
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, November 07, 2006.

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.)(Leader of the Opposition)

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

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

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Q.C.

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

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL, (Chairman of Committees)

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

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

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of Energy and the Environment)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economic Affairs and Development), (Leader of the House)

Hon. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A. (Minister of Social Transformation)

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc., J.P. (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office)

Hon. A. P. WOOD, B.Sc., M. Sc., M.Phil, J.P. (Minister of Education, Youth Affairs and Sports)

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B. Sc., J.P. (Minister of Housing and Lands)

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

Dr. the 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.

Hon. C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance),(Minister of State, Ministry of Finance)

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C., (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)

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, October 31, 2006.

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, October 31, 2006, be confirmed subject to any omissions, corrections and/or observations.

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

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

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Value Added Tax (Refund) (F. A. C. Collymore Scholarship Fund) (No. 2), Order, 2006
2. Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Securities Commission for the financial year ended March 31, 2006.

CONGRATULATORY AND/OR OBITUARY SPEECHES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is perhaps an unusual experience for me to speak in these terms since I have never yet enjoyed the state of marriage, and it would be remiss of this Parliament - I would not seek to give the same remarks that I am told that the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago gave to the Prime Minister on the occasion of his wedding - if we did not seek to offer our congratulation and best and warmest wishes for health and prosperity to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and his new wife.

House 115 Sequence 2

10.20 a.m.

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Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, over the course of the summer recess, the Right Honourable Prime Minister would have changed his status and would have, indeed, entered into what is commonly called in literature "a marital bliss". In the circumstances, I think that since this is on record, the first Prime Minister ever to do this while holding office, this Parliament wishes to join in the other good wishes that the Right Honourable Prime Minister would have received from across Barbados and in the region.

We indeed hope this would be both an occasion and status for him, that would make him even happier, would cause him to recommit himself even deeper, and to ensure that our comments are taken, not only to him, but indeed his 'better half', in ensuring that they can know that the good wishes of this Parliament and our prayers rest with them, as they embark upon this different stage of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I apologise to Parliament but the circumstances of either myself or the Right Honourable Prime Minister not being here together over the course of the last three sittings, since the summer recess, would have meant that this would not have been done before. Sir, I am not equipped to speak on these matters in any great depth and therefore I have every confidence that others will speak today and therefore I cannot offer any guidance or advice, other than to say that my prayers and best wishes are with the Right Honourable Prime Minister and his wife.

Mr. Speaker, in the circumstances I believe that an appropriate Congratulatory Message from the Parliament of Barbados ought to be sent to the Honourable Member and Mrs. Arthur, reflecting our sense of happiness on their own determination to spend the rest of their lives together, till death do they part.

Hon. Dame BILLIE MILLER: I would like to add my voice to second this Resolution to the recent marriage of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. I would like to add congratulations and if I may say so, I do believe that wedded bliss becomes the Honourable Member. It is said that it would lead to a gentler, more settled and more satisfying quality of life, and I believe that we see all of those signs in the Right Honourable Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, those of us who labour in this Honourable Chamber well know that the care and burden of the weighty matters of State, which we have so often to entertain here, do need to be leavened by the warmth, the loving and just being there of the family: the husband, the wife, the children, and everything that it stands for.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish to offer to the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and to his new wife, good health, long life and much happiness for this new journey on which they have embarked.

Mr. Speaker, I am much obliged

MR. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, it is only fitting that I associate this Chair with the Messages of Congratulations and take this opportunity to wish the Right Honourable Prime Minister many years of married bliss.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2

RESUMPTION ON THE MOTION FOR THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TO TAKE NOTE OF AND APPROVE THE DRAFT "NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN OF BARBADOS 2005-

2025:GLOBAL EXCELLENCE, BARBADIAN TRADITIONS”.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I rise at the beginning of this Session today to make my contribution to the National Strategic Plan, spanning the period 2005-2025, entitled: “Global Excellence, Barbadian Tradition.”

Mr. Speaker, since I have become a Honourable Member of Parliament and Member of Cabinet, this administration has been involved in a number of consultations, through which we have been able to solicit the views and to gain from the particular expertise that resides in this country on many matters of national importance. I recall the many consultations that we have had on national economy and once a year, for a number of years now, we have been assembling a good team in the spirit of tripartism to reflect and to discuss on matters of strategic economic importance, with the view of effecting improvements in the way we manage this economy.

This administration has also taken a decision to participate in the Cricket World Cup, 2007, and we have been happy and are extremely pleased to be hosting the Finals on April 28, 2007. We have also taken a decision to initiate discussions on the establishment of a national youth service, on which more would be said later.

Mr. Speaker, another important discussion taking place at the national level, to which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East would have spoken to us drawing on the expertise of university professors and other persons to have some input on the strategic direction in which this country should go. Sir, we are very proud to have brought to this Honourable Chamber for discussion, the Draft National Strategic Plan.

Sir, some persons would have spoken before me and would have located their presentation in a particular context, which seeks to let the Barbadian public at large and further afield know that this Barbados administration has set for itself some clearly defined Goals, which are encapsulated in our National Strategic Plan.

Mr. Speaker, before we go into the details of the National Strategic Plan, we certainly have to reflect from where we have come, so as to better appreciate where we are today and in so doing, to even better appreciate where it is we want to propel this economy by the year 2025.

10.30 a.m.

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Hon. A.P. WOOD: Sir, I am not going to use this occasion to lament on the response from the Opposition because other Honourable Members have done that but it

struck me as a little strange, to say the least, that on an occasion of a serious discussion of such an important document, in this Honourable Chamber, those who are professing that they want to take over the reins of power in this country and lead the management of the economic, social and political affairs, have missed a wonderful opportunity to tell the public of Barbados what is their view of a strategic direction for this country. It was even more strange that the Leader of the Opposition did not see it fit to respond to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East but that it was left to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and, of course, the best use was not made of the opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, we are on the verge of the 40th anniversary of our Independence and, we have achieved a lot as a small nation during those 40 years. One of the defining characteristics of both Administrations over those 40 years is that while things were done and initiatives were undertaken to move the economy forward over those 40 years, it was done with a conviction and a commitment to keep people at the centre of our development.

Sir, from Independence to now, the development of Barbados has people at the centre and, Mr. Speaker, within the context of the National Strategic Plan, this is clearly identified at Goal 3 which speaks to building social capital and, elsewhere in the plan, you would see that this Administration will continue to put people at the centre of our development.

Sir, over the last 40 years, we have had people-centred development. Sir, within the Plan and given the way this Barbados Labour Party Administration has been doing its business over the past 12 years, people remain at the centre of our development.

Mr. Speaker, I want to speak about some of the things we have been able to achieve over those last 40 years so that I could project this theme of, “People at the Centre of our Development” in my discourse on the National Strategic Plan. Sir, over the last 40 years, our development has followed a most interesting path. If you look back at 1966, the year of our Independence, agriculture was dominant but we have seen the first real sign of economic diversification with Governments of the day showing a real commitment to the adoption of Professor Lewis’, “Industrialisation by Invitation Model”. Sir, that was important because there was a view at the time that the agriculture sector could no longer absorb, in Professor Lewis’ terms, the surplus labour, so we needed to effect some level of economic diversification so the surplus labour that could not have been absorbed in agriculture could be absorbed within other sectors of the economy.

We saw some industrial base being created and manufacturing coming on stream but, over the years, we

looked at our structural transformation and economic diversification. We see today that the economy is heavily dependent on tourism and financial services. Sir, all along, great attention was paid to the development of our human capital and to issues of social and economic justice.

Mr. Speaker, we have been able to achieve the status of the best developing country forty years on and that is not by my words because you could check the United Nations Human Development Index and you would see where we are placed. You could check the results of the World Economic Forum Survey on economic competitiveness where Barbados is ranked among the 125 countries surveyed 40 years on. Sir, based on the attention that both Administrations would have paid to education, we have been able to develop a quality educational product. We have very strong, stable institutions, key political and legal institutions. We have good infrastructure and developed telecommunications infrastructure. We have a reasonably high per capita income and a good quality of life.

Mr. Speaker, attention is being paid also to the development of the financial system, which functions within a good regulatory framework and, as was discussed last time around, this is evidenced by the fact, that apart from the problems in the early 1980s with the BCCI and Trade Confirmers, there have been no concerns over the functioning of the financial system in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West came in here, notwithstanding the success we have received with regard to building of the regulatory capacity of the financial system... Sir, we said we are not resting on our laurels. Sir, a few weeks ago, legislation was passed in this Honourable Chamber for the establishment of an insurance scheme for deposits at commercial banks in excess of \$25 000.

Mr. Speaker, in the not too distant future, we hope that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West or the Honourable Prime Minister would be coming to speak to us, even seeking to further strengthen our capacity to regulate the financial system. Sir, I have not mentioned the developments we have made with regards to the health care sector in Barbados, developments with respect to providing safety nets, the attention being paid to the National Insurance system in Barbados but, while all of this was going on, people remained at the centre of our development.

Mr. Speaker, I have also said earlier that successive Governments continued to support our free education model, recognising that our development depends crucially on the quality and mix of our skills. This is more so crucial now than ever before, given how Barbados' economy is placed within the regional economy, within the hemispheric economy and within the international

economy, given the developments within the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and the direction in which trade liberalisation and globalisation is heading.

Mr. Speaker, it is an incontrovertible fact that economies will never prosper unless great attention is paid to educating the people who live in them. Sir, we could look in a quantitative sense at how this Administration has been paying attention to investment in human capital. For example, in 1993, the size of the national budget that went to the Ministry of Education was about \$225 million and for this financial year, out of a national budget of \$2.5 billion...

H115/10:40 Sequence 4

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Hon. A.P. WOOD: ...the allocation to education, at the time of the determination of the Estimates, the allocation was \$438 million. Mr. Speaker, we expect that figure will rise when there is a request for a Supplemental provision. Sir, it gives us some indication of how we have been keeping people at the centre of our development.

Sir, we have not been sparing any resources within the limits of our financial capability to develop our human capital within the country, recognising that in a small economy without great endowments of natural resources, we can only continue to prosper and we will not lose any of the gains we have been able to achieve, in regard to the quality of life, when we continue to put people at that center of our development, and have that being reflected in the considerable investment we are making in education and training.

Sir, I am going to give some more statistics to greater strengthen this point. Within the last twelve years, recognising the need to have a very skilled population, recognising the need to give persons, who go beyond post-secondary or secondary level education, every opportunity to acquire the requisite skills to perform at their optimum, in the context of a fierce economic environment, regional, hemispheric and international envorpment, we have sought to push to the absolute limit, the physical capacity at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, Barbados Community College and the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, within the last twelve years we have doubled the number of places at the Barbados Community College, Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the University of the West Indies. The expansion in enrollment has moved from just under 4 000, in 2001, to in excess of 8 000, for this current academic year.

Sir, I am just talking about the spectacular growth in the last five years, from just under 4 000, in 2001, to over 8

000, but if you go back further in time, from 1994, it was 2 500 and today is in excess of 8 000, and we are breaking new ground in regard to the enrollment at the University of the West Indies.

Sir, it does not stop there, because this Government has given a commitment, a shared vision with the hierarchy of the University of the West Indies; the University that we are talking about is just Cave Hill Campus alone, that we have gone past 8 000 this year. Sir, the commitment is, that for our development to be assured, we must train in increasing numbers at the tertiary level. If we are to achieve one graduate per household within the year 2010 - that is why I said earlier, that people will remain at the center of our development, and I will get to that later - we need to move this number from just over 8 000, in the 2006/2007 academic year, to 15 000, by 2015, on the way to an even larger number by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, the Government, obviously is trying its best, and will remain committed to facilitate that needed expansion of the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies. Mr. Speaker, I will say a little more about that when I go beyond the current period.

Sir, people-centered development is reflected also in this Government taking the bold decision in the aftermath of the problems of September 2001, not to introduce economic policies that would have resulted in some level of hardship on the Barbadian population, as was the case between 1991 and 1994. Sir, in the aftermath of the problems of September 2001, the Government took a decision that we will practice and adopt fiscal expansionary policies, that would not affect the level of unemployment. We met, in consultation with the private sector, at Sherbourne, and challenged them to hold to their employment numbers, notwithstanding the anticipated downturn or slow-down, occasioned by the events of September 2001, and we said we would slacken on the fiscal deficit a bit, to ensure that people would maintain some level of income and there would not have been any reduction in the quality of the lives of people in Barbados, as a result of deliberate government action.

Sir, as a matter of fact, to the contrary, employment levels were maintained, and we pursued economic policies to quickly reposition the Barbados economy within that period, so that when the economic downturn came to an end, we would be in the best possible position to take advantage of changed circumstances. Of course, we cannot say the same thing for the period 1991 and 1994.

Mr. Speaker, our commitment to keeping people at the centre of our development was also reflected in the establishment of the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission, they had a simple remit. As the economy benefited in terms of its macroeconomic

performance, that the mark of a serious and caring Government, is to ensure that great attention is paid to issues of social and economic justice, and those who are most vulnerable in our economic system are to be looked after, and the benefits from a growing economy should be reflected in how allocations are made to deal with those persons who are more vulnerable in our society, and that is what we did.

Mr. Speaker, we established those two enterprises to ensure that the delivery of services to the more vulnerable in our society, is placed on an accelerated path. Sir, that was done and we know what the out-turn figures are, in regard to the functioning of those two entities.

Sir, I am raising all of these issues, to put in the proper context, our models of development between 1966 and now, especially between 1994 and 2006. Sir, in projecting how we want to take this economy, we will continue to put people at the centre our development.

Mr. Speaker, there are six goals, the Honourable Member for St. Michael would have spoken about all of them. The particular goal I want to focus on, in the remaining minutes of my delivery is Goal number 3, which is: Building Social Capital. Sir, it is clearly enunciated within that goal that great attention would be paid to Building Social Capital, which is in keeping with the theme of People Centered Development. Sir, the building of social capital will require continued heavy investment in relevant education and training as well as creating the social and cultural conditions, in which all members of society can realise their full potential.

Sir, it will also require us to unlock the creative and productive potential of Barbadians...

10.50 a.m.

Sequence 5

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House 115, Sequence 06, 10.50 a.m.

Hon. A.P. WOOD: ...But this will require us to put policies and programmes in place to revolutionise our educational offering, from the early childhood education stage, right through, to the tertiary level.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to achieve the status that we are looking for in this country by 2025, there must be a commitment on the part of every citizen, facilitated by Government's programmes and the functioning of Government institutions to lifelong learning.

Sir, let us focus in pursuit of that objective on the strategic direction of education in Barbados going forward, which must reflect, and seriously so and unambiguously so, Mr. Speaker, that there is a commitment on the part of this Government to keeping people at the centre of our development.

I said earlier that we are aiming for one graduate per household from a university by 2020, and this will require a massive expansion in student numbers at the university. It was identified that if there are 15 000 students by 2015, we would be on the way to achieving our objective of one graduate per household by 2020.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill, the location of the campus, based on its original conceptualisation would have it now totally unsuitable for the facilitation of this massive expansion that we are talking about.

What has the Government's response been? Mr. Speaker, recognising that it is vitally important to give people high level training, the Government has recently donated 33 acres of land in Black Rock, by the former Lazaretto, to help the university to deal with its badly needed expansion.

Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has sought to do it in a very clever way, as the Chairman of the University Grants Committee, he has challenged the hierarchy of the university through its Capital Development Task Force to find creative ways of financing the universities expansion - and when I say universities' expansion I mean not only Cave Hill here, but the universities system-wide expansion. The Prime Minister has been leading, by example, in saying that we will not provide the 33 acres of land or any other land to be identified for the university, via a lease/hold type arrangement because that will restrict the university, in regard to how they can leverage that land, in order to gain access to valuable institutional finance.

Sir, we did not do it via a lease/hold arrangement, as was the case previously, and is the case with many other types of arrangements, but it has to get into the university's hands by way of a freehold type delivery, so that the university can use that land in a strategic way when they are seeking to access valuable institutional finance.

Mr. Speaker, we have also seen some imagination in regard to the structure of the programming at the University of the West Indies, to have it better serving the needs of the labour market. Once again, for us to achieve our status of a fully developed small society by 2025, there must be better attention paid to matching the programme offerings of strategic educational institutions with the demands of the labour market, Sir, and we have seen within the last couple of years, greater attention being paid to link

the offerings that the various educational institutions to the labour market.

For example, within the structure of the programmes at the university now, you will see offerings like graduate programmes in cultural studies. Some would argue that this is a response to the Government's commitment, as was enunciated by the Prime Minister, in building out this creative economy for Barbados for us to have greater attention being paid to the cultural component of our economy.

The university is also being involved at the graduate level now in cricket studies and e-governance. There are programmes being offered now in banking and finance, international trade policies, integration studies, et cetera. Sir, this is the way to go.

Mr. Speaker, we should not find ourselves going forward on our path to achieve developed status and struggling to provide the badly needed human resources in the mix of skills, which would allow us to take advantage of the opportunities as they arise, or better still, which will not allow us to prepare ourselves properly and strategically, so as to bring opportunities our way.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier about the tremendous expansion in numbers at the post-secondary institutions, but you would not be surprised, as an educator yourself, that notwithstanding pushing out those campuses to their physical limits, we still have a situation where the campuses cannot accommodate all those who want places at them.

Mr. Speaker, you would be surprised to know that the first intake of students at the Barbados Community College, was a mere 325 students. The Barbados Community College was established in an Act of Parliament in 1968. It got the first intake of students in January of 1969 of 325 students.

Sir, having pushed out that campus to its physical limits so as to give as many persons an opportunity, the intake for this year was 1 689 students. They had to turn back a substantial number, in excess of 1 000, simply because they have reached the limits of our physical capacity. The Government has said, no, while that is the case we have to make greater use of the technology and education, so as to give people opportunities to study. The strategic direction for education in Barbados will see us making greater use of technology at all levels.

Mr. Speaker, it is not only within the context of EduTech. A lot has been said about that in here and outside, about the technology component of EduTech, but at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP), greater attention is being paid now to what we call flexible and

open learning. More persons are doing courses online, because we recognise the importance of investing in training.

Mr. Speaker, also at the University of the West Indies Cave Hill (UWI) is the establishment of the Distance Education Programme, which has been there for the last couple of years. But within the system-wide at UWI now, you will find that considerably greater attention is being paid to let persons, who are located outside of the campus countries and even those who are located within the campus countries, gain greater access to University of the West Indies' education, via the use of technology.

House 115, Sequence 06, 11:00:14

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Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, more emphasis will be paid to technical and vocational training within and outside the school system. We do not have to stand up in here and try to convince anyone in this House or anyone outside of this Honourable Chamber who would be listening to me about the importance of facilitating greater levels of training in the area of technical and vocational education.

Mr. Speaker, more would be said shortly about the establishment of a National Science for Technology Centre and the establishment of the University College of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, the University College of Barbados would not be competing with the University of the West Indies, it would be putting the country in a better position to rationalise the offerings of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, the Erdiston Teachers' Training College and the Barbados Community College, so that the areas of applied study would be better planned for.

Mr. Speaker, I have located my discourse on a very important theme, people-centred development. This should resonate well, not only in this Honourable Chamber but outside as well. I have also made contact with the National Strategic Plan, and in this regard I want to remind some persons in this Honourable Chamber that this Government is resolved to maintaining its commitment as it relates to Goal 3, where our commitment to the investment in human capital is clearly stated. Mr. Speaker, the evidence of late in regard to how we have been facilitating the massive expansion in a physical sense and in the enrollment at our post-secondary educational institutions is a clear demonstration of our commitment to people-centred development.

Mr. Speaker, I have also located it in the context of us paying considerable attention to issues of social and economic justice. Sir, the allocations of our national budget to the social services clearly exemplify this Government's

commitment to dealing with the more vulnerable in our society.

Mr. Speaker I am going to close by commending the National Strategic Plan to this Honourable Chamber and to all Barbadians and reassure them that people would remain at the centre of our development model in Barbados.

I thank you.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would like to use the opportunity to contribute to the debate on the matter before us.

Mr. Speaker, contrary to the views I have heard expressed, though only by a couple of voices on the other side, this National Strategic Plan that we are debating is an important matter as it relates to where we want to see Barbados go for the medium and the long term future and the kind of Barbados that we would want to see created as a result of the efforts of both Government and people and people groups across civic society in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I certainly do not think that this debate is a wasted exercise and I certainly do not think that the document which is the centrepiece of focus of this debate is just a matter of empty words. I think it represents some clear thinking, some sense of vision and some clear purpose with respect to the efforts to lead this country and the efforts on the part of the people of this country to build the kind of society of which we can continue to be proud and in which our children and our children's children would grow up in and enjoy as representing the model that we can show to the world how a civil society with good leadership, with a clear sense of vision and with a good sense of purpose on behalf of the populace, can be created, what it can become and what it can mean to the people who live here.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that a National Strategic Plan should entail reflections on where we are to date and what our achievements are. Those achievements are many and one could spend some time enumerating those achievements.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that to a large extent we have succeeded here as a people in creating a modern post-colonial society which is the envy of some in the region and of many in the developing world, and it is something of which we could be justly proud. We have not simply achieved constitutional or political independence in 1966 but as a people and as a nation we certainly have gone forward in creating not only organs of the State, which are serving viable purposes in terms of helping to fulfil the hopes and aspirations for our people but we have created, in every sense of the word, a modern society in this post-colonial era.

Mr. Speaker, there are many indicators to which one could point to suggest that is the reality and that is the case. We have an economy which is viable. Sir, recent statements from the lips of the Governor of the Central Bank and the opinion of others who are professionals and experts in these matters have suggested that we have an economy which, in spite of some constraints, is a viable economy functioning amidst the complexities of a modern global environment - which poses for us some challenges - and functioning in the context of a region which is constrained with respect to capacity in various ways, we have an economy here in Barbados which remains viable. We have created institutions which are progressive to strengthen the social fabric. We have a Government which engages in forward-thinking, forward-looking and progressive policies.

Across the entire landscape of this country, we are seeing civic and non-governmental organisations which are expanding, are having influence, are helping to shape opinion and are enlisting the participation of people as we build a democracy which we continue to call Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, as one who looks on from several vantage points, one would have to acknowledge and conclude that we have indeed succeeded to date in building a modern post-colonial society. Sir, as we contemplate what a National Strategic Plan should suggest, I believe it would entail a reflection as to what we have achieved thus far.

Mr. Speaker, I think that credit must be given to people in this country. One would recall, if one is old enough or if one has read sufficiently or is sufficiently informed, that at the time of Independence Barbadians were filled with a sense of resolve and determination as to what this country could become in a post-colonial context. We were filled with a view which reflected itself in the determination in a sense of pride to build a society in spite of a lack of resources and in spite of the constraints of our small size. I think there would be those who would suggest that at the time of its Independence in 1966, Barbados probably would have been one of the smallest national communities that would have ever anticipated becoming an independent nation.

House 115 Sequence 7

11.10 a.m.

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Hon. Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY: Mr. Speaker, since then, the process of nation building has been ongoing, with full credit to our people and to the kind governance, to which we have been subject to in this country; the kind of governance has been ably led for most of the time on both

sides of this aisle by persons who had distinguished themselves in terms of capacity to understand where a nation ought to go, and in reflecting the skills necessary to take the nation there.

I think that therefore full credit should be given to those who have held the reins of Government from time to time and would have led this country well, those who would have been away from the process of Government but would have been involved in keeping the institutions of this country, with labour being one of the principal ones, in helping us to build a post-colonial State, in helping us to be proud, one in which we continue to see the expansion of democracy, we continue to build social capital, we continue to provide resources for our people, much of which in some instances come as a result of the generosity of the State.

There are not a lot of countries in their post-colonial experience, which can boast of this type of achievement and this type of success. We can look to Latin America or Africa and see situations that are replete with examples of States which have either failed or have performed miserably, not realising the aspirations of their people, when they broke colonial ties. That is not at all the history of Barbados. We have seen a country that has come on quite apace and can now take its place, and do so with pride on the world stage. We have therefore succeeded in building a society, which I think would have been in the intension and imagination of those who were the leaders in the movement towards Independence. We need therefore to reflect upon that as we consider what a National Strategic Plan should suggest to us as a people

Mr. Speaker, I believe that a National Strategic Plan should entail a recognition of what we can become and hence my view is that the task ahead is for this generation, both this Parliamentary generation as well as this public generation, to recognise the privilege, honour and responsibility, which is ours, to build and to continue to build the First World Barbados. I think it is one thing to become a modern post-colonial society but the character of our existence would still suggest that we are a developing country.

The aspiration is, and must continue to be, that Barbados must become a First World State or society. Therefore, I would want to repeat that it is my view that this Parliament generation and this generation of Barbadians in the public context must see themselves or must see itself as having both the honour and privilege and responsibility of building a First World Barbados. I think if we come to that view, whether we are speaking on the behalf of the Government of the day or whether or not we speak on the behalf of the Opposition of the day, we come to an understanding that the task which lies ahead of us is a continuance of the task, which would have begun by those who were leaders in the movement of independence.

Therefore, there is no small responsibility, there is no small task lying before us, when we contemplate that what we have to do is to build the First World Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, that is the honour that we have, that is the privilege, which is ours, that is the responsibility that has fallen to us in this Honourable Chamber on this day at this time, in this period of our history, and that is the responsibility which has fallen to this generation of adult Barbadians in this day, to continue the business of State and nation building by ensuring that Barbados becomes a First World country and that the quality of life continues in greater terms to reflect that we have got behind us a proud past. Sir, as we celebrate 40 years of Independence, we understand that ahead of us, we have a world-class future and that it has fallen to this lot, elected by the people a few years ago, to be the principal architects in the building a First, World Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I think that often when we think of the developed country context, when we think of the First World society context, we think in terms of income, in terms of infrastructure, investment and institutions. Sir, these things are proper and in place. We must see First World status in income terms. We must see it in investment terms; we must see it in institutional terms and in infrastructural terms. Indeed, as we look around Barbados, we recognise that we are on the way. The infrastructure of Barbados in several respects reflect the lifestyle and national achievement of a First World State already. In terms of its investment, we continue to attract, because of the kind of circumstances that we have created here for ourselves, such as the interest of foreign investment, in certain sectors of the economy.

I am not privy to all the information but those who are, suggest to us that the pipeline shows there is a continuing robust interest in investing in the country and people feel that we have created a kind of circumstances here in which some level of comfort can be assured them, in terms of our investment. Therefore, whether we speak to the financial institutions, the business of law and order, social cohesion, industrial relations climate, it can be seen that we have created the kind of circumstances in Barbados that gives to those who are potential investors the level of comfort which they seek, so that Barbados therefore feels very much assured if we consider the investments levels, present and prospective. We believe we can envisage for ourselves the kind of quality of life and standard of living that speaks to First World experience and First World quality. Sir, that is a charge I personally would want to suggest that we sense for ourselves that in this day in 2006, as we debate this National Strategic Plan that the responsibility falls to us on either side of this aisle, to be principals in the business of building a First World Barbados, having succeeded in the task of creating a modern post-colonial State.

Mr. Speaker, the next phase therefore beckons us, the next challenge beckons us, the next step lies before us and ours is the principal responsibility of ensuring that the challenged is faced and met, ensuring that the step is taken, ensuring that the next phase is actualised and eventualised and that our children to follow, would grow up in a Barbados which is not seen any longer as part of the developing world, but in fact very much seen as having a standard and quality of living which in even greater respect, is comparable with that which exists in developed countries of the world and in those regions of the world, which are given First World status.

