

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2003 – 2008

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, October 17, 2006

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, October 17, 2006.

PRESENT

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

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)

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

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

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

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed., LL.B. (Hons.) (Lond.), LL.M. (Leic.), J.P. (Minister of Labour and the Civil Service)

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

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

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)

Hon. Dr. 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.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

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

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 Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, October 10, 2006.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the Minutes were circulated, and subject to any observations or corrections, I beg to move that these Minutes be confirmed.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR
THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am in receipt of a Message from The Honourable The Senate to The Honourable the House of Assembly.

“The Senate has the honour to extend its compliments to The Honourable the House of Assembly and to reply to the Message from the House inviting the Senate to appoint five Senators to a **Joint Select Committee on the Road Traffic (Amendment) Bill, 2006.**

The Senate is pleased to appoint

- Senator the Honourable Miss Lynette Eastmond**
- Senator Rudy W. Grant**
- Senator G. P. Ian Gooding-Edghill**
- Senator Sir Allan, Fields, KCMG**
- Senator the Honourable Mrs. Velma Newton**

to constitute the Joint Committee with Members of the House of Assembly, and to offer every good wish for the deliberations of the Committee.

Dated the 14th day of August, 2006.

Sir Fred W. Gollop (signed)
PRESIDENT

PAPERS

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and Minister of Finance, I am commanded to lay:

Report of the Supervisor of Insurance, for the year ended 31st December, 2003.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the First Reading of the following Bills:

1. Deposit Insurance Bill, 2006;
2. Financial Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2006;
3. International Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2006;
4. Central Bank of Barbados (Amendment) Bill, 2006.

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

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

**CONGRATULATORY AND/
OR OBITUARY SPEECHES**

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, within recent weeks, a former Member of this Honourable House, Mr. Roy

Edison Brathwaite, who would have served in this Honourable House between 1981 and 1986, has passed.

As I tender This Side’s sympathy to those of his family, who still suffer this tremendous loss, I wish to say that Roy Edison Brathwaite was a man, who grew up in very lowly and humble circumstances, in the Fustic Village/Checker Hall areas of St. Lucy.

He grew up at a time where, even though there had been some significant advancement in primary education, the whole concept of universal secondary education had been very much unknown. Roy Brathwaite grew up in an era where the values of that community, in particular, required that youngsters attend Church often; that youngsters develop and learn a skill; and that youngsters do their utmost, not just to support their families but their wider communities. Sir, these values which were instilled by his parents, were values that Roy developed and on which he flourished in his adult life.

As a youngster, he tried his hands at farming. I am told that he used to produce mainly food crops, such as potatoes, yams, cassava and such like. When he was about 15 years old, he had to make a decision about his future career, and he toyed with the idea of shoemaking and carpentry, before settling to be more of a carpenter, than a shoemaker. All the while, Roy attended the Checker Hall Adventist Church, of which he was a member for more than sixty years, and in his latter life, insisted on serving in the choir of that Church.

Mr. Speaker, Roy Brathwaite never sought employment as a public officer, never saw it as a Government’s role to employ 100 per cent of those who would be seeking work, instead, he decided that self-employment and small business would be his twin activities as a youngster, growing up in Barbados.

He worked at the old Sandy Lane Sugar Estate, as it was, standing in the location where the Sandy Lane Golf Course and Resort now stand. Sir, this point has to be made that in those days, he travelled from Checker Hall, St. Lucy, to Sandy Lane and on his way home every evening, wherever he saw somebody by a bus stop, even if he did not know them, he would give them a lift. That way, people were attracted to him because most people knew the number of his vehicle, L-68, than knew him at first. When they eventually got to know him, they recognised that he was a kind and caring man.

Mr. Speaker, before his entry into active politics in 1971, he had developed a knowledge of construction, after Sandy Lane was transformed from a sugar estate, into modern real estate of a different type from what was there before. Roy went into the trucking business, during the construction of the original Sandy Lane Hotel. Based on his

early skills as a carpenter, he developed a close affinity with building construction. Roy had been seen as such a prominent self-reliant, independent person, that there were those who always wanted to get close to him, to find out what was the secret to his success in business.

Mr. Speaker, Roy Brathwaite would have told them that his secret rested in an abiding faith in God. They would have thought that his secret laid in working long hours and in being generous to those with whom he interacted. Somehow the pressure of the opinion that was favorably shared about him in St. Lucy, impelled him into active politics during the 1971 election.

Mr. Speaker, it would have required a very brave man, indeed, to contest an election for the Barbados Labour Party, in St. Lucy, in 1971. It would have been a brave man, indeed, who would have joined forces with the Barbados Labour Party, in 1971, especially when persons of the ilk of Fred Greaves, who was widely respected in St. Lucy, could not have won St. Lucy for the Barbados Labour Party. Sir, St. Lucy had become territory that was cleverly cultivated by Sir Theodore Brancker and Sir James Cameron Tudor, who formed such a formidable combination under the system of Double Member Constituencies, that St. Lucy, even in 1971, was correctively perceived as a Democratic Labour Party stronghold.

In 1971, Roy contested the election, though he did not win. He went a second time, in 1976, and did not win but in 1981, when at the time nationally there was swing against the Barbados Labour Party Government, he won St. Lucy, based primarily on that kind, sharing nature, which he had demonstrated and based on the fact that as his Party had been in power, he was able to get a number of amenities and facilities for the parish of St. Lucy.

As an Honourable Member of Parliament, he was seen by his constituents to be absolutely approachable. As an Honourable Member of Parliament, he demonstrated normal good sense during Parliamentary debates. Mr. Speaker, so loyal was he to the Barbados Labour Party, that whenever there were meetings on the National Council, in the days when he was Honourable Member of Parliament and some years after, Roy Brathwaite was always in attendance. Sir, through it all, he remained an active Sabbatarian in the Seventh Day Adventist Church.
10.30 a.m.

Sir, at the time when he entered active politics, his family was a very young family and to the extent that active involvement in politics does have some impact on family life, his young family certainly would have seen the sacrifices he was making as they, the children were growing up under their mother, when Roy was involved in the

activities of his Party. Sir, all told, Roy Edison Brathwaite, led a life which was a beacon and an example to those in St. Lucy.

It must be now said as a matter of record that with his entry into active politics and his contribution in St. Lucy, that he gave the Barbados Labour Party something of a presence which the Party never had in St. Lucy before he came and any succeeding candidate for the Barbados Labour Party, certainly up to now, would have to say that the way to any Barbados Labour Party infiltration into Democratic Labour Party's territory in St. Lucy would have been paved by Roy Edison Brathwaite.

To those who mourn, on behalf of Honourable Members on this side, I tender sympathy and I beg that the normal Resolution which this Parliament would normally prepare and send to the family be so done. I ask that as a mark of respect, we observe some moments in silence for his passing at the end of Members' contributions.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I rise to second the Resolution extending sympathy and condolences to the family of the late Roy Brathwaite. When I first visited this Chamber as a student in 1977, the Barbados Labour Party had a group of young, vibrant, aggressive parliamentarians.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, it is always bad, in my view, to hearken after the past but sometimes I would prefer to find myself in Parliament at that time because I felt that the energy and excitement on Both Sides of the House were riveting and whenever we passed as students and saw this car park full of cars belonging to members of Parliament, we knew the House was in session, unless it was dinner time, and we would come here and spend about one hour before we went home.

Sir, that was in 1976 and Roy Brathwaite entered the House in 1981, in what might have been characterised as an upset because the Democratic Labour Party went from seven seats to ten seats and its margin of support increased substantially in that five-year period but St. Lucy was the aberration, if you want to call it that, in that particular election in terms of results. It was a seat that the Democratic Labour Party felt strongly that it would have won. Therefore, when Parliament reopened in 1981, all eyes, apart from the new Opposition members would have been focused on the Honourable Member of Parliament for St. Lucy.

Mr. Speaker, in Budget debates and other special occasions, Roy Brathwaite; with his unique turn of phrase and, I would also say with his unique sense of humour and unpredictability in this House; often left us with some of the parliamentary gems which have survived. I am not going

to speak about them now because, very often, people cannot take these things in the spirit in which they are given and particularly when one is doing an obituary, these anecdotes are better talked about in the lunch room or other places but I always enjoyed his contributions just as I enjoyed the contributions, of Harold Blackman. Mr. Speaker, when, in those days, the late Harold Blackman had finished speaking, you almost felt as if you had been doused with some water, so energised did you feel. He was a very heady performer in parliamentary debate. Sir, that was not the style of Roy Brathwaite but his style betrayed his own philosophy.

He was very focused on his constituency, he was very focused on the issues that concerned him most and there was even an occasion when he took on the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow in relation to a visit that Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow had paid to Cuba to participate in a non-aligned conference on debt in the Third World. Sir, in an attempt to establish that the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, of all people, was a Communist, which in those days because of Grenada and because the Cold War was not yet over, would have been quite damaging to one's political career but the late Roy Brathwaite engaged in a riveting exchange which made headlines at the time.

Sir, he had his moments in Parliament but there are parliamentarians who excel in this Chamber as speakers and they are those who do not excel in the Chamber but may excel in terms of service to their constituencies or outstanding ministerial service. There are others who are well-rounded and may achieve all of that but I think that Roy Brathwaite will go down in the history of this Parliament, as one of those extraordinary Barbadians from whom people did not expect as much as he gave. Sir, even at times, one found that the Barbados Labour Party, as an institution itself, could almost not believe the good fortune that Roy Brathwaite has visited upon that Party by helping them win a seat which, throughout the political history of Barbados, has stuck close to the bosom of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, there were very unique features about him. He came into politics and left the same kind of person that he was. Sir, we only conversed on a few occasions but never in a parliamentary setting except at one opening of Parliament but invariably, the exchanges may have been at the Seventh Day Adventist Church or other ceremonies and funerals. Sir, to my mind, he was an extremely quiet spoken and appeared to be a reserved individual but one of those Barbadians with whom his pleasantness and the fine attributes that John Hearn describes in the *Independence Journal*, which came out in 1966, the deference and the apparent meekness that some people mischaracterises in the Barbadian character but which were simply born of a confidence, lack of pushiness but nevertheless, a desire to serve and to be of service.

Mr. Speaker, even though he came from the north, he reminded me of Members of Parliament like Reynold Weekes, a man who could be awoken out of his bed in his pajamas to sign passport forms. A man whose children had to 'size around' in the vehicle every morning to make room for people going to town. A man for whom very small favours granted to people living in rural areas, who may not have had the ability to achieve those things by themselves, endeared him very deeply into the hearts of those individuals. Sir, regardless of their latent political support, they were always able to say of those individuals that they were gentlemen; that they were approachable; that they cared and that they helped the people whom they were elected to serve.

10.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the point is, whether you elected them or not, which is probably the irony of people like that... The reason many of them do not get into this Chamber is, because you can sometimes get two for the price of one; so, the people of St. Lucy could get Evelyn Greaves, as well as Roy Brathwaite. They could elect Evelyn Greaves, who then was a trade unionist, a young intellectual bright star on the political horizon, and at the same time they could get the assistance and help of somebody like Roy Brathwaite.

Sir, in rural Barbados that has also been part of the characteristics of the political process. It does injustice to some people, and for those who are viewed in the other context, it propels them into the House of Assembly, where they could make more formidable contribution.

Mr. Speaker, even though Roy Brathwaite won the seat in St. Lucy, on only one occasion, and as I said it was, therefore, not within the bosom of the Democratic Labour Party, I do not think that the Democratic Labour Party, and certainly not its former Parliamentary Representative – and I know that its current representative – here is making his way here to participate, because of the esteem in which Roy Brathwaite was held, would have held that against him. In fact, we, like the Honourable Members on That Side, will join in celebrating his life, as an outstanding Parliamentary Representative in this Parliament and as a role model for other younger politicians to follow.

Sir, with those words, as I said, I not only second this Resolution, but I will be grateful if and when it is communicated to his family, that we extend our sympathy and our condolences, that it would be recorded that the Opposition was as strong in those sentiments as Honourable Members of the Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown.

Hon. Dame Billie MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I would wish to add my voice to this Resolution of condolence. Sir,

Roy Edison Brathwaite, Esq., was we have heard a gentleman. He was very much a man of his time and a man of his community. He was a real St. Lucy man. He spoke with that St. Lucy twang, as we used to call it in those days. You do not hear it as much nowadays. Sir, St. Lucy people have become more cosmopolitan, I suppose. He had a favourite word and would begin most sentences: "Well you know, normally..." and you would hear the St. Lucy accent come through. He was a humble man. He was tall and distinguished looking. So, in many ways you had to look up to him.

Mr. Speaker, I can testify to the observations just made by the Honourable Member for St. John, that he left this Chamber as he came to it. He was never one to get giddy. He was not moved by high office. Sir, indeed, I also endorse the view, that when he came to this House, he came at a time of great excitement. He came in July 1981, as we have heard, there was an election in that year. He served on the then Sugar Production and Export Control Board. It does not exist anymore, but at that time the late Jack Odle, Mr. Lindsay Bolden and Mr. Warwick Franklyn, served together with Roy Brathwaite on that Board.

In 1984, Roy Brathwaite was elected Deputy Speaker. Sir, Speaker Burton Hinds had retired for reasons of ill-health, and the then Deputy Speaker Lindsay Bolden, was elected to become the Speaker of the House of Assembly and Roy Brathwaite served as his Deputy, until the election of 1986.

Sir, the early 1980s were dramatic times in this Honourable House. It was a time of entry into elective politics of our now Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, and Roy Brathwaite's elevation to Deputy Speaker, coincided with the dramatic beginnings of the elective political career of the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, Roy Brathwaite was seventy-six years old when he passed on September 1, 2006. Sir, nowadays, that is not thought to be a great age, so many people now live to their late 80s, early 90s and there are so many centenarians in Barbados now. He was a countryman. I said that he was a humble man.

Sir, they used to refer to him sometimes as the spin bowler of the Barbados Labour Party. I can remember several occasions, on the Floor of this House and outside of it on the political platform, he would bowl what the fellows would sometimes refer to as an awkward ball. You did not expect it and you did not see it coming. In all of that, he remained the baron of Checker Hall. That is how the late Sir Harold St. John used to refer to him.

He had, indeed, earned and won the respect and confidence of the people of the parish of St. Lucy. It is no small thing, as the Honourable Leader of the Opposition has pointed out, Roy Brathwaite, at a time when there was a little

swing away from the then Barbados Labour Party Government, should have won a seat in St. Lucy.

Mr. Speaker, many years before that another Brathwaite, the late Lloyd Beresford Brathwaite, had run on a Barbados Labour Party ticket in St. Lucy. That was after L. B. Brathwaite had left the Democratic Labour Party and joined the ranks of the Barbados Labour Party. Those were long and distant days of radio distribution. There was no TV, there was no CBC or VOB. Sir, when you were campaigning, out in what we described as the outer wilds of St. Lucy, in many ways you were cut off. Sir, in those days you used to have elections more regularly, but the day before the election, a man in a motor car, in those days you would call it a 'loud hailer' that you held to your mouth, drove up and down the parish of St. Lucy telling the people: "Ladies and gentlemen, I regret to announce that Lloyd Beresford Brathwaite has withdrawn from the race. He is no longer a candidate."

Sir, there was no means, once that news got to 'L. B.', to reverse that position or to rebut it before the election the next morning, needless to say he loss disastrously.

Sir, L. B. would tell you, for years afterwards, people would come up to him sometimes and say: "But L. B., why did you withdraw? I would have voted for you." That is how it was in those days.
10.50 a.m.

Sir, that is how it was in those days. Indeed, it was a major stronghold of the Democratic Labour Party. Roy was relentless – and in life, and in political life in particular that is how you have to be – in his representation of the people of the parish of St. Lucy. They returned the compliment, when they decided to have him, as their Member of Parliament between 1981 and 1986.

He was a stalwart of the Party. The Honourable Member for St. James North is correct. Nowadays, I hear and I read in the newspaper that in some Parties, many Members, even sitting Members do not find themselves with regularity at the National Council.

I can remember the days, Mr. Speaker, my father's days, when a man used to put on a suit to go to Council Meetings at Party Headquarters and, Roy Brathwaite belonged to that era. He would drive down every third Thursday night to National Council meetings, in L68 filled up with constituents whom he picked up on the way. He would drive them the long way back after the meetings, which went on until 10 o'clock and 11 o'clock.

He would be found at Annual Conferences. Mr. Speaker, I would never forget an Annual Conference once, which was held in the Steel Shed at Queens Park. I forget

what the issue was that day, but whatever it was Roy Brathwaite and I had both spoken on the Floor at the Annual Conference but we were at two opposite ends of the issue.

At lunch time when we broke, he came up to me and said very quietly now: “My Lady, my wife has told me that I am not to oppose you on this issue, if not, I would have to answer to her.” I said: “Roy, in the interest of domestic peace, and possibly national peace, you should adhere to your wife’s advice.” And so he did.

He was humble, approachable, and you could love him and we did love him. We missed his presence from this House, those of us who came back to it after 1986, and in my case after 1991. He was a man much revered in his parish. Sir, I went to his funeral and I thought that I was reasonably early but when I got there, there was no room in the church, so I stood in the churchyard with hundreds of people and waited for the graveside.

We celebrate the contribution that Roy Brathwaite made to this country and particularly through this Parliament. He sat in the highest Committee in this land, and long may it continue in Barbados that a humble, simple man, who worked hard in his community, represented the interest of his community, raised himself by dint of hard work in his community, could come to this Parliament, if only for a term, to represent his people.

I would wish particularly to offer to his widow – a woman I much admired and particularly after that incident when she spoke to me through him, I have always admired her – and to her children, well-known to us, our deepest condolences, Sir.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to add words of condolence, in respect of the late Roy Edison Brathwaite and, perhaps, to speak of him as a younger person in the Barbados Labour Party, and having sat on This Side and observed him, as well as to actually interface with him at constituency meetings and at the National Council Meetings, over the last 35 or so years.

I want to say at the outset, Sir, that he was a really true example of a grass roots man who rose to excellence. I think a lot of it speaks of the virtues which he upheld, and his relationships with people. He served them day and night, as was expressed by previous speakers.

He was that BLP stalwart from the North, Sir, who was well-embraced by all Barbadians, not only the people of St. Lucy. He was highly respected by all Barbadians. When he received the opportunity in 1981 to become the Member of Parliament for that northern constituency, he served his

people with distinction. Indeed, he was very community-minded and I believe that is what helped him to become the Member of Parliament at that time.

Mr. Speaker, he was one of my favourite politicians because he carried himself with a measure of humility. He was helpful to people at all levels and led them forward by setting examples, which I believe are important for all of us to follow. He always displayed a high measure of respect for everyone, despite their colour, class, creed, status in society and, indeed, because of that respect he displayed, people also highly respected him.

He had a measure of care and concern that, I believe, more people should have known him and others at his level who would have been living the example of showing that care, that listening ear, that gentle care and comfort, which he always displayed.

Mr. Speaker, he had a measure of loyalty that, again, I wish that more of the Barbadian society would emulate. He would always indicate his differences but at the end of the day, there was a measure of commitment and loyalty that could not be measured in words. We do not see a lot of that today anymore, Sir, not even in families or in the workplace but the late Roy Brathwaite always displayed that measure of loyalty, despite the situation.

We all know, Sir, that he was a devout Seventh-Day Adventist and, I believe, that it is because of this Christian and moral development that he would have been able to live through that period.

We know of persons who would have made scathing remarks at him because many people in Barbados, even people today, are of the belief that one must have the biggest degree, live in the most expensive house, and own the largest plantation to be respected, and represent the interest of people.

The late Roy Brathwaite did not have any big degree, did not live on any massive plantation. He was a humble Barbadian, who committed himself to give proper representation to the people who placed him in that excellent position, as Member of Parliament. He always exemplified humility and generosity of spirit, and he gave unselfishly.

Mr. Speaker, I got to know many of the members of the constituency branch of St. Lucy, since on a Sunday afternoon, the late Lawrence Johnson, another stalwart from St. Thomas would always fill his van – he had a van like a ZM van – with the young and old from the parish and we would go visiting constituency after constituency. Often times, Mr. Speaker, by the time he reached St. Lucy, especially at the Half Moon Fort School, when Mr. Roy Brathwaite’s meetings were in session, we would never

leave to go and visit anybody else. A measure of comfort and much education always flowed when he spoke at his various meetings. Therefore, we were able to 'whip up' many relationships with the people of St. Lucy as a result of their connection with the late Roy Brathwaite.
11.00 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I can picture now the late Roy Brathwaite at annual conferences. He did not sit at the head table, he sat with his delegation from St. Lucy, so that they would feel comfortable and he helped to guide them through the various resolutions and other important statements they were expected to make at those series of annual conferences. Sir, that is the real true spirit of a man who wanted to be with the people, coming from among the people, and serving the people.

