
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, January 18, 2005

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on Tuesday, January 18, 2005.

PRESENT

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

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

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

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

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

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER, D.A., B.C.H. (Senior Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., J.P. (Minister of Labour and Social Security)

Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister of Public Works)

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL (Chairman of Committees)

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

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Hons.)

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)

Mr. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.)

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

Dr. W. F. DUGUID, B.D.S. (Comm.), F.D.S., FDRCS, J.P.

Mr. R. L. SEALY, B.Sc., M.B.A.

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, December 14, 2004.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, December 14, 2004, be confirmed subject to any omissions, observations and/or corrections.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report to this Honourable House that I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements for the months of August and September 2004 from the Accountant General.

PAPERS

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

1. Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 3) Order, 2004;
2. Customs Tariff (Amendment) (No. 5) Order, 2004;
3. Value Added Tax (Refund) (The Barbados Military Cemetery Association) Order, 2004;
4. Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Insurance Corporation of Barbados Limited for the Year 2003; and
5. Annual Report of the Securities Commission for the Year ended March 31, 2004.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Annual Reports of the Barbados Vocational Training Board for the years April 1, 2001 to March 31, 2002 and April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003;
2. Report on the Audit of the Accounts of the Severance Payments Fund for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002.

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

Annual Report of the Barbados Port Authority for the year 2002.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following:

1. Forensic Procedures and DNA Identification Bill, 2005;
2. Computer Misuse Bill, 2005.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

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

1. Forensic Procedures and DNA Identification Bill, 2005;
2. Computer Misuse Bill, 2005;
3. Travel Services (Amendment and Validation) Bill, 2005.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 6 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE OF THE PAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL SUM OF \$15 MILLION AND INTEREST THEREON TO BE BORROWED BY THE GRANTLEY ADAMS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT INC. FROM THE NATIONAL INSURANCE BOARD TO ASSIST WITH THE FINANCE OF THE AIRPORT EXPANSION PROJECT

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, as with any other Resolution or any other good piece of legislation, it is best to set this debate in its full context as we start out at the beginning of 2005.

Mr. Speaker, this Resolution is brought to this House specifically to guarantee the borrowing of \$15 million by the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. from the National Insurance Board of Barbados to assist with the financing of the Airport Expansion Project at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

This act of guaranteeing or sourcing of funds is to assist this country in building the productive capacity that Barbados will need well into the future. This act, along with other serious initiatives that are being done by this Government, forms part of a continuum of events that this Government is engaged in for the future development of our country.

The Grantley Adams International Airport forms a central part of the capacity needed to build this new service-driven economy of Barbados. If tourism is to continue to be the centrepiece of this service-driven economy, then this fact clearly strengthens the role the Grantley Adams International Airport will play in the development of Barbados because airlift is critical to the development of our tourism sector and to the overall development of the economy.

Sir, the Grantley Adams International Airport is also a regional airline hub for tourism and international transport given our leading role, both administratively and developmentally, in the development of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.

Sir, in the initial development of the CARICOM Single Market and the concept of the free movement of people, it is clear that we need within the subregion an airline hub that will really act as a central airline hub for the rest of the region. This is also critical to the movement of goods within the region. Barbados and the Grantley Adams International Airport is a transshipment point for people and goods into the rest of Caribbean.

10.30 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, because of their stage of international transport development, many of the other islands do not have large international airports on which wide-bodied planes can land and taxi for any length of time. It is, therefore, important, for many of these critical smaller jurisdictions that are dependent more so on a true regional hub, that the Grantley Adams International Airport continues this form of development. It would be important not only for Barbados' special development and economic needs but that we also create a hub which would allow our brothers and sisters in the rest of the region to continue creating their own service-driven economies, particularly their tourism economies.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that once we are able to develop the Grantley Adams International Airport into a true Eastern Caribbean hub, it will be a boost to our economy in many different ways, such as what is paid in terms of landing fees for planes to come in. Sir, training opportunities that are made available to the rest of the region through the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, more importantly, I believe that the expansion of the airport is critical because, in many instances, we would

not have had as many large wide-bodied planes landing here as we do, neither would there be any future prospects for expansion if we did not have the Grantley Adams International Airport as a true hub for the rest of the Eastern Caribbean. Sir, at present, there are many planes coming into Barbados with a lot of in transit passengers moving onto other smaller jurisdictions in the region.

Mr. Speaker, critical to our realising many of the goals that we want to achieve, must be the expansion of the airport into that true hub and true international airport status. Sir, it is correct to say that as a country, we are the victims of our own success. The growing numbers that are coming to our shores, as we have recorded in 2004 the highest ever number of long-stay arrivals, leads us to the conclusion that the airport must be expanded and must continue to be in a mode of expansion during its lifetime.

Sir, our airport was built to handle 800 passengers per hour transiting at peak time. The existing terminals, both arrivals and departures, including the environs of the airport such as the ticketing areas, *et cetera*, were constructed more than 20 years ago to handle 800 passengers arriving at peak periods. Sir, we have now reached the point where we are handling as many as 1,200 to 1,400 passengers per hour, in a facility that was built to handle only 800 passengers.

Sir, this says that we are now reaching the critical point at which we need to put this new terminal building into operation. Mr. Speaker, this new building is being built to handle as many as 1,800 and 2,000 passengers per hour at peak periods. This volume of passengers is projected to the year 2015.

Sir, from the way we are going and growing in Barbados, relative to the numbers coming through, it seems that we are going to reach that threshold sometime before 2015. Sir, it is best projected that by the year 2011 or 2012, we will be reaching that threshold, which the Grantley Adams International Airport is being built to accommodate. Sir, as I have before said, the critical issue that must be alive in the minds of the public is that in a developing jurisdiction, the Grantley Adams International Airport will always be in a mode of expansion. Sir, maybe a lot of the work that we are doing will not equate to the level of terminal buildings that we are building now at this time.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who travel and are familiar with international transport systems and what happens in the rest of the region and the world, will note that airports are constantly under expansion. This can be seen as one passes through Miami, San Juan, Heathrow London and the J.F. Kennedy International Airport. As a matter of fact, one can imagine what we are talking about in terms of expansion to our airport because for example, AIRBUS is about to unveil a plane which carries 500 persons and is equipped with bars

and shopping areas. Therefore, persons who are pushing up their noses that we have built a terminal that is going to outlive its capacity before reaching the end of the projected period, really do not understand the dynamics of international transport and how it is developing.

Sir, I speak specifically to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy because the Honourable Member has begun 2005 in the same way that he has ended in 2004; on the cuffs of not understanding what international transport offers us in the future.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, one of the more critical elements is that in 2002, Barbados handled just over two million embarking, disembarking and transiting passengers. From January to December, 2002, we handled 2,026,715 passengers. In 2003, we handled 5 per cent over that number, 2,120,461 passengers. Sir, between January and November, 2004, we handled 2,146,000 passengers. Therefore, we are going to end somewhere in the region of 2,220,000, which is about 5 per cent over what we did in 2003. Sir, the pattern for the last four or five years seems to be that every year we are handling embarking, disembarking and transiting passengers, growing at a level of about 5 per cent per annum.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Grantley Adams International Airport, as I said before, like most airports in developing jurisdictions, will literally always be in an expansion mode as the economy expands. Most international airports in the region and in other more developed regions have also witnessed this phenomenon.

Mr. Speaker, as a part of the concept of expansion at the airport, we need constantly to continue adding parking positions at the airport. Sir, presently we are witnessing a phenomenon that is not the best for any region, especially for safety reasons, in which we are now having planes circling in Barbados. I never thought that I would have lived to see that we would have reached a point where there would not be enough parking spaces at the airport and, therefore, planes would have to literally circle until another pushes back for take-off.

Mr. Speaker, this is a known phenomenon as there are competitions for slots at major international airports, and the Grantley Adams International Airport is becoming a major international airport. That is what this debate is all saying. It has nothing to do with issues of planning and the like, Barbados is becoming more cosmopolitan. As our country continues to grow, our airport reflects what is happening in our society. A lot more passengers are coming. We have begun to build out a truly international airport, therefore, parking positions is just one issue at which we have to look.

Mr. Speaker, another issue is that of air/sea transfers. Last year we had an over 20 per cent increase in cruise passengers and in terms of ships homeporting, we have moved from five to nine ships that have homeported in Barbados during this winter season. Therefore, we are talking about a lot more activity coming and going through our airport.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, there is the issue of jet bridges, which is another expansion mode of the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, I understand that it is being made public that this Administration is not going to have jet bridges at the airport because some minister – I do not know that minister – does not want jet bridges. 10.40 a.m.

Sir, let me say that in 2003, the Cabinet of Barbados approved the concept of four-passenger loading bridges to be installed at Grantley Adams International Airport at an estimated cost of \$25 million and the airport will see the financing for the purchase and installation of these jet bridges. The design cost is estimated to be in the region of \$2.5 million and Cabinet has approved the concept of moving towards these designs.

The consultant has commenced work on the design for the jet bridges and the preliminary design will be available for approval by Grantley Adams International Airport by February 2005. Sir, this should clear the air relative to whether or not we are going to have jet bridges in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we also envisage that Grantley Adams International Airport will constantly be in a mode of expansion. The runway will be extended and there are issues relating to the cargo facilities. There is also the issue of the car park and we envisage that some time in the future we would be looking at the concept of a multi-storey car park and also at the probability of hotel accommodation as we move towards building Grantley Adams International Airport into a truly international airport.

Sir, Grantley Adams International Airport continues to expand and to be more international and we expect, Mr. Speaker, in your lifetime and mine, a more expanded facility which includes new parking facilities on the other side of the airport, hotel accommodation, a multi-storey car park, *et cetera*.

Mr. Speaker, parking space for aircraft is now at a premium even though we have lost some services from airlines coming into Barbados but every day we continue to negotiate more airlift into Barbados. Sir, this winter, BMI is flying nonstop from Manchester into Barbados. The first week of February, we will inaugurate a new service out of the Charlotte, Chicago US Air will fly nonstop into Barbados three days a week for the first time, opening up a

new major gateway through US Airways' hub in the United States of America. Mr. Speaker, this says a lot about where we are going and why parking space for aircraft is now at a premium at Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. Speaker, all these aircraft want to arrive in Barbados at the same time. To put this into context, because of the geographical location of Barbados where we end up being the farthest away relative to long haul in the Eastern Caribbean and because of our most easterly position, many of the aircraft coming to Barbados out of major cities in the United States of America do not get back to their hub in time for passengers to disembark and would be only able, under FAA and IKO rules, to come to Barbados around 2.30 p.m.

Sir, as a result of this, on any given day around 1.30 p.m. and 3.00 p.m. at Grantley Adams International Airport there could be as many as 15 wide-bodied planes on the tarmac at the same time. This also says a lot about where we are going and how we are developing our air services coming into Barbados.

Sir, if an aircraft lands before dusk time, people can arrive at the hotel in time to see the ocean and beach even if they cannot use it. This is important because lifetime changes in many of the developed jurisdictions now point to short vacations where people take two or three vacations each year rather than one two-week span. Sir, a person would come for one weekend and if that person gets to the hotel after dusk and cannot see the sea, he believes he has lost a day of his vacation. It is important that we understand these lifetime changes when we develop our changes.

Sir, the congestion at Grantley Adams International Airport is not only a result of our own planning but also is dependent on the slots received in other jurisdictions. This speaks to our significant success in our trek towards developed status and as a regional leader for the rest of the Caribbean.

Sir, Grantley Adams International Airport was incorporated in October 1998, under the Companies Act of Barbados. The Government of Barbados remains the sole shareholder in Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. I need to explain that this was an act of corporatisation and not privatisation because Honourable Members of the Opposition do not seem to get this right. The Government intends to continue to be the major shareholder in Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. even if some holdings go to the private sector.

I also want to clarify that regulatory activity under the Civil Aviation Act will remain with the Government under the Civil Aviation Division, under the Ministry of International Transport. I also need to make it clear that in

many instances when speaking about the airport and seaport, I heard the issues of taking away the regulatory control of the airport out of the hands of Government but I want to say again that Government intends to hold the majority of shareholding in the seaport and airport and that regulatory issues will continue under the Civil Aviation Authority at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, the Grantley Adams Transfer of Management Investment Assets Act passed in Parliament in 2003 and was proclaimed in December 2003. Sir, the Act received support in Parliament when it was passed. Subsequent to the proclamation, all the commercial assets and liabilities of the airport with the exception of the land vested in the company were given over to Grantley Adams. The land was leased to the company and Grantley Adams as the company took over full responsibility for commercial operations, the management of the airport and all the transactions related to revenues coming to the airport were done as at April 2004. We expect to complete the other parts of the process of transition by April 2005 at the beginning of this new financial year.

The specifics of the National Insurance Board facility which was negotiated since September 2003 for the airport expansion project have the following terms and conditions. The sum is \$15 million for a period not to exceed 15 years. The indicative interest rate is 6.5 per cent fixed. A moratorium of interest for the first 24 months after the first drawdown.
10.50 a.m.

A parliamentary guarantee is sought from the Government of Barbados to cover both the principal and interest. The National Insurance Board at issue date will also make an equity investment in Grantley Adams International Airport to the borrower in the amount of BDS\$1 million. The borrower must provide to the National Insurance Board detailed quarterly reports on the project during every phase of construction after the initial drawdown. The annual audited financial statements of the borrower are to be provided to the National Insurance Board within 120 days of the ending of the financial year. The profit and loss projections, balance sheets, forecasts and cash-flow projections, are also to be provided annually to the National Insurance Board by the borrower. Certainly, this is the most transparent of terms and conditions under which Government would have negotiated this loan.

Sir, I want to speak more wholesomely on the status of the airport expansion project and where we are now. As at December 2004, 75 per cent of the project, which began in March 2002, has been completed and 73 per cent of the budget has been spent, BDS\$100 million, of the budgeted BDS\$140 million has already been spent. The project is

approximately 6 to 8 months behind the scheduled completion date that had originally been stated and estimated.

Mr. Speaker, much of this has been occasioned by variance in the work completed and the expenditure is due mainly to various claims from the contractor. The delay has been occasioned by many different circumstances. One of such circumstance was that there have been many breaks in construction due to industrial action at Grantley Adams International Airport. Initially the industrial relation climate at Grantley Adams International Airport was not the best between the contractor, sub-contractors and many of the people working at the airport.

Sir, I believe that a lot of the delays were occasioned, and it was reported, by issues of clashes of personalities, people from different jurisdictions and cultures. Therefore, we had issues of clashes and issues of industrial action which we have now resolved.

Sir, there were also delays in the relocation of tenants who were not originally being considered. It took a long time to remove them from the existing terminal building where construction was going to be taking place and that transition proved difficult. Areas had to be airconditioned and some had to be closed off from dust and heat.

Sir, when the construction of the new arrival hall commenced and excavation was being carried out many pockets of clay deposits were found, and everyone knows that Barbados has an abundance of clay soil, but when the testing was done, pockets of clay were found. Sir, because the amount of excavation and filling that had to be done, which was deeper than was originally estimated, delays caused were particularly on the issue of building a new terminal building.

Sir, there were the issues of the acquisition of materials, weather, variations of the job and interfacing and planning. Literally, it was interfacing an airport in use during the time of construction and many of the issues that arose were not issues that initially the contractor or the airport expansion team would have planned for. This is not unusual within our society and people know what happens in the culture of building and construction in Barbados and what happens.

Mr. Speaker, suffice it to say that the airport project is approximately 6 to 8 months behind the scheduled date of completion but it is also within budget, given the fact that we have completed 75 per cent of the work and we have only paid out 73 per cent of the estimated amount. Sir, given the issues of the variation of claims, the job may finish over the budget but that will be determined on completion of the project.

Mr. Speaker, as we speak, there are issues at the airport relating to the electrical contract and the main contractor, which is *sub judice*. This matter has now gone to arbitration and I will not speak on that issue. The courts will resolve that matter but I will say that electrical work continues, possibly at a slower rate than would have been expected at this time because less persons are employed under that electrical contract.

Sir, we now expect the job to be completed by the end of September 2005. However, substantial completion should be done by July 2005, with many of the main areas, that you will see when you come to the airport or go through the airport, being completed by that date. Sir, if you pass through the airport you would either be in the arrival hall or leave via the departure area and you will not realise that work is going on in other areas. There is substantial completion of some areas. Sir, most of the communal and areas used by passengers are expected to be completed by July 2005.

Mr. Speaker, to give you an idea of some of the phasing, the bus bays will be completed by March 2005 and the arrival hall by April 2005 at the end of the winter season.

Interestingly enough, we continue to battle through this winter season with substantial success. I must say that the Customs, Immigration, other airport staff, police officers, red caps and taxi drivers at the airport have worked beyond the call of duty to ensure that we get passengers through the airport in the most expeditious manner, even though we are cramped for space.

Sir, during the period May to June is usually a low season for Barbados but because a lot of the problems have been eliminated, we are seeing an interesting new transition in the passengers who come through our airport. As a matter of fact, it is interesting to note that for the last three years between the months of July and August, we have handled more passengers who were in transit, embarked and disembarked than we have handled during the months of January and February, and that is an interesting thought.

Sir, a lot of this is traffic where people may not be going to hotels but during that summer period a lot of people are passing through our airport. Therefore, the issues of how we continue to phase the work and our ability to meet the level and volume of traffic is going to be important.

Mr. Speaker, the arrival hall is going to be finished by March 2005. Gates 7 to 10 and 14 to 16, which are at the extreme end of the departure area, are going to be finished between May and June 2005. Once the additional airline counters for departure are completed, they will be relocated to the eastern side in the new open counter area that many

people would have experienced. The refurbished counter area should be completed by June 2005 and by July 2005, the courtyard area and the open area near the BMC kiosk, will be completed. The retail mall is the area to be completed and we expect that to be completed around August or September 2005.

Sir, in hindsight, it has been expressed to us, as Government, that 30 months for the completion of this project was highly optimistic. At that time, given the fact that the airport was going to be in operation, many of the issues that arose after the commencement of the project were issues that we never would have considered initially. Therefore, the engineers and contractor are saying that 30 months was a very optimistic time to complete the development that we had proposed at the airport.

11.00 a.m.

Sir, 30 months were projected for the completion of this job. The time was set by the consultants, the people who drew the plans, and that was the best time we were given. Now in hindsight, not me or the Government, but the contractor and engineers are saying that 30 months was a very optimistic time to complete the development which they proposed at the Grantley Adams International Airport. We have now come back to see that time really was not adequate.

Sir, there are some other issues on which I want to comment.

The water reclamation facility was completed in December 2003.

Sir, Barbados has the only common user terminal system that operates anywhere in this region, and the first wireless one in the world, at Grantley Adams International Airport. There is a docking station and a lap top and someone can move from one station to another and just change the sign at the top. This means that any airline can occupy any counter space. Therefore, BWIA, British Airways and others could use any available counter. This eases the concept of congestion where people line up at one specific place.

The realignment of the Fairy Valley Road was substantially completed in May 2003. Most of the realignment of the Parish Land Road and matters relating to the relocation of people and houses have been completed as well, but there are still houses to be built and people to be moved.

Those who are familiar with this project will know that this process started in 1989. The Caribbean Development Bank came on board in 1991. Sypher Mueller, our Consultants did a feasibility study in 1993 and in 1994 British Aerospace was invited by the new administration at

that time, to critique what Sypher had done as a feasibility plan. British Aerospace claimed at the time that the plan was too optimistic, given the present numbers and the projected numbers in growth that we were expecting. Now, we look back, again we see that the numbers which Sypher originally put on the table were even a little conservative.

The Cabinet commissioned a duty-free study to ensure that once you build out a substantial duty-free mall at Grantley Adams International Airport, under the expanded airport that you did not impact negatively upon a lot of the duty-free activity that now goes on in Bridgetown. I think that was the responsible, sensible and sensitive way to handle such a situation.

Originally, the Grantley Adams International Airport expansion project was supposed to have been one project, but we inherited pavements that were so bad at Grantley Adams, it meant that we had to start by doing only the pavement works first. This project started in 1998 and was completed in 2000. During that time, all of the plans for the terminal buildings were analysed by the client and we began this job in 2002.

Sir, regarding the staffing matters at Grantley Adams International Airport, I must say that we have worked with the Ministry of the Civil Service and the National Union of Public Workers to ensure that this transition of staff at the airport takes place in the most sensible and sensitive of ways, respecting the needs of the workers at the airport.

The General Secretary of the NUPW sits on the Board of the Grantley Adams International Airport and therefore has a hand in determining how we deal with issues relating to staff at the Airport. Sir, we have made options available to the 367 employees at the Airport, and outlined three different options.

1. The employees can seek employment with the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. Section 9 of the Grantley Adams International Airport Transfer of Management and Vesting Acts will apply to officers, in terms of their pensions and gratuities.

We have ensured that it is enshrined in the law that those who go over to Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc. have their pension rights protected.

2. The employees can be assigned to other ministries or departments under the civil service.
3. The employees can opt for early retirement.

Sir, Option Forms were given out to the 367 employees. A quarter of them have already returned the

Option Forms stating that they would like to work with Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc. Clearly, there are differences about how people view the civil service and how they view the concept of working within the private service, incorporated under the Companies Act.

Sir, we have given them the options. We intend, as a Government to ensure at this time that all of the staff who want to come over, such as janitorial, security, maintenance and development, communications, personnel, secretarial and accounts to the Airport Expansion project, can come over to Grantley Adams International Airport, Inc.

Sir, this Government intends to look after, in the most serious, professional and sensitive way, the rights of all the workers at Grantley Adams International Airport. Therefore, the talks are ongoing with the National Union of Public Workers. They are cordial. We have reached common ground on a number of issues. We have circulated to them a handbook on the terms and conditions at the Grantley Adams International Airport on which they have made their comments. Our Government's intention, Sir, is to ensure that we take full care of all those employees at the airport.

Sir, this is also a perfect test case for what happens, in terms of these transitions in the future for people moving from a Government department over into a corporatised entity. Sir, I believe this has been handled responsibly and sensibly by this Government.

Sir, there are other matters pertaining to Grantley Adams International Airport that I would wish to highlight. One is that during this phase of reconstruction of the airport, clearly we have experienced some difficulties in an airport of the Grantley Adams International Airport size, but Grantley Adams International Airport continues to be voted annually by the international media and the International Civil Aviation Organisation, as the best airport in this region.

Sir, Grantley Adams International Airport has its challenges. Clearly any airport in a developing jurisdiction will have challenges but I am pleased to say that the staff and the ancillary services that make up Grantley Adams International Airport have performed admirably over the past three years of this expansion project, under very difficult circumstances.

We would wish as a Government, Sir, to thank them for the patience that they have had in some very trying times under Grantley Adams International Airport. It has also offered some wonderful opportunities as well for employment for some of the members of our community for which we are grateful.

I believe, Sir, that by the end of September 2005, we will have a spanking new airport terminal building that really

reflects the speed, pace and the cosmopolitan nature of our society. Grantley Adams International Airport will have some 55 000 square feet of new arrival space. The arrival terminal will accommodate as many as 2 000 passengers per hour coming and going through that airport. We have also improved the immigration stations to 20 counters, surrounded by some 16 000 square feet of open space. There will be five new baggage carousels at that arrival terminal with some 33 000 square feet. There will be 12 customs stations, as compared now to four as they are in the old airport. Sir, when you get an opportunity to see the space, you will understand how expansive that space is for where Barbados intends to go in the future.

I am obliged to you, Sir, and I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution in this debate, but I have to note up front that any project which is six to eight months behind time cannot be said to be within budget because time is money in the business world, and if time is money you must be able to assess the cost overruns associated with not bringing a project in on time.

If the Minister can say that they have spent 73 per cent of the budget, that the project is 75 per cent complete but the project is six to eight months behind time, then the Minister has no concept or no understanding of the importance of time in business because time is money. Therefore, you need to be able to go and assess what the impact of being six to eight months behind time would cost the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. and the private sector individuals who would have planned to occupy the space at the airport some eight months before and the implications of such on the revenue and their capacity to earn.

Mr. Speaker, what we really want to have explained in this debate is the cost overruns at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Beyond that, we are aware that several subcontractors have experienced difficulties in dealing with the major contractor E. Pihl. Apparently, those difficulties had a lot to do with the belief that local workers should not be earning the kinds of wages that were asked for, and E. Pihl, having worked substantially across Africa, felt that the charges per hour were too high in the Barbadian labour market, in addition to some other complaints that were lodged by the workers on this project.

Sir, let me go to what I consider to be a very important matter. This loan which is being raised from the National Insurance Board is a source of concern for me, let me explain why it is so. I wish to inform the public of Barbados

that the sale of the Barbados National Bank can explain why Government has now to look toward the National Insurance Board for loans of such a nature and could also explain why there are other concerns at the National Insurance Board and the workers inability to get access to their compensation.

Sir, let me say here, I have explained this some time before, that the Barbados National Bank when it was Government-owned was used to finance several projects of statutory corporations such as the Barbados Transport Authority, the National Housing Corporation and the Barbados Port Authority. Now that the Barbados National Bank is no longer the Government's bank, the Government does not have access to it in a way in which it had prior to its sale.

I am therefore concerned with the way in which Government is now putting tremendous pressure on the National Insurance Board to finance projects that do not appear to have any substantial rate or meaningful rate of return. Therefore, as a consequence, this pressure will eventually put substantial pressure on the National Insurance Scheme. I am increasingly convinced that the liquidity situation at the National Insurance Board is being pressured substantially because of having to give these kinds of loans and this kind of financial support to projects such as the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. This therefore is a major worry and a major concern.

Sir, there is no way in which the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. would be able to yield substantial returns, as I can see it, on that investment which would be sufficient to make the National Insurance Board loan to that Board a meaningful investment for the purposes of managing the portfolio at the National Insurance Board. Therefore, if the National Insurance Board is forced repeatedly to give such loans to statutory boards in Barbados, then it must undermine the integrity of the National Insurance system in the medium term and certainly into the long term because you are talking about diversifying the investment portfolio in such a way that you can guarantee its integrity over time, and these kinds of loans being granted will not guarantee any such meaningful returns on the investment.

This is similar to the way in which the National Insurance Board was forced to put money in the GEMS of Barbados and into other Government projects. Therefore, we ought to be concerned at this stage rather than to wait later to see the implications that it would have for the National Insurance Scheme.

I therefore am now convinced that it is more a question of the liquidity situation at the National Insurance Board that is causing the workers in Barbados not to be able to get access to their unemployment benefits and other such things

and that it can no longer be an issue of the malfunctioning of a computer programme some year or so later and it is still happening today. Therefore, I am saying that there is no way in which a computer programme can be so complicated as to allow for such a long delay in the disbursement of such funds to workers and old-age pensioners in Barbados. That, therefore, must and ought to be a major source of concern.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore would wish to put in context the sale of the Barbados National Bank at this stage because this loan which the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. is now seeking to borrow from the National Insurance Board, would have been borrowed two years ago from the Barbados National Bank because we have heard about how much liquidity there is in the banking system. If the Barbados National Bank is the second largest commercial bank in Barbados according to the assets portfolio, and the FirstCaribbean Bank has an abundance of liquidity, why it is that the Barbados National Bank does not have or would not have had enough liquidity to be able to lend such funds to a statutory board. The simple answer to that is because having overextended itself as a commercial bank by being forced to give loans to the Barbados Transport Board, to the GEMS of Barbados and to other such institutions, the liquidity position at the Barbados National Bank was not as healthy as it should have been, given that it is the second largest commercial bank in Barbados.