Mr. Speaker, it cannot only be in terms of investment or institutional terms. It cannot be income terms. I believe, and the plan speaks to a recognition of the fact that we must also talk in terms of ownership patterns. Ownership patterns in this country must be expanded in every sphere of Barbados. Those which traditionally have had a foreign character of label attached to the ownership must in greater terms, in this new era, in this phase of live which this plan anticipates, take on a more indigenous character. Those which have had some limited indigenous character attached to it, must in greater way, reflect ownership being expanded across Barbados, incorporating other people into the business of benefiting from the blessings which we enjoy as a nation together.

11.20 a.m.

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Rev. J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Sir, ownership patterns must be expanded whether we speak with respect to business or whether we speak to ownership of land and property, the challenge lies before us of determining how this could be made, in greater way, a reality for the people of Barbados. Unless the Plan, therefore, excites us in this regard, we fail to grasp what is being offered to us in terms of what is provided here in strategic approaches towards the business of building a newer Barbados. Sir, wealth creation, therefore, has to be an objective.

In our younger years, we grew up in a culture and environment which suggested that we had to study and learn well at school that we may earn a living and that we may be able to feed ourselves and family. I believe the next step must be taken in terms of our thinking; in terms of our philosophy, our ideology, or mindset and that we have to start creating a culture in which those who follow behind us understand the enterprise in which we are engaged is not simply an enterprise of survival and of sustaining ourselves but that it must be an endeavour towards the creation of wealth for the black working majority classes of this country.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot, in 2006, subscribe to any view that the business of wealth creation must be limited to the ambitions and aspirations of a few but the culture must be created within which those who are educated in the very generous education system, that we continue to provide in this country, are of the view and motivated such that they understand that wealth creation must be the objective. So, I do not study at school or do what I do simply that I might be able to get a job, earn a living, make ends meet and survive but I do what I do because I am building a platform towards the creation of wealth for myself, my family, the community and for my country. This must be the type of philosophy that this type of Plan must inspire in the hearts, minds, passions and bosoms of the average Barbadian young person. The Plan must excite us towards the understanding that Barbadians must develop the kind of culture which suggests to us that there must be sustainable, indigenous enterprise in Barbados.

Sir, too often in the past, and history is replete with sad, even tragic examples of black enterprises in Barbados that were not enduring, which could not survive the complexities and challenges provided in the economic circumstances in which they existed. The Government, by its policy platform and initiatives must ensure that the environment is such... I believe that if the Plan is to be brought to a place where it touches reality, then the Plan also must speak to the issue that the enterprise, which is indigenous to be and, which is given the opportunity to emerge in Barbados, must also be given the opportunity to be sustained overtime and reflect such viability that it is enduring.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the National Strategic Plan, in very large measure, is able creating a new culture in Barbados in which we look at these aspects of our economy from the working class perspective in a new way and in a different light. Therefore, those who come behind us must be inspired to understand that opportunity for them is more greatly available and more greatly expanded and, indeed, more greatly desirable as we build the Barbados of which the Plan speaks.

Mr. Speaker, I believe in that environment that there should be a decreasing reliance of the working class on the generosity of the state. I am not in any way advocating that the State should withdraw from a position where it provides social services and other benefits at cost to the State for the people of Barbados. I am saying that in declining terms, as the country grows, as the economy expands, as opportunity is given to a greater number, we should see a reducing or declining reliance of the working class on the generosity of the State.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Plan speaks to that intention in very specific ways over different sectors of our economy and from both ideological and philosophical

terms and in strategic ways. Therefore, what we do now in terms of providing assistance to our people is but building the platform upon which they themselves discover and apply a greater degree of self-reliance and, therefore, less reliance upon the generosity of the State.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, we would expect as well that in that context there would be a more mature role reflected on the part of the indigenous capital sector in our circumstances, limited though it be, but I would want humbly to suggest that in terms of the indigenous capital sector, the vision to date has not been as far cast as it could be. Therefore, the role of the limited indigenous capital has been circumscribed in terms of what it has given itself to, with respect to the investment interest and the economic activity in which it has been gauged, has been such that it has reflected limitations in terms of what it contributes to the economy.

Mr. Speaker, one can very much point to the distributive sector and see the prominence presence there and also see the investment of capital in those areas but this is for the purpose of distribution, which is basically a buy and sell situation. Sir, all I am trying to suggest is a more matured role for indigenous capital. If we seek to develop a circumstance in which that capital expands, then, as a consequence, there ought to be a situation where the role performed by that capital becomes more mature, more responsible and more productive in terms of what we can earn for the country and contribute to the GDP of the country.

Mr. Speaker, we are beginning to see already the reflection of the policies of Government towards ensuring that there is significant improvement in the character of rural Barbados and that is important. There is nothing wrong with Barbados, becoming a city State. I believe that Barbados is small enough that it should become that and still retain its aesthetic appearance and still retain much of the garden character, which we want to make sure is preserved and sustained. This country is small enough and is yet resourceful enough and, indeed, has the capacity to ensure that what remains of less modern Barbados, a less sophisticated Barbados, a more primitive Barbados, and which attaches to the rural development in Barbados, is so addressed that rural Barbados becomes very much a part of the process of modernisation, which is taking place across this country. Sir, the policies of the Government are in gear to ensure that rural Barbados is not left behind. We are not engaged in an exercise of developing urban Barbados at the expense of rural Barbados but we are seeing development taking place in rural areas of this country. This is to be encouraged and expected to expand such that there is a balanced approach to development across this country, such that rural Barbados is brought along with the process. We do not believe in promoting the concept of a dual Barbados or two Barbadoses but one in which both urban

and rural centres fall subject to the developmental approaches to policy, such that one could see the progress which takes place both at the level of rural Barbados and at the level of urban Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that building a first world Barbados involves our rebuilding of stronger communities, capable of higher levels of self-governance and better levels of participation in national governance and development. Sir, I am not promoting some concept of a second tier of Government as some would do but I am simply suggesting that as we build a first world Barbados, we cannot do that unless we foster communities and build communities to the point where communities are participating meaningfully in the process of governance and where communities are even more capable of a greater level of self-management and self-governance in these days.

H115/11:30

Sequence 9

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Rev.J.J.S. ATHERLEY: Sir, the pursuit of global excellence is what it is all about. That is a theme which underpins the concepts exposed in this National Strategic Plan. The pursuit of global excellence, the pursuit of first world status, cannot be gone through at the expense of injuring the traditional Barbadian value concept of Barbados. I am simply trying to suggest that as we pursue global excellence, as we pursue the building of first world Barbadian society, we need to be working at the business of preserving traditional Barbadian values. Therefore, these two concepts are grasped and reflected very carefully in this National Strategic Plan, while we pursue global excellence on the one hand, we preserve what is good, lasting and enduring about Barbadian values and traditions.

Sir, building first-world Barbados is not about income and investment and infrastructure only, but it is about ensuring that there is a type of culture that drives us towards the achievement of many of those things that I talked about, that there is a passion that seeks to build the kind of quality of experience and existence, to which I just referred.

Mr. Speaker, this Plan also speaks to notions of identity and national consciousness. The question must be asked by each of us, as to just who or what is the Barbadian. He is a fellow who was cradled in the bosom of Africa and some would emphasise, that he is a fellow who was educated in traditions, perhaps, of Europe, colonial influence in our education system. Some would stress that he is a fellow who has been sustained on the popular fair, especially through exposure to the media of North

America. Some people would suggest that is a dimension of himself that ought to be emphasised. He is a fellow who has been shaped to the experience of life in the Caribbean, and some would want to emphasise this aspect of his identity.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Barbadian is not simply or singularly any one of these, but he is in fact all of these, and what that constitutes is a superior, a rich mix of a model Barbadian man or woman, a person that we are proud of and that we can prodly sell to the world. Sir, to me that is who the Barbadian is.

I think that we stripped him of part of his identity, if we see him only in African terms; if we see him only in relation to his educational past or influence as a tradition; if we see him only in terms of the influences which shaped him in these days culturally; if we see him only in Caribbean terms, forgetting the past. I think the model Barbadian is each of these and all of these put together, indeed, a superior blend, a human being, perhaps, the likes of which is to be found nowhere in the world because of the mix of our experiences. Sir, to me that is who the Barbadian is.

Mr. Speaker, this Plan seeks to speak to the notion of identity and sense of consciousness. That is where I come down on this. That man is now expected in this day and age to contest the world stage, and indeed we are doing that and have done that. Sir, not only is he expected to contest the world stage, but he is expected to excel on the world stage.

Sir, our history and the history of Barbados are replete with examples of persons, who have contested the world stage and excelled on the world stage, when you talk of entertainment, sport, the professions of trades and skills, academics, Government or public service officials, the Barbadian has been able to contest the world stage and excel on the world stage. We have given to the world examples of people who have excelled in all those areas, public service officials, who have done well here and have gone abroad and have done exceedingly well, and have excelled there. Mr. Speaker, there are sports persons, entertainers, in these days now, professional people, academics, who have taken the world by storm, people who have broken new ground and pioneered around the world, people coming from the bowels of government, who have also excelled on the world stage.

Sir, the Barbadian is embodied in all of that achievement. This is what this Plan, in my view, celebrates, and this is what this Plan, in my view, is designed to perpetuate. Sir, not that we build only in Barbados as a society, but that we continue to create a Barbadian of whom we can continue to be proud, and who can take his place on the world stage, and do so excellently, even surpassing those who come from the developed countries.

Sir, the Plan seeks to put people first, and we have to do that. Sir, I have noticed that you have signaled. Sir, one thing about the policies of the Government of the day is, you tend to find people and people's interest always at the center of those policies; whether you talk about economic enfranchisement, creating a culture in entrepreneurship or education opportunities to which the Minister of Education referred to, we are now having the business of education provided free of cost to people in this country, literally from the cradle to the grave.

Sir, whether you talk about education, opportunities for entrepreneurship, establishing a framework for social justice, establishing a framework for inclusive development, rather than exclusive development, ensuring that we are enduring values and qualities which drive our people, the policies of this Government have been people centered, and the concepts in this Plan revolve around people, and I think that is critical.

Sir, I support wholeheartedly what is in the document. I believe that it could be improved. I believe it can be expanded on. I believe that it is important that we have a strategic vision, for where we want to take this country. Mr. Speaker, therefore, in those terms, I want to give my support to the measure before the House.

I thank you.

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

Mr. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to address the question of the National Strategic Plan of Barbados as enunciated by those who have been the authors of this draft. I have also listened to the voices of those who have said that it is theirs. In fact, I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, and he was at particular pains to personalise the National Strategic Plan. Therefore, in that personalisation, I therefore would not exercise any loyalty towards the Plan, which is before us.

Sir, as I was coming to the Honourable House this morning, and as I was going through my mind, I thought that I would still pay some credit to those persons in the public service, who would have taken some direction from what some people referred to as their political bosses, to seek to fashion and to input their ideas and their thoughts and reflections into a National Strategic Plan. Sir, we would know that at the end of the day they are these persons who consider themselves to be the political bosses of us all, who must carry the final responsibility for any document, policy or idea, which is brought either to this House or to the wider Barbadian public.

11.40 a.m.

Sequence 10

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

House 115, Sequence 11, 11.40 a.m.

Mr. R.D. JONES: I believe we have had contributions from many persons on the other side and they have struck what I consider to be an inappropriate cord, relative to the national strategic development of Barbados.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South kept referring to Barbados as an economy. I know that he is an economist and therefore his mind set might be embedded with the whole notion of economics. I want to say at the outset that Barbados is a society. It is not an economy. The dynamic is different when one looks at it as a society, which is composed of living human beings, persons who respond to a whole set of both external and internal stimuli. Therefore, by seeking to characterise Barbados as simply an economy betrays that particular dynamic of referring to Barbados as a society.

I would hope that as the others speak to this whole question of the National Strategic Plan of Barbados, their ideas would look at Barbados as a society, that is dynamic, that is fluid, that is changing, that is responsive within:

1. The national context
2. The regional context
3. The global, or international context.

Sir, all this would provide a different feeling to the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, as I have gone through this document from the time that I received it sometime ago, and I kept searching for what I consider to be the spirit. Not necessarily the strategies, objectives and the vision, but something that causes my heart to race, and to say: "Ah, at long last, we have found men and women who are able to place within, what you might consider just text, hard copy, the spirit that would be captured, either from themselves or from the wider Barbadians society, a spirit which, sometimes, when you read certain novels, you get the feel for."

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, you are familiar with the work of Alan Paton, South African writer, who wrote the book, "Cry, the Beloved Country." When you read it, you saw the flow of the spirit, and want to quickly associate with the tragedies, the human condition and things such of that ilk. Or, when you read, Walt Morey's "Angry Waters", speaking about an animal and the connection of that animal to a young boy.

Sir, in this document, there is no spirit, and the society, Mr. Speaker, needs someone, even if it is the reading, or the hearing of the voice, a spirit that will guide them towards a successful future. In this instance it is truncated here at 2025.

I am not going to say that there is not any substance. There is substance in some aspects of the National Strategic Plan. I looked at the objectives, and they are stark objectives. They are not behavioural objectives.

In education, Mr. Speaker, you know what we speak about when we construct behavioural objectives. A behavioural objective is linked into the human cognition to the human intellect, to the human spirit, to the human emotion. Stark objectives are plain, and they are bland.

This document contains stark objectives, which are bland. They do not seem to suggest the kind of behavioural humanistic perspective that one would want to get, when one speaks of national strategic development.

I am therefore suggesting that for all those good men and women, who function from their particular perspective to revisit - they said they would revisit the document - and restructure the objectives into behaviour objectives. Any well-trained teacher in Barbados can show you how a behavioural objective is constructed. That is the teaching. I would want to suggest that maybe you need to put one or two teachers as the drafters of this, to construct behavioural objectives.

Sir, a behavioral objective speaks also to what I call the spirit, and the emotion, and should be contained in documents such as this, which should be seeking to galvanise the Nation to achieve the ultimate vision that is contained within this document. That is, making Barbados a fully developed country by 2025.

Of course, I hope that it does not, as we move towards a fully developed country, contain all of the elements which are characterised by fully developed countries in the world. There are some things that we should not bring on board into Barbados, which are parts of the so-called developed world. There are some things that I believe we should lend to the developed world.

I want to say, Mr. Speaker, as well as I continue on this particular path, that the single most important aspect of national strategic development is not economic development. It is the whole notion of governance and leadership. This must be at the heart of any national strategic development.

Sir, unless we change the way how people are governed and how people are led, all of the lofty ideas of getting the economy doing this or getting the economy

doing that, will essentially come to nil. All of the notions of raising productivity will come to nil, without involving the people in the whole notion of governance, how we are governed, who will be the governors, at what level will these governors be struck? Will they be struck at the level of Parliament? Yes. Will they be struck at the level of the executive? Yes. Will they be struck at the level of civil society? Yes. Will they be struck at the level of the non-governmental organisations? Yes. Will they be struck at the level of the trade union movement of the labour relations construct? Yes. Will they be struck at the level of the private sector individuals and managers of the private sector economy? Yes.

Are we suggesting that as part of the new face of governance, we will involve all of our people? Sir, I am not saying that every single boy and girl, man and woman, would be involved in, let us say, what we do in this Parliament, but they must connect to what we do in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, right now in this society, there is not really much of a connection between what we do. People go about their lives and hope to either live or survive. They say that it does not impact on them. This is a form of listlessness and alienation. It is a form of persons who do not care essentially about what others do.

You hear it about the Trade Union Movement as well, which is part of the process of governance. Sometimes it might very well be an unfair characterisation of the work that we do, or the work that the trade union leaders do in the wider society. Mr. Speaker, that stems from cynicism, a feeling that I am not part of and a feeling that others get it all and nothing comes to me from whatever goes on in the wider Barbadian society, Sir, and whatever goes on within the context of all the laws that we pass.

House 115, Sequence 11, 11:50:14

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

Mr. R. D. JONES: It is particularly insidious among the under-30 population of this country, a most frightening level of behaviour, when they do not demonstrate any care or regard for what we do, it is about their survival. Mr. Speaker, we cannot have a situation where it is only about the individual's survival, it must be the collective survival, it must be participation in every aspect of the Barbadian society by all of those persons that we have educated or have not educated for that matter because there are some who would argue that they have not been educated but have been de-educated by the systems that we have in the society.

Mr. Speaker, there are some things that we need to do to strengthen governance. One of them is that we have to look at our political institutions and our political parties. It makes no sense to suggest on the one hand that within our system our political parties are integral to the survival of our democracy as we know it and then on the other hand, we do not provide the resources for those political institutions to function and to make sense of their reality. We provide it in some instances for the labour movement through whatever form, and that is important. However, we have the political institutions and any system can be worked out to make it sensible.

This society must provide the resources for political institutions to function so that democracy would function in a way that would make sense to all captured within this polity. It should not make political institutions go cap in hand to the person with the largest pocket to feed their political hunger because arising out of that is a whole series of different complexities and complexion which persons, if they are truly honest with themselves, would know that their whole world view and what they want to achieve tends to be truncated and to be chartered into a political mode within the society. Sir, all the grand ideas and all the grand pronouncements can become changed because he who pays the piper eventually calls the tune at the beginning or call the tune somewhere down the road.

Mr. Speaker, as our democracy evolves, I do not believe that we should have the kind of situation which still exists in Barbados where there are pipers who call the tune, who do not sit in this House, who do not go and knock at the doors of the citizenry of Barbados and say give me a chance to represent your better interest, but sit wherever they sit in dark corners of this country and direct the affairs of this country which impact on the total citizenry of this country. They provide hidden help and vantage to those who bow and scrape and who still continue to say yes master. Sir, the master does not necessarily come in the complexion only of the plantation, the master comes in many complexions today, and the people of Barbados are fooled into a particular reality that all is well.

Sir, I am saying to this Honourable House today that all is not well in this polity. Therefore, my call, and the call of this Opposition, is to remove those kinds of issues relative to the exercise of democracy within Barbados. The citizens have a right to support democracy and the evolution of that democracy. Sir, that is my view and the view of this Opposition. It is a view which the people of Barbados should take on board.

Mr. Speaker, we go every five years hopefully, sometimes we go three and a half years and sometimes we go four years, to the people of Barbados by calling a national election. Sir, occasionally, we do get a by-election for unforeseen circumstances. I thought that we would have

had a by-election in January this year in one of the constituencies of Barbados to test the spirit of democracy of the people to see how they would respond within that democracy and to see if we would get, as outlined in this document, the voting population of Barbados to vote at the level of 90 per cent. Mr. Speaker, I am not referring at all to the Honourable Member for the City. The Honourable Member for the City has made a valuable contribution and therefore she would go down to time, I am talking of someone else.

Mr. Speaker, let us say - and I have not done the figures - that between the viable political parties of Barbados \$5 million - it might be \$3 million, I say \$5 million or whatever - is put aside for the conduct of elections based on the \$10 per head so that there could be equity in relation to that... Mr. Speaker, I believe that elections should be built on ideas and on policies, not on mere charisma, not on mere cursing the other fellow and sending him back to the dark ages by the vile invectives of the tongues of some who want to get into the Parliament of Barbados to then speak of morality and other sensitive issues such as those.

Mr. Speaker, I can never take that level of behaviour on board. I believe that they should be completely shut out by the people of Barbados who should be demanding a better level of behaviour and a better level of accountability relative to the whole process of governance from the persons they want to elect.

Mr. Speaker, I want, and surely the Members of the Opposition, to see continued support for the labour movement of Barbados, both the employer labour organisation and the trade unions, the workers organisation. They all need support as they add to the social partnership and the social agenda of Barbados because they are also involved in the process of governance.

Sir, if they are involved in the process of governance, they have to be given the tools to ensure that they are able to carry out their mandate on behalf of the people of Barbados not only the narrow part of the society that they represent. Sir, even if it is the narrow aspect of the society in which they represent, it is an important cog in the whole wheel of the state of governance within our society.

Mr. Speaker, I want to see the other aspects of civil society involved more purposefully in the whole process of governance. The non-governmental organisational structure in Barbados needs to be strengthened. Too many persons come forward, and that must be applauded, but they come forward without the requisite skills to carry forward the non-governmental sector. Mr. Speaker, they need help in training, in resource allocation, in management, in organisational behaviour and things of that ilk.

Mr. Speaker, Kofi Annan, the outgoing Secretary-General of the United Nations, said that governance in the 21st Century is the most important aspect of development, and I fully and wholeheartedly support that particular assertion. We in Barbados must see that, as we look at the society, as also the most important aspect of development in the 21st Century because it plays an allocation role within the society. It should be able to allocate resources not only through competition, which is the important aspect of development strategy, but also through a process of lifting up and supporting others.

House 115 Sequence 12

12:00 noon

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, this Draft National Strategic Plan, in its bullet, under "Vision" speaks to a whole series of matters and there is what I would address. Sir, as I look at a strategic development plan, one casts one's mind into the future. Sir, basically, the future is generally unknowable. What one knows is the past and the immediate present but we seek to build a foundation for the future by considering all of what has gone in the past and what currently exists within the present.

Mr. Speaker, one aspect of that vision, which I would want to speak to, speaks to the fully developed Barbados that we envisioned by 2025, as a society of order, self-discipline and respect for the law; relatively free from the scourges of illegal drugs, corruption, crime and violence.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, this is absolutely laudable. Those who sat down for a long time and worked this out as part of the vision, must be commended.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: But what is the present relative to this particular vision? The future is unknowable, the present is one we react to now. What is the present? It is totally contradictory to what is outlined here. Sir, we shielded ourselves in this particular by using the adverb "relatively free". Let us be safe. What does it mean? It means nothing.

Mr. Speaker, we couch our language by the insertion of the adverb: "...relatively free from the scourges of drugs, corruption, crime and violence." Sir, when one reflects on a society, one sometimes holds one's head down because one is burdened. There are illegal drugs in our society and there are many persons who are frightened to speak of the

deleterious effect of the damage being done to a mass of our young people by this illegal drugs; the massive movement of this across the land space of Barbados, eating away at the bowels of a future generation within this country. Sir, there are persons who find it very comfortable to turn a blind eye. Therefore, there must be voices raised, not necessary mere raw naked condemnation but there must be voices here heard and hands must be held, to lead those who feel comfortable that they must have a "pull of the weed" of a snort of the cocaine, or whatever else that is destroying this society. Persons who are comfortable, either in their homes, at their parties, on their street corners, taking \$5 or whatever it costs and utilising that for blowing smoke into the atmosphere and interrupting and destroying or disturbing the lives of others. That is the present and I would like to look forward to see that Barbados is free of the scourges of drugs.

Mr. Speaker, but what are we doing now? We are making persons rich, and the sad reality is that we expose faces of the children of the majority population here in Barbados, and obviously of a different racial group who also smoke their ganja, weed, herb or tampi, but sometimes they are hidden in their closets. Therefore, I am not only speaking to the majority of our people because all are Barbadians but I am talking about the black man and black woman in this society.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot be comfortable as leaders or among the top echelon of the leadership of the country. We cannot be satisfied that so many of our people are comfortable in utilising "poisons" within their blood. We talk of persons who should not be eating certain kinds of meats but we do not speak with enough conviction, with enough spirit, in relation to these matters.

We have to put some spirit into the document. Government should utilise its Commissioners and let them go on the street corners, some of whom are excellently trained to deal with issues such as this. I am not saying that we do not have a council with good people. They all are good people who are speaking to this issue but as I said, what is missing is a question of the spirit, focus and force, to get this particular ongoing.

Mr. Speaker, in the dying moments of my time, I want to speak to the issue of building social capital. I could not just speak on the whole notion of governance, but to zero in on another aspect of the Draft National Strategic Plan...

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Of course, it must be applauded. Building social capital emerges out of the primary construct of governance. It is one of the major strands, which must emerge out of the notion of governance. It

recognises that no society has become developed, no society has become viable, unless its human capital has been invested in a major and substantial way and developed.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados has spent over the years, and the tradition continues, in the development of human and social capital formation; building capacity; building human beings to such a state that they are sensible, responsive, responsible human beings within our society. Therefore, again I am not selfish in my offerings of compliments to anybody. The Principal of the University of the West Indies, aided and abetted by the State sector, must be complimented for the work at the University of the West Indies, a place I believe that several of us would have gone to, during the infancy of our days or at some time during our lives, or at some other institution of learning. Therefore, I am pleased with the work being carried on there. I am pleased with some of the offerings being made at the University of the West Indies. Sir, I believe that more must be done, if, in fact, we are to achieve that development of which we have spoken, of having one graduate at every household. We know we will not.

12.10 p.m.

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Mr. R.D. JONES: We know we will have the numbers raised but there are some homes with which we must work harder to ensure that there is a graduate emerging from that home, to create that stimulus and challenge for others who come after and want to achieve. Mr. Speaker, I have seen it in many of our traditional villages where one graduate emerges for the first time and then, the succeeding two, four, exponential movement of young people, hungry and thirsty for knowledge going through our tertiary level institutions and developing their society. Unfortunately, what happens is that sometimes there is an exodus of those persons.

We need a regeneration of our traditional village because too many homes, today, lie derelict within many of our traditional villages as persons migrate into the heights and terraces but, Sir, there is no condemnation of that. Mr. Speaker, the new plantation must by necessity emerge but what I want to see as a necessary corollary is a new generation of additional villages where people live, make a living and raise their children. We can do that by infusing within those communities and villages a new sense of purpose through the mode of education, through the mode of ensuring that our young people do not slip through the cracks, that our young people are motivated to make sense of their lives.

Mr. Speaker, I know that having worked with your good self at Erdiston College almost 26 years ago... We all

go grey at sometimes but my grey is now more than yours but that might come from other challenges of life. Your few greys might come from healthier lifestyles.

Asides.

Mr. R.D. JONES: I do not exercise as often as he does but I really should improve that. Sir, it is important to continue to expand education. There is a cost as we seek to expand more and more of the education and training sector, to ensure that we continue as a society to say to our people that from nursery, secondary and tertiary education, that the people of Barbados, through the actions of the State, through the actions of your Parliament would ensure that you do not have to run around, beg and be abject relative to the provision of education and training.

Sir, the Democratic Labour Party commits itself unreservedly to such continuation of that particular level of behaviour to commit the resources to the development of all our people. This is why I want to strike, on behalf of the Opposition, a chord of concern. Recently, the University of the West Indies graduated maybe the highest number of students from the Cave Hill institution and, as I looked, I searched, not desperately, for the faces of men, and they were some. I search for those faces because what is happening within our society is that men are taking the women to the tertiary level institution on evenings and are returning and collecting them rather than a situation where they sit beside them and eat off the same plate of knowledge and that is dangerous for any society.

Sir, my argument is not a gender-based argument but it is a holistic argument because no society can develop on one leg. The society must develop on both legs and you must throw in the upper extremities as well and the brain. Sir, in order to achieve that, we have to say to our men that it is not good to be happy in just finishing your secondary education. The world demands, at this highest level, the best that you can be, otherwise, you will essentially become the drawers of water and the hewers of wood. This message seems not to be getting through to some of our men.

