THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, October 10, 2006

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, October 10, 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., B.C.H. (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)

Mr. 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)

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

Hon. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of Tourism and International Transport)

Hon. A. P. WOOD, B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil., J.P. (Minister of 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 Friday, August 11, 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 Friday, August 11, 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report to this Honourable House that I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements for the months of April, May and June 2006, from the Accountant-General.

PAPERS

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

1. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Transport Board) Order, 2006.
2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Sir Shridath Ramphal) Order, 2006.
3. Value Added Tax (Refund) (New Covenant Pentecostal Assemblies of God) Order, 2006.
4. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Coast Guard Relocation Inc.) (Amendment) Order, 2006.
5. Report of the Auditor-General on the Accounts of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the financial year ended March 31, 2005.
6. Report on the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarter ended March 31, 2006.
7. Report on the Social Investment Fund for the quarter ended March 31, 2006.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the Annual Financial Statement of the Gymnasium Limited for the year ended March 31, 2006.

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

1. Annual Report of the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated for the year 2005.
2. Shipping (Water Sports) (Amendment) Order, 2006.
3. Shipping (Water Sports) (Amendment) Regulation, 2006.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Police Complaints Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the Police Complaints Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2006 was read a first time.

ORAL REPLY TO QUESTIONS

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Reply to Parliamentary Question No. 14 is ready.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO TAKE NOTE OF AND APPROVE THE DRAFT "NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN OF BARBADOS 2005-2025: GLOBAL EXCELLENCE, BARBADIAN TRADITIONS"

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Sir, when historians come to reflect on the development of Barbados as an independent modern nation State, they would, of course, reflect on the records of Hansard and seek to glean what was the perspective of those who were charged with the leadership of this country at different points in its history.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the debate, which would have led to the independence of this country, would be one of those things to which they would turn. There is no doubt that the 1974 Constitutional Amendment debate would be the debate to which they would turn, to be able to get a sense of where a country, after almost a decade of independence, felt that it needed to go in respect of the re-ordering of aspects of its constitutional framework. There is also no doubt that there would be a few other debates that they would turn to.

Mr. Speaker, it is my judgement that one of the debates which would come also to be regarded as a significant debate

is this debate, which speaks to the Draft National Strategic Plan of Barbados, being tabled one month shy of our 40th Anniversary of Independence, a period that generally is regarded by all across this world as that of a generation. Mr. Speaker, in my view, it will come to be regarded as the Statement of Intent of those of us who have the privilege of occupying Parliament as to where we believe this country could go in relation to the second generation of independence.

Mr. Speaker, I start this debate at this level because I fully anticipate that the contributions which would follow would be those which would be clear and comprehensive in respect of the vision of those of us who represent the people of this country, recognising as well that what we are called to reflect upon today, the Draft National Strategic Plan, has not simply been the position of the Government as constituted by the Cabinet and its public servants but in fact has been the sum total of a series of consultations that has reflected almost every corner and every sphere of this society.

10.30 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, some four years ago, the Cabinet of Barbados set up a Working Group on a Draft Strategic Plan. Certain Honourable Members: the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, and myself, were given the responsibility of working with other Barbadians. Those persons were: the current Principal of the University of the West Indies; the former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Peter Laurie; the current Permanent Secretary in that Ministry and the Permanent Secretary, whom I believe now is in the Ministry of Housing and Lands. We would have met over a period of time, to be able to pull together, what we believed would constitute a Working Draft vision.

Mr. Speaker, that document was prepared and indeed the Ministry of Economic Affairs held a Consultative Session at Sherbourne Conference Centre, inviting members of the Union Movement, such as the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB), members of the civil society, members of the Private Sector, and Honourable Members of Parliament, to be able to effectively comment on the draft vision, such that we could move to the next stage of being able to craft out the Strategic Plan, as we now have it.

Mr. Speaker, thereafter, responsibility was given to the then Permanent Secretary of Economic Affairs, who is still Mr. Bentley Gibbs, and his team within the Ministry of Economic Affairs, of working on the document and pulling together the perspectives and strategies of all of the persons so far. Mr. Speaker, it now includes others: Miss Kim Tudor, who is now in charge of the project, the National Initiative on Service Excellence (NISE); Professors Frank Alleyne, Andrew Downes and Michael Howard; Mr. Carson Browne, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs then, now Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Housing and Lands.

These persons were given the responsibility to begin to craft for this country a strategic plan, which would start from the premise that what needed to be done in repositioning Barbados, could only be done, if we fully understood what were our strengths, our weaknesses, what were the opportunities that lie before us, and what were the threats that could destabilise us from reaching what we should otherwise be able to reach.

Mr. Speaker, as a Government, we felt that the process of developing or having development plans for a five-year period, which set very specific targets and spoke only to the role of Government, were no longer appropriate for an economy and a society, where so much was also determined outside of the sphere of Government, in respect of the overall national prosperity of the country.

Mr. Speaker, to that extent, we, therefore, moved to a position where we felt that having a strategic plan that look at a long view of Barbados, over a 20-year period, was preferable to simply having development plans that spoke only to the role of Government, in the context of a five-year period.

The Prime Minister would speak in this debate and would tell you that he was involved, and he was charged with the responsibility in 1983 for preparing the development plan for this country. The Honourable Member would also say to us, having appreciated being part of that experience, why it was more appropriate for Barbados at this juncture, where so much of the activities in this country are not necessarily controlled by the actions of Government, that it would be better for us to speak to a broad vision, to which all Barbadians, irrespective of class, race or gender, could subscribe and, indeed, one which would allow each group or individual to determine what was their role in being able to help this country of theirs, to reach the Strategic Objectives, as so outlined.

Mr. Speaker, I start by explaining that because it is important for Honourable Members and those who are listening, to recognise that this document is, therefore, the document that has been the subject of this greatest consultative exercise, in circumstances where we believe that we could only set that broad vision, agreeing on those things, which are common to all persons and which could, in fact, constitute the bedrock of action that would take place, be it in the form of Government's role, the Private Sector's role, the civil society or the Union Movement.

Mr. Speaker, you might ask why this approach. Sir, apart from the extent to which so much activity is controlled

by actors outside of Government, Barbados finds itself at a critical juncture, at this point in its development. Barbados has done well. Indeed, for over a decade, we have been ranked amongst the world's leading developing countries, if not the leading one, in certain years, in respect of the Human Development Index, as it measures the quality of life. We have been judged by the Commonwealth Business Council, to be amongst the three top countries within the entire Commonwealth, as a preferred location for investment and for doing business. We have been judged by Transparency International, to be amongst one of the least corrupt countries in the world.

Mr. Speaker, recently in the last month, in our first participation in the World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Index, Barbados was judged to be ranked at No. 31 in the entire world, in relation to competitiveness and more importantly, first amongst the developing countries. Sir, equally, it has been judged at No. 4 in this hemisphere in which we live, coming only after the United States of America, Canada and Chile, which are countries that have a far longer track record of governance, with far greater resources to do the job at hand.

Mr. Speaker, you might ask, therefore, if we have been able to achieve all of this, why are we so concerned about the planning process and about building for the future. I say to you that one of the things that has made this country what it is, over the decades and across Governments, has been the fact that it is not in our nature to become complacent. It is not in our nature to rest on our laurels.

Sir, in the world in which we live today, where the removal of boundaries for the travelling of capital and the movement of people and information have all gone, where it has been stated that there has been a death of distance, where what happens in Pakistan could intimately affect what happens in the Americas, we have a duty to reposition this country, this economy and this society, to be able to respond better to a set of global dynamics that equally, while it favours us in relation to removing distance and size as a handicap, creates a vulnerability because there are so many things that can impact our day-to-day life, over which we have little or no control. Mr. Speaker, for example, the war in Iraq, and prior to that, the Other Side might tell you the Persian Gulf War of 1991, along with the events of 11th September.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, the continued rise of oil prices over the course of the last two years responding not to factors happening in this country but to factors as diverse as the war in Iraq, as the threat of imminent trouble between Iran and the Government of the United States of America, and as to Hurricane Katrina's impact on the global supply of oil. All of those things stood to impact negatively on this country's economic performance and in particular, to be responsible for half of the increase in absolute terms in our external Current Account deficit, over the last two years.
10.40 a.m.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, we must face the consequences of it but the most we can hope ever to do is to exert some minimum level of influence as we seek to have discourse over the future of global governance in whatever form it may take.

Mr. Speaker, we are cognisant that there are forces that cause us to reposition this country and to reflect on the strategies that we need to do so. It is a fact that more information which is used in Barbados is generated outside of these boundaries than from within and that information has the capacity to influence the attitudes, the morals and the lifestyles of this country.

It is a fact that four times the population of this country visit Barbados on an annual basis, that this country which has 270 000 people between short cruise ship visitors and long-term, long-stay over visitors, there are more than one million a year visiting this country. With them not only come the desire to spend money but also the capacity to influence, once again, individuals and institutions within this country.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we have to determine whether those things which were in place, whether those institutions, whether the legislative framework, whether the aspects of our organisations within the private sector and the civil society are sufficient to be able to help Barbados not only stave off the negative but to exploit the opportunities which are now available to it.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has been the first Government in the history of this country that has had to plan out an economy based on international rules of trade that literally handicapped you in relation to the kind of policy framework that you can put in place for your domestic productive sectors such that they can continue to earn a living to help us maintain the quality of life we have today. Sir, this is a fact. This is why we felt, then in April of 1994, as we do now that any international commitments which we give, which have domestic consequences, must have a serious consultation such that persons understand the environment within which they are going to be required to work and can plan for it in good time.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has also had to deal with the full impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, a pandemic which threatens to destabilise the gains of development which have been made in the first generation of independence, which in particular can take a greater toll on a country like Barbados largely because of the level of investment that Barbados makes in its citizens. This is a country that provides free education not only from five years

old to tertiary level as before, but in the last two years, we have extended it to pre-primary on a phased basis such that by the end of next year, all three to five-year olds are guaranteed free education in this country.

This is a country that has invested in a significant network of polyclinics and the provision of health care such that anyone who is faced with serious illness can afford themselves a free health care at the point of delivery and moreso, unlike most countries in the world, can have access to free pharmaceuticals once they are under 16, over 65 or suffering from certain chronic diseases. This is a country that has invested substantially in a community development framework and a cultural framework.

Mr. Speaker, I have said very often when I was Minister of Education that when you add up the investment per child that this country has made in each individual, by the time the child reaches 18 years old, the Government of Barbados, whosoever that Government is, has invested more than $100 000 in each child. Therefore, anything which stands to undermine the ability of that child to become a full and productive citizen, living up to their responsibilities to their family, themselves, their community and to their country is, in fact, a loss of significant proportions in the same way that it would not be in Jamaica, in the same way that it would not estimate in other parts of the developing world.

Sir, I am not trying to say that their lives are any less important but I am making the point that for us as a Government that being able to stave off the negative consequences is critical because, in truth and in fact, we have invested up front in trying to make them the best that they can be, in trying to remove the negative impact of circumstances of birth that are beyond control of that child.

When, therefore, that child as a young adult is taken in their prime, whether it is HIV/AIDS, whether it is a car accident, whether it is as a result of a criminal act, we have a problem because it means that those investments which have been given to that child, also with the expectation that the child will do it for the next generation, has been compromised.

Mr. Speaker, I have said that this Government has had to deal with those things. We have responded by putting a programme in place that has led to Barbados being a global leader in relation to the reduction of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS. We have ended up at this point in time in global affairs having our Chairman of our National Advisory Commission on AIDS leading the global effort against HIV/AIDS, not just for Barbados but for the entire world and not just for HIV/AIDS but for tuberculosis and malaria, two other diseases which we may not be as familiar with in our recent circumstances as a nation but which afflict many a nation.

Mr. Speaker, we have had to deal with the fact that the global warming which is taking place is going to significantly affect the environmental, economic and ultimately the quality of life fortunes of this country. Sir, for some people, global warming is just an esoteric phrase but for us, global warming will lead to the death of coral and it will lead to a rise in sea level. We already have a situation where parts of this country are below sea level.

You have heard the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown speaking in here every year before the hurricane season. Every year she tells you about the problems which she has because in her constituency, half of it is below sea level. Those who go on the west coast, the Honourable Member for St. James Central and the Honourable Member for St. James South will tell you that many of the establishments which now help to bring money into this country in terms of earning foreign exchange will stand to be compromised whether it is The Tides Restaurant or all of those on that coast in Holetown. Sir, for us, the issue to climate change and global warming must be a matter of significant concern even if we know that our actions only cannot stem the tide of global warming.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken about the information which is absorbed in this country. Therefore, the issue of cultural imperialism advanced not only as part of the war exercised by those in Hollywood but equally by those who also control other subcultures closer home to us within the region, and the extent to which that whole movement can undermine the values which this country has held dearly, and which we would want. Sir, why is the theme of this National Strategic Plan, Global Excellence, Barbadian Traditions? It is because we as a people recognise that how much ever we seek to integrate into a global community, we must never do so at the expense of the essence of who we are as a people, that our Barbadian identity is critical, that it has been forged over centuries, in good times and bad times, under oppression, through empowerment, but when all is said and done, it is who we are.

10.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, I say that these threats which we confront today are significant. There are others, that are more sectoral in nature, for example, trade liberalisation and the extent to which financial and capital markets across the world are liberalising, and therefore the impact to which capital can have on the fate of this country, that is not owned or controlled by anybody in Barbados or the region, for that matter. These are the new realities with which we have to contend.

Sir, having said all of that, we have significant opportunities. We have for the first time since the 17th Century, the opportunity to become a significant player

in the global community in terms of influence. I say the 17th Century, because all who understood their history would know that in the context of the development of the British Empire, the fact that Barbados was small, did not rob it of the influence which it had, not only on the British Empire itself, but indeed in the settlement and development of the United States of America, in the early years of that country's forging a national identity.

Mr. Speaker, in the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries, that level of influence diminished until the latter part of the 20th Century. Sir, I ask those who had access to the Education White Paper of 1995 to go back to it, because this Government form its first in office encapsulated in that White Paper, a recognition of what laid before us, in terms of the need for us to lift up our people and put them at the centre of the development process, ensuring that they could help us exploit the fact that this was a world that was rapidly becoming one that valued knowledge, creativity and innovation, replacing the old industrial economy and in so recognising that, we could seek to remove the handicap of size and geography, in the repositioning of the Barbadian economy, in the building of the Barbadian society and the exertion of influence in the global community.

Sir, it is significant that it was the recognition of that fact and commitment, that has seen us over the course of the last twelve years, seen the enrollment of the University of the West Indies Cave Hill Campus, moved from approximately 2 500 students to over 8 000 students today. I want to repeat it. Mr. Speaker, when I became Minister of Education 2 500 students were registered at the Cave Hill Campus. Sir, today the Cave Hill Campus is responsible for the education this year, of just over 8 000 students. Sir, 75 per cent of them through direct tuition and 25 per cent of them through distance education.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Community College has trebled three times the number of students that existed in 1994. The Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic has trebled. Sir, I am not even going to get to the Vocational Training Board, or the support given for employment related training by the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Council. Sir, I say to you, that we have done well, but I believe in my heart of hearts that we could do better. I believe we could do better. Sir, it is not that we could have done better in the past. I believe that we must do better in the future.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados must set as a fundamental goal, the provision of training to more than 80 per cent of its population, but in particular those who are currently unskilled, whatever age they are, because we would only be able to leap across the valley that would guarantee sustainable development, if we remove that underbelly of unskilled workers from the geographical landscape of this country.

Sir, the other opportunities we have, apart from those given to us by the global shift in valuing knowledge and creativity, have been the telecommunications revolution and the virtual information revolution. In the same way that we potentially stand to be a victim of cultural imperialism, we can use the same tools to ensure that our influence on global affairs and discrete communities, countries and issues, can be far greater than it is today, because at the end of the day, all the telecommunications revolution has done, is to give us a conduit. It is a pipe. If you do not determine what you put through that pipe, then you stand to be at the end of a deluge, but you can determine that instead of receiving alone, that you can equally send back out information to influence this world.

It is with this in mind, this Government has sought to carry us along a line where we believe that matters pertaining to not just electronic, commerce and transactions are critical, but that the strengthening of the cultural underpinnings of development are absolutely essential, if our people are to have the confidence to use those conduits in a way that does not see them being purely the victims of another man's message.

Mr. Speaker, there are other opportunities that are, perhaps, a little more sectoral. In the same way that the world now values a rules-based framework for the development of trade, we believe that with the right negotiations and the right terms of trade, we can craft our development, in a way that does not see us being the passive recipient in terms of trade, but equally that sees us crafting out, for us, that which we know is possible and attainable in relation to the domestic capacity of this country for its productive sectors.

We recognise that the opportunities for Barbadians to use their skills across boundaries, virtual and physical, are upon us. We recognise that the opportunity for us to plan out an economy, not based on 270 000 people, but based on a recognition that in addition to those who live here, anyone who chooses by reason of birth, descent or choice to so connect to the objectives of this country, that they are part and parcel of the domestic population, even if they are not physically present within Barbados' geographical boundaries.

Sir, what do I mean by that? They can help with their services, wherever they are located in this world to help build this economy and society. They can help through their investment. It is in this context that I have spoken with the Minister of State, in the Ministry of Finance, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, that it is absolutely urgent that we craft a financial instrument, that

can cause them to be able to invest in the building and development of this country, rather than helping to finance the deficit of the United States of America, United Kingdom or wherever they may be found.

Sir, these are the new opportunities that are available to us, that would not have been available to previous Leaders and Honourable Members of Parliament in this country.
11.00 a.m.

Therefore, as we face the threats, there is no doubt that significant opportunities for us to build on the efforts of those who saw it as their duty to lift the people of this country out of circumstances of poverty and passivity, being victims of the determinations of other people, rather than being firm craftsmen of their fate.

Mr. Speaker, we have some strengths and we have some weaknesses. I will start, Sir, with the weaknesses because the weaknesses stand in our way, sometimes, of being able to achieve all that we can. There is no doubt that the biggest weakness this country has is its inherent vulnerability, as a result of size. While some aspects of the handicap of size have been removed, when all is said and done, it is only 166 square miles.

Sir, that vulnerability that exists therefore to weather systems, is significant. We have seen what hurricanes have done recently in our own region to Grenada. Believe you me, Mr. Speaker, we do not have the mountains of Grenada, so you know what would have happened, if we had taken a direct hit from Ivan, instead of Grenada.

We have seen, Mr. Speaker, the fact that there is an inherent vulnerability, as a result of other natural phenomena in the region, which not known to have been a problem in recent past, does not mean that it could not be a problem to us in our future. I speak, of course, to the existence of the underwater volcano off Grenada again, "Kick'm Jenny".

We have a vulnerability from the point of view that when all is said and done, our land and natural resource base is limited. We have a vulnerability, as I said before, that means invariably we are takers of various prices. We cannot produce everything that we need here and, therefore, if we want it, we have to be able to get it at the prices which are already set. The most important of that is oil, of course, but across the range of products and services that we use, that theory is equally applicable.

We have a vulnerability because of lack of economies of scale. It is for that reason that this Government has been so assiduous in its efforts to be able to make sure that we can create a single market and a single economy in this region, such that Barbados is not limited by a market of 270 000 but, indeed, Barbados can speak in terms of 6 million people as its basic domestic market. This is because of the precepts of nondiscrimination that attend to the establishment of a single market and, with that, the opportunities for production integration, in the context of a single economy. This was not available to previous leaders or previous Parliaments.

We have a weakness, Mr. Speaker, where we have seen a decline in the quality of standards and training – and I lay no blame at any one's feet now, specifically because that is not what this debate is about – in relation to the quality of our public service. We need to be able to reposition it and reform it.

We have a weak entrepreneurial culture in this country. We have strong institutional frameworks but when it comes to doing business, when it comes to creating and producing things from scratch, we have a weak entrepreneurial culture. Sir, this is because we never had to rely on it, in order to be able to make our way through the world.

We have not, since Independence, been the best guardians of our infrastructure. We have seen building after building, facility after facility been the subject of poor maintenance. We need to do something about it because, as with the investment in people, once we do not maintain that which we invest in our physical infrastructure, we have to spend that money over again, instead of being able to redirect that expenditure, to other areas of activity.

Mr. Speaker, we have the problem that even during World War II, when there was specific legislation, requiring plantations to plant food to help with the issues of food security, there would have been difficulties in being able to have enough, to be able to feed the domestic population.

Therefore, the problem of food security will remain with us, as a small nation, particularly more so now, where the whole demographics of the population have changed and, indeed, the land usage has changed substantially, over the course of the last 60 years.

Mr. Speaker, whether we like it or not, we have been victims of our own success, by reason of the fact that the policies implemented over the course of the last seven decades, have led to Barbados having one of the largest percentage of older people, per capita, as a nation in this world.

Therefore, the demographic profile of Barbados has changed significantly. It means that because people are living longer, we have to be able to restructure much of what we do, to ensure that people can live in dignity in their later years. Sir, at the same time, we have to recognise the implication of that, particularly with zero growth in our

population, is that there are fewer people in the prime of their life to carry the productivity of the nation to help support the people who are most vulnerable in the society. These are some of the clear weaknesses that we face, as a people.

