
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on Tuesday, May 4, 2004

PRESENT

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

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

Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, April 27, 2004.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, April 27, 2004, be deferred given the mess up with the printing of the Minutes. We have been assured that they will be ready, I am assured, for the next Sitting.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If this is the will of the House, then so be it.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am commanded to lay:

1. The Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 2004.
2. The Special Development Areas (Savoy Properties SRL) Notice, 2004.
3. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (Evco Limited) Order, 2004.
4. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (United Holy Church of America (Barbados) Incorporated) Order, 2004.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: I am commanded to lay:

Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the year ended March 31, 2003.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am commanded to lay:

Annual Reports of Barbados Vocational Training Board for the years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute and to urge this House to commend its sympathy to two of our Members who in the course of the last two weeks would have lost one of their parents each. I refer to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West whose mother, Doris Gertrude Atherley nee Small, would have passed away onto the great beyond. Also, to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South whose father, Garnett Hubert Wood, would have been laid to rest at St. Martins Church.

It is, indeed, with a deep sense of regret that we rise today as Honourable Members of this House to offer our sympathy to our colleagues and to say that if there is but one thing that is certain in this life is that each of us shall pass that way and each of us shall also feel the loss of loved ones at some point of our existence. Sir, the certainty of that knowledge does not make the occurrence any easier.

It is significant that especially those in public life, even when they are experiencing a deep sense of loss, they are required to continue their duties and to act in a way as if they had not been experiencing such loss because invariably, this

is not always public knowledge and the level of expectations do not diminish as they relate to your performance throughout your period of time in serving the people. Mr. Speaker, it is, therefore, even more important that we in this Chamber communicate and support one another because we share that common experience and we recognise that even though we may have to deal with these normal tribulations of life, invariably we are still required to perform at optimum levels everyday, every week and every year.

Mr. Speaker, I did not know either of the two persons personally but if one is to judge their lives and their testimony by that of the kind of persons whom they raised, in relation to both the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, one can clearly say that not only were their lives well-lived but they ensured that they so raised their children with a sense of responsibility, commitment, public spiritedness and loyalty in each one of them, such that they are able, as loyal citizens of this country, to bring greater levels of service and credit not only to their families and themselves but to the people of this nation.

In the case of Mrs. Atherley nee Small, she was born at Joe's River, St. Joseph. Like many other Barbadians who were born in the country she made the trek down to St. Michael and having done so, became a St. Michael person committed to the welfare of the people in the community in which she lived.

It is significant that the thing that stands out most to me about her activities is her commitment to school children in the ways of the Bible and the Church, such that even working with her son in his Church they were able to raise over 400 children in relation to the numbers for whom they accepted responsibility in guidance and religious education. Mr. Speaker, she was not required to do this. The fact that this exercise started in her house and only when the numbers grew so significant that it moved outside of the precinct of her house, was an indication that this was a lady who understood that to whom much is given much is expected and that in every respect there is a requirement on each and every citizen of this land to give something back to the community beyond that which is their duty to family, self and job.

Indeed, this spirit of volunteerism and public spiritedness clearly was communicated unto her son who stepped into the arena, in spite of the fact that in public life in modern Barbados, Sir, few who have been in the church have been willing to make the transition to public sector activity. Indeed, his name would forever be written in the annals in the history of Barbados as one who understood that you could balance the commitment both to the church and the well-being of the citizen in respect to the State.

Mr. Speaker, I am told that Mrs. Atherley was born on May 30, 1920 and married at the age of 20 in 1940 to Joseph Atherley, a builder and a retired police officer. Indeed, it is significant that marriage was to last for sixty years, a period of time that many people do not even make on their own far less in blessed union. Mr. Speaker, I venture to suggest, as I say in respect of my own life, that 90 per cent of who we are as individuals is largely as a result of who our parents helped us to become in the early years of socialisation, the values, commitment, the outlook on life and the perspective is largely shaped in those early years.

Mr. Speaker, during my period of time as Minister of Education in this country for seven years reinforced my perspective in that regard. Sir, that is why we argue that in spite of the role that this Government, and all Governments in modern Barbados, must continue to play in respect of a strong social commitment and social justice commitment, we cannot so crowd out individual responsibility and action in the shaping of people's own lives in their houses and communities because that is an intangible that no government can ever replace as an effective guardian.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, I want to commend to this Honourable House that we communicate our sympathy to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West in respect of the passing of his mother. I am aware that it is a great loss to him and I indicate to you that those good old traditional Barbadian values, which she has exemplified in her life with respect to the children, her commitment to her marriage for 60 years, in respect of the values of thrift and doing for herself by extensively providing for her family, through the careful husbandry of a kitchen garden throughout her life to supplement their income. Those decent traditional values that we believe are best exemplified by all of the unsung heroes of this country have to continue to be uplifted, if we are to continue to ensure that the legacy which we have received is carefully shepherd and preserved to become our legacy to future generations.
10.30 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South's father, Mr. Garnett Hubert Wood, he was a St. Philip man through and through. Perhaps, if you understood the life of Garnett Hubert Wood, you would better understand why the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is the Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I would not go so far as to say that his father should have been the representative before him, but suffice it to say that the blessings of his father have been visited upon him. Indeed, Sir, that would only help you get here but it cannot help him stay here, and to the extent that his father has played a role in his continued presence in this House, it has been due to the fact that he, perhaps, even

more than many of us in here, would have been the person benefitting from the careful guidance of his father, given the fact that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South's mother died before he was 10 years old.

Therefore, his father played an extraordinary role, especially in the context of this society, where we often hear that it is the mothers who must mother and father their children, that Garnett Hubert Wood played the role of being both father and mother to the Honourable Member of St. Philip South and his other siblings.

Indeed, I am told that he was assisted in this role by his grandmother, clearly exemplifying the extended family that for so long, was the in-depths of care in Barbados' history and which, perhaps due to our housing patterns today and our different outlook, is no longer as strong a support base as it used to be in previous generations.

His father, Mr. Speaker, had he been born in this day, in my view, would clearly have been a chief engineer of a major company, would have benefitted from free education from primary to tertiary, and the skills which he showed as the engineer in charge at Four Square Factory for in excess of 50 years, could easily have been translated today to make him, certainly, a world class engineer, had he been the beneficiary of the free education of which his son was to come to be a beneficiary.

Many people of Barbados do not know, Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South has first class Honours. Many people in Barbados do not know that his combined education at the University of the West Indies and the University of Cambridge was possible, as a result of the opportunities given to him, and so many other Barbadians across this landscape.

When you contrast those opportunities with those which would have been available to his father, who at the age of 83 passed away, but who at the age of 20 in 1941, would have seen no similar opportunities for himself, one begins to understand what we have achieved as a nation, in relation to the improvement and the quality of life and the opportunities for people in this country.

I am told, Mr. Speaker, and certainly when I attended the funeral, would have heard how industrious he was, for in spite of his being an engineer, he ensured that he controlled and tended to a number of grounds across St. Philip. He ensured, Sir, that he did not only treat to his produce as a means of earning income, but as a means of understanding his relationship to the community in which he lived, and the extent to which there may be others, who may have a greater need for some of that produce, than he did at that particular point in time. This came out of what was called in Barbados,

the share crop mentality, that if you do not have today, I am going to share with you, and if I do not have tomorrow, you will share with me.

We have at some point to examine the sociology of our experience, Mr. Speaker, and to recognise to what extent our development, since Independence, has replaced some of these very carefully crafted bonds that kept this society safely. Sir, as we plan housing developments, we need to ensure that there are opportunities for persons of different backgrounds, ages, and races mixing together. It is that intangible bond of trust that has kept us safe, and allowed the evolutionary development which ensured that a son could have opportunities that a father could not, in the space of one generation.

Mr. Speaker, in my view, work stands still to be done, and not simply to be the subject of casual observation, as we are doing now, but should be central to our social policy and planning, as we move forward in the building of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want therefore to suggest humbly to this House that we pay tribute to these two outstanding Barbadians, who in their own way would have contributed to the improvement of the quality of the fabric of this country as individuals, parents and citizens. I ask that this House forward the appropriate Resolution to the members in their families, expressing the gratitude for two lives, that of Doris Gertrude Atherley and that of Garnett Hubert Wood, well lived in the service to the nation and in the service of their families.

I am obliged to you.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer sincerest condolences to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, on the passing respectively of their mother and father.

Since becoming an adult, I have not suffered the loss of a close relative, but over the last week and a half, I have lost four friends in the constituency of St. Michael North West, who have assisted me in some way within the constituency.

I can say standing here that I can now start to understand the extent to which people feel grief. One of those persons, in fact, taught me how to ride a bicycle. One gave me, almost without any soliciting, on a weekly basis, an allowance to buy biscuits and bread, and the others contributed meaningfully. I can begin to appreciate the extent to which the Honourable Member for St. Michael West would be hurting as a result and suffering from the loss of a mother.

I regard my mother to be the greatest thing ever made on the face of the earth, special in every sense of the word, willing to forgive whatever you do and certainly loved, in spite of the circumstances.

While I have similar feelings for a father, I will be honest in public to say that, in my own circumstance, my mother is the apple of my eye. I can also understand why the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would be feeling equally grieved, given that he lost his mother so early in life and therefore had a father who mothered him.

It is with those thoughts in mind that, on behalf of myself and the Democratic Labour Party, I wish to offer sincerest condolences to these two Members of Parliament who will forever throughout their lives reflect on the contributions their parents made in making them the individuals they turned out to be.

10.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, even though they may be on the Other Side, to have had the pleasure to grace this August Chamber as a representative is a distinction. This is something I know a mother is more than proud of and would feel extremely special knowing that a son or a daughter got the opportunity to represent the people of Barbados at the highest level and would be justly proud of their achievements.

Mr. Speaker, while I may be an opponent politically, I understand that at this time we need to share with them the sad loss of their outstanding parents.

Mr. Speaker, as is traditional, I have to second the Resolution proposed by the Leader of Government Business.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I too would like to associate myself with the words of both the Leader of Government Business and the Leader of the Opposition who spoke in this Chamber today.

Mr. Speaker, I never had the opportunity to personally meet Doris Gertrude Atherley or Garnett Hubert Wood. I met them in spirit in that I was at both funerals where I was able to sit and hear the eulogies on behalf of both of them and to hear the sermons preached.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Doris Gertrude Atherley was the first of the two to die on February 9, 2004. Her son, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, since coming into Parliament as a Member, and I have bonded very well. We have a fantastic relationship and respect and love for each

other. He is a very good friend of mine. I knew his sister Phyllis before I met him and jokingly I would call him my brother-in-law.

Mr. Speaker, Mrs. Doris Gertrude Atherley who died a week or two before the late Sir Harold St. John, was eulogised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael West's wife, who said that on the passing of this lady there would have been no fanfare, no lining of the streets, no ceremonial escort and no 21 gun salute, but in her estimation she was a queen. Mr. Speaker, both Mrs. Atherley and Mr. Wood would have been born during the days of hard times. Mr. Speaker, your mother too would have been born around that time and coming up in her house, you would have known some hardship. Mr. Speaker, you and I were not of the ilk like the Atherleys and the Woods. We were not born with gold spoons in our mouths.

Mr. Speaker, the women of that era would have probably gone to school to seventh standard. On leaving school they did not have the opportunities that are available to people today and those women would have either worked as helpers to known seamstresses in the area in which they lived or as shop assistants. Those who were fortunate to come to town to work got a job at a store as what was known in those days as a 'clerkist'. Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, the men would have ridden their bicycles from their homes in Christ Church to St. Lucy every day to work on plantations and back home in the evening. A lot of those same men also worked on the plantations in the area in which they lived. Mr. Wood worked on the plantation at Foursquare. In those days Oldbury Plantation, Searles Plantation and Carrington's Factory generated work for the poor people in the area. In those days people did not know what it was to have electricity or running water in their homes. They had to bring water. Those were hard days for those people.

Mr. Speaker, those people must be respected for the hard work which they did. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has said, they worked in that capacity to make sure that their children benefited and achieved from the free education we have these days.

Mr. Speaker, although Doris Gertrude Atherley's husband knew her to be a good mother who did so much in the house for his three children and as a good wife, he summed her up in three words, a good woman.

Mr. Speaker, I was at the funeral and I saw the grief. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke about not having someone close to him passed away. I myself have not had anyone who was close to me passed away. I had an uncle years ago and recently another uncle but no immediate family member.

Mr. Speaker, I go to many funerals and I am exposed to the grief which the people feel. When I go to a funeral, it reminds me of my own mortality and of my mother's mortality for the fact that she is a woman going towards 80 years old, but who knows who would go first. Sir, funerals remind me of the mortality of people, and it is not a good feeling to be there.

Mr. Speaker, I do not like going to funerals but I have to go to pay respect to my colleagues, my friends and even my constituents. If you are a hard worker and you are close to your constituents you find that bond coming between you and your constituents, so you feel it at all times.

Mr. Speaker, we heard that Doris Gertrude Atherley was a person who always put people first. She was loyal in her neighbourhood. As you would know, Sir, she used to live in the constituency you so ably represent until she moved to the constituency of St. Michael North. We heard at the church that she was community-spirited, and that she worked with the shut-ins. These are older members of the church who because of ill health or disability cannot get to church, so the members of the church go to their houses and keep services for them. She was one of those persons who were instrumental in making sure that this was done on a weekly basis. Mrs. Doris Gertrude Atherley was a person involved.

Mr. Speaker, we heard at the funeral that she was a believer and a follower of Christ. Mr. Speaker, I do not profess to be a born again Christian but I try to live daily by the teachings of the Bible.
10.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, the First Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy, Chapter Two, verse five, where she remembers it says:

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ."

Mr. Speaker, she lived that life. I will say too that she was a woman of faith. Sir, she had so much faith that about one week after the Honourable Member for St. Michael West was married, she was in the church on that Saturday rejoicing at his wedding and on the following Saturday, she was in the church at a funeral for one of her sons, aged 26. At that time because of her faith, she did not ask the question: "Why me?" She remembered Job. There is a story that says that sometime ago there was a Christian in a hospital, where his family went to visit him and from that visitation, that family met an accident where all of them were killed. In a situation where someone with lesser faith would have wondered why all of his or her family could have died at once, this Christian person sat down and penned the words to the famous Hymn: "It is well with my soul."

Mr. Speaker, I would say that Doris Gertrude Atherley was such a person. Sir, another situation is that maybe Doris remembered the words of the Hymn 548. She remembered at all times that she would take it as God has given her, she will not choose her lot. She could not, and she lived by that.

Mr. Speaker, Doris has made her contribution to Barbados and to her community. We have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North speaking about her involvement with over 400 children in Sunday Schools. Sir, in today's age, it is not possible to get over 400 children in all of the Sunday Schools in the parish of St. Michael but she was such a person. She would work with those children to make sure that they attend Sunday School. I guess in today's age there is the television with BET channels, the Richard Stoute Show, sporting activities on Sundays and, therefore, the young children would be into these things.

Mr. Speaker, there must be cultural activities and, therefore, I am not 'knocking' the Richard Stoute Show and the other sporting activities. What I am saying is that she went beyond that duty to make sure that she had these children remaining in the church. She was also very much involved in the Colts Sports Club at Station Hill, working with those young men and women.

Mr. Speaker, the greatest contribution that anyone could ever receive on earth is that life that is given to us by God. We then respond in that way to God by thanking him through the way that we live our lives.

Sir, I would want to say that on the behalf of the people of St. Michael West Central, including both Democratic Labour Party and Barbados Labour Party supporters, my family and I, if I can go back to the Bible to Paul the Apostle, the Second Epistle, Chapter four, verses six, and seven, where it talked about Paul going away and knowing that his time was at hand, where he would have been beheaded. Paul says in verse six:

"For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand."

At verse seven, he says:

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course. I have kept my faith."

Mr. Speaker, Doris Gertrude Atherley did just that and I am quite sure that as boldly as she approached the eternal throne, she can claim the Crown through Christ her own.

Mr. Speaker, Doris Gertrude Atherley was born on May 30, 1920. Some 15 years after that, she was born again and washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Sir, she left for her home on February 9, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, I did not know Mr. Wood but I heard him being eulogised by Idamay Denny. My association with his district goes way back. I heard that he was a hard-working man in the community of St. Philip. I heard he worked as an engineer at the Four Square Sugar Factory. I know he lived on Four Roads at one time. I had an uncle, Gerald 'King' Marshall, who worked and lived at Four Square for some time, and I heard the Honourable Member for St. Philip South saying that he knew him because they were neighbours, since my uncle and Mr. Wood would have worked together.

I heard about the ability and the hard work of Mr. Wood as an engineer but I would add to that to say that what I heard in the eulogy was that Mr. Wood was also what one would call a personnel officer or a human resources manager because he would have made sure that he found work at Four Square Sugar Factory for the people in his community.

Mr. Speaker, he was also a man who gave his all to people. He was a man who has raised seven children, as their mother had died quite young. He has also seen some of his children dying before him.

Sir, I have also heard that he was a ladies' man and I can see why, since he was born on February 14, Valentine's Day. As is said, he once said to his son that if he had wanted to save money, he would have had to give up on the girls and the motor cars.

Mr. Speaker, what can also be said of Mr. Wood is that he would give away all of the produce that he grew from his fields. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West and he came to that understanding early, even before the Honourable Member was interested in politics. That understanding was that anything that was grown in the fields were to have been divided among the parishioners or the people in the community.