Mr. Speaker, I see young men selling coconuts and I have no quarrel because they make a living and there is nothing wrong in being a coconut entrepreneur. It excites the jealousy of many when they pass the highway, who seek to calculate the profit of those coconut entrepreneurs. I see the Honourable Member for St. Michael East smiling because he understands very well what I am talking about. There is nothing wrong in being a very well-educated coconut entrepreneur because you are able to transcend and move from being a mere manager of the coconut stall or coconut van into a small business man eventually, into a major asset of entrepreneurial development within this country. There is nothing wrong with starting there but you

should be educated. It should not merely be the collection of dollars, placing them in your pockets and moving on but you should be educated. The message must be made strong again as seek to build human capital and build social capital within our country.

Mr. Speaker, too many young men are betraying the contribution of the forefathers, of the foreparents, particularly of their mothers, who suffered abuse in the plantations of Barbados. Sir, their grand children and their great grandchildren are betrayers of their commitment and they must be told so by all and sundry in this Parliament. Sir, you know what holds many of them back but it does not hold me back.

Mr. Speaker, you are an educator, just as I am and we have to speak about these things but they are held back and several persons allow all kinds of malfeasance to occur because somebody wants to ask them for a vote and, in asking them for a vote, they cannot tell them they are going down the wrong path and that they should straighten up, get on board and steer it out of the way.

Mr. Speaker, nowadays the new challenge is to 'fete' them at every rum shop in the community. Sir, it a nefarious act to numb the minds of our young men. Sir, that is what it is, the poisoning of their cognitive structures.

MR. SPEAKER: You are not referring to any of our parliamentarians.

Mr. R.D. JONES: No. Sir, these are Honourable men and women. I would hope that sometimes they would draw from some who have gone before, who never made the rum shop their bastion of learning relative to the poisoning of the cognitive structures. They create extremely difficult challenges for the Minister of Health, who already has challenges that he cannot deal with, yet they want to create even more challenges for him, who then would have to come and explain to the nation that he cannot get the job done.

H115/12:20

Sequence 14

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Mr. R.D. JONES: Sir, too many persons' minds are dulled, either psychiatric dead, cirrhosis of the liver or some other ailment. Sir, I would not go into the medical terms. I leave that to Honourable Minister and Honourable Member for Christ Church South. I would hope that he does not see this as a condemnation, but as an encouragement to join the voices of those, who say to those persons, who would want to come to serve in the highest Chamber of the country that it is not good to poison the

mind and blood of our young men and women, in their quest to get what they might consider that an all-important vote. That is what is destroying this society, the quest for the all-important vote. Therefore, the only sensible strategy that some can devise, is to encourage young men, particularly, to follow them like the Pied Piper of Hamelin to the rum shop, in every part of Barbados. Unless we stand up for something, we are going to fall down with nothing. That is the reality and complexity of what we have today.

Asides.

Mr. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South would say to you, that a little of whatever that is, can help calm your nerves sometimes. Sir, I call it the engulfing. Sir, I see now men in this country, and I am not going to call the name of any drink, who consume gallons of this stuff, without understanding the health risk relative to that; without understanding that sometimes it liberates other psychological problems you have, and, therefore, you injure, maim and destroy.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of women are at the receiving end of that level of poison, within their blood. Again, the Minister of Health becomes challenged to deal with the blood and gore that is a result of that level of behaviour. It is not a condemnation of the rum shops in this country, because they provide a part of the cultural framework of Barbados.

Sir, I have known some of them say to persons who utilise the beverages that they provide, that they have had enough and go home to their families.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I think those are your words?

Mr. R.D. JONES: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Therefore, I would want to say that there is a lot of work to do, relative the National Strategic Plan, and encourage the economist, not to refer to Barbados as an economy, but to refer to Barbados as a society and to place at the top of anything you do, the whole notion of governance and leadership, and out of that, construct a sensible vision and a sensible development strategy for Barbados.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Mr. Speaker, the hour is coming up to 12.30 p.m. and in the circumstances, I would beg to move that this House be suspended until 1.30 p.m.

Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to second that, Sir.

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.

12.30 p.m.

Sequence 15

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

House 115, Sequence 16, 1.30 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make my contribution surrounding the National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2005-2025. This is a document which seems to suggest the importance of charting a dream for the future, with the hope that the dream can be transformed into a reality.

Obviously, any sensible scientific approach to its analysis will have to take into consideration, the present dynamics of the social, political and economic circumstances of the country. It should reflect on its long colonial past, the structures that we have inherited as a consequence of the colonial past, the rules and regulations of the colonial past, the symbols of the colonial past, the values and norms that have been preserved over the years. Some people refer to these elements as the stabilising planks of the good old days, traditions that are responsible for stabilising present day society.

Sir, from all societies, men of deep thought, from time to time, look to see the best means of providing better governance, the best means and ideologies that are relevant to prospective changes that are likely within the society. Men are homosapiens and as a consequence of all the experiences and wisdom of life, they can sometimes chart the future. In other words everything is not left to the dialectics of the society but there is also the will of man that must assert itself in charting new directions. In the Caribbean we had such thinkers around the 1960s.

Sir, the examples of the great thinkers of Europe in the early days, in the 19th Century and before, some even as far back as BC, and even before the birth of Christ on the Continent of Africa, people looked to see how they can make life better for the society.

This document sets the framework for us to share concepts, by unearthing historic and present day contradictions, and by looking at the external and internal forces that are responsible for the present state that the society is in, and we try to put in new mechanisms by sharing ideas that will enable us to create a better Barbados for the general development of the society.

We have the Eurocentric views that lots of us are guided by, such as what is governance, and it goes back to the great philosophers, and this is what this debate is all about. It goes back to the great philosophers dating back from Socrates up to Hegel, the thoughts of people who share the philosophical guidelines of idealism, people who share philosophical guidelines of materialism and, subsequently, the Marxist theories of dialectical materialism, where people look at what are the best approaches in governance.

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: Sir, if you look back at the teachings of Plato up to the Republic and the Leviathan and the teachings of Hobbes and Locks and John/Jack Russo and all the great thinkers that dealt with aspects of governance, down to modern thinkers who also dealt with the ideology of ethics and values, you would understand that most of these thinkers were not going through an ancestral form of dialogue, but they were doing things that were for the common good of the society, and coming up with the concepts that were best suited to take the country forward.

I believe that after almost 200 years of the abolition of the slave trade which was in 1807, and March next year would be 200 years, it is an imperative and, I believe, a duty on all of us who have been fortunate to be in these Chambers to, at least, reflect on where we came from 200 years ago and look to see how we can chart a future.

Sir, with the complexities of life, as a consequence of technological, industrial and scientific development, it might be more difficult to chart the 100 year path into the future. But, at least, I believe we can chart a future that can take us into the year 2025.

There are many thinkers who spoke comprehensively on the subject of governance. In some cases what they said was not classified as governance, but they were talking about creating a better life for people. Obviously, in order to do that, there must be some central unit of the State, in the form of Government, that must introduce policies that will allow people to enjoy a better life in the future.

We are fully aware of some of the challenges that we face. It can be in the area of education, law and senior

citizens, and this debate can go in that direction. I have heard many subject matters being touched on, because it is a holistic approach to the development of man, as it relates to the people of Barbados.

We are faced with the challenge, can we truly chart a path without taking into consideration, our limited resources. We are not taking into consideration, the sources of influence on the direction of our Government, in terms of the international financial institutions, and the multinational units across the world that have some influence on these economies.

House 115, Sequence 16, 13:40:14

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Hon. T. A. PRESCOD: Even though we claim to have autonomy, the reality is that those financial institutions can force us into certain embarrassing positions where Governments have to react to the imposition of their dictates because they do not have the kind of economic power or the geographical spread or resources that will enable them to make relatively independent decisions.

Mr. Speaker, I will try to be as honest as possible in this discussion and try to purge myself of any kind of selfish partisan view on what direction this country ought to go in. Sir, this is only an independent opinion because I am talking within a framework where there is an imposition of collective responsibility on Cabinet Members. Sir, one of the major encumbrances to the freedom of speech on issues of this kind is the very inheritance of the mechanisms in the form of how governance in a Westminster model ought to operate. Mr. D. St.E. Kellman: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the House the impression that because he has been included in Cabinet there is no freedom of speech in this Parliament.

Hon. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I will absolutely ignore the comments that were made. I know that they were for your ears to hear but certainly they were not for mine.

Sir, I have to liberate myself the best that I can in order to overtly speak on these issues without having to couch my language in such a way that people would have to deduce my intentions from the metaphorical way that a debate in this kind of setting sometimes...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, if you are saying that there is freedom, you would not have to couch your language in any way.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I never deal in absolutes. My theory - and this is where ideological differences occur - is that there is never absolute freedom, that is why they

have laws and rules and regulations. I deal with what is better called...

Asides.

Hon. T. A. PRESCOD: Sir, I strongly believe that there are certain fundamental changes that need to be made within this society.

Sir, when I come to these Chambers and I begin to speak on this subject, especially when I look back through the pages of the document and see an important topic that relates to elements of unleashing the Spirit of the Nation, which I believe speaks to freedom and national identity, I would like to quote from the pages, not of "Black Skins, White Masks", but from the pages of "Wretched of the Earth" by Franz Fanon.

Sir, Franz Fanon was quoting one of the most distinguished African leaders, Sékou Touré who said: To take place in an African revolution it is not enough to write a revolutionary song, you must fashion the revolution with the people..." the emphasis is with the people - "...and if you fashion it with the people, the songs will come by themselves and of themselves". Sir, I believe that is what independence in 1966 was all about. I am referring to the National Anthem and some of the speeches which were made in here today.

Mr. Speaker, I really believe that this is very relevant in the circumstances because what we have in the form of a National Anthem is a revolutionary song. It is probably one of the strongest revolutionary anthems in the history of the western world. Sir, the reality is that if we analyse the National Anthem word by word we would discover what Sekou Toure was saying when he said it is not enough to write a revolutionary song, the song must be fashioned by the revolution within the people. Sir, he is talking about a people with a sense of national consciousness.

Sir, even though the National Anthem speaks to national consciousness, the reality is that we have to ask ourselves if we are conscious of who we are as a people. That is a fundamental question not only for us but for the Chinese and the Japanese who are very clear, but for us it is a very complex question. Sir, starting at the level of national identity, which this Strategic Plan speaks to, 200 years after the abolition of the slave trade, after 1834, and after the struggles over the years, black people in this society still find it difficult to clearly define who is a Barbadian.

Mr. Speaker, one cannot want a greater challenge than a society which is not able to clearly define itself or its people, or a society which does not know how to respect the symbols of its indigenous people, but would prefer to preserve George Washington House than to preserve the

house of Sir Frank Worrell, or that would preserve an old building under the Barbados National Trust but does not want to preserve a slave hut but would rather put a bulldozer on it. Sir, that is why I am saying to you that it is not enough to write a revolutionary song.

Mr. Speaker, we speak well and we write well on these subjects, but there is a reluctance and a fear in the society to speak to the actual requirements for transforming the society to give us a sense of pride in who we are and to respect the contributions that we have made to man, so that you have to defend when you ask somebody in this society to vote for someone that look like you and me. Sir, I am very clear, but the black people inside and outside the Chamber get confused.

Mr. Speaker, there was a leader in this country, whom I respected a lot, who asked what mirror image do you have of yourself. Sir, he was talking about looking into the mirror and seeing who you are. What I am saying is on common ground with a speech of that nature, but people do not want to face that, they speak with greater militancy and aggression in defence of their interpretation of such a statement rather than to speak in defending themselves. We have to deal with that in this society.

Mr. Speaker, everyone says that he/she is a Barbadian because heshe was born here but then they also tell you that a man who was not born here is a Barbadian too. If you ask a man why he is a Barbadian he would say he was born in Barbados. That is the strength of his logic of what is a Barbadian. We have no provision in regulations that say that you have to even live in this country for a considerable period of time before you stand up and be counted as a candidate in a parliamentary election.

House 115 Sequence 17

1.50 p.m.

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Hon. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, that is not the case in the United States of America. If you want to be a President in the United States of America, they place stipulations of how long you would have been living there or if you were born there. Therefore, one does not fly in from Barbados overnight with immigrant status and nominates oneself for election. One cannot even nominate oneself unless one understands what the status would be of a Federal Government, as a black man with any hope of ever winning an election. Every year we live in fantasy about some black candidate who would become the President of the United States of America. Every four year somebody talk about another one on the horizon, and you know the situations within those societies.

Mr. Speaker, I cite that as an example because this debate about national identity cannot be grounded in a person's nationalism; in a nation-state concept that you are a Barbadian simply because you came to Barbados overnight. That is a reality that one has to face. If I were to go to China or India and be given a passport declaring me to be either a resident of China or India, do you think I am stupid enough not to look and examine my nose, skin, lips. Therefore, the most legitimate form of determining a person's identity, not national status, has to be in the ancestral lineage of the person. If I want to know who I am, I cannot determine... I have a brother that is a Trinidadian but is not the identity of the blood relation stronger than the identity of one brother being born in Trinidad, while another brother is born somewhere else. The strength of the identity of the family is in the ancestral groundings of the family; the blood relations that exist in the family itself.

Mr. Speaker, I am talking about identity, not about a person's national status, it exists in the family itself. I am not talking about a person's national status. That is a nation state, European status. It is a bogus status. It is a bogus status of identifying persons. We have to debate that seriously. Mr. Speaker, do you know why they do not want to debate it in this country? And the people who understand it better than you and me are the people who do not look like you and me. They understand and can appreciate it and they know it is true. I respect them all the time, wherever they were born. They could be born in Trinidad, India or Guyana, I respect them for who they are but I understand clearly the strength of the legitimacy of the identity, rests in the blood relation of those people over the years.

Mr. Speaker, we have to start there. We have to first be extremely clear on who we are, before we begin to move on. Probably we should have made that revolutionary change at the point of 1966. We are 40 years late. It should have been in the respect for the symbols. How could a society believe that it has a sense of pride in its own and the society can move Sir Garfield Sobers statue, without any difficulty, but they cannot move the statue of Horatio Nelson.

We have to be strong and courageous. John Kennedy has said it clearly, that you have to be courageous. It is not only about intelligence, it is about courageous. I really believe that when we come into these Honourable Chamber, I should not be looking up at any Lord anybody. I am passionate about that. Whenever I look up I see these men in wigs, dressed up in costumes, as though it is a theatrical exercise, and flaunting it in my face, and nobody ever thinks of about putting on the walls of this noble Chamber the portrait of Errol Walton Barrow, Sir Grantley Adam. Sir, I am not talking about these things being concealed in the backrooms of the building. I am talking about being displayed in the Halls themselves. I am talking

about respect of the status of individuals that look like us. Other people would respect us more, if we do it.

Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of revolutionary changes that we are talking about. It is not enough to write a revolutionary song, and I believe that is what Sekou Toure was talking about. Therefore, there is an anthem that speaks unequivocally about pride in your lands, the pride in oneself and elements of that kind, but when you look at the symbols in the society that we respect, they are not symbols of the achievers of our own.

Mr. Speaker, I have had the privilege of travelling through parts of the Caribbean and parts of the world and wherever I go... I was in New Deli where I saw Indians respecting each other, respecting the symbols, the leaders and in every building, I saw the reflection of that identity in those buildings. But when we come here to Barbados, that colonial approach, we still hang on to it and both those who are in existence today and who are unborn, will become victims of those symbols.

We have people in this country that are sometimes backwards and in many cases inferior in intellect but hold high offices in this land. These persons were not born so but have been proven to be so by the intellectual system yet they dominate certain positions in this land and control leadership in the private sector, influence on para-statal units; influences at the level of leadership; influences in Government and Opposition and nobody see it as an important issue that needs to be addressed.

If we are going to be serious about a progressive position for the future - and a person in my view could only chart a future 19 or 20 years from now - provided that the ideological trajectory is extremely smooth and straight, he has to know what it is he is trying to achieve, as a consequence of governance. I believe that at this time, when we are concentrating for the sake of tourism or national development or preserving certain buildings, we must feel equally as strong about restoring the former house at Bank Hall, that of Frank Worrell. I believe we must look at the Nightingale Home and restore the name of Courtney Prescod. It is on the dollar bill, then let us have the name. I do not know what his contribution was but let us have the name of Prescod on that building.

Asides.

Hon. T. A. PRESCOD: Not me, I do not own anything. I am talking a people - and I place this part in the contribution because I think this is important to the psyche of our people and it reflects how we think about ourselves. It will help us to understand the contributions of not only European thinkers of governance but black men and women, who felt that they were quite capable of designing ideological positions that would help us to put the required

structures and relationships in place, for the further development of our people.

2.00 p.m.

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Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: We have remained within the constructs of colonialism. The relationships which we have developed over the years are with the very colonial units across the Caribbean, across the world and it is always with great reluctance and fear, in reaching out in a desperate way to our own people within the diaspora. We have to be more determined and courageous in establishing those bonds and to stand up and defend what we feel is right, not because we do not respect other people's view or approaches to how Governments should run, not because we do not respect the trading relationships, social relationships or cultural relationships of other people but the fact is that we must learn to respect our own people. Sir, those are some of the concerns that I have in this society.

Mr. Speaker, when you try to advance these things, the contradictions in this society are...

Asides.

Mr. T.A. PRESCOD: I know this is a very sensitive one but in this society very few people want to respect religions outside of Christianity. Sir, all of us, subconsciously or even unconsciously, speak of this society as a Christian society. It is a total disregard for any other religion which exists in it, even though the religions might overtly tell you that they are not Christians. Sir, it is a Christian society but the very people, who are not Christians in it, are some of the people that when you try to explain their rights to this society from the perspective of religion, the society becomes annoyed. This is why I am talking about both historic and current contradictions in the system itself. Sir, all the persons in this society, mainly those people from the Asianic background that are of Islamic background, live in this country every day and hear the thinkers of this society refer to it as a Christian society but, I cannot say it is a black society by the fact that we are the majority. I cannot say that it is an Afrocentric view; I cannot say that it is an Africian society although they will tell you that it is 90 something percent black and of African origin. Sir, these are the contradictions.

Mr. Speaker, how can you unriddle these difficulties, if you are setting up false premises for discussion, telling people things that are not the truth and, in some cases, you have been fortunate to get the entire society to buy the view that the society is multinational and multiethnic, although it has small pockets of other ethnic groups.

Mr. Speaker, in addition to those things, there is a need as well to look at how, in the structures of the society, we can try to return to a community model where many of our agencies can operate from among the people. I am proposing that we need to have a people-oriented form of governance, in structure and in ideology, where we can even take our units and go back to the people. What you have are units reacting to the challenges in the society after the challenges have reached a crisis point. For example, we have the Child Care Board, where only when the problem occurs in the society, only when there is abuse in the society, only when the family breaks down in the society and children suffer as a consequence of it that you expect the parents and guardian to walk down to the Child Care Board to lodge a complaint.

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

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to enter this debate. I sat and listened to the contribution made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, and I just want to clarify certain matters in relation to a statement made by him about qualification for citizens to take part in the parliamentary process. Sir, I believe it is well documented in the Constitution of Barbados, the qualifications to Parliament and, by extension, the qualification of citizenship under the Supreme Laws of this land. Sir, I just want to make that clear because reference was made that we have no legislative provision that encapsulates that issue. I believe that it is Section 43 and Chapter 2 of the Constitution, which puts that in place. I was a little disappointed in the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, who was in a revolutionary mode today but, Sir, some days you miss and some days you hit.

H115/14:10

Sequence 19

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Mr. M. A. Lashley: Sir, I also want to speak to another issue. I listened to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and he alluded to certain statements about the over-reliance of the generosity of Government. I am wondering if the Honourable Member was saying in that statement that the citizens have to wait on the generosity of government, especially in the situation where a government has been given a strong mandate. Sir, to characterise the relationship between the citizen and the Government as whatever the Government has at hand to deliver to the masses and to place it on the issue of generosity, I am saying that the Government has a social responsibility and a moral responsibility, so the issue of Government's generosity is a no-no. Sir, there is a social contract between the citizen and the Government, and Government is under a

legislative, moral and social duty to ensure that the citizens social and moral welfare are well looked after.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West is in agreement with me. I am not putting a spin on his statement, but his statement can be interpreted in that way.

I believe that any National Strategic Plan should obviously encompass goals for those vulnerable groups in the society, those who are weak economic dependents and weak social dependents. When there is a relationship between the citizen and Government, the Government must ensure that whatever programmes they have in mind should be rooted in the concepts of social justice.

Mr. Speaker, when I speak of the vulnerable groups, I want to refer to the National Strategic Plan, Page 45, paragraph 1.5. It states:

“Ensure that the rights of all, particularly the differently abled and other vulnerable groups, are clearly articulated and protected in all aspects of our society.”

Sir, Page 52, 1.6 states:

“Promote the concept of decent work in small and medium sized enterprises, as well as in the informal sector.”

Section 1.4 states:

“Create an enabling environment for economic growth and development as well as for safeguarding the fundamental rights of workers.”

Mr. Speaker, we must face reality. The reality is, as we speak today, there are 28 000 workers in Barbados. In fact, my statement can be buttressed by another document, which was laid in this House, called “The National Commission of Law and Order”. It speaks to the fact that there are 28 000 persons in Barbados who are working for less than \$250 a week.

Sir, if we are speaking about vulnerable groups, in relation to a National Strategic Plan, for reasons of social justice, equity and fairness, then what safety net we would have to put in place to protect these vulnerable groups?

Sir, I would speak to the fact that if 28 000 persons are working for less than \$250 a week, and we alluded to this National Strategic Plan, we would ensure that the rights of all vulnerable groups are protected. It is also mentioned in this National Strategic Plan the access to free legal services by the year 2010.

Sir, I want to connect both of them, the relationship of that low income vulnerable group to the relationship with the employer, because we speak about social justice and ensuring that legal and social justice coincide, at Page 44 paragraph 1.2 of the National Strategic Plan of Barbados. The reason I have to raise some concerns about that group is because we know that they are confronted with the stark reality of the day, as the Honourable Member for St. Philip West alluded to, which is the high cost of living. The fact is they are confronted with a situation now where we do not have a definitive position, on whether their representation, even in relation to a body representative, for example a trade union, that we do not have in the system a legal recognition of that body called the trade union to represent their interest, and to act in the protection of their rights.

Sir, when we speak of even expanding the legal services in this document, what will happen in a situation of this vulnerable group where at least one, five or six of them are dismissed, without just cause?

Mr. Speaker, we have in our system something called the Community Legal Aid Scheme. Whenever we speak about expanding legal services, we must link it to the expansion of the Community Legal Aid Scheme...

14.20 p.m.

Sequence 20

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House 115, Sequence 21, 2.40 p.m.

Mr. M.A. LASHLEY: ...because that Scheme was established, not only to ensure that there is legal and social justice, but also to protect vulnerable groups, which had no access to legal representation.

I am of the view, Sir, that if members of that group, for example, the 28 000 workers I said that there is evidence, who work for less \$250 a week, were put in a position where they could advance their rights, where they have a just cause to defend their rights against a person superior to them, or in a superior position, then if we speak to free legal access, expansion of the provision of free legal services by 2010, then I wonder why it took so long. Sir, did this concept take so long because it is the notion that the access to free legal services plays an important part in the administration of justice.

I am saying respectfully, Sir, that if we look at the Scheme as it is now, it is very limited. My learned friend from St. James Central, my learned friend from St. John, the Leader of the Opposition, and other Members over there who are exposed to the functioning of law, would

agree with me that when a person in Barbados, in this present time, is wrongfully dismissed, if that person is a man of straw - because even he falls vulnerable to this groups \$250 or less a week - the access to legal services in the private market, Sir, would present a problem for him.

The State now has a social and moral responsibility to provide that mechanism, safety net or the network so that persons will have access to legal services. Sir, if it is not the Community Legal Aid Scheme, some other scheme, where that person will have a chance to put his matter to have his rights defended, in the interest of justice for the worker, especially a worker at the bottom. Sir, a worker, even a person in this group I am speaking about, in the private sector is not protected in the Administrative Justice Act. The workers in the public sector are protected.

Sir, the fact is that the quality of justice and the fact that an employer...Sir, when we hear talk about the Administration of Justice, we hear that there is a law for one group and there is a law for another group, or that the law protects one group, and the other group is left out to sea. This is a perception that is out there.

Sir, a modern day Cabinet, especially with persons with the philosophy of my good friend from St. Michael East, who is always fighting for the vulnerable groups in this society, would agree that it has taken too long to expand a Government legal aided scheme to include matters of employment under the Community Legal Aid Scheme.

I read page 45, and saw the statement ensuring that the rights of all, particularly the differently abled and other vulnerable groups are clearly articulated and protected, in all aspects of this society. Sir, it goes further.

Sir, there are jurisdictions that protect the differently abled, in terms of employers discriminating against them. These jurisdictions have legislation in place, where an employer cannot discriminate against an employee, saying that I am not employing you because you are differently able. If this is done in other jurisdictions, it is an offence. In some situations it is an offence met only by the civil law. In other jurisdictions it is an offence met by the criminal law.

Sir, the legislative provision to prevent discrimination by employers against that vulnerable group, the disabled group is needed in this country. Again, as I said from the outset, every programme must be rooted in the concept of social justice.

Sir, when workers in this country wanted protection from indiscriminate dismissal, they were vulnerable at the time, the Government of the day, the Democratic Labour Party, introduced the Severance Payment Act, to protect that vulnerable group from indiscriminate dismissal.

House 115, Sequence 21, 14:30:14

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Mr. M. A. LASHLEY: Sir, when women in this country were calling for legislative protection, the Government of the day, the Democratic Labour Party, introduced the Employment of Women Act to protect that vulnerable group in this society. Sir, at the time Government had a concept of social justice, a concept of fairness and equity and so they used their legislative arm to pass the necessary protection to protect the rights of women in this country who were employed. Mr. Speaker, a Government of the day should not hesitate but should act in a swift and timely manner when it comes to protecting the rights of the vulnerable groups in this society.

Mr. Speaker, the State has tremendous powers under the Land Acquisition Act, to offer protection to an individual who is the owner of some property or a piece of land in this country. Sir, the Government of the day decided they would protect the rights of that vulnerable group and would compensate them because they have deprived them of one of their rights, the right to property, under the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, fairness and legal and social justice dictate that you compensate that person in a timely manner to ensure that vulnerable group is protected because you are now dispossessed, you are now powerless and you have no property. Sir, that is why I took issue with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West when he spoke to the generosity of Government, unless he is saying that those persons now have to wait on the generosity of Government to pass whatever is due to them.

Sir, there is another vulnerable group in this society, the victims of crime. Sir, my learned friend, the Honourable Member for St. James Central would agree with me... In fact, he has been in situations where he had represented persons where the victim was seeking some compensation, but the problem is that the accused is a man of straw and cannot provide any compensation or provide any thing to support his well-being.

Sir, why has it taken so long to bring the legislative provision to compensate victims of violent crimes? Sir, one does not have to be a rocket scientist and it does not have to take from 2005-2025 to know that a principle of justice is that we must protect the rights of those persons who are accused and those persons who are affected by whatever act or omission that was placed upon them.

Mr. Speaker, I look at this document and I read it. It is like reading the manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party over and over again. It is full of promises on top of promises and a lot of fancy language but there is nothing

specific that I can say yes, this is what they are doing and there is nothing expressly stated in here that I can say yes, they are on the right path. Sir, despite all the fancy talk about social justice, the reality is that there are 28 000 workers out there earning less than \$250 a week.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. R. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to offer some comments on this debate to do with the National Strategic Plan of Barbados. Mr. Speaker, about a month or so ago when this Resolution was moved, the mover described it as a most important debate that was taking place in this Parliament and compared it to the Independence debate of 1966 and said that when the history of this Parliament is written they would look to this debate as being a hinged point in Barbados' history.

