
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Pursuant to the Adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.15 a.m. on Tuesday, July 29, 2008.

PRESENT

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON, B.A., LL.B. (Speaker)

His Honour K. St.C. BEST, LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Deputy Speaker)

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

Prime Minister, Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Development, Labour, Civil Service and Energy)

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., LL.M. (Leic.), LL.B. (Hons.), B.A. (Hons.), Dip. Ed.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss MIA A. MOTTLEY, Q.C., LL.B. (Leader of the Opposition)

Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P., L.C.P.

Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P., M.A. (Ed.), B. A. (Hons.) (Minister of Education and Human Resource Development) (Leader of the House)

Dr. the Hon. D. C. ESTWICK, M.B.B.S., B.Sc., (Minister of Health, National Insurance and Social Security)

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Q.C., LL.B (Hons.), L.E.C.

Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, LL.B. (Hons.) (Minister of Housing and Lands)

Hon. R. L. SEALY, M.B.A., B.Sc. (Minister of Tourism)

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, M.Sc ©. Eng.) (Minister of Transport, Works and International Transport)

Hon. E. G. HUTSON, F.C.C.A., C.A. (Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce)

Hon. S. D. BLACKETT (Minister of Community Development and Culture)

Mr. J. D. PAUL, B.Sc.

Dr. the Hon. D. S. LOWE, M.Ed., B.A., Ed.D., Dip. Theology (Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development)

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE, LL.B. (Hons.)

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY, B.Sc., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. P. M. T. TODD, B.Sc. (Minister of State, Ministry of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Urban Development)

Hon. D. O’N. INNIS, Dip., B.Sc., M.B.A. (Minister of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade Union Movement and International Business)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, B.A., M.Sc. (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade, and International Business)

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO, M.B.,B.S. (Minister of Family, Youth Affairs, Sports and the Environment)

Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Monday, July 7, 2008.

Hon. R. D. JONES: 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. J. D. E. BOYCE: 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: Honourable Members, this morning it gives me great pleasure to welcome to this Sitting of this Honourable House of Assembly, the Honourable Ernest Elliott, M.P., Opposition Member of Parliament of the Republic of Guyana. We welcome you, Sir.

Honourable Members, please note that I am in receipt of the Accounts and Statements for the month of March, 2008, as prepared by the Accountant-General.

PAPERS

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Economic Affairs and Energy, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year 2007;
2. Report on the Social Investment Fund, for the year ended March 31, 2007.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to move the First Reading of the following Bills:

1. Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc. Bill, 2008;
2. Financial Management and Audit (Amendment) Bill, 2008;
3. Final Appropriation (2007-2008) Bill, 2008;
4. Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters (Amendment) Bill, 2008.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second that.

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 3 – SECOND READING OF CRICKET LEGENDS OF BARBADOS INC., BILL, 2008.

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Speaker, this morning it is an honour for me to stand here and to move the Second Reading of this Bill, to make provisions for concession to be granted to the Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc., and for related matters. Sir, to me, this is an honour because of the value that the Cricket Legends have given to us as a people. Further, because of the value that the company could bring to the future of West Indies Cricket and to the future of the Barbadian society.

The Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc., was incorporated under the Companies Act, on August 23, 2005, to inspire a new generation of cricketers to contact with the Cricket Legends. The purposes of this company are stated thus:

- (a) promote the development of cricket among the youth;
- (b) sell cricket memorabilia;
- (c) sell cricket equipment;
- (d) establish a Cricket Museum; and
- (e) establish a Cricket Centre of Excellence.

Mr. Speaker, there are 42 Cricket Legends at present. These are the shareholders in this company. The number of shareholders, of course, are unlimited, as any Barbadian national who has represented Barbados and the West Indies in cricket, having retired from active participation in the game, is eligible to become a shareholder. Any shareholder who resumes active competition in competitive cricket, immediately and unconditionally would surrender his status and his shares.

Mr. Speaker, the Cricket Legends include such prominent persons as "Charlie" Griffith, David Holford, Wes Hall, Desmond Haynes, Gordon Greenidge, Joel Garner, Sir Everton Weekes, Sir Garfield Sobers, Paterson Thompson. There is a long list of distinguished persons who have given service to this country. Of course, one of the goals of this company too, would be to provide an income to these persons who have retired from active participation in cricket.

Mr. Speaker, what this Bill will do, would be to provide a number of exemptions for the company. The Cricket Legends of Barbados would be exempted from the payment of Corporation Tax, from Withholding Tax in respect of various payments paid to shareholders on their

interest in the company. They will be exempted from stamp duty in respect of all documents relating to the company, where the registration of these documents are required by Law, and in respect of any property acquired by the company.

The company would also be exempted from the payment of goods and taxes on the importation of certain goods. These goods include educational material and articles, office furniture and equipment, office machinery, audio visual equipment, films, books, pamphlets, and one motor vehicle that has the capacity of seating seven or more persons.

Mr. Speaker, the exemption referred to in this Bill would be granted on the conditions that the goods referred to would be imported or purchased out of a bonded warehouse for use exclusively by the company, and for the establishment and operation of the Cricket Centre of Excellence.

Mr. Speaker, the Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc., will also be exempted from the payment of import duty and environmental levy on articles and equipment imported and for the purpose of use exclusively by the Cricket Museum.

Mr. Speaker, the Cricket Legends of Barbados are indeed icons in Barbados and in the West Indies. They are symbols to all of us, not only to cricket, but of what we could become, regardless of what opportunities we might have had in life. They could also be symbols of where we could go, regardless from where one would have come.

Sir, they tell us it is about attitude and discipline, in as much, if not more so, than the skill and technique that carried them there. This is not to belittle the skills and techniques, much of which our legends have shown, but certainly they stand as testimony to the attitude and discipline that so many say is lacking in cricket and indeed in society today.

Mr. Speaker, what is envisaged in this Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc., and in the Cricket Centre of Excellence, is that there would be an interaction between the Cricket Legends and young cricketers. I dare say, not only young cricketers, but that all of our young people would stand to benefit from the interaction with the Cricket Legends. Sir, such interaction could not only inculcate the techniques required for excellence in cricket, but it would inculcate those values and disciplines that are required for excellence in life in the way cricket is played when it is played well like our legends have played.

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indeed, a metaphor, for life. I do not have to tell that to all Barbadians because all Barbadians know that. Sir, our

legends believe that and they live that way, in excellence and they can teach that to our young people.

Sir, amid the clamour and noise we hear today about young people not achieving their full potential and so much emphasis being placed on where the young people are, those who are not succeeding, those who are at the edge of society, those who have fallen into the hands of the Law, we see a lot of that being highlighted, but amid all of that, there are young people in Barbados, in various fields, who are excelling in academics.

We are looking forward eagerly, in a few weeks we will hear about those who have performed well in CXC's and in CAPE. We will be hearing about the reward of scholarships and exhibitions, because we know there are young people who are excelling. They are excelling in science, in the arts, in culture, in music, in the performing arts, in athletics, in swimming, in football and, of course, there are youngsters who are excelling in cricket.

Mr. Speaker, there are some in this country and, indeed, there are some in this room, who have already read the last rites for cricket, because there are some who believe that West Indies cricket cannot be resurrected to its former glory. While it is that former glory that we pay homage to, the Cricket Legends, what they represent and what they plan to do here is not just about the former glory.

Yes, there will be the museums, the films, the books that will relive those glory days, but that is not a means to an end. That will only provide the funds for this programme, but this programme is forward-looking.

I have had discussions with stakeholders in the cricket arena, persons like the Barbados Cricket Association and the Barbados Cricket League. I have spoken to representatives from the Cricket Board, persons who have sponsored cricket and spectators, who all have a view.

I have also spoken to persons in the Ministry of Sports and the National Sports Council. I have interacted with several clubs on weekends, players and spectators and even some coaches have identified problems. Sir, if I name them here, everybody will nod, because there are the kinds of things you hear regularly on Saturday at cricket; you hear it in every bus and you hear it at every corner shop.

Mr. Speaker, things like the limited opportunities for cricketers to develop and refine their skills. These are some of the problems people have pointed to for being responsible for where cricket is today, why it is not where it was, why it is not developing the way we want it to develop.

Sir, one of those things is the limited opportunity for cricketers to develop and refine their skills. I have identified that there is no promotion or relegation for domestic cricket and what we need is a well-structured system that would lead to more competitive games, which could only redound to the benefit of cricket.

Mr. Speaker, some have said there is a need for a professional or semi-professional league in cricket. The absence of a cricket academy. Many have complained that it is time we have a cricket academy and steps are being taken to have a cricket academy. Of course, there are the inadequate programme and inadequate coaching and even the inadequate management at all levels of cricket. There is no real plan, or there seems to be no real cricket development plan either by any of the stakeholders, the BCA, the BCL or even Government has thus far not had a real Cricket Development Plan.

Mr. Speaker, the facilities are inadequate. We know that many of the fields are rocky, some of them are not maintained properly. The preparation of the wicket for a game on weekends is not standardised. Sir, many of our cricket fields are used for football all through the week and that, I understand, impairs the quality of the cricket fields, especially if the footballers are allowed to run to and fro on the cricket pitch. Some have even complained to me that there are cows that run up and down the cricket field and, indeed, on the cricket pitch. Of course, we cannot only look at those tangible problems, but it is the attitude that players have to cricket.

Mr. Speaker, some tout the fact that there is not enough money in cricket or, that there is no earning potential for players in cricket, and there are other social and economic factors. We have mentioned the attitude of people, their discipline and so on and their commitment to excellence; all those social and economic factors, a view which abounds in society.

Mr. Speaker, we sit back and look at cricketing nations across the world, who have been successful and we look at them in an effort to find solutions for ourselves. Indeed, I know that the organisations involved in cricket like the BCA have devised the cricket implementation which requires assistance from Government, and Government is committed to the development of cricket.

The Government of Barbados is developing a strategic plan for sports and focus will be on cricket because, never mind those who say that cricket is dead, we believe otherwise and our research has shown us otherwise. There are a lot of people who still want to see cricket rise and so we will focus on the development of cricket - the Government of Barbados, the Ministry of Sports through the National Sports Council.

Mr. Speaker, the programme is not just about looking back to see where cricket was and to see how we could get back there, but it is about looking forward. The prophets of doom look forward and foresee a dim future for us, but the Cricket Legends of Barbados are looking forward and they have vision for where cricket will be. That is where the BCA and the BCL are looking. They are looking forward. They have a vision for where cricket will be.

The Ministry of Sports is looking forward and we also have a vision. Sir, as I have said, every Bajan has a vision for where cricket should be. Of course, we may all share the same vision, but we would not all share the same view how we should get there.

We have different ideas on the specifics, but I think one thing is agreed on that the future of cricket is in the youth. The future of cricket is in the young people, the young players and even those young ones in school who have not yet even started to play and so, the strategic plan that is being developed is focussing on young people. It is focussing on school cricket, on cricket among youth clubs and cricket in the community.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration, when we came in, had to review all our programmes, including our sports programmes, to see how we could use our resources effectively. Sir, some programmes had to be closed, which you well know, in order to create a more impactful programme. Sir, any cricket programme that we develop will include our legends.

Our legends have indicated an eagerness and willingness to work with the Government of Barbados and the Ministry of Sports to develop programmes for our young people, and we are honoured that they would be so ready to work with us, and we are already working on ways that we can use this valuable resource that we have in our legends.

Mr. Speaker, any sports programme we develop today is not only about how we can build or upgrade the fields and pavilions that I have spoken of, but many fields do not have pavilions. There are some fields, even in my Constituency, that do not have pavilions and these things need to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, that is only part of the plan, because any plan we have developed would require that we have the proper physical infrastructure, so we have to pay attention to that physical infrastructure. Sir, the challenge too is to develop more efficient coaching programmes, for example, that can reach our players. I have said the emphasis is on the youth, so we have coaching programmes that will reach students in schools and not only in schools, but that reach the community, that use the community facilities and

resources after hours and on weekends we can have coaching programmes.

Mr. Speaker, village cricket is a life-line for many communities. It is a life line for Barbados. It brings the young and the old together not only for the game of cricket on the field....

Sir, that is we culture, that is what makes us what we are and cricket is indeed a part of that. Sir, that is why I cannot sit back and say, "Cricket is dead. Cricket is dying." Long live cricket.

Sir, I cannot sit back and just let cricket die. We have to do something because cricket is in our blood and we have to do something about it.

Mr. Speaker, the BCL must be lauded for its work with village cricket, working in the village where there were

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almost as if it were nurseries for cricket talent, and that talent was then transplanted to grow at another level. Sir, Barbados cricket and indeed West Indies cricket is indebted to village cricket and the Barbados Cricket League (BCL). Sir, village cricket is a part of community life. It allows the involvement of members of the community, persons who run small shops and bars selling food on weekends. Schools, churches and youth groups also get involved in village cricket and support the community.