11.20 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, having sold the Barbados National Bank, it is now evident that the pressure is being placed on the National Insurance Board to carry out the same kind of work that was being done by the Barbados National Bank, which is a major source of concern for me and I am sure for others in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, no one could contest whether or not we should expand the airport but the reason being given that tourists like to land on Barbados during the day in order that they do not feel as if they have lost the day, cannot be a good reason for giving more parking space on the tarmac. Therefore, I would like the Honourable Member to find a more reasonable explanation and justification for the expansion of the airport.

Sir, all of us travel, and if it is that we have to arrive at our destination during the course of the day to be able to observe the beauty and landscape of a country, and that is the justification for having to create the parking spaces, then it cannot be. It is not a reasonable thing to conclude. It, therefore, lacks depth and an understanding of the real issues confronting the industry.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to hear the Honourable Member saying that under his Administration...

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I never said that we were expanding the airport because people want to come in at any time, to see anything.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, just make your point of order.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, what was stated was that more planes and more people are coming to Barbados and, therefore, we need to expand the airport. But for the Honourable Member to try to couch that into the context that I said that people were coming because they wanted to get here at a certain time, is absolutely untrue and misleading.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, the more important issue is that over the last two to three years, we have had considerable boast about the ability of Barbados to attract new airlifts but what we have not had considerable boast about, is the ability of Barbados to lose that airlift as well. Therefore, the Honourable Member has not given us any analysis of new airlines that might have come for a particular time of the year and would have left, neither has the Honourable Member told us the extent to which we have had to subsidise airfares into Barbados, in order to sustain our tourism.

Therefore, on the one hand, there are boasts about the number of new aircraft coming into Barbados but there should also be an explanation as to how much money it has cost Barbados to be able to deliver such new airlines. It should also be explained that the new airlines have not been permanent in their nature. Sir, that is why we are seeing that in one month, some aircraft coming out of the Eastern seaboard and then we lose those, while the other month we see aircraft coming out of Mid-West and, therefore, there is no real permanency with respect to the airlifts over the last two years. And the Minister knows it only too well.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are you on a point of order, Sir?

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Therefore, if it is in the nature of the industry, then it ought to be explained in the interest of the public of Barbados, that, in fact, when an aircraft comes to Barbados for only a number of months and then abandons the routes... The Honourable Member should also come back and tell the people of Barbados that it has happened.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: You only need to read the letter that was sent to you, which was copied to the *Nation Newspaper* because there is an abundance of information.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do you think it would be better Parliamentary procedure if you rose on a point of order?

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, in fact, when we seek to bring this kind of analysis to the people of Barbados, we will hear that kind of complaining by the Other Side. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South, knows only too well that the industry of which he boasts has had considerable challenges, even during the last two to three years.

The Honourable Member also knows that when we have invested funds in getting certain aircraft to come here, that, in fact, there are challenges to keep those routes. Sir, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North was in charge of the Ministry of Trade, he was able to put it into perspective, that while you may be able to attract a particular aircraft this month, you are not able to sustain it in a way that would be beneficial to the industry over the medium-term to long term. In fact, what you would be getting would be substantial expenditure on the part of Government, with no guarantee that when an aircraft comes to the Caribbean and makes a stop in St. Lucia, that 70 per cent or 80 per cent of the tourists would be staying in St. Lucia, while only 20 to 30 per cent would be coming to stay in Barbados.

Sir, those are the things that have been happening in the industry. Therefore, we must be able to tell the public that even when we go into the market and seek to subsidise airlifts, that, in fact, other countries around us have been benefitting more from our initiatives than we have been in the last two to three years. Sir, the evidence is there to be seen and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South knows it only too well.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, there are commentators who have been writing consistently on matters pertaining to airlifts and pertaining to the industry.

Sir, while I understand and appreciate the need to expand the airport, I want to know whether or not the expansion redounds to the benefit of small businesses in terms of the average Barbadian being able to get access to the considerable space that would now become available, as a result of the expansion, and whether or not the expansion of the airport would be accompanied by a reduction in staff.

Sir, several staff members have complained that their jobs are not guaranteed for the future and that they do not know whether or not they are in a position to say next year that they would be part of this new organisation called the Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporated. It is true that the Minister has outlined options. The Honourable

Member has said that 367 employees were sent forms to give them three options which are: they can seek employment with the Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporated; they can be assigned into other Ministries, or they can seek early retirement.

Mr. Speaker, the Caves of Barbados which was made a company a number of years ago, and was able to attract staff from the National Conservation Commission, to this day has not been able to make those staff permanent. Sir even though those transferred staff members were promised that they would be given permanent jobs at the Caves of Barbados, it has not been the case after some four or five years. Therefore, there can be no guarantees for any employee at the Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporated. In fact, it is a major concern.

Mr. Speaker, on the other hand, if one can simply take staff members from the airport and assign them to other ministries, what are you really saying?

11.30 a.m.

Are you saying that there are so many other ministries across the public service that can absorb, willy-nilly, the needs and skills of these workers? Are you seeking to make Grantley Adams International Airport a profit centre? Is Grantley Adams International Airport really being corporatised or privatised? There was confusion over this matter and there remains confusion because at one stage we were told that such a body would be corporatised and it has been but once you permit for shares to be issued by such companies, then it is only a matter of time before the private shareholdership is greater than the shareholdership of the Government.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, it cannot be foolishness because, over time, it would make more sense for such corporations to be able to attract new equity from outside the public sector.

Hon. N A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. It is untrue to say that as a logical consequence of corporatisation that once you start to emit shares to the private sector that these shares will automatically go over and beyond the shareholdership of the Government. Sir, it is erroneous to say that and it misleads the House because it is not a logical consequence of corporatisation.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, it cannot be misleading. In fact, I would think the Honourable Member for St. Michael South should be happy that sometime in the foreseeable future that Grantley Adams International Airport would be such an attractive investment opportunity for

Barbadians that several private individuals would wish to buy shares in such an entity, that the Government would be only too happy to say that the initial investment would have been justified and yielded returns to the extent that it can attract private sector finance.

Sir, if the Honourable Member for St. Michael South is saying that Government intends to constrain the capacity of people to invest in such an entity, the Honourable Member is almost suggesting that he has limited the capacity of such an entity to perform profitably because Government has already taken in excess of \$72 million out of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund and invested it in Grantley Adams International Airport. If the money of Government is good enough to be invested in this project, I would hope that over time that the money of the private sector is also good enough to be invested in the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, I do not understand the fear if you corporatise and allow for an entity to issue shares. What is the fear if the shares are sufficiently attractive to be able to excite the credit unions and other small business people to get involved in contributing equity to such corporations?

Mr. Speaker, I understand the hemming and hawing over the matter. On one hand, you are talking about setting initiatives and goals that would permit the entity to perform at such a level that it can compete effectively and efficiently among a possible private sector intrusion but, on the other hand, you are trying to constrain performance of the entity because you do not wish to have too much money from the private sector. However, the Government sees it fit, as is required today, to borrow \$15 million from the people of Barbados to put into the entity without the guarantee that there would be a sufficient rate of return on the investment to make the NIS scheme a viable one in the next 15 to 20 years.

Sir, it is easy now to take money from the NIS now that the Barbados National Bank is no longer available to Government, the next best source out of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund is the NIS Scheme. Sir, there are contradictions all around.

Mr. Speaker, the whole question of early retirement is an option which the staff is being given. Sir, where would ordinary Barbadians who were employed to be janitors, security men and women find alternative employment at that level to make it viable to them to opt for early retirement?

In fact, if the Minister does not know it, a security guard in Government gets substantially more as a monthly salary than a security guard in the private sector and a security guard in Government has a guaranteed job whereas, if the skills he has been able to nurture over the years can

now be transferred to the private sector, he would not be guaranteed an equal pay because it is known that in Government, at the lower end of the scale, that Government workers are better paid than workers in the private sector. Sir, it is only in the middle and professional levels that there can be competition but all right-thinking Governments have seen to it over the years that workers at the lower end of the scale are better paid than in the private sector.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: A principle that involved that informed decision-making and salary negotiations years ago has now 'gone through the eddies' because there is no need to narrow the gap between those at the bottom of the income ladder and those at the top. It is now a social partnership in which workers are not deriving their fair share. They are contributing to improving the ability of the economy to become efficient by containing cost but Government is not ensuring when there are opportunities for the workers to gain and earn from the profitability which would have been derived through increased productivity that they can, in fact, benefit from such.

Sir, that relationship no longer exists in Barbados because the unions have seen it fit now to be part of Government, part of the private sector and part of a social engineering that is not consistent with what is really happening and in periods of boom, rather than crisis, the unions have been accommodating the expectations of both the Government and the employers.

Sir, again this is strange and it is a concern that we need to address. One can understand the period of crisis but why can workers not benefit in a period of boom? Why must there be the continuation of a strategy of an across-the-board increase rather than any discrimination between the bottom and the top?

Mr. Speaker, I cannot see how any worker at Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. would opt for early retirement because I cannot see any compensation allowing any individual to feel comfortable for the rest of his life, neither can I see persons who had been able to nurture such skills being able to find jobs easily within the existing labour market.

Mr. Speaker, it is well understood that the competition for jobs in Barbados which would result from the intrusion will occur at the bottom end of the income ladder among security guards, agricultural workers, janitors and maids so to ask a worker who would have been employed at Grantley Adams International Airport for a number of years to opt for early retirement in a period of uncertainty and at a time when there would be increased competition for jobs at that level

in the labour market would be to ask workers to commit suicide.

11.40 a.m.

Sir, workers are not foolish because they understand only too well that this is not the time to take such chances. If you have a secure permanent job within the public service of Barbados and you anticipate regional integration to the extent where there will be free movement, how could you even begin to contemplate early retirement? As a low-income worker, with whom are you going to be able to compete, with whom and where?

Where will the economic development and growth derive and give rise to greater opportunities for jobs within the lower income level of Barbados? Where will it happen? Certainly there will be more migration of such labour to Barbados than there would be outward migration of Barbadians to other countries within the region, so there cannot be any consideration at all of any such worker at that level giving thought to early retirement. It makes no sense at all. Therefore, it cannot be seen as an option for the Grantley Adams International Airport workers, so I rule out that completely.

Sir, the other thing is, why is it that you are seeking to expand the Grantley Adams International Airport physically but you now require less staff? Why is it?

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. It was never stated that we intend to have less staff at the Grantley Adams International Airport. That was never stated at any time at all during the debate. Therefore, the Honourable Member is again misleading the Honourable House, as he has been doing all morning. It was never said that we will have less staff at Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, if you said that there are staffing matters and that you sent forms to 367 employees giving them options, and there are three options: (1) to seek employment with the new Grantley Adams International Airport Inc; (2) to assign those employees to other ministries or (3) to give them early retirement, it, therefore, means that you are contemplating reducing staff. If not, it would be straightforward.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Order, please. Honourable Member, I think that you are beyond that. Let us move on. Just let us move on, please, on that point.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. Order, please. Honourable Member, proceed, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: If the Honourable Minister is saying that he has sent out 367 forms to give employees the opportunity to determine their future, I can always infer from that...

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I cannot be constrained in my thoughts when in actual fact, it is quite clear that if Government did not intend to reduce staff at Grantley Adams International Airport, it would not have to send forms anywhere.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: In fact, I had interaction with the staff at the Grantley Adams International Airport. Would a woman or man who is able to get a secured job as a security officer, janitor or maid at the Grantley Adams International Airport give it up? Perhaps, the Government does not understand the job security that Barbadians long for in the public service or on Statutory Boards. Therefore, I am saying that there must be an intention on the part of the Government to reduce the cost of operations via this route at the Grantley Adams International Airport. There cannot be any other explanation for it.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The issue is, the employees have options which they need to exercise. To try to slant the debate in the direction that states that an employee will automatically lose his employment at the airport because forms were distributed is to mislead the House. That is not a logical conclusion. That is misleading. Every man or woman has an option which they need to exercise.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I never said that any man or woman will lose his or her job. I am saying that if you send forms to workers and say to them that they can seek employment with Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. you will expect that. If you say to them that they can be assigned to ministries you can expect that may happen but you then give the option of early retirement. I am, therefore, saying that all that was needed to happen was for the Government to have met with the staff, explain the situation at the Grantley Adams International Airport, determine logically what they are seeking to accomplish, what profit levels they are seeking to derive and make the determination with respect to the kind of cost structure that it has to undergo in order to make Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. profitable.

Mr. Speaker, if it is that the Grantley Adams International Airport has not been a profitable venture over the last several years and that the Government is investing such resources in order to bring it along those lines with the intent of selling shares – you cannot sell shares in an unprofitable organisation – in fact, it, therefore, means that the Government is seeking to make Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. a profitable venture. Sir, by doing so, Government has to consider its revenue stream and cost stream.

I am saying that decisions have already been taken with respect to rationalising its overall costs and that no one can deny it. That is precisely what will happen at the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. You can bamboozle other people but you cannot bamboozle me or the Democratic Labour Party because we have seen through it for what it is.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: You hold discussions with the employees, you ensure that the employees are onboard with respect to what your initiatives are and you ensure that the employees understand where you are taking the organisation. You cannot, therefore, say that to send a form is ideal. You could have some sort of consultation or meet with staff.

Sir, why is it that every time you pass through the airport you can get employees of the airport asking you about their future? They ask questions such as: Am I secure Mr. Mascoll? Will I be secure when this airport expansion is completed? Will I still have a job here when it is completed? Do we know where we stand? Do we understand our role within the new Grantley Adams International Airport Inc.? Do we understand what contribution we are expected to make? Therefore, all of those questions would have to be brought to the forefront for Government to provide answers because the employees are uncomfortable with the present circumstances.

Mr. Speaker, let me move on because I do not know that I am supposed to think through a straight line and not be able to make inferences about information provided. Therefore, we have to be concerned.

Let me say that while I appreciate the need for the expansion, I am concerned about the methods of financing. I am concerned about the way in which Government has gone about financing this project.

11.50 a.m.

I am concerned about the sources of the finance, particularly the increasing emphasis being placed on the NIB, because remember that the NIB is about making profit

to guarantee the integrity of the National Insurance Scheme (NIS). I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, about the future of the workers of the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. I am overall concerned about even the state of tourism, and the extent to which we have gone in order to ensure that we have subsidised travel to Barbados over the past two to three years, but we cannot guarantee that profitability in tourism will come about.

In fact, the evidence is clear, even in the hotel industry that in the last two to three years, they have not been able to experience the kind of profit level because of the discounting of fares and the discounting of revenues that occurred over the last two to three years in Barbados.

I therefore, Mr. Speaker, will conclude by saying that a major error was committed this morning when the Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South said that in spite of being six to eight months behind time, there have not been any cost overruns and that the project is within budget.

It cannot be the case that a project which is lagging eight months behind is within budget. It has to be out of budget because time is money. In fact, it is known that whenever you go over your estimated time of completion, you have to infer that revenues would have been lost, either by the Government itself, or by private sector entities seeking to establish businesses at the airport.

It is also the case, Mr. Speaker, that when you have decided to make such an entity profitable, you have to look at your revenues as well as your cost. We have seen the Port Authority which has been profitable over the last several years, also rationalising to the extent where it reduced staff.

Aside.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: This happened in Barbados and if that is the model which is being followed here, I have every reason to believe that employees at the Airport will have a lot to fear in the not too distant future. Sir, once you have corporatised and you are seeking to allow persons to buy shares, those persons will only buy shares in profitable ventures. There is no way that Barbadians will invest in entities which are not profitable.

In fact, if you read the recent analysis, even by the Barbados Economic Society, you would recognise that so-called liquidity and money in a banking system is not a good indicator of the performance of the economy. Sir, in actual fact, when there is such excess liquidity, people have fear investing in real projects, and would prefer to put their money to get a 2 per cent interest rate at a commercial bank, rather than take the chance to invest in potentially more profitable ventures in tourism or other sectors of the economy. It has always been a concern that this so-called

money floating about the economy, is really not a good indication of the overall health of the economy.

We have seen it because if Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. wants \$15 million in a financial environment that is highly liquid, and it is corporatised, why should it have to borrow from the National Insurance Board (NIB)?

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Ask yourself the question. They have millions of dollars in the commercial banking system, so why would the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. have to borrow from NIB?

Do you know why? There is no longer a government-owned BNB. Therefore, the NIB is now becoming the source of finance for statutory bodies. This must be a major concern for the Government of Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: We are supposed to have money 'flowing through the ears'. It is not true because in actual fact, the so-called liquidity in the banking system, in excess of 60 per cent of that money, is in the hands of one commercial bank, and the other commercial banks have to be doing interbank borrowing. Therefore, this is also a case of lopsided money or wealth, similar to what happens in Barbados in any case, where one commercial bank has more than 60 per cent of the so-called liquidity in the banking system. There are several other commercial banks in Barbados which have to be borrowing from this commercial bank or some other commercial bank, because it is not an even distribution of the resources. It is also indicative or, in fact, it replicates what is happening throughout the economy.

I therefore have concerns. I just cannot stay here and listen to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South giving all kinds of positions with respect to Grantley Adams International Airport and not really dealing with the issue of whether the Grantley Adams International Airport has incurred cost overruns, and quantifying such cost. He has not compared the original cost to the expected cost of the project. He has not truly dealt with the experiences of subcontractors. There is only one Barbadian subcontractor on the project and he has had considerable difficulty in getting two or three million dollars owed to him for electrical work at the airport.

Sir, what is the intended completion date? If it is now six to eight months overrun, then the Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South has no real idea as to when this project will be completed. This is why he

said that there will be substantial completion at July and there would be full completion at September.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, the Minister, in fact, has identified substantial completion at July this year but full completion by September, three months later.

Mr. Speaker, I have said what I wanted to say in this debate. I think the Minister owes it to the public of Barbados, in his flamboyance, to also ensure that they have a proper understanding of what is happening at Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. I have no reason to doubt that the reason why this debate has occurred is because he is one of the few so-called performing Ministers on the Other Side.

There are numbers to suggest that tourism is perhaps up but when you do a better analysis of the sector, you have to be concerned, like the Minister was in 1999, that numbers alone cannot explain the performance of tourism. The Minister, as Vice President of the BHTA said that he does not look at numbers. He looks at revenue yields. He looks at the performance of the industry via what is coming in, in terms of finance. He looks at the overall profitability and, therefore, numbers alone cannot be used as an indicator of the health of the tourism sector.

Sir, now that he is Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, he has been able to twist, and appreciate now that success and performance can now be determined by numbers alone in tourism. This is his clarion call every month. He says that he can tell the public of Barbados that arrivals in January are now about 5 per cent higher than they were last year, the highest ever in the history of Barbados, and that is the success story.

Mr. Speaker, it is not simply about arrivals. It is about performance. It is about revenue yields. It is about what comes into the till. It is not just a question of how many tourists pass through or come to Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I intervene in this debate both to answer particular charges laid by the last Honourable Member who spoke, and to support the Honourable Member who has brought this matter before this Honourable House.

12.00 noon

Mr. Speaker, if you take the fact that the typical employee working at the Grantley Adams International Airport would see himself or herself as a civil servant in a situation where the airport is in transition from being an

ordinary civil service department to a statutory board, and if you take that fact that the typical person who sees himself as a civil servant working in a Government department would see particular security there, then you would understand the role of the option form.

Even though under the new structure the workers would be working on terms no less favourable than under the old structure, the fact is that in our conservatism a lot of us would rather be typical civil servants than be employees of statutory boards because historically there has been a perception that where there has been a statutory board or even a Government company that the Minister in charge of that Board or company has so much clout as to be able to make the workers more answerable to him as the Minister directly than to the Public Service Commission. So that would explain the putting of the option to the workers.

There will be workers working in a department that is in transition from being a Government department to being a Board who would rather remain civil servants than be employees of a Board because of their conservatism and because they might perceive that working under a Board or a private company would make them more vulnerable to political vagaries than if they remain insulated in the civil service. Sir, a line of cases, led by Thomas versus the Attorney-General in Trinidad and Tobago, Davis versus the Public Service Commission in Antigua and Card versus the Attorney-General in Belize, have indicated that civil servants during good behaviour occupy absolute security of tenure in their jobs. I cited those three cases which have highlighted the fact that an appointed civil servant occupies security of tenure.

I wanted to make that point, Sir, because the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West appeared to be indicating that there is some insecurity and fear residing in the bosom of the workers at the airport.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South never suggested that the airport would be so divested as to see a mass majority of private ownership. A theme that has been occupying the minds of the Honourable Members on the Other Side has been that our seaport and our airport have been targeted for privatisation. We perceive corporatisation as a process by which a company structure is imposed on given entities for the purposes of efficiency. You cannot have certain key agencies running like ordinary civil service departments because the bureaucracy stops fast decision-making, so you have to have a company where you can make a decision in five minutes. The same thing applies to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. There was a time when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital would have had to wait for a whole year for certain decisions to be implemented because of the nature of the bureaucracy.

Mr. Speaker, I also want, if you permit me, to answer particular charges about the National Insurance Scheme. I want to say in no uncertain terms that I have absolute confidence in the Board and the Chairmanship of the Barbados National Insurance Scheme. The National Insurance Board is tripartite in nature. This means that certain members represent the trade union movement, certain members represent the employer class and one or two members represent the Government. It is ably led by a former Member for Christ Church West. In the same way that he provided excellent representation for the constituency of Christ Church West, a tradition which continues under the current Honourable Member for Christ Church West, he brings the utmost efficiency to the management of the National Insurance Board.

Mr. Speaker, the National Insurance Board is not under any pressure at all. It is not under any pressure to do a cash flow and it is not under any pressure where it is forced to deflect funds away from one purpose onto another purpose. Let me put this in proper perspective, Mr. Speaker. Let me liken the National Insurance Scheme to ordinary insurance. There is no private insurance company that will boast that revenue and income from premiums and contributions alone can give them financial viability, so what do they do. The typical insurance company relying as it is on premium income and contributions made by people who purchase insurance would reserve a prudent amount of money for certain contingencies, another prudent amount of money for certain administrative costs and a reserve of funds out of which investments would be made.

Mr. Speaker, the reserve fund out of which claims at the National Insurance Board would be made is never intermingled or mixed up with the reserve fund out of which investments are made. For someone to suggest that the money that should be paid to the public as claims or benefits is being deflected away from claims or benefits into investments under financial and political pressure, is to make the most unfortunate allegation against an innocent agency.

Sir, what I must say is that every insurance company in the modern civilised world reserves money for investment. In recent times, under an excellent leadership, the National Insurance Board has been looking in the financial and commercial world to see where the investments can best be made. I recall having a conversation with Sir Henry Forde six months ago in which he told me that whatever Members of the Opposition may think – and he would know how politicians think, both in Government and in Opposition – that there had come a time when the National Insurance Board had become convinced that unless the investment climate changed radically that the best investments for it would have been in real estate alone.

The current Honourable Member for Christ Church West is listening and understands. Six months ago that doyen

of a politician called Sir Henry Forde, one of the greatest ever politicians of this country having served in here for 30 years, told me that in its decision-making, in respect of how to invest, the National Insurance Board had come to a determination that perhaps the best investment would be in real estate.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, both an insurer and a practical man of the world, understands that when you are looking at how and where to invest, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West said, that you should really look for the highest return. The one proper comment the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West made by implication, not directly, was that when you are looking to invest, you look to invest where you can capture the best return. Sir, time was when the National Insurance Board had been convinced that the best and safest investment would have been in real estate.

Sir, I want to say from my own perspective that the investment being made in the airport is not speculative. My friend on my right would tell you how he perceives the investment and its likely and probable return.

I also want to say, Mr. Speaker, in a situation where this phase of the funding for this expansion is being provided by the National Insurance Board, that we have to look at certain aspects of the challenges facing the National Insurance Board. Let me make this point clear for the benefit of all Honourable Members of this House. If our population today stands at 270,000 it is in the interest of every Honourable Member here to know how that population is segmented. Every Honourable Member here would have a notion of his or her population, in his or her constituency and how it is segmented in terms of age groups and such like.

12.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we have a population of 270,000 people. Of this 270,000 persons, each working person must compulsorily insure himself or herself in the National Insurance Scheme. A retired person can also insure for purposes of what is known as employment injury benefit. Therefore, if, on reaching retirement age, one goes back to work, as much as that person is a pensioner, he or she can still pay national insurance for the purpose of covering himself for an injury sustained while working.

Mr. Speaker, out of this population of 270,000 persons, we have 45,000 pensioners, of whom 38,000 receive pensions from the National Insurance Scheme. Sir, where national insurance has to be prudent in financial terms, is to seek to invest money where it can have returns of profits. Sir, the challenge at national insurance level is not paying the maternity benefit, the short-term funeral grant

or the sickness benefit but in meeting the finances of the pension class.

Mr. Speaker, the number of pensioners receiving Civil Service Pension and public pensions out of the Consolidated Fund are 8,000 persons. Of that 8,000 pensioners, 1,000 pensioners being part of the 38,000, also get National Insurance pension. Therefore, the figure works out to 45,000 persons in Barbados who are receiving pensions. Sir, this would mean that factor called the ageing would have started because if a country's population is 270,000 and 45,000 are pensioners, it means that the ageing factor would have started because the relationship between 45,000 to 270,000 is great.

Mr. Speaker, in a perfect national insurance world, twenty persons should be subscribing to one person's pension but in an ageing population, the ratio falls radically. Therefore, the greatest fear is that if Barbados ever comes to a stage where fewer than five persons contribute to one person's pension, it would be woe betides the Scheme. Sir, in a perfect world, twenty persons subscribing to one person's pension is best; sixteen persons subscribing to one person's pension is workable; and five persons subscribing to one person's pension can work under certain conditions but clearly you do not want two persons contributing to one person's pension as it would be too low a figure.

Mr. Speaker, all these things explain why a National Insurance Scheme would reserve funding to invest, hoping to make a return of profit and then to put that return of profit into a bank account to be able to meet what I would call a rainy day.

Mr. Speaker, the 11th Actuarial Review, which I will make a document of this Honourable House, has suggested that the effort of the Government of Barbados at pension reform has largely worked. However, I must be honest with this Honourable House. A study has been done on all the Anglophone Caribbean countries' national insurance systems. The study asserts clearly that Barbados has the best scheme in the region but alas, there are two countries in CARICOM, Antigua and St. Kitts, that are active participants in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, whose funds do not look good at all. As an employer, the Government of Antigua has never paid employees' contributions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are on your feet. You cannot make an aside on your feet.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, when a national insurance scheme, as an insurer, has to bear in mind the types of risks facing it, then it looks at these risks. It not

only has to get the best actuarial advice but such a national insurance scheme must also be on top of developments in the financial and capital markets, not only of the region but of the world, to see where the best investments can be located.

Mr. Speaker, we have had a situation where, in my view, even though the vast majority of persons who are insured with the National Insurance Scheme do pay their contributions, there have been defaulters. Sir, you must permit me to say that it is not realistic for the National Insurance Scheme to expect that its optimum amount of funding will automatically come from contributions because as long as there are defaulters in the system, with persons owing the National Insurance Scheme, it will never be able to maximise its income from contributions alone.