Mr. Speaker, just a glance on the other side might suggest, and certainly from what I have heard in here, I am not sure her colleagues agree with her... This is a debate that I am told is supposed to be an historic event and that so much store can be placed on this and that we should look to this as a most important issues.

Sir, this National Strategic Plan was so important, it languished on the Order Paper for about a year, and so we are in 2006 going into 2007 discussing a Plan for 2005 to 2025. Mr. Speaker, this Draft National Strategic Plan was so important to the Government of Barbados and the Barbados Labour Party that we had to postpone this historic debate and drag it out over four to six weeks.

Mr. Speaker, I am told that the concept of developing the 20-year National Strategic Plan is basically to be an improvement on the traditional 7-year development plans. We were told that period of time was too short and that in order to develop a strategic vision one needed a longer time frame and the Government has decided on 20 years.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that anyone can have any difficulty with that concept and there is a lot that you really cannot have any difficulty with. I must say that to take six lines from the National Anthem and to cut and paste them and to just embellish them a little bit with some platitudes around them and to call that a Strategic Plan is really taking it a little far. I really believe that. Therefore, I am suggesting that there are some aspects of the traditional 7-year Plan that were not all that bad. I do believe that for example the issue of cost could be considered within the context of a 20-year Plan. Some may disagree with me but I do not see any reason why their 20-year Strategic Plan should be absolutely silent on matters relating to cost. You have a 20-year Plan where you anticipate certain activities that will earn revenues and so you should be able to anticipate within some sort of context of what sort of

revenues you anticipate and naturally you have different ideas on activities and programmes you wish to put in place for the nation and you should have some idea of what they will cost as well.

House 115 Sequence 22

2.40 p.m.

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Mr. R. L. SEALY: In other words, are we discussing pie in the sky or can we hinge this Draft National Strategic Plan in something that is truly achievable? That I think is just one thing I have noticed, in so far as differentiating between what obtained before that we were told was not adequate to some extent, and what we have now.

Mr. Speaker, I understand that as one enters long term planning, that it is not always the easiest thing to do but I still think some sort of forecasting should be done because one of our main problems that has been identified by this side, by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, is the apparent question of earning our keep. The simple reality is that central, to our very economic and social being as a nation, is this very high import Bill. The fact that we are not producing enough goods and services that will ensure our sustained existence into the future, or certainly into the period under consideration in this Plan.

Mr. Speaker, I would have thought that a strategic plan, not a national strategy but a strategic plan, something that was correctly described by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West as a management tool that a Government can use, should offer something more meaningful.

Mr. Speaker, I think we all know that there is a problem with our export sector and that, in essence, is key to ensuring our high quality of living. Sir, where exactly are we going with this? If one looks at page 80 of the Draft National Strategic Plan, it actually has a Head, dealing with increasing the export of services and products. Under "Explanation", it says that Barbados must become an exporter of highly competitive services and products" There are then eight strategies such as:

1. Encourage the development and legal education, health, sports, cultural, profession and other services;
2. Expand and improve tourism;
3. Rationalise and modernise agriculture and manufacturing;
4. Promote Barbados as a hub for hemispheric business activity;

5. Re-export of services;

6. Enhance and defend the integrity of the financial sector;

7. Strengthen institutional capacity for the development and promotion of exports; and

8. To develop the appropriate incentives and other stimuli for export development.

Mr. Speaker, we have already heard about these eight strategies before. All of the strategies identified to deal with perhaps the most critical points in ensuring our quality of life, has been dealt with in the last three Budget Speeches and in the last three Estimate Debate speeches. What are we in here doing today? What is the purpose of telling me we have a Draft National Strategic Plan and all we are doing is regurgitating what we have been saying all along.

Mr. Speaker, nobody is going to disagree with these platitudes. Who is going to disagree with the need to expand and to improve tourism? We are a tourism-based economy.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I find myself participating in an exercise in which I have great difficulty.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, when I go in Baycroft Road or in Brittons Hill and I tell the young people out there that I was discussing a plan, that would redound to their benefit 20 years from now and they ask me what we have discussed, can I say that I have discussed to enhance and to improve tourism? Sir, I think we need to be more detailed. Sir, I know the first thing the Honourable Member would do, when wrapping up, is to say that this is a strategic plan, we will deal with that when we come with our five year plan, or when we come with our tactical plans.

Mr. Speaker, I reject that. I believe a strategic plan should and must come within the context of developing Barbados and deal with the issue of figures. How much are we going to earn and how much would all of it cost, within reason. There are no shortages of persons on the other side, who are qualified in the field of economics, both in and out of this Honourable Chamber. Therefore, I do not see any reason why something along those lines could not be conceptualised.

Asides.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, those are some of the definite issues I see we need to look at. Sir, while I am

on this subject of the question of 20 year or even a longer term view that this Government has of Barbados and the issue of earning our keep, I want to be very clear about what exactly is meant by promoting the investment climate in Barbados. Now again, a platitude that no one in his or her right mind would agree with, to make Barbados a leading and preferred investment centre in the world. But based on some things that have been said both inside and outside of this Honourable Chamber, I think it is appropriate that we understand that building an investment friendly environment does not necessary mean selling our land, lock, stock and barrel.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to say that I totally dissociate myself with any notion that in order to meet our current cost or to pay bills, that we have to look at selling land in any large scale basis to foreigners, and that that should be looked as a legitimate course for earning foreign exchange for us to continue to enjoy the standard of living that we all look forward to, as Barbadians.

I know that quite a bit has been said on this lately and I would like to state my position. It is no way for Barbados to look to earn its way forward. That is why I said what I said about exporting of goods and services because I would have thought within the context of a 20-year plan, that we could have heard something a little more about that. Perhaps some of those other industries, those emerging industries, both service providers as well as producers of good, et cetera, I would have thought that some degree of creativity could have been expressed there to develop areas of where, for example the burgeoning entrepreneurs out there could earn some foreign exchange for this country and that we could truly once again live to our motto "Pride and Industry." You practically copied the whole National Anthem in writing this document.

Sir, once again we can take pride and be industrious and produce goods and services and not necessary have to sell our patrimony, in order to pay bills. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to associate myself with that kind of thinking at all.

Sir, according to how generalised this document is worded, I may very well, in saying that I agree in making Barbados a preferred investment centre, as is mentioned, be unwittingly agreeing with the idea that we should all just look to take every lot that we could put our hands on, put condominiums on them and try to see how much pound sterling of United States of America dollars we could get for them. If that is what we are going to do in order to earn our keep, I think that is no way forward for Barbados. Mr. Speaker, I say that in the context of this Draft National Strategic Plan, that is an attempt to take the long view.

Frankly speaking, I question the capacity of this Government 20 years forward. We have had ample

evidence to see that this Government cannot even see six months ahead. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South said he needed six months for the Board at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to see results.

2.50 p.m.

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Mr. R.L. SEALY: The Honourable Member Christ Church South said that he needed six months for the Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to see results but we have now gone past a year and all sorts of things are happening down there. Is it a question of the events at Glendairy and the promise for a Commission of Inquiry and so on. I do not know if they have that capacity. Sir, Errol Walton Barrow never had any 20-year Strategic Plan but, clearly, he had a strategy and the imagination to recognise that, yes, you could put policies in place that could impact 50, 60, 70, 80, 100 years down the road. Sir, that is strategic planning by another name. I do not know if this Government necessary has that capacity and maybe they need to sit down and ground once again.

Mr. Speaker, I look at this exercise in this context. I cannot agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East that this is a most important debate we have had since Independence. I have seen and heard little from her colleagues on that side to suggest that they are in agreement with her either. I would be very curious to hear the Honourable Member for St. Peter. I know that he and she have such wonderful relations that he would be happy to agree with her. Perhaps, he would be the one to come in and explain to us how important this debate is. The Honourable Member for St. Philip South complained that the Leader of the Opposition did not lead off the debate. Well, if this is such an important debate and if this is setting the vision from Barbados 20 years forward, why did the Prime Minister not lead it off. Sir, you want to use one set of rules for the Medes and another set for the Persians. Our leader should lead this debate but his leader can do whatever he has to do or wants to do and send his deputy in here. Of course, there are such a wonderful tandem these days, it probably does not make a difference.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to make another observation about this Plan and, perhaps, it underscores the extent to what I have been saying earlier about how it was put together is true. Sir, I notice in the section on social justice that it speaks about...

Mr. Speaker left the Chair and Mr. Deputy Speaker took the Chair.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, proceed.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I was making the point about the section that deals with the social sector and the idea to fully eradicate poverty from the social landscape. I see that one of the strategies is to clear slums and promote urban renewal. Sir, I was little curious to know, as a Member of Parliament for an urban constituency, where are these slums that need to be cleared. I am working with the Urban Development Commission trying to renew and improve the lot of residents in my constituency but I am now hearing about clearing slums.

Sir, that is something you heard about in the 1950s, the colonial times would talk about that. We are trying to encourage people in urban areas to take some pride, to improve their infrastructural well-being and to improve their lots and now we are talking about mass clearing of slums. Sir, I do not know what that is supposed to mean. I really do not understand that sort of thinking. I do not know if it has any place in a modern Barbados that we should be talking in terms of slums. Of course, the Barbados Labour Party has a bit of history when they had to build the Treatment Plant for Bridgetown of disrupting and destroying communities in the interest of what they are calling urban renewal.

I would dissociate myself with any concept of urban renewal that means you have to take bulldozers and clear entire areas because, in your opinions, they are slums. Sir, they are communities and we should look to improve the infrastructure, improve the public amenities, improve access, ensure that everyone has waterborne toilets and improve the living conditions of the elderly, that is what we should be doing. Sir, maybe if the Urban Development Commission, which now has new leadership...

Asides.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, do not mind the Honourable Member for Christ Church East because he said he was building four houses a week and not one is in Christ Church West Central. Sir, I cannot believe that urban renewal has to be looked at in that light in the context of a 20-year plan.

I represent an urban community and I am prepared to work with the Urban Development Commission. I cannot say they have always been ready to work with me but we understand the political realities of certain things because, if you look at the history of the Urban Development Commission and why it was established, it was established to see that I was not in here. The Barbados Labour Party had determined that they should have all the seats in St. Michael so I do not expect them to push down one another and trip over themselves to come and help me. Sir, to the extent that they are forced to because St. Michael South Central is part of Barbados and part of urban Barbados, I am willing to work with them.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is reflecting a sense of overwhelming arrogance that really is unbecoming of a member. Sir, the Urban Development Commission was not established to stop him from coming into this Chamber. The Urban Development Commission was established to help relieve poverty from the people of St. Michael, in circumstances where the Democratic Labour Party, constituted primarily by St. Michael constituencies, ignored the plight of people whether in terms of land ownership; whether in terms of waterborne facilities or whether in terms of access to funds to get out poverty itself. I give him the assurance that, however much he may feel that he is important, the Honourable Member was not then or is not now, the reason for the Urban Development Commission.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member admits that urban Barbados predominately supported the Democratic Labour Party and now is saying that the Democratic Labour Party did nothing for urban Barbados. Who is being arrogance in here now? She is speaking on behalf of all the people in St. Michael and insulting their intelligence in the process too. Sir, I can only express an opinion based on the relationship that I have had with the Urban Development Commission and it predates her time as Minister. Therefore, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to speak on behalf of the people for St. Michael South Central, and I can only speak on the basis of my experience.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have seen minutes from Board Meetings of the Urban Development Commission that seek to receiving lists from Branch Offices. You would note that my Branch Office has not been consulted to submit any list for anything because I am on the other side. Sir, that is my opinion and I understand where she is coming from but that is not the sort of thinking that I believe should exist in modern Barbados and, indeed, in the context of a debate such as this one, where we are attempting to take a long view and, presumably a non-partisan view.

I do not know if it would be wishful thinking but, obviously, one would anticipate that in thinking of a 20-year plan, you could think that another Party could conceivably be in power, maybe even a Party which has not been started yet? Who knows? We do not have a crystal ball that we can predict who will be power or who will not be in power.

H115/15:00

Sequence 24

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Sir, I, unfortunately, find myself associating with some of the comments, that were made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. The document is really not a plan, not a strategic plan, nor a tactical plan. It reads like a manifesto and sounds a lot like an embellished manifesto - we will do this, a lot of platitudes, we will expand that, improve this, strengthen that and create the next. Therefore, I find myself not being bought into any draft plan, that is just woefully lacking in any genuine strategic vision, and certainly does not, indeed, constitute, what I consider to be any plan to take Barbados forward to the next two decades.

I am obliged to you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Dr. J.X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise this evening to support this draft Strategic Plan, 2005-2025. I think that it is appropriate that we should be debating this Plan, on the 40th Anniversary of Independence. As a nation, indeed, in terms of health and the environment, we have had many notable successes and achievements as a country, for which we should be proud.

Indeed, life expectancy of seventy-seven years, is comparable to that of many developed countries throughout the world. Our infant mortality is far from what it was in the 1960s, and in terms of maternal mortality, it stands out as a beacon, in terms of what we have been able to achieve in the Caribbean, and, indeed, in Latin America.

Our immunisation coverage for citizens, and our children is even, perhaps, better than that, which obtains in the United States of America. We have a network of polyclinics, of which we can be proud. Of course, we have the Barbados Drug Service, which is second to none anywhere in this region, and, indeed, in this hemisphere.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, which is beset with its challenges from time to time, but in spite of that, still manages to provide a very good standard of health care in this country, which is to the benefit on many occasions, of many of the Honourable Members on the other side, who have had occasion to visit and, indeed, to be patients there from time to time, and can attest to the quality of the service, care and attention which they have received while they were there.

Sir, there are challenges ahead, as we plan, looking forward as we speak about the next twenty-five years, there are obvious challenges that we would face as a nation, in terms of the provision of health care in this country. Already, we are faced with an issue of an aging population, and it is predicted that by the year 2020, approximately 17 per cent of our population will be over age sixty-five.

Sir, there is the epidemic of chronic non-communicable diseases, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, and there are sacralis, such as strokes and heart attacks. This is a virtual epidemic in our country, and it is so throughout the world. It is something that we would have to pay special attention to in the next twenty-five years.

Sir, indeed, because of globalisation and the whole concept of a global village, there is a universal shortage of health workers, particularly nurses and doctors in some countries. These are some of the challenges we will have to face.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in terms of drug dependency in our youth, and how it affects the youth of our country is again a challenge that will continue to affect us for the foreseeable future. Sir, in all this, we are also faced with HIV/AIDS and how we will adapt in our society, to deal with the possible scourge of HIV/AIDS and the deleterious affect it would have on a society such as ours.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the issue of our environment, the protection of our environment, is another matter which we would have to address. Of course, in a country that is water scarce, in a global context, we have to plan ahead for the next twenty years, to provide safe potable water for our citizens.

Sir, this Government, and through the Ministry of Health, in an effort to address some of these matters, has developed a strategic plan for health, and indeed a strategic plan for nursing, as we try to implement the various aspects of the National Strategic Plan, which speaks to health and the environment.

The National Strategic Plan speaks to the need to deal with the issues of the aging in our society. As I said earlier, we are faced with the growing number of elderly persons in our country. As a society, Barbados has adapted some of the standards and behavioural patterns of the more developed world. In terms of the management and caring for the elderly, oty is an area of which we need to do a lot.

Sir, we have past the stage where parents were cared for in the home. We have reached a stage where because of economic circumstances, family dynamics, persons working and having to provide for their families, there is this concept in Barbados, which has crept into our society, the issue of how to deal with our elderly persons. As they get old, they might not necessarily be ill, but they are abandoned. It is called the concept of "Granny Abandonment Syndrome".

Sir, in a population where the numbers of the elderly are increasing, it is something any Government and every Government would have to pay particular attention to, in terms of the provision of care and accommodation for the

elderly persons in our community, who at the end of the day were the builders of our society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in our future plans we need to look more at the sort of facilities, like those constructed at Vauxhall, Christ Church, to deal with caring for the elderly, and having them more in the community where they can communicate and be active in their communities, as far as possible.

In addition, we have to move away from this concept of institutional care for the elderly who might necessarily be ill and need to be in that sort of institution, to have them in moreso user-friendly units. Already, in this regard, the Government has embarked on a programme on alternative care for the elderly. This is certainly something, as we look to future that we have to expand.

Sir, in addition to that, within the geriatric system, within our institutions, the time has come when we need to pay more attention to developing those institutions, to provide more sub-acute and acute care for elderly persons, so that we move away from the basic treatment that is given to them there, and we move to a situation where we have specialisation in gerontology, both by nurses and doctors, so that we could provide more adequate and efficient care to those elderly persons who will need it. Sir, these are certainly some of the goals that we need to achieve in the future, as we move forward.

In terms of the chronic non-communicable diseases, I believe a lot has been said and continues to be said, and in Barbados we face a serious problem. There is a virtual epidemic of these diseases in our society. The level of obesity in Barbados, in the over-forty age group among females, it is well over 50 per cent, based on some indicators. In terms of diabetes, we have an incidence of over 18 per cent in our society. These are matters that certainly seem to be getting worse. It has to be addressed.

The National Strategic Plan speaks of the need to promote the whole concept of health promotion in the coming years. The whole matter of educating persons about their health, and encouraging them to be more involved in taking care of themselves and looking after bodies, as you do, Sir. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that you are a classic example, that you still find time to exercise, eat healthy, avoid alcohol and smoking. These are some of the things that we will have to extol to persons in our society, if we are to, indeed, make any impact on this possible scourge of chronic diseases in our community.

Sir, having said that, we also have to address the problem in our schools. We speak of free education and of school meals. I think that the time has come when, if we are to address the scourge of chronic diseases, we need to start at the primary school level. These are things that we

will have to be looked at in terms of the nutrition and dietary requirements, that are provided for children in our school system.

15.10 p.m.

Sequence 25

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

House 115, Sequence 26, 3.10 p.m.

Hon. Dr. J.X. WALCOTT: Shortly, I shall be announcing a Chronic Diseases Commission for Barbados. This will be comparable to the HIV/AIDS Commission. The Government realises that the management of chronic diseases is important, if not more important than HIV/AIDS, in terms of the socioeconomic consequences that we could have on our society, if we allow chronic diseases to rum amok in our society, without trying to deal with them.

Therefore, we would have to deal with this from the point of view, where we encourage persons through the society to be part of it. We have to involve the NGOs in this Commission so that every sector understands their role, in terms of bringing Barbados to a society with much improved conditions, in terms of their chronic diseases.

It will involve not only diet but in terms of extolling the virtues of exercise. Sir, in a society that is planning ahead and is building highways and roads, we will have to take into consideration, the need at this time, to provide in future planning for areas of exercise, where people can ride a bicycle and jog away from the threats of being knocked down by a motor vehicle, as occurs in Barbados. Certainly, in a forward thinking society, we need to address some of these issues, in terms of the provision for the care of persons and dealing with the chronic non-communicable diseases.

Sir, I mentioned HIV/AIDS and, again, we have a lot to be proud of in terms of how we have been dealing with the scourge of HIV/AIDS in Barbados. I think it is clear that we need to do even more as a society. The Government should be commended for the role that the HIV/AIDS Commission has played in Barbados, in terms of coming to grips with the disease.

We have had some notable successes, in terms of the reduction in mortality from this disease in Barbados over the years, and the hospital days for persons who are suffering from HIV/AIDS and had to be admitted, but we still have to do more. We have to continue the education, we have to continue to expand our voluntary counselling and testing, and we have to make an all-out effort to try, at

least, if we cannot reduce the incidence, to control the incidence of this disease.

In this situation, we were faced with the whole issue of the utilisation of antiretroviral drugs, and having to deal with the issue of persons who have developed a resistance to some of these drugs. All of this would have to be addressed in its totality as we move forward, trying to combat this scourge of HIV/AIDS.

In terms of the global scarcity of health care workers, particularly nurses and doctors, I believe it is well-documented and it has been spoken and written about extensively that there is a global shortage of nurses. It is estimated in terms of the United States of America that by 2016, they will have vacancies for approximately 800 000 years, and in that very year, there will be vacancies for at least 200 000 doctors in the United States of America alone. Therefore, we understand that will be something we would be up against.

Many of the developed countries understand that in terms of providing education for doctors and nurses, it is quite expensive. They see it in the terms of clear economics, and in the concept of the global village that perhaps for their countries, it is more beneficial for them to be recruit nurses from abroad, and doctors in some cases, as opposed to putting up the cost for providing education for nurses and doctors at all levels.

As a small country with no real natural resources, we have to look at our people and we have to look at our services sector. Sir, in planning for the future, we have to take this into consideration and look at providing, in terms of education for persons in health care, not only for Barbados' purposes but, in the larger picture, think of providing and training doctors and nurses who can then migrate on this sort of global stage, and provide the good quality for which West Indian doctors and nurses are associated with, generally.

In this regard, Sir, you can see already that the Government has embarked on this strategy. We have increased the numbers of persons who were trained as general nurses in the BCC, from 30 per year, three years ago, it was increased to 90 and from September this year the intake of persons to be trained in general nursing was increased to 120 per year. It is expected that by ng this, we will not only satisfy the needs for nurses in Barbados but we will also be in a position to allow some of our nurses to migrate to greener pastures. Of course, we benefit as a society, in terms of the experience that they bring back when they return and also the remittances which they send back home from time to time.

Similarly, in terms of the provision of medical facilities and doctors, you might know that the University

of the West Indies has already put forward a proposal to Government for the establishment of a medical school in Barbados. Again, the intention is to provide larger numbers of medical graduates every year, in this region. Again, not only providing for doctors in Barbados but thinking globally, in terms of providing persons who are trained, and who can then migrate to different parts of the world to utilise their knowledge and implement the skills, which they have been taught. Sir, as a country in terms of our plan, we need to be thinking on this sort of framework, how we can utilise our persons in the wider world to provide these services. I mentioned the issue of drug dependency. It is a problem that we will certainly continue to have to battle with, in the next 20 years. It is something that we have embarked upon, in terms of education of our youth, and the provision of rehabilitative services for these persons in our society. We have to look more at expanding these services.

The Government has entered into partnerships with private sector persons who provide some of these services, realising that perhaps it is probably better in these circumstances to allow the private sector to take the lead, and the Government to enter into a sort of symbiotic relationship, where we pay them for their services, which they provide for persons, which we would normally have to look after in our system.

Sir, fortunately at this point in time, most of these services are provided for young men. In the future, we would certainly have to look at providing services for young women in terms of drug dependency and rehabilitation and, also for the adolescent and the younger persons. This is another area which will have our attention, in the next couple of years.

Sir, health care services have become in recent years in various parts of the world, an income generating sort of business. You would know that in Thailand and certain parts of India services are provided in terms of various types of surgery, at a fraction of a cost for which persons would have to pay for them in Great Britain and, indeed, the United States of America and Canada. Persons have been migrating to have access to these services at lower prices.

We in Barbados are embarking on a redevelopment plan for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH). You would be aware, Sir, that last year I spoke about this in this Honourable Chamber. I spoke about a consultancy and how they were going to develop a plan for the redevelopment and expansion of the QEH. This plan has now been completed and it speaks to the need for a redevelopment of that institution. It will be shortly going to Cabinet and this will be a matter of debate. I can tell you without sharing any State secrets that it speaks to the need for us to have some major expansion in terms of the provision of high-

tech services, the need for us to upgrade and provide the latest in technology for our specialist areas, intensive care, renal dialysis, and the provision of operation theatre facilities.

Sir, already, you know that we have seen, in spite of the challenges which I mentioned earlier that the hospital is faced with from time to time, we continue to be seen as a sort of beacon of health care this region. It is felt that with the proposed redevelopment and expansion of the QEH, in the next 25 years, it will indeed continue to be the beacon and will be the centre of health care in the eastern Caribbean.

Certainly in terms of health tourism this will be something that will attract people to our shores. Already we provide open heart surgery in Barbados at a fraction of the cost, compared to similar surgery provided in north America, and in terms of joint replacement surgery and laparoscopic surgery.

It is felt that as a Nation, as we look forward to the next 25 years, we need not only to speak of providing the best in health care for our citizens but also looking to provide comparable health care to those citizens of the world in general. This is something that we have to look at, in terms of seeing Barbados within the global perspective.

House 115, Sequence 26, 15:20:12

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, I spoke earlier in terms of the environment and the protection of the environment. This National Strategic Plan speaks about having an efficient solid waste plan in place as part of our plans for the next 20 to 25 years. Over the years we have utilised landfills in various forms throughout our country, but we realised that the global concept is that waste is now seen as a resource. Throughout Europe and North America, this is a familiar concept. Certainly, in a small country like ours we have to be cognisant of the changes that are occurring and of the seemingly importance of waste in a New World Order.

We, as a Government, have devised and developed a new comprehensive plan for the management of solid waste in Barbados. We know that in some countries there are proponents for incineration as a solution. As I said, we are concerned about the environment, and we note that in North America, particularly the United States of America and to a lesser extent Canada, that there have been no commissioning of any new incinerators since 1993/1994. Therefore, as a nation, we understand the concerns about incineration in terms of the carcinogenic emission from these incinerators. We have seen a plan in which we have to look, for the first time in Barbados, at a comprehensive

plan for recycling as a part of our management of solid waste.

In this programme, we speak of our new comprehensive programme, which is planned for Vacluse, the materials recovery facility, which speaks of the separation of the various components of the waste and the composting section to which the organics would go. Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the next coming months, I will speak more to the recent acquisition by Government of an area of land adjacent to Vacluse, where there would be provision for those persons who are involved in recycling to expand their facilities and indeed to relocate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I speak, there are a number of industries in Barbados, which many of us do not know, that are involved in various aspects of recycling in terms of the collection of pet bottles and the utilisation of these pet bottles not only for making shingles, but for making plastic board out of the pet bottles and indeed the larger detergent bottles.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, hundreds of tonnes of this spec material is exported to China annually. In terms of newsprint from our newspaper companies, we know that there are persons who collect this and ship it to India. There is a company that is involved in the collection and the shredding of the paper that is used daily in the various offices in Barbados, and in its export and re-utilisation. There are various other aspects of this in terms of the tyres, which the Arawak Cement Plant is now looking at using as a means of alternative fuel in terms of firing their kilns. These are some of the ventures that we are looking at as we plan ahead for solid waste. Sir, this National Strategic Plan certainly paints the picture of a Government and of a country, which in planning for the future, sees the importance of developing a plan in terms of our management and disposal of solid waste. The Government recognises that we have to utilise these various components, and that in terms of the organic if they go to composting they can be utilised in terms of agriculture in improving the nutrients of our soils by extracting various components which can be separated. Sir, this can be removed and can bring economic benefit to the country, and at the same time reduce our dependency on landfills and the controversy that are usually associated with landfills and the development in our country.

Sir, in terms of the provision of potable water to our country, I said earlier that as we plan ahead we have to be cognisant of the fact that we are a water-scarce country and we would have to look and devise means of reducing the wastage of water in our society. I think that many persons are aware that our water mains have been there for decades and often they leak. Sir, it is estimated that 40 per cent of the water in Barbados is wasted on a daily basis because of

leaking mains. As a country, we have to look in terms of utilising the maximum capacity of our desalination plant.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as far as I know, according to the Standing Orders of this House we are supposed to operate with a quorum.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was wondering how the Honourable Member would have determined that.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what is going on in here?