Sir, even as we talk about reviving our community spirit, we have to bring back ownership to the village cricket. We have to use our coaching programmes and physical infrastructure for upgrading and the development of our communities. I am sure that my colleagues in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture will also see the value, or are already apprised of the value of cricket in the development of our communities.

Sir, it is through improved coaching, for example, at the community level, that a programme can be developed to bring more interest of people in the game, especially young people. Essentially, we would be widening the net if we enhance cricket in more villages, making cricket bigger and better. We are going to widen the net in search of talent, and the development of that talent at the community and school level progressing from there. That is one area of focus this Administration and the Strategic Plan we are currently developing. Work has begun and we expect to complete it shortly.

Sir, clubs and residents in the communities have echoed the sentiments that we need to widen the net and

upgrade community cricket, with more coaching and better coaching in the communities.

I believe that cricket will make a comeback. I also believe that it would be an example for other sporting disciplines and for society. While there are other sports, perhaps in their heyday, they too may experience a similar slump, then they could use the example of cricket to remove themselves from that slump. I believe that is what will happen to cricket. Indeed, as we develop cricket, the Government, the Ministry, the stakeholders in the BCA, the West Indies Cricket Board, the BCL and so on. As we work together to develop cricket, essentially, we would be developing a template for use in other sports.

Sir, I daresay it could be a template for use in other areas of our lives. Cricket in Barbados parallels life in many ways. Sir, we are talking about coaching models for different age groups, that is critical. Coaching modules for the Under 10, Under 15, Under 19, and of course what seems to me to be neglected, the Under 23 age group, but cricket models would need to be developed.

The development of sports requires, as we broaden the net, what we call the pyramid approach. This pyramid model would be geared to the fullest participation of all children and youth who want to take part in the sport, and of course, developing some of them to an elite stage. As I said, we would need more coaches, not just numbers, but better trained and qualified coaches. That is our mandate, to produce better coaches, also to strengthen the administration of clubs and national organisations with adequate facilities to cater to all. This is a template we are talking about for cricket, but it can be used through various sports.

Sir, the development, perhaps, of parish-based academies is one of the things we are looking at to cater to those who show good potential, then we could have elite training centres in at least four zones, outfitting every school with a dedicated coach in the sport. Again, the coaches can be drawn nationally or from the communities. This will require the Ministry of Sport, the Ministry of Community Development and Culture, Education and Human Resource Development, everybody to come together because, indeed, we all have a share in cricket. Cricket is our culture.

Sir, we are going to use the resources of the National Sports Council, more wisely, in the communities. One of the concerns people have identified it, there is not enough competition.

Sir, age appropriate competition is beginning to emerge. Sir, our school cricket has been excellent with the widespread involvement of our young people. We need to enhance that programme and similar programmes.

Sir, a cricket academy, which is needed is part of the plan. People will tell you that they want to see this done. We look around the world at some of the nations that play cricket, Australia, England and South Africa, for example, the progress they have made. Why is it they have improved? What is it we need to do? One of the concerns is a Cricket Academy.

A Cricket Academy would place emphasis on cricket, the skills that are required and the rules of the game. It would also focus on areas we have overlooked, and certainly at the community level, things like Sports Psychology, training, fitness, nutrition, team building activity and team building exercises. One of the problems of our cricket is the number of fragmented players. They do not necessarily come together as a team, and that is important, especially to learn team building skills and problem solving.

Leadership skills are needed in cricket. We can take one look at our cricket at every level, to know that there is weakness in management and leadership in cricket. We need the development of leadership skills, professionalism, and of course work ethic, discipline and life skills. As I said, cricket mirrors life, therefore the development of skills in cricket and life skills can be translated into the total cricket package.

Sir, Government is pleased to be able to partner with the corporate sector that has already shown an interest and enthusiasm, in the development of cricket. There are several groups that work with our young sportsmen, not only in cricket, who often volunteer their time and service. There are several volunteer groups and civil organisations that work with our young people in the development of sports. They have approached Government for assistance with their programmes, and Government is pleased to work with them and also to be part of this Cricket Centre of Excellence.

Traditionally, we know that there has been bipartisan support for cricket and the efforts of Cricket Legends. Sir, what cricket meant for the development of our nation and Region, and what cricket has given us, perhaps in times past, in terms of national pride, what it means for those who play every week, cricket should always receive bipartisan support. Someone once said cricket should not be used as a political football, and I certainly agree.

Sir, this Administration is committed to this Cricket Centre of Excellence and, indeed, to assisting the Cricket Legends of Barbados with their altruistic goals. Since assuming office, we have moved as fast as possible to bring this long awaited Bill before this House.

Sir, to date the Cricket Legends of Barbados have received support of the Government in the form of the

restoration of "Herbert House", which was leased to the company on a long-term basis to pursue its goals, purposes and objectives.

The Cricket Legends of Barbados also received a grant of \$300 000 from the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund last year. Government pledged to provide \$375 000 to assist the Cricket Legends of Barbados, to provide coaching and other DVDs for sale in the international market. Already the first tranche of \$75 000 was disbursed to the company.

Sir, I spoke of how we can use our resource more effectively, and not just our money. In Barbados we all know the value of our human resource. We know it is our human resource we have to build and develop. I met, have spoken and heard the stories of several of the Cricket Legends and if you listen to the stories, they are often inspiring. Our Cricket Legends have these stories to tell and many of them have written good books.

I want the young people to hear these stories, because these stories are inspirational. These stories tell of a spirit of excellence. These stories tell of sometimes coming from nowhere, with nothing, to achieve at the pinnacle of your game. This is a story our young people need to hear.

10.40 a.m.

Our young people, I daresay today, are not going to read the books, unless they are on the CXC Syllabus. I daresay that some of these books should be on the CXC Syllabus for our young people to be able to appreciate the lives of our legends. Our young people are not necessarily going to read the books, so this idea of DVDs is important.

The digital and film media is what is attracting our young people. The legends have been going into the schools and they have been received well in the schools, as I said, because they are so personal and the stories that they have to tell. I want more young people to be able to hear those stories.

Coaching DVDs are important, but they need also to have the lives and the pathways of our legends chronicled, such as persons like Sir Garfield Sobers and the Three Ws. These are stories that need to be told, and they need to be told in the digital and film media, and that is why the Government is committed to putting money into that film project.

Now, we are entering into discussions where we could actually develop a programme with the legends themselves to have them filmed, not just filmed to sit back and talk in a documentary fashion, but to develop DVDs that our young people would watch and our young people would get into.

We have talent in this island for developing film and we can use that talent, through the Ministry of Youth to develop these DVDs and these films for our young people to be able to see them. Therefore, we are going to be working with the legends to develop these films for our young people. These films can also be used and purchased overseas.

Our legends, Sir, are revered across the world, not just in Barbados.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: And so DVDs and the memorabilia and whatever we develop for our Cricket Legends have earning potential overseas as well and not just in Barbados, so these DVDs should be sold overseas.

Sir, we do not run away from our political parties when they are in a phase of difficulties, at least not most of us. If we did, this Party would not be here on This Side of the House today. Our supporters have stuck with us through thick and thin, and that is why we are here today.

Asides.

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: I suppose this is a good time to thank our supporters for their support during the 14 years that we were going through our phase of difficulty.

Sir, in Barbados, politics and cricket run through our veins and often link the two. Politics and Government have to support the development of cricket, even in a challenged economy. Sir, who is to say that this very cricket that we give back to, is not the cricket that we would be able to hold on to, when the going gets tough? Sir, all of us as a nation, need something to rally around, and something to be able to hold on to.

We have seen how as a nation and a Region, we have rallied around cricket, how cricket has brought us together. When we talk about uniting the CARICOM, when we talk about uniting the islands in the Region, it is cricket that we look to as a model, because cricket has been to us, more than just a game. Cricket has been our life. Cricket has brought our people together. Cricket is what united us, and so, we need to give something back to cricket for what cricket has given to us.

Some people say politics should not be involved, and we should not mix politics and cricket, but if you stand at the side of any cricket match on a weekend, you would know that you always mix the two. Cricket and politics always mix and to say that cricket has nothing to do with politics, I read once, is to say that cricket has nothing to do with life.

In closing, Sir, Brian Lara was recorded as saying and I quote:

“In the past, I have often reacted to what I perceive to be the stresses of cricket by getting away from it and hanging out with friends. Instead of confronting problems, I would turn my back on them. Now, I realise that I have to give cricket 100 per cent.”

As a Government and as a nation, we cannot react to the problems of cricket by getting away, by hiding our heads in the sand, by supporting other cricket teams or worse yet, by not supporting cricket at all. We have to give to cricket 100 per cent, for indeed, cricket gave us 100 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you, Sir.

Asides.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I would have actually seconded the Bill, simply because this Bill has its genesis in activities which I undertook last year as the Minister of Economic Affairs and Development. Sir, it is, therefore, not a matter that will separate the Opposition from the Government in relation to what is intended here.

Mr. Speaker, last year, we had a very clear position that we felt we wanted to create a competitive platform for the Cricket Legends of Barbados, recognising the central importance of cricket to this country's development, as well as to its economic fortunes over the years.

In those circumstances, we believe that even though the West Indies' Cricket Team is not doing its best to add value to our economic effort at this stage, those who have played in the past, but who, because of the structure of the game at the time were unable to benefit financially in any meaningful way, should be given the opportunity of so doing now.

At the same time, we recognise the critical importance, Mr. Speaker, of us being able to ensure that there was a transmission of knowledge and values to those currently playing the game, and those who are youngsters, whom we want in more numbers to be playing the game.

Sir, to that extent, we felt that any strengthening of the Cricket Legends of Barbados, incorporated by giving them the competitive tax platform where they would not pay import duties, environmental levy, and Corporation Taxes, would assist, since much of what they would be bringing in, would not only be for the purpose of entertainment, but would equally be for educational purposes, in helping to lift the levels of knowledge and competence, in the game across the country. Sir, to that extent, there is no division between the Government and the Opposition, in relation to this Bill.

May I say, however, that it was perhaps a form of poetic justice that the person leading the Bill on the Government Side was that of the very same Minister who was responsible for the removal of Sir Everton Weekes off his contract at the National Sports Council.

Sir, I trust and hope that there has been a recognition now that the worth of persons such as Sir Everton to this country, really cannot be quantified in absolute dollar terms. I think that the country's reaction to his removal spoke volumes and, therefore, we need not add to that at this stage.

Suffice it to say, however, it is important that we find ways of ensuring that those who have contributed greatly to this country are capable of offering back their services, wisdom and talent to those who are coming up. It is done in every other country across the world. Perhaps, we may need to refine the mechanisms, but there can be no gain-saying that it was a worthwhile effort.

In relation, however, to some of the activities of the Cricket Legends, I would have met with them, the BIDC, and Invest Barbados. It is largely because we believe that there is a product, which is worthy of export in relation to the Cricket Legends. Sir, it is unfortunate that not all members of the Governing side feel that way, but we have come to recognise, Sir, especially in Christ Church South that the person who currently represents that Constituency, may not be able to appreciate some of the finer things in relation to cricket. Therefore, we would forgive him those forecasts as he makes them.

Suffice it to say, however, Sir, there is no doubt that parents of boy children the world over would want to see videos and DVDs of a Joel Garner, telling them how to bowl fast and what they should do of a Greenidge and Haynes, who to this day remain the best opening batsmen that the world has even seen as a team.

10.50 a.m.

Sir, not only is Sir Gary Sobers a National Hero of Barbados, but his complete accomplishment in every aspect of the game would cause people to feel that there is

something to learn from him. Sir, whether you are a little boy in Johannesburg, South Africa, in Calcutta, India or in Perth, Australia, there is a resonance that these names have.

Mr. Speaker, very often parents would want their children to be exposed to the best information and coaching advice that there is to be given.

Mr. Speaker, in this day and age, it is cheaper to move information than it is to move people. To that extent, the establishment of DVDs... I would have spoken to them about this, and we trust and hope that the Industrial Development Corporation and Invest Barbados would continue on this project.

Mr. Speaker, I want publicly to make available the services of the Opposition in assisting in anything to do with the Cricket Legends of Barbados because we believe that it would add tremendous value to Barbados, not just as a country, but economically and specifically financially to the Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc.

Mr. Speaker, if we could get the DVD coaching project off the ground, which has a worldwide market, if we could equally get some video games going.

Many Honourable Members in here, Sir, are aware that the money spent on video games by children the world over is one of the largest growing markets in relation to how people spend their discretionary money. Sir, we believe that if we could have a high quality video game of cricket, particularly within the Commonwealth countries that play cricket, that this would add value.