Mr. Speaker, that then explains why the National Insurance Scheme has to invest. Sir, it is not true that anybody has forced the National Insurance Board to take this particular investment in the Grantley Adams International Airport. Sir, one of the things that has not yet been said in this debate is the fact that the measure before this Honourable House is more or less a guarantee that the investment will work, therefore, the National Insurance Scheme appears to be taking a risk of lending \$15 million.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at what we have before this Honourable House in its entirety. There is an in-built system of ensuring against loss on this investment, and that point has to be made. Let us look at the nature of the guarantee. Sir, even though the Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporated will primarily be responsible for the repayment of this loan, the guarantee by Government is more than comforting to the borrower and, therefore, there is an in-built system of checks and balances. Therefore, those persons who have contributed to the National Insurance Scheme, their contributions would not be frittered away.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion I wish to say that it is easy to say that time is money. This world has many a hackney phrase or many a cliché time is money. I can say time is money, either to make it a mantra or to make it a totally meaningless statement.

Sir, I accept the word from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South that 75 per cent of the work has been done on 73 per cent of the financial budget. That does not suggest to me that there has been a financial loss on the loss of time. Therefore, even though I could say that time is money and that a loss of time seems to be a loss of money, there are times when you may lose time and make gains because in losing the time, the gain you may make would be in realising that when you have slowed things down, you were therefore encountering problems which you did not know of before. Sir, often when you slow down operations, you come across problems you did not know before existed.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South said in no uncertain terms that the contractor was horrified at the volume of clay present under the soil, which apparently had not been known of until certain aspects of the work were reached.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, it must be a great challenge to any contractor to be both carrying out contracting works while operational facilities are still in place and, therefore, the business of the airport has not come to a halt. Sir, our airport is under massive construction with many an aircraft touching down, thousands of passengers coming and airport activities going on simultaneously. Sir, I want to say that it would be difficult for the typical contractor to be functioning while passengers, clerical officers, airline workers, *et cetera*, would be getting in the way.
12.20 p.m.

The thought has repeatedly crossed my mind that the contractors must be doing a good job because they are doing technical work but the airport was not closed one day for purposes of allowing them to carry out technical operations. Sir, it is an amazing thing and we have to bear it in mind. Mr. Speaker, it further explains why there could be a time overrun and the Minister has correctly said that there have been no cost overruns.

Sir, I am saying that the money invested by NIS is very much a national investment much as the typical private sector investor invests in the hope of return and much as a corporate investor invests in the hope of return, there are certain investments that have a social dimension.

Asides.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Sir, there are certain investments which so impact as to transcend economic and financial considerations. We have to look at the role that the airport plays in the economy and society of Barbados, at its minimal role in helping people to move around the region and the world and in facilitating the inflow and export of cargo. We also have to look at its role in facilitating travel by Dominicans and Vincentians who have no international airport. If the NIS Board considers that this is a worthwhile investment, then Honourable Members, certainly those on This Side, possess of the requisite foresight and understanding of these matters, would have to support it.

Mr. Speaker, for the benefit of Honourable Members of this House, Chapter 47 explains how investment works. Section 13(4) and 13(5) allow NIS to collect money and Section 34 permits the Auditor General to do auditing and Section 35 says:

“Any monies forming part of the National Insurance Fund may be invested by the Board in such manner and

in such securities and investments as the Minister responsible for finance may direct.”

I take umbrage and offence to any suggestion that the Board was coerced into making this. Sir, the Board was not coerced because, as a matter of its day-to-day functioning, the Board has as part of its duty, to invest in securities and investments. Sir, the Board measures the tempo out there, looks at the field out there and then decides.

Mr. Speaker, I said earlier in my contribution that there was a time when the Board felt that despite the right amount of liquidity that at one point there was no elbow room for investment outside of real estate. In fact, many an investor would tell you that the way things are at this moment, that investing in real estate is the way to go beyond investing in particular securities abroad. For example, some people feel that mutual funds represent a safe investment but there have been large corporations abroad in which mutual funds were invested which crashed, reporting profit while deceiving people and we must look at all these things.

Sir, sometimes from our vantage point in Barbados, where we do not have market information on every company in which we want to invest in the United States of America, we have to be shrewd and timid investors and invest where we know we can get our monies back rather than being speculative.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West indicated that the NIS may have embarked on investments that he would not endorse but he is subject to his own interpretation on the way life works. He knows that I am duty bound to disagree with him and that if I were not duty bound to disagree with him that I would still disagree with him as a matter of course because he is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, I support the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. As I said at the opening, I am not endorsing what the Honourable Leader of the Opposition said except for the point he made when he said that you invest where the returns are highest. I do not think that the workers at Grantley Adams International Airport are under the types of pressure we have heard, that they can opt to be civil servants or to work with a company that has the character of a private sector company.

Mr. Speaker, all told, I think that every Barbadian of goodwill towards the Government and his or her country would want to see the showpiece that this airport, when finished, will become.

I thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 1.30 p.m.

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

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

RESUMPTION

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this Resolution and to say from the outset that it is clear to me that this particular project has created many problems for the present Government. Sir, when one considers that this particular project is the beginning and the end to the success of this Government because this project can be related to the success of the economy. Everybody in the world knows that this economy depends on tourism and we would know that the early completion of this project would have been the enhancement of the tourism product which we are pushing.

It is also clear that when you have a situation where your main and only airport is not ready for your most critical tourism season, it means that this particular project would have created problems for the economy of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, that is not all. It is also important to note that at the same time we are having a problem with this project. We are also having a problem with the completion of the Hilton Hotel. We must ask ourselves if tourism is the main focus at this point in time and whether we can afford to have a situation where our airport and main hotel are not ready. We have to ponder on these things.

We also have to ask ourselves what type of planning had gone into these projects because we are now hearing that we are expanding an airport that should be capable of maintaining its usefulness up to the year 2015 but we are hearing that before it is completed, there is a possibility that the demand has outstripped the usefulness of the particular project.

Sir, it tells me that there must be a lack of foresight. It must be the lack of foresight. We must ask ourselves whether we have unlimited space in that particular location because since the 1970s we have been expanding this particular airport and we are still trying to expand this particular airport in 2005.

It also tells me that this is a case where a Government has a problem between capital and revenue expenditure. It does not understand the importance of capital expenditure and is mixing both capital and revenue expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, when one listens to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, it is clear that he has pushed a case and we are getting diminishing returns from this airport. Instead of continuing to expand this airport we should construct an airport somewhere else.

Sir, the Minister has admitted that they have to carry out construction at the airport while the airport is still operating and we have a conflict.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is clear that we have a problem and we do not know how to proceed. The location that we are spending so much capital on is not suitable and we are not getting the returns for the amount of money that we have invested in that particular location.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at what is happening, it is clear to everyone that we need to stop operating on one leg. Tourism is too important for us to be putting all of our eggs in one basket. We will not get back the returns because we did not cap the development of that project. We should have found another location to conduct the further expansion that is needed.

Mr. Speaker, if one looks at this Government it is clear that they do not understand the importance of new capital and new development. They continue to expand in areas that are fully utilised and they are not able to maximise their investment. The same thing that they are doing at the airport is exactly what they are about to do at Kensington.

We have to understand that development is being able to take what you have and taking it further within the country to create new development. Everybody knows that whenever there is new development that the returns are far greater and you do not have to be caught up between capital and revenue expenditure because you have new capital expenditure and you are able to expand.

Sir, these are things that we must understand and realise quickly. If there is one thing that must be said in this century, and history will record whatever I have said, it is that this Government had many opportunities and they have not utilised them because they have not maximised the capital that was injected and the amount of money that was borrowed. Instead of maximising the use of capital, it looks like they are wasting money. In truth and in fact, they should not be wasting money but expending it in such a way that they could get good returns on what they are expending.

Sir, instead of doing this, we are seeing the reverse. If we are not careful, airlines are not going to continue to come to Barbados and circle before they can land. They will divert and go to other countries. The Honourable Minister can make comments as asides but it is a very serious point. We have to understand that the airline industry is not waiting on Barbados to get its act together. We must get our act together in order to get airlines to come to Barbados and feel happy. Mr. Speaker, there is no sport being a pilot and have to be circling around a country when he knows that he should be landing and protecting the lives of the passengers. Every pilot wants to get his plane to take off and land as quickly as possible. No pilot likes to be in air circling a plane. Somebody must tell the Honourable Minister this.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I do not have to land because my airstrip is long. Whenever there is a debate pertaining to this particular Minister, I will always have an unlimited airstrip, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: We speak about the free movement of people and we have not calculated the number of people that will be coming through the particular airport. If we are serious about the Caribbean Single Market and Economy, it is clear that the Prime Minister would have to find someone with foresight to put in this Ministry in order for the Caribbean Single Market and Economy to work. If we have a problem now and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is not now fully implemented, we would understand what would happen in the next few weeks when it is fully implemented and there is the free movement of people, if there ever will be.

I am saying that we have to zero-in on this time and understand that if tourism is our main industry, we have to make sure that there are no problems. If we have problems we have to solve them because every problem that we get in the tourism industry will affect the revenue of this country and we cannot afford to let this happen.
1.40 p.m.

Sir, when we consider the amount of money we borrowed, it is the tourism industry that we should be depending on to service that money. It is all right for a Minister to joke around but this is serious business. We are playing with the lives of Barbadians and we have to understand that they are Barbadians who have to service this debt. The Minister believes that every Tuesday he could run to this Parliament for a guarantee for this new entity called, the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. The only reason that this Government believes they should not build another airport is because of the name. They believe that

because they are hooked on to a name, people would gravitate to them. They have to understand that they must move politics away from a name, look at the development of a country and not the development of a party.

This is beyond party, so somebody must tell the Minister and the Government that when they are concentrating all the eggs in one basket because of political gains, they are hindering the development of Barbados.

Sir, we are not in here for political gains. We are in here for the development of the country and those who cannot appreciate this particular point should get out. They are affecting the lives of a large number of Barbadians, who will not stand by and allow this to continue. Again, I am saying that the development of Barbados is more important than the development of a political party.

Sir, I am also saying that it is not for us to discuss anything about jet bridges. If he has a problem with some of his Ministers who have said that there is no need for them now, we have to understand that is his particular problem but it is much bigger than that, so the Minister cannot come in here and say that it is rumoured. The Minister has to understand that the product has changed and the policy going to the Board must be such, that it is in the interest of the country.

Although, Sir, hearing the Minister today, I am not sure that there is a Board at the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. because it is clear to me that the Minister sounds like the policymaker and the manager at the same time. Some of the things I heard being discussed in here for the first time, sound to me like things I would be hearing in the boardroom of this particular company.

Sir, I want to know if the management policy is now the policy of the Minister or *vice versa*, because there are certain decisions that must be made by the Board of this company. It is clear to me that the Board seems to be making decisions that they have no authority to make because the Minister seems to be the man in control. We have to understand exactly what is going to be happening up there and whether or not we are going to have rubber stamps.

In relation to the workers, Sir, there is no doubt in anybody's mind that whenever you make a shift like this, it is going to affect the lives of the workers and I honestly believe that the unions must protect the interest of the workers. The Unions must understand that the workers are people too, and they must go in there and represent their interest. They must understand that these people are going to be giving up a right that other civil servants are not prepared to give up. It is not only the directors, the ministers and so on, a lot of people would also say they should do this

and do that but when it comes to them, they would not give up those rights.

Sir, I am calling on them to recognise that because they might be branded in a group called poor, or the masses, their rights cannot be ignored. I am happy to see that the Honourable Minister next to the other Minister has recognised this fact and he has done everything in his power to make sure that particular problem is corrected.

I am saying that the maids and so on at the Airport are important people. If you come in at the airport and it is dirty, Sir, it is a turn off, and we do not want that impression. We want to have a system that when you go to the bathrooms you feel that you are in Barbados because Barbadians pride themselves of creating a particular image. Therefore, if you interfere with the janitorial staff, Sir, you are interfering with the health of Barbados and we must get that right. Some people would say that they are not important, ignore them, but we cannot say that, we must recognise that every worker is important in the link.

Sir, we must be careful of cost overruns, because every time we come to this Parliament to borrow more money, it is an admission of cost overruns. The Minister must indicate how many times he came to this Parliament for additional monies which were above what was initially stated to this Parliament.

I am saying, Sir, we have to understand that we must put controls on contractors, no matter where they are and just because we might be getting in the modern age and building a modern airport, it does not mean that contractors could come to Barbados and we would give to them freely, but when it comes to other contractors, we want to pull back and say that they are gouging the Government. I am saying that this project is important and the contractors have to recognise how important this project is to Barbados. I am saying that this project should have been already completed for this tourist season. Sir, this tourist season is too important to Barbados for us to have anybody dragging their feet on this particular project.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Minister is telling me that it is a good tourist season. If that is true, then we should have no hindrances. We should have been making sure that when the tourists come in and leave, they would be carrying a good message. Now, when they come in, they will be seeing confusion and when they leave, they will be seeing confusion and we cannot afford to have that happening to this country.

Sir, when I say that we want the project completed by a certain time, it must be done. We have to understand that

an airport is not like building a house and there must be a deadline to the construction of this work. If it means that instead of working eight or sixteen hours that you have to work 24 hours for it to be completed on time, it should be done.

The airport is too important to the tourism industry for us to be lagging on this particular project, especially at a time like this when the Prime Minister of this country is worried about the debt ratio to the GDP. It is tourism that will help the Prime Minister to solve that particular problem in this country. Sir, if we have problems in tourism, the Prime Minister will have to come back here another year and tell this Parliament that he has not been able to reduce the ratio because of the failings in tourism, when the Minister is telling us that the numbers of people coming in, have increased. I am saying, Sir, that the first impression counts and it means that we have to get it right and we have not gotten it right.

It does not make sense to have all the airlines flying into Barbados, and putting out all ads indicating that the airport is going to be ready, and Hilton is going to be ready. Sir, when you get to the airport, it is not ready, and when you come to stay at the Hilton, there is no Hilton, again, this is because of delays. We have to get our act together and we have to do it soon, because the lives of the masses of people and the private sector in Barbados are depending on this tourism season.

Sir, we also have to ask ourselves if we are really ready to have in transit passengers coming to Barbados, taking up valuable space that could be used by passengers who want to access the same space to stay in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we cannot continue to have passengers destined to go to other countries, blocking up the space at the Grantley Adams International Airport, then for a Minister to come here and brag about how many people are moving from the airport to the seaport. I want to hear that those persons are not moving from the airport to the seaport but they are moving from the airport into Barbados, staying in homes, hotels and villas in Barbados. We brag about the people whom we are bringing for other persons, when we need to brag about people we are bringing for ourselves.
1.50 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Minister and the others on the Backbench could laugh, but home drum beats first.

Sir, we brag about how many people we can attract for other persons but we cannot do the same thing for ourselves. There are hotels on the South Coast and the West Coast which would be glad to get those same persons. The mere fact that we can attract them to come to Barbados means that we have to put a plan in place to stop them from going elsewhere so that we can keep them here in Barbados. Sir, I suggested in a debate that the biggest problem we have is that direct trip from the airport to the seaport because I honestly believe that we will be better served if we encourage them to have an island tour rather than a straight trip from the airport to the seaport. We need to do things like that because a lot of those persons are not aware of the 'goings-on' in Barbados and we need to make them aware. When you get people and you move them directly from port to port, it does not make sense.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, if they want to appreciate Barbados, then they have to come into rural Barbados and then they will have a better appreciation of Barbados. We have to understand that the tourism dollar is not spent to promote other countries. It is clear to me that the Barbados Tourism Authority is doing a better job for other countries than it is doing for Barbados because of the number of people I see coming through our airport and then having to almost close down the transport system which stops people from getting home from work and school in order to get these people down to the Port.

This makes it clear to me that the people only know the two ports of Barbados but they do not know Barbados on the whole, and we have to do something about that. They need to know our country in its fullness and not piecemeal, but then again if you have a piecemeal approach to marketing, then that is what you would get in return. We need a holistic approach to marketing so that those persons, even if they go elsewhere, would be inclined to come back to Barbados and spend at least a day or two in Barbados to get to appreciate the beauty of Barbados.

Sir, I am also saying that the confusion that has been created at the airport is regrettable. One would have thought that the contractors would have recognised the importance of that work to Barbados and would have done everything in their power to make sure that it was completed on time. If the contractors are saying it is not done, then they need to come and tell us it is not done. It is clear to me, based on what was said by the Minister, that the contractors have created this problem for the Government of Barbados. Therefore, if the Minister is right, I am saying that the contractors should be blamed for the delay. However, if they are not to be blamed, they have to come and defend themselves because it is not fair to the people and the players in Barbados.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the contractors are not responsible for any delays. As a matter of fact, I outlined a number of areas and issues that would have occasioned the delays at the airport. Therefore, I would not want it to go abroad that we as Government are solely blaming the contractors for the delay of the airport project.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am happy that the statement was made by the Minister. At least we would know now that it is only the Hilton Hotel that is delayed by the contractors and that no blame can be laid on the contractors for the airport. However, if it is not the contractors, then it would have to be the Minister and his Party. So I am very grateful that the Minister has admitted that it is not the contractors and that he must take full blame for anything that occurs at the airport.

Sir, we also have to be very careful about how we brag about the number of flights coming into Barbados because while we are bragging about an increase in the number of flights coming into Barbados we were telling people that there was no room in the inn. Sir, as you know, the Minister does not believe in community tourism because he said on the Floor of this House that was foolishness.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I did not say in this debate that I do not support community tourism, I have never said in any debate that I do not support community tourism, so that statement should be withdrawn.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: But if that is true, I want to congratulate the Minister for reversing himself and for recognising that the \$20 tourists are important.

Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Minister must also understand that you cannot talk about expanding an airport, putting down loading bridges and doing all of those things and not recognising that if you are going to move from 800 people an hour up to 2 000 people an hour that you have to do something about the Customs and Immigration Departments. So I want to hear about better services and better provisions for the Customs Department and the Immigration Department because in order to do this you are either going to ask the Customs Department and the Immigration Department with the same limited numbers to process these number of persons or you are going to call on the relevant department to expand these departments so that we can get the type of service that we would want to get.

Sir, I hope that the Minister would speak on these issues because these are important issues in order for the airport to function efficiently. We also have to understand that with the increased numbers we also have to look at the security aspects of it and would also have to put these things in place. The Minister should not think that by expanding the airport you could reduce the number of persons working at the airport. Instead of reducing the numbers, one should expect a larger number of persons working at the airport.

Sir, make sure that you get your fair share of these workers because these workers should not be located in any one constituency. I would also ask all the Members of Government and all the Members of the Opposition to recognise that with the increase space at the airport there would be some more jobs. However, these jobs cannot be for one or two persons, they should be for other persons.

Sir, when you see people asking people to renew contracts, you must not be tricked. It is clear to me that whenever there is a change in Ministers, there is a change in jobs for the boys who happen to be there by the person having the charge at the particular point in time, so if the Government side want to stand by and see their workers go home and the Minister bringing in his, that is up to them, that is not my calling. However, what I would say is that we need some fairness. Sir, I am hoping that the Minister would recognise that the job placements up there is not a personal thing that it is something for the whole country and that everybody should share in the goodies if there are any goodies because it takes all of us to come here and ratify whatever is required.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two minutes to conclude.
2.00 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I know that the the Honourable Member for St. Michael East will make sure, because the airport is in his constituency, that he will get his fair share.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do you mean Christ Church East or St. Michael East?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, my apologies, I meant the Honourable Member for Christ Church East. Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East would not have corrected me because he knows that I meant him. Sir, although other Honourable Members might ignore whatever I say, the Honourable Member has a way of getting it.

Sir, when it comes to housing, one cannot remove a house unless one gives back a house in the Honourable Member's constituency. Therefore, the Honourable Member will make sure that if one job is removed from one of his

constituents, he will get ten jobs to replace that one job. Therefore, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South would know that at least, if there is one person he has to look after, would be the Honourable Member for Christ Church East because the Honourable Member knows well what occurs.

Sir, it is also for you to recognise that you must get some of those jobs. I am calling on everybody to make sure that the jobs are fairly shared and not to allow one minister to get all.

Sir, I thank you.

Hon. Dame BILLIE MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a brief intervention in this debate. This is a very important matter before this Honourable House and I want to commend the Honourable Member for the way in which he has presented it.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish to start where the Honourable Member has ended, that is, that any decent international airport anywhere in the world is in a constant state of expansion. It is the nature of the industry.

Sir, there are airports which have had to be relocated because they were located at a time when there was no concept. It was beyond anyone's imagination that the airline industry would have expanded in the way in which it has, over the past 30 or 40 years.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only the airline industry, in transport on the whole, whether it is air or ground transport, we have had these enormous leaps of technology over the past 10 to 15 years. Sir, recently before Christmastime we were debating the matter of public transport systems and road systems in Barbados. At that time I made the point, and will again make the point, that no one had foreseen the burgeoning of the Japanese reconditioned car industry, which has put the road building or road repair programmes, in both developing and developed states, in a tailspin.

Mr. Speaker, in the airline industry a similar thing has happened. Major airlines have fallen in and out of business, sometimes it appears to me to be on a monthly basis. They are in and out of bankruptcy. Many of them have disappeared. We have had takeover bids of one kind or another. Even here in the Caribbean, we still seem not to get regional airlifts organised correctly. We cannot seem to discipline ourselves to a place where we can agree that a certain kind of equipment would do short haul, that a certain other kind of equipment would do medium haul and perhaps another kind of equipment would do the long haul. But everybody who wants to start up an airline overnight, and some of them start up overnight, while some close just as quickly, and would want to do short, medium and long hauls too.

We have a situation in the Caribbean today where BWIA, LIAT, and this morning newspapers have advised me that Air Jamaica is now joining the club, to see who can, in a competition, give the worst possible service to consumers across this region. That is where we are at now.

Mr. Speaker, we should be proud of the fact that despite all of the disruptions, despite the highs and the lows in the airline industry across the world, that the Grantley Adams International Airport continues to be one of the most important points of entry in this hemisphere. We are all accustomed to flying in and around this region but for those persons who are coming here and are seeing it for the first time, many of them Caribbean people, are whistling and making strange noises on the aircraft when they get a sight of the Grantley Adams International Airport. When they get on the ground and see the services that are being offered by that airport, it is the same reaction. Sir, the reaction of people coming from developed countries is the same as well. Our airport is world-class and we have to stop this business of dragging down our institutions. We are all proud of it but somehow we get in here and get all giddy and think that we can tear down everything. The Grantley Adams International Airport is going to continue to be in a state of constant expansion for the foreseeable future.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable gentlemen on the Other Side are at a disadvantage in that at no time when they were in Government – and perhaps we have to be grateful for these mercies – were they ever in a situation where they were in charge of an expansion at the Grantley Adams International Airport. That has always fallen to Honourable Members on This Side of the Honourable House.

Mr. Speaker, I remember the Honourable Member for St. George South many years ago making a most profound statement. It was before most of those Honourable Members on the Other Side were here. Sir, when a statement which was similar to the one I have just made was mentioned, Honourable Members on the Other Side were shouting and screaming and saying that it was their plan and their idea. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George South, in one of his most memorable interventions, got up and said that you cannot land a plane on an idea, you land at an airport, on a tarmac.

Mr. Speaker, I will never forget that statement as long as I live. They claimed it was their idea. Maybe the Honourable Member for St. George South might have forgotten that he has made such a statement but I will never forget. Sir, here we are, the debate is coming around again...

Asides.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: We have always made ground for them to run on, that is the nature of politics. The debate is coming around again and we are back at this

position. Sir, the point was very clearly put by my colleague for air transport matters that airports are no longer simply points of entry. Sometimes you do not even get out of airports. Some airports now house hotels, conference centres, museums and shopping malls. They are not only airline hubs.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: It is a constant irritant, Sir. It is a bad habit. The Honourable Member does not even know when he is doing it and it is not fair to other Honourable Members. It is like a background humming all the time.

Mr. Speaker, airports are not only now hubs for air transport but are hubs for ground transport such as trains, buses and other methods of ground transport, and we are seeing many of them at the Grantley Adams International Airport. We have heard from the Honourable Member about the large numbers that we have to move through our airport systems and all of this was foreseen by the Barbados Labour Party in an earlier administration.

Sir, the industrial road known as the ABC Highway was a road designed to link our airport and our seaport. It was also envisaged that industrial estates, sub-towns and the like, would have grown up alongside this highway, and we have seen that dream. I refer to it as the Tom Adams dream. We are seeing it coming through now. We see Warrens as a sub-town along that highway. We also see a number of industries, even more now in the planning as we speak, along that highway.
2.10 p.m.

There are important issues several of which were raised by the Honourable Minister in his introduction but I want to deal particularly with the issue of space. It is not always easy to find the best location, especially in small islands like ours in the Caribbean for an airport. The island of Dominica finds itself in an unenviable situation where there is no location other than Melville Hall, which is not the best location at all for an airport, for an international airport and their tourism product suffers for the want of an international airport. This is true on some of the other islands of the Caribbean as well.

The old Seawell Estate, which is the site of the Grantley Adams International Airport, continues to be a suitable location for our airport but, I am of the view, that we now have to look further into the future than we are disposed to do and I say this about all major projects and

installation in Barbados. We have to stop thinking 2010 because this is 2005 and think about 2050. We have to have the ability to think even beyond the time when we will not be here or else we are going to be behind the game and since tourism is the major sector in our economy, we cannot afford to find ourselves in that situation.

The airport has sprawled west as it is possible to do without now having to contemplate the destruction of the church. It has sprawled virtually as far south as it can without going onto another level because there is a sharp escarpment beyond the Police Training School. The airport in recent years has been sprawling east and there is still room, happily for us, in an easterly direction for further expansion but there is the possibility for further expansion on the northern side of the airport as well.

I think that Honourable Members need to open up their imagination and recognise that perhaps in their lifetime, the road which we travel on now next to the airport may well be another runway or that it may well have to be resited. In fact, I think we should be thinking about re-routing that part of the highway which would allow us to earmark lands north of the Grantley Adams International Airport. The day is going to come when we will go far east as it is possible to go. The Honourable Minister made mention of the fact that on weekends you can find 15 wide-bodied planes at the airport. The day will come, sooner than we think, when small aircrafts like the Dash 8 may well have a tarmac of their own with a shorter runway.

Asides.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Sir, I would not suggest St. Lucy for small aircrafts but for the small executive jets which come here because they are growing in numbers and we do not want to despoil our environment and create a situation in Barbados that they would no longer wish to come here. Since the majority of these people are on the west coast it may well be, that for small jets a location on the west coast might be possible.

Mr. Speaker, I am suggesting that the day might not be too far off when we may have to relocate from the apron we now have, the small equipment to the northern side of the airport so that we can accommodate these airbuses which are going to be the way of the future. We are fortunate that we are able to accommodate most of what the airline industry has brought to the fore over the past 30 or 40 years including supersonic aircrafts in the form of the Concord. If we are moving to larger and larger airbuses, toward more and more homeporting and to more fly/cruise passengers, we have to look at these possibilities. I want to suggest that we begin that process now.

Mr. Speaker, we should look upon it as a positive sign and not a negative sign that the Grantley Adams International Airport may be in rebuilding and expanding mode for the next 40 or 50 years. Sir, it should not be a minus but a plus because, in all my life, I have never gone into the airport at Miami and it was not in a building mode and the same is true for JFK International and Heathrow where they are now building a new terminal. Sir, this is the way of the future for the airline industry and that we are on the cutting edge of it, is a plus and not a minus and we must not try to interpret it as such.