Mr. Speaker, he was a man that never believed there were 'inside' children and 'outside' children. He was a man who took care of his family, and saw all of them as his children.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say on the behalf of the people of St. Michael West Central, my family and I, that we hope that as Mr. Wood goes through the gates of larger life, that the angels would eternally protect him.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I will try to be very brief but I felt it is my responsibility to extend, on the behalf of my family and the constituents of St. Thomas, our

deepest condolences to these two distinguished persons whom I consider to be unsung heroes.
11.00 a.m.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke of not having any one in his family passed away recently but I can speak of my two parents passing within six weeks of each other and, therefore, I know the pain that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South are feeling at this time. It is no mean task for our citizens to endure hardship and still live to reach four score years or more. Sir, the health standards in this society have been upgraded and I must say thanks to all the Governments who have put healthcare at the top of their agenda over the past decades.

I will speak first of all to the father of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, the late Garnett Hubert Wood who would have been through very trying times to raise his family on his own. It was not an easy task because Barbadians are of the opinion that if a woman is not in the household that it will not work but many males take the responsibility to ensure that their children are well trained, nurtured and disciplined. It was as a result of the late Garnett Wood's personality and his commitment to community that individuals within the community helped him to raise his children to be successful citizens. Indeed, when we look at the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, we see that his father left absolutely no stone unturned in ensuring he had a quality education, discipline and all the good moral standards that helped to make him a good citizen and an honourable Member of Parliament. It is phenomenal when single parents can raise children who can rise to the highest level in this society. I must commend all the fathers who take on the responsibility of committing themselves to raising their families.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South is adding another burden of grief to his heart because within the last ten years he had many tragic incidences in his family. He lost a niece, sister and other loved one dear to him. Therefore, we know the pain and suffering he is enduring and this has inspired me to make these comments. I want to say to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South to rest assured that God will not put more on him than he can bear. God is simply testing him and will continue to give the comfort which is necessary at this time.

Mr. Speaker, the late Garnett Wood did not have secondary nor tertiary education that many of us boast of here in Barbados but I can attest from what I heard in the eulogy that he had a solid seventh standard education which has put him at the level of an engineer in the sugar industry supervising large numbers of employees. Sir, his degree came from working, cooperating and respecting the views of

people. He ensured that as a leader he managed while making workers feel comfortable under his guidance. This is significant for leaders in Barbados because gaining a degree does not mean that a person may become a good leader but that they need to get additional training in order to become a good leader.

The late Garnett Wood was a strong person in the workers union and this is important because a lot of leadership skills are developed there. He also made his contribution as an engineer in the sugar industry which helped with the expansion of the economy.

Sir, he was a role model in the community in St. Philip. We can sum up by saying that he was a man who lived by the sweat of his brow to ensure that he raised a good family. Sir, the theme that says "It takes a whole village to raise a child", would have been put into effect in the community in St. Philip when the Honourable Member for St. Philip South arrived.

Sir, Heroes Day has just passed when we recognised the contributions of our heroes and heroines and we can add the names of Garnett Hubert Wood and Doris Gertrude Atherley to those unsung heroes who quietly but in a dynamic way helped to make the difference in the lives of helping to develop good quality citizens.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the late mother of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, I was deeply impressed with the wonderful sentiments that were expressed about the quality of life she lived. It speaks to her being the virtuous woman we read about in the book of Proverbs. She was honest, upright, God-fearing, well-loved and community-spirited. We already heard of her involvement in fostering young children and preparing them for life by giving them good examples to emulate and ensuring they attended Sunday school where the moral and spiritual base was put in their hearts.

The preparation for the spiritual and moral base started with her because some of the parents in the community did not have the time. Sir, Doris Gertrude Atherley spent quality time with these children and this is an attribute that more Barbadians need to adopt so that children can be molded into good citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I was deeply impressed to hear of Mrs. Atherley's demeanor. If she met her children's friends she embraced them as if she had known them for a long time and invited them to her house. Sir, people cannot be invited to other people's homes nowadays because we do not know who is who and there is no community link as in the past.
11.10 a.m.

Sir, people knew that if their children went to Mrs. Atherley's home they would be safe and they would have been taught religious things that would help uplift them. Sir, Mrs. Atherley fostered all her children's friends.

Mr. Speaker, a gentleman said that Mrs. Atherley once traveled overseas and on her return to Barbados he visited her and she told him to come back and see her later because she had a token that she brought back specifically for him. He said that he was touched by this gesture. I understand that was something that she did at all times and she never looked for anything in return. I think that is another rich quality that we need to develop as Barbadians. It resonated with us in the past and we should bring it back into the system, giving and giving from the heart but not looking for anything in return.

Mrs. Atherley gave and made people feel comfortable. She fed people like the 5 000 as told in the Bible. Sir, it was said that when anybody turned up at her home, even though what she had available was limited, she spread it around so that everybody would get a little taste even if she denied herself of the meal that she had in the household. I think that is another quality that we need to look at because we never know the condition of individuals when they come to us. Sir, most of them have needs that can be met through simple actions from many of us.

Mr. Speaker, the late Doris Atherley laid a great foundation for the preservation of family life and I want to ask Barbadians who may be listening to look to see how we can again look at holding families together, taking them to church, working closely in the community with the school and other agencies to ensure that we build functional societies, societies where people want to share and where skills are developed. Mrs. Atherley did these things without looking for anything in return. She spared no effort in her task to ensure that happened.

Finally, she was a multi-talented woman. She worked as a housewife and did several things to ensure that whatever funding that was available remained within the family. She did not go to the Ministry of Welfare Department even though she had hardship. Our parents also met tremendous hardship but they made every effort at trying to help themselves first, then only when the situation was not improved they tried other sources. Sir, going to the Welfare Department was not the first step in resolving their problems. Mrs. Atherley made sure that she cut and contrived to raise her children in the days when times were really hard. Again I want to commend all women and all families who look to use their God-given talents to enable them to achieve.

Mr. Speaker, the late Doris Gertrude Atherley raised honest and upright children as we can see in the Honourable

Member for St. Michael West. He was raised in the church and continues to be in the church where he has reached the distinguished level of Reverend in the Pentecostal Church. I am sure that his parents input would have been an integral part of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West's life.

Sir, I want to say to the Honourable Members for St. Philip South and St. Michael West that they can feel comfortable to know that God granted their parents the privilege to live and to see them grow into adults. God also granted these Honourable Members the privilege to live and see their parents interact within the home, school and the larger community and they did it by setting good examples.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members did not grow up seeing their parents in prison and having to visit them on a Saturday morning. They did not see their parents doing the obnoxious things that some parents do that are negatively impacting on their children's lives. They saw their parents as a cohesive unit within the home and community and, therefore, the Honourable Members were able to develop skills that they can transfer to their families and constituents.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members can rest assured that God will continue to give them strength in their time of grief and they should thank God for the lives, witness and service of their distinguished parents who have run the race. Therefore, there is Crown in Glory for them because they have done their best.

Sir, they are not published in newspapers as heroes and heroines as we have in our history but they have been the unsung hero and heroine who will, in the end, receive their blessings from the Almighty God. I trust that they will rest in peace.

I thank you.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to this Resolution and to offer my condolences to the Honourable Members for St. Philip South and St. Michael West. It certainly cannot be an easy time for them because any type of loss, specifically the loss of a mother or father must have, not only emotional difficulties with it, but it must necessarily bring a lot of emptiness where there was once a lot of love, relationships and togetherness and where emptiness now fills that space.

I have not met the mother of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West but I met him of late and I can say without question that if the sort of values and approach to life that he brings is any indication of what values she would have been able to bring to her own life, then I believe that she would have done a fantastic job and I would want to take my hat off to her.

I have had a good relationship with the Honourable Member for St. Philip South for a long time. As a little boy running around in short pants at primary school, I think that I had the opportunity to give him a correction on a few occasions as a senior member of the school.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, our families were close. All of his brothers and sisters were close to my brothers and sisters and I think that it is the Honourable Member's senior brother who is my very good friend. I do feel the closeness to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and his family.

Sir, given the closeness of the Honourable Member's district to my district and the fact that his father would have worked within the sugar industry just like my father did, my father who worked at Carrington Factory and the Honourable Member's father worked at Four Square Factory, they would have had a lot of time to interact together.

I want to say to the Honourable Member that I understand the pain that he feels and I want him to recognise that I too share in that pain for him and I would also want him to recognise that if there is anything that I could ever do to assist him in dealing with that aspect of his emotional difficulties, because our families go a long way back, he can certainly call on me at anytime. It is with that understanding, given that I do appreciate the feeling of loss of a family member when I lost my father in 1982, that I do concur with the type of emptiness that you have to experience. Therefore, the more support that you have from persons who are close to you, and to the family, is always welcome.
11.20 a.m.

I want to offer my condolences to the family members of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, and to the family members of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and also, my personal condolences to the Honourable Members themselves.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer my condolences to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, both of whom are personal friends and good men. It is for those two reasons, in addition to the fact that they are political colleagues that I feel their grief and pain at this time.

I know that they can feel justly proud, for the contribution which in this case, Doris Atherley, the mother of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, and Mr. Garnett Wood, the father of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, have made.

They have not only been blessed with longevity, having both passed the four score years, but their contribution can be summarised by describing them as builders of Barbados. They were two individuals who, based on the description offered by many of their friends from their childhood, from their children, grandchildren, their sons and daughters-in-law, and persons in the community, it is clear that they lived their lives, respected and, indeed, died respected.

These two individuals embodied what is good, great and glorious about Barbados, and the way that we would want to see ourselves as Barbadians. They were honest, displayed all of the qualities of thrift, and were descent people. They had respect for themselves and others, but they were also very forthright. They would tell it like it is and, of course, they had a love for their God. Sir, really, when you step back and take a look at what are the best features of us as Barbadians, they were very much displayed there.

Both individuals were very similar in perspective and outlook, nuances, of course, as builders of Barbados. But based on the information of their life's work, it is clear that they, like Barbadians of every generation, recognised education and religion as important twin strategies for the development of their family, as well as the development of the community as a whole.

They were people, both of working-class origin, but they did not spend their time lamenting on the obviously harsh conditions which would have been attendant on the period in which they were born. They did not spend their time complaining only about the lack of resources that were made available to them, either by way of the nature of the work they did, or of the family circumstances in which they were born. Instead, Mr. Speaker, they spent their time devising strategies, coming up with practical ways and means by which they would be able to advance the next generation. Also, to sow the seed of ambition, determination, dedication and commitment to goals and objectives, such as would have each succeeding generation of their offspring improve on the conditions that they were born into.

I would therefore think, Sir, that these two individuals are the kinds of persons who would need to be included in an appropriate social history of Barbados. We have a social history of Barbados. History, as you know, Sir, is not just about writing a single book, but is a matter of looking at a given time period from several different perspectives, and over the long run, taking account of all of the various angles from which that period is examined, we come to a true position.

Sir, while I stress the social aspect that we need, in addition, for example, to the ten national heroes that we were

proud to examine, where we looked at their lives, their circumstances, their contribution, and we can all gather some strength from the way they lived their lives and how they achieved, there are many people at the level of their family and community that performed the role of hero on the local level. I believe that these two would be good candidates for inclusion in a social history of Barbados.

For example, Sir, the book that was launched yesterday on cricket. It is called the Glory Days and it focuses on 25 heroes of West Indian Cricket. It does not go into a long set of pros of all the history of cricket and all of the test matches and the test grounds.

It instead focuses on the individuals. Their highlights, based on the author's subjective position, whom they consider to be 25 of the greatest. It provides information on these individuals, such that you could see the conditions in which they played, what their contribution was at the end of their career, and then it gives some statistics in support of that, along with some photographs.

Based, Sir, on the example of the mother of Honourable Member of St. Michael West, and the father of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, as well as the examples that all of us in here can remember of people who were significant in our development, spread across the length and breadth of this country, this generation and generations yet unborn, would be able to draw strength and build great character from having at their disposal, until time shall be no more, a quick reference.

They will be able to learn more about what Doris Atherley went through, how she was able as a young woman, born in St. Joseph, lived in St. Michael, raised in a family in the context of times in which she lived, having passed through the hard times of the riots of the 30's, the Second World War, Independence, and the building of the nation to these modern periods.

Yet, she held firm to her strong faith as a Christian and to her core values. Clearly, Sir, she was a person who was so in touch with the times, and maintained relevance, that generations, upon generations, of young people felt comfortable in her hands in the Sunday School and in the Church. She was not a museum item. Out of the foundations of a gathering in her house, she worked with the church in Halls Road, to really be able to be the mother of the church which is now pastored by her son. Mr. Speaker, such is the contribution of Mrs. Doris Atherley. She was a community leader, a church leader and a respected person who has passed through many generations. She remained relevant without changing, like shifting sand or being a comedian, changing only to match what was happening. Such are the examples on which we need to draw.

11.30 a.m.

Mr. Garnett Wood, the father of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, was a man who had a distinguished career in the sugar industry which, prior to the pride of place held by tourism, was the mainstay of Barbados. Sugar has made us free and has made us king. Sugar has been part of Barbados' history from the time there was a Barbados right through to this present time.

Mr. Garnett Wood was at the centre of the many changes, first at the Oldbury Factory and then at Foursquare Factory. He was a small farmer. Mr. Speaker, I can certainly identify with much of what Mr. Garnett Wood has done because persons like my father would have used some of the strategies which were used by persons of those days to be able to get through. For example, in addition to Mr. Wood's day job at a factory, he would have been working several plots of land in St. Philip. In those days my father as well would have been working plots of land in St. George. In those days persons did not have to own the land, but could work it for half of what it produced because people recognised that even though persons were not property owners, they had the skills. There would have been an old person who no longer was able to work his or her land, and persons within the community would have been able to devise those strategies, and would have worked four or five plots of land planting sugar cane and root crops. They would have planted the vegetable crops near to the house because they could not watch the carrots and cabbages from two miles away.

Mr. Speaker, all of us, particularly persons like the Honourable Members for St. Philip South and St. Lucy, were born in rural parts of Barbados and would have been familiar with these strategies for development in rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, the hard work of those days did not make us weak, it made us stronger physically, financially and, of course, spiritually. It gave us a determination to succeed against all odds. Therefore, these two individuals whose passing we regret, but whose lives we celebrate as we join with our colleagues here in this House in paying tribute to them, are among the fine examples of people who had their eyes firmly fixed on the prize which was not near survival in their harsh circumstances but success and giving their children the tools to go boldly where they had not gone.

Sir, Mr. Garnett Wood also played a key role in our communities. In fact, if we could have a few more persons like Mr. Garnett Wood and Mrs. Doris Atherley spreading across the communities in Barbados today, particularly in the newer communities where the bonds of families are not as closely spread, we would have less social and other problems today.

Mr. Speaker, both Honourable Members can feel proud that they have been able to benefit from the

goodly heritage of a good name which has been left for them by their parents.

Sir, I want to say to them at this time that I share their grief and that I understand their pain, having lost my mother in 1997. Thankfully, my father still soldiers on as strongly as ever, notwithstanding his hard work, thus reminding me that hard work does not kill, but that it builds.

Sir, I want to salute these two builders of Barbados and hope that in the not too distant future, that we recognise, value, treasure, and record the contributions of people such as these two fine persons which would allow my children, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren to be able to draw strength from these lives which were not mundane lives because they would not have been noted on the front page of the daily newspapers, but lives of great importance. These were lives which changed the course of history for the people whose lives they touched, which is what we are celebrating today.

Sir, I want on the behalf of my own family and the constituency of Christ Church East, to say how much we value the contributions made by these deceased persons and to offer our condolences to the Honourable Members for St. Michael West and St. Philip South.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too rise to pay my condolences to both families, and to say that I was very fortunate to have known Mr. Garnett Wood because of my sugar industry days.

Mr. Speaker, it is very easy for me to deal with both personalities in one because when one looks, one can see the same commonality running through, that is, that these are two young men who were able to go into areas and were able to remove the dominance of a political party from those particular areas.

Mr. Speaker, when one listens to what has occurred and what was said this morning, it is quite clear the reason why the parents of these young men had to be people who were respected within their communities. They were not people who had a lot of money, so they could not use money to buy political power. Instead, they were able to use their personalities within the communities in order to get their two sons elected to the House of Assembly. I want to salute those parents who have been able to build that foundation for their children and who have allowed their children to gain the goodwill they would have developed in their various communities.

Sir, it is quite interesting to hear that Mr. Garnett Wood was a man who worked several plots of land. What modern-

day politicians do not understand is that there is a linkage between small holding and community tourism. In those days, the large plantation owners dominated the agricultural industry but these small farmers were able to add something to the sugar industry which was significant. There was a time when each sugar factory would have received over 20 000 tonnes of sugar cane from small holders which would have been a significant amount of sugar cane at the time. Mr. Speaker, those who believed at that time that they could have gone ahead with the sugar industry without involving the small holders have only now recognised the contributions of those small farmers to the sugar industry.

11.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, let us not make the same error in the tourism industry that was made in the sugar industry, and that in the same way we did not understand the contributions of the small holders in the sugar industry, let us now understand the contributions of those who would become involved in community tourism.

Sir, if there is one lesson to be learnt from the lives of those two parents, it is that there are small things that matter and that when combined, these small things make a significant contribution.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West has been able to add a spiritual side to it, which is something that is very much needed in this community today. What is lacking are those moral standards and it is no doubt that the church has been able to play a role. We, therefore, need to play that role in a more significant way.

Mr. Speaker, I hope and wish that those values which Mrs. Atherley has given to her son, would be transformed into higher moral values, where he would be able to distribute them across Barbados so that we would have a grounding and a base, where we would not have the many problems that we are now having, and where, when people speak, one could appreciate the words spoken and could hold those persons to their word, instead of having to turn a leaf to see on which page the truth can be found. I would, therefore, want to congratulate Mrs. Atherley for instilling those values into her son.

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Garnett Wood has worked at Four Square Sugar Factory for a long time and if Mr. Pat Hutchinson had the opportunity to speak from where I am now speaking, he would have told you that Mr. Wood was a very good and hard-working person and would have worked very hard for what he wanted. Therefore, I am somewhat worried that we can have men and women in Barbados like these two persons who have worked very hard and whose contributions cannot be counted.