Mr. Speaker, my greatest experiences came as a result of knowing him and interfacing with him, and of course of him embracing me as a really young woman at that time.

Mr. Speaker, he dispelled the myth that you had to be the strongest, the richest and the most handsome to represent people's interest at all levels in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to briefly make a comment and to give him kudos for the various presentations that he made on the Floor of this Honourable Chamber. He got them from me in his lifetime and I believe that I should share them now. His presentations were always dotted with a measure of humour and so people came and sat in the Gallery to hear the late Mr. Roy Brathwaite make his presentations because they knew that at the end of the day it would have been full of substance but indeed the humour would have come through as well. Mr. Speaker, I had wonderful experiences coming here to listen to what he had to say.

Mr. Speaker, he was a self-made entrepreneur. He has left a legacy behind. Despite whatever was said, he has left a massive business that his children and others have been able to benefit from.

Indeed, Mr. Brathwaite spoke of the wonderful stories of people who came to him to get lunch money and bus fare to send their children to school. Sir, he would have been down to his last few cents that should have been given to his children, but he would make that sacrifice and give it to others. Sir, that is what I call having good interpersonal skills, getting along with people and letting them know that you care.

He understood the plight of the people in those days because in the 1980s we still had a number of Barbadians who were living on the edge of poverty. Therefore, Mr. Brathwaite would have given them his last

because he believed that children should be able to go to school to take advantage of the free education that was available. Mr. Speaker, I believe that we need more persons of his calibre to be able to share, to care and to represent the interest of the people.

Sir, he left that legacy behind for his family and others. He was a tower of strength in their lives. As a father, he ensured that all of his children receive the type of education that he did not get. He would not have received the full slate of it because he may have only gone to an early secondary level, but he ensured that all of his children were able to take advantage of the free education that was available, by making tremendous sacrifices to ensure that they were on the cutting edge. Mr. Speaker, that is the kind of unselfish approach that all Barbadians should pursue in helping their children while at the same time helping others who cannot help themselves. That role was played by the late Roy Brathwaite.

Sir, his successes would have never been realised without the support of his wife. I believe the Barbadian saying that behind every successful man, there is a woman is expressed in the way that she lent him support, not only within the household but indeed in his whole political career and in his religious life. His wife was always there giving him that measure of support, love and care that is needed when one is in the political arena because he would have had to ignore a lot of the needs of his family when he would have been out there canvassing and interfacing with the people. His wife had that kind of understanding spirit and therefore she gave him the moral and spiritual support that was necessary. There was no easy period in their lives while he was in the political arena.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I want to express deepest sympathies to his grieving family – it was not so long ago that he passed away – and asked that God would continue to help them to find peace and comfort while they mourn his loss. I trust that Roy Brathwaite would rest in peace knowing that he fought the fight and ran the race and that a crown is laid up for him in glory. May he rest in peace.

I thank you.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, in 1981, as has already been stated, a gentleman, and I want to refer to the late Roy Brathwaite as a gentleman... Even though I come from the southern part of Barbados, I developed strong and deep connections with the northern parish of this country. In the 1970s and the 1980s, I journeyed many times to that part of Barbados to develop a strong relationship with a lovely young lady from that particular parish. I am not one to try to cover all parts of Barbados, so I used to take a particular journey down the coast and work my way through places like Shermans and into that area.

Sir, as I stop for gas at a particular gas station, I made enquiries, because even in those days I wanted to know who control some aspects of the wealth of Barbados, and I was told that it was a man by the name of Roy Brathwaite. In those days I did not have any real – some people would dispute this – strong political connections. I therefore did not enquire as to his political connection particularly in the 70s. It was only as the 80s start to emerge and I heard his voice and recognised that he was running against an individual whom I thought would have vanquished him at the Polls in 1981, that I recognised that he was a committed member of the Barbados Labour Party. Of course, as a youngster then – I am still a youngster now by the way, Mr. Speaker – with an emerging support for the Democratic Labour Party, I wanted my candidate to win. The Leader of the Opposition stated then that it came through as almost an aberration at the time that Roy Brathwaite emerged victorious in St. Lucy.

Sir, these parishes always have what one might almost call, strange characteristics. They recognise the contribution of persons such as Roy Brathwaite. Roy Brathwaite is an individual, as others on the Other Side have already stated, who made himself and who looked after his family well. I remember seeing several trucks around. In those days a person owning several trucks and being able to move all kinds of things across Barbados had to be a person of some deep financial worth. Of course, when one now examines the wealth legacy left by entrepreneurs of that era, there had to be imbedded within those individuals, a very strong knowledge and business acumen that persons today, as they study how they evolved, should look at what they did and use it as a template for themselves.

Roy Brathwaite truly developed a successful business template, which as I said, many other persons now could seek to emulate. I listened to Parliament as well during those days and read things in the newspapers.
11.10 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, as the representative for St. Thomas has stated, not only was his presentation fixed with substance, but there was also some humour that one garnered from his presentations. There were many people who came, either for the substance or for his humour, and sat in the Visitors' Gallery. Mr. Speaker, I believe that persons like Roy Brathwaite must be applauded for their contribution to the politics of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe that as young politicians, we are conscious of the contributions which those persons would have made and the paths and journeys which they would have taken, to ensure that we would have reached this Honourable Chamber, at this juncture of time.

I do not even know if the people of Barbados would recognise the selflessness that one has to take, in order to become involved in politics. I do not even believe that the people of Barbados are conscious that it is a hard and difficult road. The kind of quips, the kind of blows that politicians themselves put into each other; the brutality of politics, sometimes it is frightening, as one seeks to gain a percentage point or an extra vote; the viciousness, spite and dirtiness which is tossed on you. Sir, sometimes I wonder if this is what politics is about. Sir, by the mere practise of that behaviour, we tend to energise the society to take on that same kind of behaviour and, therefore, you go about your business of governance and knock at a door... I have seen instances where water was thrown, and it was not fresh water that would have just came from the tap.

Asides.

Mr. R. D. JONES: A lot of that used to happen in the past. I do not know if it is still happens because in my own particular area, they tend to be a bit more receptive, at least to my presence I do not know of others. We have, as one reflects on the life and times of Roy Brathwaite, to say to our people, when persons come forward for governance, when persons come forward to say that they want to be part of leadership and management of a society, such as Barbados, that we exercise mutual respect across the country. Let us not be victorious through nastiness and dastardly acts, but through persuading people through sound ideas, good policies and such like.

Mr. Speaker, as I said many times, in those days I used to drive a Lada. I had to do a lot of changes to it, to make sure that it functioned, otherwise it would have been breaking down as I moved across the country. I believe it was a Russian vehicle and even though I was not Communist in those days, I thought I had bought the cheapest car available. I should have bought something else but I used to get my tank filled at a gas station, which was operated by Roy Brathwaite.

Mr. Speaker, like all others who have spoken, I want to applaud his contribution to the people of St. Lucy and the people of Barbados, and to ask that my sentiments, like the sentiments of those on This Side, be added to the Resolution.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I too, would want to say a few words on behalf of my constituency and on the behalf of those young persons, who would have met Roy Brathwaite during the late 1970s. I remember sitting on the National Council with the likes of Roy Brathwaite, L. B. Brathwaite, and some of the old stalwarts of the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. Speaker, in those days, these elderly gentlemen had strong convictions about certain issues of the day, and Roy Brathwaite was one of those persons who was never afraid to speak his mind or to appeal to the hierarchy of the Party for the betterment of the people, who he wanted to represent at the time, and those persons who he later represented.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, I grew up having the greatest faith in those persons. I also believe that from his life and lifestyle, we would be able to look at what he stood for and what we could learn from his life. He was a very religious person, one who mixed religion with politics. Sir, in these days, we are hearing that persons who are of the religious belief should not become involved in politics, but surely Roy Brathwaite, as far as I remember, has never attended any of our political meetings any Saturdays. As I said, he was a very religious person. He mixed religion and politics to such an extent that he was able to represent his people during the years 1981 to 1986.

Mr. Speaker, it is also important for us to note that not only did he have a strong faith in the Almighty God, but he served his people with a determined conviction. He was also a very good businessman, which was said by many persons who spoke before and about reading about his history. Sir, he rose to prominence in this country, as a self-help person, who used his money for the good of his people, as well as his family.

Mr. Speaker, I, too, would want to send my condolences to his family and would hope that they would continue in the tradition of the Brathwaite's clan, that is to continue providing help for their people in the parish of St. Lucy and wherever they may be.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my family and the constituents of St. George, I would like to extend my condolences to his family.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to associate myself totally with the Resolution of condolence to the family of Roy Brathwaite. I think we have heard quite a lot about how much he loved his Party and how much he was indeed, committed to the efforts of the Barbados Labour Party. This is, of course, well-known. Sir, beyond that, he was a tremendous lover of his community, his parish and of course, his country. Sir, last and certainly not least, he was a real believer in family.

Mr. Speaker, when I say that, I speak not only of "Ot" and the boys, such as Ronald, Rickey and Michael but of course, I speak of the extended family of which I happen to be a part. He is actually a distant cousin of mine, not first or second, but not that far that we did not interact regularly.

Mr. Speaker, of course, like so many extended families, you cut across political lines, but one could say that where issues of love of community and love of country were concerned, I think we could say that Roy Brathwaite was really very special.

11.20 a.m.

He went into politics one could say a little late in life in his senior years. Sir, as a politician, it is probably not the best thing for me to say but many felt that he was too nice for politics. I am not sure quite what that means and what I would be saying about myself, if I associate myself with that sentence. I cannot say that I totally agree with it but there are several people in St. Lucy who did not vote for Roy Brathwaite because they felt he was too nice for politics and, Sir, it is an amazing thing.

Sir, I would say that he was too nice period. Sir, many would tell you that he was extremely generous, as I have heard said about another fallen servant, he was generous to a fault, and he was constantly giving. This is something I know was an issue for his family because they felt that perhaps he gave too much.

Mr. Speaker, when one looks at his political career, he experienced defeat far more often than he experienced victory but, as we heard from the Leader of the Opposition, it did not matter to Roy Brathwaite. He was always there for the community and for his fellow parishioners. It is amazing that in the Josey Hill area he was known to get two votes and this is ironic because his wife was from Josey Hill. Sir, fellows who knew him well, refused to votes for him but he was still there for that community and all the communities.

Mr. Speaker, as someone who has experience electoral defeat on one occasion, it is not the easiest thing always but it does say a lot about the spirit of the individual that he could not have succeeded in elective politics as he would have like but he remained committed to serving his parish and community.

Mr. Speaker, I think there are a lot of lessons that could be learnt from the likes of Roy Brathwaite. Perhaps, it is unfortunate that during his parliamentary life, as brief as it was, because of the titans that were around him – the 1981-1986 Parliament would have seen every single Prime Minister Barbados ever had serving in it – and there would have been several other titans on Both Sides of the House and maybe the Roy Brathwaites of this world would have got lost in there. It is still good that we can come on this occasion, albeit after his passing, and recognise the true spirit and the essence of that wonderful human being, Roy Brathwaite, who loved not only his Party but love his community and country dearly.

Mr. Speaker, he would, of course, be missed and we sincerely hope that his legacy and spirit would long live.

Sir, I am much obliged to you.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I am going to ask two favours. First, that further consideration of this matter be deferred. I think it would be something of a solecism to proceed with this in the absence of the substantive member for the constituency of St. Lucy. Secondly, there is another obituary where Mr. Leroy Brathwaite served in this Honourable House with one other Member who would have served with Mr. Brathwaite for the entirety of Mr. Brathwaite's career and who came from the same organisation. I think, procedurally, that Honourable Member should be permitted to lead the tribute on behalf of Mr. Leroy Brathwaite.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, in the midst of the Democratic Labour Party Annual Conference this year, after the first day of that conference and during the week, as we were sitting in the parliamentary group meeting on the Monday, we received the sad news of the passing of the late Leroy Brathwaite who was a former Member of this House between the years 1986 and 1994. Leroy Brathwaite served for two terms as the parliamentary representative for St. Michael North East but also spent almost all of his life involved in the politics of Barbados as a supporter and also an officer, one of the longest serving General Secretary. He was one of the founders of the young Democrats, one of the persons who worked along with the young Democrats in establishing the Modern Democratic League of Women and a person who had considerable influence in the Democratic Labour Party as a whole.

Leroy Brathwaite was always a gentleman, as we spoke earlier about the late Roy Brathwaite, Leroy Brathwaite served as Chairman of Committees and he was a well-respected Chairman of Committees whom, I believe, allowed vibrant debates but expected that the Rules of this Chamber be upheld. Likewise like his dealings in the Democratic Labour Party, he was one who was a stickler for the Constitution and the Rules. Even though we know in the real world that achieving political decisions which are in the best interest of all sometimes may require a root to have them produced, that does not always appeal to those who are sticklers for the Constitution and sticklers for the Rules.

Sir, in every organisation, there is a role for those individuals and I think that Leroy Brathwaite played a very important role in reminding us always of rulings and interpretations of the Constitution of the Democratic Labour Party. Likewise, in this House, he adopted a very keen

interest in parliamentary procedures and rules and took that interest to many meetings of the CPA and practised it on the Floor of this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I first knew him as being a Methodist lay preacher and being a Methodist myself, from time to time, I would see him at Hometown Methodist where as a youngster I worshipped and then, from time to time, at other Methodist's events. Sir, as I became active in the Democratic Labour Party, Leroy Brathwaite was its General Secretary just before I joined and was at almost every event. He went to the Academy of Politics every Friday night. He came to the Young Democrats meetings on Thursday nights and went to branch meetings all over Barbados on Sunday nights.

Sir, in those days, the best method of raising funds was dances. Therefore, almost every Saturday night, branches would hold dances throughout Barbados. We used to go down to River Bank Casino in St. Lucy, Sealy Hall Casino in St. John, Millie's Hideaway, Harbour View Bar, the Liberty, Randall and all over Barbados. Sir, Leroy Brathwaite, who liked to socialise, liked to dress and dance, was always present at those activities.

11.30 a.m.

Sir, I used to leave home with an old gentleman by the name of Joe Clarke, S510, who was a former Prison Officer and worked at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport for many years. I lived in St. James. I took a great risk, but Joe drove me out to those events, and they were other young people.

Sir, in those days, politics is not as it is practised now, because political groups, when they finished meetings, would go into the communities. Sir, when the Young Democrats finished a meeting, we would call the older members of the Party and we would meet them in Tweedside Road, Halls Road, Paddock Road, Weston, St. James and different places. Sir, Leroy Brathwaite was one who would always come and transport us. Mr. Speaker, we were very imbued, even though the Honourable Members on That Side would like to say imbibed, that was not it. Sir, we were imbued with a knowledge of what people in the shops throughout Barbados felt and remained life-long associations collectively, by that involvement.

Sir, as General Secretary, I think that Leroy Brathwaite, again, modernised many of the Party's procedures. He had a very keen interest in computers and working with the electoral list. He was one of the pioneers in that regard, and I believe that came from his previous association, employed in a data processing facility. As a result of that, he was one of the first politicians to use the computer to identify birthdays, to segregate information about age groups and to use the Electoral List actively as part of his political work.

As a Member of Parliament you would see in the records of this House that he was a prolific Backbench questioner. He was a person who had several questions on the Order Paper relating to matters in his constituency. The records will also show, even though it is often forgotten, that he was the mover of a Private Member's Resolution to reconsider the introduction in Barbados of alien landholding legislation, as late as the 1980s. I often hear it said in here, that the debate about alien landholding, only took place in the 1970s, but Leroy Brathwaite moved a Private Member's Resolution in the 1980s, which was spent when Parliament was prorogued, in relation to the control of purchases of land in Barbados and the registration and licensing of those purchases by non-Barbadians.

Sir, as I said, he was prolific in the questions that he asked on behalf of his constituents. He had a very active branch, a very active programme in St. Michael North East, and was a successful politician from the time he was nominated as the candidate for that constituency, and won the constituency with handsome majorities over and over again.

Sir, he was a man of very strong views and he did not have a problem in going against the grain. If you were associated with somebody in politics for over twenty-six years, as he and I had, from the days of the Young Democrats, there were times when we agreed on issues and there were times when we disagreed. However, whatever the disposition, in relation to that argument, it never affected Leroy Brathwaite's demeanor towards me. Even though our exchanges would have been heated from time to time, he always extended warm facilitation and friendship and I remain throughout my political career, a person who was able to draw on his influence, support and encouragement from time to time.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party loss a very strong stalwart. On the Sunday before he died, he arranged to come to see me on the Thursday, because he was concerned about some developments in relation to the number of voters on the electoral list in Barbados. He was considering carrying out further analysis in that regard, and we had promised to speak about it. As I said, on the Monday night, when the parliamentary group was meeting, we discovered, by the absence of one of his closest friends, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, that he was attending to him at his home and that he passed away earlier in the evening very, peacefully and very quietly.

Sir, just as he lived and existed in Barbados, he passed away peacefully and we know that he will rest peacefully, knowing that he has made a contribution to Barbados at its highest levels, and that his memory deserves to be honoured.

Mr. Speaker, my view in moving this Resolution, is that his relatives, closest friends and associates should feel that this Parliament respects and honours his contribution, by sending the appropriate Resolution of sympathy and condolence to them.

Thank you.

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

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, even before I entered this Honourable House in 1991, with the help of the Almighty and the good people of St. James North, I had known Mr. Leroy Brathwaite, as a person who was well-known to be a very staunch and fervent Methodist, a person who had been also reputed to be a very excellent dancer. Somehow, before he contested the Election of 1986, I had also been aware that within the corridors of the Democratic Labour Party, he had done a substantial amount of groundwork at every level of the Democratic Labour Party, before he became a Member of Parliament.

Sir, when I got here in 1991, he said right there, and at that time he was not only Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, but he was also Chairman of Committees. Sir, what was significant about Mr. Brathwaite's Chairmanship, as Chairman of Committees, is that he interpreted the position of Chairman of Committees to mean, that whenever any committee was established by this Parliament, that as Chairman of Committees, he was Chairman of all of these committees. I believe the records will show that whatever committee met, he always made himself available. He would check with the Clerks to find out what was the committee and how appropriate it would be for him, as Chairman of Committees, to come and show his presence and be prepared to work if needed.

Since then, I have heard some debate on this question of the extent to which the Chairman of Committees is Chairman of all the House's committees, or to the extent to which each committee chooses its own localised Chairman, portend.

11.40 a.m.

Sir, as a Chairman of Committees, he approached his task with energy. He was quite fair. I remember that there were debates in here, as to what should constitute Members' speeches in First Reading, as against Members' speeches in Committee. Sir, certain Members, some of whom were quite senior, would argue that if there was such a thing as a Second Reading speech, the Chairman of Committees had latitude to permit a range of things in Second Reading speeches, but that in the Committee stage, you had to confine your contribution to the narrow area that was in committee.

Sir, Mr. Brathwaite as Chairman of Committees, especially when it came to protecting the Opposition, always gave the Opposition latitude in Committee, even though Honourable Members like the Honourable Member for St. Michael West at the time, would get up and protest that what was being said, was better suited to the Second Reading stage.

I do not recall in my time in here, when he was in here, his being away from his seat, except he had something urgent, like the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. He came to Parliament early. He was prepared to take part in almost everything and he never disrespected his opponents.

Sir, another thing about him too, is that his loyalty to his Party was beyond question. Even if you suggested to him that his Party had made a mistake, he would sit you down and tell you that it might seem to be a mistake, but philosophically speaking, this was done to avert this or this was done on this basis.

I found that as a partisan, his loyalty to his Party was one of his greatest strengths. He had his own inimitable way of always invoking the original philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party. He did not ever let a moment pass, unless he could take you back to the philosophy of the founding fathers of the Democratic Labour Party. He always put everything in that context.

He was not prepared, not even through expediency, to compromise his beliefs and standards. He was not an opportunist. He could not have been bought, nor did he sell his soul. He was a sincere man, a very humble man, a man who took his responsibilities as a Parliamentarian very seriously, and a man who always gave his best. In this country, Barbados, there is a certain type of individual who never gets involved unless he or she can give their best, and he is that type. He did not go into any system or anything, unless he could give it his best. He had time for his religion, the Methodist Church.

In Passage Road where he was from, he perhaps among all the Arthur family – because some of the family are Brathwaite and some of the family are Arthur – in that Brathwaite/Arthur family from Passage Road, when he went there, he carried a presence. The people in the area, with affection, called him, “Tall Boy” because of his height. He certainly stood tall and he was the type of fellow, who was never afraid to voice his views and never afraid to say he was a member of the Democratic Labour Party.