Mr. Speaker, we have strengths that have far outweighed the weaknesses thus far and for them, we are grateful, but we are cognisant, as I said, that we cannot become complacent and rest purely on the fact that they have been strengths thus far. Sir, without any shadow of a doubt, one of the greatest strengths that this country has had since Independence, has been its political stability.

Mr. Speaker, one only needs to watch the international news any hour of the day and realise that what we enjoy, in terms of political stability, particularly since Independence – and even before Independence, to be fair – is a rare phenomenon among the family of nations of the world. Sir, it is my judgment that is one of the key reasons we continue to enjoy global recognition, whether in areas of quality of life for competitiveness or minimal transparency. Sir, that political stability has meant that successive Governments have been able to get on with the job of keeping Barbadians at the centre of their actions of the development process.

Mr. Speaker, while others have had to be diverted just to be able to maintain stability or to keep the institutions of Government afloat, we have been able to get on with the job of:

- providing free education
- providing free health care
- providing subsidised transportation
- being able to create new institutions to build out the new economy like the Fair Trading Commission
- being able to develop a National Insurance Scheme
- being one of the few countries in the Caribbean to have an Unemployment Benefit Scheme
- being able to deal with the issue of the transfer of ownership of land, whether it is under the plantation tenantries, or under the urban tenantries.

Sir, we have been able to get on with the job, and for that, I believe this Parliament must first today thank those who went before, but equally commit to keeping above the fray and not allowing the unfortunate examples of partisan political behaviour that occupy the landscape of other countries to become known with the development of this country.

I hope that those of us who have come in, as I said, at this juncture of our development can take the best of the legacy of those who went before, in terms of keeping this political stability at the centre of our development. It is the bedrock from which development has come in modern Barbados.

11.10 a.m.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, the fact that Barbados is known worldwide for its commitment to the rule of law and for governance issues and democracy, the fact that our judges are not called in connection with corruption and the fact that the Executive is not known to reach in to the arena of the Judiciary and influence decisions, are all things that we must not take for granted.

Mr. Speaker, I say to the Barbadian populace that, apart from the narrow partisan issues as to who constitutes a Government, these are the values for which we must fight and the values for which we must understand that it is critical for us to have if freedom is to remain something that is valued in this country.

Mr. Speaker, when you add to that our commitment to social justice, that is the aspect of the Barbadian character reflected at the individual level as wanting to take care of the underdog all the time and translated at the national level as a commitment to social justice. These are the things that matter.

Mr. Speaker, there are some countries in the world where it matters not, neither to the Parliament nor to the majority of the electorate, that their people do not have safe drinking water. There are some countries in the world where it matters not to the electorate or to the Parliament that people do not have the right to be able to live in circumstances of dignity and to access those things which could help lift them out of their circumstances. Mr. Speaker, those things matter in this country and long may they matter.

Mr. Speaker, social justice is critical because in the context of legal justice you would never be able to meet all of the variables and computations that are necessary to bring human dignity and to make things fair for people. Sir, social justice is the expression of empathy and compassion and a willingness to fight to make things fair and right for people who are victims of circumstances very often beyond their control.

Mr. Speaker, there are two values which have been associated with this country certainly in the last century of its development: the desire of Barbadians to be able to be educated... In 1900, a country that is 166 square miles had over 200 primary schools and indeed seven or eight secondary schools. Mr. Speaker, when you add to that,

Codrington College which is affiliated with Durham, that you could, even though it was not available to all, actually stay in this country and never leave and get from a primary to a university education at a time when other countries in the world did not even know what the word nation-state was... Those are the facts. As a result of that, the issue of education has remained dear. They say that if you open the heart of any Barbadian, you would see the word education and the word land. Those are the two issues that Barbadians feel the most passionate about.

Mr. Speaker, in the context of education and in the context of land, let us also step back. In Africa and Latin America, people have possession of land, but in many instances they have no legal ownership. It is the absence of legal ownership that continues to keep them in a state of persistent poverty.

Mr. Speaker, recognising that poor people would pass land, as we call it, from seed to seed and that we had to find a mechanism to reflect that physical possession of land into legal ownership, what Barbados did was to create what is otherwise known as the fictitious title suite, which is one of the key reasons why Barbados has been able to leapfrog other developing countries in the world.

Sir, it meant that people were able, upon getting legal ownership, to integrate into a western capitalist system by accessing credit to be able to improve either their conditions of living, the educational opportunities for their children or the tools which they use in the crafts in which they engage for a living.

Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons poverty exists to the extent that it does all through Latin America and Africa today is because people cannot modernise their means of production, whether it is in farming, in basic craft skills, in blacksmithing or whatever, and one of the reasons they cannot improve their quality of housing standards is because they do not have access to any form of credit because there is no collateral.

Sir, what happens is that when the first set of floods come and when the hurricanes come and when the earthquakes come, everything that they have is destroyed and they must start from scratch again. In Barbados, people have been able to build wealth across generations. Mr. Speaker, I say to you that these are some of the strengths that we have had and that we need to exploit.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that land has become an emotional issue. I would perhaps return to that later in the speech and not be diverted at this stage because I think that there has to be a dispassionate discussion such that we could maintain those values while at the same time maintain the quality of life by being able to earn, such that we are not mortgaging away our future because too many Barbadians are now living on credit as well as at the individual level, for this not to be a significant issue confronting us at this juncture of our development.

We have also benefitted from significant infrastructure not just since Independence, but if we are being honest, before Independence. How many countries of the world that were Colonies had a police force within four years of the abolition of slavery? How many countries in the world had a post office established in the mid 19th Century? How many countries in the world had a Psychiatric Hospital dealing with issues of mental health in the late 19th Century? Mr. Speaker, I am not talking about the 20th Century, I am talking about institutions in Barbados that are in excess of 150 years old. Mr. Speaker, however much aid is pumped into Haiti today, it cannot benefit anyone immediately because there are no institutions of governance to be responsible for the spending of that aid in a manner that would benefit people.

Mr. Speaker, Haiti did not even have a Treasury. We take it for granted that we have a Treasury Building out there and a Treasury. Some people perhaps never even thought about it. Mr. Speaker, what are the systems that underpin the collection of revenue from the population and its expenditure that we should have a Parliament that is the third oldest in the Commonwealth?

Mr. Speaker, yes, this Parliament has always not been known for helping the majority of people in this country but thank God we have made it into an instrument of empowerment over the course of the last 60 to 70 years of this country's life. Thank God for that because we could show the world that institutions that were known to be responsible for oppression could equally become tools of empowerment if they are properly peopled and structured and have the appropriate philosophy. We did not destroy to build back.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I am not referring to the ode. I was more referring to Lil Rick's, "Mash Up and Buy Back". Of course, we are blessed with a climate that people pay for, that people want and that people envy us for. Therefore, it is perhaps understandable when Barbadians say that we are a blessed people and that we are taken care of by God because we truly have much to be thankful for.

11.20 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you, in the same way that we have much to be thankful for, we need to stop and think as to whether our children and our children's children, would be able to make that comment 20, 30 or 40 years hence. We

must be able to recognise that those things which we do today, whether in the corridors of Government, the avenues of the Private Sector or indeed in the bosom of the Union Movement or civil society, would redound to the benefit of this country, in the same way that we knew that when Errol Barrow introduced the National Insurance Scheme, that we were going to be helping thousands of Barbadians in the evening of their years; in the same way when Tom Adams introduced the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act, he knew that he was revolutionarily removing the plight of poverty from thousands of Barbadians, who remained on land, purely at the will of landlords, in circumstances where they could not have improved the circumstances of themselves or of their families, without that legal ownership of the plot of plantation tenantry.

Mr. Speaker, what would be those decisions which we would make today, that would give those who come, the comfort that we have built upon those traditions? What we have done, therefore, is to set out a strategic plan, based on a vision that reflects all of what I have said, in terms of our current circumstances, our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, that recognises that economically this country has had periods, almost every decade, where the inherent economic vulnerability has raised its head and where there have been some questions, in relation to our macroeconomic stability but that we have been able to recover from them, in quick order, almost on every occasion, even in the 1990s, which, perhaps, is the longest period that it has taken for recovery to come.

Mr. Speaker, I want to pause for a second. We hear a lot of talk in Barbados today. In fact, there are some who have tried to suggest that the country is bankrupt. Sir, the only bankruptcy taking place is that of moral and intellectual bankruptcy on those who so assert. This country, in 2001, not only because of 11th September but if you would recall, there was a global economic downturn prior to that, where we were faced with a set of circumstances that threatened to undermine the stability of our economy. We determined then, that rather than seek to contain our spending, which would have led to a loss of jobs, as was done in 1991, we would have taken a decision to expand Government's spending, both in terms of its capital projects, as well as in terms of being willing to subsidise the losses of the tourism industry, in circumstances where they were likely to have a negative impact because of 11th September.

Mr. Speaker, we did so on condition that the Private Sector, within the tourism industry, did not layoff any workers. Sir, our reason for doing that was that we felt that in small societies and economies such as this, the loss of employment over a protracted period of time – any time over six months – given the current structure of how our people plan out their business, given the extent to which people have mortgages, that any period of unemployment over six months, could lead to a significant social impact, on the part of a family, which could result from the loss of house, to other myriad difficulties.

We recognise that by increasing our spending and carrying the deficit up to 6 per cent, that we were doing something which would increase our debt. We took a decision as well that it made sense for us to go to the international capital markets, at that time, because no one knew, in October 2001, what would have been the circumstances internationally and what would have been the terms and conditions on which we could have accessed loans, to be able to help with the development of this country.

Mr. Speaker, one of the consequences obviously is that there would have been an increase in the debt profile of the country, but in so increasing the debt profile, we were confident and comfortable that we were not putting the country in jeopardy. We were also confident and comfortable that what we were borrowing for, for the majority, was to build new capacity, so that the money generated from that new capacity would help offset the terms to repay the loans, which we had raised.

Mr. Speaker, it means that our debt profile is not where we would like it to be optimally, but that is a matter of whether we want an A-plus or an A grade. It is not a matter of the country being in jeopardy of bankruptcy. It is a matter that it perhaps does not give us the best profile, in terms of our macroeconomic indicators, and the fact that there was a negative impact, in terms of the current account deficit, but we felt that we had to give ourselves room because it was easier for us to build capacity, to build the export potential of this country, than to deal with the social consequences of unemployment, as has happened in the early 1990s.

Mr. Speaker, that was the stark choice. That is the difference between the approach taken by the Democratic Labour Party Government in 1991, and the approach taken by the Barbados Labour Party in 2001. Mr. Speaker, I say that because it is important for us to realise that even the judgments of the International Monetary Fund, in their Article Four Consultation latest report, the only difference between the Government of Barbados and the International Monetary Fund, is whether or not we could bring that debt down by 2011 or 2015. They would have us do it by 2011. They would have us defer the restructuring of the sugar industry.

Mr. Speaker, we say that the restructuring of the sugar industry is too important for a whole raft of people across this country, both in terms of our capacity to produce a product for which there is a higher value-added for the market, that being specialised sugar but that equally, in terms

of the benefits of that project, in terms of the production of 30 megawatts of electricity for the Barbados Light & Power Co. Ltd., to reduce the importation bill, in terms of fuel oil or diesel and the foreign exchange spent thereto, and to be able to replace 10 per cent of our gasoline requirements with that of ethanol, so that we can so accordingly reduce that overall gasoline bill too.

Mr. Speaker, we feel that even if it means that we do not have an A-plus grading but that we have an A or an A-minus, it is more important for us to be able to restructure and to be able to get those people on a solid sustainable path and, therefore, gradually to bring the debt down by 2015, rather than by 2011, as the International Monetary Fund wishes. Sir, we all know that the International Monetary Fund has pursued a Washington consensus approach, which has led to significant social dislocation in many countries across the world.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to see – and the Honourable Member for St. John could confirm it when he speaks – that the Democratic Labour Party's theme, in its recent foray with the public, has been putting people at the centre of development. Sir, throughout this National Strategic Plan, it speaks about putting people at the centre of development. Mr. Speaker, if that means that they would no longer take decisions that would cause people to bear the brunt of adjustment in the future, I am happy to commend the leadership of the Democratic Labour Party now, because that has not always been their stance in the past.
11.30 a.m.

When you hear that we are bankrupted, what are the facts? Barbados has a lower external debt, a lower foreign debt than the average in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, those are the facts, Barbados has a lower foreign debt than the average in Latin America and the Caribbean. Barbados also has counted as part of its overall debt, debt to its National Insurance Scheme and most countries in the world, do not include debt to their social security schemes as part of their overall debt profile, including the United States of America.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados also has a number of assets that we can show for the debt. If you borrowed money as an individual and you do not have anything to show for it, your neighbours would look at you and say that you are foolish and stupid but if you have debt and the neighbours could see the assets that you have as a result of using the money you have borrowed appropriately, they would understand why you borrowed the money. If you are not naturally endowed with resources like Trinidad, such that you could have surpluses coming up from reason of old revenues, you have to find a way of borrowing to be able to finance development. In fact, it was in this Parliament, Mr. Speaker, that Errol Barrow in 1967 said that anybody who does not support deficit financing is anti-developmental.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: It is a fact and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy can attest to it.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you that the issue always is, what is the reason you are borrowing. You do not borrow to buy food because you would never be able to sustain that borrowing.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: You should not, and this Government does not. You do not borrow to buy oil which you are using every day. This is one of the reasons that this Government has not supported PetroCaribe because it makes no sense for us to engage in a loan to buy something that we use every day. Think of yourself, when you borrow as an individual, Mr. Speaker, you borrow to buy a house, a car, to invest in a business or to buy something which has a long shelf life that would help to make your life easier and that would earn money. Sir, the Government of Barbados' debt strategy is no different.

Mr. Speaker, what we have said as well is that when you look at what our external debt service ratio... Mr. Speaker, what does that really mean? Basically, it means how much foreign exchange we need to service our debt at the end of the day. What is it as a percentage of the Gross Domestic Product of the country?

Mr. Speaker, it is significant that our external debt service ratio in Barbados today is about 8 per cent. When you hear about countries in the debt trap, a lot of them are 40 per cent, 50 per cent and 60 per cent but Barbados is at 8 per cent. What was it in 1992 and 1993? Sir, Barbados' external debt service ratio in 1993 was 50 per cent higher, it was 12.6 per cent. So, what madness are we hearing in terms of miseducating and misinforming the public of Barbados today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados has a lower external debt service ratio today by 50 per cent than it had in 1993 and, believe you me, it is not that the Government is happy with the debt at the level it is but we do not believe it to be dangerous. We recognise that our average is lower in terms of our foreign debt and that is the same average as Latin America and the Caribbean and we know for what we borrowed the money. The Hilton Hotel has today, over the last year, reaped the success that it has had the highest

occupancy of any Hilton Hotel any part of the world, that is the reality of the investment of almost $200 million in the Barbados Hilton Hotel. Sir, that is what we borrowed for.

Mr. Speaker, the funds that allow us to be able to hold 45 days storage of gasoline and oil products in this country such that if there is a hurricane and that people cannot get here that Barbados would not end up into a New Orleans in a post-Katrina environment. Sir, that is what we borrowed for.

Mr. Speaker, Grantley Adams International Airport that is now regarded as being the best, not anywhere in the Caribbean alone but in the developing world, that creates a friendly environment and a beautiful environment at which people, who come to this country to help us earn our way land, that is what we borrowed for.

Mr. Speaker, the Bridgetown Port. Last week the Minister of Tourism signed a contract with Carnival, guaranteeing that Carnival Cruise Lines will bring 1.2 million visitors here in the next three years, worth on a daily spend of US$65 per person, $156 million to this economy, that is what we borrowed for.

Mr. Speaker, for those who want to talk about Gems, we have a Savannah Hotel that is the second most popular property on the South Coast of Barbados after the Hilton Hotel and is capable of being sold like the Barbados Hilton to be able to bring back down some of the debt, that is what we borrowed for. Mr. Speaker, what you do not do is to sell under duress. You do not sell anything under duress.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central is looking at me very funnily when I tell him that you do not sell anything under duress but he would have to know what he gives under duress.

Mr. Speaker, my point is this. The Government has had a series of persons expressing interest in some of these assets that we have had to build. Do you know why we have had to do it? Sir, Errol Barrow had to build the first Hilton because there was nobody in the private sector that had the capacity or inclination to build it. We had to do the second one for similar reasons because the structure of cost in Barbados is such that unless you accompany a tourism investment with a real estate arm, the same way the CLICO is doing with Sam Lord's Castle, they will tell you like the Honourable Member for St. John would tell you that you cannot get a return on a hotel investment in Barbados unless you have the ability to also sell off real estate in order to be able to reduce the capital outlay. Sir, those are the facts and what is necessary to maintain Barbados' investment in its tourism product.

Mr. Speaker, when you do not build a Hilton, you do not upgrade the airport, you do not upgrade the seaport, you leave yourself vulnerable to any circumstances and the vagaries of shipping in the region which is already bad by not having sufficient storage. What do you think would be the consequences of it in terms of the people who are selling on the side of the road right back to the people who work in the construction trade, right across to the people working as accountants and lawyers and right across to the people in the public service who are helping to develop this country to make sure there are clean streets and a hospital providing treatment and all of these things?

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you that it is sometimes easy for us to be mired in the debate of who is doing it better. Sir, do you know what? Sometimes we should ask ourselves the question, what are we doing right. We should start with that first. I am saying to you that I am proud to come from a country that can stand up and hold its head high when we go into the international economic environment and say to people that we have not put people to bear the brunt of adjustment in adjusting to a new global economy because we have not. I am not talking about the Barbados Labour Party now because for the most part I am talking about Barbados as a country, that those values mean something.

11.40 a.m.

If I left public life today, I would want to leave with one thing and one thing alone, confident that those of us who have taken on the responsibility of representation from the generation who went before, understand the unwritten rules that are necessary to maintain political and economic stability of this country, because that is the gift which has been given to us, and that is the gift which we must pass on more than anything else. It really is.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, we have set out a vision. Our vision is that Barbados should be a fully developed society by 2025, that is prosperous, that is socially just and that is globally competitive, because beyond 2025 it must continue to build.

We believe that Barbados must have at its core a service economy that exploits the fact that we have put the investment of people through education and training, at the center of our governmental process. We believe that tourism will continue to be at the leading edge of that service sector, but it must be buttressed by the continuing growth in international, financial and business services. It must be buttressed by the sale of educational services, services in health and culture, and that there are also services in governance, nobody talks about this. Sir, we have civil servants and politicians who have served in Government, and who could serve any other part of the Commonwealth with distinction. Sir, they should be able to sell their services to earn foreign exchange for this country, particularly when

people have an implementation deficit, or an institutional deficit in other parts of the world. Those are the services that must underpin the development of this country by 2025.

Sir, very often the people have the skills but they do not have the entrepreneurial bend. They do not know how to go out there and market what they know. Mr. Speaker, you have run an institution that has made a significant difference in this country for over 30 years. Mr. Speaker, you are an expert on adult education and training. I would like to believe that you, Mr. Speaker, can also sell your services to other parts of the Commonwealth and the Caribbean, where there is a need to build up that expertise in adult education and training.

Sir, I am trying to say that in a very real way, one of the negative aspects of us being a British colony was to take on the mercantile perspective that valued only professions and trading. Sir, when I say trading I do not mean production. I mean trading, buying and selling. Nothing is wrong with buying and selling, but at some time it has to be buttressed by production.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to you that I believe Barbados has to work assiduously, at causing our people to want to take that risk, to want to be entrepreneurial. Sir, when I say, as I have said for ten years that culture must be at the centre of the development process, it is, because I understand that the same thing that causes us to do things that we value in terms of steadfastness and loyalty, is the same thing that also causes us to be cautious and not want to take a risk, whether it is the private sector as a whole, or whether it is as individuals.

Sir, one of the things that we need to do, while seeking to get Barbadians more expressive... Sir, the culture cab change. Sir, what happens today in Barbados in terms of creating a cultural expression 30 years ago, today nobody 30 years ago would have believed that Barbados would be at the centre of a cultural revolution in the Caribbean. It has changed. Sir, Barbadians have found the confidence to express themselves. Barbadians in the next 20 years must find the confidence to believe that they can produce and earn their way through life.

Sir, I will say to you, that when you combine that with the need to develop a value that unfortunately has been ripped, because of much of our history, from the fabric of our society, that of trust, when it comes to money. Sir, this Government has created a legislative framework and established a Securities Commission. Mr. Speaker, there is too little use of the Securities Commission and the other legislative instruments available for the mobilisation of savings to finance productive investment in this country. A large part of it is not only a lack of education, because the education has improved. The public awareness campaigns have been improving. First of all, a lot of the owners of established enterprises in this country, do not want to share that bounty, they have developed thus far, with others so that they can move to the next level as Pan-Caribbean or international companies. Unless there is a serious injection of capital investment, they are not going to be able to move to the next level.