Mr. Speaker, it would be a question of partnering the Cricket Legends of Barbados with people with the appropriate technologies and the appropriate capital and with Government, if necessary, coming to the table to help pull them together.

Mr. Speaker, when we therefore contemplated the passage of this Bill, and when the policy was carried to the Cabinet last year, we agreed to it largely because we saw it as a platform for a serious thrust into the development of products that traditionally have not been done that can not only earn significant foreign exchange for the country, but equally would add financial benefits to those cricketing legends, many of whom would have left the game without a sufficient level of funds, simply because the game did not attract that level of money when they were playing.

Mr. Speaker, I note the comments in relation to the coaching of young children. Sir, may I remind this Honourable Chamber that for some years we would have put money with the Barbados Cricket Association for a junior coaching programme?

Mr. Speaker, there are some fundamental issues pertaining to administration, both in Barbados cricket and in West Indies cricket, that need to be addressed if ultimately the kinds of programmes that we have been putting in place are to develop into anything.

I feel strongly, Sir, that at the same time as you expand training at the community level that you have in this Region to establish a professional cricket league. Sir, you have also to believe that the game will survive without the establishment of a professional cricket league. Sir, given the unavailability of the United Kingdom and Australia as potential locations for our cricketers to play professionally is a serious handicap. You cannot expect to have people who are playing professionally the majority of the year and then bring a team that is not and expect that team in two or three weeks to be able to beat the team that has been exposed to playing throughout the entire year.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that while we have done much for the game of cricket, and certainly in the run up to the Cricket World Cup, it is critical that we now seek to put on a proper platform, the establishment of a professional cricket league in the Caribbean with a cap perhaps of 70 per cent of Regional players ensuring that 30 per cent of the players who play in that professional cricket league come from outside the Caribbean so that you can guarantee yourself a television market which would add additional revenue to the entity running that cricket league.

Sir, if you have some Indians, some Pakistanis, some South Africans and some Australians, then you begin to have a market to be able to broadcast your professional cricket in those other countries. Sir, to that extent, I believe that is critical.

I also feel, Mr. Speaker, that it need not be any more than three to four months and that we need to find the opportune time of the year when we can create that. Sir, we would need to synchronise that as well with what is happening with inter-Regional travel, because part of the problems that we face in Cricket World Cup is that there is really not a strong tradition of people travelling from island to island for cricket games. Therefore, the development of your Regional market as your domestic market must first and foremost take place if a Regional professional cricket tournament is to succeed. Thereafter, Sir, you can look at synchronising with outside markets which have strong cricket followings.

I also feel, Mr. Speaker, that the continued spectacle of the West Indies Cricket Board at the centre of controversy is an unfortunate thing. I think I can speak for most right-thinking Barbadians who believe that matters pertaining to the administration of West Indies cricket ought to be dealt with in a more professional manner and in

one that does not seek to put the Board at the centre of controversy on every occasion.

I personally feel, Mr. Speaker, that there should be a public company floated that would allow West Indians to subscribe. I also feel that a public company ought to be the entity responsible for the operational aspect of West Indies cricket while leaving the Board to deal with the developmental side of West Indies cricket and ensuring that the Board structure focusses on development.

I also feel that the commercial side should be run according to the best precepts of commercial activity and corporate governance, but inclusive in the way in which it gives the average West Indian the chance to become a shareholder in that.

Mr. Speaker, the Australian team is picked from 100 persons who are kept on contract. You cannot have 20 people on contract and expect to have the same odds that they do. In those circumstances, Sir, it is not a matter for the Government, it is a matter for the Caribbean people. Sir, to the extent that the governments can exercise persuasive influence on the West Indies Cricket Board, then they ought to do so.

Mr. Speaker, I really do believe that the establishment of a public commercial arm that deals with the operations and merchandising aspects, while leaving developmental activity to the Board itself, is the direction in which we should go as a Region.

I feel, Sir, that there are things that we would have to undertake. I trust and hope that this latest issue with the Board will not derail them for any length of time. Sir, I am told that the former Prime Minister of Jamaica, Mr. P. J. Patterson, would have done a report. I have not seen the report, but I trust and hope that it addresses how we can focus on both the developmental side and the commercial side without compromising either one of the two.

In relation, Sir, to the matter of youngsters getting into cricket, we have a society that is driven very much by images on television and icons. Sir, it is for that reason I am saying that unless you make the game attractive in the same way that people look at basketballers and footballers, that you are not going to get the same edge.

It is true that Mr. Stanford has brought a level of panache, certainly to the marketing of the game. To the extent that he has placed the kind of money behind the game that he has, he has captured the imagination of countries outside of the Region.

I have no doubt, Sir, that ultimately it is a perfect platform for the development of the short game for broadcast purposes in North America. Sir, that in and of

itself will release a bounty, because television, as you know, constitutes the largest provider of revenue in sports in the world.

11.00 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I say that there ought to be perhaps a more coherent approach to what is being done by Mr. Stanford and some of the players, as well as what is the developmental vision of the West Indies Cricket Board. Sir, to that extent, I believe that no one would benefit unless there is an opportunity to have a meeting of minds as to how the future should be developed, rather than there being parallel activities on the part of the Board and on the part of Mr. Stanford.

Sir, I, therefore, trust and hope that good sense would prevail all around and that we would put the long-term development of the game first and foremost, rather than the injuries of the past, the offences taken in the past, the extent to which people have been ignored, perhaps, unfortunately, and incorrectly. Sir, all of those things are in the past and we need now to know how we could focus and build a strong platform.

Mr. Speaker, there are few things in which we excel in the world and in which we have the potential to excel. Those things, in my view, must be maximised to the greatest effect. Sir, some of these potentials are cricket, education, music and rum. These are the things which have a virtual mutual dominance, but unless we create the structure to propel it, to be able to cross borders in a way that adds value, we would continue to be talking about the potential that it has, rather than reaping the benefits from the bounty that it would have brought.

Mr. Speaker, we will support this Bill. We trust and hope, however, that the plans which initially motivated the passage of this Bill, would, in fact, be undertaken. We believe there is a strong market for the icons of West Indies Cricket to become associated with aspects of technology, on which there is significant expenditure among young people across the world.

Sir, therefore, to the extent that we could get DVD's coaching videos going; to the extent that we could get the video games going to the extent that we could get more travelling for School Boys' Cricket, not just between the United Kingdom and Barbados, but across the entire world, so that we could create a circuit to the extent that we could get a professional Cricket League going, this Opposition will continue not just to support these efforts, but to offer the services of persons on This Side, because we believe this to be a matter that would add value to the country and to people who have brought distinction to this country's name in the past.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

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

His Excellency D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this Bill and to say that as laudable as this Bill is, it would have been better had this Bill come before this Parliament before Cricket World Cup, 2007.

Mr. Speaker, when one sees the capacity of this Bill, one could only ask the question what would have happened had this Bill come before this Parliament long before Cricket World Cup, 2007. One would also have to ask what would have been the substantial benefits to this company, Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc., had this company been operating before Cricket World Cup, 2007, and what would have been the gains of this company during Cricket World Cup, 2007?

Mr. Speaker, the records of this Honourable House would show that I have said before - and I am now even more convinced - that we have done the wrong thing with the Kensington Oval, because "Herbert House" cannot be a replacement for the old Kensington Oval.

Sir, if one looks at what we are now asking today, and at the opportunities we are now offering the Legends of Barbados, one could only conclude that had we looked at the bigger picture, we would have been so far ahead in this world and the Cricket Legends would have been so far developed, that Sir Everton Weekes would have now been fitting snugly into the company called the "Legends of Barbados Inc." and would not have had to wait on patronage from a Government. Sir, we did not look at the bigger picture and now I am seeing a golden opportunity for persons such as Sir Everton and others to be employed by their own company, without having to wait on Government for patronage.

Sir, I am saying that the passing of this Bill today is a step in the right direction, so that political parties would not have to tokenise professional cricketers, but that these persons would now have their own company, so that they could work and earn, without having to wait on politicians.

Mr. Speaker, we in this Parliament have to recognise that there is a lot of politics going on in cricket. Sir, this cannot be ignored. I have watched and recognised that over the years, Barbados had a tendency of pulling the English tourists to its shores. I am now witnessing the fact that because some persons have large pockets and have invested large sums in one country, the West Indies Cricket Board is now in bed with those persons, without understanding what they are doing to cricket in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, what do I mean? We have the 20/20 Cricket Tournament, which will be played, which we have accepted to be an Antigua thing. You would say that other countries are allowed to play, and that would be correct, but let us look at the fact that all Regional games are played in Antigua.

Sir, I do not have a problem with that. What I do have a problem with is now you are going to come and tell me you are now bringing the British to play against the West Indies and that there would only be one match, which would be played in Antigua. Furthermore, you are telling me that the joy from having to watch cricket would not be spread across the Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, I say to those of us in Barbados who understand international politics, it is not now about cricket, it is about a threat to our tourism in Barbados. Sir, we have to be very careful how people could use fat pockets to try to divert tourists from one country to the other. Sir, I would want to say that I am very sorry for all those persons who do not understand the fact that we have to be very careful.

Mr. Speaker, people must understand that 20/20 match against the English and the West Indies is not by accident. It is to help shift the English tourists to Antigua. Sir, I have no problem with that, once it is done by Mr. Stanford, but what worries me is when the West Cricket Board is on board with it. Sir, the West Indies Cricket Board cannot concentrate on one country only. It has to be concerned about all the countries of the Caribbean.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the West Cricket Board today that if they are going to get on board about cricket, it has to be about cricket for the whole Caribbean and not for one country only. Sir, had that happened here in Barbados, I would have been making the same argument.

Mr. Speaker, persons must understand that while talking about forming a Cricket League, that league should have been formed many years ago, even before Cricket World Cup, 2007. Sir, what I want to say is that suddenly, after the horse has bolted, everybody in this Honourable House now knows what should have happened. Sir, we have to be more proactive. We cannot come here and act as though we had our own ideas and were simply storing them. I have already warned this Party that we cannot tolerate people who store their ideas and not give them out. We saw what happened when people did that.

Sir, I am saying that this Parliament cannot tolerate persons who, while in Cabinet, had stored their ideas and not delivered those ideas but now they have the opportunity, they are delivering on those ideas, when they could have used them before, to help their Party and to push the country forward.

Mr. Speaker, we have to recognise that cricket is bigger than any one of us. We also have to understand that cricket is a part of sports overall.

11.10 a.m.

I believe if one watches what is happening in Barbados, one has to recognise that it is not only cricket, it is nearly every discipline in Barbados to which we have to give respect.

Sir, last weekend, we had Soca on the Hill, Pan on the Sand, motor sports, volley ball and cricket all over Barbados, which tells me there is an appetite for sports in Barbados. Sir, if we are here today discussing cricket, we cannot stop at cricket alone. We all have to bring the other related Bills to ensure that all of those sports persons who have an opportunity to contribute, that they get something to contribute to.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot be a “too-few” Government. We have to come with a holistic approach to sports and recognise that it cannot only be about a “two-few”, but it has to be all-encompassing and we have to ensure that the good footballer out there believes there is contribution for him.

The truth is, if I had my way, it would have been the Sport Legends of Barbados Inc. I do not think it is too late for an amendment to come later. This may be a good foundation to start with, because all you have to do is to make the minor adjustment and do the necessary, because we have to recognise that this is a country that is going somewhere. We are going somewhere not only on one valve, but we are going somewhere on all valves.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot go back to my Constituency and tell Norman Forde that he does not have a place in this amendment or in this Act today. Sir, it is okay to discuss this Bill but when it becomes an Act, I want to be sure that it becomes an Act for all sports persons.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that we have to recognise that we have lost a golden opportunity. We have to recognise that as a country, Sir. We have lost a golden opportunity to enhance our heritage tourism in this country when we refuse to accept that Kensington Oval should not have been touched the way it was touched.

It hurts me, Mr. Speaker, I must tell you, when I go to Kensington Oval, because when I go there I believe I am somewhere else in the world. We destroyed a piece of heritage tourism that was unique to go and build a stadium that could be anywhere in the world. Sir, when I sit at Kensington Oval, I could be in Australia or in England but previously when I was at Kensington Oval, I knew where the Kensington Stand was and that meant something to the

development of Barbados but, Sir, when I go to Kensington Oval, I could be in Sydney, at Lord's or any where, Sir, even in Antigua.