Sir, to all those who mourn, on behalf of the Honourable Members of This Side and on behalf of the honourable members from my constituency, I too, would want to be associated with the Resolution before the Honourable House, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too, would like to join with the other Members who have spoken before, and I concur with what was said previously. I want to say that young Parliamentarians would do well to follow the line that Leroy Brathwaite took. He was not one to start like a grave digger, he knew full well that he had to build a foundation. Sir, when the decision was made for him to run in that particular constituency, it was done because people knew that he had worked hard and long for the Party, so he was deserving of that particular call.

It is no doubt that his style to politics is one that many politicians should take on board, for the simple reason he was not one who liked a lot of going on the platform to look for votes. Those of us who understand that, would appreciate why he sought to do more house to house canvassing, and sought to have a one-to-one relationship with his constituents.

Sir, too often many people believe that the road to Parliament is through the Press or through the platform, not realising the road to Parliament is through the direct contact with constituents, and Leroy Brathwaite perfected that. This is why when 99 per cent of Barbadians who thought that he would not have won a seat, there was that 1 per cent and more – however you want to look at it – who understood what he was doing. And whereas everybody was saying this person and that person would win the seat, the late Leroy Brathwaite knew the work that he had put in, and was sure that he was going to win that particular seat.

Sir, I keep saying to people that there are some politicians that the public of Barbados would not know and once they hear a name, they automatically say that name is a winner, not realising that even though they do not know the person, that person is very popular in the particular constituency, in which that person is running. I am saying that Leroy Brathwaite was like that. He was very popular in the constituency, and on a national level he was unknown.

The pollsters, without going into the constituency, would have given that particular constituency, based on name and family but not based on work. This is a lesson for many people. Do not care whom you are running against, once you put in the groundwork, and once you have used the shoes that have been allocated by that great leader – once you have used that particular strategy – there is a possibility that you could win that particular seat.

It is no doubt he was a very fair man and I am not surprised that he was also fair, as it relates to his Opposition. He honestly believed that his role was to mediate and to give justice. I have often referred to him as the lawyer of the Party because he was also one to interpret the Constitution of the Party, and he was also one to say to you that you have to follow the Constitution.

Therefore, I am not surprised to hear what was said by the Honourable Member for St. James North, because what he said about the man, is the same man I am aware of. I also want to say that it was regrettable that he left politics so early. I honestly believe that the format he created was one that could have served him a long time in politics because, as I said before, he understood the importance of the one-to-one contact with constituents.

I do not know of any role, and I am not talking about senior roles, that the late Mr. Brathwaite did not do for the Democratic Labour Party. Whenever he was called upon to do something for the Party, he was there. He understood the philosophy of the Party, and he understood what was required to help the Party to go forward.

Sir, the Party will miss his contributions, for the simple reason that he had the Party at heart. Every conference, every General Council meeting, wherever he was requested to serve, the late Mr. Brathwaite was there to serve. He did it because he saw it as his commitment to the upliftment of the masses of people in Barbados, and to ensure that fairness prevailed.

I am saying today that this House is blessed by honouring such a man, but I hope, Sir, that the words spoken would be the words to be used by young politicians coming to politics, and an understanding that there is something called a base. Sir, as you know, a house that is built on sand cannot stand, but a house that is built on stone will always stand, providing you do all the other things right. Sir, the late Leroy Brathwaite built a base within the Democratic Labour Party that was built on stone, not on sand.
11.50 a.m.

Sir, to his family and to his comrades, I offer my deepest sympathy.

I thank you.

Mr. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few words on Leroy Brathwaite. We have heard extensively, both in here today and outside, of how decent he was in terms of dealing with his political opponents and the fairness with which he discharged his responsibilities in this House as Chairman of Committees.

Within the Democratic Labour Party we recognise his love for correctness and his desire to see that the Rules were observed. Mr. Speaker, I have a very vivid recollection of his contributions to the various Councils in the Party. He served throughout the ranks and went as high, as we have heard, as General Secretary. Sir, even when he disagreed with you, he had a way of being gentlemanly about it, it was an incredible quality that he had.

Sir, the enduring thing for me, is that after his retirement from active politics, he was there to offer the benefit of his head to everyone. There are several young politicians who can say that they have enjoyed some of the inspiration and guidance from Comrade Brathwaite. There are even some on the Other Side who can say that they enjoyed the benefit he would have lent to the Young Democrats and the younger persons in the Party. Sir, on their behalf, I believe that I should also say a thank you for the work that he did in helping to shape an entire generation of political activists in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the St. Michael South Central constituency and the Nurse Land community where Leroy was born, I extend deepest condolences to all of his grieving relatives.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I just want to say a few brief words relative to Comrade Leroy Brathwaite. Just like the Leader of the Opposition, on the Monday when we were in conference and received the news of Comrade Leroy Brathwaite's passing, it was a terrible shock because just on the Sunday he and I spent just over an hour manipulating the technology relative to the electoral list and all the permutations. Sir, this was an individual who had time.

Mr. Speaker, I was quite taken in with his determination relative to the technology. He had mastered the manipulation, particularly the Microsoft Office products, and he was playing around with Microsoft Access. I knew that a year before he did not understand anything at all about Microsoft Access, he was still into the old database configuration, but in a short period of time he had...

Mr. Speaker, I thought I knew a lot of stuff about Microsoft Access and all of the other Microsoft products, but in that hour and a half he taught me some shortcuts by simple manipulations; do this, do that and let me show you what is happening here. Mr. Speaker, I was extremely impressed to see a man in his 70s manipulating the technology with the kind of efficiency that he did. Mr. Speaker, I am able now to use the knowledge gained from Comrade Leroy Brathwaite to assist others in the Party in manipulating that software package.

Mr. Speaker, Comrade Leroy Brathwaite was a gentleman. My brief seven or eight years of interfacing with him said to me that he was a gentleman in many ways. Mr. Speaker, I am one who believes that sometimes Rules stand in your way of getting certain things done, and so sitting in the General Council of the Party, you became a bit irritated because he had this strong commitment to the Rules. He would always stand up and tell the Chairman that

the Rule must be observed and this is the Rule and he went down that particular path.

Mr. Speaker, in small tributes, family and friends spoke to the kind of individual he was. These were persons who would have been there in his early life right through to his passing. They recognised very much his loyalty to the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, I like to pull out what people might consider these little things, and the use of the word loyal and loyalty speaks volumes to character and to the kind of individuals that persons such as Comrade Leroy Brathwaite was.

Mr. Speaker, without prolonging this, because I put a small piece within the tributes as well, I would want to wish to offer condolences to his family, his friends and his colleagues. I know that he would remain forever within the hearts and the minds not only of persons within the Democratic Labour Party but also of all those who interacted with him over the time of his life.

I thank you.

Hon. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Speaker, I have an obligation to say a few words on behalf of a man that I grew very much to respect. I think he was a gentle giant in terms of his physical structure and also his mental capacity. In fact, I do believe that he was one of the most underestimated of the Members of the Democratic Labour Party. I say that because perhaps in today's world he might have been able to fulfil his greatest passion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from my interpretation of Leroy Brathwaite, I think that he had longed to become a lawyer. I would confess that in my initial dealings with him it would not have been easy because he is a stickler for the Constitution and whatever you intend to do you had to ensure that it satisfied whatever Clause there was to be satisfied within the Constitution. From that standpoint, he made a tremendous contribution to discussions at meetings such as to ensure that we always discuss matters within the four walls of the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that in terms of his mental capacity and his ability, like one or two other older Members of the Party, to put into context any discussion using his understanding of the law, was a tremendous thing within the body politics of the institution.

Mr. Speaker, there was the other side of him that was remarkable. For a man of his age to have adapted to the computer world with such passion and desire, was in itself remarkable because as you know the younger you are, the more inclined you are to want to embrace computers and to want to play with computers and to understand different

aspects of the software. He would have used his skills in many respects to make sure that the national voters list and even the internal voters list of the Democratic Labour Party were in fact appropriate and that persons who were eligible to vote by way of being financial could not slip. That is the extent of the man, Leroy Brathwaite. For him, everything had to be in order.
12.00 noon

Therefore, when I heard the Honourable Member for St. James North spoke to the passion with which he held the position of Chairman of Committees, it did not surprise me. I would not have been around, of course, but if there is anything to be said about the man, it would be that he is certainly one who concentrated on ensuring that the law was kept. Therefore, I can well understand why the Honourable Member for St. James North would have referred to him in such terms because I honestly think that was his major passion.

Mr. Speaker, as a young politician, for me it was an opportunity, both as a Member of Parliament of the Upper House at the time, and assuming the leadership of a political organisation from the Senate, which would have been historical in the context of Barbados. I do not know the entire history of politics in Barbados but I cannot recall if any other politicians would have led a political party from the Upper Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, that was significant for me, to the extent that you could well understand that many of the procedures involved in conducting the politics or Parliamentary procedures involved, you would not have been accustomed to, because having not had an extended exposure to life within the Lower House, you would understand the kinds of issues that would have been dealt with, in many instances, where you would have learnt from experiences or perhaps by rote.

Sir, I would not have been as familiar, in some instances, as I might have been expected to be. Therefore, to have had the guidance of a character of that type – including others within the Party, like John Daniel, who also is of that similar make and who would be very much desirous of being a legal luminary – has served, in fact, to provide a lot of guidance at many meetings. Mr. Speaker, in addition, in instances where discussions were pursued outside and to some extent, in an informal way, where you may feel that you were correct, you would have been brought back into line, in recognising that there is Constitution.

Mr. Speaker, on that score, therefore, I would like to say that he was, for me, fully underestimated, not only within the Party but as a politician. He would have made an outstanding contribution. Therefore, it is for me now to say

to Marcia, who would have been his companion, to rest assured he has been given his full recognition here in this august Chamber by Honourable Members of Parliament. In fact, I know that it would please you plenty to see that his name will be in the annals of history in Barbados for eternity. He is justly deserving of such treatment and as I said before, being the gentle giant that he was, at least he cannot be denied recognition in the annals of the history in Parliament.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, there has been the submission that we will include both Resolutions together, after the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has spoken.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I would want to thank this Honourable House for allowing me the privilege to speak on this particular Resolution.

Mr. Speaker, there is no doubt that the late Roy Edison Brathwaite was a man with very good vision. He knew exactly from early what he wanted in life and he set about to achieve it. There is no doubt that he also had a very good foundation, being born in the west of the constituency of St. Lucy. He was from a good flock, which we would not deal with at this particular time. He was privileged to admire a man named Edwin Boyce, known to many in the area as “Edwin Tummy”, a man who, in the 1920s, was able to own his buggy and large parcels of land in that particular area.

Mr. Chairman, the late Roy Brathwaite told me many stories about that man, whom I did not know, as I never had the privilege of meeting him nor being able to appreciate that vision, but if I had to say something, it would be clear to me that the late Roy Brathwaite lived the vision of Edwin Boyce, a man who had much foresight. Sir, sometimes people wondered what would have happened, had he lived his full life.

Mr. Speaker, I honestly believe that Roy Brathwaite lived that life for him and that, without a shadow of a doubt, he demonstrated that he understood the importance of taking an opportunity and running with it. He understood the importance of not stopping but of excelling beyond the expectations of others.

Mr. Speaker, the late Roy Brathwaite was truly a St. Lucy person because when one considers the opinion of the others across the border from St. Lucy, about the people of St. Lucy, Roy Brathwaite demonstrated that whatever they thought about the people of St. Lucy, he would have proven them wrong, and he did.

Mr. Speaker, he started from a humble beginning but when he died, he died owning Welch Town Plantation. He

was also a founding member of the Brathwaite Group of Companies and a former Honourable Member of Parliament. He did not allow the criticism to stop him but used those criticisms as a platform to achieve what he wanted in life.

Sir, I have always said to people that there is nothing wrong with criticisms but that something would be wrong when people cannot take the positives from those criticisms and run with them. Sir, that is a feature that you can find in the majority of persons coming out of St. Lucy, especially those from humble beginnings.

Mr. Speaker, I would have written a tribute to the late Roy Brathwaite and would have tried to get it published elsewhere, and so I would want to say something. Sir, most people would not understand when I call for the renaming of the complex at Nestfield. Sir, the primary school is called the “Mess House” and the secondary school is something that Roy Brathwaite would have fought for, prior to 1971, when he was in the right place. He understood the importance of having a secondary school in the north of Barbados. Sir, I can produce Minutes to prove that this honourable gentleman would have made a contribution to his Party, to ensure that school was constructed.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this Honourable House has a right to ensure that the complex – not the schools – the buildings which house the schools, should be named after him. Sir, I am one of those persons who believe that history is something that should not be destroyed. That is why when the name of the building to the East was changed, I opposed it. I told him why I opposed and he agreed with me. That is why, in anything to his memory, I would like to see that complex called the Roy Brathwaite Memorial Complex, and that it would house both the St. Lucy Secondary School and St. Lucy Primary School.

Mr. Speaker, I am a strong believer in history. There are too many of us, who believe that we should change history. I believe that history is continuous and I do not care how bad that history was, the fact remains that it is still history.

12.10 p.m.

I believe that in this particular case that I can demonstrate that history can be continuous and still achieve what you want and, Sir, this is a good example. Sir, I want to say that at a time when people thought that the construction industry belongs to a particular group of people, that the late Roy Brathwaite demonstrated that from his humble beginning that he could be a player just like anybody. When people thought that plantations were for only a particular group, the late Roy Brathwaite ensured that he demonstrated to all poor people that if you are prepared to work hard and dedicate yourself to the cause that you could achieve. This is why I have said that there is a

strong relationship, even though he would not have been related to Edwin Boyce and he would have been related to his wife, Lottie Griffith, that there was a strong relationship to Edwin Boyce because he lived the dream of Edwin Boyce.

Sir, those of us who knew about Edwin Boyce would understand. This speech will be heard on the hill and on the hill this speech would be identified with but not on the hill at Coleridge Parry. I know the Honourable Member for St. James North would know that it would be heard on the hill too because the late J. S. Yearwood would be able to associate with this but the other honourable gentleman on the hill – we do not ordinarily use names in here – would be able to associate with what I speak because the buggy in which he went to school was accompanied by the buggy that was owned by Edwin Boyce which would have taken the late J. S. Yearwood to school and which the late Roy Brathwaite would have been privileged to be part thereof.

Mr. Speaker, it was not by accident that the late Roy Brathwaite was asked to champion the cause of the Barbados Labour Party in St. Lucy. The other gentleman on the hill tried it but he did not have the same touch as the late Roy Brathwaite and probably came from the wrong area in St. Lucy. Sir, people believe that politics of inclusion started lately, and I am not being political but factual, and to show how strong this man was, the politics of inclusion started as far back as the 70s, first when the honourable gentleman was included and then when he included many members who were supportive of the other Party. This is why there is no doubt that if there were one person in the north of the island who could challenge the *status quo* in that particular area, it was Roy Brathwaite because people understood him and realised that he had potential and humility.

Mr. Speaker, it is not by accident that two Members of this great Party made the same comment about him. My predecessor said that he had humility, I can also vouch for that, and I also wrote that because it is a fact. Sir, all of us who knew the man, understood that he had a common touch that you could not ignore. A person like myself, growing up in that particular area, it is only but fair to copy because when you are growing up, you are supposed to take the positive values from all sides and I would have taken that particular value from him.

Mr. Speaker, he also inspired me to see that he was a man from a humble beginning but had the right vision, and that is sadly lacking in this country. Sir, because we are small, we in this country behave as if we cannot do certain things but the late Roy Brathwaite never had that problem because he knew where he came from and where he was going.

Mr. Speaker, I would say to all young people that if they believe that life is difficult for them, to study the life of Roy Brathwaite and they would understand that they have a

place in this world and that they should stop giving up on their lives. They should stop believing that they have to be from a particular *status quo* to achieve what they want because life is what you make it.

Mr. Speaker, too many people want people to make life for them but the late Roy Brathwaite did not seek that. Sir, he never sought that but demonstrated that he was self-made because he did not depend on his political party to make him but he made the political Party by his contribution. Sir, some people might even say that his contribution to the political party was greater than what the political party offered him. Sir, that is not a negative comment because, so generous was the man.

Mr. Speaker, it did not remain there. His commitment to the Seventh Day Adventist Day Church was demonstrated not only by faith but also in terms of ownership, he insured that they had a foundation to build on. It was not only the Seventh Day Adventist Day Church because, if you went right through St. Lucy, you would have been told that the late Roy Brathwaite did this for that church or that for another church and so on. Sir, he understood the goal that the late Edwin Boyce wanted and insured that he delivered it.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying to his family that they have a great foundation on which to build. It is true that because he has demonstrated that he could break through the barriers that the vultures would be out there seeking to recapture the lost ground. I believe that as a Parliament, we have a commitment to insure that the vultures do not take any ground that the late Roy Brathwaite would have demonstrated, through hard work, could be achieved by any ordinary boy or girl in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, he was a strange person and a lot of people believe that they could have beaten his bat and pads but he quietly recognised what they were doing and would quietly inform them that he was aware of what they were doing. Sir, I will give you an example. In 1994, when I was selected as the candidate for the Democratic Labour Party to carry the mantle for the Party, the late Roy Brathwaite obviously was the champion of the west of the constituency and Mr. Evelyn Greaves was the champion of the East. Sir, fortunately or unfortunately for me, I was born in the East but my parentage from the side of my mother was from the West and those are the ones who owned the land, shop, and so on.

Sir, I also understood that the late Roy Brathwaite would have interfered with the configuration of the West and that there was a need for healing. Sir, there is no way that I could turn up, like the Honourable Member for St. James North, whenever he went to a funeral in St. Lucy, he would not walk into the churchyard unless he went first to

the late Roy Brathwaite, so the same thing that the Honourable Member for St. James North did, I did as well because rightfully so, the Honourable Member knew him because of being affiliated with the Party and I knew him because of family relationship and being part of the north so it was wrong for me to allow the Honourable Member to come from St. James North and created goodwill that was naturally mine in the most northern parish. Sir, from early, I had to inform the Honourable Member for St. James North that even though there was a relationship from a political point of view, that there was a natural relationship between the families. Sir, a lot of people do not know that the Brathwaites, the Broomes and the Greaves are strongly connected in the west.

Mr. Speaker, I would say that this honourable gentleman who is not with us any longer has demonstrated without a shadow of a doubt that he had a commitment to the people of the north of that country and, because of that commitment, I am committed to the honourable gentleman.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that as far back as 1976 when the question was posed to me, I had to inform the honourable gentleman that as much as I cared for him and as much as I appreciate the contribution that the only difference is that we could not see eye-to-eye on one fine point, which was the most important point at that time.
12.20 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, the truth is, I have always respected the gentleman and I will always give him his due, because once he is from that constituency called 'Lucy's territory', he is entitled to all the benefits from his son Elmo. I am saying that even though he has passed and gone, I will continue to look after and nourish the memory of the late Roy Edison Brathwaite.

Sir, I am saying to his family and friends all across Barbados, especially in 'Lucy's territory', do not worry, he is gone but his memory will continue as long as I have life in me.

I thank, you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, I would to associate this Chair with the sentiments expressed about the two late Honourable Members. On behalf of my constituency, I extend my most sincere condolences. Honourable Members, this House accepts the sentiments of sympathy and directs that these Resolutions be sent immediately to the grieving relatives.

As a mark of respect, I invite all Honourable Members here present to join with me in standing to observe one minute in silence.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

SUSPENSION

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, the hour is nigh, in the circumstances, I beg to move that this Honourable House be now suspended until 1.30 p.m. today.

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

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

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I am happy for the privilege to make my contribution in this very important debate, regarding the Draft National Strategic Plan of Barbados 2005 – 2025. I think it is a timely exercise, and I am happy that this Government has sought to work towards a comprehensive plan that will help to chart the course of the future of this distinguished country, Barbados.

When I look at the theme, Global Excellence, Barbadian Traditions, it helps me to focus on the past, and the various pioneers who helped to lay the foundation in this great country. Indeed, all of the important aspects of living that have been put in place that have brought us thus far, and

where we want to go in the future. We are looking at our future generations, my grandchildren and great grandchildren and what great things can be done, the excellent things that have brought us thus far and the promotion of the various skills, talents and all aspects of living that will impact on their lives.

I think this theme is most appropriate, Global Excellence, Barbadian Traditions. I trust that it will reinforce, in the minds of all of us here today, and indeed, the public of Barbados, the importance of our heritage, our culture and the sustainability of us, as a people. We know of the uniqueness of Barbadians, the things that Barbadians stand for, the lifestyles of Barbadians, the traditions that have brought us to this aspect of our history.

Therefore, as is articulated by the Prime Minister, the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Peter, in the foreword that has been so clearly expressed:

“The vision is for a fully developed society that is prosperous, socially just, and globally competitive.”

Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend warmest congratulations to the Department of Economic Affairs and to the Permanent Secretary and his staff, who would have worked assiduously, in the preparation and presentation of this very comprehensive document. Sir, from the time I had an opportunity to glance at it, I thought that the document was extremely well-prepared. Indeed, the study that had to take place and the kinds of contributions that had to be gathered from many of the individuals who would have made contributions to this document, I believe that they should be lauded for their commitment and dedication to the growth and development of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I have always been told, and I would have been taught in our schools, from primary school, ask not what your country can do for you but what you can do for your country. This document helped to resonate with me, and I am sure with all those individuals who have had a chance to read it, or to be a part of the Town Hall meetings, or to be able to read aspects of it in the print media. I believe that helps many Barbadians to step back and think about what they could do in this whole dispensation to help to build our country, since we have been able to develop and grow from strength to strength, as a result of the vision of our foreparents, pioneers and other persons in the community, who are out there in large numbers, as unsung heroes. You will not find their names registered in history books but they have made their mark in this society, such as postmen and postwomen, bus drivers, doctors, teachers, police officers, the blacksmiths, community officers and others.

It even extends beyond that, Mr. Speaker, where we have midwives who were really very highly respected,

because of their contribution. We had shopkeepers who were able to ‘trust’ groceries to people who were impoverished, ensuring that they got the food on the table, at least for the Sunday meal. We have many unsung heroes and this kind of discussion will help us to reflect, and indeed, to educate those who are young, about where we have come from. Those people who have helped to build this country were not only the persons whose names are in history books.

Mr. Speaker, I was a proud woman, when in 1996 we sought to acknowledge the contribution of our National Heroes. That is another springboard on which we can all go in order for us to be able to see how we can start looking at our history, documenting the information, educating the public as to where we have come from because of that vision. We must be all cognisant of that role those persons have played, and try as best as possible to carry out that legacy that has fortified us and brought us thus far.

I believe it is a timely invention, which would help us to chart that way forward. It is incumbent upon all of us, leaders, parents and guardians, teachers, employers, employees, all citizens, to break ranks and come together to chart this course. The Government cannot do it alone. The Government cannot do it without the input of the Opposition. The Government cannot do it without the input of agencies and other stakeholders.

Mr. Speaker, we need to be in this together, as one people striving for further excellence and for the sustainability of our country, Barbados. This is all we know, despite our colour, class, creed, religion, our political affiliation. This is the time that we must come together and work towards this achievement of these goals and these other aspects of what this strategic plan has laid out for us.

I believe that any right-thinking Government, having witnessed the strides that have been made over the past half century, the advancement of this country, and having witnessed, Mr. Speaker, a decline in some areas that bothers me and many of us in this Honourable Chamber, and others on the outside and in the international arena, would come up with this comprehensive document to let us step back, and take a full examination of the picture, to see where we have advanced and give the kudos, to see where we have slipped and try to arrest the slippage, so that the decay does not set in and destroy the rest of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy for this occasion and I believe that we could stamp out some of the pitfalls, if we come together with one voice, singing the same song on the same hymn sheet. Sir, we know that a house divided by itself cannot stand and therefore I believe that we could achieve some of these goals that have been outlined in this very comprehensive document.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to touch on a few of the advances, as a result of the vision of our forefathers. We know what the motto of the Barbados Workers' Union says, that where there is no vision, the people will perish. There is vision in this country, there was vision before my time, and there will be vision of our people as time goes on, once the climate is cultivated and people are given the opportunity to have dialogue, to be able to express their views in a democratic way and to continue to do all of the important things that are necessary for good living and to bring along others with them.

1.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, some of the good things are the road infrastructure, housing, the educational system, that for me is second to none in this hemisphere, and a health system that has served us well. Mr. Speaker, there are very few countries in the world where persons can go to a Polyclinic and get free medication having shown their Identification Card.

Mr. Speaker, we have a cultural heritage that is steeped in rich traditions that make us all a very proud people. Therefore, we know that NIFCA will take place next month and that the children in our primary schools and indeed people from communities across Barbados will deliver the best of their talents and their skills during NIFCA and at the Gala.

Mr. Speaker, we can speak proudly of the economic base in this country that brought about a high measure of stability in this entire country, which augurs well for strong investment, for the empowerment of our people and the sustainability of what we hold so dear to us.

Mr. Speaker, the decay of our moral fabric, the spiritual and social decay, bothers me a lot. Mr. Speaker, if some of these areas are not urgently addressed, I believe that we would slip down the hill. It is something other right-thinking citizens would love to see being addressed. Some of it would happen in homes, some would happen in schools and in other institutions. Mr. Speaker, it is not a privileged few who should be working towards discipline, who should be looking to stamp out the crime and violence or trying to reinforce good courtesies and productivity, it is everybody's business to ensure that we do all the things that are necessary to keep us high on the market.

Mr. Speaker, some scourges have crept into our society, a lot of which has to do with cultural penetration. Mr. Speaker, never before have we heard about 'skin-out competitions' until now that our young women are getting involved in this negative behaviour that is for me unsavoury, unsatisfactory and degrading of the kind of female that we know and have always insisted that they move with a

measure of modesty and a high level of self-respect. Mr. Speaker, it is only when you have respect for yourself that others would respect you.

Mr. Speaker, there are other scourges like HIV/AIDS, which is being tackled by this Government. Sir, I believe that successive Governments would take the mantle and fly with it because at the end of the day the people who are mostly impacted upon are Barbadians and indeed the generations that would follow if it is not arrested.

Mr. Speaker, there is also the scourge of illegal drugs, which is impacting on the moral fabric of our society. Every day we see and hear in various forms of the media of police carrying out various investigations and collecting large amounts of drugs here and there as well as weapons.

Mr. Speaker, I get tired of hearing persons in this society, for whom going to church and developing a spiritual base has put them high on the map, saying that they are not really sure why they went to Sunday School or to Sabbath School. Mr. Speaker, going to Sunday School or to Sabbath School has helped them because it kept them from falling into the hands of the police. They do not get involved in negative behaviour. They know how to treat other people within the society they live. They know how to go home and to love their family and to share whatever they have with the villagers.

Sir, going to Sunday School or to Sabbath School have worked for them, so for them to be saying now, 25 or 30 years later, that they do not really want to put their children under that pressure, what pressure are they speaking about. We need to look at the spiritual growth and development of our people if we are to reach or to achieve these goals as expressed in this document.

Mr. Speaker, there is also the scourge of poor service in business houses and in some of our institutions, and some of our schools are not doing it right in some areas either. Excellent things are happening in our schools but we need to work with the parents and guardians and let them know that the school, the stores, the shops and all of the other social environments that people go into are user-friendly and make people feel comfortable.

Mr. Speaker, the snobbery, vanity and pompous behaviour we see coming from a few, because they got the free education and have taken advantage of it, is not good enough. I believe that all of us should be able to speak to, to treat to and to care for every Barbadian despite his or her calling or position.

Mr. Speaker, the slippage in our moral fabric bothers me, however, it does not outweigh all those positive

things that we have harnessed that have put us further ahead on the map than many others.

Sir, I believe that this National Strategic Plan, like all other Plans, has been properly crafted around the inspirational words of our National Anthem. Sir, six broad strategic goals have been outlined, which I will read from the Foreword on page 4 of the document.

1. “Inspired, exulting, free”: Unleashing the Spirit of the Nation.
2. “Firm craftsmen of our fate”: New Governance for New Times.
3. “Strength and unity”: Building Social Capital.
4. “These fields and hills”: Strengthening the Physical Infrastructure and Preserving the Environment.
5. “Upward and onward”: Enhancing Barbados’ Prosperity and Competitiveness.
6. “Strict guardians of our heritage”: Branding Barbados Globally.

Mr. Speaker, we can speak with a large measure of pride about Barbadians who were educated here who have gone to the length and breadth of the globe doing excellent work over and over again. Mr. Speaker, some of them are so conscious as to the good that they have been able to receive that they are trying to assign other Barbadians for scholarships and other engagements in the job market and so on. Mr. Speaker, we have a strong, proud legacy that we should all be speaking of and should all be promoting all the time.

Mr. Speaker, I was astounded last week when the Honourable Member for St. Philip West spoke. Mr. Speaker, I am only saying this because if I were not involved in the Government at the level I am at and I were only a listener to the debates coming from these Hallowed Chambers I would have been confused as to what the Honourable Member for St. Philip West was speaking about. Mr. Speaker, I was extremely disturbed as I sat here in my seat. Sir, I did not want in any way to say anything or do anything to interrupt the Honourable Member. I did not want to be disrespectful, that is not generally my way of doing things. Sir, I felt very hurt as I sat here and jotted down some of the comments that were made by the leading spokesman for the Opposition last week. Sir, I am not trying to badger him because I believe that this whole Strategic Plan has to have the buy-in of all agencies including the Opposition and other stakeholders in this society.

Sir, I cringed when the Honourable Member for St. Philip West ranted and raved about the economic situation. Sir, that is his interest, but I am not going to talk about the economic situation in that way because I am not well-versed in Economics.

Mr. Speaker, when the Honourable Member for St. Philip West delved into aspects of this outstanding document and sought to tear it to threads and trample it to the ground, it bothered me because I believe that this is the road for us to take if our children and grandchildren are to see a prosperous Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member for St. Philip West had only taken a moment to read the document, at least the Foreword, it would have given him insights that would have helped to strengthen what he wanted to present in this Honourable Chamber. Sir, he pronounced that the National Strategic Plan is a useless document, that the persons who prepared it should be sent back to primary school, that it is a waste of time and that it should not be used even as toilet paper.
2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, that part had me sitting on the edge of my seat. I believe that if we have spent so many millions of dollars in education and if Honourable Members are here to represent the people’s interest, that they should do it with a measure of dignity and respect for those civil servants and others, who have helped to bring this document to a measure of fruition. I felt really let down about those comments.

Mr. Speaker, there were other negative comments, to which I would not reply. As I said, I consider them not only to be disrespectful but to be idiotic.

Asides.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: I would hope that is not a word I should not have used, as I do not want to offend any Honourable Member. If it is, I would be willing to withdraw it, but I thought it was child-like, to be able to make such comments, without giving the document any proper examination, to be able to speak to the issues as they arise. I felt that the civil servants were really done hard-by, when those comments were made. Those civil servants have worked hard, are well-respected and have done the best their could, with the input of other agencies, to be able to give us this comprehensive plan.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go further, as there are a number of important things I want to touch on. I want to look at Goal No. 1, which looks at our critical heritage, its transformation and sustainability. It talks about the uniqueness of our people and what we stand for. It also speaks to our values and to our national identity. It speaks to the basic tenets that have propelled us thus far, in our existence.

Mr. Speaker, it speaks to our dialect. As Bajans, when we speak in other people's countries, they ask us to explain. We know what we are saying. That is our language and we are extremely proud of it. It speaks to our lifestyle, our strong educational system and to our capacity to work with people of all ethnicity, and to our ability to get along with them, in a way that is so different from that of other parts of the world.

Mr. Speaker, we see our Caribbean brothers and sisters being torn apart because of the differences in ethnicity but not so in Barbados. Sir, I would want that to continue forever, to help us to understand that people must be tolerated, despite colour, class or creed.

Mr. Speaker, another issue is that of our vision to create greater equity and social justice, while embracing all people. Furthermore, it speaks to the upholding of our standards and to the recognition of symbols, such as that of our Coat of Arms. What does it signify? What do we understand by our Motto: Pride and Industry? Do we pay attention to our National Heroes and outstanding people, such as those who have done outstanding things in this society, who are like beacons out there for others to want to work towards achieving? I think that is significant.

Mr. Speaker, another goal is that of the preservation of our artifacts, our heritage sites and our culture.

Asides.

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I am tired of the way some Barbadians are going in these times, when there is so much prosperity, where because we could access mortgages, where we could move to particular communities, we 'look down' on those Barbadians, who still remain in the traditional communities, who have not been able to climb the ladder as quickly. Sir, those persons, who have gone forward and have forgotten from whence they came, I call them persons who have kicked the ladder down.

I believe that more people need to go back to the traditional communities, where they were raised or back to the traditional schools in the villages, to which they would have attended. I do not believe that they have to send their children back to those communities or schools, if they do not want to, because that is what democracy is about, but they could, themselves, go back and give some of the service or resources. I believe they could share their talents with the young people in those villages, because those young people need somebody with whom they could identify; somebody who could help them aspire towards achieving certain goals that they might have set.

Mr. Speaker, it is, therefore, no wonder that the Barbados Labour Party, in its 2003 Manifesto, has clearly

articulated the fact that our aim is to see a graduate in every household. Therefore, those graduates must not only come from the 'Heights' or 'Terraces', but from the villages as well, and that is where most of us here would have come from. We are proud for the opportunity to be able to blaze the trail, to set that trail that others could follow. I believe that if more of our people, who have come through the 'hornpipe' would go back and give of their services, that more of our young people would be able to see the positives. They would also be able to identify with them. Mr. Speaker, in this way, we would get the voluntary aspect of life coming through to our society again.

Mr. Speaker, I am the most concerned woman at this time in our history because of the fact that every day parents bring new children to schools and every parent or guardian wants his or her child to be a member of the Girl Guides' Association or the Brownies, Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts themselves but hardly anybody is willing to say let me volunteer one hour per week. Sir, one hour per week cannot kill any of us. It cannot take away from our professional duties. It cannot take away from the aspects of our social life. Sir, because of that I am bothered because we need more males in the Boy Scouts Movement, more women in the Girl Guides Movement, and more volunteers with Key Clubs, and with the Inter-School Christian Fellowship (ISCF). We need more people who would go into the schools, to interface with children and to let them know there is hope for them. That is what I call passing on the mantle.

Mr. Speaker, I want to touch also on Goal Four, which refers to the protection and preservation, as well as the enhancement of our physical infrastructure, the environment and other scarce resources. I believe the reinforcement is necessary for our people to be able to live a certain quality of life and to enjoy it. I am one of those persons who promote people getting that helping hand and surging forward, to live a better quality of life. That is what the Motto of the Barbados Labour Party is about. It is about a better quality of life for our people, and I fully support it.

Mr. Speaker, despite that, when people are going to be removing the garbage from their homes and dropping it throughout the parish of St. Thomas, through Vauclose, Canefield, Jack-in-the-Box Gully and such places, it means that we are making retrograde steps. I believe Barbadians need to become more conscious of the preservation of the environment and to avoid the disposal of their refuse in gullies and such other areas because that will impact on the water system, which we all have to drink.

Mr. Speaker, it also speaks to our lands. Again I am extremely hurt when I pass through the parish, in which I was born, raised and still live, to see that some plantations no longer remove the bush, nor clear the gutters and wells,

which have served us for so long. Sir, something is definitely wrong with my people. It seems to me as though they are moving two steps forward and three steps backward, because despite such lovely infrastructure such as our schools, houses, businesses, *et cetera*, we are having our back roads untidy and over-run. Sir, this speaks to the kind of person we are. Is it only about being rich and famous, or do we have to look at the other things that we, perhaps, consider to be insignificant, that have helped to make us proud Barbadians. Therefore, I have a problem when my front yard is clean but by backyard is dirty because of the fact that flies, rodents and other vermin will impact on whatever happens in this country.

Mr. Speaker, you could not have a better sweetheart deal. Every Government which has had the opportunity to govern Barbados since Independence, prior to now, has had the opportunity of planning an economy along the lines of that sweetheart deal, but the age of the preferential treatment, the inward-looking protectionism, has come to an end. It was determined by forces outside of Barbados and it has been ended by forces outside of Barbados. Therefore, the reality is, you can no longer plan the development of an economy along the lines of those things which do not exist.

2.10 p.m.

Sir, we, in the Government, have the responsibility to look at shaping and carving out new niches. We have the responsibility to speak and collide to a vision. You cannot eschew discussion on policy, because the discussion on policy is by extension with the people of the country as to the challenges which we, the people, face as a collective, and how we are going to resolve those challenges and take Barbados forward. The reality, therefore, is that we are compelled to build capacity in new areas of the Barbados economy, and in areas which will not have to, in the future, go cap in hand to anybody. Sir, there is talk about relying on protectionism or relying on preferential treatment, that is the challenge which we face.

Sir, I am sure that in there, we can find across the well of this Chamber a number of different positions to take in terms of policy stances on what we have to do. I think that we have to begin by the clear and crisp understanding of the challenge which we face collectively. Sir, therefore, the reality is, if we are going speak to that challenge, we have to look at the reality of the Barbados economy as it is today.

I think all could agree on this, that we are trying to promote a variety of kinds of services, which can be produced in Barbados and exported from Barbados and that does not necessarily mean moving from shore to shore, because you want to grasp the modern technology. If you could do it by way of technology across borders, then you

can do that too. In the same way that FirstCaribbean Bank would do it across borders by technology, they are persons who are sole traders in a service that they are providing, and they are doing it across borders by way of technology.

Sir, we are saying that we must develop the capacity of Barbadians, in terms of their ability to provide services of a wide variety and kind, and they must be encouraged to export their services. That is the challenge that now faces the government.

Mr. Speaker, how then, do you export those services efficiently? The reality is, you must therefore utilise the opportunities which are presented by new developments, which were not there, when previous Governments had the reins of office in this country. One such new development, but which has always been berated and believed that it is plague upon us, rather than, perhaps, the most wonderful opportunity that we as a people could have in the Caribbean, is the Single Market and Economy. Sir, by extension, other such opportunities are those areas of negotiated free trade activity, which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade works on each day.

Mr. Speaker, again, I want to say that as we speak to these things, one has to do so, I think, with a sense of a reality of the situation. A vast number of our indigenous service providers in Barbados, were not involved prior to 1994. In many ways, there are still a number of service providers, who are still not sufficiently involved in the exportation of their services, and in the earning of foreign exchange. I do not want to be partisan or political about it but even today, there are a number of service providers in Barbados, who do not understand that which they provide is properly defined as a service, and by extension it should be earning foreign exchange, or it has the capacity to bring foreign exchange into this country.

Sir, a Government that has been described by those who are perhaps more ill-informed, as being bankrupt, has, however, had the presence of mind to ensure that because there is a reluctance, on the part of the people of Barbados to do the kind of investment internally, that others are doing in the Caribbean, and that other Caribbean nationals are prepared to do in Barbados... Sir, there is no question of confidence in the economy, there are more Trindadians trying to do business in Barbados than you may care to believe, and they are doing it by way of investment into this country. It is not to say that you should not have confidence in the economy, all the indicators are there that there should be confidence.

Sir, the fact is, you try to build out capacity in new sectors. One of the things that you are attempting to do

at the broad and macro level is, under the Government's umbrella, you look at projects, for example, like the Barbados Hilton, where if you had not made the investment, you would not have the kind of project that is there now.

Sir, by extension, the Government is not going to be able to accomplish every one of the investments. That is why we say that we must be encouraging every Barbadian to treat to Barbados as an opportunity to reinvest at home.

One of the first things that the Single Market and Economy does is to provide for those persons who are Barbadian nationals, but also may be living abroad, to come back to this country and plough money by way of investment into Barbados. There is nothing wrong with that. A conscious and deliberate strategy, mounted by the Government of Barbados, under a Returning Nationals Programme, is to encourage back to our shores Barbadians from abroad, to not just return here, but to relocate and share with Barbadians, the skills they have acquired, while living in Canada and the more competitive economies of North America and Europe. Sir, that is the conscious policy decision which is already bearing fruit.

I also want to say that, perhaps, one of the problems in this country is a reluctance to recognise the limited carrying capacity of our domestic market. That applies both to the traditional and non-traditional export services.

Sir, everywhere you go in Barbados, you can confront young people with great skills. They are some, who are involved in painting, some who can do jewelry and craft making, and there are graphic artists and musicians. The reality is, for people to understand the challenge which faces us as a country – this has nothing to do with just Government, because the macro policy is in place. We must be prepared to confront the issue of policy discussion.

Mr. Speaker, there is no reason why those persons, the likes of whom I just enumerated, should not be encouraged, more actively so, to not only produce and sell their services and skills here in Barbados, but to see the region, as a whole, as their marketplace.

Sir, again I say, the benefit that we have of the new structure, called a single market, is not only there to be viewed as a plague upon the people, but it is there to be viewed as an opportunity for the people. It is a critical part of that which we now have to confront in the making of a single economy. How do we expand the levels of production, and how do we integrate production across this region in every area?

Mr. Speaker, I would have hoped that part of what we would hear in this debate would have been serious discussion about the way in which we can take some of those people

who have the skills base in Barbados, and to make more of them so that they can imbue our people with even more ability.

I said in this Honourable House in January or February, 2006, when the Financial Statement was made, I used the analogy of a young man in Eagle Hall, who is called "Seito". Sir, you will know him well and you will know the quality of craft that he produces. He has gone to Brazil, and we treat him as though he has not gone to Brazil and advanced his skills by way of training. We treat him as though he should not be in every secondary school or persons that he has trained be in secondary schools across Barbados in sharing and imparting to young people, the fact that leather craft is something that can earn them a living and help them to earn a good living as well.