Sir, our natural cultural profile causes us to be a 100 per cent owner of something small rather than 20 per cent owner of something huge. We have to come to terms with that over the next twenty years.

Sir, we have to come to terms with the fact that the mobilsation of savings of ordinary Barbadians, constitutes a major platform to finance the investment, that must take place in this country to help us maintain the quality of life. We have to come to grips with the fact that we need to find instruments such that people who are Barbadians by choice, birth or descent, can put some of their savings in this economy, rather than financing Mr. Bush's economy.

Sir, we want to believe that this society would be a society which is rooted still in values, that respects religion, that respects tradition and understands that the essence of whom we are as people is important, and that there is a strong sense of national identity.

Mr. Speaker, when we rewrite the draft plan, one of the aspects of the vision, that is not there, is the emphasis on that strong sense of national identity, although it is in the goals. Those are the kinds of things and editing that have to be done, to make this document for the platform to guide successive Governments and players in the public and private sectors and civil society.

Sir, we want to be a society that is truly literate. We want to be a society that understands its responsibilities as part of a Caribbean family, and recognises that no man is an island and no country can stand on its own. Sir, in a very real sense, what the single market and single economy offers us, is an opportunity of a lifetime to put Barbados' economic and social development on a sustainable platform, that nothing short of land reclamation, five times the size of the land that we have, can otherwise give us. That is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, we want to be able to see that Barbados remains a fully democratic society that does not need election monitors. Sir, monitors go into other parts of the region, and that is something to which the Barbados Labour Party, Democratic Labour Party and any other Party must subscribe as a basic precept for participation in the political life of this country. Those are the things that matter. That is the vision that we have.

Sir, we want to be able to use the natural resources of this country, in a way that does not compromise their availability to future generations. We want to be able to enhance creativity and innovation. We want that forever the commitment to the precept of social justice and fairness, should be associated with Barbadians first as an individual characteristic, then equally as a characteristic of the nation.

Mr. Speaker, we feel that Barbados is at a critical juncture where it faces two broad challenges. How does it unleash the full potential of the people of this country, and secure the wholehearted commitment across generations, race, class and religion? What are those things that can cause all Barbadians to feel it is the Barbadian project to which all of us can subscribe, and for which all of us want? Not the divisive things that would cause division, but what are the things that bind us. Sir, if we start from what binds us, then we start from a common platform and would respect the fact that there would be distances on other areas. There will be, that is human nature, but at least we know where we can come back to as a common platform that unites.
11.50 a.m.

We want this vision to be, Mr. Speaker, so that anybody – whatever age, colour, class – can pick this up and say that this represents what I feel to be good and worthy of achievement.

Mr. Speaker, we find ourselves also facing the challenge of how to reposition this country, economically. Since independence, this country has effectively had Governments trying to diversify the basis of this economy from a monocrop economy supporting sugar, producing over 200 000 tonnes of sugar to one that saw the integration of light and semi heaving manufacturing; to one that saw the beginnings of tourism, a visitor product; to one that eventually recognises that it could use legislative and financial instruments to build an international financial services industry; to one that can recognise that all of the terms and conditions on which we engage at a hemispheric, regional and global level, in terms of working with the rest of the economies on those levels, stand now to change, over the course of the last decade.

Sir, there has been a systematic reduction of policy flexibility, such that the freedom that an Errol Barrow or a Tom Adams had in crafting policy, as Heads of Government, does not now attach itself to the current leader of this country and future leaders to come. These are the facts.

Sir, we fight, equally, what I have come to call, a benign ignorance, at the level of institutions internationally, which give you a one-size-fits-all prescription and want to tell you that these are the rules you should subscribe to, without understanding the nature of your circumstances, and without understanding that very often, what they are imposing on you in terms of rules, becomes a non tariff barrier that restricts and prohibits growth and development.

We say, no, and this country has fought it, whether it is with the OECD, whether it is with the Financial Action Task Force, whether it is with the terms that the Senior Minister is trying to negotiate, in relation to further international trade agreements to which we subscribe our hemispheric...We say no and we say that risks must drive regulation.

The realities of your development must determine the rules under which you operate. Sir, a country that has a percentage of global trade in goods at 0.000 per cent, has no capacity to distort global trade. A country that has a global trade in services at 0.001, has no capacity to distort global trade in services. But the rules which they are asking us to implement have the capacity to destabilise the lives of thousands of Barbadians.

When we put it in the balance, we say to you that it makes no sense and that countries that had decades, in order to be able to adjust themselves domestically, to participate in international trade, now want countries to do it in less than one decade. It cannot be right. It cannot be fair.

Sir, do you know what is the irony? They say to the Senior Minister and others when they are out there, that they are not prepared to recognise any other category among developing countries, other than the least developed countries. Therefore, Barbados and China are equally regarded as developing. Barbados and Brazil... makes no sense but yet, when we are graduated from the World Bank for being a middle income country, and when we are fighting battles not to be graduated from the IDB for being a middle income country, we are forced to go to the international capital markets.

Sir, as you know, the international capital markets want a rating. They want somebody to assess your economy and assess everything to determine, not only whether you can get money, but what is the cost of that money which you would access. When Barbados had its first rating done – and subsequent ones too – and we got the AA – from Standard and Poors they told us that this is the highest grade that you could possibly get, in spite of all of the fundamentals being good, because there is an inherent vulnerability as a result of your smallness.

Mr. Speaker, the market acknowledges that the smallness and the inherent vulnerability, places a limit on the rating which we can get that will effect the cost of capital to us, but the international organistions to which we are signatory are not prepared to recognise that all of these

ought to be a category of countries called, small vulnerable economies that need different adjustment periods because of their inherent vulnerability.

Sir, the international organisations to which we belong, as the Senior Minister said, are marking us by a higher standard than the very marketplace in which we are participating. These are the things that we confront as a nation. This is why we say that as we outline this vision, we believe that Barbados and Barbadians must show a unity of purpose, a strength of conviction and a clarity of vision to carry us forward.

Mr. Speaker, what are the six goals? We use the language of the National Anthem of Barbados to express them. We feel that we should unleash the spirit of the nation. We use the phrase, "Inspired, exulting free". We feel that there should be a new governance for new times and we use the phrase, "Firm craftsmen of our fate". We feel that we should build social capital, and we reflect that with the phrase, "Strength and unity". We feel that we should strengthen our physical infrastructure and preserve our environment, and we use the phrase, "These fields and hills". We feel that we should enhance Barbados' prosperity and competitiveness, and we use the phrase, "Upward and onward". We feel that we should seek to benefit from Barbados' reputation internationally and brand it globally, and we use the phrase, "Strict guardians of our heritage".

Mr. Speaker, I wish to take them one by one because I fully anticipate that Members will choose a different theme and speak to it. There are six goals: unleashing the spirit of the nation; new governance; building social capital; strengthening the physical infrastructure and preserving our environment, making Barbados globally competitive and prosperous, branding Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, they encompass every aspect of human endeavour, be it within the corridors of Government or outside in civil society. We feel, for example, that the bedrock of this nation, goal number one, must be unleashing the spirit of the people of the nation.

We feel that 40 years after independence, Mr. Speaker, that we need to be able to make sure our people can move from points of dependence to a point of independence to giving back as interdependence. We recognise, Sir, that the movement from independence night to here has meant that we had to do a lot of compensating and we have had also to recognise that the role of Government was to lift up many.

Sir, as we lifted people up, we perhaps should have started to say to people a long time ago, that not only do you have rights but you have responsibilities, that with every right comes a responsibility. Sir, in the same way that you build a house, if you do not maintain that house, it will fall, the plumbing starts to go bad, the boards start to rot and mildew starts to come. All we are saying is that there is nobody to maintain this house called, Barbados, but the Barbadians who live in it now. It is our responsibility and, in the second generation of independence, if there is to be a single message to go forth, let it be that Barbadians on an individual and a collective level, must be responsible for the development and maintenance of this country called Barbados. No one else would be, and there is no one to blame anymore.

12.00 noon.

Mr. Speaker, we also believe that there are aspects of our development that need revisiting that would lead to greater racial cohesion and greater cohesion across classes and across ages. We believe that we must specifically create platforms where people of different generations, different races and different classes can mix because it is in the mixing with one another, even if it is not to be 'tight-tight', that you remove a lot of the outward vestiges of discrimination and prejudices that ultimately become the seeds of violence in other countries.

Mr. Speaker, whether it is on the cricket field, whether it is in Parliament or whether it is in church, black people, white people and Indian people must mix. Sir, whether it is within the schools or in community groups, young people and old people must mix. Wherever it is, rich people and poor people must mix.

Mr. Speaker, it is our duty to create the platforms where people could have respectful discourse, where people could get to know one another and where people could build a platform for tolerance and engagement with one another.

Mr. Speaker, we also believe that there is a mental emancipation project that will go even beyond this second generation of independence. What do I mean, Mr. Speaker? I have said in this Parliament before that the vestiges of slavery have left us with a lot of baggage. Mr. Speaker, part of that baggage has led to low self-esteem in too many of our people and we need to be able to let them free up the space that they are renting in their heads to these demons and understand that they are good and worthy persons, that nobody could tell them that they are too black, too short, too fat, or too tall. Sir, each of us is made in the image of God. Mr. Speaker, we have to have a country that values that whether it is from the perspective of Government or from the perspective of the church, the private sector or whosoever.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if you could cause people to feel more confident in themselves and feel better about themselves that will result in the unleashing of the spirit of the nation. Mr. Speaker, this means that we have to reorient

aspects of our curriculum and aspects of our national programming for television and radio and that we need to be able to have cultural programming and plays and all kinds of training in each parish, not just at the national level. There has to be that systematic buzz of activity – in the same way in the Ministry of Education that we sponsored a personal empowerment project through arts and creative education, which I hope is still going on, and I hope the Honourable Member for St. Philip South would never see it die – where you take youngsters and you reinforce values and a sense of national identity through aspects of the curriculum, through arts and sports and creative education. That is critical.

Mr. Speaker, there must be a new governance for a new time, that is what Goal Two is about. Mr. Speaker, we believe that Barbados must seek to modernise its Constitution. This has been the subject of much debate and discussion. This Government has in fact a draft Constitution – and I believe the Honourable Attorney-General would speak to it when he participates in this debate. The reality is that the draft Constitution however is a republic of Barbados Constitution. It has been the subject of 18 months of work involving some of the original drafters, Sir Roy Marshall, Professor Patchett, the Dean of the Law Faculty of the University of the West Indies, Mr. Hal Gollop, myself and others. Ultimately, it reflects the work of the Constitutional Review Commission as chaired by Sir Henry Forde and peopled by other distinguished Barbadians who consulted not only domestically but outside.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes we say that things take long, but the one significant thing this Government has done was to make consultation part of the effort of the Government. We consulted on everything. I believe it was the Honourable Member for St. Thomas who made the point when we were having these Town Hall meetings, the one we had in Alexandra School, that decisions were taken 15 and 20 years ago that affected the future of this country and which people heard about after the fact. They were not consulted. Mr. Speaker, if you consult, you would get those who support and those who oppose. That is natural and that is to be expected. Therefore, one must not get surprised or upset because people oppose.

We believe therefore that the repatriation of the Barbados Constitution is necessary. What I mean by that is that prior, the British Act of Parliament is effectively what vested our Constitution on us. We feel that this Parliament of ours must in fact be responsible for it.

Mr. Speaker, I go further. This is no secret because I have shared it in here before. I had wish and still wish that the exercise for parliamentary reform and electoral reform should have been part of the Constitution, but sometimes we need to do it in two steps.

Mr. Speaker, I trust and hope that within the next five years serious parliamentary reform would be undertaken because the composition and structure of this Parliament needs to be modernised if it is to be effective in repositioning Barbados. Equally, the need for electoral reform, particularly electoral finance reform, is absolutely critical because of the nature of the times within which we live.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that our commitment to the social partnership, which would also be reflected in the new Constitution, is a good and healthy thing and would allow for that kind of consultative leadership and participation to take place. Cabinet passed the policy framework some time ago – legislation is to be drafted – to strengthen the transparency and the accountability of civil society such that they may come to the table as equal partners in any process of governance.

Mr. Speaker, the fundamental difference is that our old Constitution spoke about the role of Government, just as the Development Plan spoke about the intended actions of Government. Our new draft Constitution speaks to the role of governance as opposed to the role of government, just as this Strategic Plan speaks to the perspective of governance across the country. That is the fundamental departure that can be reflected at this juncture, the second generation of independence, as compared to our first, when we became an independent nation.

We believe as well, Mr. Speaker, that those precepts of transparency and accountability are critical if we are to build trust in this country such as to be able to mobilise savings and to expand the opportunities for productive investment in the area of our economy. Equally, we believe that it is critical that the one major problem facing Caribbean Governments today across the board must be addressed, that is, that we must treat to the deficit of implementation that we have across the board in the region, by a fundamental restructuring of our public services all of which were designed for a different time and a different purpose.

Mr. Speaker, all of the rules of our public service relate to a different time and all of the processes in our public service were for a different purpose. We feel that mammoth exercise would take time. This Government intends to have the new draft Public Service Bill before this Parliament by the end of the year. We have also been dealing with other aspects of reform, but it would be a lie for anyone to suggest to anybody in the Caribbean that you could reform a public service that is over 100 years old under a decade because as you reform you must continue to do your day-to-day work to keep the institutions of Government working and rolling. Mr. Speaker, we commit to the continued effort and to the need for us to achieve in that.

12.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, our Third Goal is that of building social capital. The document, in my view, speaks primarily of education, but needs also to speak to the critical importance of the health of a nation in greater details. It also needs to speak to the role of social transformation in greater detail, but that is why it is in draft. Mr. Speaker, in education and training, in this document, we commit ourselves to be able to achieve one graduate to every household in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, you heard me spoke earlier to the fact that unless we remove large numbers of unskilled persons from our landscape, that the Barbadian economy would not make the quantum leap, which it must make, in order to sustain itself into the future. I believe if we understand that our future lies in the re-engineering of processes and in creating centres of excellence...

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken to persons at the University of the West Indies, as well as to persons at the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation, about the fact that there must be five centres of excellence, to drive research activity and prototype manufacturing and services in Barbados. These will be: (1) biosciences and pharmaceuticals; (2) information and communication technologies and microprocessors; (3) alternative energy research and development; (4) climate change related initiatives; and (5) cultural industries, from the tangible to the intangible, in terms of research. Those five are areas of excellence, in which Barbados could establish a global prominence, by working in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Private Sector and Government.

Mr. Speaker, as a profit-making venture, education is really the biggest in the world. Well, you would know that. When we talk about repositioning Barbados, even in terms of Barbados' foreign policy... Sir, you heard me spoke earlier about the benign ignorance, which we face internationally. Sir, Barbados, at some point, must remove the caps that currently exist for the number of persons who we train in law, in medicine, or across the board and that the premise from which we train, should no longer be to meet domestic demand only. Sir, given the fact of the single market and single economy, without more, we must have the capacity and the people to provide skills, as we have done throughout our history with teachers, nurses, policemen and priests throughout the region.

Mr. Speaker, equally, we should seek to position as many lawyers and technical persons, such as engineers, doctors, scientists and environmental people, in all of the international and regional institutions of the world. If our people are working in these institutions, as part of the international civil service, they are less likely to take positions that are ignorant of our realities.

Mr. Speaker, we should, therefore, set this as a strategic objective as a nation, that over the next 10 or 15 years, Barbados and generally the Caribbean, should seek to train and to export as many of its people, to populate the international public service of these organisations, that stand to condemn us or to ignore our realities.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That is an export of services. I go further. I believe that our foreign policy can no longer be dominated by a relationship with the North Atlantic countries of the world and that over independence, we have tried, as the Right Excellent Errol Barrow said in his famous United Nations speech, to be satellites of none and friends of all.

Mr. Speaker, we have established diplomatic relations across the board but I believe that Barbados, in the next generation of independence, should seek to develop deeper commercial and strategic relationships with Latin America, particularly Brazil, Chile, Africa, Nigeria and Ghana. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East has just returned from Botswana, which also celebrated its 40th anniversary this year.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Barbados, in the next generation of independence, should seek to develop deeper functional day-to-day relationships and presence in the rest of South East Asia, including China but equally with the Middle East. The Middle East is not only about countries such as Iran and Iraq. There is also the United Arab Emirates, along with countries such as Jordan, Qatar and Bahrain, which have the ability and with whom we should be seeking to develop deeper commercial relationships because there is surplus capital being generated in those countries.

Mr. Speaker, Barbados is not a tax haven, as you would know, but it is a low-tax jurisdiction, with a series of double taxation agreements. Therefore, it becomes a domicile for onward investments and therefore we need to have a presence in these parts of the world. Sir, I feel that one of the best ways in which we could develop a deeper strategic relationship with these new regions, I have said this to the University of the West Indies – is for them to establish another institution, perhaps in St. John, to be able to bring some level of development to the people of St. John, in a meaningful way, for example, this could be done at Codrington College, where the Anglican Church has hundreds of acres up there, to attract students, through exchange programmes.

Sir, this would not be for Barbadians alone to get scholarships but for us to accommodate 50 persons from Latin America, the Middle East, Asia or Africa, or 100 from North America. We could then let them come for the term or

year, as they are doing all across the world. Therefore, these very people, depending on the universities with whom we have the exchange programme, are going to be the people 10 or 15 years hence, who while in their respective companies, would be making decisions for these countries, governments and across the board, who would have spent some of the best times of their lives in a country called Barbados, with which they would have been familiar.

Mr. Speaker, we need to use all of our assets in order to build the strategic platform upon which Barbados is to be repositioned, and this document speaks to it. Sir, Platform Four is the strengthening of our physical infrastructure and preserving the environment. Sir, I have no doubt that the Honourable Members for St. George North, St. James South and others, would speak to why it is critical for us to upgrade our road network and to protect our environment.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke earlier about the vagaries of climate change and how it would not esoterically or perhaps affect Barbados, but how it is already affecting Barbados and will continue to do so. I also spoke to the basis as to how we could drive our economic development in the future and hence our social stability.

Mr. Speaker, there is also the issue of water augmentation and the diversification of our energy resources. Why should not every building in Barbados be capturing energy through solar panels that go back into a national grid, such as to reduce the excessive reliance on the importation of fuel oil and diesel, to generate electricity?

Sir, I am happy to say that Government is in discussion with the Barbados Light & Power Co. Ltd., because they have recognised and have accepted that there should be an optimal mix of alternative sources of energy. For example, at the Wind Farm Project, they hope to be able to generate 10 megawatts of electricity from it; from the restructured sugar industry, they hope to generate 30 megawatts; and the natural gas pipeline, about which the Honourable Member for St. James South spoke, when it is completed in two or three year's time, should bring in enough natural gas to be able to generate electricity.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that in the same way this country has become one of the four top countries in the world for the use of solar water heaters per capita, with the largest collected area of any country in the area per capita to solar water heaters, that we could also do more, in terms of the use of solar panels for the generation of electricity in this country.

Mr. Speaker, while we do all of these things, let us make sure that we do not despoil our environment, such that generations coming after do not have the same opportunities to enjoy Barbados. It means that the Physical Development Plan, which has to be laid, will be done and must be respected. It means that there will be some harsh decisions for some people, in terms of the areas of development but equally, that we would hopefully enhance the attractiveness of the nation, as well as ultimately preserve that which is critical for the nation State to be successful.

12.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Goal Five is the question of enhancing Barbados' prosperity and competitiveness. This Government, over the course of the last 18 months, has recognised that we have to do more in order to be able to boost our exports. We have seen last year a 25 per cent increase in Barbados' export performance over the year before. We know what happened as a result of the implementation of the commitments to the removal of non-tariff barriers, import licences, *et cetera* as well as the reduction of tariffs. We know the impact it has had on manufacturers and agriculture and we recognised that we have to continue to reposition both of those sectors.

Mr. Speaker, I have spoken at length in here already about some of the initiatives in relation to the division of labour between the BIDC being responsible for industrial development, the new International Business Promotion Corporation dealing with all foreign investments into Barbados other than that for tourism as well as the branding of Barbados and the export of services that are ready and indigenous services beyond tourism, that are ready for export and the support necessary for the international financial services sector.

I have spoken to the fact that we are working towards the creation of Export Barbados Inc. and, indeed, we have had the consultation in here as recently as last week helping us with that. I trust and hope that by January, we would have a framework that is operational for it.

Mr. Speaker, the Government has committed itself after the removal of the Cess to being able to support the financing for the export diversification from Central Government as of next year. We are serious that we cannot rest on our laurels but that Barbados needs a wider economic base from which to drive its development.