Mr. Speaker, the way in which hard work is being measured in this country is wrong. Sir, men like the Garnett Wood I knew within the sugar industry are the true heroes of Barbados but are never recognised, and this country Barbados would never go forward until we begin to recognise the Garnett Woods and the Atherleys of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that there is nothing wrong with the heroes that we presently have but we need to add persons with whom we can identify, who are hard-working persons and not 'paper' hard-working people. In this country Barbados we have too many 'paper' hard-working people. What we need to see is genuinely hard-working people who need to be rewarded for their hard work. If we do not do that, we are going to have a society where the young people would believe that they do not need to work hard. They would be following the society as it now stands and what is now being delivered and, therefore, this country Barbados would continue to fail.

Mr. Speaker, we are at the right time of our development to make changes which must be tangible, realisable, and meaningful. I am, therefore, saying that this country Barbados should use the lives of these two deceased as a platform and as a base upon which to build. Sir, the time for making that correction is now. If we do not correct it now, the error would be with us for ever.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want Parliamentarians to get up and to glorify themselves. We have to understand that we are privileged to have an occasion where we can set a new basis and a new foundation and that we have the right to build on that foundation and to set an example for the young people in this country.

I believe that if those two parents were alive, they would have been proud of the action that is being taken by the new Commissioner of Police and his Deputy. They would have understood that we have certain moral problems in this society and that we have to correct them.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that Barbados finds itself in a position where strong men and women must stand up and be counted, and where the days of deceit and lies would not be tolerated because at the end of the day, it is the seed that was sown, that one would be able to reap the respective crop. Therefore, if one plants corn, one is going to reap corn and not bananas.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we look and reflect on the lives of these two persons. I honestly believe that if Mr. Wood or Mrs. Atherley had not contributed to the communities in which they lived, that, for example, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would not have

been able to win the election in 1999 when the particular candidate who he ran against was able to have increased the numbers of votes that he had received during the 1994 election. This is a very significant point, that in 1994, a man was able to win a seat. In 1999, he was able to increase the numbers of votes over that which he received in 1994 but yet someone was able to defeat that person who had got the increase in numbers. It therefore, tells me that the name Garnett Wood means something in St. Philip and that the son is only living on that goodwill, which tells me that goodwill means something.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I want to offer my deepest condolences to the families of Mrs. Doris Atherley and Mr. Garnett Hubert Wood. I also want to associate myself to the remarks that have been made by all Honourable Members who have spoken. Sir, I will only add that in today's society, too many of our young people are not emulating any good values, values which our forefathers have passed on. I believe that we have seen these two individuals passing on good values to their children who have come to this Parliament and who have demonstrated that they too are involved to community work.

Mr. Speaker, I have attended the funerals of both of these individuals and one of the things that has touched me was that they were both Christians who lived for their communities. Sir, unlike the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, I believe that even though the larger society does not recognise these persons on paper, I think the communities recognise these unsung heroes and that their names will live on for generations.

I believe that communities do recognise persons who have been good to them. Communities recognise persons who have made valuable contributions overtime and when these persons pass on, not only do their names live on, but their children and their children's children are always the beneficiaries of goodwill and, therefore, it is important for our society to do good. It is important for our society to look at values which we once had and to bring them back to our lovely land.

I believe that in the case of Mr. Garnett Wood, it was noted that he was an agricultural worker who not only worked hard in his younger days at the plantations in St. Philip and had many plots of land across St. Philip but he was a man who would employ many persons at the Four Square and Carrington's Sugar Factories. I believe he was truly a good man, a man who helped his community. He did not uphold foolishness. He did not uphold criminal-minded persons.

11.50 a.m.

He tried his best to protect his society and to bring those who were deviant into the mainstream and to understand Christian values. Sir, my father was an agricultural worker but he wanted his children to be educated and this was also the case with Mr. Wood.

When the eulogy was read, I heard that he used to journey to Harrison's College to attend the many meetings of the Parent Teachers Association. Mr. Speaker, here was an agricultural worker sitting alongside doctors and lawyers of this country to make his contribution and this tells us about the nature of the man. He only went to Class VII but could read well and was able to converse with people who were highly educated. In fact, most students who went to Class VII were good at Mathematics and English.

Sir, I am of the view that these people were very knowledgeable about what happened in their communities. Most of these elderly gentlemen and ladies are able to pass on to others the important things in the community. For example, in the Ministry of Public Works we can ask persons like Mr. Garnett Wood about the drainage in relation to wells, about flooding in St. Philip as well as about the engineering techniques that could be used to help alleviate the problems in their society.

Sir, in relation to the mother of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, Mrs. Doris Atherley, she was an ardent community worker. She came to Bridgetown to live but never forgot that she came from a village in the country. Sir, too many of our people go to live in the heights and terraces and do not remember the village life they were used to. Recently, I visited a home where the elderly people live in a dilapidated house even though their children have good jobs. I say this because in the case of Mr. Wood, he has provided for his children and they have looked after him to the end.

Mr. Speaker, when I lived in Canada, persons were taught at mid-life that they would soon go into retirement, that they should save towards it and, Sir, Mr. Wood also saved for his retirement.

I think the Ministry of Social Transformation and those Ministries that touch the social life of people should start preparing persons for their retirement not only in terms of health but in terms of income and social life as there is life after retirement and it is being done in most developed societies today.

Sir, I also believe that community work is important and Mrs. Doris Atherley went back to St. Joseph and did a wonderful job with the people there. I understand why so many persons from St. Joseph were at the funeral. Sir, they attended the funeral because Mrs. Atherley helped them when they went to Sunday School. This tells us that we need to go back to our community and do work.

Sir, many people want to come into this Parliament but in order to do so, they must do community work and Honourable Members are here in Parliament because they have done some form of community work and are now here to serve that same community. I believe this is so because we and our parents have served well in our society. I also want to say to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South that he has now joined the orphanage club. I have been an orphan for a number of years. Both my parents died a long time ago and they also served their time on earth.

12.00 noon

Sir, we will continue to help our society and hope that they hear our voices today and understand that service is not servitude. We have to serve our society and at the end we would be recognised not by the society but by the Almighty.

On behalf of the constituencies of St. George North and South, I want to extend our deepest sympathy to the Honourable Members for St. Philip South and St. Michael West and to say that they are not alone in their grief.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I would like to join my other brothers and sisters of this Honourable House in paying my deepest condolence to the families of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and St. Michael West.

Sir, I cannot fully empathise with the feelings of the survivors of those who have predeceased because I have not had such a misfortune in my life. However, I have an understanding of how it feels because to some extent, the shaping of my life came as a consequence of my aunt who rescued me from the difficulties of life at the early age of six. She passed away some years ago and I was unable to sit within the precinct of the church during the time of the funeral service because I felt as though a central part of me was leaving. After the death of my aunt, I had the responsibility of standing on my own because she was always there to prop me up in the absence of my biological mother. Sir, my mother is still alive and still she plays a very important part in my life.

Sir, I did not have the privilege of knowing any of the deceased but I feel a sense of knowledge – I do not want to pretend that I am a Spiritualist and as a consequence of my spiritual connection I understand what is going on because I am not. I believe in the spirit. I am not so scientific to speak about these relationships and spiritual influences.

However, I want to join others in celebrating the importance of the lives and work of these two persons. In

paying tribute to those who have survived because I see them as the immortal continuation of their parents who have passed on. Sir, from all the contributions made, we seem to be suggesting, and I do believe it is factual, that these persons have played a very important role in the development of communities, individuals and their children. I heard that the parents of the Honourable Members made major contributions to the shaping of many people in the community and helped to uplift families who were prepared to take direction and respected the discipline which they both offered.

Sir, I want to speak of the importance of these people collectively since I did not know the individuals. I got the impression from those Honourable Members who spoke before me here today and from persons who spoke about these parents prior to coming here today that the deceased were very caring and compassionate persons. I want to make a very important point. The lives of parents will remain important and immortal. It is the only way that we have an opportunity through the reproductive system of making our lives immortal. That is why we try to have as many offspring as possible.

Asides.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Some of us have been doing a very good job at that so that this generation can be preserved and the good works and contribution to this civilisation can be respected.

Sir, we are very fortunate as a people to be here today despite the difficulties that we have been through and any person who would have contributed to that life experience and to the shaping of people who have been very successful in their careers must be respected and preserved. We have a long cultural history generating from our African heritage, a respect for our ancestors. Sir, what we are doing today is demonstrating that we have not lost any of the important elements of our culture despite all of the difficulties that we have been through.

Sir, over the years we had to respect people who had to struggle with the dynamics of survival. Living in a world with a sense of fragility, not knowing if we would survive another day and sometimes because of the difficulties of poverty and marginalisation in the system. We have to respect all those persons through all the difficulties and the meager incomes, demonstrating qualities beyond human, to be able to feed their families and cultivate positive qualities and the drive to achieve.

Sir, these two Honourable Members who sit here today in these Chambers are recipients of parents who have made

those kinds of sacrifice and who had a vision and understanding that future generations should not suffer the same consequences of those who have passed. They made sure that with whatever meager income they had, they were able to chart a path that this present generation cannot see the rewards of such an effort and probably the entire society would be able to benefit from their contribution and success as a consequence of their parents' guidance.

Sir, without having knowledge of the parents, I believe that the onus is now passed on to the survivors because death does not run in a chronological order. The reality is, the sons could have died before the parents. I would like to believe that as a result of all that we have said today, they understand the importance of protecting the legacy which has been passed onto them and we see in their life works – however long or short it might be and hopefully it would be long, because of the development of science and technology, that they will make a meaningful contribution to help lift our people and fight against all injustices in the society which might serve as inhibitions to the upward mobility of our people.

I hope that today the sons would not see our contributions simply in terms of sympathising or focusing attention on those who have deceased but more so understand that what we said has something to do with their conviction to protect the legacy of their parents. If their parents demonstrated compassion, decency and respect, and sacrificed their lives to ensure that other people can succeed and develop, in order to carry this country forward, I am hoping that in our contribution, we have been able to bring some clarity to the importance of their life work as representatives of Parliament, in honouring their commitments and the legacy which the parents have given to them and this society.

12.10 p.m.

Sir, with those brief words, I once again express my sympathy, and I hope that this legacy would live on.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I rise as well to offer condolences to the colleagues whose parents have passed from the confines of this troubled earth to what one would hope, a blissful embrace in heaven.

We would not now, Mr. Speaker, be speaking of both the lady and gentleman, if their sons were not in this Chamber. They would have passed on, remembered by their families, relatives and close persons within the Community with whom they had contact. Maybe, this debate should be a testimony of what we need to do, and say about those persons who have carried, or shouldered the burdens for the emergence of this society, over time.

We speak of persons, Mr. Speaker, who have satisfied three score years and ten, and even have borrowed some from others to add on to theirs. Those persons have toiled in the pond grass fields of our plantations, some who have worked in the sugar cane industry, at one time the most buoyant part of this economy, persons who have been nut sellers and sellers of mauby across this land, and those who have been washer women in the homes of others, all trying desperately, sometimes losing the battle, to provide for their children.

Those of us who sit here in the hallowed Chambers of this House must, by our very actions, seek to ensure and to celebrate the lives of all those men and women, not only those men and women, who because of some elevation of their children, are able to have us speaking today in tones which, yes, are celebratory and congratulatory, and for which they so richly deserve, but to speak, Mr. Speaker, to all of the countless others, who have made their contribution as well to Barbados.

This land is founded, Mr. Speaker, on the sweat and blood of all of them, those who had the academics, those who had the skills, and those who had the understanding to recognise that they had a chance to transform the society of Barbados, in the best way that they knew how. Therefore, as we hear the eulogising of those two who have passed on, we must also eulogise all of the others who have passed on.

What we must do as well, now, is to rescue from the dark corners of Barbados, those thousands upon thousands of older citizens, who cannot eat on a daily basis, because of:

1. Family neglect.
2. Wider society's neglect, who no longer care to understand or appreciate their contribution to this country.

Mr. Speaker, we walk on the soil created by them through the flaking of their skins, and the perspiration which they placed upon the soil. We call ourselves a Christian society but we abound with deep hypocrisy, because our words are not followed by meaningful action for the alleviation of the plight of countless numbers across Barbados. For many, they are only statistics, because they run and hide from that type of reality which exists within our society, that tightens the bowels because of poverty, deprivation, and the extent of the agony of many of our senior citizens.

Mr. Speaker, I recognise the work being carried on by several in our country. Sometimes, I think that they are walking up a steep hill without assistance. We must applaud them but we must challenge others to get down from their

ivory towers and commune, in a very serious way, with all of our people who are in conditions which are not suited for even the animal that we pull dear to ourselves.

It is not only this commemoration and celebration but a serious reflection and an inward look at what we are doing. There are persons who cannot get health care to take care of their psychological and physical needs. We must, Mr. Speaker, look at all of these issues and use the lives of our two colleagues' parents, to reach out even more to persons within our society and to help each and every one of them. Our society would be a better place because we would have reached into our hearts and bowels, and helped those who now at the stage of their lives, could not help themselves.

Therefore, again on behalf of the constituents of Christ Church East Central, I offer to my two colleagues in this House my condolences, and to all others who have passed on over time, that same sentiment is expressed.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I would like to join with all Honourable Members of this Chamber to offer my condolences to the families of Doris Atherley and Garnett Wood. I did not have the personal privilege of knowing these two individuals but I believe that their character, direction and vision would have well been reflected in the character of their sons, as found here in this Chamber.

The two Honourable gentlemen of whom I speak, that have lost their parents, are two of the most Honourable Members in our Chamber. This is not to reflect badly on any other Honourable Member here but that is to simply say, Sir, these two gentlemen with whom I have had the privilege to sit on this side of the isle, certainly have demonstrated a level of the most upright character of any Honourable Member I have met in this Chamber during my time here.
12.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to use this occasion to grandstand or to speak on any policy issue as it relates to the direction of Barbados at this time seen through the lives of these two people. However, the one thing I would want to say is that both of these persons would have come from some very humble and poor circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, the fact that their children ended up in the highest office of the land certainly says something about their direction, their hope and their vision for their offsprings. What I see reflected in the two honourable gentlemen who have lost their parents is a sense of direction that must have come from two parents who had a vision and a direction for them and would have moulded them in a very serious Christian direction apart from all the other social issues that

they would have added to the teachings that they would have had from their parents.

Sir, I know what it is to lose a parent. I still have a mother who is alive and well but I lost my father some years ago, so I know what it is to lose one of your parents, particularly when one depended upon that parent for direction, for control and for counsel. Therefore, on behalf of my family and my constituents, I offer my condolences to the two honourable gentlemen and their families on the loss of people who I believe would have been very instrumental in moulding and shaping their lives in the direction they are going in.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I rise to echo the sentiments of condolences which have been so well articulated by other Honourable Members of this Chamber. Sir, I, like the Honourable Member who proceeded me, did not have the privilege of knowing either Mr. Garnett Wood or Mrs. Doris Gertrude Atherley, but I know the fruits they bore. The Honourable Members for St. Philip South and St. Michael West are good men in every sense of the word. They are noble persons, not in the sense of being born to material riches and material wealth. Through their very interaction with people, the way in which they express genuine care and concern for all they come into contact with, one comes to the recognition that they are enriched by way of spiritual values which no doubt was instilled into them by the worthy parents they had.

Mr. Speaker, the loss of a parent is perhaps the most painful experience in the life of a child. I do not think that we would ever reach an age or the stage where even the fear of that loss, let alone the reality of the loss, can be calculated. I came very close to that reality with my own mother only a few months ago and it shook me to the very core of my being. So my deepest condolences go out to the Honourable Members for St. Philip South and St. Michael West.

Sir, I understand and feel their pain. When we behold the offsprings of Garnett Hubert Wood and Doris Gertrude Atherley, we see the living embodiment of their hard work, respect for others, courtesy, genuine decency, a caring spirit, a commitment for fellow man and humility. These are true gentlemen, where in a business such as politics, sometimes gentlemen are hard to find.

Mr. Speaker, I think this Chamber has been enriched by having these gentlemen in our presence. Regrettably, I was out of the island during the time of both funerals, but I would want, on the behalf of the constituency of St. James Central and on the behalf of my own family, to sincerely extend my

heartfelt condolences to both Honourable Members and their families.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I would like to associate this Honourable Chair with the sentiments expressed on the passing of the mother of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the father of the Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

On the behalf of my family, the officers and staff of Parliament and the people of the constituency of St. Michael Central, I express sincerest condolences to both Honourable Members. This House with acclaim accepts the Resolution of Sympathy and so directs that the appropriate resolution be sent to the grieving relatives.

As a mark of respect on the passing of the parents of these Honourable Members, I now invite all Honourable Members and everyone here present to join with me in observing one minute's silence.

One minute silence was observed.

May they rest in peace.

I thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the hour being half past noon, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.30 p.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 1.30 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.30 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed. With the Honourable the House's permission, we will now recommit to the Minutes.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes of Tuesday, April 27, 2004, be taken as confirmed, subject to any omissions and or corrections and or observations.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 8 – THE SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2004

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this debate to speak to the amendment of the Supreme Court of Judicature Act, Cap. 117(A) of the Laws of Barbados, to what effectively is a very simple amendment. Sir, that amendment is to seek to change the time when the Judicial Council is required to file its report in respect of its activities.

Mr. Speaker, previously the Chief Justice, as Chairman of the Judicial Council, would normally be required to file the report on December 31. Effectively what that meant, is that the report does not speak to the conduct of a full year's business of the court and in those circumstances, we would only get information relevant to the end of September.

