Mencea Cox.

He said, Mr. President, that the late Rt. Excellent Sir Grantley Adams should be tied hand and foot, bounded and thrown in the Deep Water Harbour. When we constructed the hospital that I just told you about, do you know what the Minister at the time said? I think he was Joy Edwards, that \$9 million was too much to spend on a hospital. The Barbados Labour Party is now spending \$115 million, which is double what the Democratic Labour Party was spending in 1994.

Every time they are striving, but it is still the finest health institute in the Caribbean, despite its problems. Sir, we have to learn to be honest and truthful. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital was a problem for you as well as it is a problem for us. Do you know why? I cannot afford to go to any doctor today. I do not have the money to do it. The cost of private medical care in Barbados is too much. This is why the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has a problem and the medical personnel, the doctors in this island, owe it to the people of Barbados to be more reasonable, and stop smiling their way to the bank out of people who are ill. They should be reasonable and in many cases, they are not.

I want to turn to education. Sir, for the last 35 years, the Government of Barbados, not political parties, have spent about \$10 billion on education in this country, a consistent approach by the political managers of this country, in building the institution of education in Barbados.

The signal established for our intention for education was made in 1947 and the Caribbean should be proud of this, when we set up the University College of the West Indies at Mona in Jamaica. The part that our own Barbadian, a national hero, the late Sir Hugh Springer, did in planting that institution in the Caribbean and Governments across the Caribbean have spent billions of dollars in educating its people.

Let me tell you, when you look across the landscape and see the quality of those who were educated in this institution, as well as having an opportunity to go abroad – I have a daughter who got a first degree here, who went to Erdiston, who taught here, went abroad and was in a position to eat up the education in the United States, that when she got her Masters, she had so many credits to go on to do the Ph.D. that she did it in less than five years. The basic potential came from our educational system, and this is an example of what has taken place.

When we look at the professionals, we have in Barbados, lawyers, doctors, you name the whole gamut. Where did they come from? Some of them did not even have a proper pair of shoes to wear to school but the parents made sacrifices when it had to be paid for and incidentally, free secondary education by the Democratic Labour Party,

meant that they were advancing, but no student who went to school at Parkinson, Richmond, Grantley Adams or Princess Margaret, ever paid for anything.

Asides.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Let me say that the cadre of professionals in this 275 000 inhabitancy, in preponderance, is greater than anywhere else in the world. I want to appeal to the young people on whom we are spending this coming financial year, almost \$242 million on them, and if they must be the future Government and professionals and managers of our country, we expect from them more than what they are doing and better behaviour.

I want to charge parents with that responsibility that they train their children and not behave like their children, so their children behave like them. I want to challenge those managers in education to continue to strive in difficult times to impart understanding for young people.

We are now schooling, pre-schooling and over schooling. We have set up systems under the Ministry of Social Transformation to educate the elderly. Is not that great progress? Is that not an institution that all governments deserve to be proud of, so why tear it down? Everybody has problems. A writer whom I know said that you should not focus on the ills of people or societies, that you should focus on the good, and we need to learn that.
10.40 a.m.

How much more time do I have, Mr. President?

Mr. PRESIDENT: You have 25 minutes.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: Mr. President, I want to turn now to the Barbados of today. I said earlier that nobody owes us anything and we should not believe that anybody owes us anything, so I want every individual in this country to know that nobody owes them anything. They ought to be thankful that their mother and father caused them to be in this world and if they have all that human beings should have, like coming into the world with a good body that is working well, they should thank God for it and put it to work for the good not only of themselves but of those who are born in the home with them and who are born next door in St. Philip, St. Andrew or St. Lucy. We are all in this together and as a country we must hold together to seek to create good not only for ourselves but for our country and everyone else.

Mr. President, this is not the time for a person to boast that they manage to get a Ph.D. Some of those who gained that and those who are serving well in their professions, they may not have gained a Ph.D. but they might be a well-

qualified lawyer, doctor or businessman, should reach out to a young one who needs their help.

Mr. President, when Sir Winston Churchill was a little boy about two years old he was warned not to go to the pool but he frequented it and one day he fell into it and the gardener saw him and plunged into the water and saved him. Sir Winston Churchill's parents asked the gardener what they could do for him, and the gardener replied that he wanted an education and he was educated. I cannot remember his name I think it was an Alexander something.

As Prime Minister of England, Sir Winston Churchill made a trip abroad and took sick, I think it was with malaria, and he would have died, and they had to send a medical personnel from England to him and the person that was sent to inject him with the penicillin was the same boy that saved his life. When Sir Winston Churchill recovered he told him that he had saved his life twice.

Mr. President, I said that to say this. Those of us who are better off in society have a responsibility, not only Government, to share our prosperity with some boy or some girl, perhaps they may save our life, I am being profound. I am teaching today. I am a teacher. I am a thinker. I think things out.

Mr. President, I want to turn from Barbados to the international scene. Mr. President, let me say up front that trade liberalisation is impossible. I am going to show you how it is impossible. Senator Eastmond and Senator Fields spoke yesterday about standards. The better-off nations are starving small nations like us with finance. They can afford to give us concessional financing but they would not because they say that we are too good, we are developed and we are managing well, yet they are asking us to meet their standards with the advantages, with the technology, with the money and with the institutions that they have. There is skulduggery with it too as was pointed out yesterday when Senator Fields talked about how many times they had to send their beer to collect a standard and what was revealed.

Mr. President, what is being flaunted as trade liberalisation is nothing but protectionism. All of the rules that Germany, Japan, Britain and the United States of America set, they break with the United States of America being the chief culprit. A few years ago when our relatives came here and they were going back they could have taken with them yams, potatoes, fish, *et cetera*, but that cannot happen now. The ploy that they are using is that it causes drugs to come into the country. That is skulduggery again.

Mr. President, the World Trade Organisation is a front for protection of the rich countries in this world. I want us to recognise that we do not stand a chance. They stand from

outside and come up with a facade and behind that facade is the breaking down of your borders so that they can run into your borders with any kind of goods. When they come, they are going to stifle our manufacturers, kill our institutions and subjugate our people. The Caribbean Single Market and Economy and Caribbean co-operation and unity are the only opportunity and the only hope we have in being able to come together as a Caribbean people.

Mr. President, the test of maritime boundaries must define that the Caribbean Sea belongs to all of the countries in the Caribbean, and they must allow each other to fish in their waters. We should also be able to use the resources of those waters to build the West Indian countries. It is the only way forward for us to establish ourselves in a position that we could cut niches into the Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Mr. President, I believe in trade groupings because that is how trade started. Asian people loaded their camels, their donkeys, their horses and their caravans and moved to areas with their produce and sold them and bought what they wanted to take back home.
10.50 a.m.

Mr. President, that was not done by a Government or a World Trade Organisation (WTO). Trade has been free in this world until now. The protection barriers are put up to recolonise us, and we have to work together to find a way to continue to live and that our people will live.

Mr. President, I want to turn to the point I made when I said that Senator Griffith, the Honourable Leader of Government Business, came to that point. We must do our best but must allow the Almighty to do his part. As Senator Griffith has said, if rain does not fall, what are we going to do?

Sir, the greatest history in this world is history that is revealed in prophesy. I am a Christian. I believe in God. My whole existence is to be right with God and to be honest and true to myself and to others.

Mr. President, in Daniel Chapter 2, there was this great King Nebuchadnezzar who built an empire, the first world dominant power. He did it so well that he went to bed one night and said to himself: "I have built with pride. I have built great Babylon," and probably conjured up in his mind that he had nothing more to do. During the night he had a dream that troubled him and the next morning, he called in all his magicians and advisors and asked them to show him his dream. He even threatened to destroy the lives of everyone of his magicians, astrologers and sorcerers and to make their homes dunghills.

Mr. President, in Daniel Chapter 1, there was this young lad named Daniel, who ate the right foods and who was 10 times wiser than any of the soothsayers, astrologers or magicians. King Nebuchadnezzar sent for Daniel to interpret the dream. Daniel asked the King not to be so hasty and to give him time to interpret the dream, that it was not one that he could have interpreted at that time. Daniel then went back to his house and told his three companions, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah the problem who all got together and fasted that the secret of the dream would be revealed unto them.

Mr. President, I think perhaps the Church today, including my own organisation, needs to call a fast and a prayer meeting for this nation because we are facing difficult times ahead. Pray is the key that unlocks heaven's storehouse that reveals the bounties of God's love. Pray changes things. Therefore, Daniel and his companions went to pray and God revealed the history of this dream to Daniel.

Honourable Senators know the great image and what it stood for. The great image stood for the fact that Babylon was to be the greatest dominion in the world but the successive ones would have been inferior throughout. Sir, 99 per cent of this prophesy is history, and in the 43rd verse of Daniel, Chapter 2, it says several words: "They cannot cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay."

Mr. President, that is where we are today in history. Three Frenchmen tried to unite this world in one dominion, Louis XIV, Charles Maine and Napoleon. Then there was Keizer and Hitler, who almost did it. Hitler almost succeeded but made the wrong turn to go to Moscow, and the Lord dealt with him there.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have five minutes remaining.

SENATOR I. St. C. LINTON: I want to say, do not matter what world system comes up, it cannot prosper in this world. It will not, for God has said so, and any attempt to have a world power will fail. The Nazis failed, Communism failed, Polytheism will fail on the religion side and I want to say to us as responsible persons, not to look for any good coming out of trade liberalisation.

Sir, I want to speak to the liberalisation of telecommunications in Barbados. We are ready to destroy Cable and Wireless but it is Cable and Wireless who has built telecommunications in Barbados and they would have to downsize to keep in the marketplace. Sir, the other institutions that are coming in, are doing so with a diamond-cleaved sword and we have not realised it because as a people, we want something for nothing and it cannot be done.

Mr. President, I am staying with Cable and Wireless no matter what are their rates. Senator Stuart has made a point about this. Barbadians must be sensible, objective, and must learn to think. When we see the debacles of Enron and these other financial institutions and businesses that came crashing down, let us watch it and beware of gifts that come from the Greeks. I say this to the Government of Barbados, to the Opposition, to the private sector and to the trade unions, to the various managers of the institutions of Barbados: "Good things don't come easy. Anytime it comes easy, it is trouble and destruction." Sir, the way ahead for us is to strengthen our resolve, to build this country and to give it a fair opportunity to be united with our brothers in the Caribbean.

Mr. President, there is a saying that dead people roll in their graves and I believe that sometimes they roll in their graves.
11.00 a.m.

Sir, when the late Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams became Prime Minister of the Federation, he was on the ball when he said to the countries to zone industries and to let Guyana be our bread basket. The people who broke up the Federation are in more trouble than we who are still here. For example, Guyana and Trinidad had a South American destiny and Jamaica had an American destiny. Where are they today? There are in financial difficulties, floundering on the rocks.

Therefore, I want to close by saying that we must be grateful to those who led this country, who managed our finances and we must support fiscal reform, not just in monetary terms and dollar value but what we as a people can do for our nation and assist our leaders – although it may be a long time before the Democratic Labour Party becomes the Government and they cannot become the Government if they do not postpone it by deciding that they are not putting anything on the table.