Mr. Speaker, it may well be, that in the same way that this country, 40 or 45 years ago, reclaimed land to build the Deep Water Harbour and to get rid of Pelican Island that we may have to contemplate a Barbados where there is land reclamation for both industrial and tourism development, that we add on a couple hundred or a couple thousand acres. We do not know because it might be in our future and so long as there is no deleterious impact in relation to tidal movements, it is not something that a country can dismiss, given the technology that is available to countries in the world today and given where it is done elsewhere.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Singapore and Dubai have done it and we in Barbados did it 45 years ago but we felt it could only be done for the Deep Water Harbour and no other reason. There is no reason why it cannot be done for new land for industrial development as well as for tourism development, as well as for normal Barbadians in terms of their living. Sir, land is, therefore, not a finite resource for us in the same way that it was 50 or 60 years before.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: That is right, where the new Coast Guard is going at the Flour Mill site, all of there....

Mr. Speaker, we believe as well that Barbados must seek to fine-tune its international financial services sector and to exploit the niches that are available and that we should become a globally recognised domicile for the management of assets and wealth across the next few years. Sir, on another occasion, I will speak in more detail since that falls within my portfolio and will find ample opportunity so to do in here. Suffice it to say, the establishment of the New Financial Services Commission, which the Prime Minister announced in his Budget two years ago is working, and we are on target with the establishment for mid next year. It will make a significant difference because the kind of regulatory regime you have would also help determine the type of business you can attract in relation to going into new areas such as private equity where there are some opportunities because of what is happening globally.

Mr. Speaker, the final goal is branding Barbados globally. I have spoken at length about those things for which Barbados is known internationally, political stability, rule of law, *et cetera* and it used to be known for good cricket. There are things that people associate with Barbados. The word rum derives its origins from this country. What are those few things that Barbados can associate with internationally, with creditability because a brand is only as good as it is credible? We feel that our commitment to democracy, our commitment to the rule of law, our commitment to education, our rum industry, our passion for cricket and, indeed, Mr. Speaker, our capacity over our history to develop a Barbadian vernacular in furniture are some of the things that merit global branding. We feel that our participation in the international community should be buttressed by a clear recognition by others that these assets are valued by us.

The plan speaks to the phrase used by the current Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, when he said that Barbados is accustomed to punching above its weight. It is true that this little land, this little country has been able to have the kind of influence that it has had on global civilisation, global history, global governance really boggles the mind. There must be something that is intangible about the spirit of the people that has caused us to be able to do this. It is ours to preserve and build upon.

Mr. Speaker, I can only exhort that as we participate in this debate, let us ensure that in the same way my Ministry would take the comments from the Town Hall meetings, the sectoral meetings with the university and other groups – I will meet with the boys on 'the block', 150 of them, I think, on the 20th October – that we want the perspective of this House and the Upper House because it is our intention to bring back the final National Strategic Plan – not the draft - with amendments because we already have a number of comments which we have accepted as being legitimate to cause amendments in here.

Let us use this opportunity in this House to participate in this debate such that all quarters of society, including the highest court of the land, would have had the formal opportunity to participate in a document that should guide not this Government alone but all future Governments between now and 2025.

Mr. Speaker, it is intended that the Ministry of Economic Affairs would coordinate five-year sectoral plans from the various sectors in Government but with consultation with their private sector and labour equivalent. It is intended that the National Economic Council should have oversight of the implementation of these sectoral plans to reach this vision and these strategic objectives. It is intended, it is not in this Draft Plan but it would be in the amendment, that there should be reports to Parliament in relation to the progress towards the attainment of the goals because it is my deliberate judgement that in the absence of such reports, then it is likely to become an archival document that reflects only what was the perspective of a few people at the juncture of the eve of the 40th anniversary of Independence.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious document that is capable of driving the transformation of this country and this economy. Sir, I feel privileged to be given the opportunity to have participated in some way with this document from its inception to the point of leading the debate in this House. If there was nothing else for me to do, it would be at least to have a sense of satisfaction that we participated in an exercise that condensed across what were those things that Barbadians of all backgrounds felt strongly about such that it could constitute a common platform to help us define a vision.

12.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the different approach is there from 1966, in terms of the level of consultation and

participation. I am not saying this and reflecting negatively on 1966, it is just that times have evolved and processes and expectations have also evolved.

I also feel that the fact that we speak of governance and not only the role of Government, is a recognition that the Government is not the be all and the end all, in this country. There will be other people who participate in the building of this country, but the Government is the bedrock, perhaps, that speaks to the public's interest definitively, but others who contribute make equally valid contributions to the enhancement of our quality of life, and the development of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you, that I do not think this debate would finish today, but over the next two weeks or so, Honourable Members will treat it with a level of seriousness, and like me, come to regard it as one of those opportunities from which future Barbadians could take a snapshot of understanding, what was the perspective and philosophy that guided those of us who occupied Parliament today.

Sir, the Prime Minister, in his forward to this draft plan, delivered himself of these words:

> "Can we invoke the courage and wisdom that inspired and guided our forefathers in order to undertake the most unprecedented and historic transformation in our economic, social and physical landscape since Independence in 1966?"

Mr. Speaker, I can find no better words to adopt than those which he used in the introduction to this document. Sir, as he ended with six words, I so shall end: "We can, we must, we will."

I am obliged to you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 1.45 p.m.

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

The question that the House be suspended until 1.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.
12.32 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I want to join this debate today to look at the draft of the National Strategic Plan for 2005 to 2025. Even though I will participate in this debate, I really believe that the time spent in this Honourable Chamber should be used to really deliberate on serious matters and to deliberate on policy documents. That is the charge of this Honourable Chamber and I have no intentions, Sir, of directing in anyway, form or fashion, or guiding this Administration with respect to any strategies that they may want to implement in the future.

Sir, this document represents a lot of vague notions, vague objectives that cannot be defined in any concrete or systematic way, targets and platitudes that are really pointless in 2006, when I am being told about projections in 2025 and we cannot begin to solve any of the problems of 2005, 2006 and 2007. It is a waste of time and it is not worth the paper it is written on, Sir.

In fact, those who are responsible for bringing a document like this to Parliament, should be sent back to school and not Third Form but primary school. However, I am going to do my duty on behalf of the people of Barbados. I will reiterate my position. It is a useless document. If we have too many problems of 2006 that cannot be solved by this Administration, I do not want to hear anything about 2025.

Sir, what this document should be dealing with, is telling Barbadians how this Administration is going to solve the current account deficit in Barbados. It should be telling Barbadians how it is going to solve by extension, the national debt problem that exists. I will speak to that, because I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East expressing some fundamental untruths. I will have to bring the evidence to this Honourable Chamber to deal with them.

Sir, it has said nothing about how it will deal with the inflationary pressures that exist in Barbados, which were created by this Administration. I caution, Sir, that I will speak, at the appropriate times, the differential between the core inflation and non-core inflation to support my points, because I know what I am saying. I will also ask this Administration not to tell me about 2025 but tell me how it will solve the twin deficit problems that exist in Barbados today.

Sir, only borrowings and selling off the ICB and the Barbados National Bank for US$90 million, as well as the sale of State assets are monies that would go into the financial account, Sir, and by extension, the net international reserve components, and not money that is earned in Barbados by the foreign earning sector of this country. That is what this document should be telling Barbadians and not a lot of platitude and vagueness. Mr. Speaker, that is where my interest lies in this particular debate and, as a result, I will deal with those areas, which I believe should be dealt with, in this document.

Mr. Speaker, let me deal with this problem that was raised by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. I am on record, Sir, making comments that can be supported by the Estimates of Expenditure of 2006/2007, as well as the Central Bank document. I went as far back to quote from the Auditor-General's Report that shows as of March 31, 2006, this Administration had a guarantee debt of over $586 million. Since that time, March 31, 2006, this Administration guaranteed $526 million.
1.50 p.m.

Sir, I would like to deal with facts, the Barbados Water Authority $250 million, the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation $38 million, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital $25 million, the Transport Board $22 million, the Sanitation Service Authority $5 million, and the list goes on. Sir, that means that since March 31, 2006, as evident by the Auditor-General's Report, this Government has guaranteed over $1 billion in debt.

Mr. Speaker, I will now refer to the Economic and Financial Statistics document of the Central Bank of May 2006 where central Government debt is listed at $5.2 billion. I did not produce the document. Sir, if you add the $5.2 billion to the $1 billion, that gives you a public sector debt of over $6 billion.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the Gross Domestic Product as listed in the Estimates for 2006-2007, one would see that it is listed at over $6 billion, 66 million to be exact. If one then calculates a public sector debt to Gross Domestic Product as a ratio, it accounts to well over 99 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, these are the facts. If the Government wants to challenge it, let them get up and challenge it. Sir, I stand by my point that any Government that has a public sector debt of over 99 per cent is a bankrupt entity. I also stand by a personification of that position, that is, that any man that is paid $100 per week and that man has to pay a debt of $99 out of that $100, that is a bankrupt individual.

Mr. Speaker, I am waiting for the Honourable Member for St. George North to tell Barbadians whether or not the money for "Operation Free Flow" is a BOLT operation or if it is a debt that is going to be guaranteed by Government. Sir, he is on record stating that it was supposed to be a BOLT operation, yet he is on record reporting to the newspaper that the first $20 million was drawn down by Government. Sir, I want an explanation. Mr. Speaker, if I had to include that then the debt situation is even worse. Therefore, I do not mind what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is saying because these are categorically the facts.

Mr. Speaker, again utilising the Estimates document 2006-2007, this Administration has a total debt service of $682 million on an annual basis. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East wants me to footnote them for her I would do it. Sir, in the Estimates 2006-2007, the projected revenue is a little over $2 billion, and when you do a ratio of the debt service to the revenue being generated on an annual basis, it amounts to over 31 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that is my figure and I will not deviate from that.

Mr. Speaker, what that tells me is what this book or whatever it is should be doing because any time that $682 million is being spent on debt, that is money that could be spent on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital to make sure that the operating theatres are working, that we have proper ultrasounds, x-rays and ECG machines to take care of the poor people in Barbados and that we have proper ambulances in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, that money should also have been spent to make sure that the old people at the Geriatric Hospital do not get wet in their beds, that the windows at the Geriatric Hospital do not fall off and that the old people are not being fed macaroni and English potato every day. Mr. Speaker, what should also be done with this money is to make sure that they do not have leaking roofs down there so that when the rain falls they would not have puddles of water on the floor, that the old people's clothes would not get wet and that they would not have to huddle all the old people together.

Sir, that money should be used to take care of fundamental services in Barbados. I do not want to hear about the rubbish that is here in this document, I want to hear about those things. That is money that could ensure that old people do not have to pay for painkillers in Barbados. It should be money that is used to make sure that old people do not have to pay for vitamins and minerals. It should be money that should be used to make sure that old people do not have to pay for cough medicine in Barbados out of a subsistence or a below subsistence pension. That is what this book should be telling me. This book is a waste of time.

Mr. Speaker, I will stay on this for a while because it is important. Mr. Speaker, I have calculated a problem that has to be solved that this document here does not address at all. When one looks at the latest Balance of Payments document of the Central Bank, one would notice that it lists that the export of goods and services in Barbados bring in $1.89 billion or $2 billion for those who are mathematically 'duncy'.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: You are saying it.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Yes, but I am trying to explain it for those who are mathematically 'duncy'.

Mr. SPEAKER: Oh, I see.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, when one looks at the external debt service, again, as indicated by the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue for 2006-2007, one would see that it is listed at $244 million. This Administration, Mr. Speaker, presided over an increase in the import bill in Barbados from $1.8 billion to $3.2 billion in ten years. Mr. Speaker, imports cost have to be bought with foreign exchange. When you add the import bill requirements in terms of foreign exchange...
2.00 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member has misled this Honourable House by indicating that the most recent statistics of the Central Bank of Barbados, which he has, which were May 2006, had the debt at $5.2 billion. If I am incorrect, I will take my seat.

Mr. Speaker, the statistics of the Central Bank of Barbados, released for August 2006, which are the most recent to be found in the Library of Parliament, have the Central Government national debt, at page 73, at $4.7 billion.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to make this a document of this Honourable House. To be precise, Table G7, page 73, shows $4.77 billion and not $5.2 billion, as has been the basis for the most erroneous calculations by the Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member does not understand that if you interpret $300 000 in terms of $6 billion, it tends to zero. The Honourable Member does not understand limits. If the Honourable Member had understood limits, she would have understood the concept of tending to zeros. If the Honourable Member takes $4.7 billion and adds the same guarantee debt to it, it would make no difference to the numbers, none whatsoever. That has been an ignorant statement made by the Honourable Member, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to continue. I will not be derailed by such useless interjections. My point again is that $3.2 billion is our import bill. That is what we have to look for in foreign reserves. The external debt service is $244 million. Let the Honourable Member add those figures, which amount to $3.4 billion, but our exports of goods and services only bring in approximately $2 billion.

Mr. Speaker, it means that there is a deficit in terms of foreign exchange requirements of this country, to the tune of more than $l billion. Sir, from where is the Prime Minister going to get it? Do you know from where he is going to get it? The Prime Minister is going to get it from selling the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and the Barbados National Bank. The Honourable Member is going to tell the 'white men' that they could come to Barbados to buy off the land. He is selling off the land in this new economy.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you would have to relate what you are saying to the document.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has said that this country does not have an economic crisis problem, neither does it have a debt crisis. The Honourable Member said we were not a bankrupt country. It is, therefore, my responsibility to demonstrate what is the public sector debt to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) ratio. It is by extension my responsibility to determine what are the exports of goods and services, and to relate that to what are our total requirements in foreign exchange. I have that right, and I will not be derailed.

Mr. Speaker, I will go back to the point. We need approximately $3.4 billion, based on the data. We are only generating about $2 billion. Therefore, if my memory serves me correctly, when I did the calculations for our exports of goods, it was only about 9.1 per cent. Therefore, even though we are a service economy, based on the data, it simply means that we are not generating the type of foreign reserves from the services sectors. Sir, that is what this document here should be showing us. It should be telling us how we are going to do it.

Mr. Speaker, I want to know if there are any strategies or plans in this document, to deal with the growth and development of the export services sectors of Barbados. I am hearing rhetoric about invigorating the International Business Sector. Sir, for 10 years, when the import bill went from $1.8 billion to $3.2 billion, I had heard nothing about it. Suddenly, I am now hearing about the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation and about Export Barbados Inc., when we have a deficit on the import side of more than $1 billion.

Mr. Speaker, to support what I am saying, let me go to the External Current Account deficit position in Barbados and to demonstrate why there is a trade deficit problem in Barbados, one with which this document – or whatever it is called, should be dealing.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, whatever documents I am using here, I will make documents of this House.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: You do not worry about that, I am taking my time. I have all day and I do not have to go home.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, in 1997, the Current Account balance of Barbados went negative. It became a negative to the tune of $98.8 million. By 2001, it had gotten so bad, that this Administration had to borrow Euros 150 million, to prop up the foreign reserves.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Look at Dr. Delisle Worrell's documents: "The Barbados Economic Crises in the 1990s", and you would understand what I am saying.

Mr. Speaker, by 1998, it had jumped to $124.9 million; by 1999, it jumped to $294 million; and by 2000, it jumped to $296 million. Sir, by 2005, it jumped to $761 million; and for 2006, it is projected to be $931 million, which does not even include the majority of Cricket World Cup, 2007 expenditure.

Mr. Speaker, who is responsible for that? How is this document going to deal with that? What is the strategy? What is the plan? Sir, it is all foolishness. Sir, here we are, a country with a number of problems, which we cannot solve, yet we are projecting a number of things for 2025.

Sir, I understand why the new economy for the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter is to sell off Barbadians' land because if the Honourable Member cannot utilise macroeconomic policies in the way they need to be utilised, then the Honourable Member should step out of office. Sir, the sale of land is not an economic policy. In fact, it is the first time in history, that I have heard anyone defining the sale of land as a strategy, apart from prostitution, buggery and casino gambling. Are these things new economic policies?

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I am not finished there, I am now getting ready to talk. In 2002, when I reviewed data from the World Bank, Standard and Poor's, the International Monetary Fund, even the Central Bank of Barbados, our non-energy input, in terms of the cost of living in Barbados, was less than 1 per cent.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, for those who do not understand, it is called non-power inflation. Sir, based on the latest International Monetary Fund evaluation of this country, by August this year, it had jumped to close to 5 per cent, because of cess tax placed on Barbados. Sir, what the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter did not understand, and now that he has the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West with him, whom I hope would explain it to him, is that we are a small open economy and that is the reason, even with the 3 per cent cess tax, which was then increased to 6 per cent, we still had a significant increase in credit and imports.

Asides.

2.10 p.m.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: We still had a significant increase in credit and imports. It will not be stopped, Sir, because you are trying to change a culture overnight and it cannot happen. What ended up happening was that inflation overall jumped in Barbados close to 7 per cent but an economist of that degree of expertise should have understood that this notion of passing on to the consumer is the way we do business in Barbados, that you increase cost to me and that I increase cost to you.

Mr. Speaker, it also did something else, it increased Government's revenue as well. Sir, I know that this was an under-the-table mechanism to increase revenue just like the bond rates and now Barbadians are suffering under the cost of living because of this Administration. It is because of this Administration not understanding how the distributive sector works in Barbados. When one looks at the VAT receipts over the same period of time, the VAT receipts also went up significantly. Sir, any rabbit could have understood that.

Mr. Speaker, what is in this National Strategic Plan to get Barbados out of the economic strife that I have just expressed. I said that it had a lot of vague talk, a lot of objectives. Mr. Speaker, I am hearing talk like this: "We are going to continue to do, we are going to do better." Sir, they are going to continue to do things that they never did. They are going to do better things that they do badly. Sir, it is a useless document and we are suffering with a 7 per cent inflation, an external current account deficit of balance of payment problem of 12.5 per cent, a total public sector debt of over 99 per cent of GDP and they are challenging me today, Sir, let them come.

Mr. Speaker, I am also saying that when I look at the external debt to GDP ratio in this country and evaluated how this ratio is utilised by any international agency or any economist that is worth his salt, the interpretation must be done by evaluating your import bill and your external debt service together as a combination in order for the data to

make sense. When that is done, we are not getting closer to the dealing with the deficit of foreign reserves that we need. The remittances and other foreign direct investments in Barbados are under $500 million and we cannot get close to solving the problem, that is what this document should be telling me about and how to do it. If we cannot solve the problems now, how are we going to solve them in 2025.

Mr. Speaker, how do we expect to have the revenue, the money to spend on education that is necessary and the money to spend on welfare service so that the people who are now getting welfare in Barbados can get an increase in their welfare grant and in their disabilities grant and so that old people can get an increase in their pension? How do we expect that to happen when we have so much money going out in debt service?

Mr. Speaker, when I warned this Administration in the past about their runaway deficit, I heard about counter-cyclical, close cyclical and all sort of fancy talk that ended up leaving us with $525 million that we have to finance on the Accountant-General **basis**. I am utilising that because it is the absolute number and I am not interested in any other conventions.

Mr. Speaker, who is responsible for this? I always heard the erroneous talk that the Democratic Labour Party in 1994 left Barbados with no reserves but that is absolutely not true. Again, when you look at the economic and financial statistics, we had foreign assets to the tune of $367 million and we then had a second-tiered programme in place. Sir, they should come and challenge me today.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask another question again which I have not got an answer to but at least the public would understand what I am saying. Sir, in 2001, there were some questions as to whether we were in recession. Some say that you cannot use the international definition of three months, some say it was four months of no growth and there was all sort of talk. The point is that we were in recession. Mr. Speaker, when you are in recession, I want to know from the Governor of the Central Bank as well as the Minister of Finance if that is a time when you establish a second-tiered programme to allow foreign exchange to leave the country? Sir, I want to know that and I want to warn Barbadians now that we have this whole notion, that we have foreign reserves in second-tiered programmes someplace but that it is not foreign reserves that you can count on to come back into Barbados because all the money will not be in a liquid state. It will be in investment that you cannot convert, Mr. Speaker, and it does not make sense.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to be hoodwinked and I want all those who believe that the total liberation of the exchange controls and so on is a way to solve problems that they should be careful. I also want to warn about the Jamaican experience of doing it alone after the 1970s IMF scenario and when they decided that they were not going to borrow on the international market but instead that they would borrow internally and about what happened. This is the crux of the matter.

Mr. Speaker, the National Strategic Plan has to be able to tell Barbadians how you would deal with those problems because I am now hearing that you should not worry about the internal debt when experiences that many other territories had tell me that you have to be very careful with it because you can go into an internal debt trap just as quickly as an external debt trap.

Mr. Speaker, it is surprising that this Administration could be spending $525 million more than it is collecting but you cannot get one drug or another. You go to Accident and Emergency and you have to wait 24 hours to see a doctor and the hospital needs staff, doctors, nurses and equipment. Where is the $525 million in excess revenue going?

Mr. Speaker, I want to make it quite clear that it is not the Democratic Labour Party that is responsible for this because the facts are that by 1996/1997 Financial Year, this Administration had a surplus on the fiscal balance from $40 million so that by 1996 it was $138 million in deficit and since that time, 1996/1997 every year it has been increased up to $525 million projected for this fiscal year. Who is responsible for that, Mr. Speaker? Sir, who is responsible for the increase in the debt? Who is responsible for the increase in the external current account deficit and the balance of payments problems which we now have? Sir, there are those who will hide and say that we have reserves and that we should not worry but the fact of the matter is that you have an external current account deficit and you have a fiscal deficit. Mr. Speaker, we have had twin deficits in Barbados three times in recent times but I will deal with these things on another occasion.