2.30 p.m

We take his product, Sir, and you and I know because I have seen you there and you have seen me. We know where we can go and get it, but we do not seem to understand that part of the production integration that must take place in this country, even before we speak of production integration across the Caribbean in the context of a single economic space, is that there must be an opportunity for him to have his craft being displayed in the Cave Shepherds, the Harrisons and the other department stores of Barbados, so that it is immediately accessible to the visitors of the island, in the same way, Sir, as a Columbian Emeralds would have theirs immediately accessible. This is the mind set that we continue to be up against.

Sir, there is something that perturbs me, not only in this debate, but in the political climate of today, because there is a lot of concern about elections, and there is a lot of concern about who may, and who may not win, and there is concern about the trappings, which are not esoteric but they are titillating, but what we are not hearing the concern about is how we can deal with some of these issues, by way of educating the people of Barbados, as to the opportunities that lie before them.

Those of us who are in here, Mr. Speaker, have undertaken a calling. We have come in the name of the people to pass legislation and to share with the people, such skills as we may possess. Equally, there are many people around Barbados who choose not to come here. Perhaps, they could come here, if they wanted to, but they choose not to come. Sir, many of those people have commercial skills, and what needs to be done, is for us who are sitting on the bird's eye view of the economy, to interface with those people, who have no commercial skills.

We should say to them, in language which they could understand and relate to, that X restaurant, which has

three and four branches in Barbados, which you know is patronised by Vincentians, St. Lucians, Dominicans and Kittitians whenever they come here to watch cricket or go about their other business – if it is to get a Visa from the Embassy or whatever – that the patronage you are getting from such persons should indicate to you that, if you were prepared to move your product to one of those other capitals, then you too, would be contributing to the pool of foreign exchange. This is not rocket science. It is a need to manage transformation.

I think, Sir, it is a need from Both Sides of this House for the people who are representing the people of Barbados to be speaking to the people of Barbados in a language that encourages them to go out there and be all that they can be, in any of their chosen disciplines of endeavour.

I do not buy into the view, Mr. Speaker – I resist it with every fibre of my body – that there is a bad thing or a dangerous thing in this single market undertaking. I say to you, Sir, with the greatest possible respect that we have to get real and stop bellyaching. You know, Brazil is the Federated States of Brazil. The United States of America was once 13 separate colonies, the USSR, the United Soviet Socialist Republic. It has to unify and bulk up to become the world power that it was. The European Union is 25 counties, speaking over 20 languages, with each one having their own culture.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, that if there is to be a future for this region, then we have to embrace the future and the context of the collective. A fundamental aspect of this Strategic Plan's vision is how we utilise our trade negotiations and how we utilise our regional arrangements, so as to harvest the best possible returns for our people.

I am also of the view, Sir, that there has now to be the era in which we understand how to build linkages in terms of trading across this region. We do so already with the University of the West Indies in the formal disciplines but I am now speaking, Sir, to the small man and his individual discipline. I used a few analogies just now, let us take for example, the graphic artist.

Mr. Speaker, while we have a TVET Council down here, Jamaica has a HEART TRUST programme and they work very closely with the Edna Manley College over there. I want to say to you, Sir, that the Edna Manley College is there for the promotion of performing arts, visual arts, *et cetera*. It is linked to the University of the West Indies. Even if it is too much capital investment at this time, even if there are too many administrative difficulties at this time, and I do not believe that there are because I am mindful of the fact that we are moving to a University College of Barbados...

Sir, the fact that the Jamaican scenario now is at the stage where there are some 60 countries around the world that recognise the vocational qualifications in Jamaica – understand me, Sir, 60 countries around the world have officially recognised Jamaica's vocational qualifications – then it is necessary, in my view, for us in the context of a single economic space, to be moving with utmost dispatch to ensure that our people, who are involved in vocational callings are similarly able to be accredited and qualified. We can do that by building partnerships and linkages through the HEART TRUST programme in Jamaica and also, Sir, through the University of the West Indies.

Mr. Speaker, it will not happen if we continue to believe that matriculation, accreditation and meeting of standards and all those things which stand as barriers to the well-being and opportunity of the small man in Barbados who has a craft or a skill to make money abroad, if we continue to treat to these barriers as though they could only be overcome with a university degree or with some hard earned certificate after four years of study.

It is not practical to believe that he who is at age 25 now, with a young family to feed, even though he may have the greatest skill in sculpting or fine arts in the world, Sir, you are not going to get him to go back to school now to go through all of that again, easily, because of the financial loss to him. What we have then to do, is to create a situation in which your portfolio speaks for itself. Your work experience must speak for itself, and it must be recognised. A purely qualifications oriented mind set by our education officials in Barbados will become itself, the greatest single impediment to the opportunity of our craft persons to make money abroad. You cannot become enslaved to the issue of qualification. You have to understand that the portfolio and the work experience are critical.

I have said in this House before that I believe that if you are a skilled craftsman, mason, carpenter, *et cetera*, then, Sir, the grandfathering that you could go through, when you could sit down in front of the university graduates, if they want, on a given day, and go through what you would do, if you had x, y, z, undertaking in the course of building a house, or retrofitting a house. Sir, let your practical skill be demonstrated in a practical way, and let that man, on the basis of his having been able to successfully do so, earn his accreditation, that he may go abroad.

Sir, there is no doubt in my mind that we have an abundance of carpenters and masons coming out of the parishes, St. John, St. George, Christ Church and St. James, *et cetera*, in Barbados. The fact of the matter is that they too must be encouraged to go out there and compete. Each one of them is not an ambassador for Barbados alone, he is a potential source of foreign exchange being earned for

this country. But we continue to enslave ourselves to this view that solely based on matriculation, university and high school qualifications, *et cetera*, that you can go forward. They, Sir, have become the chains and the chains are seen now as wings. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that there has to be a transformation of that thinking. I think that the broader access to training and opportunities for our artists are fundamental, as part of this national strategy on a way forward.

Equally, Mr. Speaker, there has to be a transformation of the way in which we understand the agricultural industry to work. Now, these things may not ever be articulated from a political platform, on a Sunday night, when you are only going to share licks and to talk about the titillating things that excite, for example, my friend from St. Philip North. I know that the Leader of the Opposition tries to rein him in but he is exuberant.

The fact of the matter is that this country has certain traditions and cultures, which are going to be challenged by the rest of the world and, even as we speak, Sir, the challenge has begun. Therefore, a small farmer in Barbados, who is raising a few hundred chickens, wants to sell his chickens in a little while, the reality is that soon to be gone are the days when he is going to be able to kill them, put them in a cooler, put them in the back in the car and drive them around the village. That day will not be forever.
2.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the health standards, which are governing the quality of the food and the protection of the standard from the Farm Gate to the fork, will also come to impact on us because that small farmer wants to sell to the supermarket and the hotel chain too. Sir, those bigger players are going to demand of him that he meets and maintains a certain minimal standard.

Mr. Speaker, part of our duty as elected representatives of the people is not to 'duck and dodge' a discussion on policy but to confront the policy and the challenge. Sir, confronting the challenge of facing our agriculturalists means that we would have to candidly say to the people the truth. Sir, the truth is that there is going to be the need for us to find a way to finance the small farmers with the opportunity to access refrigerated vehicles so as to ensure that there is a constant chilled temperature for our fresh meats as well as fish.

There is no coincidence to the fact that Barbados, in spite of the amount of fish to be found in our markets, is not exporting fish and fish related products to Europe because they are demanding that their people be protected by certain minimum standards. Sir, we have to squarely confront the need to ensure that we have our people meeting those

standards. Sir, it therefore means that part of what we do as a Parliament must therefore be to treat to this strategic vision and to say to our people coming soon are the days when whatsoever fish, meat products or milk products you produce, you are going to have to meet certain standards and how can Government help you meet them. Sir, this is what we are doing.

Sir, it bothers me as a young Member of this Parliament that I am not hearing this discussion. It may not suit the Sunday night thing, but we should be hearing the discussion.

Mr. Speaker, we met and sat with the poultry producers, the beef producers and the fisherfolks in this country. We are prepared to confront each and every challenge. Mr. Speaker, as I speak to you, the Ministry of Agriculture is working on how best we can identify the solution to the issue of having the transportation of chilled meats from the small farmer to whatever source it is that he is going to supply.

Mr. Speaker, as progressive as we claim to be, we do not hear talk in Barbados about inter-sectoral corporation and inter-agency linkages. I had to make the point some time recently that when you go to some parts of the Caribbean they depend on a cruise and tourism industry like how we do, but the difference is that you are finding restaurants blossoming up with menus which are specially catered with local foods targeting the tourists, so that a linkage is created between the farmer, the restaurateur and tourism.

Mr. Speaker, this is the way we need to be prepared to go. We need to build linkages across our sectors. This means that we have to confront the challenges of building those synergies because those synergies are not going to come overnight. Sir, one part of it is that the tourism plant and the restaurateurs have to be prepared to collaborate more closely with agriculture.

Sir, Government has not only been encouraging it. Sir, if you sit there, as I know you do, and you pay attention to what takes place in this House – even though those sitting on your immediate left often appear not to pay attention – you would know that budgetary proposal after budgetary proposal, year after year and Estimates after Estimates, the Government has come and made policy proposals where we are going to build linkages between agriculture and the other sectors.

Sir, it is this Government that took the lead in demonstrating that the more milk that was produced by the farmers of Barbados, the more we were prepared to buy and get it into the School Meals system, into the Prison Service and into related Government departments like Children's Homes, *et cetera*.

Mr. Speaker, I notice the time signal. Mr. Speaker, there is another matter which perhaps I should touch on but in the time you have indicated to me, I do not know if I would have sufficient time to do it justice, so perhaps it is best that I leave that for another occasion when the opportunity would also arise.

Sir, the question of a strategic vision means that we have to look at the bedrock of how our economy is functioning. I make the point, and I will stand on the four corners of the point, that Barbados can no longer rely on the kind of protectionist policy, which was dished out and dispensed to us for many years, which made us very uncompetitive and which eschewed the need to plan creatively for the future. Sir, now that that has come to an end, we find ourselves having to face the reality of ensuring a seamless and continuous survival of our people in as painless a manner as possible. Sir, it means that in managing the transformation of our economy, we have to be prepared to speak to a whole raft of new initiatives and new economic imperatives.

Mr. Speaker, unless we are prepared to speak to the issues of whether we are prepared to start at information technology and making our people capable of buying and selling by way of e-commerce; whether we are prepared to start in the area of the transformation of the agricultural sector; whether we care to start with the international trade negotiations and the implications that they have; or whether we care to look at the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and the opportunities that it provides for a Barbadian, irrespective of his class, to set up business, as of right, in anybody else's country within CARICOM, and that once that business is established he can move those people who are key infrastructural persons to the business, all the supervisors and managers, *et cetera*, to make sure that the business continues to work as he determines and sees fit over there under the right of establishment provided by the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, we would not do justice to this National Strategic Plan.

Sir, this is a Strategic Plan which is not rooted in a short five-year period, which is going to be subject to all sorts of external issues impacting it and changing it off its course, it is a Plan which is prepared to speak to the next 20 years or so; it is a Plan which is speaking across the sectors of Barbados; it is a Plan which is seeking to address the way in which we preserve our cultural integrity even as we transform our society; it is a Plan which is seeking to address the way in which we preserve our governance structures even as we transform our society; it is a Plan which is seeking to ensure that we address our social values even as we transform our society; and it is the type of Plan which is strategic not only in focus and vision but in concept. Sir, it is for those reasons that this is a document to which I wish to offer my fullest support.

I thank you, Sir.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, let me begin by engaging you a little bit. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if you can recall where you were on October 17, 1986. Sir, I suspect that most people in this Chamber would not even remember where they were in 1986 or what they were doing. I do suspect that they would have to dig deep into the recesses of their minds to try to remember where they were in that particular year.

Sir, 20 years ago, I do not think that anyone would have contemplated many of the challenges and the environment that we now face in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of fact, let me give you some strategic dates in the year 1986. On Wednesday, May 28, 1986, the Democratic Labour Party won the General Elections. On that day 24 of them went to the Lower House and another 13 or so went to the Senate. Mr. Speaker, only one of those persons is in this Parliament today, and he now sits on the Barbados Labour Party side of the Government.
2.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, in 1986, no one could have contemplated issues such as the internet, cellular phones or the gridlock on our roads, as none of that existed or was even contemplated at the time. Therefore, the most important part of what I consider to be one of the more serious debates that would be held in this Session, is this issue of whether or not, as a Government, we need to plan strategically as a Government for what is contemplated to be our future.

Mr. Speaker, the basis for this debate is whether or not this exercise of strategic planning is really important to our future success, as a nation. That is where it all begins and ends. In other words, if we are here and this debate is not important, if the exercise for strategic planning of Government is not important, we could all just go home.

Mr. Speaker, the question of whether or not our environment, the one in which we are living today, would remain the same a year from now, five years from now or 20 years from now... Mr. Speaker, how do we formulate future plans for Barbados 20 years from now, 10 years from now, or even five years from now? What is the philosophical base upon which we plan a nation? Do we need to plan strategically at all? Is it a valid tool for a Government? Where would the specific plans that we put in place as a nation come from? Do ordinary people need to have a say in what would be their future and in what we plan for them in the future? Do we need to engage the wider populace at all, once we have been elected to Government?

Mr. Speaker, these are the issues that I believe should occupy the minds of Honourable Members. Sir, I believe that when one analyses the entire scene, I think it shows

the stark difference between this Government and those on the Other Side of the aisle.

Mr. Speaker, I was awestricken and saddened by the presentation that came from the main speaker of the Opposition, the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, on the issue of the National Strategic Plan. Sir, it is not to say that any of the issues that he made would not, under normal conditions, and structured in their context in a particular debate have serious relevance but without reflecting on anything or any decision that you would have made, I questioned the relevance that the Honourable Member would have put forward to this exercise, in which today we are engaged.

I believe the reason for us having done so, in terms of strategic planning, is that it is important for us to know who we are, what we want to honour and what are the things that are important to us in public life and in our development. Sir, politics is not only about small things, it is also about big things. It is about issues such as housing, but it also has to be about issues of foreign policy and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that no administration in the history of Barbados has done more to define who we are as a people and what we want, than this Barbados Labour Party administration. Therefore, I begin by giving my full endorsement for the style and method of governance that would push us towards producing a strategic plan for Barbados. I believe it is fresh, it is different, it is visionary, and it is all-inclusive. I believe these are the types of issues that need to occupy the minds of every Barbadian, and that we do not come here to put down any of the efforts or suggestions, that come from the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I would wish to say that I believe this departure from past actions from previous administrations, the fact that every five years we come with a development plan, prepared by officials in the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs – not to put them down – may at those times, serve us well, but I believe we need to move to another level of how we plan for the future development of our people. In this regard, I believe this exercise is more than important.

Mr. Speaker, people who are putting down this exercise are not aware of a lot that has happened in our country and globally. The countries that we have come to admire and talk about, such as Singapore, Mauritius, India...

Sir, in India, there are more Ph.D's per capita than any other country in the world, including the developed countries like that of the United States of America or Great Britain. Sir, the reason for that is that those countries, Singapore,

Mauritius and India, have planned strategically to be in the position in which they are today. Mr. Speaker, I believe this exercise, which involves the best minds in and out of Government, the general public, the academics in our society, and the widest possible participation, in itself, is a relevant piece of action, to move us as a country forward.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing I want to say is that a strategic plan is, in essence, not a blue print. It is more than that. It involves a level of flexibility and adaptability. Sir, let me say that I had the opportunity to be involved in the team from Government, who are involved in this strategic planning exercise. Sir, most people do not want Government to be Government as we traditionally have known it. Many commentators have put forward the view that Government needs to be more like a business and that we need less Government. We do not need big Government anymore, with a big stick hanging over us but we need more of a participatory Government.

Mr. Speaker, excellent organisations know how to adapt to a continuously changing marketplace and the Government, although not an organisation, is somewhat similar. Sir, some people might differ, but very clearly and strictly, the full definition is that this is a managerial process, that is developing and managing a viable fit between an organisation's objective and its resources. That is ultimately what strategic planning is about. It is also about an issue that aims to shape and reshape an organisation's business, through the changing marketplace and the environment which it is in, and to combine those to produce satisfactory profits and growth.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of serious ideas that drive this entire process but what must we do? All that strategy is, is a game plan for achieving long-term objectives and, therefore, no one strategy is optimal. It means that as a country, we must be able to look at what is happening in the global environment and to adopt ourselves to suit it.

Sir, the specific plans that we put forward to the people of Barbados, those that we plan and build on, must have some philosophical base on which to start. Therefore, to be able to assess accurately the future profit potential of an environment is important. It is to be able to know what to build up, what to maintain, what to phase down, or what to terminate. These are the issues that drive the entire process of strategic planning.

Mr. Speaker, we must, therefore, determine what makes sense for Barbados, in light of our position as a country today, in light of our objectives, opportunities and the resources that we have as a country.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Government is pretty much like that of a corporate entity. I believe that new forms

and modern Government must be managed like that of a corporate entity. Government is not a business, in the strict commercial sense, but Government must mirror business. Therefore, in this process, Cabinet must lead the process.
3.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, every Ministry must also have a strategic plan under their specific Ministry, in other words, a Ministry is just like a strategic business unit. They must all engage as well in strategic planning, analysing and evaluating a business portfolio and identifying which new areas to enter and which areas not to go into.

Mr. Speaker, the Strategic Plan begins with the concept of “Global Excellence, Barbadian Traditions”. Sir, I believe to be a successful nation that we must all have a shared vision in this country and that the primary focus of that vision must be grounded in a Barbadian character. Sir, members of Parliament who go to their constituencies frequently and engage people really see what Barbados has become. I do not believe that Tom Adams or the Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow or Grantley Adams had to face a lot of the challenges which we face today.

Mr. Speaker, there is an issue out there in the public where a lot of people do not have self-esteem and confidence which they should have as people. The fact of the matter is that a lot of people in this country believe that you have to know somebody to get a job, that a Minister must make an intervention for them or that a Member of Parliament should make an intervention somewhere for them, whether it be in the public sector or the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, I am making the point that we must get back to the richness of the overall Barbadian make up. We must again be grounded at base value in the values that have made us what we are today. I believe that to be a successful nation that we could talk about the deficit and preach for ever more about the economic issues which are important, but I believe that governance is a lot more than that. The shared values which made us what we are today must again come to the fore. Sir, spirituality, caring, compassion, tolerance, friendliness, resilience, patriotism and creativity and the cultural issues and the cultural base of our society that must again come to the fore.

Mr. Speaker, once you have got a country moving in that mode, you would understand that each and every Barbadian has an opportunity. Sir, if you bring back these shared values and you have a shared vision, then the other issues are grounded in some of the social and economic issues which I believe the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would have raised.

Mr. Speaker, poverty reduction must still be the main goal of us in this society as a developing nation and, we

believe that economic growth is central to this goal and to that development. Sir, we have also put forward the idea that economic growth is best achieved through the private sector and that Government’s role must be to empower them.

Mr. Speaker, in the Strategic Plan itself, it speaks to the issue of economic development but not in the way that the Honourable Member for St. Philip West would have wanted. I think he believes that I must put down specifically in the Strategic Plan how to get rid of the deficit, whether or not the deficit should be high or low, or what the structure of the deficit should be.

Mr. Speaker, Government must be the one to inspire groups in the private sector. Sir, the role of Government must be one of empowering the private sector, but at the same time, there is an important role for Government to play, particularly when the private sector is not stepping up to the plate, in that Government must be entrepreneurial as well. Sir, once it is done in a climate of transparency and accountability and once there is communication and dialogue, I believe it is important that we have a Government that is empowering.

Mr. Speaker, all of this comes out from the base of the Plan. The private sector needs to prepare for better global competitiveness and to look beyond the national, regional and hemispheric borders that now hold them together. I believe that one of the more important aspects of why you need to plan strategically is that the only real resource we have in this country, is our people. Sir, skilled people is the only sustainable competitive advantage that any nation could have. Resources and information flow around the world now much easier that they have done in the past but the only sustainable competitive advantage that any country would have in the future is skilled people. Therefore, I believe that more widely than we speak now that we need to speak to the development of our people, to the continued development of our people in a more serious way.

Mr. Speaker, education is vital but I believe that we also need to do a lot more than we have done in the past in areas, for example, like research and development. We need to create a more innovative culture in Barbados and we need to open up our economies to embrace a lot of newer markets than we have embraced before. Therefore, the only way in which you are going to be able to do that, with the only sustainable resource being your people is if there is increased productivity.