Mr. Speaker, Bajans do not like sun, but you build stands and put Bajans in the sun. Sir, it is utter madness. We are not here for good luck, we are here about increasing productivity.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that any time we build any thing that it has to comply with our heritage in Barbados and not to believe that we are looking international or that we are doing something international. What we are doing is building capacity to develop our own country and to make it unique, because it is uniqueness that would encourage people to come to it, but when you get the "samey-samey", there is no need to come, because people are already familiar with that. Sir, you could stand home and watch it, but when it comes to Kensington Oval, you want to sit in the seat that King Dyal used to sit in, and where the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers will be looking over, but now, Sir, you could be anywhere.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you that at North Stars, it will be different, because I have a say in that matter. Sir, outside Judge Gap, I had no say, but to the north of the Judge Gap, I have a say and at St. Catherine's and Windwards, I might have a say too because it looks like St. Lucy. It is the same climate condition, the same behaviour and everything and I hope the Member of Parliament knows that too, but I understand that they \$35 million to correct that problem.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, that is a good idea but do not tokenised it, let us expand on it. Let us be all-encompassing, Let us recognise that it is not only the cricketers, but that there is room for all sportsmen. I understand that the Government might have seen something left by the previous Government and that there might have been some legends who might have been pushing, but we are not here for the "two-few", we are here for everyone. This is why there must be room for the motor sports people, the volleyballers, the footballers and all sportsmen.

Mr. Speaker, we look forward to the day when we would not have to talk about it, but we would be able to get some action and ensure that we correct these problems.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that sports tourism is big business. If you doubt me, ask Alan Stanford because he has now found a way to try to rob us of English tours and to take them to Antigua, but I want him to know that my eyes are open and that we are watching. This means that those large companies in Barbados which have money, like

SAGICOR, CLICO, Insurance Corporation of Barbados and all those companies should come up with a plan to ensure that we retain the English visitor, because it means something to their bottom line.

Mr. Speaker, we are here to ensure CARICOM unity, but we cannot allow outsiders to come and interfere with the plan when we are talking about coming together as one. We allow outsiders because they want television rights. They want this and they want that, so they come and tokenised us and we fail to see the bigger picture. Sir, I am saying that the development of cricket by anybody has to be for the whole CARICOM Region and it cannot be about competing against each other. It has to be a one approach and in the interest of all.

Sir, if it means that there is a tournament going on in Antigua, it must be in the interest of everybody and it means that if there is development that the other CARICOM Governments must be able to buy into that idea. If you believe it should only be in Antigua, no problem, but give us a right to share and to put some money into it because if it occurs like that, it means that it does not have to be across the CARICOM Region, because I thought during ICC World Cup that the biggest piece of foolishness was when individual Governments decided to build the stadium as they did when they could have equally come together as a people and recognised that the stadiums could have been built in certain countries and financed by all Governments so that the benefits could have been shared by all. Sir, countries had to spend a lot of money, build large stadiums and some of them do not know how to use them today.

Mr. Speaker, had we taken a CARICOM approach to this issue, as we would have to deal with the approach of the economy, we would have been in a better place in this Caribbean. We need to know that everybody in the Caribbean would not have to buy a ship in order for the ship to come to their harbour and it means that everybody would not have to build a cricket stadium to share in the benefits of cricket.

Mr. Speaker, if we do not recognise the way we are heading is the same way we were heading previously, that we need to stop and think. Sir, if we do not do that, what happened to the Federation will happen to CARICOM and we cannot afford to let it happen. This is why we have to be strong and committed to the cause and ensure that we do those things that are right even if they are not popular because we have to protect CARICOM and the Caribbean Single Market and Economy because, Sir, at the end of the day, it is not the talk, but the action that will deliver this single Region as a place to be and a place that other people would want to be.

11.20 a.m.

Lastly, we have to recognise that if we want to invite people to our shores, we must ensure that we treat our people right and properly, so that the others would become jealous and would want to come to this Region.

I thank you very much, Sir.

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Speaker, permit me to tread down a particular road, a particular route, that takes us down the road of history. Time was, before 1950, when rural areas of Barbados, were very poorly served with public transportation, so a lot of rural people were unable to get to St. Michael, in cases where some of them wanted to associate with cricketing teams in St. Michael. Sir, time was, also, when even in St. Michael, certain persons of a certain class, found it very hard to attach themselves to cricket clubs.

The late Mitchie Hewitt, along with people like Garnet Ashby and Tony Hinds set about providing a platform on which cricket could not only be built, but the cricketing icon be spread throughout the length and breadth of Barbados. In mentioning Garnet Ashby, immediately the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers comes to mind, because it was Garnet Ashby, in his role of talent scout, who first spotted the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers.

Mr. Speaker, this is an occasion on which this Honourable House is being asked to look at the future of cricket. It is true we are looking to facilitate and encourage the legends of cricket, but a number of factors and variables have to be looked at. Right now West Indies Cricket is at a very low ebb. There is an aphorism in Barbados, that if Barbados' cricket is at a very low ebb, then automatically West Indies Cricket follow at such a low ebb as well.

I want to tell this Honourable Parliament that even before World Cup 2007, the Barbados Labour Party Administration, had been closely looking at the question of cricket, and the Barbados Labour Party Administration invested heavily in World Cup, and invested heavily in cricket. I vividly recall the decision to make Herbert House available for a number of activities, including an Administrative Centre and a Cricket Museum. Sir, it is good that this particular Bill exempts the legends from paying particular duties and tariffs but, at the same time, as I mention this, I want to say that in an era where our young people have not lost their enthusiasm nor energy, increasingly more and more youth involved in physical sports are asking Government for tax concessions access to equipment at cheaper rates, when duties are imposed.

Sir, we have had, as I said, the legendary Mitchie Hewitt founding the Barbados Cricket League. We have had the legendary Garnet Ashby. We have a short extremely robust and energetic person called Owen Estwick, who for years held on when Mitchie Hewitt was unable to continue, and persons like Sir Everton Weekes, were able to make use of the opportunities of the Mitchie Hewitts of this world.

It is not very well-known, but Sir Everton Weekes' first club of choice was not Empire. He went to Empire when Empire was part of the Barbados Cricket Association, but he had played in league cricket, the Barbados Cricket League. The time has come where some researcher, with time, should look at the evolution of the Barbados Cricket League, in the halcyon days before it became a First Division club in the Barbados Cricket Association.

Sir, it is a fact that Desmond Haynes played for the Barbados Cricket League before he played for Carlton. It is a fact that persons like Seymour Nurse also had relationships with league cricket.

Mr. Speaker, as I make this contribution, something troubles me. In the 1970s, 1980s and early 1990s, Barbados cricket was rampant. In fact, West Indies cricket was at a very high standard, and persons the globe over used to look up to West Indies Cricket, used to look up to particular stars in West Indies cricket, and at one time around 1988/1989, an idea was floated that we should have set up a special cricket training institute for persons from abroad. With the current quality of our cricket, it will be very difficult now, to encourage the rest of the world to come to Barbados to learn anything about cricket, in circumstances where West Indies cricket has declined, Barbados' cricket has not been seen to be at the type of level or standard, that would normally commend themselves.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said that we have to consider the route of professionalism. Such would require the closest and most careful of planning. One of the problems facing sports in Barbados is a problem that has nothing to do with the sports clubs in the short-term, but one of the problems facing sport is shortage of funding and shortages of finance. In some countries of the world, the business community picks up the slack and assists with the financing of particular sporting ventures and specific sporting activities.

I support the call of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, that we should consider a professional league, but in the context of the submission I am making here before this Honourable House, I am using the word "professionalism", not merely to mean playing a sport and being paid for it, as it is your profession.

I am using the term “professionalism” to include competence in what the sportsmen are doing, the correct attitude to sports, an attitude that has been exemplified by a youngster from St. James called Vasbert Drakes, who played for the West Indies cricket team. I am sure that the type of professionalism that would carry Barbados cricket forward and West Indies cricket forward would be a professionalism founded on healthy attitudes, the honing of skills, the application of the correct work ethics in sports and a particular competence which should reasonably, be expected of a person making his or her living out of a game like cricket.

Sir, in modern times, we have seen a veritable revolution on the hill, at the University of the West Indies. We have seen a veritable revolution where cricket has been introduced in the curriculum of the University of the West Indies. You can actually do a course in cricket, and where, through the efforts of Sir Hillary Beckles, we now have the 3Ws Oval. The 3Ws Oval has an advantage where it is more accessible than Kensington Oval, and it has lights for night cricket which Kensington Oval is yet to get.

11.30 a.m.

I want to publicly commend the efforts of Sir Hilary Beckles, Roland Butcher and others, who are using the facilities at the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, to promote cricket.

There are people in this country to whom we owe debts. If I think about football, I would praise a person like Andy Thornhill, for promoting football. There is no question about it that Andy Thornhill from CBC has promoted football, by giving it the exposure, by giving it the air play, and by expressing disappointment when the footballers let us down. He should be an icon who should be recognised for the role he has played in attracting interest to football. One of the things about football is that football is a very popular spectator sport.

Sir, in the 1950s and 1960s, cricket was an equally important spectator sport as well. In the 1950s and 1960s, people caught the bus and went to First Division grounds. Mr. Speaker, if you took time from your busy schedule to drive through Barbados on a Saturday afternoon to witness first division matches, you would notice that nowadays there are grounds that are depleted, where only the two teams are there. Sometimes, a team has difficulty finding a score. Sometimes a team has difficulty finding a twelfth man. We have to investigate what are the causative forces that have more or less made people disinterested in cricket.

We have an undesirable trend in Barbados. Let me mention what is meant by this undesirable trend. We have some cricket teams that only meet and assemble in the Cricket Season and so, the concept of belonging to a

permanent club is not in existence. We have teams that get together two weeks before the start of a cricket season, pay up the subs and get together. Then, after four weeks, there is no bowling, batting or fielding practice. Sir, at the end of the season that team goes inactive until the following season.

In a situation where the concept of Club means more than that, where the concept of Club means coming together and uniting for a common purpose, and where there is always scope for social activity, I feel that we in Barbados need stronger clubs, not only for cricket, but football as well. We need people who are proud of their clubs.

There was a time in Barbados when some characters who did not play cricket, but who liked it, gave their support to clubs. There was a fellow called John Spartan, who walked around Queens Park every Saturday. He was a taxi driver, but when Spartan Club was playing, John Spartan always made sure that he went with the Spartan Club.

The Empire Club had two or three characters whose lives were their club. Sir, I think that part of the process of implementing change is to build up the concept of a club and to build the clubs.

There was, and still is, a policy by the Barbados Cricket Association to offer a level of support to clubs, but there is a need for even more support. If we are going to have professionally organised cricket, then we must have professionally organised clubs. When the Maple Club was formed in the late 1950s, one of the reasons for its formation is that some of the people from Hometown, Trents and Paynes Bay could not get to Queen's Park easily and then when they got to Queen's Park, they encountered the town man country man syndrome. Then, a lot of them came back to St. James and said they did not feel welcomed playing among town men. Then, the Maple Club was formed to give an opportunity to people from rural Barbados in the north a chance to play sports, and to experience socialising and in time, of course, to provide a nursery for young cricketers.

One of the objectives of the Bill before us, Mr. Speaker, is the promotion of the development of cricket among young people and that is to be lauded. One of the problems young people of today have is that they live in an instant age, where they can press a button and get a result automatically.

Another thing affecting the youth of today is a plethora of distractions. There are those of us, when we grew up knew football and cricket and were not distracted by anything else. I am not saying that with the coming and evolution of new sports that we should discourage people

from basketball, volleyball and such like, but I think the Legends owe it to the youth to teach them the culture and history of the evolution of cricket, which is still our principal sport.

Even though we do well at volleyball, even though we do well at football on occasions, even though badminton and Lawn tennis are now well established, originally, cricket and football occupied a type of primacy among sporting people in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, the reason that I have taken this line is because on careful analysis, none of us in here would want to see the further decline of West Indies' cricket, and none of us in here would want to hear that when our legends make themselves available to young people that they are snubbed or ignored.

We hear rumours about the attitude of some of our cricketers today. We hear that this attitude evinced by many young people today is an attitude of some hostility to those cricketers who went before them. Sir, in cases where some of the retired cricketers have offered assistance and technical advice to young cricketers, we are hearing that some of these young cricketers snubbed the older heads and even, sometimes, commit blasphemy by suggesting that some of the young ones that we have nowadays can play better than the likes of the Right Excellent Sir Gary Sobers.

Sir, anybody in the current West Indies Team who seriously can bat better than Sir Gary Sobers is guilty of blasphemy or blasphemous libel. It just is not possible. When you consider the level and the quality that we have to endure, then we appreciate the efforts of the Three Ws and Sir Gary more.