Mr. Speaker, this is why the Democratic Labour Party holds the view that this document is not worth the paper which it is written because it deals essentially with none of the fundamental problems that now challenge Barbados and it does not indicate, in any form or fashion, any strategies to deal with them. It represents a whole set of vague objectives, vague notions that are close to infinite.

2.20 p.m.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: I think what they should do with it, is simply put it on a shelf and leave it there. That is what should be done with that.

Sir, I want to know what this document is saying to Barbadians today, who have had the site value of their land increased by 312% in the last five years. What is this document saying to them? What is this document going to say to the people who suffer with the increase in their land tax from $270 a year to $780 a year? What is this document going to say, when I can produce evidence that in 1999/2000, in Charnocks, Christ Church, the site value of land was $30 900, for a plot of land, that an elderly lady had. Sir, by 2006, it was increased to $127 400.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Do the mathematics. Sir, who is responsible for that? What is this document going to tell the old people? These are things in which the Democratic Labour Party are interested. These are the things we want to understand, not about a strategic plan to help Barbados in 2025. In fact, the direction we are going is essentially the same one that has put Bermuda in trouble. You open up your country to foreign investors, bringing in all the big money, and if Government goes along with that and pushes up the site value and the land tax, you would get to a stage like that of Bermuda, where the average cost of a house is over $3 million. Sir, in addition, locals cannot buy the land or houses.

Mr. Speaker, it got so bad, that one real estate agent, who had a house worth $37 million, had to carry the Government of Bermuda to court, because the Bermudian Government had said to the people that you cannot sell land to foreigners anymore. The problem was that the land and houses cost too much for the locals to buy, so the only persons who could have bought them were foreigners. Sir, we are going down that same road, and fast.

Sir, I want to hear about a strategic plan that is going to deal with that. I want to hear about the strategic plan to deal with violence in schools. I want to hear about the strategic plan, when the Constitution Review Commission spoke to young men and women talking about not our laws, your laws. Tell me what the Strategic Plan has in place to deal with that. Tell me what the Strategic Plan has to do with over 3 000-plus school children, who leave secondary school every year. Sir, add that number to the 2 800 who cannot get into the Barbados Community College; the 3 000, who cannot get into the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic or into the university. Tell me what this document is saying to us as to how it will solve the problem.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, could this be the National Strategic Plan? For whom? For a bunch of backward people? Barbadians pride themselves with pride, intellect and capacity, and we will not allow this to be discussed in here, without giving it the full treatment that it deserves. It should not even be used as paper when you go into the toilet. It is that bad.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please do not take it down there, please.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I want to find out, how is this document going to deal with the fact that 60 per cent of the National Insurance investments are in Government paper. Sir, by any international standard, that is a problem, when many of the investments are in projects that you are not going to see one iota in return, for about 50 or 100 years. Sir, how is this going to curtail the use by this Administration of the National Insurance funds, the safety net to protect the pensions of poor Barbadians in the future?

Mr. Speaker, do you know that in 1994, the National Insurance had, in terms of long-term Government debt $404 million in debentures? Sir, there were $404 million in debentures when the Democratic Labour Party left office. Do you know what it is today? Mr. Speaker, it is $1.786 billion. Who is responsible for that? Is it the Democratic Labour Party?

Sir, 60 per cent of the National Insurance funds are invested by this Administration in projects. Sir, I do not know what the definition of a secure investment, with an effective return happens to be for this Administration, because we have seen recent evidence of it. Sir, the time will come when we debate those things.

I still want to know what is this National Strategic Plan, where does it speak to defending and protecting the National Insurance system against that type of abuse. That is what it should be talking about.

Mr. Speaker, I have footnotes for every reference that I have in this document, and I sound a warning.

Instead of this document telling Barbadians how to get the foreign exchange earning sectors working, so as to solve our problem with foreign exchange, not a word was said. Mr. Speaker, do you know what is interesting? I do not think that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was in the Barbados Labour Party at that time, but to see the response from the Honourable Minister of Finance of Barbados, to an economic difficulty, his response was: "well, let us have some tax reforms that are going to be expansionary." The great economist decided that he was going to lower every single tax he could think about, to increase liquidity in the hands of people. Sir, when the people imported goods and services, he then said that we are

importing too much, let us try to curb imports. Mr. Speaker, who is responsible for that?

I know what I am saying because the deposit rate was decreased in 2000, 2001, in 2003, and in 2004 it was decreased on two occasions.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what the Honourable Member decided to do? It was another erroneous policy. Sir, instead of allowing the tax reforms to be so structured to help the productive sectors, the Honourable Member structured the tax reforms to help people to consume.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, you should structure your reforms in such a way as to allow for the concessionary elements to go towards the export services sectors, that is not what happened. I am not taking the fact that, in 2005, there was the establishment of the Export Barbados Inc. and the Barbados International Business Promotion Corporation, and those have not yet been able to accomplish anything in Barbados, and they will not be able to accomplish anything, for many years.
2.30 p.m.

Sir, this Administration should be looking for a strategy to deal with the problems of runaway wastage and inefficiencies in public sector entities, such as $11 000 for an ackee tree, $40 000 to build a step, $100 000 loans and nobody could be found, hundreds of thousands of dollars given to people to build homes and you cannot find a foundation.

Sir, you know what is interesting, instead of the Honourable Member using this plan to deal with an overall tax policy that is not punitive in one sense and expansionary in the other, the Honourable Member reduced the taxes on land and houses, if the property is valued at $125 000 or less. At the same time, the Honourable Member increased the ceiling where no Income Taxes are paid. In other words, what was done is that he shifted the taxation burden to the middle class, which is already stretched with mortgages, motor cars and sending their children to school – erroneous policy.

I do not know if the Honourable Member is saying that only people who earn $250 in Barbados spend money. I want to ask one other question because it is pertinent to whether this plan has any relevance to Barbados at all.

In 2005/2006 in the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue, our projected GDP was five billion, eight hundred million dollars. This Administration, Sir, in the 2006/2007 Estimates has projected a GDP of $6.8 billion.

Sir, this Administration wants this Honourable Chamber and the Democratic Labour Party to believe that we can have a one billion dollar increase. It cannot happen, Sir, and that is why the IMF in their wisdom, in the Article IV Consultation did the calculations with a six billion dollar economy.

If one accepted the increase to $6.8 billion that would represent a 13 per cent increase in GDP. It cannot happen. Sir, it is being done because that artificial inflating of the GDP is an attempt to artificially increase the Central Bank overdraft limit. That is what it is about. You are not fooling Barbadians anymore.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West taught me these things. Sir, it is an artificial attempt to increase the Central Bank overdraft. They are not getting away with it, and that I use a GDP of six billion, six hundred and sixty-six million dollars. That is their strategy to deal with problems; create misconceptions, untruths.

How is this going to stop the haemorrhage of our nurses from Barbados? How is this stopping the police officers from leaving Barbados and going other places, Mr. Speaker? What is the strategy?

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, it is a beautiful strategy. It is called, 'Export Barbados'. Educate your children and tell them to go overseas and find a job. A new slaves trade from Barbados, special delivery by the Minister of Finance. Send your children to school with the taxpayers' money, fill up their expectations, and when you build up their expectations, then you tell them to go to Guyana or Jamaica and find a job.

I also want to say something to the Guyanese in Barbados. Do not for one minute believe that the Barbados Labour Party is looking out for your interest. What this Administration has done, was to find a clever way to prop up the contributions of the National Insurance. What they are in fact doing is utilising the Guyanese to pay National Insurance, even though they cannot benefit from National Insurance. Those are the facts. Mr. Speaker, I have been able to track the contribution increase, in relation to immigration data. I can produce the evidence.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: They do not know who they are messing with in there.

Sir, the Guyanese feel that the doors in Barbados have been opened up, because the Honourable Member for St. Peter is looking out for them. He is in fact using them, exploiting them to prop up the National Insurance in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I have two more points to make before I sit. If the taxation has been so adjusted that it now shifts the burden to the middle class in Barbados, why this document is not telling me about removing Value Added Tax (VAT), on building materials for certain income groups in Barbados? Why should businesses that are constructing homes have the right to reclaim a Value Added Tax but a poor man, who is struggling under the pressure of the VAT and other taxes within the middle-class bracket cannot do it?

Is it true that the Value Added Tax, because of the increases in cost related to services associated with construction, services such as VAT on architectural services, VAT on legal services, VAT on the construction services, and VAT on the transport services, you therefore, if you have a situation where the middle class in Barbados is being compressed by this taxation regime, then we need to ask this Administration why there are not strategies in this documentation to take the pressure off the middle class in Barbados.

Sir, do you know what surprises me? Mr. Speaker, listen to this one: "These fields and hills beyond recall are now our very own". Mr. Speaker, I am hearing: "Firm craftsmen of our fate", when the Honourable Member went to war in Westmoreland and told some white men down there that we do not know how to save ourselves, come into Barbados and save us. Craftsmen of our fate? Who do they think they are talking to? "Strict guardians of our heritage". Sir, this is a lot of talk – saviours of Barbados, and the only economic policy the Prime Minister could come up with is that he does not want to legalise prostitution, buggery, and casino gambling, but he wants to sell the land – fantastic economic policy, Sir.

I want to find out where in here, Sir, is the new colonisation package of the Barbados Labour Party, because when he sells the land to the foreigners, we are nothing else but slaves again – from slavery to slavery – under the Barbados Labour Party. It would have to be neocolonialism, under the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter. Therefore, I do not want to hear talk about goals of, "Firm craftsmen of our fate" and "Inspired, exulting free", when you have business interests on the west coast who do not even want Barbadians to walk on the beaches.
2.40 p.m.

Asides.

Sir, I spoke heavily to Goal Five which is to "Enhance Barbados' Prosperity and Competitiveness". Mr. Speaker, the Article IV Consultation for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 has shown that Barbados' productivity has fallen significantly. Let them challenge the International Monetary Fund data. In fact, we are only above one country, Haiti, in terms of productivity. Let them challenge it. Sir, can you imagine where we have come to. The only country we are above is Haiti, which has an illiteracy rate of close to 90 per cent and we have a literacy rate of 99 per cent.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your reference for that, Sir?

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Sir, I am in a debate, this is not a high court. I have a right to make a case and draw what inferences I so choose. I do not have to give any reference for it. I will reiterate the position that Barbados is only above Haiti in terms of productivity.

Asides.

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: In fact, if they are going to go down this road with me, I will carry them down another road. In the same International Monetary Fund consultation, both for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, it is stated that Barbados' savings rate has fallen from 18 per cent to 5.6 per cent under this Administration. This Administration should be telling Barbadians how they could save money, what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East called capital formation. This document should be telling Barbadians how they can form capital.

Sir, for the first time we now have a significant reduction in our savings rate and our savings capacity in Barbados, both private sector and public sector. That is from the International Monetary Fund's Article IV Consultation.

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

Dr. D. C. ESTWICK: Mr. Speaker, I will not be disrupted by those..., I will fire back because I am at the point now where I can spit needles and pins at their heads.

Mr. Speaker, let me go back to the important points, I am not going to miss them. This Administration has Barbadians under so much pressure that the national savings rate has declined significantly over the last three to four years. This Administration also has Barbadians under so much pressure, irrespective of the sixth signing of the Income Protocols, that we are now only more productive than Haiti. Sir, let them check the facts.

Mr. Speaker, I want to find out what is in the National Strategic Plan to deal with our productivity problems and our

problems with capital formation. Sir, these are the crux of competitiveness for Barbados. Sir, that now brings me to the last point which is the whole notion of this compact or tripartite arrangement because there is only one loser in this arrangement, that is the worker.

Mr. Speaker, when I look back over the last ten years, we have had an exponential skyrocketing of Government's revenue, and we have had a skyrocketing of the profits of business people but we have not had a commensurate increase in the salaries of workers in Barbados. Sir, I want to suggest to those who do not like to read that they should read Peter Drucker's thesis on "De-linking Productivity From Labour With Technology".

Mr. Speaker, when the Democratic Labour Party, during an austerity programme, looked at that particular scenario, it was not supposed to be structured the way it is structured now. Sir, the evidence shows that the decrease savings rate is directly linked to that particular Protocol and the way it had been applied. Sir, I love to educate those on the Other Side who do not like to read.

Mr. Speaker, when you hold down one or more of the fundamental elements that caused an increase in your cost of production, what you are in fact doing is giving the business the opportunity to increase its profits for a period of time. Sir, that profit was not to go overseas in a second-tier programme, that profit was supposed to be re-injected into the business to enhance the efficiency of the business and produce a cheaper product more efficiently. Sir, that is not what happened in Barbados. The money was taken and put overseas, profits were pushed up but the workers did not get any benefits.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to find out what is in the National Strategic Plan to deal with those sorts of problems on behalf of the workers of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I think I have said what I had to say and I will essentially summarise by saying that this National Strategic Plan does not worth the paper it is written on. It is full of platitudes, a lot of notions and vague objectives that cannot be achieved. It is a useless document for planning for the next 25 years. Sir, they cannot solve our present-day problems in terms of the social services structures in Barbados as well as our macroeconomic difficulties in Barbados, yet they want to project for 25 years, that is absolute foolishness.

Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated where I got my data from to support the position that we have a public sector debt to GDP of over 99 per cent. That does not include whether the Operation Free Flow is a loan or a guarantee of a loan. In time, I will add that in.

Mr. Speaker, we have high inflation, seven per cent and rising, and we have an external current account deficit of 12.5 per cent and rising. Sir, because of the fiscal deficit and the external current account deficit, we have a twin deficit and the only thing that is saving us is the borrowed money in the reserves, but the reserves is a stock and a stock is used up every day, so they would need to build it back up.

Sir, the Minister of Finance's solution is to sell land to put back money into the Central Bank or to sell off State assets as if they belong to him. Mr. Speaker, I have made my point. Those problems are not addressed in the document and therefore the Democratic Labour Party sees this as a useless document. If this Administration cannot solve today's problems, it cannot project to solve problems in 2025. That is only logical, Mr. Speaker.

I thank you.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am greatly saddened by the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Philip West.

Mr. Speaker, I am saddened that on this day of Our Lord, in this year of Our Lord, that a young man, with the opportunity to serve his country in Parliament, has forgotten that one of the fundamental responsibilities of people in this position in the society, is to make the way towards a brighter and better tomorrow, to have visions for the future, and to display clear leadership.
2.50 p.m.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member for St. Philip West were in this Parliament at those critical points in our development, his voice, argument and energy, would have been used to convince us that we should doubt ourselves, in circumstances where we should not. The Honourable Member could not, using his arguments here today, have possibly supported Independence for Barbados. His basic thesis is that unless you solve all of your problems of today, you dare not think about anything tomorrow.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member could not have presided in this Parliament, at any of the great points of transformation of the economy of Barbados, when Barbados was a totally agrarian society and the decision was made to move towards tourism. The Honourable Member would not have supported that decision because he would have had other problems with which to deal.

The Honourable Member would not have supported the transformation of this economy going in the direction of financial services. In fact, the Honourable Member would have been one of the loud voices that we would have heard at that time, who were talking about bringing in drugs, about bringing in gamblers, about money laundering and about the total destruction of the society, as a result of the offshore sector.

Asides.

Hon. R. R . FARLEY: The Honourable Member for St. Philip West would have been of that view point.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I have been around politics for over 35 years, and the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House by giving the impression that the Honourable doctor of whom he is speaking, is still sitting on This Side of this House. The Honourable Member has forgotten that Honourable doctor is now part of his team, yet he is attacking that Honourable Member as if he were still a part of this team.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is no point of order. Please proceed, Honourable Member.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, we are here, at this moment in time, for the first time in our history, casting our minds well into the future and laying out boldly what we believe our society should look like in 2025.

First of all, the Honourable Member is so narrow in his focus, that as far as the Honourable Member is concerned, the society only relates to the economy. This issue is not merely about debt or about inflation, though those things are important. Sir, do you know fundamentally what is at the heart of this National Strategic Plan? At the heart of this Strategic Plan is capturing the spirit of the nation. It is about empowering people to take fresh guard.

Mr. Speaker, at 40 years of Independence, having reaped substantial progress, we cannot rest on our laurels, neither can we assume that all of those things that have taken us safely to this point, would take us safely home. The society today is fundamentally different in its structure, culture and approach. We face a different set of circumstances from those in 1966, therefore, it is perfectly proper that we should cast our minds forward.

Mr. Speaker, I am saddened because the Honourable Member has failed to grasp the fundamental difference between strategic thinking and strategic planning and the old-time development plan, or even an annual economic policy statement. This document sets out 25 years hence, where we are saying what do we want our society to look like, but the Honourable Member only wants the little 'nitty-gritty', which will also come, as this document sets out to do.

Sir, this document sets out what we want 25 years hence. It says that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs will have five, five-year plans and that furthermore, every year the Minister of Finance will come to this Parliament with his Economic Policies and Financial Statements, which – as you know in each and every year - have set out carefully-crafted policies, to transform our tax system, to boost our productive services, to build capacity, and to involve human resource activities, all to the view of attaining specific goals.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is the big difference? I can sympathise with the Honourable Member. He is normally a good man. He means well, but the Honourable Member belongs to a Party, which has clearly stated that their perspective on communication with the public is that they are not going to tell the people what they plan for them, any time soon. It is what you would have to call a 'lucky dip' form of public policy or politics. It invites the public to dip their hands in and they might not know what they might pull out.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, this Administration has taken the bold approach of setting out very clearly, in a National Strategic Plan, what vision it has for this society. Sir, we were not like them, who are saying that they want to come to the people, to get their support to form a Government but that they are not going to tell the people what plans they have for them. We are not in that.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I can understand the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, who is normally a good man, but because of that kind of cocoon of secrecy, that kind of non-disclosure, he cannot even disclose his vision for the next 25 years, let alone any specific policies that might help to get us there.

Mr. Speaker, by sharp contrast, this Administration not only has its view but we sought to engage civil society. We have sought to engage our top academics at the University of the West Indies, those in the Labour Movement and the

private sector. We went out to Town Hall meetings. This document was printed in our daily newspapers, to make sure that the wider public had an opportunity to discuss and to express their views.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, therefore, is totally off the mark and does not have a clue about the document, which he purports is not worth the paper on which it is printed. What I have to remind the Honourable Member, is that where there is no vision, the people perish. Sir, if the Democratic Labour Party has no vision for this country, where it wants to take it, not even in 20 years but in five years, they are doomed to perish as well.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is the principal spokesman for the Democratic Labour Party and has said that they are not into this future thing, they are dealing with this every day thing; they are living now-for-now and day-to-day. He is saying to the public that on a daily basis, to keep tune to that station during the day and they would hear what the Democratic Labour Party plans for them. Mr. Speaker, is this a daily traffic report or something that the public has to tune into every day, to find out what the Democratic Labour Party would do for them? What nonsense. Mr. Speaker, we have a responsibility as a Parliament to make the way for the future.
3.00 p.m.

Sir, you know that in every society that you could look at critical moments in time when leaders of those societies have set targets and markers which institutions and individuals in the society work towards. When in 1960, President Kennedy of the United States of America said that they would put a man on the moon by the end of the decade, it was not because he had all the detailed plans and had a rocket lined up to fire the next day. It was the leader saying that was the target and where he wanted his society to go. It now falls on the scientist, the academic community, the military as the American people to achieve that objective. There was no guarantee that they would but if the objective was never set, what would they work towards? Sir, if you do not know where you are going, any road would get you there.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party clearly does not know where it is going, it has no vision or strategic planning and, therefore, are listening to hear which road to take, to test it by putting some spit on the finger, checking to see which way the wind is blowing and that is where you will go.

Mr. Speaker, it is the judgement of us on This Side that we are at this critical moment in our society where we need to speak to a vision. Sir, what is the vision? Is the Honourable Member for St. Philip West as the principal spokesman for the Opposition saying that he and his Party do not want to see Barbados become a fully developed society that is prosperous, socially just and globally competitive?

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, order, please.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. John who did not want to lead off on this debate, suddenly has a lot to say and I do not know what is the matter with him.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would suggest that you continue to address the Chair and not hear any asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I will follow your wise counsel. Sir, I want to speak a bit about this Strategic Plan. This Strategic Plan speaks to the society as a whole. In fact, all of the research and experience over the years have shown – although it has been missed by the last Honourable Member who spoke, my good friend from St. Philip West. He spoke as if the economy and the society were synonymous, as if the only thing that matters in the society was the economy. Sir, it is a fundamental underpinning but this document speaks about preserving Barbadian culture and Barbadian tradition and tries to steer this small country which over its first 40 years was able to carve itself a distinctive position in the world today.