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed.

Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is ironic that as I was speaking about the provision of water in a water-scarce country, the Honourable Member re-entered the Chamber. I am indeed pleased to see that one Honourable Member of Her Majesty's loyal Opposition has condescended to come to this Honourable Chamber to be part of this debate on the draft National Strategic Plan for Barbados 2005-2025. I am pleased to see that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has condescended to come, and indeed he is leaving, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know which is prettier, his ties or his shoes.

Sir, we need to utilise the maximum capacity of our desalination plant in terms of providing adequate volumes of water to our population. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East would be very certain that we need to look at the protection of the Belle Reservoir and the surrounding areas, an area that is responsible for providing more than 50 percent of our water resources.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as we approach this 40th Anniversary of Independence, I think that all Honourable Members know that there are certain concerns regarding the quality of the water in that Belle area. In terms of the level of nitrates, it is approaching the upper limit of what the World Health Organisation accepts as being an acceptable standard. In terms of the coliform counts, there are some concerns from time to time when we do a test of the water from that area, and it is obvious that Government would have to look at improving the quality of water, which is being obtained from that area.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the future, we would be looking at devising and developing a new treatment system particularly for the Belle area, in terms of the water treatment, in terms of improving the quality, in terms of reducing the nitrate levels and certainly in terms of removing the coliforms from that water.

Having said that, Sir, you would also be mindful that there are a number of persons who currently live in that zone 1 area who do not have access to running water because of the laws that prevents them from doing so. This Government, mindful of the persons who are living there for years, realises that it is important in this day and age, and certainly in planning for the future, that these persons should have access to running water and indeed proper sewerage facilities. Therefore, it is planned that we would have a sewerage system in place in that area to allow those persons to be able to develop their homes in terms of toilet and bath facilities, whilst at the same time ensuring that our water resources are protected.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that I have said enough this evening. Again, I support and endorse this National Strategic Plan of Barbados because it is vitally important in terms of its provisions, in terms of health care and in terms of the protection of the environment and our water resources.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is unfortunate, as I reflect, that at a time like this the Members of the Opposition were not in their seats to at least be part of this debate, so that I could benefit from the interaction of them this evening and to show the seriousness of this matter in terms of the importance of a National Strategic Plan for a country which is about to embark on its 40th Anniversary of Independence.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the House the impression that the Opposition boycotted this debate, when it is known that nearly every person from the Opposition spoke in this debate. Sir, I think that it is rather misleading for a senior Minister of Health who has to look after the health of the country to make a statement like this in this Parliament, thereby misleading this House. Therefore, one could only come to the conclusion that he would do the same thing about the hospital, Sir.

House 115 Sequence 27

3.30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, people do not think of it. Every time there is a new vehicle on the road, energy consumption goes up. In 1994, there

were approximately 40 000 vehicles on the road. Today, as the Ministry of Public Works said, there are approximately 110 000. Every time a hotel goes up, every time you build a new product, every time a hotel expands, energy consumption is affected. It is perhaps, along with water, at the core of national development, in a way that many other things that we tend to focus on, are not. Without water and access to energy, the quality of life which we enjoy and the plan for future economic and social expansion, would be unsustainable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is, therefore, critical, and that is why we set as our first target the increase in production of oil. Sir, we intend and are currently looking at not only increasing the yield of the present wells and employing new technology, which would allow us to increase capacity in that way, but are looking to new sites to see where new wells could be drilled, that could increase our national capacity and our island supply because for every barrel we produce, that represents a reduction in foreign exchange expenditure and allows us to have some greater level of security at the level of both society and economy.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in relation to the reliability of supply, the Barbados National Oil Company Limited is sourcing product for us. We have moved from a very dangerous situation of having hundreds of vehicles, carrying thousands of gallons of oil across Barbados' roads daily, to a situation where the oil is now moved by pipeline that is of a high quality. Sir, I make the point that it is of a high quality because we know what it is in this country and certainly the people at Gibbons, Christ Church, know what it is to have pipes in the ground that are leaking and adversely impacting on their earning capacity as farmers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Plan sets a target of a percentage of energy, coming from renewable sources within a particular time-frame. It does not lay out how that would be achieved, and I am suggesting to Parliament that there a number of mechanisms through which it would be achieved. The Honourable Minister of Health spoke about the capacity of the country's landfill for us to get energy from the waste resources that we are simply dumping and abandoning, and that is legitimate proven technology that we are looking at and are pursuing. Therefore, there is a plan to extract existing gases at the Mangrove Landfill and to feed that into the energy grid.

Secondly, the Barbados Light & Power Co. Ltd., is pursuing - and I believe only last weekend, pursuant to an environmental impact assessment - a number of town meetings to discuss the issue of the wind farm they are proposing to established at Lamberts, St. Lucy. This would allow them to switch from high cost and highly dangerous to the environment fossil fuel, to a renewal source of energy, to which we have unlimited access, that being wind.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, equally, we are pursuing photovoltaic and solar energy options, which are, again, achieving tremendous national and international attention because of the price of oil. Equally, the Ministry of Agriculture is pursuing an option of moving from a sugar cane industry to one of a fuel cane industry. This is particularly important because tests have shown that the best source of ethanol and that of biofuel, is sugarcane as opposed to maize or corn, which are also being experimented with in the United States of America and other parts of the world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recognise that Barbados cannot compete with a sugar cane industry on the international market. We do now have a landmass that is largely flat and rendering itself amenable to mechanised harvesting; the cost of our labour does not allow us to produce cane cheaply, nor do we have the size that would allow us the kinds of harvest like those places such as Brazil or Vietnam. Therefore, we cannot anymore be competitive in the international field in sugar cane but we can produce fuel cane and can use that fuel to help offset some of our expenditure on fossil fuel, while, at the same time, look to protect and save the environment.

Mr. Speaker, it is therefore critical in a situation where the sugar cane does not appear to have a serious future, especially in view of the changes in trading agreements and the fact that we no longer get preferential prices which we enjoy for sugar cane over long because they are all coming to an end and so on. It is critical, since we have grown sugar for a long time, when we look at what the country would look like, from an aesthetic perspective and what the consequences of denuding the land of sugar cane would be, it is an important shift, not only from the perspective of the economics of the fuel, but certainly from the environmental perspectives and from that of aesthetics.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are currently working on the establishment of a renewable energy centre, from which we will teach renewable energy technology, expose the average citizens to it, and provide the opportunity for entrepreneurs who have an interest in renewable energy to ... The centre would act as a catalyst for people, who are interested in renewable energy, to work from, where technology and support would be available, including support as well as educational and training opportunities. Sir, we should not scoff at our capacity to deliver in the future on renewable energy technology.

During the 1970s, through a number of mechanisms, some of them budgetary, with the then Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Tom Adams, allowing concessions and rebates for persons at the domestic level, who installed solar water heaters and allowing the manufacturing to import their inputs duty-free, we built a tremendous solar

water-heating industry to the extent that a majority of homes in Barbados now have their water heated by solar and 60 per cent of water heaters used in the Caribbean are manufactured in Barbados.

In more recent times, through extended efforts of this administration, the solar water heaters have been able to penetrate the African market and we are looking to see if further penetration of this Barbadian product could be made. But it is not only at the level of moving the product itself, we are in a situation where we expect, not only to manufacture and ship solar water heaters - and that would be a tremendous asset if the product takes off - but we are going to be licensing and enfranchising the technology, and that is where a lot of money could be made.

The issue of intellectual property and patents is one of the biggest issues of the 20th and 21st Century. What we have in Barbados is one of the most proven technologies in relation to solar water heating in the world and therefore we have a product of an international quality and reputation that we can sell but it is not only the physical product but the franchising of the Barbadian technology and the Barbadian approach that is critical.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the last few months, we have received several visits and enquiries from Governments and businesses worldwide, to get assistance in the establishment of solar water heating as an industry or for use outside of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we are also working to see if Barbados would be recognised by the relevant United Nations agency as a centre of excellence in this regard, and to locate a United Nations project here in Barbados that specifically focuses on solar water heating.

3.50 p.m.

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Hon. J.X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy Speaker, again I am obliged to you. I certainly endorse this National Strategic Plan for Barbados. Again I reiterate my statement that I feel we have been hard done by the loyal members of Her Majesty's Opposition this evening, whom I thought would have at least been here, not necessary to learn, but to impart some of this wisdom they claim to have and to help us in bringing their ideas to bear on this Draft National Strategic Plan, understanding that it is a draft in which we would expect the Opposition to have their input as we move forward to develop this Plan for Barbados.

Sir, I am obliged to you. Thank you.

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER: the Honourable Member for St. James South.

Hon. Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much. I rise to give support to the National Strategic Plan of Barbados. I would not say the years they have been repeated in here... suffice it is to say that this is an important exercise in which we are attempting to craft a broad policy framework on which national development can rest into the future. I have heard a number of speeches from Honourable Members on the other side, one today - I do not recall whom, Sir, you would forgive me if I do not - suggested that because there are issues raised in here that have been discussed before, then it is of no consequence and, Sir, that is immaterial. It is not a valid argument because the issues of governance, some are new and others are not. The thinking on the issues may be new, the approaches may be new and sometimes, we have to take old issues to determine how we grapple with them and how we craft and recraft solutions that have, for centuries, presented themselves to mankind.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, last night I was reading an extract from Cicero and I could not help but observed, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael East did today when he went back to some of the griots and thinkers how common the threads are of Roman society on which commentators of that time were discussing and debating, how common the threads are today with issues of today. Sir, issues of governance, national security, imperialism and social welfarism, they are the same issues. The fact is that these issues are being debated and that the Honourable Members for the other side feel they are of no consequence because they have heard them before is, really not a valid argument because these are issues, which man has grappled with from the time of organised society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard another Honourable Member on the other side put what could only be described as some tall kicks in Honourable Members on his side, when he chided one to stop selling alcoholic beverages and dulling the mind of the young men who walked into his shop to get them, he sought to adduce reasons for how persons lose their cognitive abilities and fall off trucks when they have alcoholic beverages and so on. Sir, I heard a lot things in here today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also heard them say that this is not a strategic plan because it is not crafted in a way that they would want.

Sir, that really is the point at which I would want to start my own serious comments in this debate and it is in relation to what a strategic plan is.

Sir, I could not help but see it in the context of construction because, what we are seeking to do is to construct a society where there is social equity and justice, where there is economic well-being that is sustainable and creates access and opportunity for the children of the poor

to be upwardly mobile in a society where they were born poor and black, where the reality is that they would remain black but where the Government has responsibility to ensure that they do not remain poor. Sir, essentially that is what we are doing. We are creating a plan to build a just society and economy for all Barbadians. It cannot be reduced to anything more simple than that.

Mr. Speaker, in the context of construction, it could be seen as the drawing on which you base your building. Sir, one of the Honourable Members for St. Philip was making the point that he could not begin to think about the National Strategic Plan because they were social issues with which he had to grapple. Sir, when you have construction drawings to put up a building and you put up your building, there may be a switch that does not work, there may be a leak somewhere, some defect in the structure even after it is built or when it is brand new but that does not deny the legitimacy of the desire and the process to have a building and the benefits of the building and the social and economic benefits that the building creates and so, today, we are laying a foundation for future national development and seeking to discuss the environment in which the society and the economy will develop over time. What we are doing is developing a macro picture. I guess there are micro issues to which we can speak but there are macro issues to which we as a country, as a people and as a Parliament need to address our mind.

Sir, some of them have been asked in questions and, perhaps, the most famous one, which we like to repeat in here and which the Honourable Member for St. Michael East alluded to, during the course of his speech is: What mirror image do you have of yourself? It is, to me, one of the enduring questions put by a politician to his people to ask them always to reflect on who they are and where they see themselves going.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, insofar as I am charged, at this time, with the responsibility of energy and the environment, I want to speak to the issues of energy. I am not, today, going to attempt to speak to the environmental issues because the issues under both are very broad. We have had numerous environmental debates in here, we have laid the National Sustainable Policy Plan in this Parliament, so it is, therefore, to energy issues to which I would I want to speak. Sir, at page 113 of the document, the strategies, targets, goals and objectives in relation to our energy needs are detailed at some length and I want to speak to some of those.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the first is to increase our crude and natural gas production as supplied. Sir, at the moment, we produce roughly 1 000 barrels of oil per day but consume 8 000 barrels. In 2004, we were consuming \$342.9 million in oil and by 2005, that consumption had

risen to \$492 million in oil. Sir, the fundamental point is that in 2001, our oil consumption was under \$100 million so, you can see that over a short time frame, this level of expenditure in the budget has expanded significantly, as a result of our consumption patterns and, people do not think of this.

H115/15:40

Sequence 28

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: There is tremendous scope for us in this regard and the Government is paying attention to it. In fact, we have met with the three leading manufacturers of the industry in Barbados, to work with them to develop a national standard, so that we are not just producing manufacturers, but there will be in place a minimum standard, which guarantees the quality of the product at the international level. I think that would help to give a notion of seriousness, to our approach to the solar manufacturing industry and give greater credence to the product and quality of the product outside of Barbados.

Sir, there is currently a Florida standard. In fact, I think that Israel is the largest user of solar water heaters in the world.

Sir, it is going to be critical that we look at the issue of alternatively powered vehicles, whether we use alternative fuels like low-sulphur diesel; whether we shift to low octane gas; whether we go to vehicles powered by natural gas or other types of powered vehicles. It is entirely possible that companies, particularly those which have large commercial fleets, can move from being dependent on petroleum to alternative energy sources, which would have greater application, including natural gas, because there are vehicles that are running from natural gas, which would have great benefit to the society.

Sir, it is of significance, because a lot of these fuels are much cleaner than petrol. In a country where a large number of people suffer from asthma and related bronchial problems, the cleaner an environment we can have, the better the air quality, then the better this is for us at the national level.

Sir, given the time available ...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have nine minutes.

Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: I hope we would have a debate on energy, at which time I would have the opportunity to speak at length. It is an area that needs lengthy discussion and expansion. I can only speak to it

today in snippets. If I may continue in the nine minutes left to me, I would want to give the country an update on where we are with the offshore drilling programme.

The Honourable Member for St. John was quoted in the newspaper, as saying that nobody will ever see an energy programme materialised in his lifetime. I believe that the Honourable Member for St. John is exactly a month younger than I am. I do not know if he is suggesting to us that he intends to die soon. I know that it is entirely possible that we will have an offshore drilling programme in the lifetime of Honourable Members in this Chamber, even if he is not with us. He may, perhaps, be talking either about his natural life or his political life. I do not know which it is, Sir.

The reality is that a well, now known in international circles as the Sandy Lane well, was drilled offshore Barbados in 2002/2003 by a company called Connoco, now known as Conoco Phillips. The purpose of that drilling was to determine Barbados' capacity for oil or natural gas production. When one drills, it is entirely possible that one does not find a large reservoir of oil, but one can hit a large reservoir of natural gas, for which there is an equally viable market.

Sir, Connoco Phillips, at the time, changed hands, and the management of the new company had a different strategic direction, bearing in mind that the price of oil at that time was less than \$30 a barrel. As the price of oil increased, so did the improvement in technology for acquiring and extracting gas from the deep shore. It is known that there is oil in the deep shore off Nigeria, Trinidad and several countries, but the technology did not exist. As the price of oil increased, it became more viable to develop the technology to extract this oil. That is exactly what has happened. Now, what may not have looked like a wholly viable operation at the price of gas four years ago, it has now taken on new dynamics in the present marketplace.

Sir, since the decision of the Arbitrary Tribunal - and we have to thank the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, and the team that worked with her to ensure that Barbados, in fact, got the result that it did from the Arbitrary Tribunal - we now have a much larger marine space than terrestrial space. It is that marine space that provides the opportunity for a rich yield of oil or gas, because it is believed, by those in the industry, that there is a vein of hydrocarbons that comes down from Venezuela, through Trinidad and down to Barbados. The drilling of the well at Sandy Lane did suggest that there is good prospectivity in Barbados and the opportunity to convert Barbados to a society where our major foreign exchange revenue earner will, in fact, be oil or gas, and that it will be used significantly, to offset our own national supply.

In pursuit of this, the Barbados Government has retained an international firm call IHI, because we do not have the offshore expertise. It is a British company, and they are responsible for assisting us, with the drafting of an appropriate legislative framework and a structure for putting our bid blocs on the market. The bid blocs can attract millions of dollars as people in the oil industry, express an interest in buying blocs.

Sir, I told them that Barbados is now a very wooed women. The Presidents and senior people of international oil companies have been flying into Barbados, writing to the Ministry indicating their interest. There are companies which said that they want an exclusive arrangement with Barbados, and are willing to buy all the bid blocs and pay us top dollar for them, such is the interest in the Barbados offshore programme.

Sir, we expect that by early next year, we will have our bid blocs ready for sale and we can move from the bid blocs to the negotiation with a person or persons who purchase the bid blocs, and with whom we are going to have a long-term drilling programme.

In the five minutes remaining to me, I would want to speak to the issue of how we are going to craft that relationship, because this is significant. I feel passionately about this as a Minister. There are societies that have oil, and yet the divide between the rich and poor is great. The benefit of the oil in the society does not reach a majority of the population. If Barbados is going to have a successful offshore drilling programme, under my watch, I want to ensure that we craft a framework and template to guarantee that the Barbadian society as a whole, and not a select few, benefit from this drilling programme. How do I see that being done?

Sir, every group that has met with me, every company and officer, and in meeting with our consultants, IHS, I have given them a specific mandate as a remit, in terms of the policy, that Government will pursue. I want to detail it for the Chamber today.

Sir, first of all, I have indicated to them, that whichever company we go with, because when it comes to this kind of bidding, there are entities that do what we call in Barbados speculate.

16.00 p.m.

Sequence 30

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House 115, Sequence 31, 4.00 p.m.

Hon. Ms. H.E. THOMPSON: ...They will come court you, get a bid block, never intending at all, to develop or drill for oil, but they out on the international street saying, "Oh, I have a bid block in Barbados. Would you like some of this?" They literally try to sell it to the highest bidder.

Therefore, we want to prevent that kind of activity and intervention in the marketplace, by ensuring that any company with which we contract, has the technical capacity, the resources, the experience and the track record in the area to deliver for Barbados. This is mandate No. 1.

Sir, mandate No. 2 is that oil has both the capacity to richly benefit and greatly harm a society, especially in relation to the environment. Therefore, the second mandate given to this company, is that the company or companies with which we go, must have clear environmental standards and principles, and follow best practices in the industry, so that the Barbadian environment and quality of life are not harmed by any international driller, who can then pull up his drill bit and go back where he came from, while Sandy Lane and the rest of Barbados have to be swimming in oil. Therefore, the environmental protection is of the utmost priority to the Government of Barbados.

The third element, Sir, which is of significance, is that whichever entity comes to Barbados must be prepared to work with the Government and people of Barbados. They must see themselves, not only as extracting revenues and benefits for its shareholders, but must be prepared to invest in the Barbadian society and economy, by giving back to the society, some of the benefits that it will be enjoying.

For example, which are the football and cricket teams that it will seek to develop? What are the contributions it will make to sports and culture? How is it going to invest in housing or other social programme, to prove that their purpose in Barbados is wider than getting oil? Therefore, they must have a social conscience and social programme for the Government of Barbados to consider them.

The fourth element, is that they must be prepared to invest in training because there must be technology transfer from that company to the people and citizens of Barbados. Finally, in the 30 seconds remaining, though this is not the point, is that we must be prepared to ensure that there are Barbadians companies, small and large, which have to capacity to service the industry. We will have to start our training and educational programmes to ensure that all of the jobs do not go to non-nationals, and we have an oil industry in which Barbadians have the capacity to do the jobs that are highly skilled and will make money.

Sir, this is an issue on which I look forward to speaking in the future, and to laying in this Parliament. I have in my possession, the National Energy Plan, in draft. I will be taking it to Cabinet for approval. Then, we will be putting it out for all stakeholders and Barbadians to comment on and after that, laying it in this Parliament. In the area of energy, this National Strategic Plan has been very visionary and I am happy to give it my support.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 4.15 p.m. today.

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

The question that the House be now suspended until 4.15 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

House 115, Sequence 31, 16:05:22

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 2 (Resumed)

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to bring this debate to a close, and I want to begin by thanking all Honourable Members on this side who participated in what, in every respects, have been one of the more significant debates that this House has engaged in during this present term.

Mr. Speaker, before I say anything else, I feel I have a need to repeat some of the acknowledgments that are referenced at page six of this National Strategic Plan. This first National Strategic Plan for Barbados is not the product of the efforts of the Government of Barbados alone and indeed, it is not the product of the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, if you read the acknowledgments carefully you would see that this is a product that reflects the perspective, the wishes and the inputs and carries with it the support of the entire Barbadian society. I therefore need, at the very outset of this brief speech that will bring this debate to a close, to reinforce the expression of gratitude to the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations, led by Sir Roy Trotman, the entire private sector of Barbados whose plan this is also, the non-governmental organisations, the Members of Cabinet, especially the Subcommittee of

Cabinet, as well as the Permanent Secretaries who contributed so substantially to the preparation of the vision.

Mr. Speaker, there has not been a Plan prepared to chart the course of this country's future that has enjoyed the input in such a extensive way of the leading members of our intellectual community. Sir, I want again to place on record, as this Plan does, our great gratitude to Professor Frank Alleyne, Professor Hilary Beckles, Professor Andrew Downes and Professor Michael Howard, all of whom contributed in a major way to enable us to have this instrument of national transformation ready for adoption.

Sir, there are a few other people who have been referenced and they ought to be recorded. They are Dr. Peter Laurie, Sir Courtney Blackman, who gave us a concept paper, and the Permanent Secretary, Mr. Bentley Gibbs and the enthusiastic young officials of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Sir, in a way, this is the society's Plan. The manner in which this Plan was prepared reflects a process of inclusiveness that gives us the hope that it could be satisfactorily implemented.

Mr. Speaker, as I seek to wind up, perhaps I should best do so by comparison. I seek not to pull rank nor to draw invidious comparison, but there is no one in this House who has had my professional experience in the actual preparation of national plans. I was first engaged professionally as an Economist to the National Planning Agency in Jamaica and in those days, I had a hand in preparing some of those countries development plans. Sir, I remember - and there are those of us who when we meet, still talk about it - an exercise that took place in 1977 that was, in every respect, the turning point in the relationship with the so-called new world group and the officialdom of the Caribbean societies.

In 1977, Michael Manley asked a group of us to prepare a non IMF Emergency Production Plan and he rallied the entire university community, George Beckford, Norman Girven, Crompton Bourne, the so-called intellectuals, left Jamaica to prepare a non IMF Plan, while we had a team of technicians in Washington negotiating an IMF macroeconomic policy framework. That exercise lives with us. All of us who were part of it in a way felt intellectually scarred by being put through that exercise.

House 115 Sequence 32

4.20 p.m.

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Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, I say all this because what is before this Honourable House is not a

development plan in the sense in which development planning is understood and I want to conclude this debate in this Parliament by drawing comparisons with what a development plan used to be about, and what this National Strategic Plan is about.

Mr. Speaker, it was the history of the developing countries, since Independence was gained by India in 1947, that countries gaining Independence in very much the Fabian Socialist tradition felt that they had to prepare something like a development plan, that set out in very clear terms, the way in which the State from the commanding heights of the control of the economy, felt that it should direct the course of economic activity.

Mr. Speaker, Sir Arthur Lewis, in a book which I trust that people are familiar with, captures it this way. Sir, this is a book I would love to make a copy of this Honourable House but it is the only copy I have. It is one of Sir Arthur Lewis' works that has contributed to his being regarded as worthy of a Nobel Prize. Sir Arthur says:

"A development plan may contain any of the following features;

- (a) a survey of current economic situations;
- (b) proposals for improving the institutional framework of economic activity;
- (c) a list of proposed Government expenditures;
- (d) a review of major industries;
- (e) a set of targets for the private sector; and
- (f) the macro protections for the whole economy.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, you can see that, from the very outset, a development plan thus conceived was intended, first of all, intended to be an economic statement about the future of the country, from Government's perspective. It was a document that dealt largely and almost exclusively with economic change. It was a document that set targets by the State for the society to achieve, on the presumption that the State was in a position to occupy, hold and direct the commanding heights of the economy.

Mr. Speaker, the history of the Third World since the 1940s and indeed in the history of some industrialised countries that had and supported socialist ideologies, the history of the Third World was characterised by the periodic publications of these development plans. They set targets for the economy and professed to be instruments for change but were instruments by change, through the setting of targets to be achieved and the allocation of resources, rather than instruments for change by setting new processes

for transformation in place. But they were largely economic documents and in many respects, there were public sector exercises at planning, that pretended to plan for the whole economy. Sir, in societies where most of the resources are in fact owned by the private sector, State planning can only be indicative but State planning cannot be commanded. One cannot command an economy that is private sector-owned to grow by 3 per cent, one can only set the context in which that 3 per cent may be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, it is therefore very interesting when we evaluate the history of development planning, to see the contrast between what was intended to be achieved by development plans and what was in fact realised. When I said earlier that I wanted to argue by way of comparison, I would like to refer the Honourable House to the last Development Plan that was presented to this Parliament. Sir, that Plan is that of the Democratic Labour Party for 1993 to 2000.

Mr. Speaker, these development plans were supposed to be statement by the Government as to what it was that the Government intended to do. The Honourable Member for St. John is not in his seat, and I supposed he would not want to speak in this debate because his associated with concepts of planning, is the most invidious relationship that one could possibly imagine. In the case of the Honourable Member for St. John, the notion that a former Prime Minister had left a development plan for St. John, for the Honourable Member to implement, is something that has come to be associated with the career of the Honourable Member for St. John.

Sir, if you read the 1993-2000 Development Plan, you would ask the question, is there any reference in this development plan of the intention of the then administration to implement the St. John Development Plan because the development plan is supposed to be a representation of what the Government proposes to do with the resources at its disposal. Sir, there is absolutely no reference to it but this is one of the most closely guarded secrets in Barbados. On page 265 of the Democratic Labour Party 1993-2000 Development Plan, set out is a statement of planned capital expenditure by the Democratic Labour Party for the period 1993 to 2000.

Mr. Speaker, you would remember that the St. John Polyclinic was closed by the Democratic Labour Party in the early 1990s. Did the Democratic Labour Party Development Plan of 1993-2000, reflect an intention to honour the obligation it was giving to the people of St. John, to finish that polyclinic? Sir, what are the facts: planned capital expenditure on the polyclinic entire programme - because there were three programmes to be done - was \$780 000; planned expenditure in 1995, amounts to zero; planned expenditure for 1996, amounts to zero; planned expenditure for 1996-1997, amounts to zero.

Sir, having closed the St. John Polyclinic, there was absolutely no intention for the Democratic Labour Party, if they are to believe their own strategic plan, to go back to the people, in an election that would have had to be called in 1996, having spent not a penny on it.

Mr. Speaker, this perhaps is why development plans are so important as statement of intention by Government because that is all there were. They are important as a record, as to how Government sought to prioritise the use of the resources.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South should have pointed to the fact that while the Democratic Labour Party was not planning to spend money in St. John, the Democratic Labour Party had accepted the report of a Solid Waste Management Study group, and were planning to spend \$15 million in one year and \$20 in a next year, on solid waste solution at Greenland.