Sir, whichever Government reigns this country, as Barbadians we have our political moments, but when the decision is made, we must stand firm behind our leaders, especially when they are imbued with qualifications and expressed wisdom from what they say and this time we have in Barbados one of the best leaders in the world.

Sir, my call today is not what the future will bring but how we respond to the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister's word and message. If we respond in a positive way, this country will go forward.

Thank you, Mr. President.

four aspects of the debate, namely handling difference, change, attitude and Barbados' people and its land, A – attitude, B – Barbados, C – Change and D – Difference.

Sir, first of all, the clash between Government and the Opposition Senators over the last two days was not just one of words, economics versus society; it pointed to a very important and fundamental difference in Barbadian politics. Like my colleague, Senator Stuart, the lead spokesman for the Opposition in this Chamber, I was impressed by the way in which the Leader of Business, The Honourable Erskine Griffith, introduced the Appropriation Bill 2004/2005. Sir, for me it was a public lesson in budgeting by Government. He gave three broad objectives:

1. To secure adjustments and efficient allocation of resources;
2. The distribution of income and wealth through tax policy and transfer; and
3. To secure stabilisation of the economy.

Mr. President, people must understand that Government does not have an unlimited amount of money and, therefore, Government has to ensure that funds are apportioned to the many areas of national development in a careful manner. They must be reminded that Government relies on taxes of one kind or the other but mostly on taxes paid by individuals and businesses in Barbados. Everyone contributes to this.

Finally, Government must watch over the receipts and payments to avoid embarrassing situations to the entire population. Every household has at least one family member who has to do this with their income.

Sir, the Honourable Minister went on to explain, sometimes in technical language such as fiscal prudence, percentage of Gross Domestic Product, which will be unfamiliar to many Barbadians, and how Government handles the economy.

Senator Stuart must have been thinking of the thousands of Barbadians, some of whom he has represented before, and, perhaps, hopes to represent again in the Lower House, who have been struggling to make ends meet not knowing where the next meal is going to come from. There are people who are in very poor circumstances amidst all the luxury living here in Barbados.

Mr. President, if you who have been driving along the main highways to and from work, would wonder where is all this need that we talk about. Within the last 50 years many thousands have climbed out of their abject poverty due to efforts by successive Governments.

Mr. President, for those political parties claimed to be interested in the broad masses of the people, to say that there is no distinction between the two parties is to say that there is virtually no change to Governments, which is against the spirit of democracy, which we former Governments have inherited from Britain which we praise.

Sir, the doctrine of politics of inclusion is destructive of the multi-party democracy we practise, in my view. Politics of inclusion meant that persons with particular gifts from other parties could be given political appointments but remain in the party of their choice. This would be a different matter all together. It has not worked out that way because of the cultural and adversarial politics that we encourage. No Opposition Party could accept the politics of inclusion while we stay a one-party state.

In small societies like ours in the Caribbean and where democracy is relatively new, there have been many instances where almost all the seats at the general elections are won by one party. We in Barbados are still in that stage. We are now creeping out of it.

Mr. President, when you add to this that at some time there is little difference in the total number of votes between the two leading parties, because of the first past the post-system which we have inherited, there is a need for proportional representation for which the Leader of the National Democratic Party had been calling.

The exchange between the two parties is not foolishness or rubbish nor should the Opposition Senator be accused of being intellectually dishonest. He is pointing to a difference in emphasis or perspective between the two labour parties in Barbados.

Mr. President, if a bright young Senator Nicholls wants an example of a difference between the two parties, let him consider Senator Collymore's analysis of the need for heavily subsidising the Transport Board since the \$1.50 bus fare had been unchanged for the past thirteen years. Would he advise Government to raise it to \$2.00, \$2.50 or \$3.00? We have to try to handle political difference, that means, we have to be tolerant of the ideas of other individuals or parties.
11.10 a.m.

I want to move on to handling change, especially social change. Education has been the greatest force for social change in Barbados. Every working-class parent wanted to ensure that his or her child did not have to work in the broiling sun in the canefields, as he or she did. Parents sacrificed much to achieve this. Some of the better-off families had children who won scholarships to second grade schools and later to first grade schools.

SENATOR THE VERY Rev. H. E. CRICHLAW:
Mr. President, Members of the Senate, I want to comment on.

Most of the children attended elementary schools, mainly Anglican ones where, with the later support of Government, they had a good 7th standard education upon which modern Barbados has been built. Free secondary education opened opportunities to many more students until recently, when it was compulsory for all students, up to the age of 16. At the tertiary level, one Barbados scholarship was offered every year, and this took the scholar to Oxford University or Cambridge University.

From 1875, the few who came close to the coveted scholarship, read degrees at Codrington College which was affiliated to Durham University. It has been spoken of at times as the Oxford of the West Indies, and it served the Caribbean until the University College of the West Indies, and later, the University of the West Indies was founded.

Codrington College and the Royal Institute also trained many of our teachers until Erdiston Teachers' Training College came into existence. Now, we have an addition, the Barbados Community College (BCC) and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP), the last three of which will form the new University College of Barbados.

Free university education for Barbadians has been the greatest improvement we have seen in Barbados and will make for the most radical changes in the future. Wealthy countries like America, Britain, Canada, among others, cannot afford to offer this facility to their citizens and they have resources. A poor tiny country like Barbados with no material resources to speak of is doing it. It will take much hard work, energy, brains, creativity, *et cetera*, to continue this and I hope we shall be able to do it.

This will mean that all those who received degrees and diplomas from the University of the West Indies will have to sacrifice part of their salaries on a voluntary basis, or they may be forced to borrow the fees and repay them over a reasonably long period. It is not too much to say that it is not too soon for the country to plan for this eventuality. I do not see how, with the rising cost of education, Barbados can maintain free university education.

There is much wastage in the field of education. This is caused mainly by the fact that most of our influence between the ages of two and five, do not get any mental nourishment, apart from their parents cursing them.

Asides.

SENATOR THE VERY Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: This is because of the very harsh economic conditions, under which those parents live. I do think that consideration should be given to young parents who have two or three children. I know, of course, you would say that this would

be to encourage them to have more children, but many have a lot of children because men come along and promise to help them with the child or two children, another man or other men have left, and that particular man would give them a third child and then leave.

Then somebody else comes along and promises to help the family and gives them one more child and so on. You can imagine the misery that those parents have, and when they curse their children and say to them: "You know, I sorry I ever did born you", or "I don't know why you didn't dead when you did born". I do not know if any of you have ever heard these expressions...

Asides.

SENATOR THE VERY Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: Imagine yourself being told that as a child, but a lot of our children hear this, and so, they are spoilt really before they get to school.

Sir, we have a lot of wastage at that point and we saw this in the 1970s when a Committee was set up by the Government to enquire into the transfers from primary to secondary schools. We felt that part of the solution to it was to have nursery schools, so that we could take these children away from home between the ages of two and five. Things have got worse now, because parents bring children to school at four or five years old and tell the head teachers to see what they can do with them because they cannot rule them.

Failing this, we should find that most of them are rejected as soon as they enter primary school, in order to allow a smaller number to get the best training for the Common Entrance Examination, five or six years later. We saw this as we went around to the various schools. The success of the smaller group will bring glory to the school, as they enter some of the secondary schools.

Sir, I look forward to the time when the Common Entrance Examination will be abolished and pupils will move automatically to schools in their zones. All the teachers by then will be professionally qualified. The curriculum will be the same. The books will be standardised and all of our children will be given equal opportunity to develop their talents. By that time, all the primary schools will be staffed by graduates. Some teachers will not have to dread going to school to teach all backward children, because there will be children of all abilities in all of our schools.

This would help to reduce the amount of class prejudice in our society. It will prevent young people from wasting their time and talents on the block, because the

society has not done anything for them. That is why we have much of this antisocial behaviour among the youth. You cannot try to get them to love Barbados because Barbados has done nothing for them. They have been rejected at the significant stages in their lives.

It will help every person to be able to express his or her deepest feelings and experiences. This is part of the reason for some of the domestic violence that we have. In some other Caribbean countries, I know one for sure, because people cannot express themselves in word, they do it by stabbing or shooting.
11.20 a.m.

When people can express their feelings, they do not have to use violence. The question of violence is a much bigger one. I am aware that the family is under attack. I am aware too of our historical past and what our people endured through slavery and the post-slavery years. That is still with a lot of our people, so the neglect that we find in many families cannot be traced to only 10, 15 or 20 years ago. In the life of our nation it may take generations before people can get this sort of cruelty out of their system.

Mr. President, education will help our people to develop self-esteem which many of our people lacked. Our people also lacked the ability to appreciate things that are done by people of their own colour, and because they feel that they are not worth anything, they believe that anyone looking like them cannot be worth much either. They were given European standards of beauty and so on to aim at. We have a problem of identity which complicates the whole issue. All of this has remained with our people.

These and many other advantages will be derived from more children being led out into broader fields through education. It is by taking advantage of higher education that our young women are developing themselves and through qualification and experience they will be the leaders of this society in about 20 years. Mr. President, I am very impressed when I listened to the young women in our Senate. If the present trend of boys opting out of learning alongside girls continues, this means that 20 years from now the men will hardly have a look in, they may look in to take photographs as they do now.

Mr. President, I was the headmaster of a secondary co-ed school for five years and I never noticed any disadvantage among the boys. The Teaching Service should be given every support and the Teaching Commission which was planned for in the 1982 Education Act should be proclaimed. I say this because teachers are now public officers, but you cannot run a school like how you can run a civil service department,

so I am sure that the proclamation of the Teaching Commission will help to make our schools better.

Mr. President, as far as possible, we should keep politics out of the schools. Parents have a way when anything happens to their children at school of running to their political representative, but that is not good and politicians should advise people who run to them like this to go to the school and have the matter explained by the head teacher.

Handling economic change – one thing we can be equally sure of in life is change. As far as our national life is concerned, most of our experience has been with sugar. Now that sugar has lost that pride and place, we have tourism. Therefore, we should do all that we can to assist with the development of our tourism industry. However, we must always be aware that tourism is a very fragile product. Anything happening in the Caribbean can frighten tourists away because they think that the Caribbean islands are only a few hundred yards or a couple miles away from each other. They would never think that a thousand miles lies between Jamaica and the islands in the south of the Caribbean.

Mr. President, we are also living in a very dangerous world. Although people for the most part have gotten over the fear of travelling by air, you could never tell when something very tragic may happen which will mean that our leading money earner will go into recess. I am sure that the Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Chandler and all those who know about agriculture are right when they insist that agriculture should be subsidized and that the growing of food, animal husbandry, *et cetera*, should always be part of what happens in Barbados.

We are a tiny island. We do not have much land and we should see that all of our land is cultivated even if it is in grass cultivation so as to have sheep and cattle farming. I know there is a problem with water but that was addressed earlier. There is a natural fear of the land among our people because of its historical association with slavery, but I hope that we will get rid of that entirely in a few generations so as to be able to value our land.