I close, Mr. Speaker, by reiterating the appreciation that this Honourable House has for Sir Hilary Beckles in revolutionising the attitude of the University of the West Indies, Cave Hill, towards cricket and, by extension, towards sport. I want to again publicly express appreciation to persons like Owen Estwick, Michie Hewitt, Tony Hinds, Garnet Ashby, Sir Everton Weekes, Sir Gary Sobers, the Maestro Mr. Seymour Nurse who underwent a very serious condition recently and I am thankful that he is still with us.

Sir, although right now West Indies' Cricket is at a low ebb, we should develop that fighting spirit of militancy, where we should play our cricket in a way that suggests that we are serious. It is unthinkable that the West Indies could have a team, 15 for 5 and be given a moderate amount of 281 to win, and then you have people 15 to 5 and lose; unthinkable in the 60s and 70s, but it might reflect a particular weakness of spirit.

Sport as exemplified by boxing is not for cowards. Sport as exemplified by the greatest of sportsmen is about application, dedication and facilitating oneself by ensuring a particular level of fitness and preparedness for the effort at hand.

Mr. Speaker, if we can make anything that will impact positively in favour of heritage tourism out of our history of cricket, then let it be.

11.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, if we can make anything in the realm of sports tourism out of our history of cricket and sports, then such should be encouraged.

At the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, this Honourable House should have no difficulty in welcoming this legislation. This is legislation that the Barbados Labour Party Government started to work on. Very often, quite frankly, drafting instructions are given and they take a long time in the system.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying that this legislation and the Herbert House project was conceived by a Barbados Labour Party Administration. To that extent, we on This Side feel proud today that our efforts have not been in vain.

I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this Bill which is before the House seeking to extend concessions to the Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that one of the more interesting, if not exciting, parts of the Manifesto that we put out just before the January 15 Election, is the intention to look at sports as an industry, not merely as an avenue for the recreation of our young and not so young people. I think it is a master stroke.

Mr. Speaker, it is within that context that I think we have to commend the Honourable Member for St. George South for her presentation in here today. She was very measured and spoke of this Government's intention to look at the development of cricket and sports generally from the community level up. Both of the Honourable Members from the Other Side who spoke said they would like to see a professional cricket league, but only a gravedigger starts at the top. I think we have some work to do at the community level first to come up.

Having said that, Sir, when the two senior Honourable Members of the former Cabinet could say they

would like to see a professional cricket league, I wonder what they had to say when the Honourable Member for St. Peter was pouring \$180 million into Kensington Oval. They could have kept back a small percentage of that and they could have had three professional leagues. Nonetheless, I would not go too far down that line.

Mr. Speaker, as I have said, I think that the Honourable Member for St. George South is on the right track. We support her in her efforts to see the development of sports, particularly cricket.

Mr. Speaker, it is true that we have done well in sports, but we have stood out in cricket. Mr. Speaker, the genesis of this Bill is not in any Cabinet room. The genesis of this Bill was in 1928 when the first West Indies cricket team was assembled with Barbadians on it. That is an enviable record that we have. Since then, 86 Barbadians have played cricket for the West Indies. That is more than any other territory. That is something unique that we have that we should exploit.

Mr. Speaker, again, I would give credit to the last Government, but it is part of a continuum. A lot of work was done by the previous Democratic Labour Party Government to develop sports tourism and so on. There was a time when the holder of the office I have now was actually a former West Indies cricketer. He did a lot to try to...

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: This is a serious matter because I really do believe that the Legends of Barbados... There is a continuum here that has crossed Party lines. We salute who really needs to be saluted where this Bill is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that I should say a few words on what our efforts, from a tourism point of view will be. Our efforts would be to embrace the legends and to see how we can bring some real benefit to Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that I am exactly starting from scratch, because there is a two-year agreement between the Barbados Tourism Authority and the Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc. that was signed on September 2006, which expires in August, 2008.

Mr. Speaker, insofar as a successor to this agreement is concerned, I have made it quite clear to the Chairman of Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc. and to the Barbados Tourism Authority staff that we want something a little more long-term in nature. We do not need a two-year agreement for something that is at a developmental phase. Mr. Speaker, there are real opportunities to use the Legends in marketing Barbados, but we wanted to have something that can look at all of their needs.

Mr. Speaker, it even goes beyond the Barbados Tourism Authority. The Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated has actually done a lot of work on Herbert House. Sir, I am of the view that we need to look at the relationship from the investment side.

Sir, even before we get to the infrastructural requirements of making Herbert House a place to attract visitors - when I say visitors, I mean local visitors as well as tourists - we need to establish the institutional framework for where exactly we want to take this entity that we call Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc. Mr. Speaker, a lot of good intentions are out there, but you need to have some institutional framework.

The last Government did pledge some resources with respect to the development of the coaching video or the coaching DVD. Sir, we need to establish not just one particular item but a range of items so that we can have memorabilia not just to offer persons that come to visit the museum, but that can be packaged and shipped abroad. Mr. Speaker, I do agree that the virtual world needs to be considered and with the whole question of the computer games and so on.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that the only West Indian cricketer to have a computer game is Brian Lara. Sachin Tendulkar has a game. Even Jonty Rhodes has a computer game and he was not an overly outstanding cricketer. He was a good fielder. Sir, when you have the number one one-day bowler of all times Joel Garner, the opening partnership of Haynes and Greenidge, Hall and Griffith, the greatest all-rounder of all times, the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers, National Hero, a constituent of mine, we have a lot of potential there. I think that we need to look at the product portfolio and we need to find out what exactly is going on.

Sir, when we speak about placing State resources behind this Cricket Legends of Barbados entity, whether it is as far as the infrastructural requirements at Herbert House are concerned, or whether it is the marketing thrust, we need to understand what is the precise framework. Mr. Speaker, we look forward to developing that.

Mr. Speaker, the two-year contract was actually worth \$300 000. In exchange for that, we received endorsements for a number of Barbados Tourism Authority events, the World Travel Market, promotion for the Australian tour in the United States of America and promotion for the English tour coming up in January.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that we can use these legends to go into even new markets. It is not often realised, but the International Cricket Council has 96 members. Cricket is played in 96 countries including Israel, so it has gone beyond the Commonwealth. Therefore, we

can use these Cricket Legends to really bring and attract some business from some areas that we do not normally see visitors coming to Barbados.

11.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I said that to say that the association now has to be developed on a more strategic basis and not just merely looking at what is happening here and now.

Sir, notwithstanding that, I think it would be good news to this Honourable House that the forward bookings for the English tour, in part due to some of the efforts of Cricket Legends, in terms of its marketing efforts by the Barbados Tourism Authority, are extremely positive. We are looking at a full house come January and February, when the English would be here.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we get it right. I think it could give a significant boost to this Cricket Legends efforts, when we would have those English supporters who have always had a liking or respect for these Cricket Legends. Therefore, we could benefit meaningfully from it.

Mr. Speaker, whenever we have an English tour here, there is always a spike in our tourism arrivals from England. We saw it in 1994, 1998 and in 2004. We want to make sure that we could properly harness that and get it right. I think the efforts at developing the Cricket Legends has to be seen along those lines.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing from the legends themselves. They have to determine that they would get the necessary specialist advice; that they could be properly packaged; that we could leverage this whole unique entity that we have, so that we could get real benefits from it.

Mr. Speaker, I must also add that in agreeing, to some extent, with the point made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, I would sincerely hope that this creative way that we have used the cricketing icons to come up with a means of generating revenue, not only for those Legends, but for the country. We also need to be creative in other sports form development.

Sir, for example, I recently attended a celebration, the 50th Anniversary of the Weymouth/Wales Football Club. They have been struggling for 50 years. They have an enviable records. They have recorded 27 championships in 50 years. They have now been promoted back to the Premier League. Sir, this institution does not have a home.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, the point is that there is a real opportunity for us to be creative.

Sir, to the Honourable Member for St. George South, I do not mind if the National Sports Council is somewhat stretched for resources and does not want to give Wales a pavilion, but the Honourable Member could put the pasture under the control of Weymouth/Wales Club and they would raise money. We would talk to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and find out how they went about it to raise money at North Stars. We would then build our own pavilion.

Mr. Speaker, that is an institution that has survived for so long and therefore, if it could find the wherewithal to build its own home, in that way it would not be relying on the State's resources to get things done. Sir, North Stars has been able to do it and here we are looking at creative ways to get these things done.

We would also be promoting the development of cricket among the youth. Therefore, in essence, the Weymouth/Wales Club would be helping the National Sports Council with its mandate. It would be doing so on the basis of generating its own resources, by taking pressure off the State, while making a national contribution at the same time.

Sir, I daresay there are opportunities for that beyond cricket and that given the passion with which the Honourable Minister of Family, Youth Affairs, Sports and the Environment spoke, we would see something being done about that.

I want to say too that I also look forward to hearing from the Honourable Member what it is that I could go and tell my constituents about, with regards to a home for the Weymouth/Wales Club. Sir, that is the sort of thinking we need to have and we need to salute.

Mr. Speaker, I would want to say that this is a very positive measure from a sports development point of view. It is a positive development from our tourism product development point of view. Sir, one of the things we hear constantly from our partners is the need for new attractions, so that after a visitor gets here, he stays in a hotel, he looks for something to eat, which is also fine, but that visitor also needs something to do. Therefore, having another attraction, in my view, would auger well from that point of view.

I think what is also important, and this is why I spoke earlier about marketing and the institutional framework for marketing, is that you do not want to have a beautiful museum, with only two persons passing through. Sir, we have examples of that. We are trying to do that with the Concorde Museum, which is a lovely experience. The

problem is that only one or two persons per day, if so many, are experiencing it. Therefore, we need to market these things.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to hearing how “Arlington House” works out. “Arlington House” is a very neat and tidy museum, with interactive historical presentations, but we need to make sure we market these various attractions and that we realise that in doing so, it would also be our locals, especially our young people, who could learn something from them. Our young people should also be made to participate. It is necessary that we do that and, therefore, once we continue to add to our attractions, it would be very interesting.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing I would say, as was mentioned earlier about the Cricket Museum, is that certainly I would hope, when using the word “museum”, that we would be talking about a museum in the modern sense of the word and that, for example, it would be an interactive one, that there would be the use of multimedia, that there would be the opportunity maybe to bowl a virtual ball at a Desmond Haynes model or at one of the other icons. A modern museum is not a place where you would simply walk through and gaze at items sitting on a shelf. We have moved away from that and I would think that “Herbert House” would become that type of a modern museum.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to remind this Honourable House that “Herbert House” is within walking distance of one of the busiest cruise ports in the Caribbean, therefore, cruise tourism is going in a different direction. Many of these vessels that homeport here, for example, the Ventura, actually comes from Europe and the United Kingdom. This business is growing very rapidly and, therefore, a lot of those passengers would be very familiar with the cricket games.

Sir, it would be mainly the British visitors and not Americans who would be on those home-porting ships, like the “Carnival Destiny”. Those British visitors provide a captive ready market for persons who could come off those vessels and go straight to “Herbert House”. I suppose also that we could use taxis. Sir, the point is that we have to make sure that we leverage this investment to its maximum.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is a very good thing. It is part of a continuum. Sir, I would want to say that not only the last Government - even though they would want us to think that way - was instrumental, but that several governments, over the years, have supported this game of cricket that has brought so much pride to this country. Therefore, we must do all we can, to see that we continue to, whatever the challenges maybe with the current crop, but considering what a fantastic nursery Barbados has been for West Indies

Cricket, we must carry a disproportionate responsibility for getting West Indies Cricket back on top.

Sir, I think this initiative is the right one. Further, when we buttress it with the wonderful work we are hearing that is taking place at the National Sports Council, under the guidance of the Ministry of Sports, I think it augers well for Barbados. This is a very positive development from a sports point of view, a positive development from a tourism point of view, and I am happy to totally associate myself with this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

12:00 noon.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I too want to commend the Honourable Minister of Family, Youth Affairs, Sports and the Environment for her presentation on this Bill, which would provide for the granting of concessions to Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc. and for related matters.

Sir, at the outset, sometimes we take decisions which act for the development of the country. Sir, in this instance, it is acting for the development of those persons who we now call “Legends”, part of our legacy of cricket in this country.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is correct, but let us understand that sometimes we have to walk before we can run. What this Bill does is that it opens the doors for many other possibilities and rather than to stop the course, stop the flow, we go ahead with this Bill as it is and then we sit down as a Cabinet, as a Government, as persons interested in the development of sports and develop new ideas and new institutions for the evolution of sports within Barbados.

This country has been extremely fortunate as a country of only 166 square miles to have produced some of the most outstanding players of the game developed in what we call the mother country, Britain, because there is also Africa.