Asides.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: But these things have to be told because development plans are representations of what governments propose to do and how they order their priorities. Sir, development plans also tell you something about the targets governments set and the realities of those targets and in many respects, they are important records for the future.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back again to the Democratic Labour Party 1993 Development Plan and say what it says about the serious matter of employment. It says at page 46:

“Given the anticipated lag in response of output to reform measures, it is important that the rate of employment creation will be somewhat modest during the adjustment period, hence unemployment is projected to fall by 20 per cent by 1996 and by 10 per cent by 2000.”

Mr. Speaker, at Table 3:5 in this plan and if you were to go through this plan and compare it with the actual out-turn of employment, in each year, the level of unemployment that the Democratic Labour Party planned to foist on the people of Barbados, was far higher than that achieved by this administration, which refused to accept the plan of the Democratic Labour Party as a realistic plan.

Mr. Speaker, I have taken the trouble of writing down these numbers, and I regret that I do not have them here with me but they are available and sometime in the future I will bring them to the attention of the Honourable House.

4.30 p.m.

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Sir, you would read the 1993 to 2000 Plan and you would see no reference whatsoever to any strategic goals to be achieved for the society. For example, there is no strategic objective of treating to issues of poverty. The document does not set our development in the context, seriously so, of what is happening in the international environment.

Therefore, when this Administration came to office, we felt that the old age of development planning as a State exercise, where the State merely sets economic targets for the country to achieve, where the State merely pretends to be ordering things from a command perspective, that approach to planning had to be brought to an end. Sir, that planning should start at a more fundamental level, before you prepare a plan, that you had to begin to ask yourself not how fast should the economy grow, not how large should be the public investment programme but fundamental questions: What exactly is the kind of society that we want to create? What are the strategic objectives that are to be met in seeking to create that kind of society? What are the key few things around which national energies should be mobilised in order to bring about the societal development that you are seeking to achieve?

Sir, I said earlier that for the purposes of showing the sterility of development planning that I was going to compare the target in the Democratic Labour Party's Plan for 1995 to 2000 with what has been realised and this is important.

The Democratic Labour Party's Plan said that unemployment in Barbados in 1995 would be 22 per cent and we brought it down to 19.6 per cent but we found it at 23 per cent.

They said that the target for 1996 would be 20 per cent but we brought it down to 15.8 per cent.

They said that the target for 1997 would be 17.5 per cent but we brought it down to 14.6 per cent.

They said the target for 1998 would be 15 per cent but we brought it down to 12.2 per cent in 1998.

They said the target for 1999 would be 12.5 per cent but we brought it down to 10.4 per cent.

They said the target for 1999 would be 12.5 per cent but we brought it down to 10.4 per cent.

They said the target for 2000 would be 10 per cent but, the Barbados Labour Party, having thrown away that foolish plan, brought it down to 9.4 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, every year, the Barbados Labour Party, in the most critical aspect of what should engage a Government, making economic growth lead to human results in the form of increased job creation, in every year, the realised rate of unemployment in Barbados, under a Barbados Labour Party Administration, was lower than the planned rate, what the Democratic Labour Party said it wished to foist upon the people of this country. Sir, that in many respects reflect the sterility of what was intended to be achieved.

Mr. Speaker, it really goes to a deeper issue. If you do not start with a concept as to what kind of society you want to create, if you do not start with a serious evaluation as to what are the critical things that would determine your capacity to achieve that kind of social transformation, if you do not set strategic goals and really use the planning exercise, not as a sterile exercise in just setting these formalistic targets but setting in train processes for transformation, if you do not do these things, Sir, you will get the results which the Democratic Labour Party realised.

Mr. Speaker, a strategic plan differs from an old-fashioned development plan in one important fundamental respect. It is based first and foremost on an evaluation of the strengths of the society, the weaknesses of the society, an evaluation of the opportunities facing the society and opportunities of the threats that the society has to cope with and taking the strengths, the weaknesses, the opportunities and threats all together, it asks: What can we, out of all this, do to fashion the kind of society that we want to create? What are the strategic objectives around which we have to mobilise the society, not just as a Government but, what really are the strategic goals that we must set out to achieve and what are the things that would make the difference enabling us to achieve those goals? But, first and foremost, what is the vision of the society that you want to create because there has to be a vision.

Mr. Speaker, in reading this Plan, therefore, you would see that in espousing a strategic plan for Barbados rather than a development plan, great pains have been taken to set out a clear vision, first and foremost, of the kind of society that we wish to create and that we can create, taking into account the strengths of this society, our weaknesses, our opportunities and the threats, specifying very clearly the core goals around which national effort should be mobilised, setting out very clearly as well, the specific goals that would drive the achievement of our actions, setting out as well the national objective strategies and targets as well as sectoral objectives and strategies.

Mr. Speaker, this is intended to make a difference in the way in which we order the affairs of the country. Sir, planning cannot be about the State pretending that it can command things to happen, in circumstances where the resources of the society are largely owned by the private

sector and in circumstances where what happens in a society is, in many respects, a function of the response of the individual to his or her societal circumstances. Planning, therefore, cannot be a command exercise, planning has to be a strategic exercise about the kind of society you want to create and a clear specification as to the objectives you would seek to meet and the processes that you would set in train in enabling you to realise this. Sir, this is exactly what this Strategic Plan deals with and it is why we have such pride in presenting it to the House. There are no sterile targets of unemployment and stuff that we are here setting out. We are setting out a broad, strategic objective for Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that full development is a right. This Government of Barbados believes and, we want the public of Barbados to believe that there should never be a permanent coalition of unequals in the global society where some countries are developed and others are underdeveloped, that is not something we feel that was ordained by nature. We feel that development is a right and that every country, no matter how small, should set full development as a goal to be achieved and that to settle for less than that as a strategic objective is, in fact, to condemn yourself to a perpetual state of backwardness. Sir, we dare, for the first time, in a Strategic Plan to feel that Barbados can become a fully developed society. We feel so, taking into account the strengths of this society, achieved not just over the last 40 years but achieved over an important process of social capital building for almost 100 years.

Mr. Speaker, I like to say that in the whole history of mankind, there is one law of development that is true, that there is no society that has ever been well-educated and well-trained that has ever remained permanently poor. It is true, it is the one binding law of development and the key to it is social capital. Barbados' aspiration to reach for true development is based on the fact that for almost a century this country has fulfilled the basic requirements for development because it has had a literate society. The human capital that has been thus accumulated can now be pressed into service to carry us to higher heights.

Mr. Speaker, there are other attributes, our stability, and the way in which the Barbadian society, in a quiet revolutionary way, are more adaptable than people give us credit for. Our ability to do much with little and the resourcefulness and all the vital Barbadian attributes are what give us this belief that we should go to this level. Hence, Sir, when the theme for this Strategic Plan had to be chosen there was no issue that it could have been only one thing, a search for global excellence in this country but resting that search for global excellence firmly on Barbadian traditions.

H115/16:40

Sequence 34

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Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: Sir, it is to this particular matter that I would really want to speak. The search for global excellence in our times will take us in many directions, in the social area. I am pleased that Barbados has already begun to reach levels of accomplishments that are truly of global significance in their own right. What Barbados has achieved in the area of education, health and other areas are standards that first-world societies would do well to emulate. The Barbados education system in many respects is now the envy of people in England, who feel they should to send their children to school in Barbados.

The Barbadian society has to be told, that the Prime Minister of England had no scruples about having his child go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, because there is a first-world health care delivery, that sometimes we pooh-pooh, but others who look at what a small country can achieve; they say what a wonderful thing.

In terms of global excellence, a promise of a whole landscape social accomplishments, Barbados is well on the way in achieving global excellence. Mr. Speaker, in the economic area as well, Barbados is also well on the way to becoming a seriously first-world oriented economy.

Sir, it has to mean something, that in today's world, this small society, for the first time, has a lower rate of unemployment, than most of the countries of Europe. It has to mean something, Mr. Speaker, that the unemployment rate in Barbados is lower than that of France, Germany and other large countries. It has to mean something that the debt of Barbados, as appportion to the Gross Domestic Product is lower than the debt of the United States Government, and that of the States together. It is half than in most Caribbean countries. It has to mean something that our competitiveness in today's world is being reflected that for the first time ever, there is an interest on the part of many, because ...

Sir, this the acid test of competitiveness to attract investment. People do not want to make investment in a society or a sector, that is not competitive. Sir, competitiveness in the final analysis is driven by people's belief, and perspective as to whether they can recover their capital and make reasonable returns.

Sir, for the first time in our history this country can attract capital, for the development of high quality services, and if you allow them to take place, would take Barbados to the pinnacle of economic accomplishment, as a high-quality provider of services.

Sir, we have not only prudential investments, in areas such as new tourism capacity, but they are people who want to invest, in top-quality health care facilities in Barbados, to allow this country to evolve as an important place, where quality health care is provided, of which there is no comparison in the Caribbean and many parts of the world. The investments that are planned for this country, are intended to take us to global excellence.

Sir, it is important that we do so, without losing sight of the basic Barbadian tradition, that have made this country strong and stable. Sir, you would have, in recent times, have heard me speak more and more of the issues of the Barbadian traditions. Today I want, from the Floor of this House, to speak to that issue again.

Fundamentally, the question is, what kind of society do we want to create. We want to create a Barbados that is prosperous, socially and economically inclusive, we want to create a Barbados, where poverty can be eradicated, in which unemployment becomes a thing of the past. We want to create a Barbados where there is an expanding range of investments and other opportunities, economic and social for all classes of Barbadians, especially those who have had for too long to exist on the margins of our society, and on the margins of our economy. We want to do so, without losing contact with those basic Barbadian values and traditions, that define the Barbadian way of life, and that have given this country, its special character, and that have made the Barbadian personality so unique, but such a rich, such a progressive, and in many respects a personality greatly to be admired.

Sir, that aspect of our development prospects, that is under the greatest threat, is precisely that Barbadian way of life, those Barbadian traditions, those fundamentally strong Barbadian values, that have made this country what it is.

Sir, that is so not because Government wants those traditional values to be under threat, but it is so, because we are living in a different world now, where a person living in Boscobelle is exposed instantaneously, and is fundamentally part and parcel of what is happening in the Bronx, Germany and elsewhere, because of the revolution in information and the communication technology. We have to be sensitive and sensible of the fact that there is a bombardment of our society new cultural forces from abroad which, unless we are sensitive to the bombardment, will fundamentally change what we eat, how we live, how our people dress, how people relate to each other, how people see themselves as citizens, and how people define work, will fundamentally change a way of life in a flash.

Sir, some people feel that we make too much of the fact that we do not allow a lot of fast-food enterprises to come to Barbados. Sir, why should we? What makes a McDonald hamburger's superior to a piece of fish fried in

Oistin? Why should we tell our people, that they must hanker after fast-foods, coming from a different culture rather than develop their own cuisine? These are the kinds of forces with which we have to contend, in today's world.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to contend, and this has to be said, with certain cultural exports from certain developed countries, especially the United States of America, that in my judgement are anti-developmental. One of the cultural exports that our young people are faced is the television programmes, even a cartoon. In the course of a night you can see at least one hundred murders, in cartoons, violence. Sir, it is shocking, and then you expect young people, who are the subject of this continuous bombardment, not to grow up believing that to be violent is the way, in which you should live.

Sir, there are other cultural exports from the developed world such as pornography. Sir, you have the returnees, dress styles that perpetuates in many respect the denigration of the personality. Unless you are serious about holding on to the security of what is yours culturally, your development process can, in fact, be swamped to your disadvantage by the increasing penetration of all of these forces, that are now part and parcel of living in today's world.

Sir, I live and grew up in a rural Barbadian society and, as compared to that which the young people have, it was as if we were living in a cocoon. How we lived, what we ate, and how we related, were very much conditioned by what is happening in the immediate local community. It was a way in which one learned how a Barbadian, by relying on what the immediate community had to offer, and all the shaping influences of what were in the community.

Sir, our young people will grow up in the circumstances, where they are part of a global village, and they will not be immune by the protective shields of closely-knit community organisations, that were the fortunate lot of those of us who lived and grew up in Barbados in the 1950s and 1960s.

Sir, a strategic plan for Barbados, that does not recognise that we have to rest what we want to achieve, not on employment, not on investment alone, not on Government's capital programmes, not on the strength of the public investment programmes, but on the strength and the security of your identity as people, and on the best values and traditions that you have built up over the years. If a strategic plan does not rest as a development process on these fundamentals, it would not be worthwhile.

16.50 p.m.

Sequence 35

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House 115, Sequence 36, 4.50 p.m.

Rt. Hon. O.S. ARTHUR: You will read other development plans, Sir, and you will never see references made to how you change a country, on the security of the traditions that have been evolved. Whatever else is said about this plan, Mr. Speaker, this administration has brought a strategic plan to this country, which says that Barbados can really seek to achieve global excellence, in how we build an economy, in our systems of governance, in how we build our social system, in how we protect our environment, in how we relate to the rest of the world, in how we brand Barbados globally, and in how we govern ourselves.

Sir, we can seek for global excellence in all of these things, but we will not achieve them, unless that overall effort is rested upon our being secure of our Barbadians values, and willing and determine to make sure that our best traditions in this country are perpetuated as the basis upon which we rest social transformation.

It is in that context, therefore, Mr. Speaker, I want to commend this to the House. I believe that implementing this will transform Barbados, not only in a strategic way but in a way that would give us the assurance that the lot of the next generation for whom we plan, will in every respect, be better than the lot of this generation, just as the lot of this generation was better than the lot of the other generations.

I believe that this Strategic Plan also breaks new ground in the way that we want to govern ourselves. It sends the signal that the state should not feel that in a society where individual effort is so important that it can command, the State should not command, but it should inspire people to feel that they can reach for the stars and we can go for the gold.

In is that expectation that this is here, not to command but to inspire. I am greatly pleased to commend it to this House and beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: With the House's permission, we will now revert to Government Notices.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

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

1. (A) RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE BORROWING BY THE GOVERNMENT OF BARBADOS FOR SUMS OF \$65 MILLION IN THE CURRENCY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON THE INTERNATIONAL CAPITAL MARKETS FOR THE PURPOSE OF STRENGTHENING THE FOREIGN RESERVES BY THE ISSUE OF SECURITIES THROUGH THE DEUTSCHE BANKING SECURITIES INCORPORATED, AS LEAD MANAGER.

(B) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A SINKING FUND FOR THE REDEMPTION OF EACH ISSUE OF SECURITIES AND FOR THE MONIES NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN THE SERVICE AND SERVICE THAT FUND.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Private Members' Resolution:

WHEREAS Barbados has settled in the year 1627 and remained a colony of Great Britain from that year until November 30, 1966:

AND WHEREAS the Colonial status of Barbados during that period did not operate to the advantage of the broad masses of people of this island:

AND WHEREAS the Democratic Labour Party determined that dismantling Barbados' Colonial status and enhancing its constitutional position was a matter of urgent political priority:

AND WHEREAS the Party placed its faith in the people of Barbados and in the year 1966 pursued independence for Barbados alone whereby this island would assume sovereign nationhood within the Commonwealth of Nations:

AND WHEREAS the people of Barbados have over the last forty years by their pride and industry fully justified the faith the Democratic Labour Party placed in them when it sought for Barbados sovereign nationhood within the Commonwealth in 1966:

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House congratulate the people of Barbados on the courage, character, and resilience which they have shown during 40 years of Nationhood:

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House takes note of the foresight and courage displayed by the Democratic Labour Party in pursuing independence for Barbados alone 40 years ago.

Mr. SPEAKER: We will now continue with Government Business, Order No. 14.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 14 - RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF PARCELS OF LAND, SITUATE AT FRIENDSHIP AND WATERFORD IN THE PARISH OF ST. MICHAEL, IN THIS ISLAND FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATIONAL BOTANICAL GARDEN.

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

Hon. R.R. FARLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I seek support for this Resolution from this Parliament for the acquisition of two parcels of land at Friendship and Waterford in St. Michael for the development of a National Botanical Garden.

These two parcels are but two of 11 parcels which are to be acquired for this project. These two however represent, along with the parcels already owned by the Crown, some 95% of the land. The others are smaller parcels with more technically complicated issues, in relation to the survey preparation and so on. We however thought that we would not wait until all of those other matters were ready, but that we would, in fact, proceed. You would see in the addendum, by way of the size that this 61.97 acres, represents a significant part of the 254 acres of land which would constitute the National Botanical Gardens. The vast remainder of that land is already owned by the Crown in the Waterford area.

You would know, Sir, that this land is part of that wider, very large area in the Belle, Waterford, Friendship, Codrington area, which really is part of a large Zone 1 catchment area. That Zone 1 catchment area, as defined in the 1963 framework for zoning, relates to the fact that the Belle water system, represents some 30 per cent of the island's daily water supply, 11.5 million gallons.

Sir, if you would observe development patterns over the last three or four decades, there have been some changes. At first, it was considered that agriculture would have been a viable use for that large area of land, stretching essentially from Haggatt Hall to Codrington. However, further and better particulars have recognised that the danger faced by the water system...

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

House 115, Sequence 36, 17:00:14

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Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the matter relating to this Resolution turns us to the fact that over time it was recognised, by way of scientific investigation, that the danger to the water system did not lie, as was thought 30 or 40 years ago, just from the matter of human waste and bacterial contamination getting into the water supply, but stemmed from the high level of nitrates much of which would have come from the fertilisers used in agriculture and animal waste, which was used in farming agriculture.

Sir, you would therefore find over time that with stricter controls and agricultural practices that the area in question would have gone out of agricultural production as well.

Sir, that raises another problem, the fact is that in Barbados there continues to be a problem of illegal dumping. Once you have large areas of open land, you are going to have the challenge with illegal dumping. Sir, you cannot want to have a greater and more devastating source of contamination for water supply than the illegal disposal of industrial and commercial waste, not only in the Belle area but also in zone 1 locations all across the island which, because of our geography, are tied in with our gully systems and related matters.

Mr. Speaker, it was therefore recognised that one of the means by which we could make positive use of the land - because we cannot treat zone 1 water areas only in a negative fashion, 'thy shall not do this, thy shall not do that, thy shall not do the third' - is that we really have to look at how we can, in a positive way, manage our development and the use of those lands to the benefit of the people of Barbados while maintaining the sanctity of that environment.

Sir, it is Government's decision therefore to use this land for the purpose of a National Botanical Garden. By way of basic description, this property, on which these two parcels are a part, would run from the Hothersal Turning Roundabout to the piece to be acquired from Stryker Limited, 3 506.3 acres which was known as Connery, that building on the corner on the Waterford side of the Hothersal Turning Roundabout going along Waterford Bottom, going along in front of Combermere, Opposite the Barbados Lumber Company, to the back of the National Conservation Commission, travelling through the back there and over to the ABC Highway on the stretch between Warrens and Hothersal Turning.

Sir, what is now just waste land, because of the development constraints, will become a national resource to allow us to focus on the preservation of our flora - the environmental folk among us would give us those kinds of details - to provide an opportunity for Barbadians to have

another park-like setting in which to not only observe the natural beauty of Barbados but to engage in recreational activities in a natural sense - recreation does not have to be active it could be passive - where you could sit in the park and relax.

Sir, this land we are acquiring will be combined with lands already owned by the Government in this area to change it from merely resting idle to this use. I should probably point out for those who would raise a concern about the fact that this is zone 1 land and that if we are going to be establishing a National Botanical Garden, even though those botanical gardens never involved large buildings or things of any grand scale that the fact that we are going to be inviting members of the public to use the facilities would mean that we would have to provide bathrooms and change of facilities for the workers and the like. Therefore, not included in the Resolution, but as part of the other 11 parcels that would come, include lands in the zone 2 area, adjacent to these zone 1 facilities, which would allow the National Conservation Commission who is executing the project to create the necessary bathrooms, changing rooms, staff facilities and the like in the zone 2 area and therefore there would not be an infringement of this zone 1 water protection policy, in order to give effect to this National Botanical Garden.

Sir, with that background information concerning these two acquisitions, an acquisition of 61.97 hectares from Friendship Farms Limited and 3 506.3 square metres from Strykers Limited, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to second that.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I should like to express my gratitude to the Honourable Member who just spoke in his capacity as Minister of Housing and Lands for helping to facilitate what is a very important national environmental project, which I think would inure to the benefit of the residents of that area and the surrounding areas. I know that the person who has political parliamentary responsibility for the geographical area would have an immediate interest in this. I would wish too to thank the Honourable Member for St. James North, who is not here today, who has played some role in developing this project.

Mr. Speaker, the development of a National Botanical Garden is important to us at several levels. The Honourable Member, the Minister of Housing and Lands, was correct when he said that what we are attempting to do is to take a parcel of land, which is now lying largely fallow, which because of its zone 1 designation could not be developed in particular ways, thereby putting it into productive use to generate revenues, to earn some degree of foreign exchange, to diversify the tourism product and to

give to the community and the country another area for family and healthy recreation.

Mr. Speaker, I have had contact with this project when I was Minister of Physical Development and I have contact now that I am the Minister of the Environment. When I was Minister of Housings and Lands I also brought acquisitions here in respect of this project. It is a parcel of 254 acres, not an insubstantial parcel at all, which, if properly developed, could be perhaps one of the largest and more impressive botanical gardens in the Caribbean. It would involve not just the zone 1 lands identified by my friend and colleague but would also include the zone 2 lands on which the Barbados Lumber Company now stand.

Mr. Speaker, given the rules in relation zone 1, it would not be possible to develop bathrooms and related facilities and activities which would leach certain types of chemicals and so on, on the zone 1 lands and hence facilities of that sort can only be located on the zone 2 lands. Therefore, a decision was taken that we would use that parcel now occupied by the Barbados Lumber Company. Sir, there have been discussions that go as far back as when I was Minister of Housing, Lands and the Environment, with the directors and managers of the Barbados Lumber Company Limited. They are amendable to giving up that parcel of land and were negotiating with us for exchange acquisition of another parcel of land owned by the Government which was larger and better suited to the development of their business and their purposes.

House 115 Sequence 37

5.10 p.m.

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Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would not want the public to think that we intend to acquire the parcel of land at the Barbados Lumber Co., which, if my memory is correct, is about three acres, and disadvantage the Barbados Lumber Co. They will move to an area that is also for industrial use and access and a site with which they are happy, one which is substantially larger, which would allow them a degree of expansion, which presently does not allow them, especially the present site is in Zone 2, and the new location, which is proposed, is not.

Mr. Speaker, to speak to the issue of the National Botanical Garden, there are a national botanical gardens that are now featured in magazines all over the world. They are important centres of green and serenity. They represent an opportunity for foreign exchange earnings. In fact, there are botanical gardens in the Caribbean that are themselves fairly well-known but outside of that, one can think of

perhaps the Kew Gardens in England, which is one of the famous gardens along with others, that have international reputations.

There are gardens which have come to be known for particular specialities, whether for waterscapes, landscapes, particular species of plant, genetic engineering and so on. Sir the Kew Gardens have an important programme, not only in the development of horticulture but in bioengineering and that is a significant development in the new technology.

Mr. Speaker, I should say that when the notion of establishing the gardens first came up, a number of committees were set up to help carry the process forward. There has been a stakeholder meeting, including the public and private sector, persons who would have had an interest in this, as well as the owners and occupiers of properties which are in the vicinity of the proposed garden. In fact, when the Committee was established to oversee this, we were conscious of the fact that it had to have stakeholder representation and even the Combermere School, represented by its Head Boy and Head Girl, served on the Committee and gave input to how they would want to see the land developed because the school, being one of the more important neighbours of the proposed gardens, would of course have an interest in what happens to that facility. Sir, equally, at the National Stadium, there are plans for the extension of the National Stadium and any plan to extend the National Stadium, would, of course, be impacting by the development of a National Botanical Garden at that site.

There is also a Friends of the Garden Committee, who is intended to bring goodwill, technical and other knowledge to the organisation and the oversight of the Committee. Therefore, work has gone on at some pace, even though we have not yet turned soil. The preparation, technical and otherwise, for the development of a garden of nearly 300 acres is not a simple matter and in fact the plan is, given the cost, that this would have to be implemented in several phases over time. Sir, I hope that we could have the commitment of this Honourable Chamber and that of succeeding administrations to develop the Garden because of the potential that it has.

Mr. Speaker, it is anticipated that the Garden would be a multipurpose garden, and will showcase plants that are drought resistant, plants that can exist in water scarce and water stress conditions; that there will be what is called zero-scaping; that it will be a place where recycling and other environmental practices take place, not only the recycling of waste but certainly the recycling of water. There is some water on site from natural wells, but it is going to be important as we find a water source for so many plants, to ensure that there are plants that are drought tolerant and would need very little water, as well as to

ensure that their water used in the area is maximised and that there is proper recycling.

The Garden will be developed with a CARICOM Garden; that is a section that would feature the plants and flowers of the Caribbean region, some of which are becoming lost. There are species of trees that the Barbados National Trust has informed me, are no longer seen in Barbados. There are only a small number and over time, they have disappeared, as housing has encroached on wooded and treed areas that various plants and plant species are being lost. In addition, there are species of plants that can only be grown in special conditions. There are species found in Barbados only at Turner's Hall Woods. There are species of palm, I am told, that grow only at Welchman Hall Gully. So that an particular environment and temperature, sun, water conditions and elevation, are all contribute to the growth and propagation of certain types of plant species. Sir, what we will be attempting to do at this botanical garden is to demonstrate and give example of the plant culture from across the region and some of the plants which we are losing rapidly.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to observe, anecdotally, that it would appear from the level of housing, across Grazettes, Cave Hill and related areas, the traditional areas in which "dunk" trees are grown, that sooner or later we are going to see shrinking numbers of "dunk" trees.

Mr. Speaker, it is proposed too that with the support of the Kiwanis Club of Barbados that there will be located a Children Safety Village at the National Botanical Garden, in which they will demonstrate safety techniques for children such as how to cross the road, how to ride a bicycle or tricycle, how to keep themselves safe. It will also provide an environment where children can come and be entertained off the streets and busy highways, where they will be safe, where they will be taught survival techniques for the children, which I think is important in today's world. It is also of some significance that we are having the support of Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs), in this development, and the civil society and that they are working with us, in complementing the work done by the Government to ensure that there is a varied type of facility. Sir, the work of civil society would be noted.

Mr. Speaker, we expect to have a Herbarium and visitor facility. This Herbarium would be growing various herbs, for example, for cuisine or exports. There is increasingly a demand for organically-grown vegetables and herbs. Therefore, it is important that we should look to see what are the markets to how we could exploit them and what, in fact, could be grown at a commercial level.

Mr. Speaker, part of the garden would be dedicated to

the eco-system or to woodland, which is an important part of our geographical and physical landscape. Gullies in Barbados have played a tremendous role for water runoff, as the habitat for bio-diversity, both flora and fauna, and what we will be attempting to produce is a gully scape or a woodland scape, the benefits of the gully eco-system, within the national botanical garden.

There will be an orchard of fruits of the Caribbean of various types. There will also be a palm garden. Palms are enjoying a tremendous resurgence of interest particularly for landscaping and there are wide varieties of palm. There are places such as Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia are very famous for their palms. They also export palm. Now, if you look across the Barbadian landscape you would see that the traditional type of palm that we use, is not as widely used today.