Mr. Speaker, there are other issues that will have implications for space management at the site of the Grantley Adams International Airport. I do not know if anyone has raised the issue of air cargo because there are now 747 aircrafts on the tarmac at Grantley Adams International Airport moving cargo. Mr. Speaker, this says to me that we are doing big business in Barbados.

Sir, Grantley Adams International Airport before it was given this name, was always a hub for the Eastern Caribbean and will always be a hub for the Eastern Caribbean so that more and more cargo business and transshipment business has to be taken into account.

Sir, the same is true of the seaport and like the Grantley Adams International Airport there is not a lot of room for the Bridgetown Port to sprawl west unless you are going to reclaim more land which has possibilities because those skills were acquired when the Deep Water Harbour was built, they still reside in Barbados. Sir, we are very good at reclaiming land in Barbados.

Sir, the Bridgetown Port does not have much room to sprawl north. There is no room for it to go further east and no room for it to go south. These are matters with very serious implications for us because these are the lifelines of Barbados. From the time of the settlement of these little islands our seaport and later on the airport were the lifelines of our trade in goods as it use to be when sugar was king and in recent decades for services, especially in tourism which is the largest and best known of the services that we sell.

Mr. Speaker, that the expansion of the Grantley Adams International Airport should be done in an orderly, well-thought out, well-designed and phased fashion is of the greatest importance. Let us look at services at the airport. Let us start with parking because the majority of people in Barbados are on four wheels rather than on foot.
2.20 p.m.

There are countries in the world where trains are being brought to the airport. This was recently done at John F. Kennedy Airport but this has also been done at airports in London, France, Netherlands and most recently Washington. This is being done all over world. Even in some places in the

developing world like Singapore, there are rapid transport systems which will move people quickly and that is, perhaps, going to be the most difficult problem of all.

Sir, if we are talking about the amount of fly/cruise passengers or homeporting, we have to move quickly. I keep making the point that it is not only cruise passengers that we have to move but also cruise crew.

Mr. Speaker, when we see those humongous liners come into the Bridgetown Port and we hear that there are 3 000 passengers onboard, there is probably 1 200 crew onboard. With homeporting, the crew members have to fly here the same way that passengers do, in order to pick up a vessel because they work on a rotating basis as well. So, all of these implications and support services that we take for granted have to be carefully integrated into the planning and designing of the present and any future expansion of the Grantley Adams International Airport.

It is important that airport passengers have the easiest and quickest possible access to parking. There are Barbadians who have been traveling for years, such as working-class Barbadians, vendors and professional people. The free movement of people of which we speak in the context of the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is not anything new. It is as old as I can remember that people move up and down. More and more these people are looking for short, medium and sometimes long-term parking at the airport. That is something that needs to be given, in my judgement, high priority at an early time.

Sir, if you are talking homeporting and a host of other services at the airport there are going to be people. Barbados is a hub. It is a diplomatic and financial services hub. It is a hub with respect to a whole host of services associated with tourism, some of which are offshore of Barbados.

It is amazing the number of people who are traveling up and down. Students are traveling up and down. The university generates that kind of business. In fact, it is said that were it not for the university that LIAT, perhaps, would not be as busy as it is. More and more people are looking for the ancillary services at airports which they come to take for granted. They want to be able to come to an airport, hire a car, do their business, return to the airport and drop off the car there. They do not want to be bothered with dropping off the car at a point and then have to get a bus to move somewhere else. Mr. Speaker, they want to be able to do the things that they are able to do when they travel to Puerto Rico, Miami or wherever they travel to do business. There is a great deal of that kind of business going on.

Sir, when we hear complaints about the state of the roads and the bus service, we are complaining because there is more work and business being transacted in Barbados than

our services can carry. So, the work is ahead of the services and we have to be careful that this does not happen in the case of the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Mr. Speaker, people need to have quick and easy access to the services that are being offered by airports. For example, the easy access to restrooms. Recently, I came through the Grantley Adams International Airport and there are new sparkling restrooms but I saw long queues at the restrooms. Again, I see long queues everywhere I go at restrooms at the best international airports and this has to do with the increased number of passengers moving through the airport. At the end of the day, the reality is, that there are only certain periods in the course of a day when an airport is at its peak. This is true of airports whether they are in the developing world or in the developed world and you cannot plan everything for peak periods.

Mr. Speaker, people are accustomed to waiting for access to certain services. I see people at the big airports in developed countries waiting for people to get up from a table to be able to sit down to have a snack. I also see them queuing up for restrooms, business services and almost any of the services that an airport would offer. Business is another of the services which we need to expand at the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Honourable Members may find it a little prejudice that I say that some airports are now conference centres but that is a fact. There is Chicago O'hare Airport and several others airports where there are conference centres with facilities where you can do business for one day, and you do not need a hotel room.

Sometimes when it is not convenient to do teleconferencing across the Caribbean people come here and would like to have conference facilities available to them. We now have a dearth of conference facilities in Barbados, that is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, for Government purposes alone, not to mention the private sector, sometimes you cannot find a suitable conference room to have a meeting. Sir, the Grantley Adams International Airport is such a hub, not only for the Eastern Caribbean but it is a wider hub beyond that in terms of the movement of passengers if you are talking about homeporting in the cruise industry or flight hub, it is another hub in that respect.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot fail to recognise that international financial services is the fastest growing sector of our economy now and the sector that is second only to tourism with respect to services in the Barbados economy.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member you have three minutes to conclude.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Among the services at the Grantley Adams International Airport, I hope that the provision of good conference facilities will go into expansion plans for the immediate and medium-term future.

We have a number of lounges at the airport and in this new expansion the airlines have their own lounges. Some of them will have very restricted business facilities. There is an executive lounge, a diplomatic VIP lounge and all of these are pressed into greater service than Barbadians would wish to believe. Almost all day long there are business people, diplomats, Heads of Government and Government officials coming through the Grantley Adams International Airport.
2.30 p.m

Sir, when you have these big conferences across the world, they are world leaders who are coming through on their private planes and this is where they refuel, and that is another consideration.

Sir, I hope you get a picture of the kind of congestion at the airport it is the kind which portends well for the economy of Barbados. Our job now as a Government and people in Barbados is to be as welcoming, well-organised, well-planned and as hospitable as possible for this broad spectrum of humanity who, voluntarily, wants to come to Barbados, doing business for leisure, pleasure and study purposes.

This is going to snowball very quickly now because, I think, that there is the beginning of the understanding that small and medium-size enterprises, particularly in these areas that I have been seeking to highlight, are going to be the way forward, in the immediate future in this country.

Therefore, I would wish to commend the Honourable Member for St. Michael South for the work that has been done to the Grantley Adams International Airport, to keep it at a high standard among international airports at where it is now. I would wish that the few words I have spoken would not fall on deaf ears, in respect of further expansion. I am not one who has any wish that it will come to an end any time soon, as they say nowadays. I expect that this will now be the way of life at our airport.

Mr. Speaker, I give my full support to this measure before the House and would commend it to Honourable Members.

Thank you, Sir.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a contribution to this debate, Sir, largely because I believe that this Resolution seeks to deal with an area of expansion of the airport which I consider to be very important, in that it

allows for the creating of capacities that can work to the benefit of Barbadians.

As a result, Sir, I intend to give this Resolution critical support, because even though I recognise the importance of what is being attempted, I do have some concerns with respect to the way in which it is being done and I believe it is my responsibility to express those particular concerns.

Sir, like most Barbadians, I feel that having a modern airport is desirable. A facility that services our patrons in spanking fashion is desirable. I also believe that any expansion which allows for greater efficiency, with respect to traffic management, movement and security elements, is important. It will also have its impact on cargo and, I think, this is good.

Sir, I am always somewhat concerned with this whole concept of modernisation. Even though on the surface it appears as if we are building these wonderful structures and monuments, I firmly believe that these monuments must still have objectives which work to advance the interest of the people of the country.

Sir, I would have to infer from that what it means to me. It means that if you are going to have a modern and new spanking facility, then the employees at that facility must by necessity benefit from that, in terms of enhanced security of tenure and enhanced pension options and other elements, which I will look at later.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, I think it is also very important that we recognise that such a new facility must not only provide for enhanced job opportunities with respect to the construction for Barbadians, but it must also expand the job opportunities for Barbadians to be employed in the facility when completed. I am not too sure, Sir, that these aspects have been clearly explained and expressed by the Minister.

I also believe, Sir, that such expansion must also provide further development of business opportunities, with respect to small businesses, which are outside of the traditional groups that we would usually see given the first opportunities to establish and ply their trade, and also given the best locations. I would hope that at this new facility, such is not the case.

Mr. Speaker, I now want to look at the area which most concerns me, and this has to do with the funding of this particular project. I would also look at some of the labour concerns that have surfaced over the years with this project.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member indicated that the corporatisation of the Grantley Adams International Airport took place in 1997. He also indicated that even

though there is the opportunity to seek private investment, he seems to want to tell the public that having the opportunity to seek private investment does not necessarily suggest that it can lead to privatisation.

Sir, if the Honourable Member could pinpoint where it is indicated in the Act that there are limitations and restrictions to the amount of private investment that could be obtained, then he would have a point.

If he would also indicate to me where there are any limitations in terms of maximum or minimum, with respect to how much of the shares that the Government could also maintain, then I would listen to the Honourable Member, Sir, but there are such indications. I had the opportunity to review it. I therefore have to move forward cautiously and hope that I am not simply hearing statements being made to give the public a false sense of security.

Mr. Speaker, so far, there have been approximately \$131 million invested in this project. Within the last few years, we have been told that the National Insurance Fund would have had difficulties by the year 2016...

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The figure that was quoted today for the investment of the Grantley Adams International Airport Project was \$101 million, not \$131 million. I just want to make that clarification.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I did not arrive at the figures willy-nilly. In the Estimates, it is clearly demonstrated that there was a loan from the Caribbean Development Bank to the tune of over \$22.4 million and in addition, from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund, Sir, over \$72 million. We are now including \$15 million and I have not added in the \$15 million, so I will proceed.

Mr. Speaker, we were told that there were to be problems in the National Insurance Scheme. I understand the demographic relationships that may have led to some of the developments, but I believe very strongly that the National Insurance Board has entered a contract with the people of this country. By the very nature of it being compulsory, it is a contractual relationship with the people that Government has entered into. Therefore, Government has a responsibility to make sure that the funds that have been contributed by the people of this country are invested with the highest of prudence.
2.40 p.m.

I have my major concerns at this point because the management of part of that investment requires that there be a reasonable return of investment in a reasonable time. I cannot deduce that that is possible from the National Insurance investments that have been put in the GEMS of

Barbados or in the Warrens Project, so I would want the Honourable Member to tell me in a reasonable time when he believes that the National Insurance Board would see one red cent from the Grantley Adams International Airport investment.

I consider those to be breaches of the contract because it is a responsible Government that would invest prudently.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: If I am to be argued against, let him bring the evidence that there will be returns on the investments in a significant way beyond 10 per cent to the National Insurance Fund.

Mr. Speaker, the other concern about this particular situation relates to the fact that there has been a boast about liquidity in the banking system. If the National Insurance Fund that we just had to rationalise so as to make sure that this Fund remains solvent, and if you have funds in the banking system that can be used for private sector investments, then I want to understand why would the small amount of money that is present in the National Insurance Fund be subjected to those types of investments when there are millions and millions of funds available in the banks in town.

Would it not have been wiser for Government to have sought the investment from the private sector? Would it not have been wiser for Government to have floated a bond so that Barbadians could use up some of the same liquidity that they are claiming is present in the banking system, and other private sector investors could utilise that for this project? Why would one want to take money out of a National Insurance Fund that is already in problems, a fund that Government attempted to rationalise because they recognise it was in problems? It does not make sense to me, Sir.

What is interesting is that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South has indicated that as part of the conditions for rehiring of employees under the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. is that members were offered the opportunity for early retirement, a condition that would worsen the National Insurance situation because you would have less contributions. It does not make any sense to me at all, none whatsoever.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I read with some clarity, Sir, you can best be assured of that.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to raise another element and I would only make passing reference. I want to ask the Honourable Minister whether the pension fund was established, as was supposed to have been, after the three

years of establishment of the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. I also want to find out if, as was said in the Act, those funds would have been computed on the date of hiring by the particular company. Sir, I have also researched corporatisation worldwide and there is not a jurisdiction in which corporatisation has not led to labour problems, and many of the problems that we now see at the Grantley Adams International Airport stem from those same conditionalities. I have not found a jurisdiction where there have not been complaints about job security, high turnover rate, pension problems, flexible working conditions, changing the terms and conditions of work and outsourcing of jobs. All of these elements are the same elements that the people of the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. are concerned about, and I want the Minister to answer to them.

I also want to know why there have been so many strikes up there. I am not a trade unionist but as far as I know there is some ruling in Barbados that you cannot come into this country and pay workers significantly below what they would have been paid for a similar project. Why would you want to take a bobcat worker or a backhoe worker and pay him half of what he was paid for previous projects in Barbados?

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: And you all countenance that? I am not going to be part of that, Mr. Speaker, not at all.

Mr. Speaker, the thing that bothers me most is that the contributors to the National Insurance Fund cannot tell Government how to spend their money.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke on a point of order.

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

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I will proceed for the simple reason that the Board cannot tell Government what to do. That is the end of the story.

Mr. Speaker, I will stay on this National Insurance Fund and the capitalisation from this National Insurance Board. The reason why I am staying here is because I really believe that Government should have found a private sector mechanism to deal with this.
2.50 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke on a point of order.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has the final responsibility, and I say no more. Sir, I will also preface my next statement by asking the

Honourable Member to show me the Rules of the Standing Orders under which that falls, and I will sit down and oblige. If not, I will not do it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, order, please. First of all, the point that you have made is not a Standing Orders matter. It is a principle here that all Honourable Members should try to be as truthful as possible in making statements. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South did say to you that such a statement could bring certain damage and harm to our country and that it was not the way how the Government functions.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what is being said to you is that it is not the way that the Government functions. If I may say something here relating to this Resolution, I hope the Honourable Member for St. Michael South sees this. This Resolution relates to the borrowing from the National Insurance Scheme and, therefore, it becomes a loan. This is the point that seems to be bypassed by Honourable Members.

Could the Honourable Member withdraw the statement and let us move on. As you withdraw the statement, I will ask that it be expunged from the record. Governments, whether it is one Party involved or the other Party, do not function that way.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I so withdraw.

Mr. SPEAKER: I thank you, Honourable Member.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Let me say this to the Press. Unfortunately, we have a system of broadcast here which is a direct system but I do not want to hear tonight on the television, the statement made and then it be said that the Speaker asked that the statement be expunged from the records, nor do I want to see it in the newspapers.

I am saying that very clearly because I have noticed a practice that because of the broadcast, when we say that something must be expunged, it is written clearly what is to be expunged, and that is not how it is to be done. Please continue Honourable Member.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, Government has the right, under the administrative laws of this country, to determine appropriations of any set of revenues in this country, irrespective of which board one is talking about.

Mr. Speaker, for a few minutes I want to revisit the statement of the Minister responsible for Tourism and International Transport. The Honourable Member has indicated that there would be no downsizing at the airport. The Honourable Member did not use those words but indicated basically three terms and conditions which were, one...

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. The Honourable Member needs to make it clear. This Minister has never said anything about issues relating to downsizing at the airport. I have never uttered those words. Again I would like to have them withdrawn because that is misleading this Honourable House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, do you agree that the Honourable Member did not say those words?

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, yes, the Honourable Member did not use those specific words and, therefore, I will withdraw them and say exactly what the Minister has said. Sir, the Minister spoke about the condition of seeking employment in another Government entity and about early retirement. The Minister might think that this is a joke but he is affecting the lives of people in Barbados and I take these things seriously. I am not going to be skinning my teeth in here. Sir, despite all the talk, the 'red cap' workers at the airport do not know tomorrow what their future would be. When I spoke about out-sourcing...

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of elucidation. Mr. Speaker, the 'red cap' workers at the airport are not in the employ of the Government of Barbados.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I never said that they were.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: This is a simple matter, Sir.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, the point that needs to be made here, and I believe that many Barbadians are listening and the numbers are increasing everyday, relates to whether or not, under the Grantley Adams International Airport Incorporation, there would be enhanced security of tenure; whether the terms and conditions of employment would be enhanced or be undermined; whether being transferred from a Public Sector employee to that of a

Government-owned company would mean a reduction in their wages or whether or not the jobs that they now have would be out-sourced to a private sector group. Sir, those are elements of concern to me.

Sir, all around the world, wherever corporatisation has been put in place and private sector capital has come in, that private sector capital has always been utilised in such a way as to effect streamlining, and part of that streamlining has always been downsizing. I have not read about any entity that has been corporatised where there has been an increase in the number of employees but the Honourable Member would want to tell workers at the Grantley Adams International Airport not to fear, that there would not be anybody who would become unemployed, when all around the world there is an opposite trend occurring.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, in his capacity as a Minister – I am not too sure whether he is the one who hires, or whether it is the entire Cabinet – but the project is now eight months behind schedule. Therefore, I would want the Honourable Member to explain to the people in this country whether he believes that appropriate due diligence was done on the company which had been hired as contractor to execute the project.
3.00 p.m.

Sir, this is important because the level of labour unrest at the airport evolves from the fact that many Barbadians could not find work there. I have seen for myself that the majority of employees are non-Barbadians. Sir, on more than one occasion, I was called to the site by workers and many of the complaints...

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Again, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. There are no majority of foreigners on the job at Grantley Adams International Airport. Again, it is an untrue statement and should be struck from the records. Sir, it is untrue to say that the majority of workers under the airport expansion project are foreigners. If the Honourable Member has proof, he should bring it or stand condemn.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I would allow you to conclude but I have said before that when such statements are being made that you should have proof of them. Proceed please.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, this project is being funded by the people of this country for the larger part. Taxpayers' monies to the tune of \$87 million have been spent and only \$44.4 million would have been obtained from the Caribbean Development Bank. Sir, I want to know

if it is true — because \$44.4 million was obtained from CDB — that a foreign contractor was given the job and not a local contractor.

Sir, I firmly believe that contractors in Barbados are as good as in any other place in the world. We boast in this country about how good our contractors are and that they work within the Caribbean and other parts of the world but when we have the opportunity to give them a major contract, a foreign group is brought in and it is evident that they unfair the workers at the airport.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. It is again erroneous to say that the contractors at the airport are unfair to the people of Barbados on the job. Mr. Speaker, I think there should be a code of discipline in this House that speaks to the issue of truthfulness. The Honourable Member cannot get up and make wild statements in this Chamber without anything to substantiate them.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Tourism should have spent more time at the airport because he does not know what he is talking about.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order, please.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I went to the airport on three occasions, met with the workers on two occasions and I am telling you what I saw. The workers have problems with respect to working conditions, safety at work, occupational health and safety, wages and these are the facts. One could logically infer from this that they were not being treated well.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. It is not a logical inference to say that because there are issues and challenges that workers are being treated badly. As a matter of fact, the Honourable Member is stating that the contractors at the airport have treated the employees that are Barbadians badly but it is not a logical inference. These issues are being dealt with by people who are experts in industrial relations. The Honourable Member for St. Philip West went there observing but he is not an expert in industrial relations.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, I was born in Barbados, it belongs to me and I will not hesitate to go any place in Barbados. The Honourable Member would like people to believe that there are enclaves where you cannot go in Barbados but I am not afraid to go anywhere in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I go back to the fundamental point that it is critical for Barbadians to understand that this project is locally funded and that a project which is locally funded does not go to international tender. Sir, I was not born

under a 'rock stone' and I know that \$87 million was funded by local sources.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. The Honourable Member must be aware because the Estimates would have indicated that the project is not locally funded according to the financial rules. The project is funded jointly by the Government of Barbados, the Caribbean Development Bank and the European Investment Bank. The fact that Government makes a contribution in a project does not make it locally financed. This project as all other projects, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would know, would be subject to the rules of international tendering. It would be the subject of a special Tenders Committee as approved to the local Tenders Committee and would be subject, in terms of procurement, to such rules as are agreed between the three institutions. Therefore, member country of the European Investment Bank, Caribbean Development Bank would be eligible to tender for such projects in a way that they would not be eligible to tender for the construction of a road funded locally through the Ministry of Public Works. The Honourable Member is very much aware of that and he should move on and make his point.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member your time expired at 3:05 p.m. but since you were interrupted, I will now give you two more minutes to conclude.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, the critical point here is that the major funding component comes from local sources. As a result of that, it is the taxpayers' money principally that funds this project and this administration has to be accountable for this money and for how the workers are treated. They must make sure that any opportunities that spill off from the project that the average man on the ground benefits from it. They must make sure that the same faces that get all the goodies from this Government do not get the prime location and opportunity because, for me, this is what Parliament is about. Sir, Parliament is not about 'skinning your teeth like if you eat roast pork' because it is more important than that.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to join this debate after a most interesting presentation from the last Honourable Member. He touched on a number of points which require clarification. I want to start with the business of the NIS Board and its relation to central Government as a matter of spending from the Consolidated Fund versus

accessing finance from parastatal entities, the NIS Board in particular.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the assertion that contrary to the line of thought and argument, that would have been developed by the Honourable Member, that the central Government, like any other entity, seeking to enjoin the National Insurance Board as an investment partner or provider of finance has to go through a most rigorous process.

In fact, I have been concerned about the kinds of, what I consider, onerous conditions which the National Insurance Board imposes on Government in relation to investment projects. Whether it is in constructing a building to be rented by Government, the kind of rates that they charge, or in relation to the stringent conditions that are put on central government in relation to loans or equity investment into enterprises.

I have always felt that the National Insurance Board could give us a little ease because we are all in government but they do not share this view. So committed are they to the fiducial responsibility which they have as members of the Board have for the protection of the interest of the National Insurance Fund that they hold the Government to a very strict line.

Sir, in relation to this project there was no cakewalk for the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. It took over a year, over 365 days, of negotiations of toing and froing, exchanging of letters and of shifting in positions for there to be any agreement reached between the two Boards on financing.

Mr. Speaker, it was as early as September 2, 2003 when formal negotiations commenced between the National Insurance Board and the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. with a view to securing finance for the airport expansion project. There were many necessary formal meetings. There was a hefty and healthy exchange of correspondence between the two sides and the National Insurance Board finally approved the granting of a loan to the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. in the sum of \$15 million for a period not exceeding 15 years.

Sir, the National Insurance Board imposed conditions on Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. It was not an unsecured loan. The fact that we are here today seeking to approve this Resolution, under the Guarantee of Loans Companies Act, is because the National Insurance Board insisted that, notwithstanding the commercial viability of Grantley Adams International Airport, that it needed to have a Government guarantee. It means that they must get their money back.

Sir, the assets of the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. are there, the lands, building, plant, equipment, furniture and inflows. So committed is the National Insurance Board to protecting the interest of the fund for the ordinary Barbadians, that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West spoke about, imposed this high condition on Government.

Mr. Speaker, the National Insurance Board was not prepared to sit back and merely wait to see if they had to impose this government guarantee, they also put other conditions in place such that over the period of the 15 years they would be aware of what is happening with Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. These conditions include that every three months, 90 days, Grantley Adams International Airport Inc., has to submit detailed reports of the construction. The National Insurance Board is not going to write a cheque and say, boys put this in the bank. Part of the conditions of this loan requires that the airport has to submit detailed reports every quarter because the National Insurance Board is an experienced and a very professional investment team.

Sir, they recognized that they are putting their money into a commercial enterprise and they want to make sure that all is going well in the project in which they have an interest. Not only that, they have also put in place a provision which requires that annual audited financial statements of Grantley Adams International Airport Inc., must be submitted within 120 days of the financial year until the end of the borrowing period.

Mr. Speaker, those conditions are not systematic of any cosy 'love-dovey' relationship. There are not systematic of the Government having excessive exercise of power over the National Insurance Board to say, give me this money. Those are the very clear demonstrations of a Board functioning as investment analysts and managers, who, in order to come to a decision about investing \$15 million of National Insurance funds into a project had to satisfy themselves that it is a commercially sound project, that it will succeed into the future and, therefore, will be able to repay the money. It is also ensuring that the people's money is being protected.

Mr. Speaker, the interest rate is 6.5 per cent. The National Insurance Fund, recognising that this is a corporatised entity, has also stated its claim that should the company decide to do an initial public offering that it wants to exercise the first option of taking a minimum of 10 per cent of the shares. That is all part of the agreement, a solid investment undertaking by a serious and solid Board at the National Insurance Scheme of Barbados.

Sir, we can, therefore, sit back, close our eyes and proceed in the calm and blessed assurance that the National Insurance Board and its members are serious people,

managing a serious fund and will not either in this measure or any other measure jeopardise the National Insurance Scheme. I hope that this has given rest to that business that was being alluded to.

Mr. Speaker, in relation to the project at hand I want to say that I am very pleased with the progress that is being made on the implementation phase of this airport expansion project. Indeed, that area of Barbados, in which our airport is located, represents a very special development zone which we have been able to utilise by way of expansion. This would now be about the third major expansion which has been undertaken along with several other minor ones. The reality is that every day change in technology and change in commercial activities represent challenges to our planners.

Sir, when this current expansion was done there was no unveiling of the gigantic aircraft which was done yesterday by the President of France. That European aircraft carries 500 passengers at one time which is going to make the 747 aircraft look like a tiny airplane.
3.20 p.m.

Sir, we expect that in the same way in an earlier administration where we were able to expand the Grantley Adams International Airport such that it became a scheduled stop for the Concord, one of the few in the world – the Concord has only really flown charters from London to JFK, London to Barbados – we must make this continued commitment to the expansion and upgrade of our airport. This must be done from a technical capability standpoint, as well as passenger comfort and safety, so that whatever changes there are in the aviation industry, Barbados will still be in the loop. This is a fundamental commitment that we need to make which will call for an investment of public resources. We are committed by this and other actions to that investment, because Barbados must not be left behind in the aviation industry.

Indeed, Sir, when this current project is completed, Barbados will easily be able to boast of having the best airport anywhere in the Caribbean region. Already, without it being completed, the new Departure Lounge, partially opened, is most wonderful to experience and I look forward to the other facilities reaching their full completion.

Of course, Sir, this project does not occur in a vacuum. I want to comment on two other issues. Sir, the impact which the expansion and other matters related to our airport has on persons in the area, and the state of civil aviation in the Caribbean.

Sir, once we have to prepare our airport and have it in the state of readiness for the increase in international traffic, which is expanding rapidly, I am concerned about the state of our regional airlines and the potential impact that the

troubles of our three principal carriers in the region could have on traffic in the Caribbean region, especially as we face the reality that we are moving toward the 2007 Cricket World Cup.

Sir, even if there were no World Cup, any possibility of a hiccup in travel across the region affects the everyday lives of people who come to Embassies in Barbados and Trinidad get their visas, and people who work comfortably every day in the region going about their business moving their fruit, vegetables, jams and jellies, also the doctors, engineers, and accountants.

Sir, here we have it, Air Jamaica, accumulated losses of US\$600 million and only this week, sent home an additional 100 persons, returned three of their aircrafts, and reduced services around the world. Last year, the Government took back Air Jamaica from privatisation.