Mr. President, when I travel, say, from Brussels to Berlin I see all hundreds of square miles of cultivated land and I had to say to myself that here I am driving through hundreds of miles of cultivated land and in a 16 x 21 Barbados we can find areas that have been allowed to run into bush. That is so because most of our people do not really have any feel for the land. Barbados could be a very beautiful garden, so to speak, when you look at it from the air. You get that impression, but when you get nearer to it you would see that there are still many areas...

11.30 a.m.

Mr. President, the Minister of Agriculture is very enthusiastic and I am sure that much will be done during his period of office to see that agriculture is promoted but I think we need more persons who will help in this regard.

Mr. President, I need not speak on regional change. Many of you, including the last Honourable Senator who has spoken, have dealt adequately with this at the regional, hemispheric and world trade order.

Mr. President, there are many personal and family attitudes that do not make for healthy living in Barbados. We need to remember that our physical health is affected by our mental attitudes. I think Senator Stuart touched on that when he averted to socio medico-centric as against preventative medicines.

Mr. President, Professor Stanley at the University of the West Indies (UWI) has been preaching that for years, and it is something that everyone should know, that is, prevention is better than cure, but most of us are lazy and, as far as diets are concerned, have grown up hating the best and most nutritious part of our diet, so that we hardly take exercise. Those of us who have been sitting here for three days now will know how we feel by not walking around. We would also notice how much weight we have gained, so one can imagine those who work every day in sedentary jobs, but there is a connection between our mental and physical health.

It is a great pity that so many beautiful young lives are thrown away by HIV/AIDS. I think young people ought to be helped to understand that health is the greatest possession of all. I find that those exercises that we used to do in the 1960s, when we were around the ages of 9 or 10, for instance like ordinary stretching, *et cetera*, can come in very handy when persons reach 60, 70 or 80 years. Therefore, physical education should be part of every school's curriculum but adults need to take some time out and do exercises too.

Mr. President, family neglect is rampant in our society. Some years ago, I was very pleased to see a year that more men have been taking an interest in their families, which I am sure would be good for everybody. I know of the torture that some men go through in trying to see their children after they have been separated from those children's mothers.

Sir, by and large there is much neglect in the family. People who are working, especially fathers who own their children, neglect them, and are not aware of the damage this does. I can think of a student, not in this country, who could not work for days. She ended up crying because of the fact that she had realised that she had never called anybody "Daddy". It was not to say that her father had died but simply that she never knew him.

Mr. President, another attitude is work ethics. I think that most of us would not mind if we had a bank holiday every week. A number of us hate working. We want to be on the paysheet, of course, but we really do not see the connection between work and salary. To some persons, there is the obvious connection but not to everybody. Sir, the perks are so bad that some people take every chance to get away from work.

Sir, one of the reasons why I said that we needed a teaching commission is that teachers are allowed 21 days off as casual leave but teachers cannot afford to believe that they can take up to 21 days off school. They are entitled to it as public servants but they must then think of the number of classes, the number of children who are waiting to be taught. Sir, in all of my teaching years, I cannot remember ever taking a day off in that manner because most teachers in the past felt that way. I think we are causing teachers to create very bad habits by allowing them to think that they could take the usual days off as allowed in the Civil Service.

Mr. President, we need to help our people to understand that work is important and that the country could not move forward without work, for example, if we think of the Sanitation Service Authority's workers being off for two or three weeks, let us think of the number of lives that would be lost, the number of people who would be hospitalised or who would have to attend the polyclinics, *et cetera*. These are important people so that our trade unions and employers must be conscious of the need for people to be on the jobs and they should go all out to see that we minimise the numbers of strikes, *et cetera*.
11.40 a.m.

Sir, if we did not work the land, think of what Barbados would look like. The land would go to ruins in a year or so. I have not seen this tremendous energy being put to work as we move toward the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, Free Trade Areas of the Americas and World Trade Organisation. We are competing against countries that understand what work is. Our people must be told that they must change their attitude towards work.

Mr. President, of course, the conditions under which they work must be improved if they need to be improved so that they can feel comfortable on the job. I take it that is part of the management studies in which people are engaged in at this time.

In our service industry, we still think that service is servility. This is part of our social history as well but we hope that with the widespread secondary education that, in the near future, we would be able to help people understand that when they serve others it does not mean that they are demeaning themselves. As a matter of fact, service is the

hallmark of greatness. Jesus said “I came not to be served but to serve.”

Sir, our attitude to law and order – I think that we are fortunate in having the kind of society that we have. I suppose that it is mainly due to the schools and churches in the past and the law courts. In all of us there is a streak of trying to get about the law. We cannot progress unless we have some kind of law and order. I do not mean that we have to have a regimental society. Sir, people must be reminded that the freedom they now enjoy carries a number of responsibilities and their freedom only exists to the limit of other people’s freedom. They are not free to do what they like, when they like or say what they like to whom they like and when they like.

Mr. President, in an age when we are trying to develop our human rights, when all over the world they are trying to get rid of cruelty and injustice and to see that people are treated in a humane way, in Barbados we have traditions that we can build on so that our country remains free.

Mr. President, I am very pleased when I hear visitors say that the best thing they enjoy about Barbados is people, the warmth of our people. I wish that our people would express some of this warmth to people who live here as well. I do not get the impression that people in Barbados are so very warm and hospitable. We seem to be waiting to explode if something happens that we do not like, even if it is the right thing.

Asides.

SENATOR THE VERY Rev. H. E. CRICHLOW: For example, if you happen to drop into a pothole on a rainy day and they get splashed, they think that you left home with that intention.

Asides.

SENATOR THE VERY Rev. H. E. CRICHLOW: I am very pleased when visitors enjoy not only the sun and sand but the warmth of our people. Barbados would be a much happier place to live if we could show some of this warmth to each other.

Finally, handling all things Barbadian – we are very judgmental. I am not sure if Honourable Members are aware of this. They expect you to be perfect. You cannot make mistakes. Or is it only the clergy that is to be perfect?

Asides.

SENATOR THE VERY Rev. H. E. CRICHLOW: I find that if you are waiting at the traffic lights and then the lights turn green and people start to walk across the road, they use the green lights for the motorists at the time to cross the street, and if you go near them they are ready to curse you. In the meantime you would have been waiting at the traffic lights for a long time but they do not consider you at all. They ask if you are blind and if you want to kill them.

Mr. President, Bruce St. John, in one of his dialect poems, although George Lammings said that he cannot find the title, said that “Every Bajan born with a chopper in he hand.” I think that all of us will experience this business of people waiting to chop us down.

Asides.

SENATOR THE VERY Rev. H. E. CRICHLOW: I heard a story of someone in the supermarket who was getting ready to do some shopping. This supermarket was owned by a Barbadian and she said, “Let me get out of here. He can’t get rich out of me.”

Asides.

SENATOR THE VERY Rev. H. E. CRICHLOW: Our...is responsible for a lot of this. I think we need to be more responsible in our island.

There is a complaint that people are moving from the villages to the heights and terraces and this is increasing the class prejudices. I think that this is a normal behaviour. Villages are usually crowded and everybody knows everybody’s business, *et cetera*, and if people have worked hard and decided to have with a little space around them, then they are entitled to it.
11.50 a.m.

We should continue this community feeling. In every country it is not so, and certainly, you would not get it in big cities. I think we have a good nation. I am very sorry that I was not here for the funeral of Sir Harold St. John. He really deserved all the tributes that were paid to him. He was a very fine statesman.

I can think of the time that the Government was lost when he was Prime Minister for a year. I did not think that he had it in him to sacrifice the nation’s welfare for his own personal gain or his Party’s personal gain. He told the groups that threatened to strike that the country could not afford what they were asking for and, therefore, in all conscience, he could not grant them.

Others might have granted them the increases and then taken them back in taxes or so, but I think many would say that his sense of integrity and so on would not allow him to do that, but, I paid tribute to him for his very fine work and example and dedication to the nation of Barbados. I wish we had many more people like the late Sir Harold St. John. The country needs it.

Sir, speaking on the landscape of Barbados, there is not time to go into the environment but I am sure all of you would agree with me that Dr. Colin Hudson who died recently loved Barbados with a passion and he worked for the good of Barbados and will be remembered by his many friends for a long time. Whenever we think of the environment, the landscape of Barbados and treading lightly, *et cetera*, the Future Centre Trust, we will think of the very fine sustainable work he did.

As I drive around the island, I am very pleased to see that Barbados has become a place for living, and not just for working. There are now many beautiful houses which we need to make into beautiful homes. There are playing fields and community centres, and we do not have playing fields like the one that used to be at St. Augustine, what do you call it?

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, please address the Chair.

SENATOR THE VERY Rev. H. E. CRICHLLOW: Sorry. There was a playing field there next to St. Augustine School, where people fielding in the gully were actually in the gully. What was it called? Nobody remembers the name?

I am glad to see that we have proper playing fields and this will add to the beauty and the health of our people.

Mr. President, I have tried to show that we need to handle difference, change, or attitudes, Barbados, its people, and landscape. I hope that the Appropriation Bill for 2004-2005 will help us to continue this development that is going on all around us.

Thank you very much.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Mr. Speaker, I would first want to start by acknowledging the presentation made on Monday by the Honourable Senator, the Leader of Government Business, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Senator Hon. E. R. Griffith. His, Sir, was a presentation which informed this Chamber about the relevance of financing. His, Sir, was a presentation which discussed certain aspects of the various sectors of our economy and the relevance which they have to these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure.

I think, Sir, it is very important that from the outset, we recognise that these Estimates do not simply stand alone.

We must also recognise that there are a number of programmes through various ministries, which these Estimates will make a reality.

Sir, on Monday afternoon, for some two and a half hours, we were treated to a presentation by the Opposition Democratic Labour Party's main spokesperson in this Chamber, which sought to give the impression that the Barbados, which we in the Government recognise and nurture, is a Barbados which is nonexistent. In fact, Senator Stuart would have indicated in his presentation that he did not recognise the Barbados which the Honourable Leader of Government Business spoke about.

Sir, I listened to the contribution from Senator Stuart and the references he made to his not having an understanding of how we, as a Government can accomplish for Barbados our being a developed country by the year 2010. In fact, I remember some of the comments which Senator Stuart made. He said he was looking forward to the Barbados Labour Party seeing Barbados as a society and not simply as an economy. He said that is where the divide is to be found and where the battle will be. He said that we are concentrating on the issue of growth as opposed to development.

Mr. President, that would seem to suggest that there is necessarily a conflict between the economy or economics and society. It would seem to suggest, Sir, that there is a conflict between economic growth and development but that is not the case...

12.00 noon

Sir, you can develop programmes and you can have policies which would encourage growth and also accommodate development. I want us to recognise very clearly that the economic policies which a government pursues will have an impact on the society.