Mr. Speaker, we have to move towards those areas by using technology, literacy, science and mathematics and languages. Sir, why is it that Barbados cannot envision learning Mandarin, for example? If China is going to be the dominant force that it is, why do we not contemplate

learning Mandarin in our schools? Mr. Speaker, you only get there, if you understand that what you are seeking to do is to engage a wider population in a global sense than you have ever engaged.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it begins with planning strategically for the future. If we understand that our trading partners in the future are going to be people like China, that our foreign policy might be impacted by China and China's relationship with our traditional partners so why can we not envision the issue, for example, of learning something like Mandarin.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that research in our country needs to be more commercialised than it has ever been. We do not have a culture of research and development in Barbados and this is how you get there. Sir, I also believe that there must be culture of innovation in Barbados that has never existed in the past. It does not have to be ways in which people imagine it now in more developed countries but a culture of innovation that allows us to do things in areas of arts, culture and sports which we have never done before. Mr. Speaker, the individual aspiration of each and every Barbadian must be aligned with the aspiration of the country overall.

Sir, there is also another reality which comes out of this. Goal 5 speaks to upward, onward and to enhancing Barbados' prosperity and competitiveness. Sir, in a small open economy with limited resources, using your people as the base, we have already envisioned and looked outward to say that services is the strength of the economy of Barbados in the near medium and long-term. Sir, this whole issue of enhancing our prosperity and competitiveness speaks to an altered and changing regional and global economy. You need to look outward at how the global economy is structured and begin to position yourself to take full advantage of how that economy is being reconstructed. It demands of all of us that we analyse our economy and see where it best fits into that global economy. It also demands that we adapt our economy to best suit the global economy.

Mr. Speaker, if our services are niche services, we have a limited landmass and we get into this resource base and we have talked about some things are important...

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Speaker, I want to say that if we are going to enhance prosperity and competitiveness in the future, that it is built on services. Sir, the two service industries which we know about, tourism and international planning, to which we are best suited at this time, we need to shape and reshape them under a concept of strategic planning. Sir, the ability to alter and adapt each of these to a wider environment, is really the key.

Mr. Speaker, I am sorry that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is not in his chair. Sir, Honourable Members come to Parliament and argue about the numbers in tourism, but if tourism is going to continue to be our number one economic leader, then tourism must be considered in its most comprehensive and enabling sense. Mr. Speaker, the gains that are made from any one of these productive sectors, particularly tourism, if it is leading, must be used to develop and empower other industries and other areas of our economy, and particularly our small and micro enterprises. Sir, I believe that the principles on which you plan to get more tourists to come to Barbados and to spend more... How do you really create the industry? Sir, unless you know what you want to create and adapt, you would never be able to do it.

3.10 p.m.

Sir, for example, tourism must be more community oriented, in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, when you start to plan the structure of the industry, you have to plan from a philosophical base. I say that tourism must be more community oriented than it has ever been. More people in Barbados must seriously feel as part and parcel of this sector.

Sir, tourism must be developed in a way, not to be considered intrusive. I believe that most Barbadians are conditioned to believe that it is an intrusion, that somebody is coming into your space. I believe that these are the philosophical notions, we need to debate more seriously. This has nothing to do with the number of tourists that come to Barbados, the dollar value, or how many planes are coming.

Sir, I believe that these are the issues from which you determine where the numbers are, where they should come from, and how the people should get here. Tourism must accord with wider national goals. The development of the tourism industry and any other productive sector, for that matter, must accord with the national goals. Tourism must make people feel like people, and not less than other people, to really have a permanent and a competitive and sustainable stake, within the make up of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, tourism must also treat people humanely. It can help us to define who and what we are, and can squarely define the difference between service and servitude, which many of our people currently seem to have a difficulty in understanding. This is why you plan strategically, and this is why you create a base to say, how do I move this industry forward in the next twenty years? How do I really create the basis for tourism to be a sustainable industry? These are the issues.

Sir, that is why we in the Ministry of Tourism have created specific programmes and plans, which have

community tourism as the base. You cannot construct plans at the product level, within the Ministry of Tourism, unless you are sure about where you want to go as a nation; which productive sectors are going to continue to be important, how you are going to position and develop them. This is why the whole exercise of strategic planning is an important national tool for the future development of our country.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to spend a little more time on one other aspect of this plan, specifically speaking to Goal Six, which is, Strict guardian of our heritage, branding Barbados globally.

Sir, when most people think about a brand, they think immediately of a slogan. Sir, branding is more than just a slogan. Why is Goal VI so important? At the end of the day, a brand really is the value proposition that you put to a potential customer or a potential person with whom you interact. In Barbados' case, the value proposition is bound up in the principle and policies that have made us what we are.

Sir, a country that is so small, with limited resources, that is actually considered to be the globe's number one developing country, tells me that we have done a number of things correctly. Sir, the brand is really going to be: Can we take full assessment of these things? Can we package them? Can we enhance them? Can we build upon them? Can we export them to other people who are not as fortunate as we are, or who have not planned as well as we have, or who have not been as successful as we are? Can we use the Barbados brand to enhance our standard of living?

There are two issues in terms of brand. First of all, the issues and reputation that create the brand must be earned, and they are not yours, whatever the product, country or service. They are governed by the cultural dimension of 50 per cent and other areas of influence.

Mr. Speaker, in other words, if Barbados' equity in the global market has been built on the premises of friendliness, spirituality and caring, it means that in everything that we do, these are the kinds of assets that must shine through. I believe that in those aspects of our development where we have swayed from those based principles, that have made us what we are, there is a need to return to those basic principles.

Mr. Speaker, it beholds all of us in this country to take this exercise of strategic planning very seriously. I believe it is going to make the decisive difference between where we are as a country and where we need to go.

Sir, those persons who watch a lot of American television, there is an advertisement by a company called the Liberty Mutual, which is an insurance company. The

company's slogan says: "Yes, there is an insurance company that is as responsible as you are." It closes by saying, "Responsibility, what is your policy." I want to repeat it. It ends by saying, "Responsibility, what is your policy."

Sir, I believe that those who are responsible for the welfare of Barbadians, those who are at the wheel of governance and those who want to be in the future, had better start practising responsible Government and governance. Therefore, the policy of this Administration is to be responsible, that is why we have been engaged in this particular exercise.

Mr. Speaker, I submit to you that when the history of this country is written, this debate and this Strategic Plan, would go down in history as one of the better initiatives that has been practised by a Government in Barbados for all time.

Sir, I say to you, for those of you who are coming in the future, my apologies, but as far as I am concerned to date, this is the most responsible thing that we have done as a Government. I, therefore, have absolutely no qualms in supporting this particular Strategic Plan and committing to all Barbadians.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, at the outset I would like to take exemption to the approach taken by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, when he spoke last week. On that occasion the Honourable Member suggested that it was wrong for the Government to bring a National Strategic Plan to this Honourable House. Sir, for him, it appeared as though this Administration was seeking in some way to bring out a manifesto for the Barbados Labour Party and to solicit, through this debate, the opinions of the Honourable Members on the Other Side.

Sir, I believe that it is important to make a distinction from the outset between this important document, The National Strategic Plan 2005-2025, and any Party Manifesto. 3.20 p.m.

A party Manifesto is by its very nature partisan. By its very nature and the way in which it is compiled, does not have the benefit of the input, from as wide a cross section of the Barbadian community, as this National Strategic Plan has. Perhaps more important, Sir, our respective Manifestoes only seek to commit a political movement to a particular course of action for a limited period of time, five years, the term.

Mr. Speaker, what this Government has sought to do is to engage all of Barbados in a national debate on the

direction which this country should go on, without regard for partisan positions or partisan politics. In fact, Sir, I can think of no more noble an approach to the matter of governance, than that a political movement, such as the Barbados Labour Party would seek in carrying out its mandate to involve the calibre and the categories of people that were involved in crafting this particular document.

Mr. Speaker, it is important too, to reflect on the fact that the first words within the covers of this book are the words of the National Anthem. It is important, Sir, to remind ourselves that the second verse says that the Lord has been the people's guide for the past 300 years. The outset of that verse invites us to look into the past 300 years of our history.

The position that we are taking today, Mr. Speaker, is that although we are grounded in our history, we must now fix our sights firmly into the future and determine the direction that this country is going to take.

A strategic plan is no new animal. A strategic plan is something that companies develop, enterprises develop them of all kinds, and schools and universities develop strategic plans. It really does not take rocket science to recognise that in order for an organisation to secure its future and its longevity, it has to determine what are the strategic paths that it needs to direct itself on, going forward. It is no different, Sir, for a country.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is more relevant, it is more important that every Nation should develop for itself and for its people, that kind of plan, because, Sir, the shareholders of a country are every man, woman, boy and girl who reside within our shores.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, I want to laud the efforts of the various people who made input into this plan. The person who opened the debate, indicated who some of these people were and I would like to add my voice to that credit.

I am particularly concerned about the strategies that we adopt as we go forward, particularly from the standpoint of being a Member of Parliament for a rural constituency. A rural constituency, Mr. Speaker, that finds itself challenged, from time to time in relation to the delivery of social services, and a constituency that finds itself challenged, in terms of communications networks – when I say communications networks, I am talking about such things as roads being destroyed through slippage and so on.

Mr. Speaker, I am also concerned about the strategic direction the country will take because of our concerns for the environment, a thing that is especially dear to my constituents. I am concerned too, Mr. Speaker, about the capacity of the people in the constituency of St. Joseph to develop the kind of social capital that we are discussing in this Strategic Plan.

Sir, this Strategic Plan therefore has to be a document that bears tremendous relevance to the aspirations and dreams of the people who have given me the opportunity to serve them in this Honourable House. Therefore, I have had, Mr. Speaker, to look at this document with a critical eye to satisfy myself that, as I speak to my constituents, I am able to say to them in all sincerity and from the bottom of my heart that it is a document, which directs not just the fate and the fortunes of the nation as a whole, but that it deals with specifics of those rural residents in the constituency of St. Joseph.

Therefore, from that perspective – and I believe it is an important perspective to start from – I would want to consider at the outset, the matter of the physical environment, Goal Four, Mr. Speaker, “These field and hills.” In that particular chapter of this book we talk about strengthening the physical infrastructure and preserving the environment.

Mr. Speaker, I believe it is correct to say that one-fifth of Barbados is in the Scotland District. It takes up one-fifth of Barbados' landmass. It is the single most challenged part of this country. It is challenged principally because of the incidence of slippage.

Sir, slippage is not just a geological phenomenon. It is a phenomenon that wreaks havoc on the lives and livelihoods of Barbadian citizens. It is a phenomenon that prevents people from gaining convenient access to their homes, and gaining convenient access to their lands. It prevents people from getting to work on time. It prevents people from being able to develop their real estate. Mr. Speaker, it of tremendous importance to the people of rural Barbados that a Government takes to heart, the importance of preserving our physical infrastructure.

Mr. Speaker, this particular goal is one that I am happy to say resonates with the people of my constituency. Goal Four resonates with us because it puts at the centre of human habitation, the importance of maintaining a safe and reliable water supply, ensuring an efficient and reliable energy sector, and developing a modern transportation infrastructure. Important too, Mr. Speaker, is improving disaster management.

Mr. Speaker, we have to consider that as we look at the goals of our nation, the goals that we have taken the trouble to enunciate here, we cannot look at one goal in isolation. Our ability to preserve all that is important about our country, all that we hold dear, depends on maintaining the mantra of the Barbados Labour Party, Sir, that no one is going to be left behind and that everyone would have the opportunity to be a winner.

Mr. Speaker, Goal Three also speaks to my heart because there we are talking about building social capital. It is perhaps a given that people who live in rural constituencies in this country are the ones who are able to benefit least from the many services that are available.

This Government has taken on that old and dying attitude, frontally. We have taken clear decisions as to how we are going to be improving the social capital within rural Barbados. I am able to say, Mr. Speaker, that in my own constituency, I am able to point to examples where this Government has been determined to rebuild our schools, to ensure that our young people have the opportunity to receive training in computer technology and so on. I am able to say that this Government has taken on the challenges of delinquency in rural areas.

Mr. Speaker, the Project OASIS has been working miracles, if not wonders in rural Barbados. These are not just things to go from one election to another. These projects are not things that are politically expedient. These initiatives come from the bosom of a Government that recognises that in order for us to stay true to our commitment that all Barbadians are to be winners, we have to ensure that every Barbadian, wherever you are from, whatever class you are from, you have access to all of the social opportunities that are made available to other citizens in this country.

Mr. Speaker, important too is Goal Two, “firm craftsmen of our fate.”
3.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Goal Two, Firm Craftsmen of our Fate, is very important. Firm craftsmen of our fate resonates with me more because of the portfolio that I have the honour to hold because this particular goal also speaks to how we protect our nation. Mr. Speaker, this is a multifaceted issue. We can protect our nation through preventive mechanisms, through law enforcement and through rehabilitation.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to start from the end and work forward. On page 51 of this document, reference is made to the matter of penal reform and law enforcement. Mr. Speaker, it is perhaps important at this time that we consider the role of penal reform as we look to take Barbados forward. Someone may say that it is obvious to state that we cannot expect to have a secure society except we look seriously at the matter of rehabilitation of those individuals who have found themselves running afoul of the law.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to share with you some statistics from the Census for Glendairy Prisons for the year 2005, which was conducted by the National Task Force on Crime Prevention. Mr. Speaker, I would want to make this a document of the House. Mr. Speaker, in this Census, which

is correct as at the end of December 2005 – we would also be doing one for 2006 – there were 942 inmates in Prison, that figure has now increased to nearly 1 200. At that time, Mr. Speaker, 95 per cent of the inmates were males and a mere five per cent were females. Eighteen per cent of the incarcerated prisoners were non-nationals. Almost one-fifth of the people in our Prison are from places beyond these shores.

Mr. Speaker, what is perhaps the most startling statistic is that violence offences were the most common causes of inmate incarceration. Sir, 299 inmates were in prison because of violence offences, which is 32 per cent of the inmates. Mr. Speaker, 163 of the inmates were in prison for homicide, which is 17 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, these figures paint a very stark picture for us. Twenty-one per cent of the population as at December last year was between the ages of 26 and 30. One-fifth of our prison population are barely past their teens. Mr. Speaker, these individuals are individuals who are to be returned to the Barbadian society. Mr. Speaker, if we consider that fact, we have to recognise that penal reform therefore takes on a new importance as we plan Barbados’ strategic path over the next two decades.

Mr. Speaker, we, in the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Office of the National Task Force on Crime Prevention, have considered the matter of penal reform. Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that over the years, we had a system where Glendairy Prison was operating in its own sphere, the Probation Department operating in its own sphere and the Government Industrial Schools also operating in their own sphere. Mr. Speaker, the reality is that these agencies have not been functioning in equal time, they have been out of step with each other.

We recognise therefore that as we look to protect our nation, and as we look to deal with the question of penal reform, that we cannot just concentrate on fixing buildings. I will remind you, Sir, that in the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto of 1999, we stated that we were going to redevelop Glendairy Prison and renovate Summervale and Dodds, a clear recognition from our Manifesto of 1999 that the physical plant needed to have some work done to it. These of course have been overtaken by the events at Glendairy and now the events of last week at Summervale.

Mr. Speaker, the point is that the matter of penal reform extends far beyond putting good, physical buildings in place, it also has to do with how we treat the inmates of these institutions. Mr. Speaker, I said that almost one-fifth of our prison population is barely past its teens. This means that we have to look now at the causes our young men and women are involved in criminal activity. The frightening

knowledge that so far for the year we have had five minors involved in homicides is something that should cause every Barbadian to pause and to ask where our society is going.

Sir, when the Opposition talks about us bringing a Plan here for their input into a manifesto, it is an almost insulting approach to take to a matter that concerns every Barbadian. Crime has a victim and it has a perpetrator. If your family is not touched by virtue of having suffered at the hands of a perpetrator, then perhaps your family has suffered by virtue of having produced a perpetrator.

Mr. Speaker, we have to make an investment in programmes to reintegrate these inmates into our society. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say to this Honourable House that some important things are happening in terms of our juvenile programme. For some time now the young men and women from both institutions have been doing CXC's. In fact, one of our concerns, since Summervale burnt last week, has been how do we make sure that the educational programme for those young women who are taking CXC's in January remains undisturbed.

Mr. Speaker, a few months ago, I exercised my discretion under the relevant legislation and allowed two young women to be released from Summervale early because they had achieved outstanding CXC results. I believe one of them had six CXC's and had a job offer. Sir, there are some positive things that are happening within our juvenile programme but the fact of the matter is that Barbadians are not so embracing as to put aside the stigma of being a Dodds boy or a Summervale girl, or the stigma of dealing with an individual who has gone to prison.

Mr. Speaker, I have met, both inside and outside of politics, productive men and women who have served time in prison. Sir, when you speak to them, you would not know that the individual went to prison. They are engaging, they are intelligent, and more important, they are hardworking and productive members of the society. It proves the point that if this society were to adopt a more embracing attitude towards our brothers and sisters who have fallen afoul of the law, perhaps many more of them would return to our societies, if given the chance, to be productive men and women.

Mr. Speaker, this is a clarion call for all Barbadians to recognise that we do not have the luxury of putting these people into a balloon or a compound after they have paid their debt to the society and so it is incumbent on every one of us to make sure that they are reintegrated into our society so that they no longer pose a threat.

Sir, I am convinced that one of the reasons for recidivism is the attitude that we display toward some of

these individuals who have come back into our society. We need to find once more that spirit of forgiveness and that spirit of brotherly love. We need to temper the anger that these individuals feel by showing them an appreciation for their skills and that they have tremendous self-worth.
3.40 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is not, at all, a small element of our strategic plan that we will be concentrating on penal reform. These individuals have to come back into our society. There is also the important element of how we protect our society and our nation.

Mr. Speaker, today's environment is one with which I believe Barbadians are feeling a little uncomfortable. Recently, there have been a number of hideous crimes, and it does no one any good to hide our heads under a pillow. Sir, crime figures, as of September this year, indicate a 9 per cent increase in overall crime, as compared to last year. This increase is mainly attributed to a 33 per cent increase in reports of breaches of the peace.

Sir, you might say that a breach of the peace is a relatively small offence, for example, where two persons might be quarrelling or fighting in the bus terminal, but these figures will cause our crime statistics to increase, and in this area, we have had a 33 per cent increase last year.

Mr. Speaker, what is worrisome is the fact that so far for the year, we have recorded 28 homicides, as compared to 21 for the same period last year. Mr. Speaker, while the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force have an outstanding record in terms of solving these crimes, it is a blot on our society that we are recording increased levels of homicides, especially when some of those homicides are being conducted by mere children.

Mr. Speaker, this is not a political or partisan issue. The fact is that law enforcement and the penal system only come into play, after the individual has committed the offence. What are those things that are in our society that should be shielding our young men and women from following that path? What are those things that, in previous generations, would have helped to steer young men and woman away from walking around with a knife, to stab a 15-year old? We need to engage in that introspection.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, the first page of this Draft National Strategic Plan recites the National Anthem. It says:

**“The Lord has been the people's guide
For past three hundred years.”**

Mr. Speaker, from that 300-year period of history, we need to draw the lessons. We need to draw from those things that were of value then, that we now seem to have cast off.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that our young men and woman spend more time out of school, than they spend in school. Many of those times their schools are outside of the communities, and so we have to wonder, if, in a sense, our communities are not failing. We have to wonder if our churches have not become too far removed from the day-to-day lives of people. We have to wonder if our teachers are only focusing on the academics and not trying to pay some attention to the matter of spiritual and human values.

Mr. Speaker, these are not matters for law enforcement. Law enforcement, try as you might, would only come at the end. Therefore, by the time the police are called in, the crime would have already been committed. Mr. Speaker, I am calling on the communities, to take our young people in hand and to try to steer them away from this path, which takes them to destruction.

Mr. Speaker, what is the relevance of our National Strategic Plan? As I have said, we are not going to be able to ensure justice, peace and security, if the very fabric of our society deteriorates. Therefore, we cannot continue to be ‘outing’ little fires, in circumstances where, whenever something happens, we say we have a plan for it. That is not the way we are going to ensure success going forward. We have to anticipate the challenges that might come and put strategies in place, to deal with those things as they come forward.

Mr. Speaker, I am especially attracted to this Strategic Plan because, as you look at it, it sets out the objectives. It says what are the strategies that we are going to employ to reach those objectives; what are the targets we expect to reach, through these strategies; and a method of measuring our success.