What we are seeking to do by making the new deadline March 31, is to allow the Chief Justice to be able to file a report on the behalf of the Judicial Council, which speaks to the full calendar year's operations, in terms of the conduct of cases and activities that would have been undertaken by the Judicial Council.

Mr. Speaker, the amendment before us is a very simple one but you must forgive me if I use the opportunity of this Bill to speak to the wider issues pertaining to the administration of justice in Barbados and, indeed to the maintenance of an environment of law and order.

Mr. Speaker, I do so, recognising that there are times when persons will seek to utilise information for their own purposes, in a way that will not inure either to the national interest or indeed reflect properly on their own perspective.

Mr. Speaker, last night the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) carried, as its lead story, a story indicating that the United States of America's Government had carried on its website of the State Department, a travel advisory or travel information more appropriately called, in relation to the state of crime in Barbados, and indicating that crime was up in a number of areas, in particular robbery against visitors,

crime in the City of Bridgetown. The report also delivered the very unfortunate remarks that the Royal Barbados Police Force was ineffective and incapable of treating to this situation.

Mr. Speaker, you have been the Presiding Officer in this Honourable Chamber, and without seeking to breach the Rules of the House and refer to debates of this same Parliamentary Session, it does not escape me that you and other Honourable colleagues in this Chamber would be aware, not only from what you would have heard within this Chamber during the last year but also that which you have been treated to publicly, that is the situation as it relates to crime, whilst still of concern to any Government and to any entity with the interest of the nation at heart, is far more in a controllable state than those faced either by our predecessors in Government a decade ago, or by those in other Caribbean territories today as we speak.

Mr. Speaker, last year Barbados recorded a 17 per cent reduction in crime. For the first quarter of this year, the Commissioner would have, in his quarterly press conference last week, indicated a 14 per cent reduction in the first quarter of this year. Sir, the April figures now being made available to me suggest a further 6 per cent reduction in crime for April, 2004, as against April, 2003.

Sir, contrary to the perception that crime is escalating and contrary to the allegation of an ineffective Police Force, I want to go on record and state the support of this Government and I hope this Parliament for the work of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Mr. Speaker, since assuming this post, I have maintained that this is not a matter that I believe should be the subject of a partisan divide because ultimately Barbados is too small and crime knows no particular race, political affiliation, gender or class. In those circumstances, if we accept that the only way we can treat to the reduction in crime in this country, in the context of a world that is seeing ever-increasing numbers in relation to crime, we need to work together as a country in order to achieve those goals.

Mr. Speaker, to that end, I have appointed a Commission on Law and Order, which is chaired by one of the most eminent Barbadians alive, Sir Roy Marshall, a former Vice-Chancellor of two universities, and a person who has had the distinction of chairing the Commission on Racial Equality in the United Kingdom. In that group are persons from all backgrounds such as political, gender, racial and class but who represent a group of persons who are unified in their commitment to Barbados and who are able to treat to the issue of justice, peace and security as an issue that will span generations, Governments and political terms of office.

Mr. Speaker, it is only through the elevation of the policy issues to that level that, as a country we will be successful in continuing to arrest crime downward.
1.40 p.m.

Sir, we speak from a perspective of a country that has known what it is to reduce crime against visitors and to have a burglary rate and robbery rate in this country that is now one third of what it was a decade ago. Therefore, you would appreciate the considerable disappointment and disgust with which that report was met not just from this Government but, I am free to say, from the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force and particularly its leadership.

Mr. Speaker, we have had instances in the past before where travel advisories have been issued against the Government of Barbados. In those circumstances, we have protested in terms that we feel that if an advisory is going to be issued against a country whose principal income derives from its attractiveness as a destination, then we ought to be given the opportunity to see what it is that you would say about us, that is the basic rule of natural justice.

Mr. Speaker, the current team of persons at the American Embassy and not the Ambassador who has just arrived, would have committed to that principle when I met with them two years ago when we had a similar difficulty in relation to comments about Barbados' human rights and level of crime. I would like to think that we had put that behind us.

I am however, fortified in my view this afternoon as I speak in a way that I was not, having heard the story on the news yesterday evening, and having taken the appropriate steps of consultation with the Embassy here, I received a few hours ago, communication from the United States Embassy indicating that they were seeking to hold a press conference to correct what they themselves have termed as gross inaccuracies in the description of crime against Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, they have represented to me, the Government and people of Barbados that this story was printed on the States Department website without the expressed knowledge or agreement of the United States Embassy in Bridgetown, that the information does not reflect the opinion or analysis of the Embassy in relation to the crime situation in Barbados. I am also fortified that they would have found it possible to publicly state that there are supportive of the Government and the efforts of Royal Barbados Police Force and its new leadership in dealing with crime in this country, that they are clearly convinced that we are seriously committed to fighting crime and also indicated that they thought we were making great strides in doing so.

Mr. Speaker, to cut a long story short, they apologised on behalf of the Government of the United States of America.

It is my responsibility in this Chamber, the highest court of our land, to accept that apology and say that we are heartened that they have been courageous enough to publicly state that what was represented as their official position on an official website on the Government of the United States of America is in fact not reflective of the situation in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we have not always had the calmest of relationships with the Government but in these circumstances, I believe that the *bona fides* on the part of both the United States of America Government and the Barbados Government are clearly reflective and it speaks volumes that they would be prepared to publicly correct a situation that has been the subject of not just unfortunate reporting because, in my view, they should have been a balance in respect of a story of the Embassy here and a story from the Commissioner in response to it.

Mr. Speaker, I know my honourable friends on the Other Side would know better than to want to associate themselves with anything that would undermine Barbados' good name and credibility. I want to use this opportunity to thank the Honourable Leader of the Opposition for not taking the position that the former deputy leader in the Other Place took. Perhaps it is a good thing that there is a new deputy leader because Senator Stuart, this morning on the news at 7.30 a.m, sought to embrace that which not even the American Embassy in their wisdom is prepared to associate itself with. It begs the question that if he can so quickly run and seek to embrace a report that clearly bears no relationship to reality that I wonder who remains the culprit in this saga.

Mr. Speaker, in this respect, I say to you that we have a responsibility to this country that must be higher than a responsibility to our own personal political circumstances. Perhaps I now better understand the wisdom of St. Philip South and St. Michael South because if you can seek to profit on a story that seeks to ridicule the good men and women of the Royal Barbados Police Force, then you have no place in the public life of this country. Mr. Speaker, I say this without apology.

Sir, this was not an allegation against the Government of Barbados but against the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force. These are officers who have been working beyond the call of duty to ensure that all of us who stand in this Chamber can proudly say that at a time when other Caribbean countries, unfortunately, are experiencing increases in crime and calling state of emergencies because of the crime situation, that the level of relative safety in Barbados is high. While we accept that there is a role played by every member who is a law-abiding member of this society, we also accept that the police play an extraordinary

role in the maintenance of law and order and in ensuring that crime does not increase in this country.

Mr. Speaker, this is not by accident because two years ago this Government introduced the flexible responsibility allowance to ensure that officers working outside of their shift could continue to do so and be compensated in circumstances where their work was critical to the maintenance of that peaceful environment. This has largely been a success even with the bureaucratic difficulties experienced some times in increasing the number of available man hours in the fight against crime in this country.

Sir, too often persons refer glibly to the work of the police but there is no one who would seek to stop the police from doing what is their lawful duty in this country without risking the wrath of the good people of Barbados. Sir, pandering to the lowest common denominator does not help you in your political career but what will is a commitment to the stability and security of this country.

Mr. Speaker, when the police have to take difficult decisions, it is not for us to further undermine their credibility but to support them. Having said that, it does not mean that if there are the incidences of breeches of the law by the police that those should not be dealt with and we support dealing with them. This is why we have brought the legislative framework for the Police Complaints Authority. ...I am happy to report that at long last the Ministry of Housing has found accommodation for the Authority that it is Chaired by an eminent Queens Council, Mr. John Connell, and we fully anticipate that this year the public will be able to make complaints and to have them legitimately investigated in a transparent manner. It will bring to an end a police practice that would have obtained for over 160 years.
1.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am not seeking to say that the Royal Barbados Police Force is perfect but all of us know in our hearts that to describe the Royal Barbados Police Force as ineffective is an injustice unknown in the annals of this country since Independence. Mr. Speaker, the Royal Barbados Police Force plays too critical a role in the defense of this country and in our well-being.

Sir, I want to go on record today as publicly commending them in particular for the extraordinary efforts they have made in the last two years. I have not forgotten that the last major outbreak of crime in this country was in May 2002. There was a robbery at LIAT Quickpak and there were two or three other incidents of shooting that same week. The then Commissioner of Police, Grantley Watson, cancelled all leave for all police in Barbados and made the police work double time to bring back a situation of normalcy and try to address the people's sense of fear. Mr. Speaker,

we have not since had a similar situation and it is now May 2004.

Mr. Speaker, I am not seeking to raise this Government's reputation on the backs of the police in this country. If we want to talk about the performance of this Government I can talk about housing, the economy, education and other things. I maintain that the fight against crime, the maintenance of a peaceful, just and secure society in a small society such as ours cannot be the subject of a partisan divide because it is our lives that we are playing with within, the long-run across the aisle and outside the precinct of this Parliament.

Sir, I, therefore welcome the approach that the Leader of the Opposition has taken in relation to that issue but I do hope that he would have the opportunity to ensure that other Honourable Members of his Party, particularly the one who found it necessary to speak at a time this morning when his silence would have done him better. Mr. Speaker, this is the same person who would want to create a fable on an FBI report across Barbados and use that as a platform for entry into this Honourable House instead of wondering why the people of St. Philip South found that they could no longer have confidence in him and why it is that the people of St. Michael South were not able to accept that confidence.

Mr. Speaker, his cloistered reality, perhaps does not realise that we had a continued diminution in the commission of crime in this country. We are not by any means safe completely from the commission of any crime but we do not have a crime-ridden society or one in which people cannot leave their houses or engage in activities without fear of being attacked in a serious way.

I hope that this will be the one contribution that this generation across the political divide will solidify for this country, because we owe it to the people of Barbados to ensure that there is a holistic and collective effort to maintain that just, peaceful and lawful society that has been the legacy of those who have gone before us.

Mr. Speaker, if necessary, I will make available the documents which the Commissioner of Police would have shared with the public last week in relation to the treatment of crime and the commitment that he will continue to treat to the public on a quarterly basis, as well as the diplomatic embassies in Barbados, ensuring that they too can make well-informed judgements as to what is the reality of the existence on the ground.

Sir, I want to thank the United States of America Government, through its Embassy here, for having the courage to correct what was, according to them, a set of gross inaccuracies on their website that reflected negatively on the people of Barbados. They have also assured us that

they contacted their State Department this morning and the Consular information sheet is being corrected. I am told as we speak today, and I look forward to the adjustments to that sheet and they will also be working with Washington to ensure that this type of false reporting does not happen again.

Sir, I ask the Honourable House today, while debating this Supreme Court of Judicature Bill to join with me in ensuring that we send a vote of confidence to the work of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force to indicate our gratitude to them for very often going beyond the call of duty and ensuring that all Barbadians can live peacefully and peaceably. I also asked that even the person, who made those unfortunate comments this morning, would equally have the courage to do as the American Government did and distance himself from those gross inaccuracies detailed on the State Department's website.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you and I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Amendment but after almost half an hour of delivery, we are not yet sure why an amendment was made to this legislation. I would hope that this amendment gives the Chief Justice greater power for decision making within his office.

Sir, it must be the case that, to adjust the reporting period from July to December would have some kind of justification which, therefore, allows for better budgeting, I suspect, given that our fiscal year starts in April. There must be some reason for it.

However, the Leader of the House took the opportunity to deal with the question of crime and a recent comment. Let me say that it is the United States of America Government that needs the condemnation for having reported falsely such information on a website. I do not know whether or not Barbados has to thank the United States of America Government for anything.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. On the question of thanking the United States of America Government, I thank them only for having the courage to correct it. My initial comments were very condemnatory of a very false and wrong report. If the Honourable Leader of the Opposition did not hear me clearly, I repeat it again.

Sir, when I heard the report last night, not only the Commissioner of Police and I were livid but we took the immediate action of requesting of the United States of

America Government an explanation that bore no relationship to reality and I give him that assurance.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I am grateful that the emphasis has been placed on condemning the United States of America Government for such reporting and not on the apology.

However, let me say that the Royal Barbados Police Force has been congratulated on many occasions from this Side. The good work that is being done ought to be visited by a complete look at the need for reform within the service. We have argued *ad nauseam* for some kind of regrading to occur within the ranks of the police force and we have advanced all kinds of reasons for this regrading exercise, the need for a Constable to have 3 CXC certificates and, therefore, he is now within a special group in Barbados and also the very hazardous nature of the work.

Sir, while there is an allowance that is paid to an officer for an extended period of service, that is during the course of a week or any emergency, I think that the time has come for a fuller evaluation of the state of affairs within the Royal Barbados Police Force as it relates to compensation. We have put forward this matter forcefully before in debates.
2.00 p.m.

Sir, I heard some degree of condemnation for the Senator of the Democratic Labour Party, but let me also say that the representative for the constituency of St. Michael South East sought to represent his constituents, and rightly so, when the Royal Barbados Police Force invaded, for want of a better word, the Pine area. A lot of us believed that it was an indirect reaction to the unfortunate tragic killing which occurred in the constituency of St. Michael North West, just the day before.

We are not here to impede the work, in any way, of the Royal Barbados Police Force. We see it as absolutely necessary to do what is legitimate to exercise the powers of the Force in executing its duties and, therefore, it is a question of how the Force sees crime beyond the boundaries of the less fortunate societies or villages across Barbados.

Therefore, what we hope would happen in, the not too distant future, is that other areas which would have been associated, for as long I know myself, with crime but seem to locate themselves on the southern borders of Barbados where all kinds of things have happened, perhaps there is need for a visit in that part of Christ Church that is reputed to be involved in such activity.

Sir, to balance the skills, it would be most appropriate if the Royal Barbados Police Force would pass Miami Beach

and continue way up towards the southern district. I am not calling any names, and I think we are all aware of the reputation that those areas have.

Sir, let it not be the case that you only identify the Pinelands and then you come to the Farm and other such communities to execute such adventure. It is necessary, but the use of drugs cannot be concentrated in any one area because of some history. We have now to recognise that it has become so complicated that it must be the case that others are very much involved in this whole network.

I support the Attorney General in whatever methods are employed, once they are above board, but I cannot support the isolation. They have been other such efforts, and they were also concentrated in the unfortunate areas of Barbados, so as to make this assault look like a complete assault on drugs. Therefore, other such areas of concern, we should extend beyond the boundaries of the deprived societies in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, on the question of the travel advisory, it is a matter of concern that the US Government could have seen it fit, when there has been all kinds of boasting, that there has been a reduction in crime to issue such an advisory.

We know how much we have now become dependent on tourism. In fact, I have expressed concern that Barbados is becoming a one-legged economy. Therefore, tourism is even more critical to us now than it ever was, and any attempt that falsely damages the image of Barbados would therefore be a concern, not only to the Government but also to all people of Barbados.

Therefore, it ought not to be the case that such information could have been placed on a website, when there is apparent evidence of reduction in crime. However, let me say, as I have said before, and I hope my argument is understood, you cannot treat crime statistics the same way that you treat batting averages. If 200 people commit crime in the year 2000, and it reduces to 190 persons in the year 2001, if there are no repeat persons involved in the crime, then in actual fact, there are 390 persons committing crime over a two-year period.

Therefore, to simply say that it would have been a 5 per cent reduction in crime is an error. Indeed, not an error of statistics but an area of not understanding that you cannot accumulate the numbers over time, and treat as if the numbers are so discrete that from year to year, they bear no relation to each other.

I would therefore repeat my argument that unlike a batting average, and profit in a company, you cannot look at the outcome of statistics at the end of the year and make a

conclusion that we are that much better off, particularly if we have not had any repeat persons involved.

My point therefore is clear. You ought to be concerned. Indeed, if any society is unable to reduce crime as measured in such a way over time, then it really speaks to the ineffectiveness of those who are seeking to control crime. Unless you are in a society which is increasingly growing the amount of criminals emanating either from social problems, or a lack of economic opportunity, you should be able to arrest many of the difficulties which you have, through effective policing.

In this regard, the Royal Barbados Police Force has to be commended for the effort it has made over the last several years. I do not want to segment how we address the question of crime because there is an ongoing process. Therefore, measures that might have been used 10 years ago to stop crime or to identify crime, might have been refined and reimplemented, and proven to be as effective now, as they were years ago. This is my argument that, out of a process of trial and error and out of a process of doing, the Royal Barbados Police Force has simply become better at detecting crime and being able to solve and prevent crime over the years.

Again, we will support any effort on the part of the Royal Barbados Police Force to be involved in crime in a most effective way. It is like everything else in life. With experience, you get better. The more you do the more experienced you become and, therefore, as a consequence of doing, you simply improve how you do it, and that is true for almost every endeavour in life. I am, therefore, saying that in that context, the Force has to be commended.

There is also the question of awareness. It does appear, in all fairness, as if the current Chief is rather more prepared to put certain measures in place, in order to get outcomes. No one can criticise the approach, because that attempt to be more involved in the whole process of solving crime, seems to be the apparent strategy of the new chief. Therefore, again we see no real reason to condemn anybody but, in fact, to treat this as an exercise in learning and as we go on, we simply become better.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer our support to the amendments made to this legislation. It is quite an innocent amendment but, I suppose that the events of the last two days might have inspired the Leader of Government Business to indulge in commenting on the wider issue of crime.
2.10 p.m.