Sir, when one hears of the names of persons like Seymour Nurse, Sir Garfield Sobers, Wesley Hall, Charlie Griffith, the modern vintage, Joel Garner, Malcolm Marshall, Desmond Haynes, Gordon Greenidge and if you go back a while to the 3Ws, persons who came out of the bowels of this country, persons many of them from homely backgrounds, who were able to develop their skills, talents and their whole attitude towards the sports and they took these talents as ambassadors, not only of good cricket but

as Ambassadors of this country right across the world. Sir, there are so many others, but on the list which I have called, that have more brand recognition than many of the things we would want to promote in Barbados as useful brands.

Mr. Speaker, Sir Garfield Sobers, Sir Everton Weekes, Sir Clyde Walcott, Frank Worrell, some of these gentlemen are still with us and we are not exploiting them. What we are doing is actually promoting the talent that this small country produced. There are many others that could have become but, at the end of the day, a cricket team, as far as I know, still comprises of 11 players. I would have to ask the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. She is an officando of the sport and as a Barbadian, she should know.

I am told that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East knows more about the sport than the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. The Honourable Member for St. James North might venture to move that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South might be more capable of playing badminton but that too, is a brilliant sport. Sir, we are referring really to the mass-based sports, throngs of our young people, men and women, play these sports in the infancy of the evolution of cricket in Barbados. This was played right across every nook and cranny of this country.

Mr. Speaker, when we look and see how those persons emerge, it was not cricket that was coached by somebody certified in an academy in Australia, and academy in England or, maybe, an academy in Barbados. The sport was played with what nature provided. We shaped it out of the coconut branch and out of the clammy-cherry tree. We used the tubes of the bicycle to make the ball and if you were facing me, I would have knocked you down because we are talking about sports, and the sport being played by many but you were more comfortable with marble cricket or now golf. He has matured so it is now gold.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: He used to bend on his knees and play marble cricket, so he should keep quiet. You should not trouble me because I am a gentle soul.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you still addressing the Chair?

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, I am speaking to the Chair as always. Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that we had great ingenuity and we were innovative. Sir, when you review even some of the bad images from the television of persons playing shots, it is almost impossible to think, in the modern times how they were able to. They batted

without helmets, facing one of the legends like Wesley Hall. Sir, there is even a greater delivery from him now as a preacher and you know that he was an excogitating fast bowler and bringing Charlie Griffith from the other end, a competent businessman in this country.

Mr. Speaker, these were not fools or novices. These were from the belly of Barbados and they were great men. Therefore, we have to support them. We cannot fiddle about with issues such as this, because this is the reality and this is what we are doing and I am thankful.

Sir, occasionally, this Parliament lives to its highest level and this morning, this Parliament rose to a high level.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe the level always goes up, but it rose to a high level with the Leader of the Opposition seconding, supporting and speaking to this matter. This is the beauty of this great country that we have called Barbados. Let us pray for it constantly and celebrate it.

Mr. Speaker, sport is recreation, sport is general development, sport is economy development and sport is social development. Sir, sport is so many things. There is nothing, not even ragga soca or any of those are as dynamic as sports to move a nation. It is important for the cultural arts to do what they can and I support "Red Plastic Bag" and the youngsters now. On Friday nights we should go and support the activity, because the areas of development in this country are sports and the cultural arts. 12.10 p.m.

We have gone quite far with industrial development and small manufacturing, and we will keep those, but these are services based on talent. Therefore, these are the areas of exploitation.

Sir, I cannot fathom, and maybe we need to send somebody to Jamaica to see how they constantly produce some of the fastest men and women in the world. I know there is a history of the maroons and they had to be constantly on the move, and therefore, this might now be built in the genetic structures.

Sir, when you speak of Osaffa Powell, Usain Bolt, and there is a little youngster on the horizon, they are constantly producing them. I would love to be in China to watch Usain Bolt and Asafa Powell in the finals, because that is where they will go once there are no injuries, and we pray for them. I do not know how you will separate them. I put my money on Usain Bolt.

Sir, we have done some work as well. Obadelle Thompson was an outstanding athlete and so were several others. This country has been selfish to its sports people. Let us speak reality. This country does not like to pay to see its good sportsmen and women. They are not as heavily conditioned as other countries in the world, because failure

and success are on opposite sides of the coin. We believe that we must only have success, but sometimes failure makes the better for you to rise to the highest level, because you go back and make the analysis of what you have to do, in order to advance and go forward.

Sir, I have been looking at the Manifesto of the Democratic Labour Party. There are some exciting ideas and initiatives in this Manifesto. The only thing which can stop the realisation of those ideas is this. Since the ladies upstairs do not understand, this is money. That would stop the true development of this country. If I can come a little closer to home, let me give you an example. I have been speaking to the Minister of Sports about this.

Sir, we sent 25 youngsters to England, footballer, to Liverpool, to give them a feel of the culture of the sport, because football is massive. It is a major industry in England and Europe. When you hear of a transfer of a Striker from Tottenham Hot Spurs to Manchester United for £21.5 million, their currency, in the arrangement he is already guaranteed a salary of over £15 million, not per month, per week, and he takes a slice of the transfer fee.

We have not yet in this country began to comprehend the dynamics of this. This is a different society. There is a lot of room for development. There are a lot of "hads" in sports in Barbados, but we will deal with that in another Place and another time - people who undermine the sporting development of young people in this country, a waste of time essentially.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, for political reasons, and you understand it well. There is one who has terrorised you for years. It is a good thing that you are well trained in the good military arts. You take them out at the appropriate time. I am speaking of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. They come in all forms and disguises.

Sir, I was making a point in relation to these youngsters. It was difficult to get them up, but they went, the support and some debt which you have to pay off over time, once nobody does not put you in the hands of the Honourable Member for St. Michael East. That would be a great joy. I would enjoy that battle. I will have by my side the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, because anytime you go up against a Lawyer you get another Lawyer. They like each other when they can raise their fees, but they do not like each other when they are trying to get - I will deal with that. Divide and rule are the only tools.

Sir, they did exceptionally well in every game they played, including outside of their age group. I am talking about an upward age group. Sir, you are harnessed because

of the debt. The price of fuel has caused the price to move in this Region. To take a football team of 25 people used to cost \$5 000 and you go into two days and you pay another \$3 000. It is nearly \$20 000 now, overall. That is what we are talking about.

Sir, you cannot move your cricketing teams, football volleyball or netball teams or what have you as you would like, so we have to develop a strategy, if we are paying \$20 000, we spend two nights and half of a day and play two games, which is a bit dangerous, especially for those who play football.

Sir, we need to come up with the kind of strategies and the kind of programmes as identified here. Not all can be identified in a Manifesto. That is impossible. It means that we will stop dreaming and start developing programmes for the evolution of the sports and for the evolution of our society.

Sir, when I talk about the economic potential, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central spoke about the tourism potential. I still keep calling it potential, because we have not yet reached 10 per cent of what it can do for Barbados. There are other countries in the Caribbean who watch us.

I remember we used to do a Regatta out of the Canary Islands to Barbados every year. Do you remember that colleagues? Then somebody took it from under us - St. Lucia. They are watching what we do and seek to do it a little better, so we have always to stay ahead of the crowd.

Sir, we have the Hockey Festival. We have the Sir Garfield Sobers Tournament. We had the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, and I like to give credit where credit is due.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North knows nothing about sports. He does not know anything at all about the development of sports. Do not mention him in the same breath at all.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: He went to trials? Well he is still going to trials all like now. He spends his time in court. That is what he needs to do.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East brought into this country, from the Caribbean, large numbers of players, and they played throughout the Pine and other parts of this country, persons who understand. If I give him some praise now, it is not because we sit across

the political divide, but you must recognise a man for what he has done.

Sir, that helped put some resources in this country. Food was being cooked. Baxters Road sold a few more fish. They went to Oistins, in the Constituency of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, and they spent money by George, Annie and Hercules. They helped to keep the local community alive. This is part of the dynamic of the sport. That is one aspect. There is a lot more.

Sir, there was a time when the National Stadium was new and a lot of the football teams out of England used to come here to play. It is no longer in use. There is some work being done to the field. Thanks to the National Sports Council, et cetera. Sir, because we have built up some negativity, you will not have them in again. The last Government sat on it, a stadium which was developed by the charitable organisation such as the Jaycees of Barbados.

12.20 p.m.

The State needs to make strategic investments in sporting infrastructures for the development and evolution of the games. I hope that this Government would not be part of any neglect, but would be in the refurbishment and delivery of new physical, mental, administrative and organisational structures for the development of the sport.

Mr. Speaker, do you know how many good paying jobs could be created at the level of Sport Event Managers and full-time Sports Administrators? This is what we are talking about when we are talking about developing an industry, using sports as its genesis, so that the Gymnasium, the Netball Stadium, the National Stadium, North Stars Sporting Complex and Kensington Oval, would have good Sports Managers, who are properly trained, and not handpicked and deposited to cause confusion, particularly in the recent past.

We have pavilions where there are still some people who believe that the keys belong to them, so the young people are shut out. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George South told me that this is going to be a thing of the past.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: What those people should be looking for, Honourable Minister, are keys for their homes, and this Government is going to make sure they have keys to their own homes.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: If they love keys, let us give them keys to their own homes, so that they could free up the keys for the young people of Barbados to use the facilities.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: This is what has to happen.

Sir, we need sports event managers and sports tourism managers, so that we have the development of sports management and sports event companies. There are one or two here in Barbados that do reasonably well, but again they are not well capitalised.

We heard the Minister of Tourism talk about utilising the technologies, so he has gone into the virtual world. I am sure that the former Representative for St. Michael West Central would understand the virtual world, especially if we make a connection to the heavenly world. I am speaking of that great fast bowler, Rev. Dr. Wesley Hall.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I know that you not only know, his first, second and third name, but you also know his nickname. You are of the same vintage and of the same talent.

Sir, we have our web builders, our designers and our animators. We have to look at the possibilities and not put blinkers before our eyes and it is a great challenge. It must be buttressed by a solid strategic development plan for sports in Barbados.

I did not feel comfortable, because I was unable to get to the gymnasium to support the volleyball players. Sir, I would want to say to them, and I am sure on behalf of the Minister of Sports, not to be down-spirited.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: You have done this country proud over time. What you do is that you rise because passion must be in your heart and you must be able to spike more deliberately and serve more deliberately. Sir, only those like the Honourable Member for the City would understand how it is to spike. He rises and with the power of this arm connects to the ball and brings it down in the opponents' court, and ricochets it off the turf. He smiles as though he does not understand of what I speak.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: But the Constituency of the Honourable Member for the City, great sportsmen have

emerged. I know he will speak about those after we return from lunch.

I want to commend the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill, and all those who have been associated with focussing on sports as a developmental agenda.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I am saying that I want to compliment all those persons at the University of the West Indies who understand what sports can do for their nation. Therefore, we have the Centre for Cricket Study and Research, where we use the cognitive and academic structures to make examination of what is happening, and connect our people to the study, appreciation and understanding of the various sports.

We want to see more books written on our icons and our legends, from different perspectives.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Swing the ball the way only Malcolm Marshall could. He was a small man, who did not have the same physical stature like a Wesley Hall but he understood what he had to do with the ball - in and out, in and out, and then you are out.

I am associated with football, but I have a great appreciation for the nuances of cricket. It is in our blood. Just like hemoglobin is in our blood, cricket is also in our blood, and even though we would pretend, we need it for fuel to take us through our journeys. I commend them for that and I commend them for building an international-sized football field at the Lazaretto, a land donated by the Government and the people of Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: We thank them for putting down a proper athletic track down there, and then gradually constructing facilities for persons to sit. Sir, we must not stop there. The Government has to, as in this Manifesto, put a dedicated football stadium somewhere in the east. I do not know the east as well as my colleagues from St. Philip North, St. Philip South and St. Philip West. I am hoping that they would put their collective heads together and locate that place and speak to the Minister of Sports, if they are not intimidated by her.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: If she speaks to me, I would speak to her. I am not intimidated by her at all.

Sir, it is important, really, for us to boost our youth and build our nation. We need to latch it on the sports and cultural arts. We need all those qualified persons, some of those the Honourable Member for St. George spoke about, the strengthening of the clubs and the administrators.

We in the Ministry of Education would love to work with community development and the Ministry of Sports to utilise local talent from the communities. We have good fellows, but we need to get over some of the refinements, so that in schools, where we have captured groups of young people, we could bring in a physical education teacher who is an athletic coach, and therefore does not have the ability and the talent to impact on football or cricket, but what we need to do is to use the community resource and commit that community coach to be working with the Deighton Griffith Secondary School, the Foundation School or the Princess Margaret School, across the age groups. The person is not a teacher, because that is a specialised craft. The person is a coach who is attached to the school from the community.

12.30 p.m.