Sir, this Barbados Labour Party Government has put in place a number of wonderful programmes such as EduTech which seeks to ensure that our young people, the future of this country, would have the capacity and the ability to function in an information age and to make sure that Barbados in the future is relevant. Through the Ministry of Social Transformation we have programmes in place for the eradication of poverty and for the protection of the vulnerable and the disadvantaged in our society.

We also restored to the public servants of this country the 8 per cent cut in salary which was taken from them. I want us to reflect on the fact that during the Administration of 1991-1994, we saw a lot of social problems in this country because of the policies instituted by the then Democratic Labour Party Government.

Sir, I heard Senator Lowe speak about difficulties and challenges. We exist in a society where everyone has the right to speak and everyone has the right to communicate how they feel on any particular issue. Nothing is wrong with that. There would be times when there are disagreements and there would be times when there will be different points of views, nothing is wrong with that either. However, we have not seen during the period of 1994 until now the level of disruption in the society which existed when the Democratic Labour Party was administering the affairs of this country.

Sir, we put in place incentives for small businesses through the Small Business Development Act. We made \$5 million available through an Innovation Fund. The point I am making is that it must never ever be accepted that there must be a divide between focussing on the economy and ensuring that you have a good, desirable and sustainable society.

Mr. President, Senator Stuart is an attorney-at-law and I am sure that any client he represents when he goes before the judicial officer that he argues on points of law. Sir, if you are seeking to ensure by your governance that you provide for growth and development for your people you must, by necessity, focus on the economy. That is the only way that it can be done, so to seek to give the impression that we in this Barbados Labour Party are trying to cause a divide, is really wrong.

Sir, when I listened to Senator Stuart I remember something that I had read which talked about a person going into a dark cellar at midnight with no light looking for a black cat which was not there. I remember those things that I heard and I always use the aspects that are relevant.

The point I am making is that Senator Stuart in his submission was really groping in the dark seeking to talk about issues which really were not there. We want the Opposition in this Chamber to be able to say how they would provide for the upliftment and the development of the people of this country, but Senator Stuart indicated that his task is not to be here to tell the Government what to do.

Sir, those in the Democratic Labour Party often talk about the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow and I just want to say something to Senator Stuart. In 1985 at the 30th Annual Conference of the Democratic Labour Party when the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow was President, he indicated that the conference document which he had contained a number of policies with respect to how the Democratic Labour Party would have administered the affairs of Government.

He said that there is a school of thought which believes that you should not share with the people policies and programmes and he said that is a school to which he has

never enrolled. He said that he did not believe that you should spring policies and talk about programmes to a surprise electorate.

Sir, I only mention that because the Democratic Labour Party will say one thing and talk about one set of values, but they will do something else. They should come to the table, bring programmes and let us discuss the issues. They should come and let us talk about it and tell us how they would facilitate through the Estimates by ensuring the people of Barbados that their lives are better. That is what we want to talk about. We want to deal with issues, we want to deal with programmes and we want to engage the Opposition intellectually in order to ensure that Barbados is a better place for all.

Mr. President, I believe that by providing greater economic opportunities there can be significant improvements in the quality of life of the people. Yes, we will focus on the economy, which is something we know to do well, and by focussing on the economy we are able to make the lives of Barbadians better. I know Senator Stuart well. He is my good friend. I know when he speaks from his mouth and when he speaks from his heart.

12.10 p.m.

Mr. President, I am telling you that he too must recognise that the 8 per cent cut, the low foreign exchange reserves caused by the fact that there was a loss of confidence in the Administration of this country during 1991 and 1994, and the massive job layoffs, all had a severe negative impact on the society. Therefore, never let it be said that this Barbados Labour Party Administration will seek to demonstrate that there is a conflict between the economy and the society or between growth and development.

Mr. President, I heard Senator Lowe speaking about EduTech and about the fact that we have allocated a lot of money and much is not happening with EduTech. I want to remind Senator Lowe and to say to Members of this Honourable Chamber, that today we exist in a world where we need to be at the forefront of technology, where we need to ensure that all of our countrymen are able to function in an information age. That is part of the reason why we have sought to liberalise the telecommunication sector.

Senator Stuart did say that during a previous debate I had made reference to the Fair Trading Commission and to the fact that exclusive telecommunication licences provided to Cable and Wireless for the provision of domestic and international telecommunication services were not given for the 10 years, as was the custom, but for 20 years. It is a fact that today we are involved in the liberalisation of the telecommunication sector because of the manner in which the Democratic Labour Party had functioned.

Sir, I believe it is very important to present facts and the Education Sector Enhancement Programme (EduTech) is a revolutionary approach to ensuring that we provide the tools for our young people and that we are able to allow them to function properly and to engage in a new economy.

Sir, the reality is that in seeking to prepare schools for EduTech, it was recognised that there needed to be significant refurbishment. Therefore, up to 1999 the physical facilities of 19 primary schools were upgraded. Civil works were completed at 12 primary schools and these schools were prepared for this technology. Sir, new primary schools such as the Hilda Skeene Primary, the Ignatius Byer Primary, All Saint's Primary and the St. Christopher's Boys' Primary were constructed. The Lester Vaughan Primary School was refurbished.

Sir, I need to ensure that as soon as I deliver these facts, Senator Lowe would be able to repeat them to his colleagues. Sir, \$30 million has been allocated in these Estimates for EduTech and a number of programmes have been identified for 2004–2005. Those programmes involve expanding the flexible learning programme, ensuring that we are able, through the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, to cater in the short-term because we are looking to a University College, which will be a reality. We would be able, through a website and other facilities, to cater to the students 16 years and over both in technical and academic subjects, to train them for the world of work.

Mr. President, I heard Senator the Very Reverend Harold Crichlow speaking to values in this society and one of the things which we are doing is to ensure that as we provide the technology for our young people, that we do not allow them to have access to the type of material which is likely to corrupt their minds.

Sir, between 2003–2004, twenty-one schools were further outfitted for EduTech, and civil works and technology were installed and staff trained on an ongoing curriculum reform programme.

Mr. President, as a country, we have done well because we have been able to enhance that one resource, which is our human resource, and as we look to the future with all of the challenges which it will bring, we have to ensure that our people are able to function and to operate in the new global environment. Therefore, EduTech is very important, relevant, and we will see the gains in the very near future.

Mr. President, last week I was watching a CNN News report and there was a caption at the bottom of the screen which stated that global tourism is expected to increase slightly after the September 11, 2001, SARS and wars. Sir, immediately I started to think of our tourism sector and of

the challenges which we faced with respect to SARS and the terrorist attacks that have occurred in other parts of the world, and I thought to myself that we have done remarkably well.

Sir, I heard the last speaker talking about the tourism sector and to the fact that it is a sector that if there are other terrorist attacks, could have a severe negative impact on our economy.
12.20 p.m.

Sir, I want to say to all Honourable Senators that you can feel confident that the leadership of this country and the Barbados Labour Party will ensure that we take protective measures to safeguard our tourism sector and you do not need to think too far back because after the terrorist attack in 2001, many countries within the Caribbean faced significant challenges. Many countries within the Caribbean up to this present time are not able to rebound from the impact of September 11th, SARS and the like.

What has happened in Barbados? The Government of Barbados speedily put a programme in place to ensure that we were able to sustain the tourism sector. Last year, 1,157,159 visitors came to Barbados, an increase of 7.5 per cent. Sir, this is the highest number of visitors in the history of this country. Mr. President, 626,000 cruise passengers were included in that figure. The expenditure from tourism was \$1.5 billion, the highest ever in the history of this country. I think that the Government should be congratulated for that.

Sir, I need to speak about these things because it must be clearly understood that tourism is our lifeblood and it is significant to this economy and we must take the necessary steps to ensure that we safeguard this sector. It must be interpreted that we still have a lot of work to do but we also have to ensure that we talk about the successes that we had.

Mr. President, during the last year Barbados received numerous awards and I wish to talk about a few of them. Barbados's airport was adjudged the best in the region. The Barbados Tourism Authority was awarded a trophy for being the best marketing agency of its kind. In addition to that, this small country, Barbados, sought to have one of the retired British Concordes to be placed here and, as all of us know, we were able to achieve this at no cost to Barbados.

There were other people in other places who said that we should not pursue that. There were also people who could not understand why we ensured that one of the Concorde aircraft is based in Barbados. This was done so that we could differentiate our attractions and Barbados as the premier tourism destination in the Caribbean. Sir, that was not all.

During the last year we saw a number of airlines increasing flights to Barbados to facilitate the airlift capacity. We saw a new airline, Continental Airways, coming out of Newark, New Jersey. British Airways increased their flights to Barbados 11 weekly, Virgin Atlantic increased their flights to Barbados to eight weekly and Air Canada increased their flights from Montreal and Toronto to Barbados.

Sir, for the first time since 1988, Condor has a yearly service to Barbados from Frankfurt, Germany. The US Airways, out of Philadelphia, even though they did not increase their service to Barbados, for the most part they used an A340 120-seat aircraft as opposed to the 130-seat A319 aircraft that was used previously.

The point is, we have been able, not only to ensure that we have additional seat capacity coming into Barbados, we have been able to ensure that we are putting passengers on those aircrafts, and I am going to get to that shortly. There is an individual who shall remain nameless, I believe associated with the Democratic Labour Party, who constantly seeks to give the Barbados Tourism Authority a lot of negative talk and who would want to suggest that additional flights coming to Barbados have not really been beneficial to us.

Sir, recently, I was at a function hosted by a company called "Gold Medal Travel". This is a company based in London which deals with promotional and marketing aspects relating to tourism. While at that function, there was a ten-minute video presentation which looked at various destinations throughout the globe that had the potential for growth in tourism and that would be at the forefront in tourism. During the presentation they spoke about Dubai, India and China. I was extremely happy when they spoke about Barbados. Let us understand that there are people within the international communities who are watching us and taking note of what we are doing and the successes that we are getting.

Sir, we anticipate that in the coming year we will have a 5 per cent growth in tourism arrivals. These Estimates provide for the continued growth within tourism by facilitating infrastructural development, human resource development, expansion in air services, by having continued capital investment, marketing and promotion of Barbados as a premier tourism destination.
12.30 p.m.

Sir, the Barbados Tourism Authority will continue to focus on market and promotion of this country, over the next year. Barbadians can expect that during the next financial year, there will likely to be additional airlines coming out of the United States of America (USA), England, Europe and Africa. Emphasis will not only be placed on ensuring that we bring new airlines, but on stimulating demand to fill the

seats. We will be pursuing an aggressive strategy to ensure that we bring tourists here and that we enhance and strengthen the relationship between tourism and the other sectors of the economy. We would not wish, Sir, to have a situation where tourism alone continually is benefitting. We will be strengthening the linkages, already it has started. I will speak about it later.

Sir, a critical success factor within tourism is international transport. In 2003, passenger arrivals out of Europe increased by 54 per cent. There was a 34 per cent increase in airline seat capacity. Out of the U.K. arrivals increased by 12 per cent. There was a 13 per cent increase in seat capacity. Out of the U.S.A. tourist arrivals increased by 2 per cent. There was a 2 per cent increase in seat capacity.