She said that if she wanted to boast about the Government's performance that there are several other areas she could point to, but I am certain that having assumed the position of Attorney General that she would only be too

happy to boast in the circumstance, if the statistics suggest that there has been a reduction in crime. Apparently we cannot fault the statistics. They are being collected on the same basis. The whole collection method is similar to what it was ten years ago, so we cannot fault that. If indeed there was a change in methodology that gives rise to this improved performance, we could criticise the outcome of crime.

Mr. Speaker, in spite of the so-called reduction in the statistics, the kinds of crimes that are still occurring are a source of concern not only for us on this Side, but for the entire Barbadian public. We therefore want to ensure that the more serious kinds of crimes can be addressed by the Royal Barbados Police Force because, notwithstanding the statistics, people are still complaining of some degree of lack of safety in Barbados. There is an apparent perception that crime in Barbados is increasing even though the numbers are saying otherwise. Mr. Speaker, the perception of crime is as critical as the reality of the crime. I therefore would wish to support the amendment and to assist Government however and wherever we can in fighting this most serious concern of all Barbadians.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I too rise to speak on the amendment and to say from the outset that I support the police which is what I have been saying in here since 1994.

Mr. Speaker, now that the advice has been taken by the Attorney General's Office and the Commissioner of Police to appoint that talented young man from the north of Barbados, one would see some action in the police force. That appointment has brought about some changes and we are now seeing some real action. So those who believe that they can behave as they like, should recognise that the strong arm of that particular person would be felt in Barbados. Sir, when they first had the ongoing debate over the approach of the new leader towards the ZR vans, I was bold enough to write a column in the newspaper stating that the Commissioner of Police needed to watch his approach and take some advice and appoint a deputy early so that he could get first-hand information to deal with the problem.

Sir, there is no doubt that if you want to solve the lawlessness that is occurring within Barbados, that the new approaches will deal with the so-called problem within the ZR culture. Once you deal with this particular problem, it will also impact in an indirect way on the problems within the transportation system of Barbados.

Sir, you would recall that during the Estimates of this Parliament this year, I made the point that we have some neighbours within the Caribbean region who were interfering with and creating social problems for Barbados. Sir, you would have read in the newspapers this week, that those

countries have now recognised that they need to do something about it and have started to do something about it, so we are getting some success not only on our shores but also on the shores of the other countries.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that some changes must come in a real way. Government must understand that crime prevention cannot only occur within the police force when the officers are working in their regular 40 hours a week job. I have said in this House already, and I am going to repeat it, that moonlighting must be encouraged within the police force but it must be sanctioned by the hierarchy of the Royal Barbados Police Force. The policemen in Barbados should be able to supplement their income by doing the same work they do normally for Government on the outside, but it must be sanctioned by the Commissioner of Police and his hierarchy.

Sir, I do not believe that any policeman who is doing a law-abiding job should have to run when something occurs when that policeman is doing a job to make sure that Barbados is safe. I am saying that the same way it can be sanctioned in Atlanta, it can be sanctioned in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: If you do not produce an example in this House sometimes nobody listens to you. Once you produce an example from outside of Barbados everybody then listens to you. I have been saying this before, but I never used Atlanta as an example and nobody listened, but now I am using Atlanta they are all listening because they like to hear about something foreign.

Sir, I am saying that a policeman working doing lawful duties, which some people do not consider to be lawful, to protect the interest of Barbados should not have to worry. I am saying that if we need to change the law to allow policemen to moonlight, we need to change it. Government is claiming they do not have the money to pay them, yet they want to stop them from working. I am saying that is not fair. So I am calling on the Government, now that we are in the process of making amendments, to make this amendment too in the interest of the masses of people in Barbados. You cannot on one hand tell people with capital that they need to maximise their capital to get greater return on it, but when it comes to labour you want to limit it. Sir, I am saying that there must be some fairness and that the same thing that occurred for those who have capital, must occur for those who provide labour. I am not here to skylark. I am here to put the point on the behalf of the policemen.

Sir, there are some elements in Barbados who feel that they have the right to destroy the good name of St. Lucy by doing things in St. Lucy that should not be occurring in St. Lucy. I am saying that the policemen have a right to come into St. Lucy and clean it up and nobody should come

to me for me to put a case for them because St. Lucy must remain the way it has always been. Nobody should expect to get any protection from this politician, not in St. Lucy. We have to understand that the society within the St. Lucy area must be for one and all, but nobody should believe that they could come and take over St. Lucy by night or by day.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: If support is to be given, the support would come from the Member of Parliament for the policemen because it is only in that interest that I will operate.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, there are some men parading around Barbados who believe that the cake in Barbados should only go to the rich. That is why they cannot appreciate community tourism and see it as a criminal activity. I am saying that justice for one must be justice for all.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: If there is any support to be given to the police, I am not afraid to give it to them because a protected society can benefit the masses and an unprotected one would not. At the end of the day we have to be careful that we are not supporting something that would allow us to be in the minority in the long run. There are many people who talk about human rights who are only looking at the short-term goal of the particular object but not at the long-term effect of it. What is going on in Barbados now will benefit this country in the long run.
2.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, people sometimes have to understand that the masses have always suffered in order to gain. That is history and no one can doubt that. Therefore, we have to understand what we are about and what would occur and that if we do not do anything about it, today it might affect my children or me but tomorrow it might affect you or your grandchildren. I am speaking about protecting our future, that is why we need to give the Royal Barbados Police Force our support.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken about this issue in the Estimates and would be a hypocrite to have spoken about it in the Estimates and then go against it now. Sir, the one thing that I am known for is my consistency.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am neither going to say I support nor support the amendment because I am not sure what the clear import of it is, except that I understand that it is housekeeping matters.

Sir, there are two aspects of the debate that have been raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East who obviously wants to deal with matters relating to the Royal Barbados Police Force or matters of justice and public safety as a whole, which I think need to be analysed.

Mr. Speaker, in the periods which I have been in this Honourable House of Assembly and prior to that as a practising Attorney-at-Law doing criminal matters, I do not think that there was ever an occasion when there was a change in the high command of the Police Force, when that was not also met with commensurate initiatives to signal that change.

Mr. Speaker, I wish the new Commissioner of Police the very best of luck in doing the job that he needs to do but I hope that he would have both the resources and enthusiasm within a year or two, to be able to continue the high level of activity in which the Royal Barbados Police Force is now engaged. No one could deny it, I see them on the roads at rush hour on mornings and evenings. I know they are into communities on the 'block', I know they go out to activities and are seeking to have their presence felt. I heard the Commissioner in the Press Conference making radical suggestions about impounding Public Service vehicles, and I hope that particular punishment would not only be extended to persons who are functioning at that level of the society but to other levels as well, to those persons who flagrantly breach the law, in areas that impact on the way in which we go about our business as citizens.

Sir, I also heard him made recommendations or come to the realisation relative to the prevalence and the use of illegal drugs in Barbados and about its impact on communities. I keep making the point and I have made it a thousand times in here, that in the age of globalisation, the one commodity that we should study in relation to the ways in which it is imported, even though it is illegal; the ways in which it is distributed in every village in this country, even though it is illegal; the numbers of persons who are earning a living from it in Barbados, even though it is illegal; the numbers of persons who are using it and even those who are criminalised by it in our system, they use it even though it is illegal and are criminalised by it because of the system that we have.

Sir, it is not just a question of speaking about substance abuse. When we look at the impact of it in our country and throughout the Caribbean, we have to have a much more serious analysis because there are some lessons to be learnt. Sir, not all of these lessons are bad. It does not

mean that because the commodity might be a bad commodity that all the lessons to be learnt about its impact in our society are bad lessons. In fact, there are lessons we need to learn about the ways in which it has been able to transform the minds of a generation; the impact it has on us as adults and as parents; our dealing with it, and the manner in which it has consumed such vast resources from our law enforcement agency, much of which could have been spent dealing with the matter in a different way.

Mr. Speaker, this is not what the debate is about. What I want to say is that I was happy to appreciate from the Commissioner, an understanding of its impact in our society and I hope that at some point it would spur the Office of the Attorney General and those agencies that are involved in public safety in this country, to truly carry out an analysis at a national level, relative to its impact.

The Honourable Member for St. George South has always talked about the problem of the human face of the Police Force of Barbados. Sir, whenever the Police Force commits an act which, on the face of it, appears to be unfair, aggressive and unjust and which people would criticise, the Police Force would jump up to defend their action, even prior to an independent or impartial analysis of what has happened in the circumstances, which often makes the small man in Barbados believe that the say-so of the Commissioner of that high command, basically represents justice for them.

Sir, I have had cause to express my concerns, and even more recently, about the manner in which the Police Force has undertaken certain operations. I have had to express concern about an incident that took place in St. John recently but on none of those occasions, even though the Commissioner was able to acknowledge that the Police Force had a duty to go back to the family or to the persons who were involved in the incident and to offer an explanation or some kind of counselling, nothing like that was ever done. Therefore, a situation exists in Barbados where the Police Force went into a district in Barbados and carried out an operation in an aggressive manner and when it is all over, the police just walked away and expects that there is going to be strong public support for the manner in which they had carried out their operation.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in an aggressive policing where necessary but where it is being carried to the extreme, I have to express my concerns. There are stories of policemen kicking down doors in Barbados, which are not myths; the way the police execute search warrants are not myths; the way that innocent persons who suffer at the hands of the police when they go onto the 'blocks', persons on whom the Police Force finds nothing; the threats that are issued to them; the way or the belief in which they are being criminalised; the pervasive view in Barbados that they

should be a curfew in some areas in this country, where people should be driven off the streets because they could only be involved in illegal activities. Sir, it is these kinds of concerns that I think need to be addressed and, therefore, I am not going to be as strong in my comments as I had initially intended to be, because I believe that every new Commissioner deserves the opportunity to have a full public support. As I have said, I have seen some attempt by the Commissioner and his team at the top level and members of the Police Force as a whole, to make some inroads, particularly in those areas where there are the greatest of concerns. There are also some major problems that need to be addressed.

Sir, I want to ask about the Police Complaints Authority.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Oh, I am sorry, I did not hear but I hope that whatever you did say about it, would come onto stream soon. I believe that is a very important aspect of it.

I would also like to see not just that level of aggressive policing dealing and targeting with those areas of concern but I would like to see a restoration of community policing in Barbados. I have seen the impact that has had. I remember Police Officer Roland Cobbler, who is now a Sergeant being attached to District 'C' Police Station and who was assigned to Gall Hill, St. John. I remember the impact that he had on the community at Gall Hill, as the Community Officer.
2.30 p.m.

I remember Sergeant Straughn from District "C" and Sergeant Sisnett from St. George were both community policemen. They were good volleyball and basketball players and organised road tennis. Sir, they were like community development officers and had a dramatic impact wherever they went in Barbados. I would like to see more emphasis being placed on finding a way to integrate the police more in communities and give them the resources and authority to help work more with young vulnerable people who are predisposed to crime and beyond that to place a human face on the work of the police in this country. I have seen it in rural Barbados, I do not know if the experience is the same in urban areas but I can attest to the hard work of outstanding police officers in communities in St. John and the impact that community policing had on the lives of young people.

I believe that kind of policing can have a much more dramatic effect on helping people to understand what their rights and obligations are in a society in helping them to relate to authority and helping communities in communicating with each other and reducing conflict. The

police in Barbados need to look at this beyond targeting those areas where all of us have great concerns.

Sir, the areas that the people have put their fingers on as causing greatest concern are justifiable. The police have not targeted the wrong area but the question is how it should be dealt with. The way to deal with it is not the way it is being dealt with now because the situation far from getting better is getting worse because it is more accessible.

Sir, the trade levels are increasing, if we were to take it out of the context of crime and use the language of the trade economist and the Minister of Business and Industry. The Minister should be focusing his attention on how it is that I could leave here tonight if this debate goes on until nine o'clock and could not get a newspaper, even though they are produced daily, I might not be able to get bread or a panadol but I could go to any community in Barbados and there is a particular commodity that is so widespread in this country, so well networked, distributed and marketed throughout Barbados on a global scale, global in terms of our community, that it is amazing. Sir, this is something we have to analyse very carefully. I think the comments of the Commissioner should be taken in that context and our work should be focused on understanding why that has come about in Barbados.

I thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I welcome the contribution of all Honourable Members who have spoken. This debate is distinguished by the fact that three Members of the Opposition spoke and one Member on the Government Side but that in no way diminishes the debate. The reasonable dialogue in this debate suggests that there is a basis for a bipartisan approach to certain societal issues in this country of which crime and its attendant factors are one.

In responding to a number of things that were put on the table in the same spirit in which they were raised, I wish to say a few things. The Honourable Member for St. John repeated much of what he said in here in relation to the insidious nature of the drug culture in Barbados and the response of successive Governments to it. May I say at this stage that there is absolutely no doubt that serious analysis has to be done in relation to the impact of that culture on our society, the quality of our governance and the ability to maintain our social fabric as we move into the future given that its impact is greatest among our young people.

Mr. Speaker, may I also say that there is absolutely no doubt in my mind that once the Commission on Law and Order files its report, it is my intention to engage that broad based Commission on the issues that the Honourable Member for St. John spoke about. I am told by the Chairman

that the Draft Report should go to the printers this week. Sir, we can only develop the best policy we can as a Government based on the best information we have available.

It is my judgement that we need to be able to do the work that allows us to look at the socio-cultural, economical and criminological factors as well as the public health factors surrounding drug usage in this country and the use of Barbados as a transshipment point to other destinations. Sir, we have to do this recognising that much of the action internationally is driven by one or two countries who have a perspective on how these things should be treated to.

Sir, all of these things need to be examined frontally. Once the work of the National Commission is finished, I have advised my office that I wish them to undertake this work such that Government and Parliament would be able to review and analyse the appropriate steps in a situation which, if left unchecked, could become catastrophic for the development of this society.

The Honourable Member for St. John spoke about the work of the police and the unfortunate instances of what would be termed heavy handed and unfair policing. Mr. Speaker, no police force in the world can claim there is never an instance of this because human nature sometimes abuse power when it has access to it. However, I am satisfied that we are seeking both at the level of this Parliament, the Government and the leadership of the police to put systems in place to reduce the incidences of unfair policing or the inappropriate and excessive use of power.

I accept that it has taken a long time for the Police Complaints Authority to be operationalised but, unfortunately, there have been bureaucratic difficulties in relation to the location of headquarters with the Ministry of Housing. We felt it was important that it be centrally located in Bridgetown since most people who want to make complaints should be able to do so easily and have them properly and transparently investigated.

The new system would provide for independent investigation separate from the old system where one of the officers in the force would have investigated a colleague. We recognise that this would offend the rules of natural justice and hence an independent system of investigation to assure persons that there is a detached way in which investigation is being conducted.

Sir, in relation to that, it must be significant that unlike other Caribbean countries where six and seven officers are being charged with murder that Barbados has not had that kind of history where police officers are seen as both oppressors as well as defenders of the law and to that extent, we would not want it to reach such a situation but we

recognise that where there are persons who want to destroy the image of the force, aggressive and decisive action must be taken.

2.40 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. John may be aware that when the police took strong action recently, they discovered that not only members of the public were in breach of the law but one or two officers were in breach of the Orders under which they conduct themselves. In fact, I have been told that one of those officers was spoken to and he found it necessary to resign immediately. Sir, that is the kind of decisive leadership that we see coming out of the Royal Barbados Police Force, that they are not prepared to entertain infractions of rules, whether those rules relate to moonlighting or behaving in an inappropriate or illegal way.

I have confidence that the two Commissioners of Police with whom I had the pleasure to work, Commissioner Watson and Commissioner Dottin, have the commitment at heart to do the right thing in the defense of law and order in Barbados but in particular, the Commissioner has been a staunch advocate of intelligence-led policing. Intelligence-led policing is not only policing based on intelligence which you may get through technology but it is based on human intelligence, the old time human relationship where you relied on the very people to help us develop the network and information that we need to detect and solve crime in this country.

Sir, in that regard there will be times when the police will have to display aggressive force. I do not think that there is any Honourable Member in this House that would not support them in the use of that aggressive force where necessary, not disproportionate but aggressive.

Mr. Speaker, by the same token, what is counter-balancing that approach by this Commissioner. I am happy to report to this Honourable Chamber and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has confirmed it to me as we speak, even though the police found it necessary to treat in an aggressive way to a community on Saturday morning, there is already a plan that speaks to community policing and a reinforcement of the social and community structures in that community. I am told by the Commissioner, and it is confirmed by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, that there will be a meeting on Friday afternoon this week with all the community-based organisations in The Pine with the police to re-establish a strong community policing presence.

Sir, what is equally important, and would be of interest to the Honourable Member for St. John, is that the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force went back into The Pine yesterday to a lot of the households to explain what it was

they were doing, why they were doing it and to apologise to anybody who was not breaking the law but offended by them.

Sir, that is the kind of mature approach that we are fortunate to have and I want to commend the leadership of the Royal Barbados Police Force, the Commissioner and all of the high command, in ensuring that they balance the use of a heavy hand with a compassionate ear and spirit because that is the only way you can aggressively enforce the law but not marginalise and exclude people from cooperation and participation in the defense and the rule of law. I think that all Honourable Members will agree with me that this is an appropriate approach on the part of the police to the extent that it is to happen in other communities.

I heard what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said in his description of the south of Barbados. I also heard what the Honourable Members for St. John and St. Lucy said. Suffice to say that it speaks to me of one thing. There is a need, as they articulated, for social justice in the manner in which the police direct its operations. Mr. Speaker, that is not a matter that I can disagree with. Indeed, far from disagreeing with it, I am satisfied, given my briefings from the police, that there is an aggressive approach against all persons who seek to break the law, not just those who are working-class people. I think we shall continue to see the evidence. It is a matter of which I am aware, which has been the subject of joint cooperation between the United States of America Government and the Barbados Government, where persons have already been arrested in relation to financial-type related crimes. He is not from the same arena that the Honourable Member would say that they would traditionally wish to direct their force.