Sir, you could pay them sessionally through the three agencies, the Ministry of Community Development, the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Education and Human Resources. They would be there with them training them. They would accompany them to their competitive games. They would be there with them on Saturday during the Tiger Malt Youth Tournament.

Mr. Speaker, let us create the linkages that is a hybrid. Out of that hybrid, you could develop community or parish academies. Sir, out of the parish academies would flow the zonal elite or centres of excellence, the pyramid structure, mass-based sports. Sir, everybody would not reach a Usain Bolt, a Wesley Hall or Sir Garfield Sobers ability, but they all must play. Mr. Speaker, a country in its pyramid, through the recognition of excellence and the elite development of athletes, stands poised to reap greater rewards than it has reached in the past.

Mr. Speaker, this country stands to salute its sportsmen and sportswomen as we did Obadele Thompson. There are people who have never rub shoulders with Obadele Thompson, but they came out on the streets of this country some years ago when Obadele got the Bronze medal and saluted him. The people of this country felt great, and for weeks, productivity levels went up. Sir, it is not only religion that might have that transformative effect, it is also the celebration of our people when they achieved.

Mr. Speaker, our people can achieve on the world stage if we do what is right in the Constituency of St. Philip West, the Constituency of St. Lucy and the Constituency of St. Philip South. Sir, if we could give some small support,

as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central did for Weymouth Wales, or is doing for Britton's Hill, or as the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown does for New Orleans, or as the Honourable Member who constantly support and sponsors football in St. Philip North and Clarkes Hill.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, who is a constituent of mine, who I know supports me, even though sometimes you have to spank him, gives occasionally, even though grudgingly, to Eden Stars.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: We know the paucity of his resources, but he gives, even sparingly. We must be thankful for the widow's mite, or is it the wizard's mite in this instance.

Mr. Speaker, I want to commend again the Honourable Member for St. George South for bringing this Bill before us and for her comments and the comments of all Honourable Members in support of this Bill.

I thank you very much.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.45 p.m. today.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to second that.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 1.45 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly. 12.50 p.m.

RESUMPTION

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

ORDER NO. 3 (Resumed)

SECOND READING OF CRICKET LEGENDS OF BARBADOS

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Speaker, I rise to wrap up this debate and to thank my colleagues for their support in this Bill.

Sir, in their deliberations, they have shown all the important and various facets of this Bill. Of course, we are disappointed that at this time there is nobody from the Other Side here to speak to this.

Sir, for all the lip service they would have given to cricket, this appears to be one that is not of priority for them. Sir, certainly their record for the last 14 years has shown that there was only lip service, when there was not a lot of glitz and glamour to be had with Cricket World Cup, 2007. There was not any show of faith in cricket and in the development of cricket over the past 14 years. Sir, all that is going to change, because certainly we have a vision for sports overall and for the development of this country.

Indeed, we see sports not just for fun, but it is about time we get serious about sports, or about anything that could impact on the developmental potentials of this country and on the people of our Region. We have seen, over the decades, the value of cricket to the development of Barbados and to the Region.

Mr. Speaker, you would see we are putting our money where our mouth is. We are not just putting our money into fancy buildings, but into planning and real development. We have started with the development of our sports plan.

The Ministry of Sports and the National Sports Council are working together with the University of the West Indies, on producing a strategic plan for sports, one which would set out the vision and strategic directions for competitive and recreational sports. This would be done in collaboration with the sports associations, many of whom have met with me and have outlined their challenges and concerns.

Mr. Speaker, this plan will include facilities development. We are looking at a development of the National Stadium and of developing the Netball Stadium. We are looking at developing an area for multiple indoor sports such as badminton, boxing, volleyball, netball and martial arts. Of course, we are committed to the development of a facility at the North Star Club, St. Lucy.

Mr. Speaker, mention was also made of the need for facilities in the south and east of the island. Sir, our plan includes and must include human resource development such as players, coaches and managers. It also includes a sports medicine facility and the development of sports medicine. Sir, the area of event managers was also discussed and that is an area we see for the development of the human resource potential in and around sports.

Mr. Speaker, the point I am making is that what we are doing for the development and redevelopment of cricket, is a plan that we could use in the development of other sports. Therefore, as we put our emphasis today on the development of cricket, we have a plan that we could translate that to the development of other sports.

Mr. Speaker, our vision too is to make Barbados the Sports and Events Capital of the Caribbean, and we are working assiduously on a programme which we would bring to the public very shortly. The first part of the plan would be ready in three months. There would then be a detailed plan, with pull-out development plans, that should come in 2009.

Mr. Speaker, it is time that we see our investment in sports as a serious one. Today we are talking about our Cricket Legends, and there are other athletes in Barbados who have given of their service to this country, who have gone by the wayside.

Today I would like to honour Anthony “Mango” Philips and Victor “Gas” Clarke, both of whom have passed recently, but who have tirelessly given of themselves to this country, and perhaps not with the reward they deserved.

Mr. Speaker, sports is important for recreation, but we really do need to sit up and look at the earning potential in sports. Sir, above all, we need to look at the capacity to develop our human resource. We have to look at the capacity to develop our national spirit, our national pride and our community spirit. These are things that perhaps we have given too much lip service to, but when we see the true value and potential in these things, then and only then do I think we would see some real development in sports.

Mr. Speaker, today’s discussion was enlightening but I think it has just begun to scratch the surface of the possibilities that exist in the area of sports. Sports is the buzz-word around the world. It is seen as a tool for nation building, for peace building and for human resource development. Sir, in countries that are war-torn and in areas that are separated because of gang violence, sports is being used to bring communities and countries together. Sir, in sports, people tend to put aside their differences, just for the game. Sir, sports is also seen as a tool for gender equity. Sir, of course, we all know of the benefits of sports in health.

Mr. Speaker, the Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc., have partnered with the Government of Barbados in a health and wellness programme. The Reverend Dr. “Wes” Hall has given his commitment that the Legend would continue to work in such programmes, because we all know of the value of sports to our health. We talked about how much money has been spent on chronic non-communicable diseases and sports is a way to bring that back. Sports is a way to get people interested in physical activities.

Mr. Speaker, there are some persons who would simply walk or go on a treadmill for exercise, but that does not appeal to many. Therefore, if we remind people of the number of benefits that could be gained from sports, if we

could get people out there, we would have a more healthy and active population. We would be able to see how we could bring down the incidents of the chronic non-communicable diseases that are literally eating away at our population.

1.50 p.m.

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

Sir, reference was made to the Manifesto which outlines, in quite significant detail, what we are attempting to do in the Ministry of Sports, but above all, we have realised that the time has come that we have to put some more emphasis on sports.

It is not just about running around the field, it is not just about kicking a football back and forth, but sports has the potential to do a lot of the things we have been talking about on political platforms and that we talk about in other arenas, where we talk about society, developing communities, how we want our youth to be involved, how we want to bridge that generational gap. All these things we talk about and we are trying to devise all kinds of programmes.

Sir, sports is here before us and it is a tool that has been tried and tested for many years to develop this kind of society, and still we are sitting back and doing nothing about it, but the Ministry of Sports is committed right now to doing just that.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank all the Members of this House who have spoken to this debate. I want to thank them for their contribution. I want to thank all those sports persons because, this is not just about cricket. This is about sports. This is about where we want to take sports and all those sporting organisations and stakeholders who have come and shared their advice and concerns with me in the Ministry.

I want to thank them for doing just that and for letting us know how we need to go forward. I want to let them know that their time and effort have not been wasted. We have listened, we will continue to listen and all they have told us will be a part of the plan that we are developing.

We have looked at how monies have been spent; yes, we have terminated some programmes and not because of any grouse we have had with any particular individuals, but programmes were terminated because the resources can be better used in other areas, and that is just what we will continue to do.

Mr. Speaker, we are working with all of the legends. They have committed to working, not just with the

Government or the Party because, as I have said, this is not partisan. We are working with Barbados. The Legends of Barbados are Barbadians first and foremost and they are committed to which ever Government will work with them to develop the future of Barbados and, in particular, for our young people. Sir, however we formulate our plan, it is going to be, above all, to the best interest of the Barbadian society.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am obliged to you.

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

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

On the separate motions of Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO, seconded by Hon. R.D. JONES, the House resolved itself into Committee, Mr. S.A. LASHLEY in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. S. A. LASHLEY: This House is in Committee.

Clause 1 - 7 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule became the Schedule to the Bill.

On the motion of Dr. the Hon. E.R. BYER-SUCKOO, seconded by Hon. R.D. JONES, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee without amendment and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO, seconded by Hon. R. D. JONES, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Cricket Legends of Barbados Incorporated Act, 2008.

2.00 p.m.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

ORDER NO. 7

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$500 000 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2008-2009 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 3 2008-2009 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, this is a Supplementary with respect to Head 52, which is the Ministry of Finance, Economic Affairs and Energy, in respect of an Energy Awareness Programme for Barbados in the sum of \$500 000, the spiralling cost of petroleum products, and the impact of the increase of the price of the petroleum products along with the burgeoning demand for these products that dramatically increased over the years, and have also increased the cost of fuel imports to Barbados, which has placed considerable strain on our foreign reserves. The inflationary impact of rising energy has been felt by all sectors of our society, and is reflected in the balance of payments, transportation costs and the retail price index. It is, therefore, urgent and important that the Government seeks to improve national energy use through the energy conservation measures, renewable energy, energy awareness and an effective and efficient method to monitor this situation.

Currently in Barbados, electricity generation and transport, are by far the two largest consumers of fuel imported into this island. According to our discussions with the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited, of the electricity generated, domestic consumption is the greatest use and the Barbados Water Authority is the single greatest user.

It is with this perspective that water conservation measures are also considered as part of our energy conservation programme. Concurrent with these increases in energy cost and consumption, Barbados is also seeking to exploit any potential petroleum reserves, on and offshore, and commercialisation of offshore energy sources if present, will not be expected to achieve anything until the year, 2015.

Sir, we have decided to introduce in Barbados a public persuasion programme regarding energy conservation. We believe that there have been significant enough development in the area of renewal energy and energy conservation in Barbados that can impact on both the public and private sector. Therefore, the Government's Energy Awareness Programme, together with a wider public persuasion programme are critical in engaging and educating the public's active participation, active conservation and renewal energy, particularly as it may apply to their own personal circumstances.

Sir, this National Public Awareness Programme is being proposed with a public target audience which will include adults who have the spending power to finance energy conservation and renewal energy measures, and young people who very influentially change agents in businesses. This programme will be done through a variety

of methodologies. In other words, a variety of public awareness methodologies.

The ultimate objective over the next three months, in the form of advertisements and public advertisements, will be to reduce energy bills in your home, vehicles and businesses, ways of resorting to renewable energy, Government and private sector initiatives, where the benefits of renewable energy and energy conservation are already being realised; Government policies and programmes, fiscal monetary or otherwise, offering incentives for energy conservation and renewal energy, and changing energy costs and their effects in Barbados and abroad.

Sir, we are going to use slogans, a logo, jingles and the creation of a voice or persona for this Public Persuasion Programme.

In addition to this, we will be introducing energy competitions for schools, the way to involve children in active learning and implementing energy conservation. A youth competition to be distributed in the print media using insert brochures or postage stamps, lectures to energy focus groups in the private sector, as well as the public sector, lectures in Government and private sector schools engaging the assistance of service clubs to carry the message in schools and other learning institutions; a science exhibition on renewal energy and energy conservation; Town Hall Meetings for the public; park and ride and car pooling campaigns, Billboards, Adopt a Bus Stop Programme; signs on buses and the use of IT, Facebook, Myspace websites and other forms of electronic communications.

Sir, this is a reasonably exciting programme. Phase 1 of the programme starts immediately after Crop Over and will run for nine weeks. Phase 2, which is on schedule, runs for 12 weeks, will start from October 5, 2008 to the end of the year. Phase 3 will run from January 1 to March 31, 2009.

Therefore, I believe this is an important part of Government strategy, and I am therefore urging the Honourable House to support this Public Persuasion Programme of Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy, as a means of not only reducing the cost of living in our country, but also focussing attention on renewable energy resources.

Sir, therefore, I move that Head 52 as amended stand part.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I do not propose to get into wider debate on the energy policy today, but I have some questions that perhaps the Honourable Prime Minister might provide us some answers with, in relation to this programme.

There was in place a Government National Conservation Programme for the public sector. We want to know the status of that programme and whether it was continuing?

Secondly, there was a plant for the energy conservation at a national level and, perhaps, he might indicate whether this is, in fact, the execution of that programme or whether that is being undertaken separately.

2.10 p.m.