The point has to be made that, yes, when you bring additional airlines into your country, it may necessarily take some time through your marketing efforts, depending on the time at which the airlines come to fill the seats, but the point is the statistics show that for the large part, we are filling the seats coming into Barbados.

Sir, I need to tell you that the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport will be pursuing a number of air service agreements during this coming financial year. It has been determined that we will be working through CARICOM to have an Open Skies' Agreement with the USA, essentially providing for airlines here to land at any point within the USA, and *vice versa*, within CARICOM.

During the next financial year, we will be seeking to conclude air service agreements with South Africa, Italy, Brazil and Panama. We are ensuring, Sir, that we do not rest on our laurels and become complacent with the successes that we have had thus far. I mentioned earlier that the Grantley Adams International Airport was awarded for being the best airport in the region.

I also mentioned that the Grantley Adams International Airport, as you know, is now going through expansion work and I want to say at this time that, yes, there has been some inconvenience, because there are demolition and construction, and the airport is being expanded at a time when it is still being utilised.

I want, Sir, to thank the travelling public, tourists, business persons who would have been here, for their patience in this regard. The expansion work taking place at the Grantley Adams International Airport is to ensure that our airport continues to be the hub for the Eastern Caribbean region, both in passenger and cargo business, as well as for South America.

Sir, I talked about the fact that we are going through expansion work. I talked about the fact that we are bringing in additional airlines. I must mention that in addition to those increased numbers in tourists that I talked about, you will recall Senator Newton saying yesterday that the Grantley Adams International Airport was designed for a carrying capacity of 800 passengers per hour at a peak time. I must tell you, Sir, that in addition to that, we have on some days another 2 000 passengers coming through the Grantley Adams International Airport, both inbound and outbound with respect to home-porting.

Home-porting is business, Sir, that many countries within the Caribbean are seeking to be involved and there are those who have questioned the decision of the Government to aggressively pursue the home-porting business. I want to say, Sir, that home-porting allows entities within our country to have an opportunity to participate further in the cruise tourism sector.

There are companies in Barbados which provide juice products to cruise ships. There are individuals who provide engineering assistance to cruise ships. There are also services done by doctors, dentists, taxi operators, tour operators and we will be seeking to build and to enhance that particular type of business.

Sir, we have given a commitment that we will be establishing a separate facility to deal with light cruise operations, because we do not wish to put additional pressure on the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, after September 11, 2001, and you know that security became the buzz word and I would want to touch later on aspects of security. I feel that I must tell you at this time that Grantley Adams International Airport provided a new security system which is now presently being installed to allow us to have improved security lighting, CC TV and monitoring, security communications and a security control post, and will allow that there is a control system for all access points of the airport.

We are taking security very seriously both at the Grantley Adams International Airport as well as at the Bridgetown Port. Maybe, at this time, I should also speak to the security at the Bridgetown Port. Sir, there is a code facilitated through the international maritime organisation which requires... and it is a mandatory code. Sir, at the 22nd International Maritime Organisational Assembly a Resolution was adopted which sought to review the procedures with respect to acts of terrorism. Subsequent to that there was a diplomatic conference in December 2002. The objective of that Conference was to look at mandatory maritime security requirements. Coming out of that

Conference was an amendment to the International Convention on the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) which brought into effect the International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS).
12.40 p.m.

Under the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Part A of that code is mandatory and Part B is not. As you know, Sir, the United States of America has the United States of America Maritime Transportation Security Act which focusses on security.

Sir, there are provisions in these Estimates to ensure that we properly deal with aspects of security. I talked about security because security can very well be used as a barrier to business activity. I heard the Honourable Minister of Commerce, Senator Eastmond, as well as Senator Fields speaking about non-tariff barriers yesterday. If we are not able to have proper security measures in place, we are likely to realise that the activity of engaging in cruise tourism and even in land-based tourism, because the tourists coming here for land-based tourism have to fly, so we have to make sure that we have our security in place.

I am very happy to report to you, Sir, that this ISPS code is expected to come into operation from July 1 and that we are preceding diligently in ensuring that we will have all of our measures in place by that time, so we are not taking any chances. We are also working very closely with our CARICOM partners because I made the point in this Chamber previously that no one destination can make an itinerary.

I believe it is the United States of America Maritime Security Act which speaks to the fact that if a cruise ship goes to any port within the last 10 ports which does not comply with the security requirements of that country, that they would not be allowed entry in the United States of America. That would have implications for us and so we are working with our CARICOM partners to ensure that all of us are at the required level of security to safeguard our important industry in this important sector.

Sir, the Estimates make provision for \$16.2 million to be allocated to the Airport Expansion Project. I am not going to go through all of the aspects of the Airport Expansion Project because I believe that time may be against me, but I want to say that it involves the rehabilitation and expansion of the existing passenger terminal, the construction of a new arrivals terminal and the replacement of sewerage and fire protection facilities.

As you know, Sir, the new departures terminal is fully operational. I am happy to report that we are doing well and we are getting very, very good compliments. Sir, everyone I meet who has utilised the new departure area congratulates this Government for what we have done. We even get some congratulations from the Opposition Side, which is good.

We are constructing a new arrivals terminal which we expect will be completed this year. We expect very shortly that we will be able to have another aspect of the Airport Expansion Project in operation, that is, the new airlines operations counters, part of what would be the full airlines operations area. We are doing it in phases and so we expect very shortly to have utilisation of that area. We are going to hoard off another section and ensure that we facilitate the work there as well to have that area properly constructed.

We are utilising the system known as the CUTE system where now no airline will be restricted to one place. We are ensuring that we properly, efficiently and effectively utilise the resources which we have. This CUTE system will allow airlines to operate in any area, and we have invested heavily in that. We are constructing a water reclamation facility, which simply means that it would be a sewerage plant. We are ensuring that we do not put pressure on the water reserves we have here and that we are utilising.

Sir, provision is also made with respect to having the parameter of the Grantley Adams International Airport extended. We have previously constructed the Fairy Valley Road and we are ensuring that there is construction and realignment for the Parish Land Road. There would be acquisitions in the financial year of property for the relocation of residents in the environs. Sir, you would recognise as well that there is provision in the Estimates for the construction of a new airport fire station. As I said previously, we have to ensure, through the Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporated, that we properly utilise and allocate all of the resources that we have. One of the challenges that we face at the Airport relates to the parking of aeroplanes.

If you go to the Grantley Adams International Airport any Saturday you would see many aeroplanes on the ground. You would see 3 British Airways, 3 Virgin Atlantics, Air Canada, BWIA, and Air Jamaica aeroplanes. We will be constructing a new fire station and we would be looking at properly allocating the land which we have to ensure that we could properly develop and properly grow the airport facilities in the future.

Sir, the arrivals terminal would have proper facilities and enhanced facilities for Customs, Immigration, the Port, for health and for offices of all Government departments operating in the Airport. They will have new extended inbound duty-free shopping and location for tour operators.

Sir, the new departure lounge which is able to facilitate some 2 000 passengers at peak time is in use.
12.50 p.m.

Mr. President, yesterday Senator Newton talked about washroom facilities and maintenance and we are placing greater emphasis on that. Sir, when the expansion project is completed, the number of washrooms available at present in the departure lounge is six in one area and six in the other area. Sir, the washrooms which previously would have been in the old departure area, as well as the washrooms which are in the existing arrivals area, will all be part of the new departure lounge.

Mr. President, when we looked at the expansion of the Airport, we sought to ensure that the facilities would be adequate for 2015. We are growing rapidly because the policies that we are pursuing are working well. We may have to look at it before 2015 but be that as it may, one can rest assured that for the next few years, it will be more than adequate.

Mr. President, I did indicate that the International Civil Aviation's Regulation requires that we have a clear and safe zone for aircraft coming into the country. That is why of necessity, we have to expand and adjust the perimeters of the Airport.

I agree that we need to ensure that we can and that we do properly maintain the facilities at the Airport. During the Estimates of 2003–2004, as well as the Estimates of 2004–2005, there is provision for resurfacing and widening of the runway shoulders. That is to ensure that our facilities are such that we can properly provide for aircraft coming into our country.

In fact, one would notice that in the Estimates, there is provision to procure equipment, to be able to constantly check the runway because we are moving to higher heights and are taking every precaution to make sure that we safeguard our valued and valuable sector.

Mr. President, I would not want to finish without making some reference to the Bridgetown Port and the expansion work that will be taking place there. While we are focussing on bringing more airlines into Barbados, we are also focussing on bringing more cruise ships to Barbados. Therefore, we will be providing a new cruise pier which would allow us berthing facilities for two additional mega ships.

Sir, on a recent business travel, as I always do, I went on the Internet and read the *Nation Newspaper* and I saw that on the Tuesday it was said that we were expecting six cruise ships to Barbados. I was at a Sea Trade Convention where we were seeking to ensure that we encourage more cruise operators to our shores. Sir, at the Barbados booth, with the assistance of our partners, we were able to display photographs of the Bridgetown Port, with the ships being in port.

The new cruise pier will not only facilitate cruise ships but will also ensure greater employment for our taxi operators, more duty-free shops and that we involve more Barbadians.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Grant, your time will expire in two minutes.

SENATOR R. W. GRANT: Sir, I need to tell you about what is happening in the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport. I need to tell you that the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporation (BTII) is ensuring that it enhances the tourism product. This is a matured tourism destination and work has been going on in St. Lawrence Gap.

The Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporation (BTII) has dealt with the restoration of the Old Town Hall. I need to tell you that the new Tourism Development Act has been able to facilitate private sector capital investment of \$66.7 million, through the expansion and upgrade to hotels and restaurants, villas and new tourism facilities.

I need to tell you about a private jet centre at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, I need to tell you that we are working continuously to ensure that we utilise programmes such as Tourism Education Awareness and Me (TEAM), to involve persons. I need to tell you that through the Heart of Barbados Programme, we are utilising and working with communities to ensure that more communities are involved.

Sir, I would want to finish on this note. I would want to tell you that unlike some of my colleagues from the Other Side in this Chamber, we believe that by getting the economics right and by focussing on the economy, we can create a better society.

Sir, I am confident, as all of my honourable colleagues are, that these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, facilitated through the programmes that we provide, will ensure every Bajan a winner.

I am obliged to you.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for one hour, to be resumed at 2.00 p.m.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.00 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to. Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly. 12.57 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Griffith.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, I wish to thank Honourable Senators for their constructive contributions which were made over the last two-and-a-half days as we discussed the Government's Budget for the fiscal year 2004–2005.

There are a few issues which I feel compelled to respond to, starting, of course, with the issue raised by Senator Stuart when, in his disappointment, he was not able to criticise the Government over the management of the fiscal affairs of the country, that the deficit had been reached well within the target set by the Government, sought to give the impression that there is no need for focussing on the fiscal management of the country and somehow there is a disconnect between the economic indicators and the society.