Mr. Speaker, how do we measure the success that we achieve? We have been achieving success, in terms of interdiction. We have been achieving success, in terms of capturing drugs. We have seized 52 firearms so far this year, but those are things that happen after the fact. This society has to take on seriously the responsibility of preventing these things from coming upon us.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that this National Strategic Plan is vital. We have to chart a course. I am sure that every Barbadian will find something in this Strategic Plan that will resonate with them. Some persons may not want to focus on the matter of crime and security or on the matter of protecting our nation, but we would not be able to achieve any of the goals of high competitiveness or high productivity, unless people feel comfortable and safe.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time when there was a serious spate of violence against taxi drivers, where taxi drivers had

begun to feel that they did not want to work routes at night. Furthermore, Barbadians then started to take up that message. They begun to feel that St. Lawrence Gap was not available to them anymore because the place was unsafe.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that, to some extent, those times have passed but that our safety and security is a very fragile flower. Sir, the recent contributions on our call-in programmes will demonstrate to all how fragile is that flower. This National Strategic Plan helps to fortify our hard work. It helps to protect the gains that we have made over the last 300 years, 10 years or three years, but more importantly, it orients us to a point in the future – and I hope all of us would still be alive then – where we would be able to look back at this debate and say that the little steps we have taken today, have been able to achieve the kinds of success on which we can build a better tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your indulgence.

Mr. SPEAKER vacated the Chair. Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER assumed the Chair.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to join this debate, at this time, simply because I think it is a very important one, which certainly warrants our national attention.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must congratulate the two speakers, who came before me, for their well-thought-out intervention and for putting this debate in a clear perspective, while articulating how they see it for Barbados, which is in synchronisation with the Draft National Strategic Plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, first of all, I want to offer my sincerest congratulations to all those, who were involved in the development of this plan. It has taken many months of planning, of focusing, of looking at the issues, and of strategising and, therefore, it was not an easy exercise. The final document which has been produced, is one of which most Barbadians should be proud.
3.50 p.m.

Sir, I sincerely believe that this document in itself should really be discussed at the level of the tertiary institution or even at the secondary level and even at the community level. This is not to say that the planned strategic meetings across Barbados are not happening. I am saying that if we are to get to the core of the participation that we want, then we ought to have an unorthodox method of reaching the real persons in Barbados which this National Strategic Plan will directly effect. Hence, it is critical that the youth groups across Barbados, the churches in Barbados and all the advocates of society be given a copy of this document so that they could discuss it with their membership.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, against that background I would like to thank the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations for their input into the document. I would also like to thank all of the private sector associations, the NGOs, CBOs, Government ministries and certainly the statutory bodies in Government. I also want to thank the staff of the University of the West Indies and in particular Dr. Peter Laurie, Mr. Carson Browne, who is now Permanent Secretary to the Minister of Housing, Mr. Courtney Browne, the former Barbados cricket captain, the Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and their staff but more particularly, Mr. Bentley Gibbs, who in my view, has become Barbados' focal person as it relates to our National Strategic Plan (NSP).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I was preparing this discourse for this Honourable Chamber, I sat with a group of young people who actually prepared the presentation for me from the perspective that they wanted their ideas and views expressed in this Honourable Chamber through my voice. I will make it a document of this House and please allow me to quote extensively from the document which they have presented me to bring before this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is against that background that the involvement of the youth is very critical in the decision-making process and critical to the development of this country. Sir, living in a globalised economy where change is certainly inevitable, the challenge is how to effectively manage the change which will benefit our society. These challenges of change, initiating, sustaining, redesigning and rethinking are evident because we seek to change a world that is a living world.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to understand that social realities, like physical realities, are not fixed but are continually unfolding. These are issues which are shaped by international, regional and local forces. The only way that we could make the most of what is to come is if we seek first to understand the global pressures that have come to bear on small island economies and the changes that we must endure for, we certainly cannot prevent them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we are to benefit from the changes in this global climate, a global climate where to stand still is what we consider almost equivalent to running backward at high speed. We can ill-afford to find ourselves in a position where we are reacting to things we should have seen coming. This brings about the old adage, where there is no vision, the people will perish.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this National Strategic Plan is a tool which can be used to provide a platform or framework for effectively managing change in Barbados. This National Strategic Plan of Barbados with its theme of "Global Excellence, Barbadian Traditions", presents what we call a

bill of social rights which seeks to empower and prepare our nation to effectively compete and prosper in this new dispensation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Plan presents an approach to the sustainable development of this country. It presents a model for development and also provides an ethical framework for a transformed Barbadian society, Sir, a society where we maintain, strengthen and reinforce our national and cultural identity. Sir, the late great Walter Rodney from Guyana once said that identity precedes participation. Sir, I must repeat that because it is critical in a day when our youth are struggling to identify who they are and to bring a sense of who they are as a people, it is critical that we understand the words of the late great Walter Rodney when he said that identity precedes participation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, improved governance systems and fostering of partnership with all development stakeholders. Sir, what I am talking about and what they are saying to me is that at this time in our development and with the impact of globalisation on small economies like ours, they are saying that Government should consider a system of local governance, where community leaders, community practitioners and those organised communities could really take hold of the management of the community in which they were born and which they are currently managing on their own in their own community style, where people are always placed – this is also very important – at the centre of the development process regardless of political persuasion.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they are basically saying to me that despite whatever political Party they support, that people should be placed at the centre of the human development process.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am reading what they have put forward to me. Sir, this whole ideology about polarisation and assistance based on which Party you are affiliated to, is something that must be discarded, where we seek to ensure environmental sustainability and sound infrastructure. They talk about global competitiveness and positioning Barbados to compete successfully at the global level, something that the Government of Barbados is seriously pursuing and has been pursuing for four years; consolidating the image of Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbados is still considered a leader among the developing countries across the world, if not the leading developing country in the world. Sir, I want to say that sustainable development cannot be achieved without innovation and creativity. Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South spoke to it in glowing and eloquent terms and I also want to repeat that sustainable development cannot be achieved without innovation and creativity. Sir, innovation and creativity is best achieved in a culture that embraces and fosters learning and change.

Therefore, sustainable development is dependent upon the realisation that the economic, the social and environmental areas are all dependant and are inextricably linked to each other and, Sir, actions to meet goals in any of these areas affect the other and are assisted or hindered by them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to add that the State should not be seen as the sole duty bearer. The development vision cannot be achieved by this Government or any Government on account of the multifaceted nature of the development issues. These issues must be seen as a shared responsibility, with Government forging partnerships with the private sector, civil society, trade unions, as part of the protocol, NGO groups, CBOs and international agencies. There might be a need for a protocol which would include the community organisations and other social sectors in Barbados and the churches.

4.00 p.m.

Sir, I am very happy to see that this document is certainly the product of a number of collective consultations of all stakeholders in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, a strange thing is happening today and it is significant, that this National Strategic Plan is being discussed today. I am of the opinion that every Honourable Member of this Chamber, knows that today is International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. There are speeches being made by Kofi Annan, The Secretary General of the United Nations, and many world leaders who are recognising that today is International Day for the eradication of Poverty. Sir, 168 Leaders across the world signed a very important document called the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our National Strategic Plan, in my view, is Barbados' MDGs Plan of the Millennium Development Goals. Let me explain that, Sir.

Sir, Barbados, basically, has achieved almost all of the MDGs. There are countries across the world that are still struggling to achieve the MDGs. Sir, when a critical assessment and evaluation is carried out, it is concluded that Barbados has achieved most of the MDGs. We are now into the MDGs plans, which comes in the form of our National Strategic Plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you examine our National Strategic Plan, when you examine the international document of the MDGs, Barbados' National Strategic Plan, as it relates to the MDGs, encapsulates all of the MDGs and also localises the MDGs in a form that is accepted to every poor person and man on the street.

Sir, our job and our department is to really make the MDGs effective to ordinary persons across Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we talk about MDGs, the basic questions to almost all Barbadians are: How would these terminologies affect them. How would it change their lives? How could they benefit from them? Sir, it is clearly articulated in our National Strategic Plan.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, to those who do not know or might have just heard the term Millennium Development Goals, there are eight such goals. The very first goal today is International Day for the Eradication of Poverty and today 166 countries across the world are talking about the eradication of poverty.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, somehow in Barbados, because we are conservative and tentative, we are afraid to speak about the eradication of poverty as a serious policy that we must pursue. I have heard some of my colleagues and other persons across Barbados, who should know better, talking about the alleviation of poverty and that poverty could never be eradicated, and I tend to agree.

The United Nations and world leaders across the world have accepted that the first goal of the MDGs, is to eradicate extreme poverty. Sir, Goal II, speaks about universal primary education and Goal III, gender equity and the empowerment of women. Those are areas for which we must provide the necessary safety nets. Sir, Goal IV, is to reduce infant mortality; Goal V, improve maternal health and Goal VI, speaks about a reduction of HIV/AIDS.

Sir, I must say that against this background, that I want to congratulate the Caribbean Broadcasting Agency and all those community practitioners, some of us are in this Honourable Chamber. We have really taken on the fight to reduce HIV/AIDS, which is Goal VI of the MDGs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I said that Barbados has attained most of these goals, you will see what I am speaking about.

Sir, Goal VII speaks about environmental sustainability. Mr. Speaker, to me, the two most critical, which are clearly articulated in our National Strategic Plan, is Goal I, the eradication of extreme poverty and global partnership for development.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have taken Goal VIII, of the MDGs, and put it in a local form and called it National Partnership for Development, where it is working very closely with all the actors of civil society.

The localisation of these goals is very critical. It is important when we look at what Barbados is now doing, the MDGs plus. I want to repeat it. If we have achieved most of the MDGs, then we are looking at the MDGs'plus, which most developed countries across the world are now devising a strategy to implement their version of the MDGs' plus but that is where we are.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the localisation of these goals are critically important. How can ordinary Barbadians benefit from it? Our department is looking seriously at the implementation and localisation of these goals.

Sir, the basic element that we have to deal with is the sensitisation, which is very critical. Despite the meetings that are being held, it is now critical at this point that every school and sporting organisation and the Government Information Service be mobilised in such a way that the national strategic initiatives that we are discussing here in this Honourable Chamber, once passed and approved by this Chamber and by all Barbadians, we have to go on mass sensitisation and an awareness drive, where every member of our society would be informed and be part of this National Strategic Plan.

Sir, this National Strategic Plan is fully owned by the Government and people of Barbados, has benefited from the collective inputs of representatives of the public and private sectors and civil society.

As we are aware, Barbados' economic, and particularly its social development are grounded in a tradition of stable governments over a period of time, democratic freedom, the advancement of human rights, which is described in this document of the National Strategic Plan, as a Bill of Rights, the advancement of an independent and fair judicial system. The Honourable Attorney-General gave you the statistics of crime in Barbados, and this document speaks of a re-examination of the judicial system. Sir, the emphasis is on a fair judicial system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Barbados has always prided itself in its human resources. Today the Honourable Member articulated a very good case in this Honourable Chamber about the National Strategic Plan by a well-educated and trainable workforce. Sir, we are talking about the investment in the human capital, sound economic management.

The economy of Barbados has benefited from significant investment in its social capital formation. The development of physical infrastructure, an innovative legislation in education, land reform, social security, health and the elimination of gender-based discrimination.
4.10 p.m.

Sir, I want you to understand what is really happening. As I said in my introduction, there is a group of young people at tertiary level and secondary level that I met with, and discussed this document. What I have brought to this Honourable Chamber is a document from them, which came out of that discussion. In other words, the work of these 14 young people I met, will become a document of this Honourable Chamber and, by and large, they would have participated, in a new way, in this discussion.

Sir, the Six Goals present a development vision for Barbados for the year 2025. The document identifies our strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats. It presents a range of objectives and strategies, which will secure a place for Barbados as a fully developed society.

Sir, as we start to discuss poverty, and we look at the issues of poverty, poverty as all of us know, is multi-dimensional. We would debate and some of us would agree, and some would disagree. Let us recognise that if we want to come to a fair decision or a fair agreement to what poverty is, as it relates to us, we should recognise that poverty is more than a lack of income, it is a lack of opportunity and choice, it is a lack of rights and resources, it is a lack of social resources and support, a voice, and also a lack of power.

Sir, if we are to continue on this development programme and, if we are to encapsulate this National Strategic initiative, then we have to talk about the empowerment of communities in Barbados. The time has come when the community practitioners in Barbados, should be empowered. The communities leaders across Barbados should now focus in a very serious way on controlling their own communities and their own spaces.

Let me ask this Honourable Chamber a reasonable question, because I believe that all of us are reasonable men and women in this Chamber. It is against this background, Sir, of the Millennium Development Goals, Sir, that I would not want to forget the role that Dame Billie Miller is playing. I want to congratulate her because I listened to the debate at the UN's most recent Sitting, where she put up a very spirited performance as it relates to putting Barbados' position on the MDGs.

Sir, this is the question. If you have community-based organisations functioning within your constituencies – and sometimes they are doing some of the work that some of us are doing – and they have made a proposal to control, let us say a community resource centre across Barbados, why should we not grant them the opportunity to manage some of these social resources within the community? I am talking about introducing a new level of local governance.

The time will shortly come upon all of us here in this Honourable Chamber, when we are going to seriously have to look at empowering the community-based organisations in Barbados. We have to give them a role to intervene in the development of this country.

We cannot believe that because we are elected by the people and for the people that it is only our sole right to make decisions for the people, without the people. If we are talking about representation of the people, then the people

themselves must be involved in any level of decision-making. Their participation in this kind of new Government system, will surely bring about equity and equality.

I know that all of us in here have big goals. I know how powerful we feel when we come in this Honourable Chamber and sit. We believe that we are the masters of our fate and the controllers of the people’s destiny in Barbados. Sometimes we tend to forget that the real masters of our fate, and the real people who control our destiny are the people out there in the street.

I listen glowingly to politicians. This is not because I have a disdain for politicians, but because I am a community practitioner in politics, better known as the simple Rasta man from the Pine, St. Michael. I like to hear when the politicians get up and say that we care. Sir, you must permit me in this Honourable Chamber to just give you a bit of my acting skills. When the politicians get in front of the political microphone, they say that we care about the man in the street. That is the first thing that they say but under close scrutiny and examination over the years, and you check the records, the man in the street still remains the man in the street. This is a very serious thing.

Sir, the whole thing is about change and involvement. I have a document here – some time I will make it a document of this House – where a young lady, named Kaye Marie Belle wrote a very interesting futuristic article entitled “Politics in Barbados”. A number of students at the UWI presented it to me, while I was talking to them. It consists of how they view us, where they want to see Barbados go, and where we are at present.

Sir, sometimes when we really look at what the young people are saying, we do not understand how far removed we are from how the young people are thinking about us. If we are talking about social revolution and social changes, then the importance of the young people, should be paramount.

I am not talking about the political arm and an affiliation of political parties. I am talking about all of us as true revolutionaries of the people, going into the bowels of the community, and extracting the best talents that we have, looking at the potential of our young people, and bringing them and harnessing them for the development of this country. It is critical. We cannot divorce political participation from community involvement. The two of them are inextricably linked.

A political scientist or a social practitioner, a professor might want to ask me, where I derived that kind of thesis. I like to use these fancy words. What empirical evidence do you have Hamilton Lashley? I say, Sir, Barbados’ true

empirical evidence is critical, just like how the Minister of Social Transformation is doing his surveys to determine what are the poverty levels in Barbados.

Sir, our foreparents, great grandparents and so on, survived in this society, brought us up, carried us through school, some of us were very successful and went to a university. Sir, when they were growing up, there was hardly any talk about economics, but they practised economics.

Sir, the empirical evidence that we have, is the evidence of local knowledge and observation. In Barbados at the community level, we say that almost everybody is ‘malicious’, but really and truly it is keen observation. Everybody in this country knows everyone’s business, participatory observation, which is critical.

Sir, when I come to this Honourable Chamber and I listen to what is happening outside and what is happening on the inside, there is a strange paradox.

I was going up Bay Street and a young man shouted me and said:

“Hammie La, let me tell you something, you are doing good so far, but one thing that we do not want you to become is a poser.”
4.20 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know that I like to talk in my local English that I am so proud of because it is something that was developed by us Bajans, which is natural.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was standing up against the wall posing because I felt cool on a very warm day and he said to me “Hammie La, don’t you ever become a poser”. Sir, we have too many posers in Barbados. Sir, since we have so many posers and so many talkers, what we really need now is social doers, I am putting it very simple.

Sir, the time has come now for us in Barbados to look at serious and radical political changes in Barbados. When the internal house system comes in this Honourable Chamber, we have to look at changing and amending some of the old traditional rules of this Honourable Chamber that are long outdated that was made in England years ago. Sir, sometimes you wonder if Guy Fawkes did the right things. This is a serious statement. Sir, when I look in this Honourable Chamber and I see relics of the colonial system still remaining and we are slavishly being guided by them, it means that we are not progressing too fast.

Sir, you must bear in mind, that I am fully respecting the laws of Parliament and the traditions that we have, but I am reflecting to you from this document that 14 young people that I met with gave me. These are not Hamilton Lashley’s sentiments alone.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if we as politicians really care about what the people are saying, then therefore we have to listen to them. What they say might not be palatable, might not be Victorian, or might not be Shakespearean in language, but it is real. Sir, once we start to get real in Barbados, then we will start to understand how the people of this country particularly the young people... Sir, the young people of this country are very serious. It makes me sometimes shudder at the point of time in our development when this country has some of the most energetic and creative young people that we have ever witnessed...

Sir, I thank you for adding the extra minute to my time.

Sir, all of us, as serious political and community practitioners must give the youth an ear.

Sir, as I conclude, I want to say again that this document "the National Strategic Plan" is a very good document that we must read and examine. I want again to thank all of those persons who worked on the document. Sir, this is one document that speaks directly to the point, let no obstacle be greater than the cause.

Sir, I thank you very much.

Hon. C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy Speaker, following a very good friend of mine, I join this debate to put in context the theme of his message, which indeed is the need really for us to understand what the Barbadian identity has become. Sir, if we can begin to understand the Barbadian identity after 40 years of independence, then we would be on course to having a vision and therefore creating a strategic plan out of that vision. Sir, I well-appreciate what the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East has said that we need to build an identity.

However, Sir, an identity can only be built on character and understanding the character of the people, but character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. It is only through experiences of trials and suffering that the soul can be strengthened, vision cleared, ambition inspired and success achieved. If therefore we are to understand the identity or who we want to become, then it is critical that we appreciate the need to have character, that character has been developed not within the last 20 years, but over history. Mr. Speaker, I dare say therefore that after the abolition of slavery that we as a people would have had our soul strengthened.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the turn of the Twentieth Century and the end of the Industrial Revolution, our ambition would have been inspired. Over the 1940s, 50s and 60s, we would have achieved some successes in the politics of the day. During the 1970s, 80s and beyond, we would have built social and economic foundations, laying the groundwork for a modern Barbados. In essence, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, we would have over the years, given our experiences as a people out of slavery, developed a soul that has been strengthened. Mr. Deputy Speaker, over the years, as a result of our experiences during the Industrial Revolution and beyond, we would have had ambition that inspired us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, having been critical of there not being a clear vision as to where this country intends to go, I now sit comfortably on This Side knowing that there is a Strategic Plan that is being articulated for the people of Barbados. It is absolutely necessary to be able to define who you are and to make decisions to determine where you are going.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the real difference between this Strategic Plan and the Development Plans that would have been introduced in the past is the whole question of management. In earlier days, nobody paid any special attention to management as a science and nobody paid any attention to managing a process, because it was felt that you could just set targets and achieve those targets without having to strategise. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is why there is that sense of comfort knowing that there is now in place an attempt to put a vision on where we are going and to analyse clearly how we intend to get and reach that vision.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one cannot proceed in politics without having a vision and one cannot proceed in life without having a vision clearly defined. For me, it is particularly heartening that there is that kind of clearly defined plan in a National Strategic Plan. Sir, more critically, it says Global Excellence, Barbadian Traditions. In short, you are in pursuit of excellence but not losing your character or culture or who you are so that some time ahead there would be a clearly defined 'Barbadiana' whether it is in your culture or in your architecture. Whatever it is, you should have something that we can describe as Barbadian in nature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I therefore can only too well begin to understand that the pursuit of global excellence requires extreme planning and a very insightful Government for there to be any consideration at all of such a pursuit of excellence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wish therefore to look broadly at those areas that we need to consider. First, there is the whole question of political democracy. Personally, I think that Barbados has already reached the stage where there is the achievement of excellence in our political democracy. In fact, there is no other country that can speak as freely about freedom of speech, about changing of Governments or about the kinds of democracy that we practise in this country. There is no other country that could boast of the excellence in which a political democracy has functioned and continues to function.

The whole question of economic equality is one in which perhaps we could say we have achieved. There is good, but yet there is a need to pursue excellence in the area of economic equality. On the question of social justice, there is no doubt as to whether or not Barbados can be given a pass mark, but we still need to pursue excellence in the area of social justice.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the three tenets upon which future life ought to be based and should be based, have in fact been clearly described as political democracy, further search for better governance and good governance, and the whole question of equality and better income distribution.