Sir, there would be other examples as we go along because I think that if we are to rid Barbados from injustice and if we are to elevate social justice, then the rule of law must be equally applicable to each Barbadian and there must not be the appearance that you will take advantage of those who are most disadvantaged economically in relation to the enforcement of the law.

Mr. Speaker, this is a culture that we have to fight, part of which is mythological and part of it is based on fact. We have to collectively work to ensure that there is equal application of the law against all persons who would seek to break it, whether it is for a white collar crime or whether it is for traditional areas of crime that we have come to understand.

I look forward to the approach of the balancing by the Commissioner and the direction of the Royal Barbados Police Force's activities, not against those who are most economically disadvantaged but I have the confidence that

this Commissioner believes that anyone who breaks the law, irrespective of their station in life, ought to feel the weight of the law.

Sir, there are those of us in here who agree that we should not be above the law and if we are found in places that cause us to be the subject of searches, we do not try to override the police but submit ourselves to the discipline of the law. Therefore, when I say that a lot of it is mythological, I really mean so because people would feel that because you are a 'big up', to use a phrase that might not otherwise be permitted in this House before it became part of common Barbados accepted colloquial dialogue, you should not be subject to the law.

Mr. Speaker, on Saturday afternoon I was in my constituency in Bibby's Lane/Exchange Hill where there was a community function and the fellows forgot to ask the police for permission to play loud music. I was there at 6 o'clock and the police turned up with two van loads of policemen because the people complained about the noise. The police quite appropriately said, "do you have permission to play loud music?" The fellow said that they only had permission to sell alcohol. The police said, "I am very sorry. You will have to shut down and we will give you forty-five minutes to play music but turn down the music." Mr. Speaker, I stood up there. I did not interfere and far from interfering, I indicated to the residents that they had to comply with the policeman's instructions, that is the kind of thing that I am talking about.

There are very few people on either Side of this Honourable House who would seek to treat the Police in a way that is disrespectful of their office or the rule of law. Yet, there is the mythology that only 'big up' get way and that is one of the things that we have to deal within the management of Barbados as it evolves. I look forward to us as a Parliament playing our role with them.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John delivered himself of the wish that in a year or two he hopes that the Commissioner has both the same level of resources and enthusiasm to treat to the job. Sir, I go further than that. I anticipate and hope that for the period of his tenure that he shall be as steady, firm and as enthusiastic as he has started off. Sir, in terms of the resources part, it is, perhaps, appropriate for me to speak because that is the Government's role in the provisioning of these resources.

I can say to this Honourable House that this morning I would have had a meeting with the Principal of the University of the West Indies because I have been given the responsibility of coordinating the reform of all of the police training in the region by the Committee of the Attorney

General and Ministers of National Security at CARICOM level.
2.50 p.m.

We met with the Principal of the University of the West Indies, because it is our intention to have the University work with us to reform and upgrade, not only the capacity of the Police Training Colleges in the individual territories, but for the University itself to deliver critical programming to supplement the Police Training Colleges. We look forward to being able to work on the development of this project over the next year, so that it can be implemented on a region wide basis.

I also met with a consultant who has provided a preliminary report for the modernisation and reform of the Royal Barbados Police Force, once again, coming out of initial discussions between the Commissioner and myself. Indeed, Mr. Speaker, I have seen that draft report which is to be presented in six weeks time. We recognise that there needs to be a five-year programme that is managed not from within the bosom of the Force but from the Office of the Attorney General. Sir, you cannot expect the same people to go to work and do their day-to-day functions, and also manage the change process and reform for a Force that is more than 160 years old.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, and I have had represented to me that the Royal Barbados Police Force is one of the better police organisations in the Commonwealth, but that does not mean we are perfect. It also does not mean that we have seen the changes that we must have, to make it commensurate with the society that has changed.

Mr. Speaker, in terms of the other resources that they require, I brought to this Parliament earlier this year, a \$26 million telecommunications project to be able to give Police the ability to communicate with one another effectively, on a telecommunications platform that is as outmoded, Sir, as the Victorian age is to this world.

I brought also, Mr. Speaker, a programme for us to see the conversion of special constables and police constables to increase the numbers in the Force. The first thing that we did two years ago, was to create the Rapid Response Unit, in order to be able to deal with some of these issues, as well as to equip the Force with a Firearms Intelligence Unit which has already seen a reduction in firearm crimes.

As I said in my opening remarks, Mr. Speaker, perhaps more significant is the introduction of the flexible responsibility allowance, where officers have been truly rewarded. There are some policemen who have carried home as much as \$2 500 extra a month. While all of us would like to

see even that improve further, it can and must be in the context of the overall development of improvement of services in the Service.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, you are already aware that there is a job evaluation exercise, the report of which all of the Unions are now commenting on and that will certainly, in my view, lead to an improvement in the terms and conditions of a majority of members in the Royal Barbados Police Force.

Sir, the Leader of the Opposition need not worry about this Government's intention to treat, not just to the collective welfare of the Force in terms of resources, but to the improvement of the individual terms and conditions. Sir, a number of policemen have either fallen ill or died in the last few years. We have put in money for the first time in the Estimates this year, to help us execute what we call a Wellness Programme, so that Officers could have access to proper gyms and facilities to help them keep fit, and to fight the stress that is associated with their jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I can go on and on about a number of initiatives that both Commissioners have put before the Government which we have accepted. The Government has developed initiatives on its own, in relation to the Police. We also have seen physical improvements come, and more will come.

Sir, as the Leader of the Opposition knows, the one thing this Government will not do is propel Barbados into a fiscal crisis. To that extent, Mr. Speaker, our progress, as I indicated on May Day when I looked for my other colleagues to be present, has been the result of steady and certain steps that are sustainable. Equally, the progress that we will help the Royal Barbados Police Force achieve, will be steady and certain, and defensible.

I want to therefore end by thanking those Honourable Members who have spoken and to say that a number of things are happening in the Force now. I did not refer to the Forensic Lab but that is also going to expand their capacity and the comprehensive training that is taking place pursuant to that.

In relation to this matter of the Bill before the House, as I said, Mr. Speaker, this is to deal with the housekeeping matter of allowing the report of the Judicial Council to be filed at the end of March, instead of the end of December, such that its report can reflect the conduct of a whole calendar year, instead of just nine months. Therefore, it facilitates the work of the Judicial Council to making their information easier to collate and disseminate for the benefit of all of us who hold them accountable under the laws.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

COMMITTEE

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

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Dr. W. F. DUGUID, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee, without amendment, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Dr. W. F. DUGUID, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Supreme Court of Judicature (Amendment) Act, 2004.

ORDER NO. 7 – INSURANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2004

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, this Amendment Bill seeks to amend the second schedule of the Insurance Act, so as to allow insurance companies operating in our domestic sector to invest more than 15 per cent of their assets in real estate in Barbados and, in fact, to increase that limit to 25 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, though the actual amendment itself may be small, its significance is one that is worthy of discussion in this Honourable Chamber. The amendment has been moved because of the fact that all insurance companies have to comply with international accounting standards.

In this particular case, the accounting standard that is applicable is the International Accounting Standard, No. 40. This particular standard prescribes the accounting treatment for investment in terms of recognition, measurement and disclosure of such property.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the opportunities for investment for insurance companies in Barbados are considerably more narrow than might exist in other markets, and therefore

investments in real estate would play a significant role as far as the investment portfolio of insurance companies is concerned.

Sir, at the end of the year 2002, of the investments made by insurance companies carrying on long-term business in Barbados, 21 per cent was invested in Government bonds and debentures, another 21 per cent in mortgages and loans and six per cent in real estate. For companies carrying on general business as at the same period, 24 per cent was invested in Government bonds and debentures, eight per cent in mortgages and loans and 14 per cent in real estate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the insurance industry in Barbados has been doing exceedingly well. Equally, the value of real estate in Barbados particularly over the last decade has increased at a significant rate. Therefore, the company that has had assets of a particular value would well have found that they were in danger of surpassing the statutory limit simply because of the fact that the value of their real estate investment would have appreciated at a significant rate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is an amendment the Government has been petitioned for by the insurance industry so as to ensure that their annual audits would disclose that they are within reasonable limits. In fact, there is an insurance company that finds itself unable to fully develop a particular real estate asset because were it to do so, it would have exceeded the limit of 15 per cent. Therefore, you have the grave risk of insurance companies having real estate on their books but being unable to deal with it in a prudent way so that they could achieve a reasonable return on their investment. Insurance companies rely on investments for their return and could ill-afford to have a substantial piece of real estate doing nothing simply because there is a statutory ceiling beyond which they cannot go. Sir, by way of comparison, the limit in Jamaica is 20 per cent at this time, in Trinidad and Tobago it is 20 per cent for long-term business and for general business the Supervisor of Insurance can use his discretion, but our research tells us that they apply the same as with life insurance companies. In Canada the limit for non-life companies is 35 per cent while for life companies, on aggregate, it is about 20 to 30 per cent. We have insurance companies today operating in a very volatile global climate, but at the same time we have this ceiling that is lower relative to what is happening in other significant markets and certainly in the regional marketplace. That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the rationale behind this amendment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want to put a legislative framework in place or to maintain a legislative framework that is flexible enough for insurance companies to continue to make real estate investments. Insurance companies are limited

in terms of what they can invest in. They are not allowed to go out there and engage in speculative business ventures, that if all went well, they would achieve a 100 per cent return. However, if there is a loss the companies might be wiped out. Insurance companies are not allowed to get into the venture capital business. In fact, for the benefit of the shareholders and the policyholders, insurance companies must be very measured and in some ways very conservative about the nature of their investment. Therefore, real estate and Government bonds represent perhaps the finest avenue of investment over the long term for these companies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we therefore consider it important that we have enabled our insurance companies to continue to do as they have done, that is, to continue to invest significantly in our real estate markets so as to have assets that are capable of delivering a reasonable rate of return.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the insurance industry in Barbados has been one of our real successes over the last 20 to 30 years. Perhaps it has been one of our success stories over the last century. As at the end of the year 2002 there were nine insurance companies registered to write long-term business and 18 to write general business. Of the nine registered to write long-term business, four of them are locally incorporated companies, three CARICOM, one American and one British.

Asides.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Of the 18 companies registered to write general business 10 are locally incorporated, four are CARICOM and the other four are from outside of the region. So clearly in this very important sector, domestic insurance companies dominate the market which says several things to us. One of them is that domestic insurance companies have been able to weather the storm. Notwithstanding the fact that we have global entrants and other regional entrants in our marketplace, we have done so well that we have continued to take pride of place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want also to look at this in the context of CARICOM and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy because we all know of those insurance companies that are headquartered in Trinidad and Tobago, that have made what people would consider to be significant inroads into Barbados. When we talk about the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, this is the kind of success story that we need to preach because while our governments are seeking to bring commercial integration to the region, our biggest businesses have over the last few years systematically sought to spread their reaches beyond their shores so that while governments may be talking about

implementing the Caribbean Single Market and Economy we actually have businesses that are operating in many respects as though it is already a reality.

Sir, I am happy to say that Barbadian insurance companies are perhaps at the pinnacle of this kind of activity. Clearly we have to mention Sagicor when we talk about Barbadian businesses that have significantly expanded beyond our shores. Sagicor is now the major insurance company in Barbados carrying on both long-term and general insurance business with assets, for the Barbados operation as at 2002, being valued at \$604 million and for the total company \$1.078 billion.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a good example of how our domestic companies have spread beyond our shores because there are offices in Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, St. Lucia, and I believe others places. In fact, I understand that SAGICOR General has an office in the United States of America. Therefore, clearly what has been able to emerge out of Barbados has been a Pan-Caribbean company. I think that is an important achievement for the region where Pan-Caribbean companies are taking on a greater significance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we speak of Pan-Caribbean companies, we are speaking about nothing more than companies having their base in Barbados or perhaps in other territories and which, in their operations, have been able to embrace all of CARICOM in their marketplace.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, insurance is one area in which I would say that we have done exceedingly well but we have to remember that there are greater opportunities that lie behind this. Sir, if one would reflect on the figures given a while ago on the percentage of monies that were invested in Government Bonds and Debentures, I think all Honourable Members would recognise that the taking up of these Government Bonds and Debentures by insurance companies represent a significant source of capital to fund our Government's capital works programme, *et cetera*. Of course, we have to think always of the larger context because when we are able to fund our capital works programme from what is essentially domestic borrowings and then as a spin off to that to create jobs and other opportunities in the marketplace, then we have a win/win situation for all. Equally, these insurance companies are engaged in a significant amount of lending to persons who would want to buy real estate or to build homes, *et cetera*, and this is a significant market for us.

Sir, as a first recourse, many Barbadians go to insurance companies when they are about to make that next step to borrow money from these insurance companies. This has provided major assistance to middle income employees for many years, to be used in housing development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, another salutary aspect of our insurance sector is that it has been run by Barbadians. Last week we spoke about Barbadians who have excelled in arts, sports and culture but we have to heap the greatest accolades on those Barbadians who have excelled in commerce.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is sometimes a feeling among some of us that big business is bad and that those Barbadians who have risen to the top of million-dollar organisations ought not to be there, *et cetera*. Sometimes we are not sure how we see the creation of wealth. Sometimes we look at it as a positive and sometimes as a negative but in this country, we have a cadre of experienced professionals who are well-respected globally and who have been able to steer these institutions, despite the troublesome global markets, into positions where these companies have exhibited growth over the last number of years in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, investments by companies carrying on general business total \$257 million in the year 2000. In 2002, it rose to \$331 million. Therefore, in two years' time, they would have moved from \$257 million in investments, to \$331 million. Their aggregate total of investments by all the insurance companies was \$600 million in 2000 and was \$757 million by the year 2002. It is clear that these companies, managed by Barbadians, have shown growth over both the short term and the long term.

Sir, I think that we in this Honourable House have to recognise that as our Barbadian business leaders steer these companies into becoming regional entities, that they too will become regional players. Therefore, it should be a great credit to all Barbadians that a company such as SAGICOR General has a management team that is principally Barbadian, an investment team that is principally Barbadian, and has been able to grow in the way in which it has grown.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have mentioned the significant increase in real estate value over the years. I know that there are some persons who would be crying out but the fact of the matter is that real estate has been seen as perhaps the single safest investment for Barbadians. Sir, years ago, a former Honourable Member of this House, Dr. Richard Cheltenham, said to me: "Dale, hurry up and buy a house. Buying a house and owning a house are forms of saving." Sir, I have to say that the moment he said that made me realise that while it did not represent cash in terms of cash in the bank, the accretion to the value of the asset represented, in fact, the acquisition of equity. Therefore, while it was not savings in the bank, it represented equity or while it did not represent liquid capital, it would represent an opportunity for liquidity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, therefore, in our particular environment, I consider that the increases in values,

into difficulties in Barbados with low and middle income people having access to our real estate and land. This has a lot to do with the fact that an economy that is stable becomes attractive to an investor.

The stability of the Barbados economy showed extreme potential throughout the difficult period of the 1990s. Sir, in spite of the IMF programme we were able to so manage the Barbados economy that it remained an attractive alternative for investment in real estate. We saw an upsurge in interest in the 1990s by foreign investors and our inability to protect our limited land space.

The Honourable Member for St. Joseph mentioned that the late Sir Harold St. John said that we had the highest landownership among Caribbean countries and it was not difficult to accept. Barbados is still one of the most densely populated countries in the world and by extension, we expect landownership to prevail across the population. In fact, Barbados has the best distribution of income of all CARICOM countries but this has been so for years. If you go to other countries that boast of more riches, they do not have the kind of even distribution of income that is seen across Barbados.

Sir, my concern is how is it that this Government has the wisdom to see the need to expand the allocation of insurance companies to move from 15 per cent to 25 per cent investment but yet still cannot see the need to allow credit unions to get involved in higher levels of investment in real estate. I well recall the Prime Minister speaking to the issue of not allowing credit unions to invest in real estate and sought to condemn the largest credit union in Barbados for acquiring the property on Broad Street.

I have difficulty in understanding the mission of the Government when it can permit, by way of an amendment to the Insurance Act, an increase in the limit for investment in prescribed securities and assets in respect of real estate and leasehold for the production of income to insurance companies but cannot see the wisdom in allowing credit unions which are broad-based in ownership to get more involved in the ownership of real estate. Sir, this is my major concern with this amendment.

3.30 p.m.

I understand the need to allow for higher levels of investment in terms of the insurance companies to earn income to sustain the entities but cannot understand why credit unions should not be given such an opportunity as well, therein lies my major concern.

As a result of the increases in real estate values, it is evident why real estate will become an alternative or a very viable source of investment for insurance companies. Let us

not forget that the Government, in amending the Property Transfer Tax to allow for foreigners and locals to be on the same playing field, encouraged or provided an advantage to foreign investors to get involved in the purchase of real estate across Barbados, because Government, apparently in conformity with World Trade Organisation expectations, made an amendment that gives the same level of property transfer tax to locals as well as foreign purchasers.

Sir, I have learnt that when we see these kinds of amendments, we need to look beyond. The National Housing Corporation apparently has land available for purchase. This land is to become available so that companies can get involved in building houses for middle income Barbadians.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: There was a recent appointment to the Ministry of Housing and given a recent impasse, some people asked why the Honourable Member for St. Michael East was appointed to act as Minister of Housing?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know, like you do, that there are lands available for purchase and I am concerned as to the access that some people and companies may have in purchasing large lots of land in Barbados with the hope of expanding and developing these lands in the not so distant future. Sir, again, the intent is for the National Housing Corporation to get involved in real estate that is affordable to the average Barbadian but there is substantial evidence to show that has not been happening. Sir, by way of expanding this limit, we are giving the insurance companies a greater opportunity to get involved in real estate and therein lies a concern.