I know that Senator Stuart does not believe that because he knows that if there is no growth taking place in a country, there is nothing to distribute and the social and other programmes which are necessary for the advancement of the country cannot be implemented, so, I am sure that he was not serious with his statement that we were talking about things in the abstract. They are real. Sir, if he wants to discover how real there are, let the economy go into a serious recession and then, I am sure that Senator Stuart would speak about the reality that would have existed in that situation.

Mr. President, I first turn my attention to the statements with reference to those comments mentioned in the Auditor General's Report. Let me say for the record that this Government has nothing to hide in relation to matters pertaining to the St. Leonard's School. In fact, if you read the Auditor General's Report carefully, you would discover that it was not one of his routine audits that led to these disclosures.

It was at the request of the Ministry of Finance to the Auditor General to conduct a special audit. That is how these matters were brought to the fore. The Government has nothing to hide because nobody in the Government instructed anybody on that project to breach the Rules as described by the Auditor General, and certainly nobody in the Government condones that kind of behaviour.

Sir, it is a fact that because of the system of governance which we have, that the Government got the blame. That is not because anybody in this Administration condones those things. My advice to those persons who are heads of departments and accounting officers, that those positions do not only carry salaries, they carry responsibilities.

I made that point abundantly clear in my introductory speech when I said that there is no room for mismanagement of the kinds described by the Auditor General and I trust that those persons who are responsible for that grave mismanagement, have taken heed and that corrective measures will be put in place by the appropriate Ministry to make sure that there are no recurrences of this situation and that those persons whenever they are asked to account for their action or lack of action, will be dealt with appropriately.

It is not for me, at this moment, to decide what consequences they will bear. The matter is on the agenda of the Public Accounts Committee and that Committee will do its investigation. I will repeat that if persons are engaged by the Government to manage projects on their behalf, whether they are from the private or public sector, they have an obligation to do their job properly. Sir, when I read the Auditor General's Report I could only conclude that was not the case and in the appropriate place that matter will be dealt with.

Mr. President, as far as the issue raised regarding tenantry roads, I noted carefully Senator Collymore's remark that there is nothing new about building tenantry roads and that they were being built for decades, and I agree with him. Mr. President, nobody on this Side is making any claim to doing anything novel when a road is built in a community that had no road.

Sir, what we are saying is, that since tenantry roads were being built for so long, we do not accept that today there are in excess of 600 communities with unpaved road accesses. We have pledged that during this term in office we will make sure that every community has a paved road.

Mr. President, it is not acceptable for us or anybody to say to those persons who live in communities without paved roads that it is nothing new about building tenantry roads and that was going on for decades. That does not deal with their problem.

Sir, two Saturdays ago I had the honour to officially open a tenantry road in a community and as I mingled among the members of that community, they told me many things. Some of them told me about the inconveniences and discomforts which they suffered for years but they told me other things. They started to draw to my attention the housing development that has started to take place in that community since the road was fixed. They also told me about other plans for that community.

Sir, Senator Collymore wants to know what the Rural Development Commission does besides building roads or fixing houses. The Rural Development Commission is the

agency that has been given the mandate for rural development in this country. Rural development includes building roads, the installation of street lights and fixing houses. Those three things are only a part...
2.10 p.m.

Those three things are only a part of rural development. The Rural Development Commission is the agency that has the mandate to work with respective communities to ensure that economic activities take place in those communities, so that we can have vibrant communities in this country, which is also the cause of the economic activity taking place there, cohesive communities.

Now, you may say that is something that any other agency would do. That is true, but the Rural Development Commission is the agency that has that mandate and that is what the Rural Development Commission does besides building roads.

When I went to that community two Saturdays ago, some of the things we spoke about, as I moved through the crowd, included the activities that some of them were planning to do now that they have a road. I visited some farmers in Ealing Park not long ago and Senator Lowe would tell you what the issue is with them. They have the land but when the rain falls, they cannot have access to their land to move their produce anywhere. It is not simply a question of just building a tenantry road. There are purposes behind that and the intention is to facilitate activities taking place in the communities.

The Rural Development Commission has three loan schemes that it uses in pursuit of that objective. It has a Livestock Development Fund, a Rural Enterprise Fund and a Fruit Orchard Development Fund and it lends money to these three schemes to any person in the rural communities.

When we speak about rural development, we are speaking about activities taking place in particular communities. We are not speaking about lending Mr. A from community B money to set up a business in another community. We are talking about developing an environment where people can work, live and play. If anyone wants to know what the Rural Development Commission does in that respect, visit some of the communities.

We held, not so long ago, Town Hall meetings across Barbados and met with various communities to hear from them what are the activities they want to get involved in their communities. We can share the information we collected, Senator Husbands knows that because she has been part of this exercise, and you will see the plans they have. People want to be involved in agriculture of one kind or another, planting food, or rearing animals.

Sir, that is not all. When we speak about a rural development, we do not only mean agriculture. People want to be in crafts, set up cottage industries and the Rural Development Commission works with those people to help them set up those businesses.

One of the activities that they pursue through the Small Business Association is training. You can look at the many training courses they have been conducting across Barbados, preparing those people to manage the small businesses which they set up in their community.

Of course, they can borrow to set up elsewhere but the great emphasis is on development of economic activity within the community. That is what the Rural Development Commission is expected to do. That is what it is doing and that is what it will continue to do. Coming out of those Town Hall meetings which we held, we have a plan which we are now implementing.

Only yesterday morning when I was leaving the Ministry of Agriculture, I saw two young ladies at the door. They had not come to see me. They came to see another officer in the Ministry but I took the time to chat with them to ask them how far they had reached since we had the Town Hall meeting at Princess Margaret School and they came with a plan for the community of St. Philip where they live to do a range of activities and the Rural Development Commission has been working with them.

The Rural Development Commission is serious about rural development. As I said, this is more than fixing roads, installing street lights or repairing houses. Those three things are a critical part of rural development, because just as the farmers in Ealing Park require a road so that when the rain falls, they are able to move their produce in and out.

When I visited them, they raised another issue with me, which is one of the things done by the Rural Development Commission. They raised with me a site from which they would be able to sell their produce and the Rural Development Commission does that as well. The Rural Development Commission sets up vending areas in communities so that people are able to sell what they have grown, without having to go to Bridgetown.

What is the reason for a farmer coming from Six Roads all the way to Bridgetown to sell produce, if he can set up his business somewhere in Six Roads or a more convenient area, so that is what the Rural Development Commission does, besides building roads, fixing houses and installing street lights. We think this is a very important mission they have to fulfill. If you doubt it, speak with any of those people who are now benefitting or better, those persons who expect to benefit and then you will see how important that is.

The issue, Mr. President, of recent job evaluations. I cannot say much about what happened in 1989. I was

working in the public service then but I was not affected by it, except in a very strange way. I was a permanent secretary then, and at that time, they had two grades. Grade 2 and after working for a certain number of years, you went to Grade 1.

I never knew that there was any reference. Maybe, there was but I was not aware of any reference to the level of responsibility. I was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Finance. This is the only place that I have been a Permanent Secretary. I never knew that I was at Grade 2 because it was felt that my level of responsibility said I should be at Grade 2 rather than Grade 1, or anybody had done any exercise to see what skill I should have had to be in that position and determined that those skills suggested that I should not be higher than Grade 2. I was at Grade 2 because they had Grade 2 and after a number of years, you moved to Grade 1.

Therefore, when the exercise came in 1989 and everybody was put at Grade 1, I had reached there, but what I would tell you, in the event of reaching there I had a very strange experience. This would tell you some of the *ad hoc* things that are done in the public service, even up to this day and I would speak about that in a little more detail when I speak about public sector reform.

Sir, I discovered that a gentleman who was appointed at Grade 2 the same day as me, I suddenly looked in the *Official Gazette* and saw that his appointment was back-dated. When I enquired what was the reason, I was told by the then CPO that he was going to reach retirement age before getting to Grade I, so it had been decided to back-date his appointment to when he started to act in the post.

I drew to the CPO's attention in a letter that I had been acting before him and my appointment should then be back-dated to when I started to act in my post and that if they do that I would have reached Grade I two years ago, and they owe me some money. I got a very nice letter at home which I had framed. The letter told me that the Governor-General, acting on the advice of the Public Service Commission, had denied my request.

Do you want me to repeat that, Mr. President? A decision had been taken by certain persons to back-date a certain individual's appointment so that he could reach Grade 1 before he retired. I telephoned the Chief Personnel Officer who deals with personnel matters and he told me that the decision had been taken to backdate the appointment to when the gentleman started to act as Permanent Secretary. 2.20 p.m.

I foolishly thought that the same thing would apply to me through natural justice, so I wrote the CPO, who on the telephone had agreed with me, asking for mine to be

back-dated from the time I started to act. Up to now I have the letter framed to show future generations of the way matters are done in the public service.

Mr. President, when it comes to anything even remotely associated with money or land, there is always a great dissatisfaction, so I would be surprised if there is an agreement with any evaluation exercise in the public service. The 1989 and the previous evaluation exercises, to my knowledge, were less transparent than this one. Certain people knew of them, but this is the first one I am aware of that such a wide range of people had any say in it. I am not talking about after the report is developed and then circulated. I am talking about helping to develop the criteria to determine.... These criteria include things like level of skills required, level of responsibility, training and the academic qualifications that are thought necessary to do the job and the extent to which you operate on your own. This was an attempt in a transparent way because a committee was set up which included representatives of the workers and other persons to try to come up with objective criteria. That does not mean that the exercise is flawless. It may still turn out that some people in presenting information would say that they do more than they do and some may not give all the necessary information. At the heart of all this, everybody wants to be at Grade 1, so if you are not at Grade 1, or if you were put at Grade 1 because somebody was your friend and decided to put your post at Grade 1...

Mr. President, I have seen things like that in the public service in my time and I have suffered from some of them. I remember well the time when I returned from studying in Glasgow and discovered that I had not only to revert to my substantive post, but I had to go on leave because in my absence a person who was 10 years my junior was put to act and when I returned I was told by the then CPO that he is a human and that he had become accustomed to the acting allowance and how would I expect him to revert.

I thanked him for letting me know that I was not human because I had reverted and I had to go on leave to accommodate that situation. Thanks to the Almighty, I have risen about those challenges and I would not support any system that would continue to allow those situations to exist.

Mr. President, when it comes to public sector reform, I have my thoughts on it and in some instances they differ from those of a lot of people because the injustices which I suffered, I do not want to see inflicted on anybody. The four years I served as Head of the Civil Service, I was appalled at the kinds of situations that existed in the public service.

All of my life I did not know some of them existed. The one thing that I find unacceptable even up to today is the fact that when decisions are made by the Public Service

Commission and other people supercede people, sometimes without good reasons, they have no recourse except under the Administrative Justice Act to go to court and pay away what they do not have.

Mr. President, I believe that any reform of the public service has to take into account a number of things. Everybody focusses on what the individuals are to do. I focus on that too, but I say some other things such as you need to have in place a set of objective performance criteria. They do not have them now. At the end of every year somebody writes on a form which has a number of things on it such as attendance, punctuality and skills and you put an A. That is not done on the basis of any record that is kept over time or anything like that.