The Government of Trinidad and Tobago had to save BWIA. They had major problems around the Christmas period where they were unable to satisfy passenger demand. They left bags in Barbados and JFK and people were separated from their luggage. We had the worst end of it, because there were rotting hams and turkeys in unclaimed baggage at our airport that gave rise to a stench which was not befitting of a warm welcome to sunny Barbados.

Sir, then we have LIAT where the Government's intervention was required again in the last week to provide a line of financing. The Prime Minister of St. Vincent indicated to LIAT that this is their last change to restructure.

I know, Sir, that the Government of Barbados and the Minister for Civil Aviation are playing a leading role in the rationalisation of air traffic in the region, ensuring that we are able to have a strong regional airline industry to match the international traffic that is traveling through Barbados.

I want to use the Floor of Parliament not only to express my concern but to express my confidence in the Minister, and for Barbados' effort to bring some rationalisation to air traffic in the region, such that persons on everyday business, as well as our World Cup travellers, will have no hiccups.

I want though, Sir, to say that this airport expansion has had its impact on two wider area issues. One is the physical expansion of the airport and the other issue relates to the radar. I am pleased to say that several of the Town Planning issues which had prevented development in the past, thankfully as of last year, have been resolved.

Sir, there are restrictions on development, occasioned by the technical issues relating to the radar, in areas from Charnocks through to certain parts of Pilgrim Road, Pilgrim

Place, Gibbons, going as far down as Oistins, and from Fairy Valley, up to Spencers and Gemswick, such as the use of metal roofs and the height of buildings.

I want to say, Sir, that as we position this country for the future, we need perhaps to ensure that we preserve as much of the underdeveloped land in the environs of the airport in that state for expansion. Sir, the technological demands of civil aviation can take us in any particular direction. The challenges which people who live in that area had to face, by way of adjustment to the changing conditions, have not been easy.

I want to commend those residents for their cooperation in the airport expansion, as well as to commend the Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South for his leadership in the implementation of the project, which has resolved a number of the challenges. In fact, a visit to Fairy Valley, the community immediately south of the airport, will demonstrate what that commitment to smooth implementation is all about. If you travel along the road to the Regional Police Training Centre and you make the right turn, down the hill, through what used to be a rocky tenantry road which was paved in 1997 or thereabout, you will see a new community emerging.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West knows that area well. He would know it more looking up from the Long Beach Road. Sir, he would tell you, if he had not run out of time and still had the chance to speak, what an aesthetically pleasing sight it is to see the houses constructed by the Government for those persons who were displaced, as a result of the Airport Expansion Project, who are now in a new modern development, with good quality housing and excellent view overlooking Long Beach, and looking over by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West when he makes his visit into my constituency.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Sir, there still remains work to be done. I must say that I look forward to the completion of the second phase of that relocation because persons on the cow pasture, which is the section of Thyme Bottom, where the relocation is yet to be completed, Wilcox Road and surrounding areas, are looking forward to their relocation. Of course what every person there wants to ensure is that fairness, justice and smooth implementation is the order of the day for them, as it has been for those who have gone so far.

3.30 p.m.

The Ministry of Tourism and International Transport, in association with the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment, has not only focused on building a fantastic departure area, a new functioning and efficiently operating

arrivals hall and additional parking aprons, but has recognised that the airport exists in a community of persons and is looking after these Barbadians many of whom, either themselves, their parents or grandparents, would have worked at the airport through all the years, so they are receiving their just reward.

Mr. Speaker, I want to add a word of caution. As the airport transitions from a Government department to a corporate entity it must recognise that it has a corporate responsibility. We cannot order it now that it is not a Government department. I have a concern in that they are not always meticulous in the maintenance of the lands now under the control of the Grantley Adams International Airport. Therefore, on behalf of the residents of the area I want to remind them that it is their responsibility, notwithstanding the heavy rains we have had, to ensure that the grass is cut, the bush removed and the vines are taken off the fence because what is the back of the airport to people who travel, is the front yard and the front lawn of the people who live on the south side of the airport, and we always have to remember that.

Sir, those areas which have been acquired from where houses have been relocated have now become vacant lots. I have written, called and urged that the airport not allow those vacant lots to become overgrown and overrun lots because all of what we are doing by way of aesthetically pleasing structures on the front side of the airport will be undone by overgrown lots now under the control of the airport at Fairy Valley, Thyme Bottom, Wilcox, Cow Pasture and areas like that. Sir, I really want to urge corporate responsibility on the part of this new corporate entity, which this Parliament is using its time and its legislative powers to ensure that its funding is supported by way of a guarantee.

Sir, I want to indicate how much I fully support this Resolution and the expansion at the Grantley Adams International Airport. I am satisfied, Sir, that the fears and the concerns raised by the Opposition are unfounded and that history will be very kind to those of us who happen to be in administration of the affairs of this country and in this period for the investment we are making in the future by way of the millions of dollars we are putting into the expansion of the airport.

There are many people who cannot appreciate the beauty of a construction site so all they see are cattle there and heaps of mold and hear of the complaints and the confusion about the dust and the dislocation. However, when the final heap of mold is removed and when the final scaffold is removed and the beauty of the airport unfolds, then the critics, whether they be on That Side or anywhere else, would most assuredly be silenced and this country would have secured its future by positioning itself as a major hub for passengers and I hope also for cargo.

Sir, I would close on the point that I believe that there is existing on the south side as well as on the north-western side of the airport, more than enough land space for us to make a serious investment in commercial warehousing space in order for us to use Barbados as a transshipment location. There is tremendous money in the cargo business and the fact that we are able to have Cargo Lux, Federal Express and several others land jumbo jets for cargo here, put us in a position where we can create employment for people and generate money in this economy by having Barbados the centre where much repackaging is done for shipment to other locations where only smaller aircrafts can service not just in the Caribbean but in Latin America. We are only one hour from Venezuela.

Sir, as we look around at the stability, the predictability of our business and political environment, Barbados will become an even more attractive location for that kind of business, so I want to urge that the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. look on that business of cargo. We cannot just concentrate on expanding our airport for passengers, we need to look at the vacant land at the airport for expansion into the cargo business. I am sure that in terms of finding employment, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and I would be able to make such recommendations as are necessary to ensure that they are able to be fully staff with persons who are within a stone's throw of the community.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I fully support this Resolution. I wish the new company well. I believe they are off to a good start and with the conditions for good governance, for financial prudence and for accountability imposed not only by the Government but by the National Insurance Board in making this loan, that this Parliament will have no trouble whatsoever with the operations of the Grantley Adams International Airport Inc.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I join in this debate today to first congratulate the Minister who brought this Bill here today for this guarantee and for the fine work that is being carried out on the expansion of the Grantley Adams International Airport.

Sir, I do not believe that we in this Chamber as legislators are divided on the expansion and the upgrading of such an important venture in Barbados. Over the years we have talked about being the most easterly Caribbean island and that we get here first before we get to any other place, about how strong we are in tourism and that we have this fantastic airport. However, Sir, we are not in this alone. There are many players within the Caribbean and Latin

America who are also competing for the tourism dollar and we in Barbados must realise that we have to be on top at all times and that we have to be upgrading our products and facilities if we are to remain competitive in such an important area as tourism.

Sir, I support the guaranteeing by Government of this \$15 million loan to this venture through the National Insurance Board. It shows the importance of the insurance industry. Although the National Insurance Board is not part of the private insurance product in Barbados, nonetheless it is part of the industry and it does what other insurance companies do. They insure against loss, that is, the replaced earnings.
3.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the size of the industry is very big. It is a sound industry and the National Insurance of Barbados is well-run and advised by well-known and sound actuaries. Over the years in Barbados, many men and women have studied actuarial science. They have gone as far as Scotland, Canada and Miami, to venture into this business of actuarial science. It is a business where you spend sometimes between 12 to 15 years before one is actually considered to be a qualified actuary. Therefore, I advise that the National Insurance Department got, was sound and hence they are in the business where they are in a position to know exactly what they would be getting into.

Sir, I want to congratulate those persons and to say that any insurer, whether it is the Barbados National Insurance or a private insurance, that takes in large sums of premium, have to find somewhere to invest this money. Over the years traditionally people have put funds into fixed deposits but there are several large vehicles into which one could invest one's money. We have found that people have invested in stocks and bonds. Recently people have been putting money in Mutual Funds. People look at one of the best hedges against inflation, which is real estate. That is what we are here today doing, that is, supporting a guarantee that will allow the National Insurance of Barbados to invest \$15 million into a strong project.

Mr. Speaker, no one with any sound training and knows what he or she is doing would invest his or her money unless that person knows that they are getting a good return and secondly, with a minimum risk. Hence, the National Insurance of Barbados has gone ahead looking for the best hedge against inflation, in that they are investing their money into a sound investment, that is being the Grantley Adams International Airport Expansion Project.

Mr. Speaker, besides the investment, the National Insurance Scheme cannot simply let the money lie, they have to look for other investments. Sir, over the years investments are maturing and, therefore, they would have to be looking for additional investments. Mr. Speaker, in Barbados there

are not many areas in which we can invest money. In Trinidad and Tobago, there are big markets in Point Lisas, where insurance companies can invest their money in petrochemicals. Again, they have big pension funds in which they can invest the money of their depositors.

Sir, it would be good if the National Insurance could find an area into which it could invest its monies in emerging markets, especially in commodities because this is the area that is growing fast. This is an area into which I would hope that the National Insurance Scheme would eventually look at putting its money.

Mr. Speaker, as guarantor, the Government of the country is guaranteeing the return of that money at the end of the 15-year period. It is said that the loan is for a period of 15 years and at 6.5 per cent interest per annum. Sir, this is a sound investment and I do not think that anybody should try to knock it because I do not see the politics in it. We see it as the Government of Barbados looking to upgrade the most important thing in Barbados, which is tourism. Sir, they have to keep abreast of the situation in that they are not in this alone. There are many other players in the market and they have to look at it carefully. There is a 15-year repayment and there is a moratorium on the interest payment for the first 24 months of the draw down. Sir, you cannot want it better than that.

Sir, the National Insurance Scheme also has an option whereby if Government needs to borrow any more money, the National Insurance can lend them again. Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is a sound investment and I believe that this is the way in which insurance companies should go. These are the kinds of investments that they have to be pursuing if they want to get a good return for the money that is entrusted to them by depositors.

Mr. Speaker, I support this guarantee. I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South will now wind up.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, let me first thank all Honourable Members on Both Sides who may have contributed to this debate. It is clear that on Both Sides of the aisle we have support, even though in some quarters we had the phrase, the critical support for this particular Resolution. Mr. Speaker, suffice it to say that on Both Sides of this aisle we support the concept of the expansion of Grantley Adams International Airport and the fact that we do need a new airport, given the levels of growth that we are seeing passing through that facility in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the issue relating to how this phase of the airport expansion project is being financed is an issue that was raised and I intend to clarify some of the issues that

were raised by Honourable Members on Both Sides, with regards to this airport project.

Mr. Speaker, first I wish to respond to the issue regarding the clarification of cost overruns at the airport. Sir, as has been said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, if a project is delayed, it will occasioned cost overruns. I think this is a logical conclusion in terms of cost. Sir, the issue is, with time, as with cost, when everything is summed up, there will be issues of cost overruns. I believe that when it comes to issues of variations and the like, that on most construction projects anywhere in the world, once there are variations and snags, *et cetera*, there are always cost overruns.

Mr. Speaker, suffice to say that to date we are on track with the level of completion necessary to match that level of investment which we have put into the project. That is not to say that at the end of the exercise, that there would not be cost overruns on the project. In other words, we have not spent more than we have projected, at this time, to achieve this level of development that we now see at the airport.

Sir, our best estimate is that given the eight months delay, we are looking at approximately 10 per cent cost overrun, which is the best number we got from the expansion team and from the contractors. Therefore, we may be looking at \$154 million rather than \$140 million on this project.

3.50 p.m.

The National Insurance Board has loan \$15 million to Grantley Adams International Airport for 15 years out of \$140 million that was projected for the project. The interest rate is 6.5 per cent and has a Government guarantee because it is not Government's equity investment in the project but a loan. I think the loan has very good terms given the quantum and the length of time. To my mind, it is not a risky investment but it is a worthy and sensible investment.

I do not understand why the Opposition thinks that the investment is risky, is not sound and that it is depleting the National Insurance Fund. Granted, Sir, they have the right to query and be critical but I believe that we have received this particular investment at a better rate than if we went to the local market. Mr. Speaker, other Government projects have borrowed from commercial banks and the private sector. One of these projects fall under the Minister of Tourism and International Transport and we did not receive an interest rate as low as this one.

The statement was made that the National Insurance Board is being forced to make loans to different entities and that they are dipping their hands in the funds but these issues should not arise. As far as we are concerned, it is

erroneous and uncharitable to the National Insurance Board to make statements of this type. I believe that the National Insurance Board and its officers are more than competent to make investment decisions relative to how they spend the money in the National Insurance Fund.

I thank the Honourable Member for Christ Church East for the statements which he has made relative to the issue. We do not force the National Insurance Board to make investment because they have their own actuaries and officers who look for opportunities to make investments.

Sir, my best information tells me that the National Insurance Board offered the loan to Grantley Adams International Airport, so I do not understand the statement that the Government forced the National Insurance Board to make the investment.

I want to speak to the issue of subsidising airlift coming to the country. I have heard this more than once coming from the Leader of the Opposition and other Honourable Members on the Other Side of the aisle. Mr. Speaker, I want to make it clear from the outset that the Government of Barbados does not directly subsidise any airline into Barbados but we have co-opted with many partners, including airlines on the issue of marketing to ensure that there is substantial airlift coming into Barbados to support our tourism industry and the wider economy. We have used two innovative formulae to ensure that we get results.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, we do not have a national airline in Barbados. Most people who have national airlines, are running into trouble with them. Sir, they have to subsidise them and when they 'go on the rocks', they have to subsidise them again. This is happening in developed jurisdictions with airlines like Air Canada, Air France, British Airways, Continental Airways, US Air, Air Jamaica but Governments have continued to fund these airlines. Since Barbados does not have a national airline, we are seeking to ensure that adequate airlift is provided particularly out of jurisdictions and markets where we have not traditionally had expansive airlift from different gateways like the United States of America.

In some instances we said that we would co-opt with these airlines, pool our resources and advertise with them to ensure that these airlines fly to Barbados but we are not directly giving any airlines money or subsidising airlift into the country. We have asked European airlines and chartered flights to tell us what is the amount needed to break even and to fly their aircrafts. We told them that if they fly their aircrafts into Barbados and needed 40 seats filled out of 120 seats to break even but fly with only 38 seats that we would pick up the cost.

Sir, we have never had to pick up seat cost from any airline flying into Barbados. This has fueled substantial new airlift coming to the country like US Air, Continental Airways, BMI out of Manchester and Condor from Germany. Sir, we have been able to use this formula effectively and Barbados' formula is now being sought after by other jurisdictions in the region.

Mr. Speaker, if the Democratic Labour Party wants to stop us from co-opting with airlines to create more airlift to Barbados, they should say this but they should also tell the people of Barbados how they expect to support the tourism industry if we stop co-opting with our partners to ensure that airlift come into the country.

Mr. Speaker, the only airline that we have lost which came to Barbados, ran a summer programme and did not return was a charter flight, Excel, out of London but all other airlines continue to fly to Barbados so this is erroneous information being spouted from all areas.

Sir, on the issue of the profitability of our tourism industry, I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West that numbers alone do not tell the full picture of how successful your tourism industry is. The benchmark and index used to judge tourism performance globally begins with a number count. There are other measures used like occupancy levels and revenue and yield but I do not know of any tourism count in which numbers went down and the other indices went up. I want the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West to tell me if he knows of any instance where the numbers dropped but other indices went up and I will 'take my hat off to him'.

Sir, in the case of Barbados when our numbers go up, our occupancy levels and revenue per room go up as well. I think we are on the right track in the way in which we measure our costs.

Sir, relative to the staff and the protection of their jobs at the airport and how we will deal with the employment issues, I first want to clarify an issue. When this project started, we had more than 400 employees working at the airport and of that amount 305 of them were Barbadians.

I want to make a document of the House an article from the Ministry of International Transport. I will list every person employed, every subcontract at the airport and I will prove that the statements made by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West are erroneous.

Sir, PIHL & Sons the main contractor, is from Denmark. There are 55 expatriate employees, 51 of which are CARICOM employees and 189 local employees are employed by the main contractor.

Brunden is the main electrical contractor and there are two subcontractors, Everson R. Elcock Co. Ltd. and ESSCO. Sir, there are no expatriate electrical contractors. Elcock has 20 locals and two CARICOM employees and ESSCO has 19 locals and 12 CARICOM employees.
4.00 p.m.

Sir, a company called ECEES, has the initial sub-contract for the baggage handling system. Three Barbadians are employed by this company and no CARICOM personnel.

Sir, the next subcontractor, is TPO Fuel and Applied Roofing Systems, this is a Barbadian entity. There are seventeen locals employed by this company, no CARICOM persons and no expatriates are employed.

Mr. Speaker, when it came to the ECEC, which is the elevator contractor, eight Barbadians are employed. Simpsons was the contractor for the water features and this company employed two Barbadians. Cable and Wireless Structuring is another Barbadian company which employed two people. The Barbadian company of Seam and Gleam Concrete Cleaning has four employees. Fairview Nurseries, which is responsible for the irrigation and painting, is another Barbadian company which has four employees. Brewsters Painting Services has nine employees. This is a local company and no expatriates or CARICOM persons are employed. Brathwaite's Construction which was responsible for the asphalt employs ten Barbadians and Concept Construction has six employees. A total of 305 of the 400 employees at the airport are Barbadians.

Sir, what is this constant bantering? Almost 70 per cent of the people working on the project are Barbadian workers. I say that we have to come to this Honourable House with an upright, sensible, sensitive and a truthful stance when we come to the people of Barbados. I believe that if you have information then bring it.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West always quotes numbers and concepts when he has no knowledge at all of what he speaks.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: As at December 2004, the expatriates employed by PIHL at the airport are 48; the expatriates employed on the subcontract are 23; in terms of locals there are 14 operator drivers, 108 skilled workers and 44 unskilled workers. The local subcontractors have 111 Barbadian nationals working on the job. Those are the numbers as of December 2004 that make up the complement at the airport.

Sir, there is the issue that Barbadians are placed at a disadvantage on the job. Let me say that the Barbados Workers' Union, the worker's representative at the airport, has been more than diligent in doing their job when it comes to representing the workers of Barbados at the airport. They do not need the Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South has to be misleading this Chamber. Having said that the project is already 73 per cent financed, it is impossible for the complement of staff as at December 2004 to exceed the complement of staff a year earlier. Therefore, it has to be amazing that you only have 27 per cent of your budget to spend.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: By the way, Mr. Speaker, while I am on my feet I was accused of having said that the Ministry of Finance...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please remember that you are on a point of order. Do not make a speech.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: In the Annual Report of Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. with respect to the money that was sourced from the National Insurance Scheme, it said at the request of the Ministry of Finance the company has recently initiated preliminary discussions with the National Insurance Department. Yet, I was told that the Ministry did not initiate, when it is said here in the report that at the request of the Ministry of Finance...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am quoting the information that was sent to me from the main contractor at the airport. I will make this a document of the House.

Sir, my best information tells me that the National Insurance Scheme made a loan to Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. Suffice it to say, there were labour concerns at the Grantley Adams International Airport. I already expressed in my initial speech that there were some cultural issues that existed at the airport.

I believe that the Barbados Workers' Union was more than diligent and on the job dealing with the issues as they arose. As far as we know, the issues were handled by the

people who are contracted by their workers and the people who were most competent to look after labour relation matters, not fly-by-night labour relation critics. That is not what it is. Sir, the people who know what they were doing resolved the issues. So, I am not taking any lead from the Honourable Member for St. Philip West. What does he know about labour relations?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are not referring to any Honourable Member?

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: No, Sir. I am not referring to any Honourable Member.

I want to go on to the issue of the business opportunities that would be made available. I wish to say that the Board of Grantley Adams International Airport Inc. and the Government will look after the needs of all of the interest groups at the airport and will ensure that they are given the best treatment under the new arrangements and whatever opportunities arise, we will accommodate as best as we can the small business operators.

Sir, tenders have been made for shops in the new retail mall area at the airport. I believe that persons have already been invited to a meeting. A meeting was held at Sherbourne Conference Centre last week and those prospective tenants have already been given their papers and briefings. We intend to have a range of businesses at the airport. Clearly, one wants to know that if one is in a particular area of operation that the most competent operator gets the contract. It does not mean that anybody is going to be at a disadvantage in anyway.

Mr. Speaker, regarding the transfer of staff, I think that I outlined the options that were available to staff at Grantley Adams International Airport. It does not mean that people may not opt for early retirement or opt to go to another department in the civil service.

Sir, every employee is given an option and if he or she so desires to stay within the civil service because they believe that there is a certain level of security of tenure when you work for Government as opposed to when you work for a company incorporated under the Companies Act, then that is his or her option.

Mr. Speaker, if there is a comparable position within the civil service, the Government has already made the commitment to help accommodate these people. The Government has, under the Act, laid out clearly that the pensions and gratuities of these persons would be protected. I do not know what else the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would want us to do as a Government. I think that we are offering them the best options available. We are doing what we can and I believe that it would work out.

Sir, on the issue of whether the Government should have floated a bond, business decisions are made everyday and I think that in the best interest of Barbados we are looking to get the project completed as quickly as possible with the best possible people and accommodate the staff.
4.10 p.m.

Sir, the delay has nothing to do with phasing. I already explained that when we started the terminal building, the clear pockets we found and the excavation is the reason we were delayed. There were some issues of transfer of staff from one area of the airport to the other and, again, that occasioned the delay.

Suffice it to say, Sir, that during this winter period, we handled the situation well and in about six months, we will have a spanking new airport that certainly supports and complements the cosmopolitan nature of our society and where we are going as a country.

I believe, Sir, that when you look around and compare Grantley Adams International Airport to many of the airports in the region, I think that is the best in the world for the level of a small airport. I would say that we have more than done our job and we apologise to those who would have been at a disadvantage by the delays.

Sir, again, I wish to thank the employees at the Grantley Adams International Airport for the tremendous pressure that they have been under, relative to the heat and dust, and the way in which these Government officers have worked during this very difficult period.

With those words, Sir, I ask that this Resolution do not pass.

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

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

ORDER NO. 7 – TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND

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

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$5 421 331 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2004-2005 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 7, 2004-2005 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THIS RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 23 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN SCHEDULE II TO THIS RESOLUTION

HEAD 45 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS
IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5 077 251

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, this Committee is asked to approve the sum of \$5 077 251 to supplement Head 45 for the Ministry of Public Works. This sum is specifically needed to supplement Program 040, Subprogram 070 in the sum of \$32 731 to meet expenses to facilitate the functioning of the Building Authority Unit, and the remuneration to members of the Building Advisory Committee and the Architect Registration Board.

Mr. Chairman, these two professional bodies are currently being reviewed by the Ministry of Public Works. In the case of the Building Authority Unit and the Building Advisory Committee, the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation has provided assistance to the Government of Barbados, through the secondment of Mr. George Matthews, a senior building control advisor from a Scottish Executive Building Standards Division to perform the role of Director of the Barbados Building Authority for a period of two years.

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Members have asked what is being done at the proposed Building Authority Unit. I just want to say that the Barbados Building Standard Authority is a body that once the Building Act is passed by Parliament, will have the powers to carry out the Building Code.

Of course, the philosophy behind the Building Code is to set minimum standards for building, and overall construction in Barbados, so as to ensure that all new buildings, alterations and extensions, subject to the change of use, are constructed so that they attain an acceptable level of health and safety for the people who use the buildings.

It is important, Mr. Chairman, for us to accept the minimum standard in today's society because we have seen a change in weather patterns within the world, over the last two years. Therefore, it is essential that we in Barbados accept and maintain the minimum standard of building. There is a consultant on board and the unit is being established within the Ministry of Public Works. Sir, as I said before, the Act is now being reviewed. When completed, we hope that this Act will police the Building Code and ensure that buildings around Barbados maintain a standard.

Mr. Chairman, the sum of \$32 000 is needed for the Building Advisory Committee and to help the unit.

The other issue is the Architect Registration Board. Cabinet agreed to the setting up of this Board. The Architect Registration Act was passed in both Houses of Parliament. The function of the Board is to regulate the conditions of architectural practices in Barbados, and to prescribe a certain code for those persons who are practising the architectural trade. The Board came into being a year ago and the funds here are needed to pay those members of the Board.

I want to assure Honourable Members that since the passing of the Act in April 2003, a number of concerns have been raised by interesting parties, such as the Barbados Association of Professional Engineers and the Barbados Association of Architectural Technologists, commonly known as draftsmen. As a result of these concerns by the draftsmen, a committee was set up to review the Act and make recommendations.
4.20 p.m.

The working committee completed its review of the Act and made certain recommendations to Cabinet. Those recommendations were agreed to and a subcommittee of Cabinet reviewed the proposals of the working group and these recommendations will go back to Cabinet before they come to Parliament. We believe that we have arrived at a fairly comprehensive review and that it will meet the acceptance of most of those persons who felt that they were at a disadvantage especially those draughtsmen who were working for a number of years either on their own or within the establishment of recognised architects.

We also note that there are certain sections of the Architects Registration Act which were considered restrictive or discriminatory in relation to the establishment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. These restrictions were removed with the enactment of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (Provisions) Act of 2004. I believe, Mr. Chairman, that all is set now for both the amendment to the Architects Registration Act as well as the Building Act. We are in the final stages and both bodies of professionals are currently reviewing the respective Acts.

Mr. Chairman, this supplementary is being sought to help look at property acquisitions. You would recall, Mr. Chairman, that the sum of \$500 000 was approved in this year's Estimates, but this amount is insufficient to pay for the acquisitions of all the lands that were acquired over the past two to three years to help improve the highways and tenantry roads of Barbados as well as other improvements to junctions, to the Bridgetown Roads and Safety Improvement Project, and other highways across Barbados. The sum of \$3 420 055 is required to pay the outstanding debt in respect of all of these acquisitions. These are the negotiated sum but it does not represent the total amount of money that we still have to pay landowners and property owners.

There are still a number of outstanding settlements for properties in the Bridgetown area, within the Christ Church area for the roads from Searles to Six Roads and from Crane, Highway N, as well as other major land acquisitions that were made. We are negotiating these settlements and as soon as the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment is able to tell us which ones, because we have to pay, then we have to either bring them in the Estimates that would come in March or through supplementals from time to time.

At present, all acquisitions are done by the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment. We are in constant negotiation with the landowners and we are working constantly with the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment to bring all of these acquisitions that were done in the past to settlement. It takes a long time, Mr. Chairman, but this seems to be the nature of the programme.

Mr. Chairman, in this exercise we are asking for the sum of \$1 278 609 for the Bridgetown Roads and Safety Improvement Project. For the financial year 2004, \$1.8 million was approved. So far we have spent \$1.7 million leaving a balance of \$100 000. We therefore need in this supplementary \$1.2 million for the payment of Valuation No. 48 for the contractor, Rayside Construction Limited.