We want to continue to do that but we are doing it against the backdrop of globalisation as expressed not only by trade liberalisation and financial liberalisation but also a cultural hegemony which has been fuelled by the ready availability of technology. Sir, in a way, it is the downside of technology because you could go to New Orleans in Barbados and be as American as someone growing up in New Orleans in the United States of America because you are both exposed to the same culture, CNN, FOX, ABC, your music, your food and your values. Sir, in fact, it has got to the point when some persons in Barbados speak of their rights, they speak of their rights based on an understanding of the United States Constitution and laws based on what they see on television, they expect that the way the Police should function in Barbados based on what they see on television. They will say "I plea the 5th", but there is nothing call the 5th in Barbados. They do not know that it is the 5th Amendment of the United States of America Constitution, that is the nature of the culture or hegemony. Sir, for us as a society at this time, we have to recognise that we are faced with globalisation, that we cannot ignore it, that we have to be able to insert Barbados into the global economy and that we have to maintain Barbadian traditions and Barbadian culture and that it cannot be left to whims and fancies. Sir, it cannot be left to happenstance. It has to

happen by deliberate actions, in our family structure, by the work of our churches and other religious groups.

Mr. Speaker, this Strategic Plan, therefore, while it speaks to our economy and how we will pay our way in the world, speaks to those other wider aspects of society. I, therefore, consider it to be of fundamental importance at this stage because one of the most important aspects of the plan, in my opinion is the first section which deals with unleashing the spirit of our nation.

There are observers who may contend that those countries which have been successful in the independence experiment are those which balance the new found freedoms, removing the shackles of colonialism, being able to determine our own position in the world, call our own shots, make our own laws but also recognised that there is a balance of new responsibilities. In the case of Barbados, those responsibilities were placed on us at a very rapid rate and continue to be heavily so, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, as a small country, our success has been rewarded, not with additional support but with being cast out to the winds. As a small country, still with its vulnerabilities of external financial and economic shocks, vulnerability to natural disaster and other things, we have had to know what it was like to build this society, to strengthen our economy and to build our infrastructure without the support of concessional aid. Sir, going into the future, that is one of the features of our future society because we have left that in the past.

How, therefore, as Barbadians, the ordinary man and woman in the street can we get to better understand our responsibility that Independence in this next forty years will not be so much about celebrating our newfound freedom, it will not be so much about a charter of civil rights and liberties as important as they are but it will be about a charter of responsibility. Sir, not only that, we are embarking on this second phase of Independence not as a single unitary sovereign state going off on its own but we have said that it has a Caribbean destiny, that closer integration of our Caribbean brother and sister states in the Caribbean Single Market and Economy is a part of our future reality. Indeed, Sir, the external objective conditions are clear that even in this globalised world we are globalising within blocs of countries than in individual small states.

Mr. Speaker, how do we as a society in the next 40 years so fashion that relationship that we build on the best of what Caribbean Single Market and Economy has to offer whilst making sure that it results in prosperity for Barbados, that it does not compromise our social justice. This is what this Plan speaks to.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am very saddened that my good friend has chosen to give the speech that he has been giving for the last year on debt. He has got to debt and he has not gone from there. Sir, even in this fine moment he has stuck to a small part of the document. This document speaks about debt. There is a comprehensive section in this document about how we are going to pay our way in the world. Mr. Speaker, before I close, I want to speak about that.

Sir, I want to make the fundamental point, least anyone tunes into the debate late and make the mistake of thinking that there was a very narrow economic debate about a few issues. Sir, these include issues of our society, of religious and enduring moral issues, embracing diversity and tolerance, having a strong sense of public spiritedness and community spirit. We want to take Barbados into this bold new world, to maintain Barbadian traditions.

I grew up in a Barbados in which you knew your neighbours, in which one neighbour would keep their neighbours' children. There was nothing called a Neighbourhood Watch. You did not have a president, secretary and a treasurer. It was there, self-help and reliance were part of the traditions that we had. There is no need to jettison them in order to deal with the new financial sector in the economy or to deal with the new digital economy. These are realities.

We are an exemplar of democracy and good governance in this country. We want to maintain those. We want to further strengthen them and to make democracy more participatory, over the next twenty-five years, so that the citizen would not only be able exercise citizen power every five years or whenever elections may be called, but there are other ways in which you can use technology and multiply approaches to empower your citizens on a day-to-day basis. This is what the vision is.

Sir, this debate should be more about what would happen in 2025, if we achieve our vision, than what is happening today. None of us are trying to be fortune tellers. We are not looking into a crystal ball. Sir, as I said, if you do not have a view of where you want to go, any road will get you somewhere. We are saying that this is the kind of society we want to see.

We want to see a society with people at the side of this development, economic enfranchisement and empowerment, good education and health care. We do not contemplate any slippage in our education and health profile. In fact, we want to see indices continue to rise.

This document speaks about the university graduate per household. It speaks about increasing life expectancy, which has increased by about four years every decade. The

average life expectancy of Barbadians is seventy-nine years, phenomenal. We want to increase that further. Those are the kinds of objectives we have.

Sir, because we are going into a global economy, we will not go in the direction of having our citizens pay for education, because Americans do that. That is their business. If they rather spend their money on fighting wars in distant lands that is their business. Over the next forty years we want to invest even more heavily in human capital, because we have recognised that it has been our human capital, not diamonds, gold or oil that has made Barbados strong. Given the services economy orientation of the economy now, and given our projection of what kind of economy we will expect in 2025, we will have people highly trained and highly skilled.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, I think he was most unfair, ungracious and wrong in the slant he put on this business of export of skills. A society must never imprison its people by training them in such a limited way, that they are only of value within the narrow confines of their society. That would be as hideous as would be the arrangements in the early years of Barbados, certainly up to 1946 when the Located Labours Act was repealed, where labour was tied to the plantation, and if you were not working at the plantation, you had to pick up your chattel house and move.

Sir, I know about that. My grandparents were in that and they made the bold decision to tell my father and brothers that even if they tell us we have to move you all are not going to work there, you all will break free.

Mr. Speaker, in this 21st Century to cast a slant and a slur that training of Barbadians so that they are proud, confident and capable of working anywhere in the world, when they choose to do so, is akin to exporting them and modern slave trade is ridiculous. The option of having them tied exclusively to Barbados, or to some company that trained them or to some parish is retrograde. I rather have my son and daughter free to exercise an option to live here, work there or whatever combination.

Sir, do you know what is happening? Mr. Speaker, because of technology many Barbadians are able to live here and use their skills elsewhere. Some work overseas three days a week, fly back home and spend the other days home. Some sit at home and do their consultancy and other work online. That is the kind of Barbados that we have now and we will have more of this in 2025.

I want to say that even on the economic side, that the Honourable Member spoke so fully on, the Honourable Member obviously did not read the document, because it spoke of a comprehensive programme for enhancing Barbados' prosperity and competitiveness. Sir, if your projection is for twenty-five years, you do not get into the level of detail that the Honourable Minister of Finance would get into, when he comes with his next economic policy statement, clearly not. The document spoke about increasing the projected rate for our sustainable growth, at a minimum of 5 per cent per year. We want to go in that direction, achieving full employment.

Sir, no one, certainly not the Democratic Labour Party can question this Party's record in terms of employment. The absolute number of persons employed has increased by thousands, the percentage of persons has increased, and we have done it in the past and our records suggest that we can do it in the future. Sir, it speaks to the maintenance of strong macroeconomic fundamentals, of achieving a Gross Domestic Product to a debt ratio of 60 per cent. The fact that we are not there now is not the issue. The issue is that we know where we need to go and we are working towards that.

Mr. Speaker, it speaks to issues of safeguarding food and nutrition safety and the importance of agriculture and that mix. It speaks to the creation of an entrepreneurship society, to having programmes in place to encourage our young people to consider entrepreneurialship and business as their own option, not something that you stumble into, if you got laid off from a job, because we recognise that we need to sell unique Barbados products and services. It speaks to the development of an information economy, measures to boost productivity. Sir, we recognise that productivity is a key component of competitiveness and that Barbados, if it is to survive and prosper, must be more competitive. It speaks to these strategies here. The Honourable Member did not read the document.

3.20 p.m.

The document spoke about increasing the exports of services and products. Sir, the fact that we have already looked at new institutional arrangements, the new company we have established to make that a reality shows that we are serious. Sir, the increase in the level of exports, from more than $300 million to $421 million last year shows that we are serious.

Sir, the document speaks about integrating Barbados into the global economy. All of the millions of dollars that we had to spend on trade negotiations, and the establishment of the University of the West Indies of a new Master's Programme in International Trade to build capacity, not only in Barbados but the OECS, are all part of that, Sir. They speak about world class excellence in the delivery of service.

Sir, our major sectors of tourism and international business are not special concessions that anybody has

dropped on us. We are competing with the rest of the world. The people who travel here for business and for tourism, could go anywhere in the world, and they do, Sir, and the Barbadian barman, groundsman, manager, hire car worker, everybody is compared with the other destinations. Therefore, we recognise that our benchmark cannot be comparing south coast to west coast, St. Lawrence Gap to Oistins, or the least developed countries to Barbados, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have to conclude now. You had some extra time already.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Thank you, Sir.

As I close, I want to say that we on This Side, as the debate goes on, will speak in more detail to specific aspects of these goals and what this document says about the vision that we have for Barbados.

I found it important, in the light of the presentation from my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West to remind this Honourable Chamber that this is a broad plan, a long vision. Where there is no vision, Sir, the people fail.

Sir, we have a clear vision for this country over the next 40 years of our independence, and we invite everyone to join us, as we travel along the road to making Barbados a fully developed society that is prosperous, socially just and globally competitive.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Asides.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is not by accident that the Honourable Member reminded us that he was at the headquarters of the Barbados Workers' Union lately and he saw the wall, but he forgot one thing, Sir, that unity is strength.

It is clear today, Sir, that in this House there is a need for unity. When one looks at the drafting of this Resolution it is clear that the Government Side decided that they want to include us, in preparing their Manifesto for the next election.

Sir, one can only come to that conclusion, if one looks at the Resolution, that says to move the passing of a Resolution to take note of and approve the draft...you hear that, Sir, the draft. What the Barbados Labour Party has now done to the Parliament of Barbados it has now made the Parliament of Barbados – and I have been checking the Standing Orders to see if they could do this – a Committee because based on everything I am seeing here, Sir, they are saying this is not the final document. This is a document before the Committee and then after we have debated this, there will be a final document.

Sir, do you know the most important thing? I see nowhere that after we have changed this that the final document will come back here. It is clear to me that this House has been used to prepare a final document, not for the Parliament of Barbados, but for Roebuck Street, to be used in the next election.

I want to tell the Barbados Labour Party that if they want information to put in their Manifesto – and it is clear to me that this is really a draft of the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto – that they need to go back from 1994 until now to the good book we call Hansard, and they could read all of my speeches, and pick out all the important parts. The truth is, Sir, they would have the largest Manifesto ever written in this country. When they do not find enough in there, Sir, they could go to the weekly columns of the *Advocate Newspaper*, under the debate and they will get what they are looking for.

Sir, today, I am not here about that because the information has already been given by me to them. What is insulting, Sir, is when a political party could use Parliament, not for the work of Parliament but for their personal work to draft a Manifesto for the next election and expect me to shoot myself in my foot.

If you want my knowledge, I have given it freely to Parliament and the people of Barbados, and you are free to take it from Hansard and also the *Advocate Newspaper,* but there are some points, Sir.

It is clear to me, Sir, that the Barbados Labour Party has now believed that the same strategy used by big businesses where they get the small businesses to submit their feasibility studies to the bankers, that they are now the new bankers of Barbados, where they come and create a debate, you throw out what you have to throw out, and then they take it for their personal needs.

I have no problem, Sir, of contributing to the Parliament of Barbados or contributing to Barbados on a whole. I find it very offensive for a political party to use cheap politics to achieve what they want and using the highest court of the land to achieve it, Sir.

I think that this reflects badly on the House of Assembly and also on the Chair, because no where am I told that I am in Committee, yet still, I am expected to do the work as if I am in Committee. Sir, you know my position on that. I have no intention of sitting on Committees, so I have no intention of divulging anything at this point in time

because I am here to do the work of Parliament and do the work for the people of Barbados, and not do the work for my opponents.

I not saying, Sir, that I am not prepared to give away ideas because I have done that freely, but I do not believe that we should use such a cheap approach to get information from the opponents, when you are saying that they are empty and have nothing to offer. This is a political approach and I will make a political speech.

Mr. Speaker, I heard this Barbados Labour Party making a very valid point and I agree with them. They said that the Incomes Protocol is important. Sir, are you aware that in 1993-1994, the Government collected over $287 million from incomes and profits? Sir, by 2004 and 2005, that had risen to $621 million. Are you aware that in 1993-1994, the Government was only collecting $1 billion in revenue, and by 2004-2005 that increased to 1.9 per cent, nearly a 90 per cent increase?

Sir, can you tell me by what percentage the workers in Barbados have been able to increase their wages and salaries, between 1993/1994 – 2004/2005? I was told that it is supposed to be a three-way relationship. The workers in the initial stage – when the agreement was signed for the Incomes and Prices Protocol – that as inflation increases, the workers' wages and salaries would have increased also.

Mr. Speaker, if I am to take the rise in taxes on incomes and profits, it is clear using that as an indicator, Sir, the workers of Barbados would have seen a 300 per cent increase in their wages and salaries. Sir, you and I know that it cannot even come to 50 per cent over that period.
3.30 p.m.

Sir, what is even worse is that they told me that in order to pay for these things, you have to have revenue. Sir, inflation went up by 90 per cent, the Government was able to increase its revenue by 90 per cent but the civil servants' salaries could not match the inflation.

Sir, am I to believe that this is the same Incomes and Prices Protocol where Government could increase its revenue by 90 per cent but the workers cannot even see 30 per cent over that period in time. Am I supposed to feel happy and support an Incomes and Prices Protocol because my Party negotiated it? Sir, when my Party negotiated that agreement, it was done in such a way that as prices go up, wages and salaries would go up too. Sir, if you want me to accept that has to occur, then you have to back pay the workers of Barbados that amount and then we could talk.

Sir, I am not here to let anybody off the hook. I have said in this country that the private sector has a right to represent its members. Sir, I am satisfied, based on these statistics, that the private sector represented their workers. Sir, you have heard me speak many times in this House about the three-sided triangle that turned into a one-sided triangle.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, what happened is that the unions, the private sector and the Government came together and went to bed, and what was once a three-sided triangle, turned into a straight line. You asked for an explanation, you have it.

Mr. Speaker, the Government Side cannot complain because of this arrangement. The Government Side was able to see a 90 per cent increase. The private sector got what they wanted and the Government got what they wanted. Sir, can you tell me what the trade union movement got for the workers of Barbados? Sir, can you tell me if the trade union movement got the matching amount for the workers.

Sir, the trade unions want to tell me that as a member of the Democratic Labour Party, I should be happy because we signed that agreement in the early 1990s. What we signed was not for this, Sir. What we signed was that if the Government got a 90 per cent increase, the workers would also get a 90 per cent increase.

Sir, if they did not follow what we set out in the early 90s, how could you now come and tell me I should be grateful that we signed it and that we should not be knocking it. If they want a scapegoat, do not include me because I would back the workers.

I want people in Barbados to understand that the Democratic Labour Party represents over 50 per cent of the people of Barbados and we do not need to prostitute ourselves to get the support of anybody. Anybody who wants our support must understand their task of coming to join the bandwagon but we will not be prostituting ourselves to get cheap support. This Democratic Labour Party has over 50 per cent of the support of Barbadians as demonstrated by the last poll. If people have failed the workers of Barbados do not use the Democratic Labour Party as an accomplice.

Sir, the Government, by its own admission, recognised that after 13 years of the agreement they were party to an agreement that would compensate the workers for inflation. The Government admitted to the trade union movement that they were not doing their jobs and the Government recognised, one year before the elections, that they were unfairing the workers of Barbados and they put aside $20 million for them.

Sir, when the trade unions realised that the Government insulted them by putting the $20 million and that the workers

would finally realise it is not $20 million that is owed that the $20 million is only for one year, the workers in Barbados told the trade unions when they went to the last meeting that they have been unfaired for many years and they do not want any more two per cent or three per cent, they want nine or ten per cent because they owe them for the other 12 years when they should have been getting the increases based on inflation.

The National Strategic Plan must have a part in it for the workers first. You have to first show me how you are going to compensate the workers who for 12 years stood strain. In this country Barbados we do not understand that it takes labour to work capital. We have a Government who for the last 13 years ignored the labourers and focused on capital without realising that it takes workers to work the capital. On top of that, they have even 'dissed' the workers. They talked about the new technological changes and mechanisation and are now replacing our workers by machines. They are sending the jobs for people overseas and are putting our workers on unemployment benefit.

Mr. Speaker, I want to see how we are going to get back the workers of Barbados to be productive after putting them on unemployment benefits for 26 weeks at a time. Sir, the Government was told that they were doing injustice to the workers of Barbados and it would have been better to give them a lump sum payment, discount it, and get them back on the production line.

Sir, the Government ignored all of those things and now in their last days they placed a Manifesto before Parliament, hoping to get the ideas of both parties under the name of unity in the interest of the country. This is the first time I know of a draft Manifesto being placed before Parliament.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, this draft Manifesto cannot be accepted by this Parliament. This Parliament is not Roebuck Street and it is not here to serve the self-interest of a political party. If the Honourable Member for St. Thomas does not understand that this is not Roebuck Street, that this is the Parliament of Barbados, I am very sorry for her.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South does not understand that a draft Manifesto cannot be called a Strategic Plan even though it had been disguised and placed before Parliament as a Strategic Plan. Mr. Speaker, this is not a Parliament for drafts, this is a Parliament for final documents. Sir, I am prepared to debate policies in this House, not draft documents, especially when it is a draft Manifesto.

Sir, when the Government brings the National Strategic Plan of Barbados and not the draft, I will debate it. I am not in here to do their work. They want to idle on their benches and then expect me to do their work for them to come back with my final document and defeat me with it when it comes to the vote. If the Honourable Member wants to defeat me to the vote, she should bring her ideas in the final document and I will bring mine. They are not going to use my ideas to prepare a document and then outvote me on it. Am I a clown? This is exactly what is happening in this House. They want to treat us as clowns in here. Sir, we understand quite well what they are up to and we will not allow it to happen in this Parliament.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. George North could have done the same thing with the Road Traffic Act but he did not do that. He brought the final document and when the Honourable Member found that there were errors he took it before the Committee. I congratulate him for that because he was honest in his dealing on this particular matter, that is why I always praise him. Up to two weeks ago I was on the radio praising him because if he brings errors in here it is by accident not by plan, but this is by plan not by accident.

3.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the Honourable Members of the Democratic Labour Party are smarter than that, and that we will not allow anybody to trap us by bringing the draft to a Manifesto to this Honourable House, one cloaked looking like a lamb, when it is actually a wolf. This is exactly what this document is all about. It is about to trick us.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell the public of Barbados today that the Opposition is functioning and that we understand exactly what is happening. If they want ideas, I told them exactly where to find them. If they want to know why the sugar industry should not have increased its production a number of years ago, let them go back to Hansard. If they want to know why Bulkeley Sugar Factory should not have been closed, let them go back to Hansard also. There, they would find speeches from the Honourable Member for St. George South and me.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Of course, at a meeting in Ellerton, I said that I agreed with the Honourable Member for St. George South, that Bulkeley should not have been closed. The Honourable Member did not keep his promise and now he is dead like Bulkeley.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, it is clear that in order for the new sugar policy to work, that its production

would have to be increased. Sir, it was not the Democratic Labour Party who said that we were going to cut off the sugar quota by 10 000 tons, which is equivalent to more than 90 000 tons of canes. It was the Barbados Labour Party that did it in a budget, about two to three years ago. Mr. Speaker, it was not the Democratic Labour Party, who said they were going to change the tax system.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, we said it but we never got the chance to do it. Mr. Speaker, it was not the Democratic Labour Party who said that we were going to change the taxation system from that of direct to that of indirect and then kept both systems. It was the Barbados Labour Party. It was not the Democratic Labour Party, who decided to focus on revenue, more than foreign exchange.

Sir, that is our problem. The biggest problem now facing Barbados, is that we are more interested in this document, than we are in any document which deals with earning foreign exchange. Once we have a document called Estimates, we use it as if it could run a country. That is not true. What we need to do, is to ensure that we have our productive forces working, in such a way, that we could maximise the usage of foreign exchange in this country. Sir, this is where the Government has failed because they have concentrated on the Estimates of Barbados and have not focused on the productive sectors.

Mr. Speaker, we also have to understand that one does not go to the World Market to borrow, without understanding what it is we are borrowing. Sir, the problem with this economy goes as far back as the 1980s, when we allowed the Japanese to offload cheap loans on it. Sir, I will make this point over and over because in this country Barbados, there are not many people who understand the concept of foreign exchange losses. People believe that when negotiating a loan, one must only look at interest rate, and that is what is failing this country because the Government has looked at the interest rates and not at the fluctuation of the currencies.