We have put in place a set of objective criteria that would measure the performance of people which they will know are being used to measure their performance and when they falter along the way someone would call them and tell them where they are falling short, how they could correct it and give them six months within which to correct the problem and when they fail, to call them back. With all of that, we are still going to have difficulties with the management of the public service.

Mr. President, I feel also that there is need for modular training in which people are trained to perform the jobs they are being asked to perform and not leave it to chance and then find fault with the quality of their service when you did not prepare them to do the job. I believe that has to be done. All those people who were responsible for managing the public service over the years could have done that.

I also feel that there must be a different approach to the issue of discipline in the public service so that when people falter after having been given a generous amount of opportunities to put themselves right, appropriate action could be taken against them. All the other issues in my view would fall in place when you do those things. Mr. President, that is as far as I would go on the issue of public sector reform.

Mr. President, I turn to look at the issue of supplementaries which Senator Chandler raised. I am sorry she is not here. Supplementaries come from time to time because of all sorts of reasons. Some may very well be genuine underestimations of the situation at the beginning, but all need not be as a result of that. Circumstances change over the period of the year. New shoes arrive.

Our system is one which does not permit variance, that is, if you have savings under item A but because of changed circumstances you have to expend more money under item B, so you cannot take funds from item A to spend on item B,

you have to come back to Parliament. Usually you do that by saying that you have savings here but you need additional funds there and the overall expenditure of the vote would remain unchanged.

The Ministry of Finance would agree to that with their eyes closed once they hear that you would not be spending more. Simply because people come for supplementaries, does not mean that they are inefficient and incompetent. It is very easy sometimes to perceive that public servants are inefficient people, but I have found inefficient people wherever I went in the world.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. President, in keeping with that feeling about public servants, when we were preparing for the changeover with the Y2K problem, I had chaired the committee which was preparing the public service for that changeover. Sir, there was not a day that I did not get a complaint from a former civil servant who had felt that the Civil Service had stopped since that person had left the service, or from a private sector person who felt that people in the public sector were incapable of dealing with it, unless they were given a contract.

This situation went on to that very day. When that day came, none of the chaos that they were foretelling came and the changeover came so smoothly that nobody knew there was any problem which might have been as a result of the changeover.

Mr. President, therefore, I am not one of those persons who feel that everything that happens in the public sector happens as a result of incompetence or inefficiency. I know there is some of that but from my experience, I do not believe that everything is like that.

Mr. President, the issue of statistics which Senator Chandler has raised is one with which we in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development have begun to deal with. We have engaged a new statistician who has had much training at the Statistical Department and has started work collecting statistics. I am sure that in the very near future there would be a great change to the situation within the Ministry.

Mr. President, as far as the services to farmers are concerned, there is always room for improvement. Therefore, we in the Ministry are taking steps to ensure that we produce the best service for the farming community. Next week we are going to be launching our new and updated website and all farmers will have access to it to research whatever information is necessary.

Mr. President, yesterday Senator Collymore made reference to what he heard two Prime Ministers say about

success or otherwise at the Ministry of Agriculture. I lay no claim to any ideas behind anything that is happening in the agriculture sector. All I say is that the ideas which are now bearing fruit and will bear greater fruit in the future, are the ideas of the farmers. They are the persons who have the investment in the industry. I have simply met with them and with the officers and have discussed what were the problems they were experiencing, where they wanted to go, what difficulties they would have encountered, and how they think the Ministry could help them.

Mr. President, we in the Ministry of Agriculture operate on the basis that we have learnt from the lesson of those persons with the talent. We have no intention of hiding our talent in the bushes and using the excuse that we know the Lord. We intend to use our talent and leave the rest to the Master.

Mr. President, the issue of water is not whether or not the rain falls. When I visited Ealing Park, one of the issues that the farmers raised was an issue of which I was aware, that is, there is a large deposit of brackish water at Gibbons Boggs. I do not know if Senator Lowe knows that.

We in the Ministry have our views and have put them forward on how the shortage of water could be dealt with for the farming community. When I was resident in Geneva, at the request of the Ministry of Finance, I went to Frankfurt to take part in a number of discussions. One of the discussions in which I became deliberately involved, was how water stressed countries were seeking to solve their water problems. We were talking about Arab countries, most of them almost desert, and we saw how they were solving their water problems by using desalination plants.

Mr. President, Senator Chandler is right. There is water all around us and at certain parts of the earth here too, for instance, at Gibbons Boggs. It is, in my view, that persons who are charged with the responsibility of water resources have taken the approach like that of the person who had the single talent and have kept putting notices out saying not to do certain things, as though Barbados must stop going forward. That is not something that we in the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will accept.

Those persons can accept that if they want to but as far as the farming community is concerned, we have accepted that there are two issues with which we have to deal, which are the issue of a land use policy, as was dealt with by Senator Chandler, and the issue of water.

Mr. President, if the farming community is to do the things that they, the members of that community wish to do, and things that everybody expects them to do as we seek to lift agriculture to a new plateau and to increase its

contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), land has to be made available and the water issue has to be solved.

Mr. President, we are not saying that because we expect it to be done by somebody who we have put forward our proposals on how it could be done. I am, therefore, confident that it would be dealt with.

Sir, I am not the Minister responsible for water but if I had to deal with it, I would be able to solve it. I also know that there are members of the private sector who have produced plans to be able to solve it, and that very shortly it would be solved.

Mr. President, Senator Lowe was right when he spoke about stabilisation, about the fact that if one continues to stabilise the patient, at some time that patient would die. I was pleased to have seen in this case, that he was more advanced in his thinking than his colleague. That is exactly what I was saying when I pointed out that after the recession following September 11, 2001, the Government got involved to take up the slack that had resulted from the downturn and that Government had put extra spending in that area.

Mr. President, the emphasis then changes as soon as the economy returns to its growth path because the restructuring has started too. Sir, all of those issues I spoke about with reference to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development have to do with restructuring, for example, the cotton industry, the sugar industry, the expansion of all the other sub-sectors, and that is the position that this Government has taken.

Mr. President, it is not only happening in agriculture but in manufacture and in international business. If one would look at the Estimates, one would see that the provisions are there. Senator Husbands has spoken at length to the various measures that are being put in place to generate new small businesses. If one would read this document, when the Minister responsible for Economic Affairs presented his economic policies to Parliament, this is what he said:

“We have to lift our average real growth rate of economic output to between 3 per cent and 3.5 per cent and sustain that average rate over an extended period of time. To accomplish this, major changes have to be made to the sectoral composition of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and to the emphasis of our recent growth strategies with a view to creating a more balanced economic system.”

Mr. President, the point we are making, certainly from our small corner of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, is that a Barbados that is diversified in its

economic base, is a stronger Barbados than one which is moving like a vehicle on one piston. We are a strong services sector, providing the driving force as the way forward.
2.40 p.m.

Mr. President, if by chance there is a faltering along the way in one sector – it is like a jet flying. If the jet has only one engine and it fails, we know what will happen. If the jet has two engines and one fails, it is likely to land somewhere before it falls from the air. This is the same thing with the economy.

Sir, the Estimates of Expenditure are constructed on that basis. Efforts are being made during the coming fiscal year to allow the respective sector of the economy to play their part. They all do not have to grow at the same pace.

Sir, in the agriculture sector we do not expect every sub-sector to grow at the same rate but we have taken the view that we would want to see growth in every sub-sector because we know that is stronger growth than having one sub-sector growing and the others are lagging. This is the same thing with the economy, so you are perfectly right, Senator Lowe. We could have exchanged places.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, Senator Collymore raised the question of pensions and he raised it within the context that the Government, as part of its policy, was capping certain expenditure and he interpreted the issue of pension as one of them. If I understood him correctly, he might very well be suggesting that in a sense it was false budgeting because he somehow assumed that this capping, with reference to pensions, was done in order to keep the deficit down but I can tell him that was not the case.

The capping to which the document refers is in relation to the statutory bodies that receive funds from the Government and the objective is fairly straightforward. A number of those agencies now provide services and the fees that they charge for these services are no way near the cost of providing the service and there is scope for them to look at that.

The issue of pension, the revised Estimates for the current financial year, 2003-2004, is approximately \$136 million. The provision for 2004-2005 is \$127 million, so there is a difference of \$9 million. The Senator was correct when he said that the bulk of that expenditure is made up of two items, the retiring benefits and other benefits. One is statutory and the other is not. If it becomes necessary to provide additional pensions, the additional amount can be provided without coming back to Parliament. That is correct.

Mr. President, this is an Estimates made up after persons have tried to work out how many persons are likely to retire in the year. They may be right or wrong. In this day and age there are many people in the public service who do not wait until retirement age to leave. There are some persons who are required under the existing legislation to retire at the age of 60.

Sir, one can assume that all of those persons will retire at age 60. This information can be achieved by checking the personnel records to determine those persons who would reach the age of 60 in the coming fiscal year. You cannot determine how many of the large number of public servants will decide to leave if they are offered better jobs, so, you may or may not be correct.

Sir, let us assume that this is incorrect and that the expenditure will be \$136 million, the same as last year. Take that as a percentage of the expected Gross Domestic Product of approximately \$5.63 billion and you will see that it amounts to 0.14 per cent and you add that to 2.7 per cent and you get 2.8 per cent.

Mr. President, this is an estimated deficit to start with but let us assume that nothing will change between now and March 13, 2004, and the deficit comes out at 2.8 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product, Barbados is not going to go into a crisis over that but, also accept that persons are managing the situation.

Sir, if perchance the pensions went up to that and you had to add 0.14 per cent to 2.7 per cent, it is here where you will make adjustments. It reminds me of a gentleman who was a Minister, when I worked in the Ministry of Finance, and I had reasons from time to time to advise that he should not be given some of the money he was asking for and I told him why we had to keep the expenditure within certain limits.

At the end of the year when I came down to Parliament, during exercises like this, and the deficit came out to where we wanted it to come out, he would come to me and say: "You see, there was no crisis, everything came out well", but he never stopped to remember that we were managing the situation and the deficit did not come out by accident.

Sir, the point that I am making is, it is very farfetched for anyone to assume that if we want to keep a deficit at 2.6 per cent, that we would have to cap pensions and reduce them by \$9 million in order to do that. I would leave that where it is.

I thank you.

Mr. President, I will briefly touch on some matters specific to agriculture that I did not get the chance to speak about. For example, the proposed plan for the Scotland

District which, in our scheme of things, is a very important plan. The Scotland District, as you know, represents 1/7 of the land mass of this country. It is an area where there are peculiar challenges, instability in the soil.

Over the years, the Soil Conservation Unit has done an exceedingly wonderful job in trying to stabilise the land in that area. Some months ago when I visited the Scotland District with members of staff of the Unit, the Chairman of the Board of the Scotland District worked in that Unit many years ago. As we visited the area in Sedge Pond, he stood with pride and pointed out to me areas which were unstable in the 1960s, when he worked there, that area now standing firm with a lot of vegetation and so on.