4.30 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in fact, for sure, Barbados can boast of having the best income distribution of any country in the western world. In fact, Trinidad that has excess in finance, that ought to be even more developed than it is, does not have the kind of income distribution that Barbados has. To this day, there are social indicators in Trinidad that cannot justify the level of financial resources available to Trinidad.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I cite Trinidad, not because I want to pull Trinidad down but I want to indicate that, in fact, Barbados, with its limited resources, has been able to achieve a level of income distribution and economic equality to date, that certainly is the envy of countries within the region.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, therefore, see the whole process of engaging in this exercise as very critical. Sir, it ought to be the case that any serious political party should see this as a matter in which one should truly be engaged, because one cannot begin to plan for a future, unless one understands where one is. You cannot begin to plan for a future, unless you understand your strengths; unless you appreciate the weaknesses you have; unless you see opportunities that can be available to you and the possible threats that can be in your way, either as a country or individual. Therefore, it is very critical that we embark on such a strategy of ensuring there is a National Strategic Plan in place and ensuring such a vision.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how then do I look to put that into context for the average Barbadian. Sir, that is perhaps going to be the most important matter to attend to? The Strategic Plan, to my mind, in its Draft form, has also to take into consideration the whole question of how do you finance the plans and programmes, to allow you to meet those objectives that have been outlined. Therefore, while it is going to be a very serious task, it ought to be part of another document that speaks to the questions of "Can we achieve those objectives set out in the National Strategic Plan?" Do we have to engage in a certain level of financial planning, to allow us to meet those objectives? To the extent that we have

the resources, can we put those resources in place, to maximise the benefits for all Barbadians?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am, therefore, suggesting that while the Strategic Plan has been prepared, in very recent times, the Right Honourable Prime Minister has been referring to, to my mind, to what has become the most critical economic strategy that has to be pursued in Barbados and that is how do we create an environment that allows for financial resources to flow into Barbados, so that we can make even greater opportunity of the physical and human resources, which we have available in this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, therefore, is the major constraint to growth and development in Barbados; that is the absence of an abundance of financial resources. Therefore, to the extent that we can become a developed capital market; to the extent that we are seen as politically stable, which we are; to the extent that we are seen as being managed soundly on the economic front; and to the extent that our social environment is stable and peaceful, then Barbados has an opportunity to attract greater levels of financial resources.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I make this point because I think that, over the years, especially from the 1960s, there was a collision with our economic thinking and our independence from Britain; that is, there was a confession that the pursuit of strategy of allowing for foreign investment to come to our shores, was at variance with the question of independence, as a people. Therefore, to that extent, the theoretical construct that was laid for us, by persons like Sir Arthur Lewis, who had indicated there is need for industrialisation by invitation and that the region needs to be able to attract financial resources, which are scarce, there was some collision on the part of other thinkers at the time, who felt that the pursuit of such strategy to attract foreign investment and foreign exchange, would be at variance with a strategy of political independence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, therefore, invite the academic world in this region to revisit that kind of division because it is now evident, more so than ever, that the major constraint to increasing our potential for growth and development, is going to be the availability of financial resources. Sir, in this world that has become global, where labour is restricted in its movement and where finance finds its way all over the globe, in search of opportunities via the internet or world markets, we, in this country, have to consider where we want to go.

We cannot be self-reliant in the area of financial provision. Barbados does not have the physical or financial capacity to grow to the extent that we want to.

We will continue to do well but we need to make a quantum leap. Therefore, in that sense, there can be no consideration or repeat of the error that was made in the 1960s, when our academics felt there was some collision between the pursuit of foreign investment and political independence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some 40 years later, it is now recognised that, in fact, the real search is for excess finance. How do we attract excess finance? As it relates to CARICOM, it is very evident that Trinidadians are finding this country exceedingly attractive, and for several reasons such as its stability; its management; the social environment; our political system, and that is something that has to be encouraged, beyond Trinidad and throughout CARICOM.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am, therefore, committed and I am a believer in the need to go towards a single market and a single economy. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the very planks upon which we are seeking to come together as a region, would dictate that we seek paths of economic integration that are mutually satisfying. It is also the tenet of functional corporation, upon which CARICOM has to develop. Therefore, in that sense, if there is need to share our social development with others in the region, then we have to consider it because it is a question of coming together and functioning more as a CARICOM unit, than restricting ourselves to simply being Barbados.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the other question is one of foreign policy coordination, which is going to become increasingly more important as countries seek to grapple with issues of World Trade Organisation and globalisation. The question of foreign policy coordination is going to become critical, as we are seeing it today, in process of governance of these countries. We are seeing it, even as I speak, in the question of whether or not Venezuela should become a part of the Regional Security System and to the extent that CARICOM should cooperate with Venezuela in giving that vote of expression. Therefore, we can begin to see the kinds of machinations that are going to take place in this new world and for us to become even more committed to each other, in forming a union that has, at its heart, economic integration, functional corporation and foreign policy coordination.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said that because it is impossible to think of a National Strategic Plan for Barbados, without understanding the role that we would play within CARICOM. It is impossible to think of a National Strategic Plan for Barbados, without understanding the global constraints to economic growth and development. It is, therefore, impossible to think of a National Strategic Plan, without taking into account all of those things that could impact on our future, whether that future is social, economical or political.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in that context, I can see that this National Strategic Plan, once properly implemented, which it would be – I have no doubt about that – and once there is the availability of finance, we in Barbados could achieve whatever it is we want to achieve, over the course of the next 20 years.
4.40 p.m.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is going to call for visionary leadership. It is going to call for leaders to understand their roles in the pursuit of balances between different objectives whether they be social or economic, balances between objective whether they be financial shortages, whether you have to borrow or not borrow, whether you have to set the stage for economic process upon sectors that are being driven by foreign exchange intentions or motives, whether you want to pursue a strategy that encourages a larger population pool given a greater critical mass for domestic businesses, whether there is going to be the opening up of our country to allow for further movement of labour or further movement of individuals from other countries within the regions. Sir, those are the kinds of things that would inform the management and leadership of this country over the next two decades.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say this because in addition to those broader parameters there are, of course, the more micro issues that we have to grapple with. Again, as someone who until only last year would have been critical of the national debt position of Barbados, I can now find comfort at page 119 of this Document because all have recognised that the national debt level is high and, therefore, there is an objective to reduce the national debt of Barbados, at page 119, to 60 per cent of GDP.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you are going to be critical of a process, and decisions are taken to stop you from being critical – because the right decisions are being made in the interest of the country – then what difficulty could there be if you understand that your criticism may be fully recognised and that there are actual policies and strategies designed to correct the excesses on the national debt. Well, I can seek my comfort in that as well.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have had to say that you can be critical of the size of the national debt but you cannot make inferences about the national debt for devaluation because it depends on the structure of the debt so there is no inconsistency. Sir, I have said this before that if you are six feet tall and weighing 200 pounds as opposed to four feet tall and weighing the same 200 pounds, the taller structure can carry that load far more easily so your structure is critical in determining whether or not the weight or size you carry is appropriate or inappropriate. In similar vein, as it relates to debt, it is not just the size of the debt that matters

but the actual structure of the debt. Sir, in that sense, Barbados' national debt is predominately domestic and not foreign and is, therefore, more manageable and sustainable into the future.

Therefore, I do not have to make any more comments about that because I think I have laid it to rest. I have put my position and my position, I can safely say, is being attended to. It is clearly articulated in the National Strategic Plan, so there is no need for me to discuss this matter any longer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the question of the cost of living. Sir, this latest reaction to the cost of living in Barbados is amazing. It did not require any CADRES poll because as far back as 2004 in the Reply to the Budget, I had this to say about the cost of living in Barbados.

"The overall impact of projected prices increases on a single parent family household over the next year – which will be the end of December 2005 – would be an inflation rate of approximately 6 per cent to 7 per cent."

Sir, this was said in 2004. The inflation rate for Barbados at the end of 2005 was 6.1 per cent. Again, it is not a question of whether you have been critical of the cost of living. It has been fully recognised that it has to be addressed, that the whole question of the imposition of the Cess to protect your imports because you needed to slow down has been inflationary and that is being addressed. It is recognised that high fuel costs which were predominately imported have been inflationary. That, fortunately, because of world circumstances will be addressed and has been addressed. There was the whole question of whether or not you protect your local manufacturing sector and agricultural sector from the ravages of WTO and globalisation with the imposition of a tariff equivalent of the non-tariff barrier. Let me explain this one for the people of Barbados because in 1992, while being an economist at the Central Bank of Barbados, I would have calculated a surtax of 100 per cent. Sir, all that was being required of Barbados is that if you are going to offer protection via import licences that this new world is saying to seek an equal tariff or a tariff of equal potency rather than a non-tariff barrier to offer protection to your manufacturers and your agriculturalists. Therefore, that resulted in the introduction of a surtax or bound rates.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bound rates are designed to protect manufacturers and the agriculturalist but that means that you are going to increase the cost of importing a competing good and, therefore, it would contribute to the cost of living. For example, there are several commodities, agriculture in nature which currently attract a 1 per cent Environmental Tax, CET and then bound rates but they are designed to offer protection to the agricultural sector.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you were to remove the bound rate, you would automatically drop the price of that imported good. In essence, you also have some kind of cost of living increase resulting from your desire to protect those most vulnerable sectors in the economy from the ravages of globalisation. Therefore, if the Government takes a decision to ease the pressure on the bound rate as a means of allowing or encouraging the agricultural sector and the manufacturing sector to become more competitive in today's world, then it would reduce the cost of living for the average Barbadian.

There are several things that could be done to effect a reduction in the cost of living but the most critical thing that needs to be done is for the retail and distributive sector to be not so horizontally linked, that the same individual who imports from the distribution side is only a company that sells at the retail stage as well. Therefore, from the process of importation to the point of retail, one individual with different companies named in between there, is the one who is 'jacking up' the markups; that, therefore, has to be addressed in the context of Barbadian pricing structure and the Barbadian pricing system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is really a result of history. Sir, historically, you would have had a sugar industry that, over time, might have been declining in importance and those people got involved in the distributive trade and then the relationship between the agriculture sector and distributive trade would have been established and recognised. Sir, in the years when you were seeking to prop up the sugar industry, people might have used the resources to help prop up the distribution sector in which they were also involved. Sir, over time, the relationship had been clearly established. Therefore, if you were to check, you would see that ownership patterns across the economy are similar regardless to whether you are in the distributive side of the trade or the retail side of trade, regardless of whether you are in real estate or in tourism.

There is a commonality of ownership patterns around Barbados. Sir, this has to be addressed as a matter of urgency for us to deal more effectively with some of the issues pertaining to price.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the whole question of the need of income tax reform that is being pursued so definitively in Barbados, would have been jointly shared by both Parties if you check the Manifestos for 2003, so that the income tax reduction and the increases in threshold for tax purposes from \$15 000 to \$25 000 over the years would have been shared by both Parties, so there is no need to be uncomfortable.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the whole question of housing and how you tackle housing to effect housing solution

for low income and middle income Barbadians is now being addressed. When you hear individuals on the Other Side speaking about a wooden house in derogative terms, how it is too dark or how it is too small, it simply says that those individuals have removed themselves from their identities. Most of us would have grown up in wooden houses that were painted on an annual basis; most of us would have grown up in wooden houses that would not carry sash windows, but would have had the old-time windows, jalousie windows, which are even darker.
4.50 p.m.

Sir, in today's world you could illuminate a house by the use of sash windows and other things, you cannot now say that a house is dark. You have to say that there is now an innovative plan to reduce the cost of housing to the average Barbadian. Sir, to the extent that a house becomes affordable, it really matters not whether it is hardwood or wall, because it is a question of affordability, availability and accessibility. That is the issue. Are houses affordable, are they available and can they be assessed by the average Barbadian? Sir, that, therefore, constitutes what strategic thinking and planning is about. It is about the capacity to deliver to the people of Barbados, in a way that is effective.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it, therefore, means that in the overall picture for advancing this country, there is one constraint to the economy. I mentioned it about finance, that is on the supply side. Unless we are able to earn foreign exchange, as a small country, we cannot make the quantum leap that we would want to make as a country, because we have to import to survive. We have to import for us to enjoy the life we want. Sir, in order to import, you need to have hard currency, US dollars. Sir, any strategy for sustainable economic growth and development, must be a strategy in which the private sector drives the engine and in which the private sector, not only drives the engine, but the private sector exports in order to earn foreign exchange.

Sir, there is one constraint to economic growth and development. If a country in the region has adequate foreign exchange and manages its fiscal side effectively, then the road is clear for prosperity. Sir, you either pursue a path that is driven by the urgency of earning foreign exchange, with prudent fiscal management, or do not earn foreign exchange and you do not have prudent management and you, therefore, incur all kinds of economic crises in the future.

Sir, the choice is, do you strategise to get you where you want to go, or do you allow your engine to be turned off and follow the waves to determine the direction in which you want? That is not what you want.

Sir, the difference really has to be, that you put management systems in place, which is the heart of the strategy. Sir, as I said earlier, the difference between a development plan and a strategic plan really is about one being managed, a managed process, not only set an objective, but to manage yourself or your country on the course to your objective.

Sir, as I said before, it is not that the development plan of my mentor, the man that I respect fully in economics, Sir Arthur Lewis, was not effective for its time, but his management was never deemed to be as critical as it is today. In fact, it is one of the newer sciences and people have become aware of the importance of managing any process.

In fact, productivity is a managerial process, the way in which you control your inputs versus your outputs. That is a managerial process that has to be pursued.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has one minute.

Mr. C. A. MASCOLL: Sir in light of that, I just have to say that beyond the need for even greater political democracy, beyond the need for the pursuit of economic equality, beyond the need for even greater social justice, what is going to be critical for the future – is in the words of Martin Luther King, and I quote:

“We should have to create leaders who embody the virtues we can respect. Who have moral and ethical principles we can applaud, with an enthusiasm that enables us to rally support for them based on confidence and trust. We will have to demand high standards and give consistent loyal support to those who merit it.”

Sir, in essence, therefore, it is critical that we put great importance into the whole question of leadership, because in order to lead, there is need for vision and unless you can really give that kind of support to your leaders, and unless we can identify who those leaders are, you as a country may make an error in choosing the wrong kind of people to lead you into the future.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that further consideration of this matter be postponed.

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

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

ORDER NO. 8 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE LAND ACQUISITION ACT, CAP. 228 THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF THE PARCEL OF LAND, SITUATE AT LOT 5, STURGES, IN THE PARISH OF ST. THOMAS IN THIS ISLAND, FOR THE PUBLIC PURPOSE OF THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE SECURITY AT THE CARIBBEAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

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

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this matter is a small technical matter. As you would be aware, the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, owns some lands at Sturges, on which is located an antenna for transmission. There is a microwave link between the studios at The Pine and the transmission facility at Sturges. The land in question lies in the direct path of that microwave link between and Sturges and the Pine broadcasting studios. In addition, one of the wires stabilising the antenna mass lies on this property.

It is therefore proposed to acquire this property at Lot 5, Sturges, which measures 8 748.2 square metres, in order to ensure that there is no potential further future development, which would block the microwave link between Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, the Pine, and the transmission facility at Sturges, as well as to ensure no further development on this land would pose any threat or danger to the existing antenna structures, located on the property already owned by the Crown, on which Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation has this antenna.

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

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

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

ORDER NO. 14 – RESOLUTION IN ACCORDANCE WITH SECTION 5 OF THE CROWN LANDS (VESTING AND DISPOSAL) ACT, CAP. 225 THE VESTING IN NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF THE PARCEL OF LAND THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN SITUATE AT “BLUNTS”, AIRY COT IN THE PARISH OF SAINT THOMAS IN THIS ISLAND MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE TO THIS RESOLUTION, TO FACILITATE FURTHER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Christ Church East.
5.00 p.m.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this matter involves a small piece of land, some 23 000 square feet, about 2 199 square metres and this would have been land on which stood the former Hillaby Primary School.

You would recall, Sir, that Hillaby Primary School would have been closed many years ago and the school now called, the Hillaby/Turners Hall Primary School is located at Farmers. Hillaby Primary School has been closed so long that the derelict buildings were demolished some 12 years ago from that site.

Sites such as those, a number of small parcels all around the island, were the subject of a decision of Cabinet several years ago, that these lands, which were residual parcels along the ABC Highway, disused properties and former public baths, should be disposed of by various means.

The former public baths, for example, were disposed of by way of public auction some years ago, a number of residual pieces of land along the ABC Highway were, in some cases sold to owners of adjacent properties, or where feasible, utilised for the purpose of housing. This is one such parcel which was part of that package. The idea is, that rather than having these small pieces of land lying around gathering bush and not serving any major public purpose, that they are placed into the hand of an agency with some proper use made of them.

This property therefore at Blunts, Airy Cot, St. Thomas is one of the last of those properties in that package. This is one on which the old Hillaby Primary School stood. The buildings would have been demolished 12 years ago, and we therefore asking for Parliament’s approval, in accordance with the Crown Lands Vesting and Disposal Act, Chapter 225, to vest this land in the National Housing Corporation for use in its development programme.

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

Hon. Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I wish to express sincere thanks to the Minister of Housing and Lands for having brought this Resolution here today. The people of Blunts, which we call Airy Cot are really going to be very happy. This is some time now, Sir, that many of them have been making queries about the spots that have been left behind, as a result of the demolition of the school.

We know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is extremely difficult for some persons to acquire house spots. I am sure that this land, which will be vested today in the Ministry of Housing and Lands, will go a long way – small as the portions are – in helping to satisfy the needs of a few

of the residents in that small community where the people there want to build their own houses.

I am sure that once the opportunity is given to them, they will be able to empower themselves in that particular way, and so, it is with great gratitude that I want to thank the Minister and his staff for bringing this project forward, so that the folk of Airy Cot can pursue their construction.

I beg to second the Resolution, Sir.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this brings us to the end of Government's Business for today's Sitting. I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, October 24, 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

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

The question that this House be adjourned until Tuesday, October 24, 2006 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 5.04 p.m.

CONTENTS	
MINUTES	
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND	1
Confirmation of Minutes of Tuesday, October 10, 2006.	
ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER	
Mr. SPEAKER	1
PAPERS	
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND	2
Report of the Supervisor of Insurance, for the year ended 31st December, 2003.	
FIRST READING OF BILLS	
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND	2
1. Deposit Insurance Bill, 2006;	
2. Financial Institutions (Amendment) Bill, 2006;	
3. International Financial Services (Amendment) Bill, 2006;	
4. Central Bank of Barbados (Amendment) Bill, 2006.	
OBITUARY SPEECHES	
Hon. R. C. Eastmond, 2, 10, 11; Mr. D. J. H. Thompson, 3, 10; Hon. Dame Billie Miller, 4; Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde, 6; Mr. R. D. Jones, 7, 13; Hon. G. A. Clarke, 8; Mr. R. L. Sealy, 9, 13; Mr. C. A. Mascoll, 14; Mr. D. St. E. Kellman, 15.	
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
ORDER NO. 2 – DRAFT NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN OF BARBADOS 2005-2025, GLOBAL EXCELLENCE, BARBADIAN TRADITIONS	2
Hon. C. Y. Forde, 17; Hon. N. A. Lynch, 26; Hon. D. D. Marshall, 30; Mr. H. F. Lashley, 34; Hon. C. A. Mascoll, 39.	

ORDER NO. 8 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE COMPULSORY ACQUISITION BY THE CROWN OF THE PARCEL OF LAND SITUATE AT LOT 5, STURGES, ST. THOMAS IN THIS ISLAND, MORE PARTICULARLY DESCRIBED IN THE SCHEDULE HERETO FOR A PUBLIC PURPOSE, NAMELY FOR THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE SECURITY AT THE CARIBBEAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION	44
Hon. R. R. Farley, 44.	
ORDER NO. 14 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE VESTING IN THE NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION OF THE PARCEL OF LAND THE PROPERTY OF THE CROWN SITUATE AT “BLUNTS”, AIRY COT, ST. THOMAS TO FACILITATE FURTHER HOUSING DEVELOPMENT	44
Hon. R. R. Farley, 44; Hon. Miss C. Y. Forde, 44.	
SUSPENSION	17
ADJOURNMENT	44
Hon. R. C. Eastmond, 45.	
SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE	
EASTMOND, Hon. R. C. (St. James North)	
FARLEY, Hon. R. R. (Christ Church East)	
FORDE, Hon. Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)	
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)	
LASHLEY, Mr. H. F. (St. Michael South East)	
LYNCH, Hon. N. A. (St. Michael South)	
MARSHALL, Hon. D. D. (St. Joseph)	
MASCOLL, Hon. C. A. (St. Michael North West)	
MILLER, Hon. Dame Billie (City of Bridgetown)	
ROETT, His Honour I. A. (St. Michael Central)	
SEALY, Mr. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)	
SYMMONDS, Hon. K. D. (St. James Central)	
THOMPSON, Mr. D. J. H. (St. John)	