Sir, let us remember that an insurance company investing in real estate, as is said in the Objects and Reasons for the amendment, is to earn revenue. If the insurance companies are looking to enhance their income and profitability, then we cannot expect that these developments would be catering to the needs of the average low income Barbadians.

Sir, the larger the house, the greater is the potential for income and profitability on such properties. One of the reasons why suppliers might be deterred from building small homes is because the actual rate of return on the home will be much smaller for a \$50 000.00 or \$100 000 home than it would be for a \$250,000 or \$1.2 million home, the obvious returns would be substantially more.

Sir, from the point of view of providing homes, the persons getting involved are going to look towards the

middle or higher end of the market if they are in the market to increase their profitability. The whole intent of creating a land bank, which was the intention of this administration, to give access to the average and low income earners is no longer feasible within the context of what we are seeing in Barbados and that is a major concern that I have.

Why is it that the new policy appears to allow companies to have access to land that is apparently under the control of National Housing Corporation, where they can purchase large lots and then seek to develop in the hope that a certain kind of income earner is going to be able to have access. It defeats the whole intent and purpose of the policy as originally espoused by this administration.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really did not want to interrupt the Honourable Member but he is misleading the House. A number of inaccuracies were given but he has now reached the point where I must, for the sake of the record and the accuracy of what is before the Chamber, rise and speak.

The impression given and the words used by the Honourable Member not only suggest but specifically state that the National Housing Corporation is selling land from its land bank to companies for development into housing. Sir, that is not true.

The National Housing Corporation has not sold any land to companies for the development of high income housing. The National Housing Corporation has embarked on a joint venture programme but the National Housing Corporation retains ownership of the land, some of which is being developed and sold to persons on National Housing Corporation's waiting list. We have not sold any of the land to large companies for their development.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: The difficulty, of course, is that if you retain ownership of land upon which a house is built, how do you still own the land? It is a joint venture where you have invited persons to get involved in providing homes. You own the land...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, proceed, please.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Sir, I rise to correct the record. Ownership of the land is transferred from the National Housing Corporation to the individual prospective purchaser of that individual lot.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Therefore, the only thing that the National Housing Corporation has going for it is the ownership of the land because having allowed persons in a

joint venture to build on the land, the land still has to be sold. The question is, at what price and to whom will it be sold?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the whole question of the insurance industry – the impression was conveyed by the Honourable Member for St. Joseph that, in fact, the insurance industry is in the best state of health ever in Barbados. Again, we all know that we may be able to say that about an entire industry but there are a few insurance companies that are approaching insolvency in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I will not be so irresponsible to identify the specific company of which I can speak about at length. Again, a lot of companies have been taking tremendous hits in terms of their liabilities with respect to car insurance.

Asides.

3.40 p.m.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: ...therefore, there are several small companies that are under severe pressure, as a result of the increased liability, the increased car population, the increased value of cars and, therefore, there is potential for accidents.

We must also be concerned that in several instances of minor accidents in Barbados, when we are told about the cost for repairs to a slight bump on a car, we express awe. It has happened on several occasions where apparent, almost insignificant touches of a car can result in hundreds, almost thousands of dollars in repairs. There is no way, I can be convinced that there is not something suspicious in the industry, with respect to the kinds of settlements that are made, and the demands that are made by people.

I recently had an experience in which a parked car in a car park, rolled back on another parked car. The owner of the car that was damaged said that it prevented his engine from turning two days after, when the car rolled on the back bumper. It was then said that as a result of the slight touch, something happened to the engine at the front of the car. Therefore, you could understand the extent to which you would suffer, if you have to carry that kind of bill into the next year of insurance. Again, there is need to look at the industry.

The other thing that needs to be looked at, is the phenomenal increase in real estate values in Barbados. I heard a member of that fraternity addressing the matter recently. Can you imagine that a house is purchased for \$250 000 and within a year or two, it is valued at almost

\$450 000, without any major renovation, and the impact on your insurance cost?

In all fairness, you have heard about how having a house can increase your net worth, but it is only relevant if it is sold, so unless you sell a property, which net worth has increased substantially, you will not benefit. In fact, if you decide to keep the property for sentimental reasons, you have increased your tax liability, insurance liability and almost every cost associated with that property.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to be concerned about the impact of the increased value of real estate. Sir, what is more important, is not the additional net worth to the individual, but the overall cost to new potential owners of property and real estate in Barbados, and that is where the problem lies, in the ability of these escalating values to keep out certain individuals. Therefore, in terms of qualifying for ordinary homes, the qualification rate cannot be satisfied by a couple with just a basic salary of, say, a graduate teacher.

If you want, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to truly understand it, you only have to look at 10 or 12 years ago, where in some parts of St. Michael, such as Wanstead or Warrens, land values would have been \$5 or \$6 per square foot. Now, they fetch considerably more. The thing to note is that a graduate teacher from that period would have required only three times his annual salary to qualify for a mortgage to purchase a home, on such a property.

In today's Barbados, some ten years later, your qualification for the mortgage has moved to about six or seven times your annual salary. It is the same three-bedroom home and land, but the actual qualification for the mortgage, given the escalation in the property values has so increased, as to push a relative graduate teacher out of the reach of owning a similar type home. Therefore, there must be concern about the overall extent of the investment sector in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, it is not a question of remedy. It could have been addressed before and this is, in fact, where the Government should have entered the market some time before, so as not to allow for the escalating prices to penetrate on the western, central, eastern, northern and southern coasts of Barbados, but it happened.

When there was a debate in here about the impact of foreign ownership, in terms of increasing the cost of land and properties, there was a voice saying that we cannot

discourage foreign investors from getting involved in the ownership of real estate and property in Barbados. Then there was a committee established to look at it, and what I am saying is that the horse has already left the stable and, therefore, there is very little that can be done now to reduce the cost of building and buying land to make them affordable. In short, we have pushed the market beyond the reach of the average Barbadian.

Sir, let us not confuse ourselves about it because it is true. This is making it extremely difficult for people to get access to housing of all types. People with just a low income, may just need an ordinary two-bedroom home and it is still beyond their reach. People who are looking to rent an apartment, still have difficulty. Those who have gone into the higher echelons and are looking for a good three-bedroom home, maybe four bedrooms, two bathrooms are also finding it difficult.

Therefore, this is a perfect indicator of the way in which Barbadians have not been able to move forward, with the so-called perceived creation of wealth, over the last 10 to 15 years in Barbados, and that has caused the redistribution, in favour of the already existing privileged class. This is why certain persons in Barbados could have boasted, who owned almost half of St. Thomas and then parts of St. Lucy, and other parts of Barbados that their overall wealth would have increased substantially.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me cite an area for you of an example. There are several persons in Barbados when they had access to reconditioned cars, would have been able to buy an executive type car, some six or seven years ago. Sir, to show how Barbados has moved forward to the disadvantage of some, those same persons cannot replace that similar type executive car in today's prices.

Therefore, several Barbadians are forced to hold on to a car which they had for the last seven to eight years for an extended period of time. They cannot find the resources to purchase a similar type executive car, which they did six or seven years ago. It is an indicator that people have been living from pay packet to pay packet, and cannot make the adjustment.

Therefore, a fellow who had a large ride, by way of a big jeep, six, seven years ago and now seek to replace that jeep, cannot do it in today's Barbados, because his income has not moved commensurately with the increases in prices for such valued assets, so some of the valued assets in Barbados are cars, land, property...

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: it is a bad asset.

Asides.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: One can say that it is an asset that depreciates, but it is an asset that is treasured in Barbados for several reasons, that is why some people like BMWs. Those persons who had owned a Lantis and now own a BMW have made it quite clear to John Public that they have moved up the ladder from owning a Lantis to owning a BMW.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I understand the context within which this amendment is being made. It is somewhat similar to the need to use the existing liquidity in the banking system. There may be resources in the insurance companies that have to be invested elsewhere. It also speaks to the other side of the Barbados economy that apart from real estate, there is hardly any area of safe investment that yields the kind of rate of return that is desirable for potential investors. That is a major concern for the Barbados economy where people are finding it very difficult to invest their resources in areas that can benefit and yield the kinds of benefits that they would expect from such investments. This speaks to that outstanding issue in Barbados, something that we have been preaching for the last several years. It is consistent with the overall dependence on tourism. It is consistent with the continuous decline in manufacturing. It is consistent with what is happening in the agricultural sector. It is consistent even in areas where there was once a prospect of good milk production.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are beginning to see evidence of a declining investment environment for people. This, therefore, explains why there is an increasing level of liquidity or money in the banking system that is not being invested elsewhere because they are very limited opportunities for such investments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are told that they would have been allowed to invest in securities. Sir, what is going to happen is that even if there is an increase in the amount of securities that they could purchase, given the existing prices or the interest rates, the actual long-term yield on these securities would not be seen as viable alternatives to real estate, and therefore, we would anticipate that with any additional investment, it would occur in the area of real estate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I end on this note, that if the Government can see the wisdom in allowing insurance companies to invest more of their assets in real estate, I do

not understand why Government cannot see the wisdom in allowing credit unions to invest more of their assets in real estate.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: It is an ideal opportunity to give credit unions a greater opportunity to broaden the base of ownership and to have greater opportunities for investments in their portfolios. They should not be restricted nor limited in the way they are presently. When they make investments in real estate, they are criticised by the Minister of Finance for the way they are doing so, when we should be encouraging a greater level of investment in real estate by the credit unions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as you know, I am a man who is led by my conviction, and I fear no one once I am convinced of the position I hold. That is how I will live my life with a conscience. While the newspapers and the media in Barbados are speaking to the issue of the failure to restructure the Barbados economy, to give greater opportunities for investors across and beyond areas such as tourism, they should be giving praise where it is due because this has been an ongoing debate in why Barbados is going to find itself stifled in the newer economic arena because it has not created the environment for investment and rates of returns, the debate should have been engaged in a long time ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have now reached the juncture where I can read an economic review saying that Barbados' economic prospects rest only on the very fickle tourism sector. It should never have been occurring. We had ten years in which to restructure the Barbados economy and to reposition the manufacturing and the agricultural sectors. We had ten years to do something about the offshore sector in Barbados. We had ten years not only to tamper with tax policies but to restructure and to reform the Barbados economy in preparation for what is happening. Instead, we allowed it to go in this direction and we are now hoping that something is going to come along and bail us out when we could have been proactive.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have rejected the investment sector loan from the Inter-American Development Bank. We have rejected the need to reposition Barbados. We have rejected the overall restructuring exercise, and we will suffer as a country even though we might now be appearing to do well. Sir, in tourism where we are seeking to boast about doing well, we are not doing well, and we know it. I am not fooled about any output or value-added in tourism. A tourist is a tourist for the purposes of measuring value-added or output in tourism, it does not matter, so whether one brings in a Trinidadian, a Guyanese, an American or an Englishman,

it is the same for the purposes of measuring output in tourism. Therefore, when one hears the Governor of the Central Bank saying that the output in tourism is at six per cent, it does not say whether or not we have seen any increase in revenue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what matters in the industry is the amount of spending that is occurring and not the amount of people who are arriving. When the Minister of Tourism and International Transport was on the private sector side, he understood it, because he said that numbers do not matter. Suddenly, he is now boasting daily about numbers when he knows that the actual commensurate revenue has not occurred. Therefore, in the Estimates the Prime Minister was able to say that we are not doing that well in the area to tourism.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am, therefore, saying that we not only need to find real estate or security but that we need to find an economy that offers opportunities for investment and an economy that gives people the opportunity to invest, knowing they can get a proper rate of return. Sir, in the absence of doing so, this administration has to take the blame for not preparing us for the future. It has ridden on the back of the Sandiford administration in the civilisation policy but it has never sought to reposition the Barbados economy. That is precisely why we have to do now what we have to do in the area of the insurance companies, to find ways to invest in Government's papers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Government could run all kinds of deficit. Government could spend as it likes and then the insurance companies would be able to invest in Government bonds as a means of financing that deficit. Government could do whatever it likes but the private sector of Barbados was not given the opportunity to invest, to reposition or to create wealth in the Barbadian economy. This debate is now squarely within those four corners of the issue of investment and the impact that investment has on developing an economy, creating wealth, creating jobs, generating foreign exchange, sustaining one's future prospects for growth and one's future prospects for the social sector development, but it has not occurred.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am happy to be given the opportunity to identify the need to have an economy in which we can invest beyond real estate. The unfortunate reality of life is that those who were able to get involved in the purchase of land and those who got involved in the purchase of buildings years ago, are now comfortably sitting. They are so comfortable that they could eat all of the green grass and all the brown grass around and no other cow who could even consider getting access to the milk.

4.00 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is precisely what is happening in Barbados, with regards to persons who have been able to get access years ago. The grass is limited only to cows, the sheep cannot get access, neither can the goats. It is limited only to cows because years ago, the cows made sure that they cordoned off the necessary real estate, from which they are now getting the kinds of benefits that they are seeing.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: No, it is true, the rain is now falling on a certain part of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: We have always had grass because even in turbulent times, the well-to-do are not affected. They do not make any adjustments, only those who live on the margins have to make the adjustments. As a tourism specialist you would know that in turbulent times, one goes to the high end of the market to get people. In turbulent times these persons can still travel and can still buy. In fact, they enjoy their lives regardless of the circumstances, and that is precisely what has happened here in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other reality of life is that when we confront this reality, they are simply going to consolidate the wealth by forming the same kinds of joint ventures that they form locally with foreign companies, in order to remain healthy and in a state that we will never be able to challenge. That is what is happening again in Barbados and, therefore, all the mergers that we are seeing in retail distribution, the hotel sector and in manufacturing, are all occurring precisely because the well-to-do are also preparing themselves for the eventuality of competition.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have done it extremely well in several areas. We no longer have a soft drinks industry and we all know why. There was a major discussion about this. The Honourable Member for St. James North would know that when there was a major discussion about the potential to invest in the soft drinks industry, we had all kinds of discussions as to why we should lie down and play dead and allow the Trinidadians to come and take over the BIM factory. We then saw the demise of Coca Cola and Ju-C companies, to the extent now where there is no longer an industry, and it will continue to happen.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I stood here today only to demonstrate once again, that in spite of all we are seeing in Barbados, we are not doing the right kinds of things to allow for a broader base of ownership of resources such as bonds, real estates, securities or businesses, that would justify a

definite advance in our people. Sir, in fact, the more we seem to advance, the more the majority of people are being marginalised.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise in this debate to make my contribution. Sir, it is known that I am a member of the insurance fraternity.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: I am that first, politician after.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support the Resolution here today but let me say that the insurance industry has been good to me. Sir, let it be clear that any small fishes and barley loaves that I have had in my life, were because of my hard work in the insurance industry.

Sir, the insurance industry is a good industry. It is one that has contributed to the welfare of many Barbadians while, at the same time, it continues to create the investment climate in Barbados as it is today. It is an industry that employs people at all levels. There are actuaries who are trained persons from North America or Scotland, qualified accountants, clerical staff, and large numbers of insurance agents, some having the designation of Certified Life Underwriter (CLU) and Fellow Life Management Institute of Insurers (FLMI).

Sir, I would say that it is an industry that has trained persons and that like any other industry in the world, has its good apples and its bad apples. There are persons that sometimes one would question why they are in that industry, as one would question any other profession such as legal or medical.

Sir, there are some persons who would 'knock' the insurance industry and say that there are some dishonest people working in the industry but at the same time, one does not hear about the amount of death claims that are paid out. When persons become disabled, one does not hear about the numbers of persons on disability claims, yet there are some who would continue 'knocking' the insurance industry. They are some persons who because they are not working, would use the insurance industry as a stop gap. When some individuals who were working at banks, who steal the bank's money and get fired, they go to the insurance industry as a stop gap.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, many of them leave the insurance industry in a hurry. They say that they would try the insurance industry but in fact, the insurance industry is trying them, and a lot of them fall by the wayside.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we owe a lot of our development to the North American companies. Between the early 1960s and 1970s, we had an insurance company, the Dover Plan Insurance company, coming out of England. During the 1970s, we had companies coming out of Canada called Sun Life Insurance company, North American Insurance Company and Confederation Life Insurance Company, which is the company with which I had my beginning. After North American Life Insurance Company left Barbados, the company, Life of Barbados, was formed out of North American Life Insurance Company. As I said, these North American companies are the companies that have done a great deal for the industry in Barbados. We have since seen the demise of a number of insurance companies in Barbados where the whole insurance industry has been transformed to where we now have two large companies, SAGICOR Group of Companies, which has just bought the Life of Barbados portfolio. Prior to that, Life of Barbados had bought the portfolio of the North American companies, Confederation Life Insurance Company, as well as North American Life Insurance Company.

Sir, in the past, people had the perception that when they invest in a company and the company had to leave the territory, that the money would not be seen again. That is not true because the insurance company is well regulated by the Supervisor of Insurance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the early 1970s the insurance company, Confederation Life Insurance, would have invested in places such as the Sunset Crest Development. Windsor Lodge, where Cable and Wireless (BARTEL) is located, was also an investment of the Confederation Life Insurance Company. There are other residential areas in Barbados that are indebted to the insurance industry that have been upgraded by these insurance companies, such as Confederation Life. SAGICOR General, formerly Mutual Life, has built the Fort George Heights area and at present are looking at a development in the Bydes Mill Development, St. George area. Sir, by and large, the insurance companies do make investments in Barbados.

Sir, as I said, the industry is not without its faults and more can be done for it. As it is now, the whole industry's assets for the year 2002 stands at \$1.728 billion. Sir, the industry has its competition.
4.10 p.m.