Mr. President, it is our view that is too large a portion of the country to be left unattended and to be allowed to slip away. Therefore, we have devised a plan to develop that area, not only to keep the land stable but to add to the food production of the country, remembering, of course, that we have set ourselves three objectives in the Ministry of Agriculture.

1. To increase the contribution of the sector to the Gross Domestic Product of the country.
 2. To safeguard our food as far as possible.
 3. To reduce the food import bill in the process.
- 2.50 p.m.

Our approach to agriculture is one where we are trying to build an industry which has backward and forward linkages with other parts of the economy and I will give you some examples.

When I visited a number of the producers of cut flowers, and they told me that at the present moment, they sell all of the flowers they produce to hotels, with a few exceptions which they sell to churches. This is what we mean when we talk about building linkages with other sectors of the economy. The hotel product gets some of its value from an output of the agricultural industry, namely, in this case, the horticultural industry. If the horticultural industry in Barbados goes under, for whatever reason, the hotel will then have to import flowers to beautify their rooms. If we keep the horticultural industry going well, it is able then to make a contribution to tourism.

The black belly lamb is another output from the agricultural sector into the hotel sector, but manufacturing as well. We are talking about agro-processing as one of the ways of solving the problems, so that is a linkage with the manufacturing sector.

If we speak about the distributive trade sector, as the agricultural sector expands, it has to take more inputs from the distributive trade sector, so that is another linkage.

Sir, all three sectors will benefit from an expansion in agriculture and *vice versa*, they will suffer from a contraction in agriculture as well.

Sir, if agriculture expands, other sectors of the economy with which we build linkages, will expand. In the Scotland District, we are doing two things besides stabilising the land. We are speaking here about a number of projects. Some of them have already started. There will be the planting of forest trees at Morgan Lewis, which has started. These forest trees will eventually create the opportunity for people who are interested in trails as well. We are also planting, as part of that programme, a number of fruit trees. Those fruit trees, in due course, will produce fruit that can be used elsewhere.

When I met with the officials of the Pine Hill Dairy and spoke with them about the possibility of this project coming to fruition in the Scotland District and fruit being available for making pulp to go into the making of juice, they gave me a list of the kind of fruit they would be willing to take. They also indicated to me their willingness to work with the farmers to bring a project like that to fruition.

We are not necessarily talking about large processing units. We are talking about cottage industries because this is part of rural development as well. We are talking about creating activities in the Scotland District so that the people who are living there can get involved in activities within their respective districts and they do not have to move out to live elsewhere. This Scotland District Project is a very important project for them as well. There is much more about it but I will not go into that at the moment.

Mr. President, there is the issue of the Sustainable Development Agricultural Development Bill. We now have the outline of that Bill, and we are in the process of preparing the policy document that will lead to the development of the necessary legislation. We will be setting out in that Bill issues such as the water use, including the saving of water by using drip irrigation and other devices that would save water and still allow the farmers to do what they want. There is also the issue of land use and many other things in that Bill on which we are working.

Mr. President, I have touched quickly on some of the issues raised by Senator Stuart in relation to the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, particularly the one where he spoke about the need for careful attention to diet and exercise.

I would just like to let him know that the points he made are well taken and they are being acted on, even now. If he takes a look at the programmes for the Nutrition Centre, they would discover that they have been doing programmes like that for quite a while. A visit to some of the polyclinics will also show that there is emphasis on diet, especially when dealing with persons who are already affected by some of those problems to which he referred, but also, trying to get others to avoid reaching that stage. Maybe, there is need for expansion, but that is okay then.

Sir, the issue of solid waste which was raised by Senator Collymore, if you look at the Estimates for the Ministry of Health, Sub-programme 373, under Structures, \$4.3 million, the note reads as follows:

“Provide for the physical facilities to be constructed during 2004-2005”,

Sir, the activities which are going to be there, have to do with construction of the waste transfer station, combustion facility, bulky waste, disposable facility, chemical waste storage facility and so on. There is already provision for that and there is also a provision of \$1.4 million for professional services.

Mr. President, I currently chair a subcommittee of Cabinet which is dealing with issues related to this project, the terms of reference for the consultants and other people, so this is a matter that is being dealt with at the moment.

Mr. President, I have been overtaken by time. I will therefore conclude by saying that I am sure that in spite of the queries which had been raised, the Honourable Senators support the Government's budget for the year. My advice, Mr. President, is that the Speaker of the House has certified the Bill as a money Bill, therefore, it is not necessary for us to go into Committee to consider it further.

I therefore beg that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR the Hon. E. R. GRIFFITH, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2004.
3.00 p.m.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PAYMENT BY NEEDHAM'S POINT HOLDINGS LIMITED OF COST OVER-RUNS WITH RESPECT TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF A RESORT HOTEL TO AN AMOUNT NOT EXCEEDING US\$10 613 732.20; AND THE PAYMENT OF DEBT SERVICE TO AN AMOUNT NOT EXCEEDING US\$7 MILLION ANNUALLY

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, this Resolution before us is as the result of a request by the financing agencies which are funding the construction of the Hilton Hotel. As you know the estimated total cost of this project is US\$106.1 million and it is being funded by a number of commercial banks, by the Caribbean Development Bank, the National Insurance Board, the Hilton Hotel and the Government of Barbados.

The commercial banks as well as the Caribbean Development Bank have made a request to the Government that it should provide a guarantee to deal with any cost over-runs up to 10 per cent of the project. This is just a measure to be put in place in the event that this should occur.

Similarly with the debt, the Caribbean Development Bank and others have asked the Government to provide a guarantee that in the event there is some likelihood of a default, that the Government would guarantee the repayment of the debt as well. Mr. President, these are just precautionary measures and therefore I would ask Honourable Senators to agree to the Resolution.

I therefore beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR F. J. STUART: Mr. President, in light of the explanation given by the Honourable Leader of Government Business, there is really no need to detain the Senate on this issue. When I read the Resolution, I was under the impression that there have, in fact, been cost over-runs, but the explanation has clarified the issue for me so there is no longer any misunderstanding on my part. We on this Side understand that if it is a requirement of the lending agencies that it is not something from which the Government can walk away and therefore the Resolution has our support.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

The question that the Resolution do now pass was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 3 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228, THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF PARCELS OF LAND SITUATE AT DRAX HALL GREEN IN THE PARISH OF ST. GEORGE IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSES OF HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AND RECREATION

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH: Mr. President, this Resolution deals with the acquisition of two parcels of land amounting to 5.89 hectares at Drax Hall Green, St. George. The first part of the land is to be used for housing development and the second part is to be used for recreational facilities.

Mr. President, during the past two and a half days there was some discussion about the need for housing lots and for the construction of houses. This Resolution for the parcels of land at Drax Hall Green is an effort to help ease that problem which now exists. This Resolution is also in keeping with Government's philosophy that when housing areas are created that sporting facilities are created as well in an effort to develop rural communities.

Mr. President, when I spoke just now about the role of the Rural Development Commission, I did not mention that there are other components to rural development that fall outside the jurisdiction of the Rural Development Commission. The Rural Development Commission has a role to play in co-ordinating the activities of other agencies since it is ultimately the agency that is responsible for rural development.

There are many services that will make up part of this rural development that are provided by other agencies but, to avoid duplication, we are allowing the Rural Development Commission to do the co-ordination, so the intention here is to develop the first portion of the land, 3.18 hectares, into housing lots and the second portion, 2.71 hectares, for the purposes of sporting facilities.

Mr. President, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

SENATOR Dr. D. S. LOWE: Mr. President, I rise to indicate our support for the acquisition of this land and also to reiterate our position that the cost of housing in this country, particularly for low income persons, has to be studied.

I believe we are on record in this Chamber in suggesting that the Government needs to contemplate using the National Housing Corporation in the construction of these homes so as to reduce the cost of housing since the

Corporation is a functioning entity of Government and there are artisans within the bosom of that institution who can provide the kind of service that would be required in the construction of these homes.

Therefore, we would want to again ask that in the moving forward of such programmes that the role of the National Housing Corporation be studied to ease the burden of cost on those persons who are sitting at the bottom of the earnings table to enable them to afford housing.

Mr. President, I well recall a similar project in Orange Hill where a number of excited first-time low income homeowners rushed to be part of the ownership process only then to encounter a number of problems because of poor construction, the size of the homes and the cost which was based at around \$55 000.
3.10 p.m.

Mr. President, while we embrace the Government's attempt to continue to find housing solutions for Barbadians, we would want to instruct that in the provision of those solutions, it contemplates in a most serious way how we could create a more affordable cost range to those persons who currently sit at the bottom of the earning ladder in this country.

Mr. President, the second point I wish to make is that it is, in fact, a progressive idea to twin the provision of housing with the provision of recreational facilities. Indeed there are a number of existing areas where recreational facilities are not part of the ambience of services provided for persons in housing districts. Therefore, we see that the attempt to twin the provision of recreational facilities with the provision of housing as a good and progressive move. Therefore, we would hope that any further efforts by Government to create housing solutions, would also be accompanied by the provision of recreational services.

Mr. President, with that comment, I support the Resolution.

SENATOR Miss S. C. V. HUSBANDS: Mr. President, I wish to inform Honourable Senators of some of the initiatives in terms of housing. At present the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment has put out contracts to build approximately the 1 000 houses that are spread between middle income and lower income housing.

The matter that has been raised by the Honourable Senator Denis Lowe is well taken by Government in terms of the high cost of construction of homes, which makes it very difficult for people at the lower income level to be able

to get affordable housing, with which they could feel comfortable.

Sir, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment is currently investigating low cost technologies in housing construction and is seeking to bring a reasonably-sized house in under \$100 000, which would be more affordable for the use of low income persons. There would also be the provision of 100 per cent mortgages for that type of housing, making it more affordable.

This would mean that someone does not have to look for a large deposit but could look at a repayment plan that is similar to perhaps that of a rental, to make it easier for low income persons to access housing. Therefore, the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment is doing a great deal of work in that area in seeking to provide affordable housing on behalf of the working class.

Mr. President, I thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH:
Mr. President, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. E. R. GRIFFITH:
Mr. President, before moving the adjournment of the Senate, I wish to thank all Honourable Senators for their contributions over the past three days but, particularly, I wish to thank the members of staff of Parliament for their great efforts over the past three days. We do appreciate the work they have done. I hope now that they can take a breather after today's Sitting.

I beg to move that this Honourable Senate be adjourned *sine die*.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before putting the motion, let me just say that this is the 10th occasion on which I have had the privilege of presiding over the Annual Appropriation Bill.

Let me also say that it was a debate of high quality and I would like to congratulate all Honourable Senators who have participated.

The question that the Honourable the Senate be adjourned sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
3.15 p.m.

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2. A Resolution to approve in accordance of Section 5 of the Land Acquisition Act, Cap. 228, the compulsory acquisition by the Crown of the parcels of land situate at Drax Hall Green in the parish of St. George in this Island and more particularly described in the First and Second Schedules hereto for the public purposes of housing development and recreation respectively.

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