No.114 (38) 5.20 p.m.

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Hon. Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Sir, there are other types of palms like the Bismarki palm, the large grey palms, which are seen in the yard at the hospital and, as you drive along Trevor's Way, a number of them have been put in. The type of palms that we want to grow and that can possibly be exported and that can be used to diversify and enhance your landscaping would be made available at the National Botanical Garden.

Mr. Speaker, there will be an ornamental garden, a garden that you will not get fruit or vegetables but the value of the ornamentals would be substantial. This is another area of potential export. There are people in Barbados, who are already growing orchids for ornamentals at hotels, restaurants and for export. There are persons who are growing a wide variety of anthuriums and ginger lilies, including the shell ginger and so on. The value of ornamentals, which the Ministry of Agriculture advises are now earning more and more foreign exchange for Barbados would be stressed. In fact, Barbados does have a history of performing well in ornamentals at the level of competition being able to win gold medals and silver medals at the Chelsea Exhibition on a regular basis. Jean Robinson, Mona Edwards and the team, who have carried Barbados' Flag at that exhibition are to be commended. This garden is going to help augment the work which they have been doing to show Barbados what is possible in an ornamental garden.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados has always gone into ornamentals. The smallest chattel house has a nice garden in front of it, so this is an area which I think Barbadians would appreciate. They would see new types of ornamentals, which are grown in Barbados and can be grown in Barbados under the right conditions but, which

have the potential to earn phenomenal revenue and phenomenal foreign exchange for persons who are interested in getting into this area.

Mr. Speaker, there are species of plants, which do well in dry, arid or hot conditions so, a desert garden would be featured. There will be a demonstration garden and that speaks for itself. There will be an amphitheatre so people can come and have open-air productions, concerts, people can come from the community can do little shows and people are always looking for somewhere to practise and rehearse will have access to the amphitheatre for not only theatrical production but for various types of activities in which they might have an interest.

Sir, knowing the importance of exercise and the need to provide places which are safe for persons to run, jog, et cetera and exercise, we have included a jogging and walking track across the Botanical Gardens that would use the 254 acres. Sir, a number of people, at this time, walk in area of the Barbados National Stadium and around it...

Mr. SPEAKER: What about the gentleman with the horse riding school?

Hon. Miss H.E. THOMPSON: Sir, the garden would be opened to all those persons who come within the ambit of the legislation. There is legislation in Barbados that covers horse riding and anybody who follows the legislation would, in fact, be at liberty to do what the law allows.

Mr. Speaker, there will be a number of artificial lakes and ponds at the Botanical Garden because water does add a certain appeal to a landscape. Clearly, it would not be possible to have a garden without doing vegetables and food crops. It is intended that part of the garden will be taken up with food crops. There will also be a part of the Garden dedicated to trees and various types of trees, as well as a heritage garden.

Mr. Speaker, it is a multi-phased, multi-tiered project, which the Government would be implementing with several different components over time and, which I think the public will derive tremendous benefit from, not only visible benefit but, certainly, as a place to relax and it also opens up some opportunities for the generation of revenues.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H.E. THOMPSON: I am being urged by my colleagues that it will be a place for courtship but people do not need to find places, they do so without our help. Sir, one of the points that I would want to make is that one of the uses to which we intend to put the garden would be for research. Barbados has had a strong tradition

of research, particularly in sugar cane. There are species of sugar cane that have been developed in Barbados to give high sugar yield, to be resistant to particular things, canes that lend themselves well to mechanisation, canes that lend themselves well to hand cutting, all kinds of species of sugar cane have been developed in Barbados.

We expect now that biotechnology being the forefront of economic activity and receiving tremendous importance internationally, with patents and intellectual property rights being so important and issue in today's world, that research and development would be a significant component of what we do at the Botanical Garden. For instance, Sir, I do not know how widely known it is that researchers have now been able to isolate the gene which gives coffee its taste and particular unique aroma. This is significant because Japan is the largest consumer of coffee in the world and in the Caribbean, perhaps Jamaica is the largest producer of coffee in the region and you have places like Nigeria and Colombia, making tremendous amounts of money from coffee. If you can sell coffee essence in a bottle, at a price cheaper than a person can produce a can of coffee, countries who are dependant on coffee as a crop could be in serious trouble. I point this out, Sir, to show the importance of biotechnology and where it is going.

Sir, crops are now being produced like maize and wheat which do not spoil easily and also crops which are resistance to pest, crops that are extremely hardy and which can stay in the ground and not be reaped for long periods without their nutrient content. Sir, there is a tremendous amount of technology and engineering going on at that level and it is going to be very important that Barbados also does its share of experimentation and seek to give part of that experimentation to the world for a fee.

Mr. Speaker, for instance, we thought nothing of "dog dumplings" until they started to be produced, internationally as Noni Juice and became the international cure-for-all that was earning significant revenue. We looked at them and laugh at them, boys played cricket with them, people tossed them around and knocked them out of the way as being useless but, all the time they were here. Equally, the Rastas acknowledged the benefit and usage of aloe and a few old ladies would take a little piece for the liver every morning and so but, as a whole, we did not pay any attention to it, until aloe became the most significant ingredients used in suntan lotion and body creams. Sir, there are, here, the opportunities to earn money from agrobased products and from plants that we are not exploiting.

There has been, for years in Barbados, traditional knowledge of circee bush, of things they call cure-for-alls and a range of bushes and local embrocations. Sir, people know that soursop tea is good for this and that you can use

this or that leaf to band the foot, if you have a sore but that traditional knowledge is dying because, all of us now run to the pharmacy and take a few antibiotics every time we get a headache or chest cold. It is that kind of information that can now be used to inform medical practice as, in fact, the world moves away from western medicine, chooses more eastern type medicines and traditional means of cures, rather than western medicine as a first option all the time.

Mr. Speaker, if we would take seriously some of those plants, both for cuisine and cure, then there would be opportunities available to us at the export level and at the level of potential foreign exchange earnings.

H115/17:30

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Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: We intend to use the garden in this way, as a place for scientific study to ensure that we do not only see plants at the cultural and traditional level, but we are able to take the use of these plants to the next level and move them to a level of medicinal use from which, not only the individual, but the country can benefit.

Sir, in developing the garden, to date, a number of activities have taken place. I want to give the Chamber information on this. We have set up a project unit and a staff. In addition a number of staff members have been sent to the University of the West Indies and to other areas for training. They have also been given attachments with Royal Westmoreland and the Sandy Lane properties, where gardening is done at the highest level, particularly for ornamental and landscaping, generally, so that they can learn some of the techniques and methods being used by the private sector, and to incorporate them into our own practices, the best practices of course, that are available in the marketplace.

Sir, the acquisitions are ongoing, and today we are here as a consequence of part of that process. A small Secretariat has been established, to facilitate the development process. The surveys of the area have taken place, topographical soils and vegetation surveys, because we are attempting to avoid what is a very bad practice in Barbados, that is, when you want to build, to construct a garden or do anything new to a parcel of land, you bring in a Bobcat and you denude it. You remove every blade of grass and every tradition tree.

Sir, I remember when my husband and I were about to build our house, there were some "Shak Shak" or "Woman tongue" trees on the land. I was very careful to say to the Bobcat driver, that I would like you to make sure when you are clearing, that the trees stay, because they add

some character and I thought that the noise that the 'shak shak' made was very pleasant. Sir, his reaction to me was one of total horror. He looked at me as if I were mad or foolish. There are some who may say that I am, but his reaction was one of total horror. He said: "Mistress, that is wild bush. Why do you want it about the place?" I tried to persuade him that they were not, in fact, wild bush. He thought that I was a kind of peculiar person, that I would want to keep these things around my place. Sir, that is really how we do our landscaping, rather than incorporating existing trees on a lot into our landscape, we would remove all the grass, trees and some of the topsoil and go from scratch.

Sir, we have done the various surveys, necessary to ensure that what is on the land how it can be incorporated into the plan that we have for the development of the area. In the meanwhile, this is an area where members of surrounding communities, landless farmers, have traditionally used the lands for staking out cows and sheep, primarily cows. We have asked some of those persons, who have for many years kept their cows on the area and are familiar with the behaviour of the landscape, to serve on the Board and the committee, who are taking the process forward.

Sir, there is a gentleman from the area, who rejoices in the name of "Luke Luke". I may say something of his habits, but I must confess I do not know his real name. However, he has been particularly useful in helping to give guidance to the committee, and he is one of the persons who traditionally keeps his cows there.

In developing this project, we have been careful not to alienate the community, but to involve them in our plan and in the activities proposed, and to allow them to continue to use the areas for grazing, for as long as they can, until the whole garden is developed.

We have commenced stakeholder consultations. The preliminary concept drawings are completed and are available. I would hope at a future time to be able to bring the drawings to Parliament and leave them here as a document of the House, so that Honourable Members of the Chamber, would have the opportunity to review them and to see what is proposed for the area, and that this Parliament would have a full and proper record of what is intended for that site.

Sir, as I indicated earlier, there have been a number of educational visits to existing gardens of high reputation, like Kew Gardens, for technology transfer, transfer of knowledge, and we have got the management of these facilities to agree to do attachments, and training of our own staff, to bring us up to international level and to ensure that we can develop a top-quality facility.

The terms of reference for developing the master plan for the entire site and the details design for phase one of the project are now completed. Sir, I think that next year, we would be in a position to start some of the work for the development of phase one, at the start of the next financial year,

Sir, Tender Notices, with respect to the construction of phase one, will be placed in the newspapers before year-end. We are now in November 2006. My brief is advising me that it will be done in November. I am being cautious, knowing how these things work, in saying that the Tender Notices, will be placed in the print media before the end of the year.

Sir, the activities necessary for projecting the baseline information, in order to develop a medium to long-term plan, we are talking medium to long-term being a two to five-year period, have all been completed.

Sir, that is in essence where we are with the development of the project. I have tried to lay out the goals and purpose, the national benefits, the parochial benefits, the components such as research and development, that go slightly beyond the scope of just the landscaping component. I have sought to address the benefits from an aesthetic perspective, and I have sought to indicate how we are addressing the issues of the Zone one versus the Zone two lands, and why we are going to be moving across the street, for further acquisition of Zone two lands, even though we already have such a large parcel in Zone one, because we are seeking to fall within the framework of the low, and not to go outside it.

Sir, I will conclude by saying that it is going to be very important for the National Botanical Garden Committee and the Management of the National Conservation Commission, to work closely together, because what you have are now two separate and distinct agencies of the Ministry, which have similar roles and which need to work in a complimentary way, to develop adjoining lands and to have a comprehensive facility at the site.

Sir, what I do not want is to have a duplication of effort and resources, by having National Conservation Commission develop their lands at Codrington in one way and the National Botanical Garden going about their business and doing something else, without the two communicating with each other, and developing a similar strategy and approach. We have, in fact, met with the respective managers of these agencies, in order to ensure that they are, and I hate to use a cliched expression, but I beg you to forgive me, in order to ensure that they are on the same page and are pursuing a common approach and common path.

I think that I have been thorough in terms of the development of the National Botanical Garden for Barbados, and I know that this is a matter which will come back to the House again, as we continue to do the acquisitions. On that occasion I imagine that I might speak to other components of the project, but I think that today I had, in fact, given the helicopter view of where we are in the development of this particular facility, and sought to demonstrate its importance at several levels.

Sir, with that, I commend this acquisition to the House, and again express my gratitude to the Honourable Minister for bringing it before us at this time.

I thank you.

17.40 p.m.

Sequence 40

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

House 115, Sequence 41, 5.40 p.m.

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

Mr. R.D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I rise to speak on the Resolution before Parliament, which essentially speaks to the compulsory acquisition of lands for the establishment of a national botanical garden. From the outset let me say that one cannot quarrel with the idea of the development of a national botanical garden, particularly from the point of view that one has to assist the natural environment in some way. This seems to be an effort, particularly from the long explanation given by the previous speaker, that it is a necessary corollary to, not only our natural landscape, but also will assist the otherwise touristic development of Barbados.

In the past, we have been asked to look at some private sector entities, such as the Flower Forest and Andromeda Gardens, which we know had a very capable owner and brought some measure of pleasure and comfort to the hearts of those persons who like to relate to the flora of our particular area.

I am now being told that Andromeda Gardens might be in some difficulties and one would not want to see the disappearance of such a garden, which brought a lot of pleasure to the hearts of so many.

The question which arises and has been pointed to by both the Minister of Housing and Land and the Minister responsible for NCC and the environment that the majority

of this area falls in what we refer to as the traditional Zone 1 area.

In Barbados, when one mentions the Zone 1 catchment area, persons become extremely concerned that there would be some kind of pollution which would affect the water that they use, the potable water supply of Barbados.

I know that the two Members who have spoken have sought to allay our fears that if there is going to be any buildings, they would be shifted to a Zone 2 area, and that some discussion has taken place with owners of an establishment in the general locale of the National Botanical Garden. One wants to be more substantially assured that one would not get any kind of seepage from any chemicals or fertilizers, which might be used to assist in plant growth.

Hon. Ms. H.E. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of elucidation. The Honourable Member is making a valid point. I recognise, as I was sitting, that I did not address it and I would, for the benefit of the Chamber and the Honourable Member who is on his feet.

I would wish to indicate that, in fact, because of the sensitivity of the area, only organic methods will be used. There will be no harmful chemicals put in the soils because we recognise the potential threat, if harmful chemicals were to be used.

A person who has been specially trained in the area, a forester with immense knowledge and skill, is leading the project and specifically treating to those very issues, which are valid and are of tremendous importance.

I would thank the Honourable Member for raising it and for allowing me the opportunity to speak to it because it was, in fact, an omission in my presentation.

Mr. R.D. JONES: I am thankful to the Honourable Member for providing that particular explanation. Obviously, as one sat and listened, there would have been some particular concerns relative to this. One has constantly to protect the potable water of the citizens of Barbados.

It also brings us to another issue, if I am familiar with or if I know the particular area, and I am thankful for a map of the area from the lands and surveys department, that it is surrounded basically by two carriage ways and captured within that area. There is a heavy movement of vehicular traffic around that area, and the likely question is, Sir: What would be the likely impact of that on the Botanical Gardens of the exhaust which comes from the traffic? This is something which, I believe, would be considered by those experts who are on board, and who

most like, if they are not currently on board, would be brought on board to assist in the development of such a project.

Of course, let me say it is a bit refreshing, as well, to get the type of extensive explanation in relation to this matter. It is unlike the explanation, which was offered to certain residents in Christ Church, in relation to another project, not a Government project, but a private sector project, something referred to, as a water park. This has caused substantial consternation and at this stage, verbal uprising, if one could coin such a phrase, among the residents of certain districts within the Christ Church communities.

One can consider that they might have some legitimacy, relative to their concerns in that particular location of Barbados. The Floor is not the place to speak, in any extent to that particular concern. There must be linkages between what we are looking to do at Waterford and Friendship, and what is taking place in the sanctuary at Graeme Hall, in that particular area.

There must be consistency, based on the whole notion of sustainability of such activity, the protection and preservation of areas of Barbados, not only for our current people, but for future generations. Therefore, whatever we do on the face of Barbados, must be done in such a manner that it does not affect the future viability of the lands that we have, or the future viability or aesthesis of the country that we currently call our home, and our children and grandchildren would want to call their home.

Therefore, one has to look carefully at the kinds of permission granted by any private, or even Government sector or public sector developers, relative to our land space. One always has to exercise some care, concern and caution, as one seeks to utilise the land here in Barbados.

There has been some work of the National Conservation Commission and, we have known that we have had both what we call an aesthesis and a commercial work ethic. One recognises that there have been some difficulties in the past with the commercial work ethic. How is the NCC outside of what they are doing, also within the parameter of the National Botanical Garden going to be complementary to what is taking place in the National Botanical Garden in that space? Could there be another location? This is another question for the establishment of a National Botanical Gardens.

It seems to us that a substantial amount of work has to go to create and recreate the kind of landscape, the kind of area, the kind of garden that the Minister who is responsible for the Environment and NCC would want to create within that area. It would seem that there would have

to be massive trucking in of a lot of material and I am speaking about trees and shrubbery.

House 115, Sequence 41, 17:50:14

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

Mr. R. D. JONES: In many places where I have seen botanical gardens, what I saw was the existence of traditional trees and the enhancement of what existed there previously in major ways. However, in this area, it would seem that we would have to go almost from scratch in the creation of what the Minister referred to as the gully eco-systems and things of that ilk, but a lot of work would have to be done.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister spoke to many of the purposes to which that land would be exposed. That Botanical Garden would be used for commercial purposes as well because the Minister wants to produce crops, what she spoke of as things of medicinal and curative value. There is also the notion of the preservation of some of our indigenous plants. It is also to be used for recreational purposes, because one heard of an area for children to learn things and to play.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister with responsibility for the environment and the National Conservation Commission spoke to the establishment of a Project Unit, the establishment of a Secretariat and the putting in place of other staff to assist within the development, therefore, there is a cost already which the taxpayers of Barbados have to bear because we are now putting in place a certain cadre of persons who are being paid from the public purse.

Mr. Speaker, we on this side, would have loved some idea as to the moneys which have been expended thus far on the establishment of the National Botanical Garden. Mr. Speaker, if you were an average or ordinary citizen of Barbados, you would see that the trees, the grass and the trail of the track in that area have remained the same.

Mr. Speaker, one also has to have an idea as to the phased or total cost of this entire project. I would believe that the Minister should put before this Parliament what has been expended thus far on seeking to get this project up and going and what would be the cost of this project either in a phased way or in a total way to the taxpayers of Barbados. I am asking these questions not to be controversial, pugnacious or problematic. I believe that if the Minister could so eloquently put all of the other things relative to the establishment of the project before this Parliament that she also has a duty and a responsibility to put to the people of Barbados what would be the expected cost of the project and what money has been the expended thus far on this particular project.

Mr. Speaker, one would want to believe and one would hope that as we move towards making this particular project a reality that the citizens of Barbados and the visitors to Barbados would enjoy it and that persons would see it as an oasis in the midst of many of the issues which confront them on a daily basis so that they could retreat into a quiet space, if it is going to be quiet, where they can commune with the flora.

Mr. Speaker, one knows that when there is an abundance of plant, one tends to also get the presence of what some refer to as creatures, the small birds, and the reptiles and things of this ilk.

We, on this side, outside of those questions and obviously some others which would be asked, do not have a particular difficulty with the establishment of a National Botanical Garden in Barbados because it should bring us up to scratch with many of the other places within the Caribbean and within the world.

Mr. Speaker, it is pleasant to note the involvement of other sections of the community in the delivery of this particular project. Maybe this would mark a substantial divergence from some of the practices of the past where you go ahead and you start a project and at the end you then seek to involve persons, thus you have created from the outset an alienation of those persons toward the project, therefore, they see the project as one which they should destroy.

Mr. Speaker, one would hope in this instance that this would not be the problem one would get and that one would look for the kinds of managers and the kinds of persons who will ensure that the project would be well-taken care of.

The notion of the CARICOM garden, utilising diverse plants from across our region, once they are able to be nurtured within the environment which is created at Waterford, is an interesting idea. Maybe this suggests that not only is Barbados a total CARICOM country now but we are also implanting within the Barbadian landscape plants from within the whole CARICOM region.

One would want to believe as I said, Mr. Speaker, that the kinds of managers and the kinds of individuals who are involved in horticulture, in the management of various herbs and things of this ilk would be on board and that in a few years with the growth of the plants and the various other facilities in that area that before any of us pass on to either happiness or sorrow, that we would be able to enjoy the benefits of the National Botanical Garden in that particular space.

I would still want to assert that even though the Minister has stated that things would be done organically

that there would be extremely careful oversight so that no one diverts from the practices which would be set up because sometimes persons skirt or go around in order to please their bosses and they do things to cause growth to propel at a faster rate because they might believe that those persons who are in charge of them might be dissatisfied with what they are doing. Therefore, one would hope that the kind of oversight which is necessary will take place so that no pollution would take place in that area to affect all of us, particularly those persons who tread potable water from that particular catchment area.

With those few word, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not intend to delay the House very long, suffice it to say that I would have found it difficult to be in this Chamber and not seek to speak on this Resolution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some seven years ago, I would have made representations to the Cabinet and to the then Minister of Environment, the Honourable for St. James North, as to my desire for us to have this parcel of land as well as the piece owned by Government to constitute a National Botanical Garden in St. Michael.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was because I felt strongly then, as I do now, that in urban Barbados it is critical that we have large areas of green space so that persons can enjoy themselves, can recreate and indeed it can become a source of calm and reflection for those who would wish to be able to get away from the hurly-burly of life, particularly in urban Barbados where very often people live cheek by jowl.

In this circumstance, the then Honourable Member for St. James North arranged a site visit with the owner of the land, whose name I think you would not object to my calling without notice, Mr. Patrick Bethel, since I am not seeking in any way to disparage him but to thank him for working along with the Government in being able to ensure that this parcel, which has not been used in agriculture for some considerable period of time, should be the subject of this kind of national effort in creating not just this green space for urban Barbados but ultimately a product in which all of Barbados can feel proud by reason of its attempt to be able to develop a scale of gardens, aspects of which we hope shall become unique in the overall development of the plant.

House 115 Sequence 42

6.00 p.m.

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. James South has sought to advance this work. Their vision is very strong and very clear and this has been one of the projects that inevitably has been phased in a more gradual way, but I understand why, because if we want to exhibit a level of fiscal prudence, we cannot do all things at once. Therefore, as we come to the end of an aggressive capital works programme for Cricket World Cup, 2007, I look forward to this project taking greater prominence in the Government Public Sector Investments Programme because I do believe that they would all be both economic and social benefits to the country, as long as we could complete it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would also like to urge that the Honourable Member for St. James South would to take into consideration the need to be able to involve the members of the community, on a far greater basis, than it has been to date. I know they have reached out to some of the corporate stakeholders and there is a member from Civilian Road, Bush Hall, St. Michael, who sits on the Planning Committee. But I think that the ability to have some kind of Town Hall meeting in the area, which allows people to see the beauty of what is being proposed, would help in energising elements of that part of the community, in ways that may ultimately lead to some significant savings on the part of Government.

I would also like to suggest that they consider putting in place a programme that allows for people to adopt areas of the Botanical Gardens, such that they can have both responsibility from the point of view of either sponsorship or indeed, actually doing the work according to predetermined landscaping plans by the landscape architect. Sir, there will not be a free-for-all, but if the Horticultural Society, if a particular Church or sports group, wants to take responsibility for either a quarter or a half of an acre and that they do so, according to the overall designs and plans that have been agreed to by the Ministry. I think that would ensure that there is a far greater level of acceptance of what it is we are trying to develop.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not sure that many Honourable Member of this Honourable Chamber have ever visited the site but I urge them to do so, for it is one of the most beautiful sites in St. Michael. Furthermore, persons do not realise the level of gradations, in terms of height until one gets there. There is a natural amphitheater, which can easily be used for entertainment, and I do not necessarily mean 'bashment' entertainment but entertainment that at least would allow people to take care of the grounds, in circumstances befitting of the nature of the park. Sir, we do not want people to trample plants or flowers but that if they have a sense of ownership, because they have been part of its development, I suggest that they are going to be very careful in wanting to take care of it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also think that kind of outreach programme... There is also opportunity in my view and I believe Honourable Member for Christ Church East has certainly reflected upon this and mentioned it to me just now before I spoke, that you can seek also to avail wider Barbados and persons from overseas, of the opportunity of having a certain set of trees planted and a plaque erected to commemorate the fact that person would have sponsored that. Therefore, 40 or 50 years hence, when those trees are matured, their families and others could come and see that person would have contributed to this area being developed as a major bequest to future generations of Barbadians, with them recognising that as we seek to know more and more concrete among us, that is it critical that we have this opportunity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central correctly raised the issue of the impact of fertilizers, in relation to the potable water and I can say to him that on numerous occasions I have also represented the fact that we have to be careful that the nitrate content, which can come even from animals, does not endanger the supply of water that can come from the Codrington well. Many persons have forgotten that there is a functioning well at Codrington.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a result of those entreaties and as a result of those emanating from studies done by Government, you would note that there has been a consistent effort in the last two years not to allow cows to graze on that land anymore. In the circumstances the Government is cognisant of the problem and will not do anything to endanger it. Hence, as the Honourable Member for St. James South, I am indicating to you that we must take clear decisions that it must only be organic practices. I also issue a further caution because even within the body of organic practices, there may still be dangers. Therefore, we have to be fully cognisant of what it is we will do both in the establishment of the Garden and its management and maintenance thereafter.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also believe that the various range of focus that the Garden will have is critical because it will ensure that people will come there for difference reasons; some would want to come and eat; some would want to come and read; some would be fascinated by the different species of flora that will be there. It would be a good thing, if we could also seek to get some birds. In some part of the Botanical Garden, reserve a space for exotic birds that may not regularly be seen in urban Barbados, largely because of the scale of its development.

I, therefore, pledge not only to assisting Government in this project but to have my constituents work along with me. I also feel strongly, for example, and we hope to mount a beautification project in and around that area, that you do not want a Botanical Garden on the parameter of areas that

are not looking as though there is a sense of respect for flora and aesthetic beauty.

I hope to be able to mobilise members of the community, particularly those enterprises that have a vested interest, by reason of their presence in the district, from Warrens to Eagle Hall. They will be able to ask them to participate in a beautification project that does not only look at the beautification in terms of the structure but equally in terms of the softening of the environment, by ensuring that we plant all along the roadways coming down and that we indeed almost create an entrance of beauty into what will become the Botanical Garden.

I hope that in the phrasing of this project that they may find it possible to at least do a phase which is immediately apparent to the driving or walking public because that in itself, would inspire people to want to get on board. If that could be part of the early execution of the project, I would be grateful. The reality is that as I said, because of the typography of the land, if you start on the inside, nobody would know what you would be doing, unless they come right into the centre of the land. I believe if we could phase it in that way, particularly on the Stadium Road, Waterford Bottom and off the highway, so long as the construction there is finished, as that would negatively impact the health of efforts on that side of the Garden until it is finished, that it would inspire the rest of Barbados to feel that they could be part of this.

Sir, one only needs to recall what was done across the island, in relation to the Community Independence Parks, where people want to become involved and want to have a sense of beauty. It is perhaps said best in the language of Bob Marley's "Concrete Jungle". That is what we do not want.

6.10 p.m.

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: If we could work together to create this place of beauty but, at the same time, have a statement that reflects the fact that Barbados wants to be able to move towards an economy that is more sensitive to the needs of sustainable development, that is more sensitive to the needs of the building of a green economy and, Sir, by green, I do not only mean plants but green in its wider sense and allows us to take a more proactive and aggressive stance, as we have been trying to do on small island states matters as well as on climate change, it would be part of a coherent strategy and philosophy that drives us as a people and as a Government.

I can think of better location that this area in Waterford and Friendship, which has basically been out of productive use now for almost 15 years and, which

ultimately, can bring great relief to the residents of Waterford, Bush Hall, Green Hill, Codrington Hill, Black Rock, Bridge Road, the Belle, all of St. Michael and then, of course, to wider Barbados, as they come to town and recognise that it should not only be the country where people get to see large green expanses. Sir, really and truly, the ability to get away, reflect on that kind of surrounding does something for your peace of mind and, hopefully, the level of quality of interaction with your family and the members of your community.