One will recall that the Bridgetown Roads and Safety Improvement Project which was awarded to Rayside Construction Limited in the sum of \$53 million is now completed, but we still owe them for Valuation Nos. 48 and 49. The Project which was started on June 15, 2000 was completed on July 20, 2004. The road work covered 7.5 kilometres of roads which was done in three sections from Eagle Hall, St. Michael to the Frank Worrell Roundabout in Black Rock, St. Michael, from Welches, St. Michael to the Garrison, St. Michael and from President Kennedy Drive, which includes Westbury Road and Passage Road, to the Country Road junction. There are still a number of outstanding matters which we are now negotiating with the contractors as they relate to the retention of money due to the contractors. It is envisaged that we will surpass the original contract of \$53 million by about 10 or 13 per cent.

Mr. Chairman, also in this supplementary the sum of \$345 855.00 is required for professional services to the consultants Dillon Consulting Limited. We owe the consultants \$245 855.00 and we also owe \$100 000 for land surveying services. We had a number of professionals, as well as the consultant, working on this particular project and this amount of money is still outstanding to those persons who have provided valuable service to the improvement of the roads which we call the Bridgetown Roads and Safety Improvement project.

Mr. Chairman, the amounts required represent the full total of this supplementary. I therefore beg to move that Head 45 stand part.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: I beg to second that.

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

4.30 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on Head 45 and to say from the outset that I am happy to see that finally the Other Side has recognised that land owners in this country need to be compensated. Sir, for a long time I have been saying in this Honourable House that Government believes they have the right to walk around and take up other people's land and not to compensate them.

Mr. Chairman, that is not the major point of my contribution. The major point I have made on this particular issue is that I am not sure that putting money at the disposal of land owners in this country, at a time when land is now the biggest industry in Barbados, would be the right thing to do. I have before said that the vendor should be the one who is putting the option to Government and not Government putting the option to the vendor.

Mr. Chairman, as you are aware, if you have a piece of land and it is being taken up by Government, when you consider the time it would take for payment to be made for that land, one cannot then go on the market and acquire a piece of land the same size or for the same amount of money. One would find that one would be out of pocket.

Mr. Chairman, considering that it would be easier for Government to acquire land from persons who have land that they might not need, it might be better if Government would offer alternative lands, especially now that it is bragging so much about its land bank to persons. Government can do this instead of forcing people to take money and then have to go on the open market to purchase land, where sometimes one would have to pay higher sums for that land. On the other hand, sometimes persons cannot even find land to purchase.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that the Land Acquisition Act needs to be changed, putting the emphasis on the vendor and not on the purchaser. As it presently stands, everything is to the purchaser's advantage and not to the vendor's. We, therefore, need to see a change here because as I have said, it is not the vendor who has the Land Acquisition Act with which to work but the purchaser. That is why the vendor should have the right to dictate the pace and not Government.

Mr. Chairman, I am happy to see that there is some money being voted for landowners. It has been a long time that we have not voted in this Honourable House to get money for landowners because nearly every Tuesday, this Government acquires people's lands and do not make provision to pay people for such lands. I am, therefore,

happy to see that we are now seeing it being done. Sir, when one looks in the original Estimates, all one would see is \$500,000.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading the Honourable House.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, I accept his congratulations and I thank him for his kindness but I cannot let his attempt to mislead this Honourable House pass.

Mr. Speaker, the reality is that given the rules and the way in which finances are structured, money does not go into the Estimates for an acquisition prior to the completion of the negotiations, even though negotiations may be completed within that financial year. Therefore, there is a situation where the money that goes into the Estimates invariably pays for acquisitions which took place in the previous financial year.

There is a similar rule in relation to posts. If you want to have a new member of staff, even though the post would be created in the new financial year, you cannot put in resources to pay the person at the beginning of the financial year or at the time of Estimates, until the post has actually been created. Unfortunately, it is the way that Government's budgeting is done but it is not correct to say that we acquire people's properties and then would not pay them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I am very glad that the Honourable Member has corrected the Honourable Minister of Public Works because it was first said that the delay had to do with the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am glad that when the point was being made, I saw the Minister looking...

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, I have made the point that the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment and the Ministry of Public Works have worked together to negotiate settlements.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, it was rather interesting that when the Minister of Public Works made the point, I saw the Honourable Minister of Housing, Lands and

the Environment looking as if she was prepared to make a point of order at the time but she used her good judgement to ...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please continue, Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am, Sir. The Honourable Member used her good judgment because she knew that I would have dealt with it, and has taken the opportunity to try to correct me.

Mr. Chairman, based on what the Minister of Public Works has said, it is clear to me that the Minister understands the amount of criticisms that have been given on this issue and has carefully shifted it to the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment.

Sir, based on the comments given by the Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment, then we would expect to see all the settlements that were made this year accounted for in the next Estimates. Sir, I would be looking forward to the 2005-2006 Estimates, and I would expect to see a detailed report on the Ministry of Public Works setting out the amount of land that must be compensated for, so that I can monitor that period 2005-2006. I hope that all lands that were acquired prior to March 31, 2001, would be adequately accounted for and would be put in the Estimates to be compensated for in this financial year.

Sir, for example, I would not expect to hear anywhere in Barbados at this time some persons still have not been compensated for lands that have been acquired for the building of the Cement Plant. Sir, based on what I have heard and have been told today, it could not be true because it would have been already budgeted and paid for. Therefore, I accept the assurance given by both the Minister of Public Works and the Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, it is incorrect to mislead the Honourable House by suggesting that the only reason for the non-payment of acquire lands has to do with a lack of provision of funding in the Ministry of Housing, Lands and the Environment's budget for any financial year. The reality is that in the acquisition process, often several disputes may arise. For instance, disputes may arise relating to the value of land, the quantum of compensation or sometimes ownership. Therefore, there can be several situations in which compensation takes quite a long time.

Sir, I will speak to this in more detail when I speak to this Head but I do not want the impression going out to the public, because it would be false, that the only delay relative to compensation has to do with whether or not it is in the Ministry's budget.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I agree with the Honourable Member because seeing that we operate on a cash basis, it is only fair that when the sale of land between the vendor and the seller is agreed to in one financial year, then it would only be reasonable to expect that will be compensated for in the next financial year. Sir, when I said agreed to, you would appreciate that there would be an agreement in relation to compliance and conveyance.

Sir, we accept the point made by the Minister, and I want to tell all those landowners, within this financial year and past financial years, that they can expect to receive their monies and that they need not to worry because the only hindrance that they would have had, would be solved within this financial year, since both Ministries have reached an agreement to pay during this 2005-2006 financial year.

Mr. Chairman, I am also happy to see that the Minister of Public Works has agreed that there were a number of flaws in the Architects Bill, and that they had a sub-committee set up and that there are some changes that will be made.

4.40 p.m.

You can call me as much 'I-man' as you want to but when 'I-man' said in here that it was wrong, everybody said it had to be passed and he was ignored. Sir, good advice is given in this Parliament, it is refused and then the money of the taxpayers is wasted trying to correct the same thing that was said on the Floor of the House.

Sir, we need to understand that the House of Assembly has two sides and not one side and if the Government cannot listen to the minority because it has the majority seats, we might as well close Parliament down. We are here to do the business of the people and if Government does not want to accept the opinion of a particular Member, it should say so but I am here to work on behalf of the people of Barbados.

Sir, people must stop getting jealous of me because I have ideas. If the Prime Minister can accept my ideas, then any other Minister should be able to accept them.

Mr. Chairman, we have to be serious about doing the business of the people. We should not allow developed countries to implement things that we have been able to speak about before. Sir, we follow blindly as if we cannot think and as if we can only think because we see countries which are developed doing these things.

Sir, because we have a small Parliament does not mean that we lack the ability to think. Mr. Chairman, this House must understand that we must lead the world because we are accustomed to doing so. Sir, they are not brighter than we are and I would be embarrassed if the President of the

United States of America in his State of the Union message delivers something that this Parliament should have delivered years ago or if we wait for the IMF to dictate to us, for us to understand that we have the ability to think about it first.

Mr. Chairman, I am accused of 'bad-mouthing' big organisations and international organisations, but I do not mind because I am thinking and they have to follow. We have to understand that since 1994, it has been raining in St. Lucy but it has now rained all over Barbados and it means that the roads in all 30 constituencies in Barbados need repairing.

Sir, I am now in trouble because, based on what I am told, I have to wait but the Honourable Member for St. George North should understand that I should be on the priority list because I was waiting since 1994 and ten years after, now that it is 2004, priority should be given to St. Lucy where there was neglect. Mr. Chairman, I support this supplementary but I want to hear about supplementaries for St. Lucy too. I am not coming to this House and voting for money for other people but leaving out 'I-man' because he has to get something too. Sir, we are people and deserve to be treated as people. I can say one thing for the Honourable Member for St. Philip South that when he was holding the portfolio that he understood the importance of pro-rating them so that each constituency could get a piece of the cake.

Sir, those Ministers who have Heads that can be divided, it should occur. If we are going to make changes as to how we debate the Budget and Estimates, this must be done this year, if we really want a change as to how we approach the Budget and the Estimates.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has two minutes more.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, those Heads that can be divided, let us divide them at the time of Estimates. The best way to get accountability is putting the responsibility on the Minister. The Minister should police the Heads to make sure that they are managed in an efficient way.

Sir, it would not go pass me if a house in my constituency was to be repaired for \$28 000 but was repaired for \$60 000 and no Minister or Member of Parliament on the Other Side should let it pass him by either.

If we really want to see good governance, we would divide the Heads among the 30 parliamentarians. Let us do the policing and monitoring of the Heads and the amount of work that has to be done in our constituency. If you want to see value for money, this is the best way to go. If the Government cannot do it, it should move away because the Opposition is ready and has the ideas.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: There are two matters which arise out of this and one has to do with the issue of public transport but today, I will not use this opportunity to speak to public transport. The other issue which arises and on which the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spent a large amount of time was that of compensation in relation to compulsory acquisition.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy during the course of his remarks said words to the effect that the legislation in respect of acquisition is largely in favour of the purchaser, the Crown, and not in favour of the vendor. Sir, in every situation where Government is doing a project for which lands have to be acquired, it impacts on a citizen whether natural or corporate and, therefore, it behooves us to speak to the matter of the legislation and what the legislation really says.

The reality is that a lot of people are not familiar with the provision of the legislation even though the legislation is really generous in relation to citizens and their rights. It is also my view that it is not an area which a lot of lawyers practise and it is possible that many attorneys are not familiar with the provisions of the legislation.

I want to start by conceding that the process takes too long. Often, between the time that an individual is written by the Crown to say that it has an interest in his/her land, to the time that process for acquisition is completed, years can elapse. If Government is to be fair to citizens, it has to find a way of expediting the process so that citizens can get money in their hands quickly.

Mr. Chairman, sometimes persons from whom the lands are acquired are not people of means and substance but often simple Barbadians who are not familiar with the legislation and rights in these matter and are easily intimidated by officials, officialdom, bureaucracy and bureaucratic processes and do not know how to deal with a lot of the letters and notices which are sent to them. They do not understand the full implications nor do they recognise that, implicit in the legislation is a provision for them to challenge the Government on the issue of the quantum of compensation for the property and this is fundamental to whether they are happy or not. Sir, we live in a society where people speak perpetually of being victimised and may, in fact, have some fear to challenge the Government, whichever Party constitutes it. Sir, people do not want to have confrontation with the Government.

4.50 p.m.

Sir, first, let me start for the purpose of the public. I want to talk today about some of the provisions of the legislation as they impact on this matter relative to the Supplementary, brought by the Honourable Minister and Honourable Member for St. George North. I want to talk to the provisions in a broad sense.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, the Government can give, under the legislation, notice to a property owner that they intend to acquire the property for a public purpose. The purpose has to be a public purpose and it has to be defined in a particular way and that itself can be the subject of dispute. Invariably, the acquisitions are for things such as playing fields, road widening, the acquisition of lands to do property construction or it can be an acquisition for the redevelopment of Kensington Oval, which we will agree is in the national interest. I could think of only one person in Barbados, who would say that the redevelopment of Kensington is not in the national interest.

Once notice is given to the landowner, I think it is Section 3, even though no compensation is paid, at that stage the Government has the right to enter on the property and start to execute whatever works it has determined it wants this property for. At that stage you cannot quarrel and say that you have not received any money and that you are not going anywhere and that the Government can do what they like. Bajans will say that. The reality is, once you have been given the notice, the Government has the right to enter on the land.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government gives you notice, and this is what a lot of people are not aware of, and within a certain amount of time does not act on it, you can challenge them and say to them, if three months elapsed with your getting notice and nothing more happened, you can ask the Government what is going on. You can ask the Government to pay compensation or enquire of them what is happening with the acquisition or request that they give you back your land, because three months have passed and nothing has been done with it. The reality is, in our system it often takes more than three months for anything to happen and very few people use or cite that provision which exists within the law.

Equally, the Government may determine that they are not going to site the playing field on the location that they first thought. They might move it further down and instead of acquiring Miss Bishop's land, and I am using fictitious persons here, may acquire Miss Proverbs' land. I try not to use the surnames of persons in the Chamber so that nobody can say that I am speaking about them or persons connected thereto.

The Government is, therefore, required under the legislation to give you a notice of abandonment of that

acquisition. Consequent upon the abandonment of the acquisition, you are entitled to say to the Government that you have been without your land for 6, 9 or 12 months, that they dug up the land to build a playing field, and you want your land reinstated or compensation for the amount of time that they had it in their possession and you were held out of the benefit of your property. People do not know this but that is a legitimate area of challenge under the legislation that is not frequently employed.

Equally, when the Government gives you notice to acquire property, you can hire your own private surveyor, attorney, valuer or land surveyor. Sir, you can hire any professional reasonably connected to a land transaction and Government must pay the full costs for your professional services under the acquisition. If the acquisition is abandoned and the costs were reasonably incurred consequent upon the notice of the acquisition, Government would still be compelled to pay for these services.

Mr. Speaker, people do not know this and they do not claim them. There are also attorneys who do not make any claims but these are legitimate expenses to be put at the foot of the Government and from which Government cannot escape in these matters.

Equally, Government is compelled to pay your conveyancing costs because, after all you are selling your land at their behest because it is not a willing transaction. Therefore, the Government must also pay in this matter your conveyancing costs.

How is compensation determined? This is often the bulk bearer in the issue. The Government will ask the Commissioner of Land Tax to give a valuation and a member of his staff acting on his behalf will do a valuation of your property or all the properties to be acquired in the subject area, as in the case of Kensington or the ABC Highway, where they would have been several roads or where we are doing the National Botanical Garden, where they would have been several property owners. Valuations are done by the Commissioner of Land Tax, even at Queens Street where the properties are under dispute at that location. Sir, that value is what the Ministry of Housing and Lands tends to work with. Clearly, the Commissioner is the Government's agent.

Sir, disputes often come at this point because, clearly, everybody wants to get the best possible price for his/her land. For some people it is an emotional connection. Their family may have lived there for generations. In other instances, it may be that they had a plan that they would have passed the land or a parcel of it onto a child or children and they may feel that the children are losing their inheritance. They may feel that they would rather have the land than money. So, there are often emotional issues caught up in these acquisition matters. It is very difficult to deal with

them only on the basis of dollars and cents where people's ambitions, aspirations and familial connections are involved.

At this stage, if the property owner does not agree with the valuation given by the Commissioner of Land Tax, this is where he or she would hire their professionals, the land surveyor, valuer and attorneys for Government to pay. The quantum to be paid can be negotiated between the parties. If the parties do not agree, the High Court can be asked to make a decision to resolve the matter. If after negotiations the parties cannot agree, the ultimate decision can be given by the court.

Sir, I am being detailed because I really do not want it to be felt that this legislation is purchaser oriented and that vendors have no rights because the legislation does give tremendous rights to those persons whose properties are being acquired.

The formula used by the legislation for the valuation of the property is, and the language of the legislation specifically says, that the price to be paid by the Government should be the price that the property would attract if it were sold on the open market in a situation where both the vendor and purchaser were willing partners or willing parties to the transaction.
5.00 p.m.

Therefore, the legislation does not intend that a prospective vendor, under the Compulsory Acquisition Act, should get a cent less than the full market value but this is where the dispute often occurs. If I am a woman, as occurs now at Kensington, who has a small chattel house but I carry on a business which generates revenues from the sale of food, how is that valued? I would wish to say that the legislation also speaks to compensation for revenue earning activities being done on the land, so it is not only the value of the land that the landowner gets, but the value of any property on the land at the time, and the purpose for which the land is put.

Let us look at the example where you have two properties beside each other of similar square footage. Property A has a little shop attached where the woman is selling soft drinks and ham cutters and there is a commercial enterprise going on all day. Property B is a chattel house used by a single person to live. The two properties, even though of similar size, might attract entirely different valuations because of the commercial enterprise being conducted at one.

Therefore, while at Queens Street, to use an example, there was noise over the disparity of the valuations, given the sizes of the properties, and I am not saying it was so in that case...

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I am simply saying that you cannot look at the mere sizes alone to determine if people got a fair valuation. You have to look at the kind of structure that was on the land and the use to which that structure was put. Therefore, you cannot say how is it that John Brown had only 3 000 square feet and got \$10 000 but Mary Smith who had 5 000 square feet only got \$7 000.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute more.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir.

If your land is not in commercial or other use, but you had a Town Planning permission, or had put in an application to carry out a certain type of activity on your land, or to get a change of use, those factors must also be considered when compensating persons. It is any income that you derive from the property. Is it a house that you have rented, which brings you \$500 monthly additional income, and what is the value of the property on the open market, *vis-à-vis* properties of that type?

Sir, if there is a dispute over title, once again the court can sit and hear the matters summarily or with speed and make a decision so that the correct person can be compensated. Equally, Sir, the court can provide for the payment of interest, where you are kept out of your compensation for a long time.

All of this, Sir, shows the extent to which, built into this legislation, are provisions which seek to protect the average ordinary Barbadian. I want citizens to be aware of this legislation and the implications for them.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Hon. Dame BILLIE MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am obliged for the opportunity to speak to this Head, especially to Program 040 which deals with Direction and Policy Formulation, Subprogramme 070 dealing with general management and coordination of services. I want particularly to address matters which, I hope, are before the Building Authority, such as the Building Act and the building code but, more particularly, the building code.

Sir, we have been contemplating this matter for over ten years now and I am impatient of it, and will take every opportunity to speak to it, and this is yet another. I am hoping, since we are now in building code review that certain elements of the building code will be mandatory. I cannot see it otherwise.

In all of those countries of the Caribbean ravished in recent years, particularly over the last eight or ten years by

hurricane, flood, earthquake, volcanic eruption, every natural disaster known to mankind, you name it, you will find it in the Caribbean. In all of those countries hit, some of them repeatedly within a year – Antigua was hit four times by hurricanes in one year, the Bahamas twice on two occasions separately in one year – those countries have put very stringent building codes in place, most of them based on the Florida Building Code. Even now post Hurricane Ivan, the Florida Building Code, may well have to be put under review.

People will remember that Grenada was hit by Hurricane Ivan, but Ivan not only did damage in Grenada, it did damage in Jamaica, Cuba, Cayman Islands, and did considerable damage in seven States of the southeastern United States such as Alabama, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, and both of the Carolinas. We need to remember that the greater damage done by Hurricane Ivan was not damage by wind but damage by sea surge.

I would wish, hope and pray, Mr. Chairman, that there are certain elements in the Building code of Barbados which must be mandatory. Sir, not only should certain elements of the Building code be made mandatory but property insurance in Barbados. We have come to a place now, long past time, where property insurance must also be mandatory.

It is not fair for this Resolution reason, motor car insurance is mandatory, not only because of the fact that you will damage yourself but you will do damage to third parties. In the event that there is a natural or a man-made disaster, houses go down and then the Government, meaning the taxpayers, are asked to make good that damage.

Sir, I am not speaking of anything that is new. This is not rocket science. When I was a child, and you may well remember it in your childhood, the average house in Barbados was insured. Chattel houses were insured. I also remember as a child walking along Black Rock going to school, going to music lessons, going to the bus stop and saw chattel houses with little tin insignia nailed up over the front door.

Asides.

Hon. Dame BILLIE MILLER: Those insignia were the logos, as we would call them now, of the various insurance companies in Barbados, which insured chattel properties, wall and every kind of properties imaginable in Barbados, and what that insignia did was to tell the other fellows, not to bother to knock on this door to try to get this insurance. This one has been covered already. This is how it used to be, that Barbadians were and still are house proud. Your house, although now some young men who are car mad, may not want to recognise it, but your house is likely to be

the single largest investment that you will make during the course of your life time and the time has come.

We are told that we are in a cycle across the world, including this region, because...

Asides.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: We like to believe that this is God's little acre and we are different from the rest of the world. We are not, but are sinful and wicked like all the rest of the world and the natural disasters of this world will be visited on us, in the same way that they visited on other people. Sir, because for a long period of time we have been spared, we must not take it for granted because we are becoming more wicked by the moment. In the whole of the 20th Century, Barbados was visited seriously by one hurricane, Hurricane Janet, but in the century before, it was visited by many hurricanes.

5.10 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. Dame BILLIE MILLER: That may be something to laugh at, but, Mr. Chairman, I am in deadly earnest about this matter. We have seen now for ourselves in 2004 alone what natural disaster can do to entire countries. This is not a district now like the Scotland District, this is not a community like Emmerton, this is an entire island where it disappears overnight and where a whole GDP disappears and people have to start from scratch. We see it now in South East Asia. Do we have to wait like Antigua, St. Croix and The Bahamas did to put in place a mandatory building code and mandatory property insurance? Do we have to wait now for a disaster in order to do that? I really hope not, Mr. Chairman.

I also believe that we need now to be giving greater consideration as to where we build in Barbados. I am saying this I hope for the benefit of the Building Authority, the Act and the Code. I am not talking now only about houses and buildings but about roads as well. Barbados is a relatively flat country. We no longer have surface waters. We do not have rivers which are tidal and we do not have lakes of any large consequence. Two-thirds of the City of Bridgetown our capital – this beautiful constituency which I have had the honour to represent over the past several years, this year is 28 years I believe, because whether I am in the Parliament or not I represent the interest of the people of Bridgetown – is below sea level. That means that you have a high water table and that means that it is flood prone.

Barbados has a series of gullies running down the West Coast and to some extent even the East Coast which help us with run off. Over the years people have built across gullies, people have built even in the Holetown hole. I am sure the

Honourable Member for St. James Central is going to speak to that. I would be crazy as a private investor to have built Jamestown. I would not buy a dog kennel in Jamestown. Last year was a very wet year and this year is showing us already that we are not looking for much of a dry season, so we are just hoping and praying that we are going to get the sugar crop out.

Mr. Chairman, just as we get years of drought, we get years of heavy and continuous rains, and when that happens, mother nature reclaims her own and shows us where the old watercourses were. The hole in Holetown was tidal this morning, but people go and build there. People are doing what they have done over the years and some semblance of order now has to be brought to it. People are building homes where they like and where there are no utilities and no services and then they expect the Government, in other words, the taxpayers, to pay to bring the services to them. We need more order. I hope those who have influence in respect of the Building Authority, the Act and the Code will bear some of what I am saying in mind. I speak out of my own hard experience. We are building in known flood prone areas.

Mr. Chairman, I am particularly concerned for Bridgetown. I want to strongly suggest here that in any building code and in any disaster prevention, disaster mitigation and disaster management programme that very special considerations have to apply to Bridgetown. The people in Bridgetown have to be encouraged, as they are in other flood prone and below sea level areas, to have their foundations high up off the ground. In any plan for disaster preparedness and disaster mitigation in Bridgetown, evacuation has to be an element.

I am planning in my constituency through my constituency branch, district by district, during the next several weeks and months to educate the people of Bridgetown about these matters. An evacuation plan for them at the simplest level means identifying a place above sea level where they could go to be safe in the event that major flooding or something of that kind is anticipated.

Mr. Chairman, it concerns me greatly that most of the major installations in Barbados are located in Bridgetown. Our central police station, our central fire station, our general hospital and Kensington Oval, and I could go on and on, are all located in Bridgetown. We have to think differently. We are living in Barbados where there is a police station in Holetown. This is the misguided policies of the gentlemen on the Other Side, not in their generation. How could we have spent all those million of dollars in a civic centre at Holetown and leave it in the middle of a flood prone area on the beach side, prime tourism property?

We have to begin to be more thoughtful and more orderly in how we look to our civic centres and how we look

to where our major installations are. You do not put a police station and a fire station down at Weston in a flood prone area. Where is our thinking now? This is the 21st Century. We are all educated people. These are the considerations that really need to inform the thinking and the recommendations that will come from any building or advisory committee that should inform the Building Act and certainly the Building Code. We have to look to these things.

The one last thing that we have not really attacked and mastered in Barbados is drainage. We have relied for all the years on the natural drainage that comes down the gullies. Along the West Coast, where I have lived all of my life, is a series of coral stone terraces. The East Coast, that is the Scotland District, is oceanic and it is overborne with other problems. On the West Coast we have these roads starting from Walmer Lodge coming down the University Hill, Jackman Alley Gap, Wavell Avenue, right down to Holders Hill, Paynes Bay and right down pass Hometown which are water courses. When you see rain, even like we are having it now, not a heavy downpour but a constant drizzling, those roads are flooded. Those roads must be constructed of concrete. I do not know how many times I have to say it in here, but I am going to say it in here as long as I am in here. Those are the roads that wash out as soon as you get wet weather like we have now. It just does not make sense. It is not as though we do not have a cement factory in Barbados. I do not understand it, Mr. Chairman. Government policy is driven by the advice of its technicians in this administration

Mr. Chairman, I am appealing now to the Honourable Minister that they in the Ministry of Public Works make one pilot project of a place like Holders Hill, Sea View or any of the steep ones and just look at it over a period of three or four or five years.
5.20 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, we have done it here in the City of Bridgetown. I have concrete roads that are more than 22 years old, which still remain pristine but every time a lot of rain falls, Risk Road has to be rebuilt. I live in Risk Road for years and I know every steep. Chapel Gap and Holders Hill have to be rebuilt every time a lot of rain falls. This is an absolute waste of taxpayers' money and speaks to an attitude that because it was done 70 or 80 years ago, that one should continue to do it today.

Mr. Chairman, these are the issues which I hope would inform the review of this building code but I hope that the building code is not now going to take another 10 years. I hope that it has its mandatory elements and that it will be brought into force at an early time because the writings are on the wall, the warnings are all there for us and we have only ourselves to blame if we choose to ignore them.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Hon. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Chairman, I remain mindful of my position in the Government but Sir, I will speak from my heart to Head 45 and specifically to Object Code No. 6 EX 26 – Professional Services.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to begin by saying that I am grateful to the Honourable Member who has just taken her seat. I think that the Honourable Member, although representing the City of Bridgetown, speaks as a person who has hailed from the North, who understands the daily difficulties under which persons from that area have to labour.

Mr. Chairman, I want to begin on the question of acquisition because I think that this Honourable House was treated to an excellent presentation by the Honourable Member for St. James South. Therefore, I would want to agree with the view that the acquisition process cannot be dictated by the subject of the acquisition, or by the person whose property is being acquired. Sir, the bottom line is, and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not seem to get the point, that an already slow, painfully slow and failing process, would become virtually the new atmosphere, within which Government finally grinds to a halt. Sir, we have a system where, as attorneys-at-law, we can be contentious. We can be contentious on the issue of value.