Mr. Speaker, the worst thing to do is to borrow a loan when the currency is low because it would appreciate. Sir, that is exactly what happened with the Japanese loan. That is why this Barbados Labour Party would never learn. When the Democratic Labour Party borrowed the Euro loan, when the currency was up... Sir, you would recall it was borrowed at the maximum rate but has since fallen. This means that even though the interest rate was high on the loan, because of the fluctuation, that loan turned out to be one of the cheapest loans to service.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what happened? There are people, every time they open their mouths, not knowing what they were speaking of, but are telling us that the Democratic Labour Party had borrowed a bad loan, when there should be people in this country, accountants and others, who deal with these things, who know better. Sir, I must admit, there are not many companies which would have dealt with that.

Sir, fortunately for me, I was at the sugar industry at the time when we had to deal with the same type of loan, where we had a situation where we borrowed money from the Caribbean Development Bank. Sir, I will always make this point: The Caribbean Development Bank has unfaired the sugar industry because the sugar industry wanted to build Portvale Sugar Factory – and that is all it had to do with this plan because it is now haunting us – and the sugar industry borrowed a US loan from the Caribbean Development Bank. Sir, because the sugar industry was starved for money to complete Portvale, the Caribbean Development Bank ensured that in its repayment terms, that money would have been repaid in US dollars and half in the Japanese yen.

Mr. Speaker, that was something that was new to the sugar industry and they accepted it. Sir, do you know when the sugar industry had finished paying off half the loan, they still had owed the full capital on the loan? Sir, that was due to the fact that the loan had appreciated and, therefore, the capital repayments had doubled. Under normal circumstances, in servicing a loan, you worry about the interest rates but in this particular case, it was not only the interest rates they had to worry about but the capital.

Sir, that is why when the Barbados Labour Party went on the Japanese market, the Right Excellent Errol Barrow had warned them that it was the worst market, but they did not listen. Therefore, in other words, we borrowed $120 million in principle from the Japanese market and ended up paying over $240 million. In other words, we gave away capital to the Japanese and in the 1980s, we gave away capital, in the 1990s and 2000s, we are now giving away jobs, under the concept of technological changes, without thinking about the multiplier effect of anything we are doing.

Mr. Speaker, I want you and this Honourable House to know that whenever you replace Bajan workers with a machine, you are replacing workers in the country and giving those jobs to people outside. Sir, it is the people outside who both make and service the machines, along with the fact that the supplies for the machines come from outside. In this way, there is no multiplying effect for those machines in this country, but when you have a worker, the multiplier effect 'kicks' in. Sir, that is something that people do not understand. If you are going to make technological changes, you use that, along with your workers.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I know you would smile because you never thought you would have heard this type of argument coming from me.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I had no need to use it before, but today I had to use it. A lot of people believe that in order to know about economics, you would have to have an economics degree. I have already said to this Honourable House that anytime one is studying anything close to an accounting degree, that one has to be qualified in economics.

Mr. Speaker, I am, therefore, warning the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, because when we are ready, he is going to be hit with statistics, with accounts, with law, and with all of those things that make up an accounting degree, and it is going to come from one direction.

Mr. Speaker, I am today saying that people have to understand that this plan will not get through us. We understand the trick in it. We appreciate it was a good attempt by the Barbados Labour Party, to be able to prepare itself to have a Manifesto that is pleasing to Both Sides. We appreciate they have done a wonderful job by calling this document the Draft Strategic Plan of Barbados, 2005 to 2025. Sir, this document should have been renamed: "The Draft Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, located at Roebuck Street, brought to the House of Assembly under this guise and has been kicked down by the Opposition."

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I would want to focus my attention on the National Strategic Plan for Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, Honourable Member. We have heard you. Let us hear some others.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I believe this document was well researched.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. If you have a document that is well researched, it cannot be in draft, it has to be a final document.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I believe that this document comprises...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: That one is beyond the Chair.

Asides.

3.50 p.m.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Sir, this document which we are looking at today, the National Strategic Plan, has wide consultation across Barbados. In fact, I visited on two occasions, one at the St. George Secondary School and the other one at the Deighton Griffith School where a number of persons across Barbados turned up to discuss this document. Also, it is fair to say that Members from the Public Service as well as persons who would have given years of service to both political parties were included in this exercise. I believe that it is the type of document that all Barbadians should read. I also believe that the focus and the goals that are set in this document should be read by all right-thinking Barbadians even those persons who do not agree with a Strategic Plan should read it. As Honourable Members have said before, it has had wide consultation and even if it is a draft, it does not mean that Members of Parliaments should not get an opportunity to speak to the strategic planning and what the focus would be in 25 years.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure that a number of goals, aspirations and plans for this Document are also embodied in the thinking which I have heard expressed by members of the Opposition. I believe that they believe that Barbados should be a fully developed society that is prosperous, socially just and globally competitive. I believe that the Leader of the Opposition would want to ensure the best for Barbados. I am sure that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would want to ensure that Barbados is a truly literate society, whose people are educated and round. I also believe that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy wants a society that is sustainable and where people coexist in harmony and in a beautifully constructed environment. Therefore, it is wise for all of us to embrace this and also to give our thoughts to this Document.

Mr. Speaker, we hear people talk about the American dream and Barbadians must dream about what they want this country to be like and what are the aspirations they want for themselves. Sir, 40 years is not a long time and they say that life begins at 40. We are now entering our 40th year and we expect that Barbados will go on and on. What is it that we expect this country to look like in 20 years? What is it that we expect this country to look like in 100 years? We may not be able to conceptualise 100 years but, surely, I believe that all Barbadians must think about what Barbados would be like in the future.

Mr. Speaker, we have a historical perspective of what Barbados was like in 1900. We can look back at history and at a number of documents and experience what it was like.

Many of our cultural artistes and many of our people, from time to time, go back and try to depict what it was like. I have seen plays written by a number of our people depicting what it was like in the early 1900s and what it was like under slavery so we have a perspective. None of us know what the future may bring and, therefore, we must plan. Are you saying to us that it is wrong for us to plan? Are you saying that it is wrong for us to take a mortgage today and hope to live in the future?

Mr. Speaker, I want to focus my attention on two specific themes within this Strategic Plan. I want to focus my attention on Goal No. 3 and Goal No. 4. Sir, Goal No. 3 speaks about building social capital and developing stronger communities and that is what is important. I believe that we have need to have a society that is strong, where community facilities are provided in every area where we attract more private funds to help us uplift our communities. Mr. Speaker, I have said before that we are in our fortieth year and we still have other of areas in the country side that need upgrading. I have travelled from St. Lucy to St. John to Christ Church and all across St. Philip and we still have a number of our communities which need to have infrastructure. I have gone to Welch Town which is familiar to the Honourable Member for St. John. There are beautiful sceneries from Welch Town but it needs infrastructure. You still need proper lighting in that area, roads and community centres. I have gone with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to certain parts of St. Lucy that still need upgrading. I have gone with the Honourable Member for St. Philip West and there are certain communities that still need sidewalks. I am saying that we have to dream that the physical environment is important. As you go through Bush Hall and Bank Hall, you still have a number of communities in those areas which need infrastructure and that need proper drainage. Are you saying to us that we must think only about today or should we think about what would happen in the future?

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that the future holds dear to Barbados and what it would be like 20 years from now. Sir, we need to have stronger communities. I used to be a member of one of the strongest community groups in Barbados. I used to be President of a volley ball group called Progressive, 20 years ago but Progressive is now not as strong as it used to be. Sir, in those days we went out and had debates in the community and we had sporting facilities. I do not see these things happening any more because people are not part of communities any longer.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that we need to get back stronger communities. We need the churches to start organising better programmes to uplift the young. Are you saying that 20 years from now that you want to have a Barbados that is full of crime or do you want a Police state? Sir, I am saying, no, that we need stronger communities and that we need the Opposition to understand what it would be like for our children. None of us may be in this House but what is it that we want for our children and our families. Sir, that is important.

Mr. Speaker, we need to spend now and that is why I find Goal No. 4 to be very exciting because it is promoting environmental, sustainable use of our natural resources, to maintain a safe and reliable water supply, to ensure an efficient and reliable energy sector, to develop a modern transport infrastructure, to improve disaster management and to maintain an efficient land use policy. I want to concentrate mainly on developing a modern transport infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, we have inherited a number of roads in our country that are small and that were developed out of tracks and small tenantry roads. I am saying that time has come for us to widen and improve our roads. The time has come for us to provide proper sidewalks to separate the carriage from pedestrians. The time has come for us not only to do that, but to ensure that our sidewalks are there for everyone, including the disabled. I am saying that we have to do this.

4.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I can picture this. Sir, what do we want to happen twenty years from now? We want to have a society with an urban corridor that is friendly to all, where there is greening and trees, where persons are able to walk around in comfort. We want persons with wheelchairs or pedestrians to be able to move about without problems.

Mr. Speaker, we want to have not only these things, but we want to have a system, where there is better signage in our society. Sir, our signage in Barbados is still outdated. We still have signs that are small, cannot be read or interpreted by persons who are not of our culture or language. We need to have better signage in our country. In addition, we have to ensure that persons are able to read these signs, sometimes it is a problem. We have to be able to do so.

Sir, in terms of traffic management, we have to be able to provide a system, where persons can travel in safety. We must have better traffic lights and traffic calming measures. Currently in Barbados we have a system that as soon as we construct a road, the traffic uses it immediately. Sir, traffic calming measures will have to be introduced. Some of us call them humps or ditches. These have to be installed as well.

Sir, we need to provide a rapid rail system. There is a lot of congestion in Barbados, and it is important for us to encourage persons to have vehicles. The Honourable Member for St. Peter and Prime Minister said that he wants to see a car in every home. It is already happening. Sir, what will happen twenty years from now with our traffic? We have over 116 000 vehicles on our roads and we expect it to grow by 7 or 10 per cent yearly. Sir, by 2020, we may have

more than 150 000 vehicles on our roads. What is it we want to do? We have to be able to manage this traffic. We have to be able manage it in such a way, that although we encourage persons to own a car, at the same time we have to ensure that persons reach their destination on time. Therefore, we have to have a rapid rail system or a mega carrier, call it what you like a rapid rail, mega carrier or mass carrier. We have to plan now. We cannot wait for twenty years to plan for that. We have to be able to not only have a mega carrier but we have to be able to state what will happen. Sir, we have to start planning where we will put homes and buildings. At this time we must be able to plan what will happen down the road for Barbadians.

We must also plan a park and ride system. A park and ride system should be coming by 2008. We also need to plan for this rapid rail system. I believe that the plan talks about it by 2012 or 2015 or an express bus service, or something of this nature to improve transportation in our country.

Sir, the question which comes to mind, is that of a dedicated school bus service, which we said will come by 2008. Already the Ministry is planning for a dedicated school bus service. We have had meetings with some of the school principals, and the Ministry of Education. Already we have talked about a pilot project. We are hoping that when the new fleet of buses are received by the end of the year, we can have a pilot project school bus system. We must accomplish that.

Sir, we have to be able to p.lan for a better bus terminal. There are plans to improve the bus terminal at Fairchild Street. We have to construct a new bus terminal at the River Terminal. We also have to construct a bus terminal in St. Philip, because commuters have been asking for one. We have to look at turnaround stations at Sargeants Street, St. John and Connell Town. These are things that have to be planned for now.

Sir, do we want our people on their return journey just to stand at a bus shelter? I believe that by 2020, there should be a bus shelter at every bus stop. I also firmly believe that the Transport Board must have courage to plan their routes in such a way, that there is a schedule in every bus station of arrivals. I believe that this should happen by 2012, but we must start now. Mr. Speaker, it should be computerised in such a way, that every passenger or visitor must know what bus you can take. Sir, if you go into the bus terminal today, you cannot tell, a visitor especially, what bus to take and what time it will arrive. We need to revolutionise these things.

Sir, this document speaks about what a public transport system would be like. We are now finalising the Public Transport Authority. That should be established by 2008. Sir, already a document has been prepared and we are hoping that we could bring that to Parliament within the next few months. I believe this document speaks to these things.

Sir, before I talk about buildings, I wish to inform Honourable Members that the ABC Highway is expanding to four lanes from Warrens to the Garfield Sobers roundabout. Mr. Speaker, what about beyond Garfield Sobers roundabout to the airport? We have to be able to expand that as well, in order to accommodate the expected traffic in 2010. It must be a four-lane highway throughout.

Asides.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: We talk about the traffic from St. John, and traffic from Bathsheba travelling through St. John, there must be some improvement. We have completed Bath Hill and Codrington College. We must improve the roads right through to the airport**.** Sir, we talked about a new highway along the East Coast. This must be done.

I have already spoken at length about our plans for moving traffic across central St. George from Christ Church to St. Lucy and St. Peter. We have to be able to provide now for our infrastructure. That will also be completed. Already people have been saying to us that we need to look at the coastal areas as well. We will do that as well.

Sir, transportation is important to provide employment for people and to ensure that people get to work on time. We can see that in 2020 the bus service will have to move to a twenty-four hour service. Mr. Speaker, twenty years from now, people would need to get to work, especially if we are talking about a twenty-four-hour work day, so we need to have adequate transportation and a reliable bus service as well. Mr. Speaker, this is what we will be doing. Sir, this document speaks to a modern transport infrastructure and we will be doing this.

In terms of building, when you look at our buildings in Barbados, we have architects, draftsmen and so on, the Act has been passed. We have architects, the technologists and they are doing wonderfully well. What designs do we expect those persons to bring to the fore? Would the architecture be the same as today, or would they reflect a past Barbadian culture? I believe that we have to do better. If you look at Barbados today, we have some beautiful buildings.

4.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, we also have many buildings that need refurbishing. We need to spend more money on our buildings, especially the Government. I can speak about the Ministry of Health compound which needs refurbishing. Sir, the Government cannot do all of them and, I believe that the private sector must be called upon to help develop our

infrastructure. The private sector must also be the engine of growth in the future and help the Government to develop and refurbish our buildings.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Government has set the example. We have spent a lot of money over the last twelve years and we will continue to spend more money on our buildings. This Government has spent millions of dollars on accommodation for the civil servants but what conditions do we expect our civil servants to work under in 20 years. As I said, the Ministry of Health will have to be refurbished, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Public Works, all these buildings will have to be refurbished as well to provide better working accommodation for civil servants.

Sir, if you look around Bridgetown today, you would see that this Government has made a lot of changes. If you look across the wharf today, you will see what the BTII is doing. If you look at our new airport, you will see new buildings going up from time to time but I believe that 20 years from now, we have to do even better. Twenty years from now, Mr. Speaker, we may very well need a new airport, and we may have to look at the expansion of the Bridgetown Harbour, in order to take in the new services that will be coming to the fore.

Mr. Speaker, another area that we have to look at which is spelt out here, is disaster management and response. Now, Barbados and most of the other Caribbean islands really are prone to natural disasters and our response to natural disasters must take on a different meaning. How we prepare for natural disasters is important. It is true that from time to time we do not take heed of these things. We do not take warnings. This year has not been too active, even though it was predicted that we would have an active hurricane season. We still are in the season and we must prepare. What do we want our people to understand, in terms of natural disasters?

I believe that in the future, we will have to plan better and provide better opportunities for young people. We will have to make our buildings sturdier. We will have to look at the Building Act, which will be coming in the near future. I think that in terms of natural disasters, if we adhere to these things, the effects will not be as great.

Mr. Speaker, we are also looking at an agency, for example, insurance, and what would be the cost of insuring buildings. I believe that we need to contain the cost of insurance for people. We should look at a system where the Government and the private sector work hand in hand to ensure that every home is insured but that the cost should be at a minimum. We have to look at that as well.

Mr. Speaker, all these things are contained in this document, and it gives people an opportunity to take the strategic document now and make recommendations. Since it is not the final draft, I believe that when the final document comes, it should reflect what the Members of Parliament are thinking, and what the society is thinking.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that if Members should read this, it would be beneficial to the society, if we adhere to them because there are certain targets in this document that are important. For example, it speaks about amending the physical development plan every five years, which is important.

Already, we have had situations where persons are asking a question, what do we do with lots that have not been built on, and the Town Planner had approved. Most of these lots, Mr. Speaker, are causing severe problems, especially in developed communities, such as Rose Park, College Terrace, and Fair View Heights. The persons who have bought these lots have either gone away or bought them for their children. There is a situation now where they are overcome by bush, where rats and all types of vermin are living.

Mr. Speaker, we have to plan for these things because members of the public have been calling – especially in my community – for legislation to protect people who have built their homes, but cannot live in peace because of the cow itch, rats and all sorts of things. These people are asking if we are going to attach a fine to the people who own lots and neglect them, or are we going to ask the Land Tax Department to collect additional taxes, in order to clean these lots.

Mr. Speaker, people are asking many questions when we go to community meetings. What do we want our strategic planning to look like in 20 years? Mr. Speaker, we should have a society that is fully developed, a literate society that is well-educated and sustainable. Sir, of course, the Churches have a role to play in all of this, in terms of providing a better moral society, a society that is tolerant, a society that is spirited and also has an abiding trust in our God.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the future holds well for Barbados. I do not believe that Barbados is second to Haiti. I do not remember the words that my friend from St. Philip West was saying. I think he is talking about production, that productivity is now only second to Haiti. I have not checked the records, so I do not know, but I believe that we are producing, but we have to produce more in this country, especially food.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that if these things are done, Barbados could be not only the best place to live in the Caribbean, but the best place to live in the world.

Mr. Speaker, with those remarks, I am grateful.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that further consideration of this Bill be postponed.

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

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

ORDER NO. 14 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225 THE VESTING IN NEEDHAMS POINT DEVELOPMENT INC. OF THE PARCELS OF LAND, THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN, SITUATE AT GRAVESEND IN THE PARISH OF SAINT MICHAEL IN THIS ISLAND FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, this very simple Resolution involves the vesting of 10.25 acres of Crown lands at Gravesend, which is in the area of the Hilton Hotel and surrounding properties, in Needham's Point Development Incorporated.

Honourable Members would recall that a decision was made some time ago to undertake certain developments in the area associated not only with the construction of the new Hilton Hotel, but the redevelopment of that area on which the Mobil Refinery used to be located. That area is now in the process of being environmentally rehabilitated with some technology which is used to restore the condition to its pre-oil condition.

Mr. Speaker, you would appreciate that after over 50 years, I believe, of being used as an oil storage area that area was contaminated, and work is being done. It also includes the area on which the offices of Mobil were located and the areas on the beach front, a children's park, a car park, *et cetera.*

In accordance with the legislation, under section 5 (1) (c) of the Crown Lands (Vesting and Disposal) Act, Cap. 225, parliamentary permission is required to perform this action. This action, as would have been indicated earlier, is one which is required in order to allow the Government, through its land interest in Needham's Point Inc., to be able to engage in joint venture activity for the further future development of that area to achieve its full tourism potential.

Sir, I beg to move that this Resolution, to vest this 10.25 acres of Crown land in the Gravesend area in Needham's Point Development Inc., do now pass.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, even though the Opposition understands the reason for this vesting, we would like some assurance from the Honourable Member that the vesting of this land in Needham's Point Development Inc., which is a private company, will not interfere with the rights of the people in the area as they seek to traverse the particular area.

Mr. Speaker, this Opposition believes that tourism in Barbados can only survive if we appreciate the contribution of community tourism. Sir, when one considers the changes to tourism and the selfishness involved in tourism, it is no doubt that it is not the owning of a piece of land on the beach anymore but the right to get to that beach. Therefore, I would like to have the assurance from the Minister that the people in that general area would not be affected when this land is vested in Needham's Point Development Inc.

Sir, I spoke previously about land in the St. Lawrence Gap area and I was given the assurance that the vendors and the people in the area would not be affected. Sir, I find it rather strange that the Government of Barbados wants to give up this right at this point in time when one considers the importance of community tourism to the development of Barbados. It is the only aspect of tourism that we can claim and it is the only aspect of tourism that you can really see the true multiplier effect working so that we can get some generation within the economy. Sir, community tourism allows the full step of the multiplier effect but when the land is given to Needham's Point Development Inc., the true multiplier effect of tourism will not work because it catches people at a particular area and it alienates people at a particular level.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be very sure that we do not see a situation – I understand that there might be a couple Members on the Frontbench who would not understand but I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West would understand what I am speaking about – where we had a trade-off between Needham's Point Development Inc., and the true tourism potential that we can get in having a relationship where Government allows Needham's Point Development Inc. to have access to the beach and the community tourism players to also have that access to the beach.

Sir, we have to be very careful in vesting this land that the point be made to the Directors of Needham's Point Development Inc. that they cannot interfere with the rights of those persons living to the east, the south or wherever of this particular piece of land.

Mr. Speaker, I am very interested in this because there is an area in St. Lucy called Fryers Well that I ensured that the people to the east would always have a right to get to

that beach for the simple reason that beach land cannot be only for the people living on the beach, but has to be for everyone. Sir, in the same way I went out of my way to ensure that all those persons living in Checker Hall and the surrounding areas have access to the Fryers Well beach, I want to ensure that further south the same thing occurs with this piece of land.