I want to thank the Honourable Member for St. James South but I equally want to thank the Honourable Member for Christ Church East for facilitating the presence of the Resolution here today. I know that the owner of the land was becoming quite perturbed to what exactly was happening and, at least, there is a finite end in sight in relation to the acquisition process.

I look forward, at some time, to being able to welcome all Honourable Members of this Chamber, to a completely beautiful but serene National Botanical Garden, which would add value, not just to Barbados' tourism product but, more important, to the quality of life that ordinary Barbadians experience.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member from St. Michael South Central.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to join with Honourable Members who have spoken so far, in suggesting that it certainly is a step forward, as a nation, to be making some concrete move at establishing a National Botanical Garden. I suppose that we could look at it from several points of view but, we should laud the many groups out there that have been truly, strict guardians of that aspect of our heritage that would be quite happy to see what we are doing in here today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Horticultural Society that was mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East comes to mind right away, of Chelsea Flower Show fame, et cetera, but there are some others, the Museum and Historical Society, the National Trust and some other smaller ones, the Orchid Society, the Future Centre Trust, the Town Planning Association and others that deal with the non-terrestrial, the Marine Trust, the Association of Professional Divers, all of these, I believe, would laud what efforts are on today, to truly preserve this particular aspect of our bio-diversity and encouraging, not only the indigenous species of plant life but, presumably, importing other species that could survive in these tropical climates and developing something that could become a national treasure. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is a very

wonderful thing that we could, potentially, be on the cusp of here today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I sincerely hope that the effort would continue a pace because, it is a natural asset, in every sense of the word, that could only be to the benefit of all Barbadians. This is why I say that I sincerely hope, as the Honourable Member for St. James South promised, that students from the primary school to the PhD category and those doing research that they would become more aware of various aspects of our botanical existence here in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say that, first and foremost, because I do agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East - we do agree, from time to time - that it should be about Barbadians first. Naturally, it is something that could enhance our tourism product range and could become a genuine tourist attraction but, before we even get there, I think it could be very useful for Barbadians, who generally speaking, like plant life. Sir, even those with small dwellings would go to some pain to plant a hedge, a lawn or both a kitchen garden, orchard or something like that. Sir, as small as a dwelling maybe somebody would have a golden apple tree, a mango tree or something like that, so we are a plant-loving society. Therefore, I think it is quite appropriate that we should have a Botanical Garden.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is ironic that some of our neighbours, whom we consider to be lesser developed than we are, have had Botanical Garden for some time and they form central pieces within their capital cities. Sir, St. Vincent, planted the first breadfruit tree in the Caribbean and it is a major attraction in Kingstown. Sir, I believe that the Botanical Gardens in Dominica is where their cricket grounds are located and it is a major thing is Roseau. Sir, maybe we are behind some of our neighbours, who we are supposed to be more developed than. Sir, that is not my opinion, the CARICOM has us separated as MDCs and LDCs and, Sir, Trinidad has theirs around the Savannah.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope that some kind of impetus would be given with respect to research in our indigenous plant species and perhaps others as well, that it would not just be said idly but that it would be recognised as we move away from sugar cane production. If we are going to see agriculture continue, it has to be looked at in the context of some highly creative methods and, perhaps, various other more economically beneficial species. Sir, the cut flower industry which has so much potential, that whole aspect of our agriculture industry can be developed and the Botanical Garden, with its research component could be looked at as a real opportunity for some meaningful research to take place that could also redound to our economic benefit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to being a tourist attraction, the Botanical Garden, through its research component maybe in the same way that the Belair Institute is involved with the Folkestone Park, we could see other institutions and the necessary endowment funds could be established, so that we could have real, meaningful research take place that we could see some long-lasting benefit.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, it is necessary as we continue to see a movement away from what was our traditional mainstay in agriculture, sugar cane. Sir, we look forward to that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would hope that as tremendous an initiative this might appear to be that it does not stop here. I see absolutely no reason why the National Botanical Garden cannot be located within the context of a national park system.

H115/18:20

Sequence 44

Tuesday, November 7, 2006

Mr. R.L. SEALY: ..I believe that the residence of your constituency spoke about Greame Hall. I think I should declare an interest since I do have to in part of that catchment are. I own a property too. Sir, residence who objected to the water park, they have suggested a park and it is not a suggestion that I think should be taken idly. I think it should be considered very seriously. I would not want us to believe, that because we are only 166 square miles, we should make do with a botanical gardens, Queens Park, King George V Park or whatever. There is no reason why we cannot have a system of parks throughout the lengths of Barbados. Sir, there was talk about the Greenland possibly becoming a national park. I do not know if that is still possible.

Asides.

Mr. R.L. SEALY: There is no reason why we cannot look, within the context of sustainable development, within the context of pressure to provide housing opportunities for so many Barbadians, and for a lot of our environment that is currently in agriculture to become built, just to accommodate people, that we could not look at a national park system, within which this botanical garden could be located.

I think that it would be a good initiative for this very Government, that has confessed, that at times its record on the environment has been a little less than stellar. Only recently we heard about the question of the gullies, and not being able to enforce the law on illegal dumping in the

gullies and so on, it is not an easy task, obviously. The question of even the marine environment, and some damage to the reefs and so forth, they have at times to their credit, admitted, it has not been always the easiest thing to protect the environment, so, perhaps, we can look at a national park system to locate this effort, and we will take it from there.

I also hope that the point made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, of the rather checkered performance, of the previous effort at botanical garden in Barbados. Sir, Andromeda Botanic Gardens, which has seen some financial difficulties, and, in fact, I believe that Government should take it over. Again, that can be incorporated into the national park system. I do not see any reason why it should not. Sir, I accept that Government's resources are limited and, therefore, we can deal with opportunities where there is economic benefit.

I know that we do not want to be charging prohibitive admission fees, et cetera, but we have to look at ways and means, of ensuring that our botanical garden and attempts at preserving precious eco-systems in our country that is so densely populated, that we spare no resources for it. Therefore, I would hope that the Government would look at the botanical garden within the larger effort. The national the larger effort, the national imperative, at protecting our eco-system.

Sir, I am grateful to you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I rise to speak on this particular matter, and to say from the outset, that it is rather interesting, that the Honourable Member for St. James South, mentioned planting fruit trees in part of this botanical garden. Sir, when we first discussed the gully concept, I suggested that instead of just planting trees, it would have been a good idea to plant some fruit trees in the gullies, et cetera, considering the monkey population that we have in Barbados. This point was ignored, now we have a situation where instead of the monkeys being able to feed in the gullies of Barbados, where they naturally fed previously, they are now feeding in the backyards of the citizens of Barbados.

I hope, based on this example, and based on the complaints that you are now receiving from the residents of Barbados, that the point made previously, about the gullies will be accepted. I cannot understand why in Barbados we would want to plant trees, and why we do not understand the importance of planting fruit trees also.

For example, I was told, when I raised the point about fruit trees, that Barbadian would pick the fruit. We

need to plant fruit trees whether the Barbadians pick the fruit or not, because we also need to have some fruits for the monkeys and the birds.

Sir, the situation has so bad, that we have a situation where the monkeys are getting so smart, that if you have twelve soursops on your tree, they would ensure that at a particular stage, that they would leave their mark to make sure that you cannot reap your soursops, returning when they are ripe to get them. That is how clever and smart they are now.

Asides.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: They know friendly territory and they know on whose property to do that to. They know that I will look after the birds and monkeys, so I would not endanger their lives for coming on my property.

Sir, this project is even wider. On Saturday, while visiting a project in the north of Barbados and discussion another commercial project, I was able to discuss with a company in Barbados about how to develop tourism sites. I was glad to see that the Ministry of the Environment, has allowed the Barbados Light and Power Company to go further north, to where the Ministry of the Environment wanted to put a landfill, but now will be the home of the windmill. The residence in St. Lucy have no problem, providing that radiation is not a negative aspect from that particular project.

Sir, the original spot where the old windmill was, on Lamberts Hill, because of its height, gives a particular view. If you remove the blades from the windmill, then erect something like a small house on top of the body of the windmill, could you imagine what would occur if you were to go up there and look out? That is something for the Ministry of the Environment, who has been written on it previously - it is on the files of the National Conservation Commission - they can now develop a park around the old windmill, construct a restaurant, and it could easily be another tourism site. It can also be used, providing that we sort out the problem with radiation, as the visitors centre for the windmill. Sir, as a result of that, we would be able to use all the land to the south, west and north, as house spots, in that particular area.

Sir, I said all that to make this particular point. Sir, lands sometimes that you would term as not important, can be very important to people who know how to use this land. It is rather interesting that this piece of land we are acquiring, is also on the highway, that is the ABC Highway, and many other highways, which means that its location is important. I would hate to believe that some people think that because it has trees and was in agriculture, that it has no value.

We also have to measure the potential of the land, not for what it is now being used, but the future potential of the land. I find that too often in Barbados, we tend to ignore the future potential of the land and when there is the matter of compensation, we do not want to compensate people for the future potential of the land.

I would hope that the Honourable Minister of Housing, and I am glad that the Honourable Member is now the Minister of Housing, can appreciate the land has a value. I remember on many occasions in this Honourable House congratulating the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, when there were land acquisitions in the Honourable Member's constituency, he ensured that those persons got land in exchange. That is a very fundamental point.

16.30 p.m.

Sequence 45

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

House 115, Sequence 46, 6.20 p.m.

Mr. D. St.E. KELLMAN: We are now in a land scarce society, Sir, and we cannot continue to put money at the disposal of people, when some of those persons would prefer to have land in exchange.

It brings me to another fundamental point. One of the companies that will be acquired to accommodate this transaction, has been in business now for over 30 years, and has been able to build up a reputation that, even though a lot of companies have closed down doing similar business, this company has been able to continue. I hope, Sir, that in calculating any compensation for this particular company that its location and the number of years of business that it has been able to survive, will be taken into consideration.

Sir, the land, considering that it is in zone 2, gives it particular rights which would be different to the land in the zone 1. I do not want to see any drawn out negotiations with this particular company or any of the companies involved. Sir, for the simple reason, when we have World Cup 2007, and we wanted the land in the Fontabelle and the Pickwick areas, without any fuss, we came to Parliament and we paid to those large companies, the right sums.

I do not want to see a situation, where we will hear about confrontation over compensation for the simple reason, Sir, this project is just as important as World Cup 2007, which happens to be a one-off situation. This is continuous. If you are asking anybody to give up anything,

you have to take into consideration what they are giving up.

Sir, I am saying that this company is one of its kind. It is interesting that it is over 30 years old. It is what we would call, a real Barbadian company. It even has the name Barbados attached to it. The main fact that it has the name Barbados attached to it, must have a value to it, Sir.

I would hope that the Minister of Housing, would be aware of all the factors of the land, such as the location and longevity would be taken into consideration for the compensation package. I have no doubt that the particular location is fantastic. It would have created a tremendous amount of goodwill. As you are aware, Sir, being a businessman yourself, goodwill is something that has to be paid for.

I find in Barbados that people believe that when it comes to the small man, goodwill must not be compensated. I am saying, no, that the same way goodwill was compensated for in the Pickwick and Fontabelle areas, we will expect the same thing to occur in the Waterford area.

Sir, we would expect that this Botanical Garden will not only be seen as a park, but we will see it as a larger project where, instead of this country spending so much money buying flowers, we would be able to export flowers.

Sir, I want to repeat this point. When one considers that we are now speaking about 254 acres of land, I would expect that we would not adopt the cosmetic approach to this project but we will see the magnitude of the project. Instead of just having a park and flowers for import substitution, we take it to the further step and use it as an industry.

Sir, you cannot have the goodwill created by the Barbados Horticulture Society (BHS) and not appreciate that this group has created goodwill for Barbadians all over England. The mere fact that they can take our flowers from Barbados every year to England to the Chelsea Show and win, tells me that people outside of Barbados appreciate what we have to offer in Barbados. We as Barbadians have to stop limiting ourselves, because we have things that are good but we believe that because they are grown in Barbados, we cannot appreciate them. I am saying that the BHS has demonstrated to us that there is a demand for Barbadians flowers outside of Barbados and this project must be the starter project. We must expand this project to turn it into an export industry.

Sir, this is why I want to congratulate the Directors of the Company who own the land in the zone 2 area and are prepared to give up their business they had for over 30 years, to accommodate this project. I would hope that the

Government would understand what the Directors and Shareholders are giving up, and they will not treat them badly, but they would compensate them.

I must admit, Sir, it is not easy to develop a business for over 30 years, and have it in such a wonderful location and then accommodate Government easily. This House should congratulate the shareholders of this particular company and not treat them badly. They should ensure that they are treated well and they are not money starved. They should ensure that they receive the necessary compensation upfront, so that they could relocate their business at another location, which they will now have to develop.

Sir, if Government intends to exchange land for land, they have to remember that the land the company is giving up, is a piece of land that they have developed for 30 years, created goodwill for 30 years and that the land the Government is giving this company, cannot be of the same value, for the simple reason that the company now has to develop goodwill at this particular location where they are going. Therefore, it cannot be a clear swap. The Government is getting something better than what they are giving and they must be prepared to pay the difference.

Sir, I would forgive the two Ministers on this occasion, for bringing this in this piecemeal approach. I honestly believe that we are at a stage in Barbados now, where when we speak about botanical gardens and parks, we need to have a wider and more macro plan. Sir, considering that we are in tourism, we need to have more sites in Barbados for tourists and Barbadians alike to go to, we now need to move from the micro to the macro side of this, so that we can have from Archer's Bay in St. Lucy to St. Philip, real parks in Barbados, and where we can have locations for people to go when they come to Barbados. If it cost some money, let us budget the money now and recognise that we need to blend something with tourism to get the maximum benefit out of it.

In the same way, Sir, that we can spend millions of dollars on a seaport and airport for people to just pass through Barbados, let us spend some money to retain people in Barbados. I think this would be more beneficial and fundamental for us to spend money for people to remain in Barbados, than to spend all that money for people to be in transit in and out of Barbados.

Sir, we have reached a stage where we have now recognised that foreign exchange is the key. Every project we do, we have to look at the capacity to earn foreign exchange. It is not easy for the Governor of the Central Bank, and the Minister of State in the Ministry of Finance to tell us that we are now spending \$1 billion more on food, and we cannot find the matching foreign exchange to provide for that food. Sir, when we do a project like this, it

has to be a project that can bring some foreign exchange or save us some foreign exchange.

Mr. Speaker, we need to lift these debates and take them to a higher level. This is exactly where this debate has gone now, to another level, because previously we were looking at the micro side of this debate. Now that I have introduced the macro side, any other person who has the ability to enter this debate, can now enter.

I thank you, Sir.

House 115, Sequence 46, 18:40:14

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

Hon. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Speaker, I just want to add a little to the words of wisdom that came from the few persons who spoke such words. However, this interest is in a wider perspective beyond the admiration of the improvements of the aesthetics in the form of a Botanical Garden in the area of Waterford.

Mr. Speaker, I must say unequivocally that I am fully supportive of the State's intention in this project to use the land for the purpose for which they intend to use it. This is an alternative approach to what existed for a considerable time. Before, in this modern era, scientific indicators were that if we use the land for traditional agricultural purposes it can continue to contaminate the watertable and add to what is called bacteriological contamination that comes from many perspectives; the nitrates within the water, that came from the defecation and the urine of the animals in the soil that adds to the challenge as a result of the nitrates going into the water, the toxic and other forms that could have endangered the lives of the people of Barbados. Therefore, the new intention for a more noble exercise in the use of this land should be welcomed by all reasonable persons.

Mr. Speaker, I want to put a case for that piece of land that stretches itself across the entire ambit of the zone 1 area where the Botanical Garden would be sited in the northern part of the zone 1 area. As a result, I believe it is a must that I at least make some contribution to this debate.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand the aesthetic value, and the commercial value of it, and I can understand the Honourable Member from St. Lucy's interest in bringing in foreign reserves, all of which I support. I also believe that there is a social aspect of it where we have to take into consideration the public's view especially those who are likely to believe that we have already found an alternative interest in the lands on the northern side. There is also lands on the southern side which the public in general is denied the opportunity of the use of those lands for anything developmental.

I would like to believe that as a consequence of this it should not be difficult for some gains to come to the people of St. Michael East as a result of this decision because if you could use the lands to the north for something that is progressive, I believe that Clarkes Land, that land just below Fitz Shop facing Licorish Village on My Lords Hill, which is owned by the Government already, which the Government could not use for the sake of housing could be used for the purpose of the provision of a play park for the residents of the Licorish Village area.

I believe that this would stimulate some debate if we do not look at it in a very general and holistic manner as to how we could use the lands in that entire pocket, not only for cultural and social development but for people's development.

Mr. Speaker, I have been denied the opportunity of moving at a rapid pace in that area and providing the best form of the improvement of the physical environment in St. Michael East because on many occasions there was always a reservation of the use of that land by the Town Planning Department and by the other agencies of the State.

Sir, even outside the realm of the threat to the watertable, I found it difficult to get an agreement on the construction of a road inside the zone 1 pocket. I do not see that becoming any threat to the watertable. I do not know what sense of reasoning could be used in the Odessa McClean area, where there is an unpaved road for a considerable time. All the requests that I have made to the Government agencies, including the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, they have refused to do anything to that road. I have also approached the Urban Development Commission who said that they cannot do anything to the road in the Odessa McClean Road. Sir, this is not to put in water-borne water toilets, the road in any way would not change, all the road would do is to provide that kind of velvet environment for cars to drive on and for people to walk on without stumping their toes and ringing their ankles and wearing out all the shoes that they have to purchase in town. Mr. Speaker, I was given some strange justifications why that road could not be put in.

Mr. Speaker, I am hoping that as a result of this interest in the beautification of the northern side of the land that there would be some reconsideration for the concerns of the people of Odessa McClean Road, Licorish Village, My Lords Hill, Blackman Road, Jones Road and all the surrounding areas inside that northern section of the zone 1 area.

Sir, in addition to that, I really believe that it is not only about beautification, it is about providing a healthy environment as well for the people, not only something that would soothe the eyes or bring some kind of commercial value to the society because even if you get foreign

exchange or you produce perfumes as a consequence of the growth of the flowers or you end up winning all the prizes at Chelsea, at the end of the day the money that you gain from that you would have to spend it back in the social environment in the same northern section dealing with matters related to health. The people in that area still cannot get water.

Sir, although I want to have absolute admiration for the State's interest in this exercise, and I believe that it ought to be fully supported. I do not want to look at it in total separation from the general concerns of the development of the people in the entire zone 1 area because it relates to the general physical development and the human development of the people within the community, so I am asking for a reconsideration.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that there is any argument, although sometimes reasonableness or fairness might not always allow persons in positions of power to respond in an affirmative manner to such a request. Sometimes you find it very difficult at the unorthodox form of reasoning you have to face when you ask for development in a community, when you cannot get a road and the reason you are led to believe that you cannot get a road is because it will encourage people to put in indoor water-borne toilets.

House 115 Sequence 47

6.50 p.m.

Tuesday, November 07, 2006

Hon. T. A. PRESCOD: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know how one could arrive at that kind of sequence of thought but that is what I was told on numerous occasion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to put in a request, even before the Town Planning Department receives a letter from me, that I need to have the approval for Clarke's Land, for a play park for the children of My Lords Hill, Odessa McClean Gap, and the entire surrounding area. I have already advanced a request on the behalf of the people, through the National Conservation Commission, the same principal body that is over the agency that refers to itself as a friendly committee. I would like that friendly committee to reach out to its principal and request that principal also takes into consideration the children of the people who were displaced from those lands at the Belle.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Belle once employed many persons against their will, in the days of slavery and thereafter and many persons' lives were shortened as a consequence of bending their backs in the boiling sun there on the Belle, Lower Estate and Waterford Estate. Therefore, the children of these persons who worked on the

Belle, are now the residents of Licorish Village and Odessa McClean Gap, and I would like to believe that this Committee would have some kind of influence in the development of the area and that the agency itself, in the form of the National Conservation Commission, would also take these people into consideration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have seen indicators of persons who have been employed inside the agency, both the principal and the agent, National Conservation Commission and the body responsible for looking over these things, but I have not heard any suggestions that the children of the families, who worked hard on the Belle, who cannot work anymore... and I would like to believe that it is a form of affirmative action because after you sweat and built and enterprise, or plantation in the way in which these people would have, now other people could now be given the right to sit on a committee, to look at how those land will be used in the future and those lands that were used before for the production of sugar cane, as consequence of the labourers who came from the community, now find themselves at a great disadvantage in the northern pocket of the zone, where their houses are still not suitable for human being to live in. Sir, we cannot improve on them, even if we repair or build a house within the pocket, the person still must use an outdoor toilet. Sir, many persons in that area still continue to live a life without having access to the modern utilities of water.

I have also asked them to make a request on the Barbados Water Authority. One has to go back to a traditional approach position. I am asking them to also be people-oriented in this exercise and go back to what might be considered to be a backward approach but in these circumstances it has to be an exception to the principle and at least place at strategic points inside the same Zone One area, standpipes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a number of occasions, the Ministry of Health and I, have gone into the community and have given containers to the people. Furthermore, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, in making those containers as modern as possible, has put taps onto them. We have done everything that we can, within the limit of the resources available to us, to help the community.

Sir, I am asking Barbados Water Authority, the Ministry of Health and all the stake agencies, to take into consideration that in the same way they can beautify the northern side, I want them to beautify the hearts of the people in the southern side in Licorish Village/My Lords Hill areas and save them from all the inhibitions and challenges that they have to face, as a consequence of not having access to water, as regularly as they would like.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we put the water meters on the pipes, while it was to the advantage to many

Barbadians, it was to the disadvantage of many persons in Licorish Village, who could not get water from their friends anymore because of the installation of the water meters. Sir, I enter into this discussion to compliment the Government and the Minister for doing what must be done because there is very little other use for which the land can be used, but I also want the Minister to extend his interest to the southern area of the community.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am aware that the Government and the Cabinet of Barbados is doing all it can in order to address the Zone One problem as it relates to either the setting up of a Sewerage Plant or using the method of reverse osmosis. There are also recommendations of the installation of septic tanks and filter beds. I have heard many alternatives but I believe it is time for action.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am asking now that we have put this on the agenda as a project, that some of those elements, which I have highlighted, be also taken into consideration and put into execution, so that the people in the northern parts of the Zone One area could also be best served.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, with those few words, that is the entirety of my contribution to this debate. I therefore would want to support the Honourable Member under those conditions.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not think there is anything which I need to say. All Honourable Members have contributed richly to this debate and it is now for the Ministry of the Environment to press on with that implementation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government Business for today. I beg to move that this Honourable House be adjourned Tuesday November 14, 2006, at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question was put to and resolved in the affirmative without division and MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

7.00 p.m.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

Prepared with the transcript; for checking against the recording and the Minutes.

EDITORIAL QUERIES

Points noted while preparing this report from the edited transcript. The text has not been altered except where stated.

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Order No. 2, take-slips House 115 Sequence 27 to 29 (about 3.30 to 3.50 p.m.). A passage of about 1,300 words on energy policy, labelled ‘Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON’, stands in the middle of Hon. J. X. Walcott’s speech, before the Deputy Speaker calls the Member for St. James South and she begins ‘thank you very much. I rise to give support’. It appears to belong to her later speech and to be out of order in the source. Printed as in the source. Please confirm.

Q3. Order No. 14. Hon. R. R. Farley first describes the acquisition from Friendship Farms Limited as ‘61.97 acres’ and later as ‘61.97 hectares’. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Suspension of Standing Orders. The motion reads ‘Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20’, with the letter l in place of the figure 1 in ‘16’ and ‘18’. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Order No. 2, title. The Order Paper title gives the Plan’s subtitle as ‘Global Excellence, Barbadian Traditions’, while Hon. A. P. Wood quotes it as ‘Global Excellence, Barbadian Tradition.’ Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 7th November, 2006 at 10.15 a.m., with Mr. Speaker, His Honour I. A. Roett, in the Chair; prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood. The Minutes of Tuesday, 31st October, 2006 were confirmed. The Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur, laid the Value Added Tax (Refund) (F. A. C. Collymore Scholarship Fund) (No. 2) Order, 2006 and the Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Securities Commission for the year ended 31st March, 2006. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley moved that a congratulatory message be sent to the Prime Minister and Mrs. Arthur on their recent marriage, which she noted was the first by a Prime Minister in office; Hon. Dame Billie Miller seconded and Mr. Speaker associated the Chair with the message. Standing Orders were then suspended for the rest of the Sitting.

Under Order No. 2, the House resumed debate on the Resolution to take note of and approve the draft National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2005-2025. Hon. A. P. Wood located his contribution in people-centred development, citing an allocation of \$438 million to education in the Estimates, more emphasis on technical and vocational training, and a planned University College of Barbados. Rev. J. J. S. Atherley gave credit to those who had governed on both sides since Independence and spoke of widening ownership of business and land. Mr. R. D. Jones questioned the personalising of the Plan, spoke of behaviour among the under-30 population and argued that the State should provide resources for political parties. After the luncheon suspension, Mr. T. A. Prescod spoke of the colonial past, quoting Frantz Fanon, and of respect for religions other than Christianity, and Mr. M. A. Lashley answered him on the qualifications for Parliament and on compensation under the Land Acquisition Act.

Mr. R. L. Sealy recalled that the mover had compared the debate with the Independence debate of 1966, and dissociated himself from any idea of selling land to foreigners on a large scale to earn foreign exchange; Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley rose on a point of order against his remarks. Hon. Dr. J. X. Walcott cited a life expectancy of seventy-seven years, announced a forthcoming Chronic Diseases Commission comparable to the HIV/AIDS Commission, and regretted that Members of the Opposition were not in their seats, which drew points of order from Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, who said that nearly every Opposition Member had spoken. Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson spoke on energy, including the increase in oil production, the wind farm proposed for Lamberts, St. Lucy, fuel cane and the solar water heater industry.

After a further suspension, the Prime Minister closed the debate. He thanked the contributors acknowledged at page six of the Plan, among them Professor Frank Alleyne and Professor Hilary Beckles, contrasted the Plan with earlier development plans, including the 1993 to 2000 Plan, and quoted Sir Arthur Lewis; he argued that the State should inspire rather than command. The Resolution was agreed to without division.

Reverting to Government Notices, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley gave notice of a Resolution to approve borrowing of US\$65 million on the international capital markets through Deutsche Banking Securities Incorporated, with a sinking fund, and Mr. D. J. H. Thompson gave notice of a Private Members’ Resolution congratulating the people of Barbados on 40 years of nationhood and noting the role of the Democratic Labour Party in pursuing independence.

Under Order No. 14, Hon. R. R. Farley moved the Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of parcels of land at Friendship and Waterford, St. Michael for a National Botanical Garden. He explained that these were two of 11 parcels for a garden of 254 acres in a Zone 1 water catchment area, the Belle system supplying some 30 per cent of the island's daily water. Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, as Minister of the Environment, described the project unit, training of staff and surveys already carried

out. Mr. R. D. Jones, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, who said she had proposed the garden some seven years earlier, Mr. R. L. Sealy, Mr. D. St.E. Kellman, who urged the planting of fruit trees and prompt settlement with a company in business for over 30 years, and Hon. T. A. Prescod all supported it. The Resolution was agreed to without division, and on the motion of Hon. R. R. Farley the House was adjourned until Tuesday, 14th November, 2006 at 10.00 a.m.