As the Honourable Member has indicated, we can be contentious on the issue of additional uses to which the property can be put, thereby deriving income, and we can be contentious on the price which would have been ordinarily reached if we had gone to sale under private treaty.

Sir, the fact of the matter is that as a question of policy, Government, in my view, now has to come to the recognition that all of these areas of contention simply serve to facilitate those of us who care to, with an opportunity to retard and to delay the process of land acquisition in Barbados.

Sir, an attorney-at-law can cover up these delays by saying that he or she is fighting for the justice of their clients but as a legislator, I believe the problem is that the system can be retarded by persons who care so to do, in their own narrow interest, to their own benefit and to the greater detriment of the public good, which the Act is created to enforce.

Mr. Chairman, I know whereof I speak because that is what is happening in the constituency of St. James Central today, where there are persons who would live, for argument sake, in the district of Sea View, a district which I have inherited from the Honourable Member for St. James North. Sir, I have said in this Honourable House on a number of occasions and I will continue to say that I have

written about it to the Honourable Minister of Public Works, who can tell you that I have flooded his office with letters. The people who live in the back part of Sea View know what it is for the last three or four months when we have seen nothing else but rain, to walk half a mile or more every day, through mud, sludge, grime and dirt. This is their daily reality and one grows weary of making the point.

Mr. Chairman, when one enquires what is the stage at which we have reached, one can almost predict the technocrats answer before one hears it that the acquisition process is underway. Mr. Chairman, this is an acquisition process which began when the Honourable Member for St. James North had responsibility for that aspect of the constituency. When I took over his files, the Honourable Member was kind enough to show me letters that he had written when he first came to Parliament. Therefore, it is not a question of a Barbados Labour Party Government or a Democratic Labour Party. That is why I take great issue and serve great offence at the innuendo coming from the Other Side. It is an issue of a systemic problem, where irrespective of who sits in this Honourable House... Sir, irrespective of who sits in this Honourable House, the process of delivering services and improvements to the quality and conditions of life of our people is being retarded by a need for us to repair the legislative defect.

Sir, that is my view on the issue. I go further because sometimes one feels that one is dealing with molasses going uphill. There is a need, in my view, for us to realise that we have to buy in professional services in Barbados. Mr. Chairman, I will be the first person to accept that every Ministry should have a team of professionals working with respect to their relative sphere of interest. But Sir, there comes a time when we have to realise, and all of us who earn a living in the private sector knows it, that sometimes when you are offered a retainer, one has to get up off of that which one sits upon and go out there and do a job. It means that one has to hustle out and get the job done, whether it is rainfall or sunshine because that is how one earns one's daily bread, as there is no security of tenure.

Mr. Chairman, the area of surveying is another area in which Government's and the people's interest is being retarded considerably. Sir, resolutely we have taken a position that we will continue to allow the number of surveyors who exist within the relevant Government Departments to go out and try to do all the land surveying that is to be done in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I take a very different view, that is, a lot of the difficulties we face in terms of the extent to which we are able to transmogrify the conditions of our people would be assisted, if we were to go the route of trying to ensure that some of the backlog would be alleviated. Sir, in this case, part of the backlog is the abundance of surveying work that

has to be done, which remains undone because we are trying to do it just as we have done it during the 1960s and not coming to terms with opportunities that exist in 2005. Therefore, the need to buy into surveying services from the private sector to assist Government to get on with the people's business, is, in my view, another critical issue, if we are going to alleviate social distress.

Sir, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, talked about the district of Chapel, Paynes Bay, for example. Sir, in Chapel, Paynes Bay, I can tell you that the Urban Development Commission went to that area and put down a new road when the Honourable Member for St. James South had jurisdiction over that district. Sir, the process has grounded to a halt because one landowner has decided that he or she does not want anything to be passing over his or her land and, therefore, we now have to reroute the work that is being done.

Mr. Speaker, Government's mandate is to do the work and the people want the Urban Development Commission to do the work, irrespective of whether it is done by the Honourable Member for St. James South or by myself. The Party's policy is that the work is to be done. The Government's commitment is that the work must be done. But, Sir, if you do not have the wherewithal within which to do it, and that is why I make the point that we need to buy into the private sector some of the resources that are necessary, then we need to have the surveyors and the valuers going out and doing what is necessary to be done, so that we can get back on track.

5.30 p.m.

Sir, I want to speak about my constituency and the question of the state of the roads because their relationship to drainage is of great concern to me. I make bold to say that even though I am aware of a drainage unit in Barbados, as far as I am concerned, I have seen little or no evidence of a macro policy for drainage in this country. It is all well and good to talk about not buying land in Hometown but people have invested their life's savings in Hometown, Jamestown Park and the surrounding districts and I cannot tell them that they should not have bought the land. I have to say to them that I am aware that water coming from gullies in St. Andrew, St. Thomas and St. James finds its way into Hometown.

Sir, we cannot tell the water not to come down the hill and unfortunately, we live in a society where in spite of the tremendous strides that our citizens made, they still think it is the decent, humane and good neighbourly thing to do to take an old mattress or discarded settee, throw it in a gully and block the watercourse. Sir, that is the Barbados in which we live and no amount of preaching like Peter and praying like Paul would get persons of that type of mind to change

this type of behaviour. Sir, a person may buy a Mercedes-Benz or BMW but he would take the minimoke which he owned before and dumped it in the gully because this is how we discharge things and it is part of the problem in this country.

Sir, having said that, the watercourses become block. When, therefore, would it occur to those who micromanage the unit of the Ministry for drainage that perhaps a system of wells need to be dugged and maintained? Sir I know of what I speak because at Christmas time, in addition to delivering hampers, I did some house-to-house canvassing in the Sea View area and I went into one of the wells. Sir, the silk, grime, grass and bush in the well was amazing.

Sir, I want to be as candid and honest as possible because these things begin to burn deeply and it has nothing to do with Government policy but with management and judgement. I call the drainage unit, told them that I was at the location of the well and that I would like them to send someone to clean the well. They came and clean out the well, for which I am grateful but they should not have piled it outside the well because when it rains, it will wash back into the well. Sir, to do this means that nothing has been done.

Sir, the Opposition will 'holler' at the Government, people will get vex and if they care to, will change the Government and the Opposition will 'holler' at a new Government but until we get pass those basics, we would be getting no where fast. Sir, this is the problem we have to deal with. I honestly believe there has to be a systematic programme about drainage in Barbados. I went to Hometown after the major flooding we had in November and three days after the flooding took place, the watercourse was still full of water careening downhill at what might be in excess of ten to fifteen miles per hour.

Mr. Chairman, those who had to withstand it on the day in question could attest to the fact that water came through Hometown at such a rate that it took trucks up and floated them. The Honourable Member for the City described it as tidal and it was exactly that. I would accept that it was the highest level of rainfall in the island for a long time.

Sir, I know that flooding would take place in many parts of the world so I am not seeking utopia nor is this a quest for heaven but there has to be an element of good sense and judgement in what we do. When one recognises that we do not as yet have a proper well construction system or drainage system, one realises that we are failing ourselves and the people we are supposed to be representing.

Mr. Chairman, I want to speak briefly to the question of a building code. I do not know whether it is contemplated because I have not as yet seen the code but I am hoping that just as other jurisdictions have seen it fit either within the

building code or add an annex to their building code to protect the citizens, so too would the people of Barbados be protected. Sir, specifically, I draw reference to what took place in Florida with Hurricane Ivan.

In the aftermath of the storm, prices for basic commodities went up. Two days before the storm, prices for the wood was \$5 more expensive for each unit than it was the day before. Sir, that is commonly called gouging and whenever the building code is enforced, I want the Government to take the necessary steps to ensure that the public is protected against the gouging that follows in the aftermath of a disaster. While the building code will make and set prescription for how we build and what material we build with, another step must be contemplated, the protection of the people who may still suffer fallout since a building code cannot ward off a disaster.

Sir, in the aftermath of a disaster, we have to make sure that our citizens are not bankrupt by those people who control the commanding heights of the economy and in many cases control monopolies within the economy.

Sir, I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Joseph.

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I am sure that the pleasantries of extending greetings for the New Year are not required for Honourable Members of this House but notwithstanding that, I would like to offer them in any event.

Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to speak in support of this Supplementary and I want to speak on the matter of Head 45 dealing with the works in and around the City of Bridgetown. Bridgetown is a capital City and as all capital cities go, there is a need to have a greater measure of attention paid to infrastructural work. Having seen several capital cities across the region in the last few weeks, I continue to be extraordinarily proud of the condition of Bridgetown, the roads in and around Bridgetown and the standard of infrastructure that Barbados boast of today.

Indeed, the infrastructural work to which this Supplementary is directed is of benefit to all Barbadians because all Barbadians at some point in time make their way into Bridgetown whether for work, leisure, church or other spiritual fulfillment or entertainment. Sir, anything that is done to ensure that people can travel to and from their destinations especially around the City area with greater efficiency and comfort is more than desirable.

Mr. Chairman, I have to say that in the same way that this type of attention has been paid to the road infrastructure in an around urban Barbados that there is a great feeling

creeping into other parts of Barbados where people are not seeing the benefits of this type of attention.

Mr. Chairman, I am honoured to be a representative for a rural part of this country.
5.40 p.m.

Therefore, I want to draw to this Honourable House a recent incident. Yesterday a lady went into labour in Spa Hill, in my constituency, and because of the condition of the road in Spa Hill the ambulance driver was unable to get to this lady's residence.

I am well aware that officers of the Ministry of Public Works in the past, in fact, twice since elections the Honourable Member for St. George North accompanied me to Spa Hill and other parts of my constituency to look at the state of the roads. In fact, we were there together as recently as October 28, 2004 to look at the worsening condition of the road in Spa Hill.

Mr. Chairman, while it is true that there are not many houses in Spa Hill or some of the other districts which are affected in that way, in my respectful submission, this Government is obligated to see to the needs of its citizens and residents wherever they may reside. I am well aware that Government applies a cost-benefit analysis to making decisions regarding the fixing of roads. For example, how many residents live in a particular community or how many houses are in a particular community.

Sir, I am a firm believer in the idea of maintaining communities and not denuding communities of population. Therefore, if that is a path that is to be followed, then much more attention has to be paid to roads such as Spa Hill, Mellows, Fruitful Hill and so on.

Sir, the residents of these communities remind me daily that there was a time in the not too distant past when these roads represented important arteries for people traveling into and out of the Scotland District. Mr. Chairman, one by one they seemed to have fallen into disrepair and some of the technical people involved seemed to have taken the decision that these roads have now reached the point where there are too far gone for it to make sense to rehabilitate them.

I want to say as with much passion as the Honourable Member for St. James Central, that we cannot apply that kind of analysis to these areas. It is incumbent on us to see that these roads are rehabilitated. There is great economic significance in the Scotland District. The question has to be, what will happen to us as a nation if we continue to allow parts of Barbados to be cut off simply because we do not maintain our road network adequately. We see the millions of dollars that are spent in maintaining the road network in the urban areas or in the heavily populated areas, whether

there are in St. Philip, Christ Church or St. James, but we are not seeing similar attention being paid to the road networks in rural Barbados.

Perhaps, the day may have to come when Barbadians wake up and find that they can no longer conveniently reach East Coast for their picnics or that they can no longer reach certain parts of the Scotland District to pick guavas and cherries or they can no longer reach Atlantic Hotel to enjoy lunch on Sundays. Perhaps that is what it would take for all of us, a people, to recognise that it is important for all of us as a nation to ensure that the Scotland District remains a vital and thriving part of Barbados. Sir, this can only happen if we maintain the population base.

I believe that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown would agree with this concept because when I was Chairman of National Housing Corporation she said to me that where you have a city and people do not live in it that it dies. How much less true could it be for rural communities if we continue to think that our only solution to things like slippage is moving the people out of those areas.

Therefore, I am supporting this Supplementary but I am calling for greater attention to be paid to areas in rural Barbados that are desperately in need of attention and my constituency in particular is under grave threats by the slippage in the Scotland District. I am calling for the Honourable Minister to spend some of his attention and some of the Government's resources in my constituency to remedy these kinds of challenges.

I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I just want to add a few words in this debate in relation to the matters which stand before us for the purpose of Supplementary appropriations. In respect of the Building Authority the building code is a matter with which I am familiar as I had to do some work with it along the way. This effort on the part of the Government has been the subject of much discussion and engagement but there comes a time when we need to be able to sign off and perfect the kinks as we implement.

I am told by the Honourable Minister, and I look forward to it, that time is approaching us shortly when we shall have in Barbados an appropriate building code. Many of the things that we take for granted today are things that were the subject of instruction and informal communication among generations and in villages. In very many instances people were taught to build by master builders, who were able to communicate why they did certain things when they build.

Unfortunately, we have seen the development of a construction industry that is unregulated and in many instances there are horror stories of persons who have hired people, who have not only performed below par but have put the person's investment in jeopardy and in some instances their own safety.

Sir, I have a constituent in a particular part of my constituency, that borders yours, and this pensioner is over the age of 90, about six years ago she paid a builder some money to help her convert her home from wood to wall. The builder proceeded to build the house without an ounce of steel.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, we may laugh but it is a sad, sad thing that this woman having worked as a domestic all her life, having saved funds, had her son who lives overseas send back money to help her had all of her investment wiped out because of an unscrupulous contractor who put up blocks with cement without reinforcing them with steel. Needless to say, I can take you there this evening and let you see that there are major cracks at the front part of the House. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas may be aware of it because I may have carried her there but that is not the only incident. There is a younger lady who lives in Skeetes Road who paid a contractor \$10 000 to start work on her house and neither she nor the police have seen that contractor since then.

Sir, I gave these examples purely to make the wider point that one of the things that causes great devastation in natural disaster is where there is extreme poverty or where the structures have not been the subject of appropriate planning as well as appropriate safeguards in relation to the quality and standard of construction.

I trust and hope, and I speak not just about wider civil society but about Government agencies too, that all of us will sit up and take notice because if there is one memory of 2004, it must be the memory of the natural disasters not just across the region but across the globe.
5.50 p.m.

In those circumstances, Mr. Chairman, it is not only about us doing work to get the new agency for CERO, the Barbados Emergency Management Agency (BEMA) up and running but to do the appropriate other work in other Ministries to ensure that there is reinforcement, in relation to the types of things that must happen.

Sir, not only must we get the Building Code and the Building Authority, but I believe that the Ministry of Housing or the Ministry of Public Works needs to look at the issue of the regulation and licensing of contractors. The

reality is that too many people are being made the victim of improper building work in this country.

Mr. Chairman, having said that, I do not want anybody to believe that all contractors are bad because that is not the case. There are excellent contractors out there and there are some who take serious pride in their work, but we must be able to protect the good ones from the bad reputation that is being given to them by the ones who are fly-by-night impostors.

I also want to say, Mr. Chairman, that I have listened carefully to the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, she spoke like a stateswoman this evening in relation to her knowledge about these matters. Clearly, her length of time in public life has been reflected not just in this debate but in the earlier one which dealt with the airport, and I sure that you would not mind me reflecting on that earlier debate in these circumstances.

Sir, we have accepted in the Ministry of Home Affairs, that there is every good reason why we should seek to implement an emergency programme that is specific to Bridgetown. Indeed, I have given instructions to those preparing the Policy Paper, that the Policy Paper that speaks to drafting instructions for the legislation for the establishment of Barbados Emergency Management Agency, ought to speak to a specific evacuation plan, not only for Bridgetown but for Holetown, Speightstown and other flood prone areas in Barbados.

Barbados is small enough, Mr. Chairman, only 166 square miles. In the last two years, if there is one thing that I have tried to argue and to push forward within CERO has been the re-energising of the District Emergency Organisations.

I feel strongly that before a natural disaster hits us, even without CERO doing its work, everybody who lives on a particular road, should know who are the vulnerable people on that road, who can withstand a hurricane, who needs to be moved prior to a hurricane, and needs to be moved or checked on as soon as the hurricane has passed and the all-clear is given. If we divide Barbados into a number of cells, it then becomes possible to completely minimise loss of life in the course of natural disasters.

I have asked Members of Parliament and other members in civil society to play a serious role, especially at this time, because we do not start back active duty really until June, to place serious attention to your District Emergency Organisations and ensure that there is representation from every district in a community. These are the ones, and not only the police, the fire service or whoever but the people who live on a street are the best people to take care of people who live there.

For example, they are the ones who would know that if you do not give Miss Brathwaite her diabetic medication at a certain time what will happen to her. An officer coming from outside would not know all of those details. I therefore want to urge all civic minded Barbadians to become involved in District Emergency Organisations, because it may be your life, or that of a family member you might be saving, by your participation. Unfortunately, there are too many people who feel that they are over and above that kind of community service.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I do not subscribe to that view, Mr. Chairman, I feel that all of us have a duty. Sir, even though our housing patterns have changed and there is less communication in developments, that is all the more reason for a specific structured community participation and activity. I am asking Members of Parliament to help us play that role in identifying key people.

In the same way that the Honourable Member for the City has indicated that she is seeking to work out within her own constituency specific responses, I urge all Members of Parliament to participate in that meaningful way. There may be added benefits but the purpose of this is to minimise loss of life and property.

Mr. Chairman, I also want to speak to the question of roads. I really do believe that the Ministry of Public Works needs to be able to re-examine its systems for maintenance in this country. In the days when plantations generated the majority of economic activity in this country, they had developed ways of dealing with drainage. There were ponds all across Barbados, wells and gullies were cleaned, there were certain times of the year that you did certain things, and there was an internal logic to the maintenance systems, employed both by the plantations and the vestry system. This is not a debate about blame but one where we need seriously to look at our systems.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that there is no reason for streetlights not functioning and the Minister of Public Works knows how I feel about that, because I cannot accept that you can have major Highways where the streetlights are not working.

I cannot accept either, Mr. Chairman, that you can have situations where poles are cut down in accidents and the insurance companies are not made to carry the costs as part of the settlement. The insurance companies cover the costs for the other car, or for damage or for injury to a person. They should be made to pay for damage to Government property as well, in the form of the streetlights. If you look all along the Highways, you will see them.

I also believe, Mr. Chairman, that if we could commit to one thing in January 2005, I would like it to be that when we de-bush the sides of the roads, we can clear the bush on the same day that we de-bush. It is so simple that it defies comprehension why it is not done. This has nothing to do with political parties, because it happened under the previous administration and this administration. What is it that prevents us from moving the bush from the side of the road, on the same day on which it is cut? It goes back to contribute to the same flooding again, because invariably, the bush blocks up the drains. The water settles and collects again and where you have rain constantly as we have been having, then properties are subjected to flooding.

I am appealing therefore to the Minister of Public Works. I know his heart is in the right place, but I want the systems to follow his heart in this regard. Sometimes, you have to focus on one thing and make it right before doing anything else. The whole of Barbados, I think, would owe you a debt of gratitude, if you were able to deliver that for us.

In addition, I want to speak quickly to the issue of Green Hill and the execution and phasing of the project. Green Hill has been going on now, Mr. Chairman, for over two and a half years. Indeed, I believe you were with me when I did the first site visit. I know that the Ministry intends to pave it shortly. In fact, it was in the newspapers that it would have been paved last week, I believe, but the rains would have prevented anything like that from happening. In fact, what has happened is that there are now six-inch and eight-inch deep craters in the middle of Green Hill, as a result of these recent rains that we have experienced.

Sir, this brings back the point that the Honourable Member for the City made, because Green Hill, like those other roads which she spoke about going down to the West Coast, is also a watercourse and that is why those craters are there. Really, there is probably merit in determining where those roads are that act also as watercourses, we should seek to use a different type of material, as well as we have done in Green Hill to put in appropriate drainage at the same time.

Mr. Chairman, I saw Foster Hall recently and I was shocked because they have just paved Foster Hall in St. John. If those rains continue up there, that paving would come off *en masse* because there is nothing on either side of the road to catch the water, so the water would undermine the structure in circumstances where you are already facing problems with land slippage as a result of water pressure in that part of the world.
6.00 p.m.

Sir, I want to appeal to the Honourable Minister that the Ministry has to be able to treat to the issue of drainage as a fundamental part of the planning for the construction of roads and that in some instances they are going to have to address what is the appropriate form of material to be used on the roads.

Sir, I do not believe that we should spend a million dollars or half of a million dollars to build a small road in a tenantry where only four or five cars may pass on a daily basis. I believe that you can build a sand-seal road and finish with that. There are other roads by reason of the level of traffic count and by reason of their location and the fact that they act as drainage courses which will require us to spend more money.

Therefore, there has to be an approach that allows for the preparing of a comprehensive programme in relation to the roads, to literally analyse each road and determine what is the appropriate methodology as well as to make the determination whether they have appropriately planned for the drainage, such that that road is not undermined within five to ten years and the Government ends up having to spend money in the same location for the same reason again. We do not have the resources to engage in that kind of luxury.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Minister is trying his best to have an aggressive road programme but I really do feel, that unless we get those few things correct in the planning as well as to deal with the other things that I have spoken about in terms of the de-bushing and the streetlights, that you give an impression of a country that is not taking care of its infrastructure. In my view, you cannot have people, I am not talking about tourists now, I am talking about Bajans, feel good about themselves if the environment within which they function does not reflect something that one would be proud of. When we add to that the fact that our primary foreign exchange earner is tourism, then we have double reason why we need to pay greater attention both to our built and natural environment.

I believe that the Ministry of Public Works must be on the front line in this regard, so I support the sums of money that are requested here. Indeed, I would support further generosity with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport if it means that we are going to be able to get back some sense of stability and normalcy in relation to our public infrastructure in this country.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Chairman, we do welcome the belief and hopefully we do anticipate that there would be a building code in Barbados in the not too distant future. Perhaps, the sector that can best utilise this Building Code is

the public service. At one stage all kinds of unregulated contractors were hired by the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission to build all kinds of houses across the length and breadth of Barbados, and several instances of poor workmanship have not been brought to the public's knowledge. In that regard the best place to start for Government would be with a selection of contractors to build urban and rural development houses.

Mr. Chairman, there is definitely a need for the proper maintenance of roads and drainage. Last year during the rainy season some members of the University Drive community took me on a tour to find out why it is that flooding occurs in Goddards Road, St. Stephen's Hill just on the border of the St. Stephen's Primary School. On that trip we discovered that a major source of water causing flooding in St. Stephen's Hill actually comes off of Hinds Hill. There is a little man-made canal that runs parallel to the road and it is supposed to be the case that the water would be collected in this canal, for want of a better expression, coming off the road, but all the drainage systems are blocked. So the water now goes downhill toward University Hill, turns into University Drive and causes havoc rather than running along this man-made canal provided for such runoff, from the main road.

We then discovered that after heavy rains St. Stephen's Hill which is pretty steep by Barbadian standards can actually carry quite a lot of water and when it gets to Golden Acre it cannot make the turn and it goes through the property of the former headmaster of the Deighton Griffith School, Mr. Blackman, and then finds its way into Goddards Road. We discovered all of this from field trips.

The Ministry of Public Works was made aware of this and they immediately responded by way of a visit. However, as we know in Government, no matter how urgent the need, there has to be a line item and so while we were promised that something would have been done by way of the digging of two wells just off the road, nothing so far has been done, so flooding is still occurring in Goddards Road, St. Stephen's as a result of water coming not only from St. Stephen's Hill but also from the Hinds Hill area. Sir, there is definitely a need for the Government to look into such a matter that can be cured as a result of making a couple of wells available for the collection of such water. I do not know how deep the wells would have to be, but they would cause properties not to be damaged.

Sir, a lady in Goddards Road actually showed me where the water comes under her foundation. She has a concrete three-bedroom structure and the water comes from the back and finds its way out to the front of the house through the foundation; amazing. So we are just saying that there is need for proper maintenance.

Mr. Chairman, this is not in the constituency of St. Michael North West, but if you take a drive from the roundabout at the St. Thomas Parish Church to Mile-and-a-Quarter, St. Peter you would find that there is not one streetlight in the area.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: When it rains, that road is treacherous. In fact, a journey on that highway is almost a risk to life and you can understand how it is compounded by heavy rains and strong winds. It is only when you become a member of the rural community that you recognise that there is a substantial difference, by Barbadian standards, in the temperature in St. Michael as compared to the rural districts of Barbados. When you leave St. Michael and journey to St. Lucy you can almost gauge where you are by way of a drop in temperature.
6.10 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: I do it. I have done it for years. That is why I am up and out of bed on mornings.

Mr. Chairman, I understand the financial constraints and all the other things but there are certainly some areas that require immediate attention.

Mr. Chairman, I am concerned with Government's ability to deliver on disaster management and it can only occur if Government is willing to share information. Sir, I know that Government can, in fact, clearly identify where every plot of land is situated in Barbados, and that data is available on a computer programme.

Sir, in terms of managing disaster, I think that it is important for Government to make a step towards assisting constituency representatives. It is very difficult to do house-to-house visits and to document every lot and then to be able to put it on computer, when, in fact, it may be quite possible, and I can see no reason why it is not possible, for such information to be made available to every constituency representative by way of that kind of computer data. It would be a beginning.

Asides.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Government does not have to do it but there are private sector persons involved who have access to such information. It would be very beneficial if we could be in possession of such information where we would be more able to clearly document where every person in Barbados lives and by constituency level. We would be able to identify more clearly the needs of persons, especially the elderly, during such periods.

Mr. Chairman, I know that it is a very costly piece of information but again I am appealing to Government. Sir, I see no reason why within the framework of disaster management that such information cannot be made available to constituency representatives. Sir, as was said by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, it would be extremely difficult for any newcomer to come into a district, who would be able to identify those persons who would be in need of such assistance during such a period.

Mr. Chairman, we are, therefore, extending a hand to Government in the process of disaster management, with the understanding that it may very well assist us in being able to manage our constituencies even better and may provide some degree of benefit and advantage if such information is made available. Therefore, the bigger picture has to be our concern for our capacity to manage in times of disaster and not whether or not an incumbent would be given an advantage as a result of having such information and data. Sir, there are some persons out there, who can, in fact, make it available, but at very exorbitant prices, and poor parties cannot buy such programmes, even though they would be extremely meaningful and important.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of disaster management, I have alluded to it in a previous debate but I think I can be forgiven, if I refer again to that area along Highway 1, between the University of the West Indies roundabout and Holders Hill, is a disaster waiting to happen because there is no other way out. You cannot get to the other ridge, except going through Holders Hill or coming back to the University of the West Indies roundabout. Therefore, between University roundabout and Holders Hill, any time that there is an emergency, I cannot see how those thousands of people would be evacuated in quick time. Perhaps again we need to consider how we can build an exit or entry road in the event of such a disaster.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of disaster management, we also have to take into consideration the way in which Barbados is terraced, that is, as one moves from the coastal area, you are going up in steps and, therefore, your safety is more guaranteed when you get closer and closer to the highest ridge, which is in the centre of the island, almost into Christ Church, St. Philip and into St. Peter. Therefore, getting to the higher level would be very critical in times of disaster management and, therefore, we have to do it as a matter of duty to make an access road between the University of the West Indies roundabout and Holders Hill, onto the next ridge. It must be done because there is no way in which one could get away from a disaster in the event that something unusual happens. We have heard a lot of "Kick-em Jenny" and I suppose now since we have had the Asian Tsunami disaster that there would be some thought given to how we can better manage that process.