We have the credit unions and the banks competing for business. Sir, some banks sell insurance products and both insurance companies and banks sell mutual funds so we can see that there is great competition in the industry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to see more investment happening in the lower end of the market in

Barbados. Years ago, poor people were sold a policy for \$10 000 only but today, large numbers of poor people finance insurance companies because these companies will take as low as \$25 from a person. Sir, there is so much competition that insurance companies would now sell policies to almost anyone. Given this fact, it is not right that they should say that they cannot invest because the return is too small.

Sir, it is a fact that National Housing Corporation is crying out for money and that since 1994, Government has been creating a land bank for poor people yet, poor people do not have access to this land. I believe that large insurance companies should invest money in the National Housing Corporation, not to build terrace units, but to allow people to buy a plot of land and build a house for their use. These insurance companies may say that the return is small but Government can give tax incentives to them to help in this regard.

As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are large numbers of people in your constituency crying out for land daily and this is why I understand what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said because at elections time we make grand promises about housing for poor black people but, at the end of the day, they get nothing.

Sir, it is time that we seriously look at real estate in this country and also at the National Housing Corporation and put mechanisms in place to make sure such things come to fruition and that people are in a position to get a plot of land to build their homes.

Sir, as I said before, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said a lot of things and I understand where he is coming from because as politicians, we are here to help people. Sir, I will not remain a politician if I cannot help people because elections after elections I see people remain in the same circumstances.

Sir, I want to see investment in real estate and that Government leads in this regard. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not concerned about the middle-class people who can go to a bank or insurance company to qualify for a mortgage but my concern is for the person who wants to buy a house between \$65 000 and \$130 000.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I support the legislation but I want to caution Government about one thing since we are talking about raising the limit from 15 per cent to 25 per cent. In the 70s and 80s, the insurance industry in Jamaica was a thriving one but as time went by, the entire industry collapsed. The same thing also happened in Canada when Confederation Life, one of the oldest and strongest insurance companies collapsed because of the amount of money

allowed to be used in the real estate markets and we have to be very careful that a similar thing does not happen here in Barbados.

Sir, in Jamaica, Government formed a company called Simfac to salvage what remained in the insurance industry and here in Barbados, we must be careful that the same thing does not happen here. In the end, Life of Barbados bought Life of Jamaica and the Barbados Mutual Insurance Company bought out Mutual Life in Jamaica. Sir, to date, the insurance industry of Jamaica has not recovered.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to see that regulations and strict measures are put in place to make sure that our insurance industry does not follow the same as that of Jamaica and Canada.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I too rise to speak on this Insurance Bill, 2004. There is no doubt that insurance is important to any country but one has to be careful that when we make these adjustments that we are not years too late. If you look at the climate of insurance within Barbados, you would see that the majority of companies that made large sums of money never held large sums of money in retained earnings but paid out the profits to the shareholders who were few in number.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is one thing to increase the amount from 15 per cent to 25 per cent but this is occurring at a time when the insurance market is no longer localised. We have now chosen a globalised market to dictate to local companies to increase from 15 per cent to 25 per cent when the competition is much greater.
4.20 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there seems to be a contradiction to me that the Government of the day is asking the insurance companies to increase premiums from 15 per cent to 25 per cent when insurance companies are saying that they are losing money and are increasing premiums on the backs of poor people. I would like the Government to explain that to me because it seems to be a serious contradiction. It is also clear to me that if Government wants the insurance companies to have this type of increase, then it is going to be the masses of Barbados who will have to pay the additional charges to compensate for these increases.

Asides.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: The increase that we are talking about is an increase in the amount of its assets that it can invest in real estate so as to bring a better return. This is not a case where we are discussing increasing any cost

component. We are only increasing their opportunity to invest and increase their returns. So there is no cost to be borne by any taxpayer or insurer. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is utter nonsense.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, under normal circumstances if I used to be beg for mercy, I would request that the Honourable Member withdraw those words because they are unparliamentary. Sir, because of the lack of accounting knowledge on his part, he is unable to understand what I am saying.

Sir, in everything that you do, unless you can increase your disposable income you cannot do what is required here. You have to generate revenue and divide the pace to get what you want. If the insurance companies are saying that greater demands are being made on them and you are asking them to do this, then you are creating a greater demand, that is a common sense thing. You do not have to be an accountant to understand that. This is simply arithmetic.

Sir, we are also operating in a globalised world and one of the best things that happened in Barbados was the demutualisation of the Barbados Mutual. Even though it was one of the best things that happened in Barbados as it relates to the masses, it is turning out to be the worst thing that has ever happened because the Government of the day did not put an educational programme in place to educate the masses nor did they put disposable income in the hands of the people who own the insurance policies so that they did not to sell their shares to get disposable income in order to liquidate their debts.

I am saying that this programme was introduced without proper planning by the Government of Barbados and when a tally is done, one would recognise that when Barbados Mutual demutualised the economic climate in Barbados it would have encouraged Barbadians to sell their shares. Sir, since Barbados Mutual can no longer be identified in Barbados as a local company, they changed their name to Sagicor.

I am saying that since the base of the Barbados Mutual, now Sagicor, is no longer in Barbados, shares are traded daily and they are being bought by Trinidadians who live overseas. This has caused a greater divide in the local market. Sir, do not be surprised if the headquarters of Sagicor is relocated out of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying that they have been serious economic changes in Barbados because of that move and the Barbados Labour Party will have to account to the people of Barbados for it. Whether or not the Honourable

Member on the Back Bench understands what is going on that is up to him. One only has to listen to the Stock Exchange report and one would understand what I am referring to.

I am a strong supporter of credit unions in Barbados and I want them to understand that the reason for the establishment of credit unions was to look after the masses. It is clear to me that the directorate of the credit unions believes that they are now 'big up' and better off and that their interest is no longer representing the masses. Sir, when contracts are being awarded, they are not given to small companies, they are awarding the contracts to large companies that do not invest in the credit unions.

I was told by a political comrade that one of the reasons why people invest in certain companies in Barbados is that they earn a right to some of the work being generated by those companies. Sir, poor people are investing their money in credit unions and yet they cannot get any of the business coming from the credit unions. I am saying that this is a backward step and we are worse than the people that we accused of doing us injustices and people have to understand what is happening in Barbados. Politicians have to start opposing those persons who are preaching one thing and doing something different.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the large sums of money being invested in credit unions belong to the masses. Therefore, when contracts are being awarded, they should be awarded to the masses if they are capable of doing the job.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: There are a lot of companies complaining daily about the injustices.

Sir, people can come to Barbados and enjoy rights and privileges but returning nationals to Barbados are smelling hell. There are politicians who gave the returning nationals the impression that I am anti-returning nationals, when I speak about this matter. It is easier for a foreigner to come and live in Barbados than a Barbadian who is returning from living abroad, especially when that returning Barbadian is bringing back personal belongings.

I am saying that we need to give those returning nationals the assurance...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is clear that when they return to Barbados they have money to buy insurance. We have to protect them and let them know that we need their money to invest in Barbados.

Sir, all over the world people are diversifying into various areas of production in order to earn revenue. Barbados is a fortunate country because we have Barbadians who lived abroad for many years and who want to return and invest their money. However, because of Government policies they are unable to do this. I am saying that we must allow returning nationals the right to return and build homes and insure their personal possessions.

4.30 p.m.

Therefore, we would be able to build on that income, and they would be able to fit into the Government's policy of moving it from 15 per cent to 25 per cent.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It takes income to purchase assets, so you must have that income to deal with this particular situation.

Sir, I am saying that we have to understand what is going on in this country. Our own citizens are now second class citizens in their own country, and something must be done about it. All over Barbados, every morning and night, if you are a proactive politician, your telephone is ringing, where returning nationals are having problems, even though this Government gave the impression that they would create a better life for them.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, could you stick to the subject matter, the amendment to the Insurance Bill?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thank you, Sir.

Sir, I have been able to tie the two. The more returning nationals, the more insurance policies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that the insurance climate in Barbados must be divided between the locals and the returning nationals. The returning nationals must feel free to come back to their country of birth and buy a policy like anybody without any impediment.

Sir, I am saying that when you look at the amount of real estate purchased recently, you would recognise that the returning nationals have been purchasing the real estate and buying homes. If you doubt me, ask the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, who are the ones buying the majority of the property in the St. James area, above Queens College, and he will tell you that they are the returning nationals who are buying them. Again, once they buy property, they have to buy insurance.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: On a point of order. We have really stretched every fibre of our intellect to try to understand the connection of what the Honourable Member is saying. If I can be permitted to remind the Honourable Member, the first rule of a debate in this House is that of relevance.

This amendment is to permit insurance companies to increase the level of the percentage of their assets in investment, from 15 per cent to 20 per cent. It has nothing to do with who can buy a policy. It bears no relationship or relevance to the returning nationals. I just want to remind him what the amendment is, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your point has been taken. Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am shocked and embarrassed to hear an argument like that coming from a Front Bench of a Government. The Front Bench of the Government does not understand that if there is anything that drives investment, it has to do with income. If returning nationals are coming back here and buying homes, they must have insurance policies and that relates to the debate.

When you can get a Front Bench of a Government talking like that, which claims that it understands what is going on in the world, now I understand why there was no higher growth this year, and why the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is walking around saying that he is the only Minister that is working and the others cannot produce any growth.

I thank you, Sir.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to make a short but meaningful contribution to this debate, about the increase which would be allowed to the insurance companies to increase their percentage in real estate investment.

Let me first say that I would wholeheartedly support this amendment. It is something positive for this country, and it is obviously something positive for the insurance industry.

Sir, I am no insurance expert but I have certainly seen the significant benefits that the insurance industry has afforded this country. It has been a vehicle for investment in this country. We have seen the insurance industry use the monies that it has access to for development, to do significant real estate developments in this country.

We know of the Sunset Crest Development, Husbands Development, the Fort George Development, and if this

increase from 15 per cent to 25 per cent enables the insurance companies to do even more investments in housing for this country, I say, "here, here, more of it." Sir, let them continue to use the significant funds that they have at their disposal to help us to develop Barbados and make it a better country for us all.

I am aware that the Sagicor Insurance Company is also in the process of developing land at Lyrias, which they have had idle and underdeveloped for some time. I understand that they are going to put up a flagship building at Lyrias. Sir, for those who do not know where Lyrias is, it is at the corner opposite the Garfield Sobers roundabout, looking north west at the Life of Barbados building.

This investment is right in the heart of the constituency of Christ Church West. I hope that the people there would benefit from jobs in the construction and then jobs thereafter at that building that Sagicor is hoping to put up. I welcome the development to Christ Church West and also the development to Barbados as a whole. It shows significant reliability in the people of Barbados, and that the country of Barbados is a sound investment, where they could pick up millions of dollars and invest in putting another building at Lyrias.

Let me go on, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and talk a little about the insurance industry, as it relates to medical insurance. Medical insurance is a Saviour for many people in this country, who would never have been able to get access to medical procedures and services that they need, unless they had medical insurance. I think that this is an additional advantage that the insurance industry has brought to this country.

Yes, I understand that the insurance companies often say that it is a loss leader for them, that they do not make money on medical insurance, but so be it, because it is a social service to the country of Barbados.

Asides.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: We must support the insurances. If they make money in their real estate investments, and they can support their medical insurance, then it is necessary. It is something that we must continue to support. We have heard time and again, the health of a nation is the wealth of the nation. Therefore, I support the insurance companies in this, because it is obviously geared to improve their investments and spread their portfolios as well, in a more meaningful way.

Again, it is also showing that real estate investment in Barbados is a sound investment, and there is no beating about the bush. We all know that when you invest in real

estate in Barbados, not only will you benefit in terms of rent, because that investment would bring rental income, but the investment itself will appreciate over time.

Sir, I heard Honourable Members from the Other Side say that the appreciation was too great and we should consider capping it and so on, but I say, why? Let the market forces prevail. If the properties are going to appreciate, let them appreciate. I am not saying that they should appreciate wildly with no sort of consideration of what is happening around them, but market forces have a way of balancing and equalling out all things.
4.40 p.m.

We saw and we heard that the value of real estate increased almost fivefold when compared to the 1980s and the 1990s. This only goes to show how good an investment real estate is.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy speaking about demutualisation. I am sorry that he is not in his seat now because I have to say a few words about that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that demutualisation was a good thing in this country. What demutualisation essentially meant was that people who had policies in the previous Barbados Mutual not only had the opportunity to benefit from those policies, but once that company became demutualised, they then got an additional asset which they did not have to begin with, which if they sold their shares, could then be used to acquire further wealth or to invest in other properties. This fantastic opportunity was afforded to the people who had policies in the Barbados Mutual.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me go further and say that it was not up to the Government to have an education programme on demutualisation because it was not a Government programme. Demutualisation was a programme by the Barbados Mutual Company which made a decision that it was in their best interest to settle their differences with their then shareholders so as to be able to access more investments to be able to make the company a larger, better, more viable and more robust company. That certainly benefited the then Barbados Mutual now Sagicor and has also benefited significantly the people who had policies with them because those people have an opportunity now to turn what was their shares into equity and use that equity to invest in real estate if necessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to go yet a little further because we also heard a lot about name change. Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you were by nature a mutual company and you then changed your mode of doing business to a share owning company, you can no longer be called the Barbados Mutual, you have to change your name. On top of that, you

are doing business not only in Barbados but in several jurisdictions like Trinidad and Tobago, St. Lucia, Dominica, and I understand there is also an office in the United States of America, therefore you have to go for a universally accepted name, and the universally accepted name which that company went for is Sagicor. So there is no reason or any wild accusation why they should have maintained the name Barbados Mutual because it was obviously nothing to contradict or trick poor people. It was simply a decision to make it more accessible and to give it a name that people could relate to internationally. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am surprised to hear an Honourable Member on the Other Side coming with such a suggestion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this amendment is a sound amendment. The insurance industry is a good industry. I have been privy to some of it through a friend of mine, my agent, who taught me a lot about the insurance industry and I have learned and come to understand what benefit Insurance is, not only life insurance, but general insurance as well as health insurance. Sir, all through the insurance industry I can only see positives and I encourage all Barbadians to get out there and get some insurance for themselves, not only insurance in those aspects but also general insurance for housing. We hear of many houses that have been razed to the ground by a fire where the owners did not have insurance, which hurts your heart. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not like the insurance for insuring a chattel house is expensive. It is something the average person would be able to afford and I encourage people to get out there and get involved in the insurance industry. The insurance industry is a benefit to Barbados and it is a benefit to all of those who get involved in it.

Mr. Speaker, I now turn my attention to land ownership. Land ownership in this country is at the heart of why we get out there and work, why we want our children to have the best education possible and why we want to improve ourselves. In Barbados everyone wants to own a piece of the rock because they recognise the significant investment and the significant status and that it is something you can pass from generation to generation. We recognise that our forefathers not only were not able to own land but some were slaves who even themselves were owned. So to be able to take our people through to be land owners is a significant statement in this country. Therefore, if we can help the insurance industries through this legislation to help us to make more land available for housing to give more Barbadians an opportunity to own a piece of land in this country, it can only go to the benefit of us all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this debate has been brief but it has been significant. I believe that most Honourable Members of this Honourable House have a good understanding of the issues and the impact that it will have on the ability of the insurance sector to satisfy its accounting requirements but perhaps more importantly to realise a significant economic return on its investment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish to thank all Honourable Members who participated in this debate and I therefore move that this Bill be read a second time.

Dr. W. F. DUGUID: I beg to second that.

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

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

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 2 inclusive were called and passed.
4.50 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, seconded by Hon. J. X. WALCOTT, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour Mr. SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the motion of Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, seconded by Dr. W. F. DUGUID, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Insurance (Amendment) Act, 2004.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government's Business for today. I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, May 11, 2004, at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, May 11, 2004, at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
4.52 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Deferred.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 2

1. The Customs Tariff (Amendment) Order, 2004.
2. The Special Development Areas (Savoy Properties SRL) Notice, 2004.
3. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (Evco Limited) Order, 2004.
4. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (United Holy Church of America (Barbados) Incorporated) Order, 2004.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL 2

Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the year ended March 31, 2003.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 2

Annual Report of Barbados Vocational Training Board for the years 1999/2000 and 2000/2001.

OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 2; Mr. C. A. Mascoll, 4; Mr. R. D. Marshall, 4; Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde, 6; Dr. D. C. Estwick, 8; Hon. R. R. Farley, 9; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 11; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 12; Mr. T. A. Prescod, 13; Mr. R. D. Jones, 14; Hon. N. A. Lynch, 15; Hon. K. D. Symmonds, 16; Mr. Speaker, 16.

MINUTES (Recommitted)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 16

Confirmation of Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, April 27, 2004.

SUSPENSION OF CERTAIN STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY 17

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 8 – THE SUPREME COURT OF JUDICATURE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2004 .. 17

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 17, 25; Mr. C. A. Mascoll, 20; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 22; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson 23.

ORDER NO. 7 – INSURANCE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2004 28

Hon. D. D. Marshall, 28, 42; Mr. C. A. Mascoll,

31; Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, 33; Mr. R. D. Marshall, 37; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 38; Dr. W. F. Dugid, 40.

SUSPENSION 16

ADJOURNMENT 42

Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, 42.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
ESTWICK, Dr. D. C. (St. Philip West)
FARLEY, Hon. R. R. (Christ Church East)
FORDE, Hon. Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
JONES, Mr. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)
LYNCH, Hon. N. A. (St. Michael South)
MARSHALL, Hon. D. D. (St. Joseph)
MARSHALL, Mr. R. D. (St. Michael West Central)
MASCOLL, Mr. C. A. (St. Michael North West)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PRESCOD, Mr. T. A. (St. Michael East)
ROETT, His Honour I. A. (St. Michael Central)
SYMONDS, Hon. K. D. (St. James Central)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)
THOMPSON, Hon. Miss H. E. (St. James South)