I know of what I speak, Sir. There are some selfish people who will believe that this land and this beach access should only be for the hotel. Sir, if we really want to develop tourism in Barbados, this Parliament must protect this and I need to get the assurance from the Minister.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, the vesting of this land in Needham's Point Development Inc. in no way compromises any access to the beach on the Needham's Point peninsula. For the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to raise an issue like that to make the public of Barbados and this House believe that in some way we are compromising people's access to the beach is not the way in which we should approach this particular debate, but the Honourable Member for St. Lucy constantly does that.

Mr. Speaker, this piece of land and this vesting does not in any way compromise any issues of community tourism or its development, so to raise those issues in the same context does not do justice to why we are here. This is a debate to a simple Resolution to allow us to have further access to the lands on Needham's Point surrounding the Hilton Hotel for further economic development. It in no way compromises anyone's access to the beach on the peninsula.

Mr. Speaker, I am giving Barbadians and the House the assurance that in no way will any access to the beach on the peninsula be compromised.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, what happens constantly in here is that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy constantly raises these issues to project himself as the champion of poor people and the champion of beach access. Mr. Speaker, this is a man who had land on the beach and sold it to white people.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I have never sold land on the beach to any white person, but I am sorry that I did not have some land to sell to white people. Sir, the Honourable Member must withdraw those remarks because I never sold land on the beach to any white person. I never owned any land in St. James, I rented land in St. James and I could not tell the landlord who to sell her land to.

4.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member is misled by the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter, this would be the first time in his life that he would have been misled by that Honourable Member because one would have expected that he would have been misled by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Peter is not here.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, this is a gentleman who had access to prime west coast beach land, and who sold it to a 'white man'. Sir, I do not know what are the issues.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. I have just informed this Honourable House, and I am glad that the Honourable Member has misled this Honourable House so that I can correct this Honourable House. Sir, the only beach access I have ever owned in my life, that I have written the National Conservation Commission and the Ministry of Public Works to take control of, so that it would not become a private access, can be found at Fryers Well, close by the Ministry of Public Works. This was done, so it could become a public access.

Mr. Speaker, as usual, the Honourable Member speaks off the bottom of his feet and does not connect with the issue, at this point in time.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Well, I am now totally confused. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy, at one voice, says he has never owned land on the beach, then he comes and says he owns land on the beach.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I said I have never owned land on the West Coast. I never said I did not own land in the north of Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I said that the land that was on the West Coast belonged to a lady who sold it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Alright.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, do not be misled or misguided.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate. This land is being vested in the Needham's Point Development Inc., simply for further economic development on the peninsula. It does not, in any way, compromise access to the beach in that area.

Mr. Speaker, with those words, I am obliged to you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member knows that the same hotel had the right to this land and that it never accepted that right to ask the Government for permission to own the land. Sir, when the late Honourable Member for Christ Church South was Chairman of that Board, he refused to allow Needham's Point Development Inc., to take control of that land because the Honourable Member always said that poor people must have the right to access. Sir, now that the Honourable Member has passed away, we are seeing this Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, this Minister must tell this Honourable House why they are now coming for this land, at this point in time, when it was there ever since. The Honourable Member must also tell this House why they have never sought to put it into Needham's Point Development Inc., and why it is that they now want to remove the right of access from the people.

Mr. Speaker, do you know what is more hurtful? I now realised something. Do you understand that the Honourable Member is doing this to his own constituents?

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay, please. The Honourable Member for St. John.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to make a very short intervention. I have listened to the words of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, I have listened to the introduction and I have listened to the final words, in particular, of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Mr. Speaker, the Government, I believe, has been very delinquent in not disclosing the full facts relative to this matter. Perhaps the Minister of Housing and Lands might not be aware, not being responsible for an economic Ministry anymore, and the Minister of Tourism and International Transport has a long history of not being aware of things going on under his watch, at the airport and elsewhere, but the Ministers need to clarify whether or not any negotiations have been taking place for the sale of the Hilton Hotel. That is at the crux of this matter.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: What does that have to do with this? The Honourable Member does not have to clarify that.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, Honourable Member. That does not have anything to do with this Bill today.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Order, please. I am dealing with the Resolution I see before this Honourable House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Resolution before this Honourable House vests the land in Needham's Point Development Inc. I am saying to the House that negotiations and discussions have been taking place for the sale of the Hilton Hotel, which stands on this property, which is being vested in Needham's Point Development Inc.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the land which is the subject of this specific Resolution, is adjacent to the Hilton. It is not the land on which the Hilton is located. Therefore, the Honourable Member is just a few feet off the mark.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, a miss is as good as a mile, in this case. It is the land adjacent to the Hilton, which as was indicated, is land on which the former Mobil Refinery was located, not the land on which the Hilton stands.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, obviously the Minister is saying that it would make it easier for the Government to sell both the Hilton and the adjacent land, having vested it in Needham's Point Development Inc. That is all I wanted to hear.

Mr. Speaker, I am grateful to you.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please conclude.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have not, in this debate, made any statement concerning the sale of the Hilton, the sale of lands, or of any such thing, therefore, the Honourable Member...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member would be misleading the House. I am saying the Honourable Member does not know about it. I am saying the Minister of Tourism and International Transport, to the best of my knowledge, does not know anything about it, either.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please conclude.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, for the position of clarity, I would want to inform Honourable Members that this land indicated in my introduction, is land on which was the former Mobil Oil Refinery, which this Government closed, because of its exorbitant rate of return, which Mobil was earning, while putting pressure on petroleum prices in Barbados. It was also closed out of environmental concerns, such as contamination by oil deposits in the area, over many years, of usage for that purpose; the discomfort caused to users of the beach in the area by the fumes from the refinery; and the fact that greater economic benefits could be obtained from having hotel/conference facilities and other tourism-related investments in the area.

Mr. Speaker, this land to be vested in the Needham's Point Development Inc., is land which would be used ultimately to enhance the tourism-earning potential of Barbados. That is why the Crown is pleased to vest this land in Needham's Point Development Inc. It will not include beach land. Beach lands and accreted lands will remain the property of the Crown. It will not remove access to the new wonderful beach facilities, which were constructed by the National Conservation Commission, for the comfort, safety and human dignity of Barbadians, who use the beach in that area.

Mr. Speaker, it has been this Administration that, far from reducing access to the beaches, has not only increased and expanded the number and scope of beach accesses but has put facilities in place at popular beaches, so that Barbadians do not have to stoop behind the bushes to answer the calls of nature.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House. Sir, you would have been in the House when the Honourable Member for Christ Church South...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what is your point of order?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with decreasing the number of beach accesses.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just make your point of order, Honourable Member.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, if it is hurting the foot, I will sit.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think I have said all I wanted to say on this matter. I would want just to reiterate that this does not include, nor infringe on the access to the beach and that we look forward to further future development to enhance the tourism-earning potential of Barbados.

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

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

4.40 p.m.

ORDER NO. 16 – TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RE-SOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the House resolved into Committee of Supply, Mr. R. D. MARSHALL, Chairman of Committees in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

ORDER NO. 16 – RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF $358 532 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2006-2007 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 2, 2006-2007 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION

HEAD 18 – AUDIT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 18 stand part.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I support the idea of this amount being given to the Audit Department and generally speaking, I support any attempts that are made to upgrade or to assist the work of financial auditing in relation to Government's expenditure of money. The Audit

Department prepares a report under the Laws of Barbados which is then laid in this House as the Auditor-General Report and then the Public Accounts Committee is required to review that Report and any other Reports made by the Auditor or any other financial Report. The Public Accounts Committee, by law, is required to report under Section 8 of the Act on the performance of its duty in respect of each financial year. I know that every now and then, the Honourable Member for St. Peter makes heavy weather about the Public Accounts Committee not reporting. Sir, I want to make it abundantly clear that the Public Accounts Committee has been totally hamstrunged by the failure of the Government to have drafted and brought before this House, regulations so that the Committee can perform its duty under the Act. My attention has been brought to a letter written by my predecessor in office the contents of which I agree. I want to make it a document of the House if it has not been done so already. It is written to the Speaker and copied to the Clerk regarding the need for regulations to be made. I am calling from as far back as July 2005 as a result of the failure of the Public Accounts Committee to be able to continue to conclude or undertake any of its work to have regulations made so that the Committee can carry out its work.

The writer called on the Government under Section 22 of the Public Accounts Committee Act which makes provisions for regulations to be made by the Governor-General for the purpose of carrying out or giving effect to the Act to have those regulations made and approved.

Secondly, there is another problem with the legislation which relates to the fact that it was never intended for independent Senators to participate in the work of the Committee. The letter – as I have said, I am going to make a document of the House and whoever wants to see it, is entitled to take a look at it – points out that these two factors, and I agree with, have considerably hampered the works of the Public Accounts Committee. The Act is passed in 2003 and matters which are critical to the work of the Public Accounts Committee carrying out its mandate have not been done.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We cannot do it without regulations. Your own members of the Committee went into the Committee and frustrated the work of the Committee including a Senator from the Other Place and the work of the Committee was shut down by the intervention of Government Senators and others. If the Committee can continue its work, then the current Minister responsible for the Urban Development Commission should tell the Director to come down there and give the evidence that he is supposed to give without bringing 12 and 15 lawyers to frustrate the work of the Committee.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. To begin with, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition knows that unless he is suggesting that as a leader of a Party in this country that he is supporting the denial of access to justice by individual citizens, he knows better than to suggest that any Minister of Government can go and stop a person from having access to independent advice. This position of me as Minister for the Urban Development Commission is that they must do their work in the Public Accounts Committee. The fact that the Director has legal advice is irrelevant and, in fact, is being used as a sore and poor excuse for the failure of the Leader of the Opposition to be able to do his work in relation to the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr. Chairman, furthermore as an Attorney-at-Law, he knows that the Attorney-General would address this, that there is no need for regulations for them to do their work, that their set the terms and conditions of how they operate in the Public Accounts Committee. While his predecessor might not have been an Attorney-at-Law, he, certainly is an Attorney-at-Law and should be able to find the Case Law.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you very much. The Honourable Member for St. John, you may continue.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, the Public Accounts Committee is now a statutory Committee and prior to becoming that, it was a Committee of this House. I am giving the former Attorney-General time. It does mean that I am stripping you of your nomenclature. You are the former Attorney-General and you should take up the law and read them. It is now a statutory Committee and, therefore, the Committee exercises statutory powers and is now subject to the provision of the Administration Justice Act. It would not have been subject to those laws had it been simply a Committee of the House.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You may debate that with the previous Leader of the Opposition or whom you wish...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House again. The fact that it may be subject to the Administration Justice Act does not in any way give him comfort in his assertion that they cannot function without regulations. The Insolvency Act in this country does not have regulations but people still function under it. Therefore, it is a red herring to suggest that a Public Accounts Committee in this country cannot function because of the absence of regulations. The only thing that the Public Accounts Committee has had is an absence of will from the Leader of the Opposition.

4.50 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member for St. John, would you please continue.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am raising the matter, if the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East wants to reply she can either reply to me or the previous Leader of the Opposition or whoever she wishes to reply to. I have raised substantive concerns, and I raised it because I join with the writer of that letter, who said that in the Estimates debate in March 2005, the Prime Minister of Barbados held the Committee up to ridicule and that the surest way of steering its work away from the path of both ridicule and disrepute would be to have the regulations made. My position has not changed in this regard. I believe that the regulations need to be made. Sir, if the Honourable Minister is saying that they do not need to be made, then she has to bring those persons, most unlikely to come under whip in any event, to heel in the Public Accounts Committee and tell them to cooperate with the arrangements and give directions to those persons under her charge in the Urban Development Commission, to stop frustrating the work of the Committee and let it undertake the work that it has to do.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member as Leader of the Opposition knows better than to reflect negatively on people, who have simply sought to access legal advice and to term that as frustrating the Committee's work.

Sir, if the Honourable Member, therefore, is serious about upholding the institutions of Government and to give people access to the laws of this land, he cannot say that the Director or others at the Urban Development Commission are frustrating simply by asking for legal advice, he cannot.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

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

HEAD 23 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH – $2 532.00

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Dr. the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Sir, this amount of $2 532 is Barbados' assessed contribution to the Framework Convention on tabacco control. Sir, Barbados ratified this international health treaty in November 2005, and I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

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

HEAD 43 – MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS – $150 000.00

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, this amount $150 000 is requested to support the efforts of the Barbados Youth Business Trust. Sir, Honourable Members would recall recently that...

Asides.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: Mr. Chairman, the Barbados Youth Business Trust is an entity that offers entrepreneurial assistance to young persons in Barbados. Since its inception in 1996, this entity has been doing some wonderful work in facilitating the involvement of young persons in various areas of business activity. I do not think that anyone in this Honourable Chamber would want to deny the Barbados Youth Business Trust the opportunity to expand its work and include more young persons in its portfolio.

Sir, with those few words, I beg that this Head stand part.

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

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

HEAD 49 – MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT – $200 000.00

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the request here is for $200 000 to fund the work necessary for the exploration of the extended continental shelf, Barbados' claim in respect of this. I think that Honourable Members would be aware that having got the decision of the Arbitral Tribunal, which has been so significant for us economically and the use, development, exploration and exploitation, as our marine resources and our hydrocarbon resources in particular, that we need now to go on to do the complementary and corollary work in respect of the claim for the continental shelf. Sir, these funds will help to secure

technical advice, expertise and consultant to carry out the work on Barbados' behalf.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

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

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am very glad the Honourable Member has pointed out that these funds will help us to be able to increase our fuel capacity. I will be very grateful if the Honourable Minister would tell us, now that we have seen the reduction in Government overcharging for fuel in the country, when will we feel the effects of the reduction in world market prices at the pump in Barbados. It is clear to me that at the level of the price on the world market, the consumers in Barbados could deal with a further reduction as it relates to world market prices and not as it relates to financing the Barbados National Terminal Company Limited or World Cup.

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

Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is being provocative.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, are you going to wind up the debate?

Hon. Miss. H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, I will respond because I think the Honourable Member has put something in the wind with which people may be inclined to run, because it is titillating, though lacking in substance. The answer to his question is this. This has nothing to do with expenditure for Cricket World Cup, point number one. Sir, point number two, we have dropped the prices commensurate with the decrease in the prices at the international level. If prices at the international level should continue to decline, equally, the Government of Barbados is committed to pass on that decrease to the public.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is on a point of order.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression when the price of fuel on the world market was US$59 a barrel, that the price remained the same as it was previously. Sir, if I am misleading the Honourable House, I would like the Honourable Member to tell us when the price was US$59 a barrel, how much it was per litre and how much it is today, Sir.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has not only misled the House, he misleads himself as always.

Sir, the reality is there are fluctuations on the world market. Sir, for those people who track what is happening, in international commodities there is a variation in price of $1 or $2, which may or may not be reflected in the importation costs. The importation costs are not only the price of the product itself, but insurance, freight and related matters.

Sir, if there is a dollar drop in the international price, it may not be reflected. Sir, the Honourable Member is now interrupting me mid-sentence.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is on a point of order.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. James South knows that we are not speaking about a $1 per barrel drop, Sir. We are now speaking about $20 a barrel, which is equivalent to nearly 25 per cent drop.

5.00 p.m.

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, the price in Barbados was last raised in May of this year, when prices were US$75 per barrel. Since that date, the price went down in the last three weeks to about $60 to $62 and it has been wavering in that range – $60, $62, $60 and so on. We do not change the price at the pump every day. Once you get into a certain band of reduction that is sustained over time, it is then that the change is reflected.

Sir, we changed, perhaps when the price was in the region of $60 to $65 per barrel, where there was an increase. When it went up to $75 we increased then and now that it has moved down to approximately $60 a week ago, we lowered the price, commensurate with the international drop.

The Honourable Member during the course of his question, threw in a little side jab. If we were in the boxing ring, I am not sure what blow it would be equivalent to. Sir, it was the kind of glance that you could brush off. It was not a knockout punch or anything that carried any weight behind it, but implicit in there was a little snide question, which was the issue of the terminal.

Sir, I do not have my file here and I apologise. We paid perhaps in the region of maybe 3 cents to 4 cents per litre, 6 cents at the most, as a repayment on the cost of the terminal, which is much cheaper than the cost that we paid for transportation of fuel under the previous Administration.

Equally, we are able to have these reductions in the price of oil because the Barbados Labour Party Administration terminated the relations, which the previous Administration had with Exxon Mobil or the Esso Company Mobil, which locked us into paying a 15 per cent after tax guaranteed of profit.

Therefore, Esso in Barbados was guaranteed by the Democratic Labour Party, 15 per cent profit after tax on every drop of oil that was sold in Barbados at the pump. Sir, that is why they were never able to reduce the price of oil, and we can.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is on a point of order.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that Mobil was a cost to the consumer and that the two terminal companies are not now a cost to the consumer.

Sir, everybody knows that the consumers of Barbados will have to finance a bill of almost $150 million, of which $100 million is overrun. It is wrong to give the impression that a project that started at $45 million that now cost more than $145 million, is not a cost but Mobil was a cost.

I would like the Honourable Member to tell me how the terminal company that was budgeted to come in at $45 million, now cost the taxpayers $145 million, and it is no cost to the consumer. I would also like the Honourable Member to tell me in what way, and what methods are being used to finance the $45 million, and also the $100 million overrun that occurred.

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir. The Jack-in-the-box is now galloping.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. James South, you have to withdraw that, please.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I do?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, I abide by your ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please, Please. Continue now.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, who has been likened by some to a Jack-in-the-box is now on a gallop, Sir, which is substantially different from what I said initially.

Sir, the reality is this. There is no suggestion on This Side that the terminal does not have a cost. As a matter of fact, there is a loan guarantee, which we will have to debate in this Chamber and the full information will have to be given at that time.

There was no cost overrun of $100 million, as is being alleged by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. What they were, as I understand it – because as you know, this is a project that preceded me and I had to get the figures since I became Minister – they made certain changes to the project. Let me give an analogy that might help to explain.

If you are taking on a construction project, and you determine that you are going to build a two-bedroom wooden house, your cost may be $75,000 or $100,000. If you then determine that you are going to build a three-bedroom wall house, the cost may go up to $200 000. This is not a cost overrun. This is a change in the project structure, which caused additional costs, and that is what happened, as I understand it with BNTCL.

When they started out, initially, they defined the project in a particular way. They then made a determination that for Barbados' oil security, in order to have the quality structure and pipeline that would not be leaking like the pipeline at Gibbons is leaking into the agricultural lands, they then took a decision to go for a far more high-tech transmission system and pipeline with a higher technical capability. As a result of that project change, the cost of the project went up. Sir, that could not be described as a project overrun.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that this new terminal company will be compensating the farmers in the Christ Church East area and that the cost of this new terminal company will include the damages that will have to be paid to those farmers who lost.

Sir, by the Honourable Member's own admission, negligence occurred with a previous company and the Honourable Member is now saying that once the information is given that the Honourable Member used the Ministry's energy to protect those farmers in the Christ Church East area, under the environmental side of her Ministry. I am grateful to the Honourable Member for getting compensation for those farmers, using the environmental side, and not the energy side of her Ministry. I am grateful to her, Sir.

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

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I am disappointed that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy did not advise the previous Administration to compensate the farmers, since it happened under them, but that is another matter. The reality is, Sir, that the payback for the pipeline has been put out by persons for whom it is convenient to give inaccurate information, as a substantial amount of money coming out of the taxpayers every month, every day and so on.

Sir, the payback – and I am speaking without the benefit of the file in front of me so the figure may vary by a cent or two, but if my memory serves me correctly – it is about 5 cents per litre on gasoline, not a larger sum than that, every taxpayer pays. This is the money that is used...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that 5 cents a litre means nothing. The Prime Minister already told this House that every cent a litre is $1 million. Therefore, that means 5 cents would have to be $5 million, per litre.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, 5 cents per litre on gas is what the repayment is and when the matter comes before the House, we will have an opportunity to debate it at length. I see the Honourable Member for St. Philip West nodding his head in keen anticipation, and we will have an opportunity to discuss it then.

Sir, I believe I have answered the questions of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, those that were intended to solicit serious information, and those that were just intended to solicit. I have dealt with the matter.

5.10 p.m.

I beg to move that Head 49 stand part.

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

The question that Head 49 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, seconded by Hon. R. R. FARLEY, the Resolution was read a first and second time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, this brings us to the end of today's Sitting. I wish to indicate that it is the intention of Government to continue with the debate on the National Strategic Plan when next we meet, as well as to do one or two other Resolutions and to deal with Obituary and Congratulatory Speeches. Mr. Speaker, the debate on the National Strategic Plan will continue next week and probably the week after.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words I therefore beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 17, 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, October 17, 2006 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

5.16 p.m.

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ORDER NO. 16 – RESOLUTION THAT THE SUM OF THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHT THOUSAND, FIVE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-TWO DOLLARS BE GRANTED FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND BE PLACED AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2006-2007 44

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KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)
LYNCH, Hon. N. A. (St. Michael South)
MARSHALL, Mr. R. D. (St. Michael West Central)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
ROETT, His Honour I. A. (St. Michael Central)
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)
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