Mr. Chairman, I want to say that there is another area to which I have alluded, being the Brandons/Brighton area. There is only one entry and exit, and since Spring Garden is now heavily used for all kinds of reasons, it is only but fair that the residents of Brighton/Brandons be given an alternative exit in the event that they have to be evacuated. They have made representation to previous representatives. They have also made representation to me on this matter and it is vital that Government thinks in terms of making those residents feel more comfortable by providing an alternative entry and exit and by looking at the question of flooding within the Brighton/Brandons area.

Sir, in light of the fact that we are going to put so much emphasis on 2007, I repeat, give greater comfort to those persons living in the Brandon/Brighton area, particularly because we are now thinking in terms of expanding and developing the immediate environs of Kensington Oval.

Mr. Chairman, I make this plea once again because I think it is crucial that in all that is being said and done, that we consider the importance of safety and disaster management in those particular areas.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I wish to extend prosperity to all Barbadians in this year 2005 and I trust that this year would bring us closer together as a people, that we could at least pursue some of the plans that would serve us well as Barbadians.

I particularly like the idea of the volunteerism, that is, working together to ensure that individuals in the community, the pregnant women, the senior citizens, the shut-ins, young babies and children, would be looked after whenever there is a disaster.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has finished on a note and has mentioned some areas, and I agree with him. Sir, in that short space of time, I have listed eleven communities in my constituency which have no exits. I can talk of Bridgefield and Jury Road, where there has been massive development but the developers did not even think of widening those roads. On numerous occasions, I have been asking the Ministry of Works for assistance in that respect.

I can talk of areas in Arthur Seat and in Spring Farm, which have hundreds of people living there, with no way out. Sir, it is the same with places such as Dukes Tenantry, Lion Castle, Mount Hillaby, Farmers, Exchange, Grand View, Shop Hill in general, Bibby's Lane, Carringtons Village, Upper Cane Field, and areas of that nature.

6.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, let me get to the most substantive area. I am extremely disappointed in the networking that should take place among the agencies of Government. The Honourable Member for St. James Central spoke about the cleaning of wells and that the debris is left alongside the road to be washed back in when rain falls again.

I believe that Sanitation Service Authority, the Rural Development Commission, Urban Development Commission, the Ministry of Health, the Utilities Department, Ministry of Housing, and the Ministry of Public Works should have a closer relationship when it comes to dealing with a number of issues pertaining to the environment of this country. Therefore, I make a special call for more dialogue and networking to ensure that we give Barbadians a full package.

Mr. Chairman, I want to commend the Honourable Minister and his staff for working hard to bring the Building Advisory Committee to fruition because too many poor people suffer as a result of some of the issues raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, who spoke about the house of the old lady which had no steel. Sir, a lot of poor people want to advance but do not know what to expect from some builders and they suffer in the long run. I believe that builders should be struck off the list if they treat human beings in this fashion.

Mr. Chairman, there is no other parish in this Barbados that gets the level of rainfall as St. Thomas. I am disappointed with the Barbados Water Authority that having met with them for more than a year that they have not met with the people of St. Thomas to advise them of what can be done to dam the gullies in the parish so that some of the water can be put to proper use which goes down to St. James, St. Michael and other parishes which devastate those communities.

Sir, with all the technology and training, I believe that some gullies could be dammed so that the water can be put to productive use. I want to encourage the Barbados Water Authority to put on their Wellington boots, go into the gullies and see how best to solve the situation because, Mr. Chairman, I am appalled about what is happening in these gullies.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the Ministry of Public Works for the upgrade that is being done on the roads in St. Thomas. Sir, as you know, Bucks Road links from Highway 2A through to Christie Village, Shop Hill and other communities in the parish. It is an excellent link road that has been out of commission for more than four years. I want to publicly thank the Ministry of Public Works, particularly the workers at the depot at Bagatelle, who work assiduously to ensure that the roads in St. Thomas are well-maintained.

Mr. Chairman, there are still some serious challenges because the road at Lion Castle which collapsed in May last year, which is another excellent link road if you come from Vacluse, Deanes Village and Hopewell, is still not fixed. The Minister has given me some assurance that I would get help and I trust it would not be far in the future that the road would be repaired and that the bridge would be fixed, which collapsed when the Barbados Water Authority put the necessary pipes in the area.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of problems in the country have come because a number of the things being done are not customary to our culture. Sir, sidewalks are being built by machine and all the water remains on the highway. I am not a builder but I have commonsense which tells me that in the past sidewalks were built with cuts in them so that the water could filter off the roads into gutters and make its way elsewhere but the volume of water on the highways now clearly indicates that sidewalks should be done with little cuts to allow the water to run off.

The other big challenge I have seen for the last year is that the owners of plantations, in an effort to get the mechanical harvesters onto their property, have ploughed the land onto the sidewalk so that the mechanical harvester can enter the plantation from any location. This led to the lost of much topsoil and destroyed the gutters which filtered the water.

Mr. Chairman, I had the privilege of being raised in a country community. My mother rented a property at Springvale but she never put the drains on the property to run downhill. The drains were always put horizontally and there were cane holes which had tremendous impact on water drainage. Sir, these practices worked well for us for centuries and we should get back to them in order to hold our land in tack.

Mr. Chairman, it was a hurtful experience to see many developers in the parish excavating all the ponds, suck wells, and watercourses for road building by pushing garbage into these natural watercourses so that the water has no where to go. I can speak about Shop Hill, Ginger Lily in Cane Garden, Padmore Village and Welches where a lot of debris and marl have been filled into watercourses and if this is allowed to continue, it will throw the water into another community and cause the type of catastrophe we saw in 1995 in Weston and Holetown.

It is not a wise thing to do and a lot of people are using the excuse that they are building play parks or putting up structures. It is wrong for business people to sell properties to other individuals claiming that it is good land but when people want to build their houses, they have to dig fifteen or twenty feet to find foundation. I think this is immoral and I

believe that the Town and Country Planning Department has to do a little more in helping to stave off that type of practice.

Mr. Chairman, I spoke about the areas of Chapman Village, Springvale, Carrington Village, Mount Hillaby and Bloomsbury. These areas grew sugar cane, bananas, sweet potatoes and yams for many years but people have now bought these lands from the plantations to put up their houses. Some of these people have done it the legal way and some people have not but many of these houses are now threatened by land slippage. This is very unfortunate because most of these people do not have the wherewithal to resite themselves, another property or the necessary assistance to relocate. I believe that Government has to further assist these people in being resited and afterwards ensure that no other development takes place on these spots, otherwise five years from now, we will have the same challenge again.

The final area I would like to talk about is the manner in which roads are now built. Again, I look at the road coming from Orange Hill.
6.30 p.m.

I believe that the disabled should be accommodated but the sidewalks are so wide that they can accommodate two sets of wheelchairs traveling in the same direction. I believe that the roads could have been wider or the sidewalks could be narrower to facilitate the volume of traffic that goes to Orange Hill.

Sir, the most disturbing thing is that there is something like an island built at the bottom of Orange Hill and it is the most dangerous thing that I have ever seen built in Barbados after the one in Christ Church going in the direction of St. Christopher.

I believe that it is about time that the Ministry of Public Works puts either a roundabout or traffic lights in that location at Orange Hill because it is difficult for motorists traveling from Greenwich Village and Lancaster to cross the road to go to Orange Hill or to cross Highway 2A. We have had serious accidents in that area and I believe that this kind of activity should take place in the Ministry of Public Works to ensure that nobody is injured or loses their life as a result of what I have seen there.

I believe that we should have more dialogue with local people to hear about his/her views and what has transpired and some of the possible solutions to those kinds of challenges rather than having to spend millions of dollars to correct something that should never have been there. I do not believe they should have been there. I am not an architect but I believe that I have commonsense that tells me that it is not the best thing for a community.

Sir, the worst thing in the world is to go into small communities such as Greenwich Village and Orange Hill,

where the roads have been widened but no mechanisms have been put in place to make life easier for those individuals who live there and those who have to travel there to work or visit friends.

Finally, I wish to lend my support to the Supplementary that is being offered here and encourage Barbadians that when they are in doubt to ask a question. They should go through the correct channels of the Town and Country Planning Department when they want to carry out constructions so that five years later, when they did not ask Town and Country Planning for permission to build, that they do not see their lifetime investment go down the drain as a result of not complying with the law.

Therefore, I wish to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and commend the Minister and his team for doing excellent work in helping to rehabilitate and construct roads to make life in Barbados a little more comfortable for all of us.

I thank you.

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

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, given the limited time left I will try to be very brief.

Sir, first of all let me say that I am in full support of the request being made by the Ministry of Public Works. I do not think that any of us will be suffering from any illusion that the task before the Ministry of Transport and Works is a very large one and where and whenever possible we can lend support to any request for funds so that they can advance their work, I think on Both Sides of the House we should give them the support.

I am not going to say much, if anything at all, about the building code. I think that all of us have come to the realisation, some a long time ago and some more recently, that there is a need for the planning development work on the Building Code to be concluded so that we could use that Building Code in order to improve the standards and quality of work that is done on structures in Barbados.

Sir, earlier it was mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West about the quality of the work done by some of the smaller contractors of the programme of the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission. Sir, while I will commend the Government for the wonderful work that it has done by empowering some business persons in Barbados, namely the contractors, I want to agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West that there must be better quality control and monitoring of the work done by some of those small contractors.

The Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission are in the business of providing training for small business persons. I dare say that this training can go a long way for those contractors who are engaged in those programmes because invariably the recipients of the work done through the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission are persons who can be considered financially starved. In the housing programme of the Rural Development Commission and Urban Development Commission the groups that are targeted for this help are those who would find it difficult otherwise to improve the quality of their structures.

Sir, that is why it is extremely important that those small contractors who are recruited by these two commissions to improve the living conditions of that class of Barbadian, should remain committed to their task. Sir, whatever assistance that the Government can give to them by way of training should be provided, so that they certainly, as an entire group, can improve the quality of the work that is done by them.

Mr. Chairman, I want to join those who spoke about the need for more de-bushing in Barbados. In this case I am not speaking about the crash programme that the Government runs at Christmas for three or four months which is done by the Ministry of Health. I am speaking about the de-bushing that is required along the streets. It would serve three purposes.

Sir, serious de-bushing along the streets will reduce some of the fear that resides with pedestrians who have to walk fairly lengthy stretches of roadway, especially at night. I have some areas in my constituency which I have identified for immediate treatment.

Secondly, the de-bushing of the streets allows the streets to regain their original width. Too many streets in Barbados have been made narrower and narrower as a result of the bush and grass that have been overtaking the streets. It is becoming extremely dangerous for motorists to manoeuvre in some areas. The Ministry of Public Works needs to pay closer attention to this level of bush and grass that is taking over some of the streets. Thirdly, the removal of some of this bush and grass would allow for more seamless flow of water to the intended collection points.

Mr. Chairman, I made a call in this Honourable Chamber for more attention to be paid by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to signage in Barbados. The situation continues to cry out for treatment. I am not talking only about signs that are now inverted, broken or need replacing. If we go into some areas and you see the number of inverted and broken signs, not only in residential areas

but all over the country, it tells us that we need to move with a higher level of seriousness on a signage programme in Barbados.

6.40 p.m.

Sir, we still have areas in Barbados that do not have any signs. In most cases, these would be the recently established developments and it becomes very difficult for persons to identify the exact location of persons living in some areas. I think that closer attention could be paid to this particular issue and the Ministry of Public Works working with the property developers, should ensure that the time interval which elapses between the completion of a residential development and the provision of signs in those areas should be as short as possible.

Mr. Chairman, the other issue I would want to address quickly is the need for more vigilance on the part of officers at the depots, in respect to the maintenance programme for the roads. I would agree that in order to deal in a comprehensive way with the road situation in Barbados, it will be extremely costly but, Mr. Chairman, I do not agree and I will not support the continued lack of proper attention to road maintenance.

There is no reason why so many potholes in Barbados should be going unattended for such long periods of time. Sir, even in some cases when they are attended to, there is no reason that we should be using marl to plug holes, when we know that all it takes is for some rain to come along and the holes will re-appear. If we need to allocate larger sums to the Ministry of Public Works in order to use hot mix solely in the pothole patching programme, I think that should be the case.

Mr. Chairman, when marl is used to patch holes, the folk who live in those areas and have to traverse those areas, think that we are making sport. It is even more ridiculous to see the use of marl along major highways.

Mr. Chairman, I beseech the Ministry of Public Works and indeed, the Government to pay closer attention to the requests for the upgrade and repair of roads in residential developments. As a politician, I think it is important for all of us to recognise that particular class of Barbados as well, has some genuine requests.

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North is saying that they pay more taxes but you will find that in more cases than not, when you go into one of the built-up residential developments, there are one or two common requests. They either want the roads rehabilitated, or want some natural gas installed in their areas.

It is true that in a proportionate way they pay more taxes but we find, and I have this experience in my constituency, that in many of the residential developments now, the roads have fallen into a state of disrepair. The residents there have a common request and we have to meet more of those requests coming from the folk in those areas.

We have it in Ruby Park, Long Bay Development and Crane Park North, where the roads there are disgraceful. We have it in Crane Park South where the roads there have gone back to marl tracks because they were not done properly in the first place. We have it in Sargeants Park where the roads there are marl and dirt tracks.

Sir, while I understand what we are trying to do in the Rural and Urban Development Commissions, in their road programmes by building roads in the communities that never had roads previously, we should not lose sight of the fact that there are other residential areas which may be classified as having these common requests and that is the rehabilitation of the roads.

I have written to the Minister of Public Works, drawing to his attention the acute needs of the Government road programme to pay a little more attention to those types of persons, while recognising that the work of the Urban and the Rural Development Commissions should continue in the communities where there were never any roads.

Sir, I close by making contact with a point made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East about the role of the District Emergency Organisation. I join in her call for persons who are civic minded to participate in the work of the District Emergency Organisations.

I also want to use the Floor of the House to congratulate the St. Philip South District Emergency Organisation for the wonderful work that they do during the storm periods and outside of the storm periods in keeping the message before the constituents. Certainly, if I were to describe the effort of the St. Philip South District Emergency Organisation during the last storm, it was exemplary work.

In this connection, I would also want to congratulate that group of 20 or more young persons from the Crane area for the wonderful work they did, braving all of the showers and the high winds during Hurricane Ivan, going to make sure that as many as eight or nine roofs were replaced. It was a little risky on their part but you always hear about the negative things that the youth do, therefore when they do something positive, they should be congratulated.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, I just want to make a very brief intervention in support of this Resolution, and to indicate that the Ministry of Public Works is facing a

great challenge, as a result of the unseasonal weather, which we have had over the last three months in Barbados.

Sir, I believe this requires the Ministry to be strategic in its approach. It obviously cannot do everything. Therefore, the depots which function in support of our communities, need to use the intelligence which I believe it has, and certainly should have, to identify those areas which are known to be problematic and zero in on those.

Sir, I want to congratulate the Minister, the Honourable Member for St. George North for the tremendous amount of work he has done, especially on the Highway Construction and Maintenance Programme, servicing the roundabouts, re-paving many roads in the City and the major network around the country. However, at the level of the community, we have some peculiar problems. For example, once it rains, automatically I would know exactly where to go in the constituency of Christ Church East because there will be a problem.

6.50 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Public Works in giving relief to citizens in our community needs to use that same approach. The area from Pegwell Boggs through to Chancery Lane, an agricultural basin which is identified in the Integrated Rural Development Scheme, has in it elements of rural communities which do not have paved roads. Just a stone's throw or two house widths from the Enterprise Main Road, a well-paved main road, going from Oistins up through Chancery Lane, there is a tenantry road running parallel which has what we would call a little recess, a saucer shape, and water settles in that area, and when it rains heavily Mr. Mayers and his family would have to use a boat in order to be able to get out of their house. Sir, immediately, I know that you would need a pump from the depot to pump that water off and to do certain basic works until such time as a road is put in place. Those are the realities which our citizens are facing as a result of the unusual rains.

Additionally, in the area of Gibbons Boggs and Ealing Grove, agricultural areas, the challenge of access to agriculture lots has become a problem because the old tar road which they have, has grown narrow because of overgrown khuskhus grass on the edges of the road and the drainage problem caused by the heavy rainfall. Therefore, the Ministry of Public Works would obviously need to focus on the cleaning and the pumping of those wells because that is an area that is known to flood.

Similarly, in relation to road damage, there is an area on Pilgrim Road, next to the Pilgrim Road Nazarene Church, which does not have a paved road, and naturally any marl road would tend to be cut with grooves on it as a result of the heavy rains. We have had to contact the depot in order to get some temporary relief there. In the case of Pond Hill, which

is between Pilgrim Place A and B, a road caved in many months ago but because of other challenges the Ministry of Public Works has not been able to address that as yet. So I hope that this supplementary would go somewhere towards being able to address that road which caved in at the Pond Hill to give those residents some relief, so that they would not have to make their way across the temporary road.

Sir, as soon as this rain eases and we are able to have some dry days, we look forward to having the re-paving of what we call the top road in Parish Land from the Providence Church going East towards the St. Bartholomew School which is an asphalt surface road, which has become very heavily pitted over the many years of its use.

Sir, in supporting this Resolution, I raise those issues for the approach which the Ministry of Public Works needs to adopt in a situation where there is so much to do across the island. They really need to zero in on those areas which are known to be problematic and which, like a recurring decimal, will be the ones which would pop up on each and every occasion.

Although I wanted to be very brief, Mr. Chairman, I could not take my seat without drawing attention to a few more issues in relation to flooding because of the heavy rains. There is a problem in Inch Marlow near to Miss Lashley's house which is a natural catchment and natural settlement area for water coming from as far up as the Chancery Lane main road. There is a well on her property which was put there by the Ministry of Public Works but because of the way in which the drainage into the well runs the water often makes its way toward or into her house. Again, I believe that the depot at South Point needs to be more frequent in its visits to that area to give some relief to poor Miss Lashley and her neighbours.

Mr. Chairman, I therefore support this supplementary in order to bring relief to these communities and I look forward to a vigorous and robust plan of action from the Ministry of Public Works. I support the calls made by other Honourable Members for the Ministry of Public Works to use the skills which are available in its depots to go into communities such as the one I mentioned at Enterprise and the others which are not heavily trafficked, and do some work because they do not require extensive or expensive roads, but require two concrete curves, some marl underneath, some tar, some sand-seal or even some asphalt over the surfaces. Like everybody else in the society, the residents in these communities want to be able to get in and out of their homes whether there be sunshine or rainfall.

Mr. Chairman, separate from the work of the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission, which will deal with the larger communities, I believe that there is much that our depots can and I hope

will do to bring some relief to the citizens in the smaller communities of Barbados who are affected in a very severe manner by the unseasonal weather that we have had.

Sir, I want to salute the Honourable Member for St. George North for his efforts thus far. I am sure that under his direction we would be able to address these issues that I raised on behalf of the people of Christ Church East.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your indulgence.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to thank all Honourable Members for their support in this supplementary exercise. I also want to thank you, Sir, for the work that you started when you were at the Ministry, especially for putting in place the technical advice which we now have from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation, through Mr. Matthews. He is there because the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Cooperation is paying for his service along with a small stipend from the Government of Barbados. His duty is to help to review the Building Code and to go to the public and to educate the public about what is happening within the Building Code.

So far, Mr. Chairman, he has appeared on television and on radio and he has published a number of articles in the Press about the Building Code and the proposed Building Act. He has also met with the professionals such as surveyors, architects and engineers and with the artisans. He has also held meetings across Barbados within the communities.

Mr. Chairman, we are trying our best to put the Act in place but we have to do it in such a way that the public would be educated.

Mr. Chairman, I want to assure Honourable Members that there is a Building Code that was done by the Barbados National Standards Institute along with other stakeholders within the Ministry, with engineers, a number of artisans and professionals within Barbados and from input from the public.

Mr. Chairman, the Building Code cannot be made mandatory until the Act has been approved by this Parliament. That Building Code is about the same size or thickness of the present telephone directory that we have. There are thousands of requirements within the Code which must be complied with prior to the obtainment of a building permit. When this Act is passed, we will have persons to police the Code to ensure that builders do the things that are required within the Act.

Mr. Chairman, it is very important that we have this Act because over the last couple of months, as we have noticed, we had problems with flooding due to the heavy

rains not only in Barbados but across the Caribbean. Indeed, the weather patterns of the world seem to have changed. Mr. Chairman, as the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has said, when it rains, it rains. In some months it rains for long periods, and then there is the dry season. We therefore, have to be mindful of that and to be able to put a code in place, in order to protect citizens.
7.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, Government can only do what it can but as citizens of Barbados, we must also play our part. There are still a number of Barbadians who are putting heavy equipment such as beds, old stoves, *et cetera*, into drainage system or are throwing their garbage into bushy areas. At this time in my constituency, for example, there are a lot of cow-itch vines growing. These vines are not growing on Government's land but on lands that are owned by a number of Barbadians who are living abroad and who have not made it possible for their lands to be cleaned.

Mr. Chairman, I want to encourage the Ministry of Health and the other Ministries which relate with the Ministry of Public Works, to let us work hand-in-hand to ensure that persons who own these properties would get them cleared. It is a big task but we have to do it. Sir, I want to appeal to Barbadians not to throw their garbage into these areas but to call the Ministry of Health or the Sanitation Department, who will be willing to help with the collection of such garbage.

Similarly, I believe we must also call on land owners such as plantation owners, who have large tracts of land leading towards the roadside, especially in rural Barbados. As one passes through St. Thomas, St. George and St. Joseph, one would see plantations which have large tracts of lands that are not being utilised, where the grass is growing from these lands, onto the roadside. Mr. Chairman, this is a heavy task for the workers who are weeding and I want to salute all those weeders at the Ministry of Public Works who are trying their best.

Mr. Chairman, we have now put in place a team of workers for each constituency. Each constituency should have at least six heavy-duty weeders to keep the surroundings clean but we can only do so with the help of those persons who own land. Sir, we have not only put in place heavy-duty weeders, we have also put in place heavy-duty workers for the Drainage Unit. Sir, before we would have had flooding in Headleys Land but that does not happening anymore. Flooding is now a thing of the past in Headleys Land. Sir, in the City of Bridgetown, despite the recent heavy rains, we have not had any major flooding.

Mr. Chairman, the Drainage Unit continues to do a lot of work but of course more has to be done. Sir, I have noted that the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has mentioned

the area of St. Stephens Hill and I am going to ask the Drainage Unit to look at that area and to some of the other areas that have been identified by Honourable Members. In fact, I am going to note the speeches of Honourable Members and look at them to see how best we can be guided in our planning for this year's programme.

Mr. Chairman, I want to give Honourable Members the assurance that we are, indeed, planning the year's programme at this time. In fact, only yesterday we had a planning exercise for the full day, in which we not only looked at the Building Code but to the proposed amendments to the Architects Act, and to traffic management proposals, among other things.

Mr. Chairman, we have recognised that there is, indeed, a need for lighting on the highways of Barbados. I did not realise that there were no lights on the stretch of road leading from Simpson's Motors to Mile-and-a-Quarter. We will look at that to see how best we could facilitate the lighting of that highway. As Honourable Members have said, it can be very dangerous travelling along that highway when the rain falls and there is no lighting.

Mr. Chairman, as far as the other highways are concerned, we have noticed that there are a number of cases where vehicles knock these lights down and where insurance companies go unpunished by not compensating the Ministry of Public Works for these damaged lights. Sir, we have to be able to make it mandatory for insurance companies to compensate the Ministry of Public Works for those lights that are being knocked down by motorists.

Mr. Chairman, whenever any of those lights are knocked down by motorists, it costs Government almost US\$2,000 to replace them. Therefore, we have to make it mandatory for insurance companies to compensate the Ministry of Public Works. Sir, I have been asking the Chief Technical Officer in the Ministry of Works to tell me what is the best system because sometimes it is very difficult to detect who would have knocked the lights down.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Police Force, working with the Ministry of Public Works and insurance companies, could help us to detect some of these things, as it is costing Government a lot of money. Sir, even though we have replaced all the lighting on the stretch of road between the roundabout at Life of Barbados and the one at Graeme Hall, we have noticed that two of them have been knocked down within the last two weeks, which is indeed a very trying time for us at the Ministry of Public Works.

Mr. Chairman, Honourable Members have also spoken of the need to have an exit on Highway 1. I want to give Honourable Members the assurance that the Honourable Member for St. James Central and I have recently made a

tour of that stretch of road. The Honourable Member has identified an exit from Johnson Road, near Jordans Supermarket, where we can exit near Chapel and proceed through Fitts Village, onto Chapel Gap, and onto Holders Hill.

Mr. Chairman, that is one of the ways but we are looking at other ways of exit because we recognise that members of the public and residents in those parts of Barbados are asking for an exit in case that something happens, even though we are hoping that nothing would happen. I will give Honourable Members the assurance that we will put it in this year's Estimates.

Mr. Chairman, as far as concrete roads are concerned, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has been asking the Ministry for such roads for a number of years now. I know the Honourable Member is tired of asking the Ministry of Public Works for a pilot project on concrete roads. Sir, concrete roads are very expensive but we will give the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown the assurance that we will try our best to do a pilot project at the Sea View Road.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I hate to interrupt my colleague. It is not fair to say that the concrete road is more expensive. The concrete road costs more to put on the ground but does not need repairs for at least 25 years. Therefore, in the end, it is less expensive than the asphalt road.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, we know that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown has been at pains to point out that we definitely need to have concrete roads, especially in the western areas of Barbados. We will give the Honourable Member her wish and will look at concrete roads for Sea View. We have been told that the roads that we have started are having a number of problems, including a number of potholes. Mr. Chairman, there will be reorganisation within the Drainage Unit. They have been working hard over the years but I think that it is time that we not only reorganise the unit but look at a comprehensive plan for the entire island as it relates not only to flooding and cleaning drains in Barbados but to educate the public about what should be done in such cases. 7.10 p.m.

We have encountered another problem in the St. Michael area, especially Black Rock and Bank Hall, where householders are directing water from their kitchens onto the streets. We are looking at a comprehensive programme to assist residents in those areas to acquire proper soakaways. The Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Social Transformation, with the help of Government, will be looking at a programme where we would encourage householders to build soakaways in an effort to keep the water from running off their properties onto the public road.

Mr. Chairman, there is a need to amend the Addendum to Head 45. The amount should read \$1 624 455 and not \$1 624 445.

Sir, with those remarks, I beg to move that Head 45 as amended stand part.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

HEAD 23 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Explanatory Note to Head 23 be amended as set out in the Schedule II to the Resolution.

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

The question that the Explanatory Note to Head 23 be amended was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 48 – MINISTRY OF HOUSING, LANDS AND THE ENVIRONMENT – \$344 080

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to move that Head 48 stand part.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. G. A. CLARKE, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of the Money Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. G. A. CLARKE, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the Resolution was read a first and second time and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today's Sitting and I beg to move that this House be now adjourned until Tuesday, January 25, 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

Sir, it is hoped that we would be able to proceed with the Forensic Procedures and DNA Identification Bill on that occasion.

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

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, January 25, 2005 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
7.16 p.m.