Thirdly, I am not sure if he indicated who is in charge of the execution of this programme - it is a public persuasion programme - and whether these funds which are being requested will be supplemented by Government's access to air-time or is a large percentage of these funds being dedicated for the purchase of air time and newspaper space? Or is it more in relation to production cost?

Sir, I believe that if we could have an answer to those things, because equally, we would want to support any programme that encourages the reduction of energy use in Barbados. In our Financial Statement last year, we would have had a section dedicated to the green economy, which sought to put those things in place.

I would also like him, if he is at this stage in a position to advise on the pilot project for the conversion of buses at the Transport Board to LPG. Sir, in Regional discussions at the Caribbean Development Bank, we argued strongly as a country last year and hence, the pilot project that we felt the public transportation sector, as the Honourable Member just indicated, is an area in which significant savings can be had, and to that extent, if we can have a successful conversion of our buses, it would bring benefits to the country, in terms of minimising the volume of fuel that has to be imported, and hence, savings in foreign exchange.

I believe, Sir, that equally, the issue in relation to alternative energies has to be seen in its wider context. I think that it is fair to say that there is no single alternative renewable energy that can replace fossil fuels and we accept that as a country, but the combined use of the various alternative energies, however, can reduce the reliance on fossil fuel.

Sir, to the extent, therefore, that it is necessary for the regulatory work to be done by the Fair Trading Commission to be able to accommodate the use of

alternative energies, could the Government please advise the stage we are at, in readying the Fair Trading Commission for the regulatory work? In other words, you cannot simply sell energy into the national grid without the regulatory work being done.

In December, when we met with the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited, they indicated that by about April or May of this year, they anticipated that they would have to go back before the Fair Trading Commission. We indicated in discussions that this is one of the areas we would like focus being brought on.

In addition to that, the whole question of the establishment of off-peak and peak rates, because in other countries, they have been used to maximum effect, such that people would undertake activities involving a lot of electricity, when there are off-peak rates, if those are available. Therefore, there is a role for the regulatory entity, such as the Fair Trading Commission to play, in order to be able to ensure that as a country, Barbados can reduce its use of energy, as well as diversity to a mix of alternative energies recognising. However, that no single alternative renewable energy will ever replace fossil fuels.

Sir, it does require change behaviour but at the same time, accommodating the institutions of Government and the regulatory functions of Government to be able to take into account, the use of these new alternative energies. Today, I am simply seeking to ask a series of questions in relation to these matters.

As I said, the Opposition will support any programme that seeks to reduce the volume of fossil fuels that are used in this country. We recognise the implications for it. Sir, I would have indicated that we had to face an increase in energy prices from US\$12 a barrel in the year 2000 to US\$104 a barrel in January of this year, when we demitted office, therefore, we know what it is to have to face that, Sir.

Equally, like this Government, we would have had seven separate six-month occasions where the increase in oil prices exceeded 36 per cent. Therefore, to that extent, there is a concern, but we believe that with the appropriate policies and the appropriate response, not just from the Government, but individuals in the country, we can get through this without there being the kind of negative consequences that would lead to increased unemployment and hyper inflation. Therefore, to that extent, Sir, our concerns are in getting further information how best this programme would be executed.

I believe at this level, it is a national programme but we also need to know who is running it, with whom we can interact in order to be able to have our constituents play their valid role and to what extent will this sum of money

be adequate to the end of the financial year, given the fact that Government does have access to air-time, under its agreement with each of the broadcast entities.

There is air-time that is available. It is usually only held back from Government at Crop Over and Christmas because, obviously, of the commercial possibilities for the radio stations in those periods of time, but if we are relying on that, and hence the half million does not include air-time and newspaper space.

I am obliged to you, Sir,

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for the City.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: Mr. Chairman, I rise to support the matter before this Honourable House, in terms of the Government's energy conservation drive, in terms of public awareness, and to encourage each and every Barbadian to buy into this national effort to conserve energy and thereby reduce the outlay of foreign exchange to import fossil fuels, be it the bunker-c fuel to drive the generators at the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited.

Mr. Chairman, as a person, I would like to add my voice to explain to the general public, the tremendous savings in electricity that can be garnished by the country as a whole, when each individual and each household in the country play their part in reducing the electricity bill.

Mr. Chairman, simple matters such as replacing incandescent light bulbs in your homes with fluorescent bulbs, which may be a little more expensive initially, but as time goes on, the savings in terms of reduction in the electricity bill in your household would eventually surpass any increased cost in terms of the fluorescent bulb as opposed to the incandescent bulb, the fluorescent bulbs being more energy efficient.

There are other simple measures, for example, Mr. Chairman, such as rather than placing the washing machine to wash small loads, put all the clothes together and have larger loads, rather than putting a couple pairs of socks in a machine, wash them by hand. We do not have to go back to the jucking-board, but it would be healthier for us and you would be saving energy.

Mr. Chairman, other simple issues, for example, ironing all of your clothes one time, be it Sunday afternoon, as opposed to every morning scrambling to iron a pair of trousers, a dress, a shirt or whatever, saving energy. Making sure that the refrigerator doors are not leaking hot air into the refrigerator, thereby generating more electricity by just placing a two-dollar bill to make sure that the gasket is working effectively, as well the use of solar water

heaters, rather than electric or gas water heaters. Sir, these are everyday activities that we take for granted.

Mr. Chairman, people leave on lights throughout several rooms in the house where they do not need the lights to be on, and we do not believe in ghosts, so we do not need to have lights all over the house when they are not being used, be it the television on and you are not watching it, or the radio on and you are not listening to it. These are simple measures that we waste energy on a daily basis.

2.20 p.m.

In these times when the price of oil is increasing, these measures can save the country millions of dollars annually in terms of the fuel bill, even in terms of car-pooling, as the Honourable Prime Minister mentioned.

Mr. Chairman, within the City of Bridgetown, there is a lot of traffic congestion as in other parts of the country. This can be reduced significantly if people car-pooled. Some companies experimented with the park and ride system during the Cricket World Cup and other events, but we can look at this in terms of a long-term solution to the congestion on the roads of Bridgetown and urban Barbados and the pollution of the air in terms of the vehicle exhaust and also a reduction in energy and the use of fossil fuels in terms of fuelling cars.

Why should somebody have to drive 100 metres down the block to buy a loaf of bread when they can walk and get some exercise and remove the excess calories from the body and live healthier and have a better lifestyle in our country?

Mr. Chairman, I congratulate the Government for pumping money into educating the public on these issues so that we can engender a national ethos in which we are more aware of the wastage of energy and the need to conserve energy.

Mr. Chairman, without further ado, I support this Resolution which is before this Honourable House.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I am happy to make this presentation in support of the Supplementary before us. I am especially touched by the title which this project is being given, "Public Persuasion Programme".

Mr. Chairman, we as a Government have come to recognise that the time is past for the "lot of long talk" about energy conservation.

Mr. Chairman, there are consultants out there who would love to come and sit and present documents upon documents, pages and pages and graphs about how much energy can be saved, but the truth is that there are people out there who are already installing energy lighting and are selecting energy efficient equipment when they buy their fridges and other electrical appliances. As a matter of fact, in some countries and indeed to an extent here in Barbados, you are not even permitted to import equipment that is of a particularly low efficiency. Mr. Chairman, I would like to see this programme keeps to its title, that is, persuading Barbadians to move toward implementation even when it means investment of their own, because at the current fuel prices, upward of US\$140 a barrel, it almost pays for itself to install energy sources like photovoltaic and wind turbines.

As I said before, there are a number of Barbadians who have already displaced more than 90 per cent of their dependency on electricity from the traditional Barbados Light and Power Company Limited source. Of course, the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited has its role to play. The Barbados Light and Power Company Limited must very well start thinking about changing its role and getting on board as far as this persuasion programme is concerned, because if they are to remain a viable company in the production and provision of electrical power, then they have to be on board as our citizens move from the complete and total use of fossil fuels into the application of renewable energy sources.

Mr. Chairman, we have a very valuable resource in sunlight. For a long time, successive Governments have supported the introduction of solar water heaters, but as we are aware, solar water heaters only touch the tip of the iceberg in terms of the potential of the sun to produce energy for applications in the households and in the larger community.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the wide-spread application of solar vehicles. We have a young man by the name of William Hinds in the Ministry of Energy who was promoted. I want to commend his work at this time and to urge that we continue to support entrepreneurs like him.

There are proposals in the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport for persons to introduce solar powered vehicles to promote tours, particularly in our town centres like Dover, St. Lawrence Gap and in the City Centre itself, outside of the Harbour to bring persons into Bridgetown for short tours.

Mr. Chairman, we also have all the time to be thinking of developing a wider attraction in terms of products for our visitors to enjoy. Mr. Chairman, what better way could we fit this Bill than to be able to provide solar trams to take persons up into our city centre? These

kinds of projects have not been championed in the past, but I am happy to say that this Administration will be championing the implementation of these kinds of transportation systems in restricted and controlled areas.

Mr. Chairman, as I said before, we are promoting a number of activities. We are promoting new entrepreneurial activity. We are promoting the use of renewable energy by way of the use of photovoltaic. We are also promoting a diversification and a building of capacity by way of our offerings to our visitors and locals alike.

Mr. Chairman, we are 100 per cent behind this programme. We think that this programme would serve to point householders towards transitioning, as my colleague from the City of Bridgetown indicated, from the cheap incandescent bulbs to the effective energy saving photo compact florescent fixtures.

Mr. Chairman, we intend to promote the small things. Sometimes, Sir, we tend to focus on the esoteric, the long-winded, the nuclear energy and all these kinds of wave power and these kinds of options which, though practical and working, are not immediately applicable.

Sir, what I understand this programme to be doing and why I am so comfortable in supporting it, is that it is persuading us as Barbadians, business people, householders and the young people who are the change agents, the ones who would bring about the quickest change in terms of what we do and the habits that we have in promoting among themselves, these practical and immediate ideas which can make such a difference and which, when applied in a wider sense, would impact largely on the entire economic picture.

Sir, this programme has our total support. We look forward to building on this. Sir, \$500 000 is not a lot of money, but in the remainder of the financial year, we believe it is sufficient to direct us where we should go for next year.

2.30 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I want to compliment the Ministries under the Democratic Labour Party that have been turning towards programmes of energy efficiency. Sir, certainly in the Ministry of Transport, Works and International Transport, this is one of our lead programmes in which our management team is actively engaged. We are looking at opportunities for replacement of existing fixtures, such as lighting and air-conditioning.

Mr. Chairman, in administrative offices, there is a proliferation of split air-conditioning units, which are, in

two ways, inefficient. There are inefficient because they are costly to run.

Secondly, they tend to be unhealthy, if not properly installed. Mr. Chairman, I have been very careful in making that qualification, as they could be installed in a way that make them very healthy and perfect, but most of the time, because of the kind of short-cuts that are taken to bring about immediate cooling, does not take into effect the opportunities for saving energy and for ensuring there is a healthy environment.

Mr. Chairman, we are looking at the wider application of larger systems, either by way of chilled-water systems or by direct expansion distribution by duct work air-conditioning systems. There is central air-conditioning which some persons shy away from because they think if there is a problem and there is something out, then the entire system would be affected, but there can be built-in redundancies. Sir, with the kind of efficiencies we could gain, even with the redundancies, there is greater opportunities for savings and for a Barbados which we know would fit the bill of an island as a leader in the future.

Mr. Chairman, Barbados has always been a leader. Indeed, Caribbean islands in this part of this hemisphere have always been leaders, and we would want to continue to be leaders in this regard. Therefore, we will make sure that this public persuasion programme hits the ground running, as they say, and I am sure that the Ministry of Energy and the Environment would ensure that this redounds to the benefit of all Barbadians and to the economic benefit of this nation as a whole.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I believe nobody else has any more contributions. The programme that is designed, as I can see, is made up of both the replacement and advertisement, as well as production fees.

The placement of advertisements amounts to approximately \$140 000. The production fees are approximately \$160 000, and the balance is made up in various forms of expenses, including \$60 000 for consultancy fees. I believe it includes radio and television advertisements, over and above that which Government normally gets under its existing arrangement with the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation, the license holders under the terms of the broadcast license. I do not think there were any other major questions.

Mr. Chairman, I cannot answer the Leader of the Opposition's question about previous policies. I have been

somewhat too busy to compare what existed before I came to office, with what I have to do now. Mr. Chairman, like the Minister, I have been too busy in designing more effective programmes that would have a more lasting impact on the public. Therefore, I did not trouble myself too much with what I had seen on the file, which obviously had either failed or had not gotten off the ground. Sir, I am certain this programme will get off the ground and that it will have an impact.

Mr. Chairman, I am not in the mood for contention, but in 1961, the Democratic Labour Party came to office. There was a previous Barbados Labour Party in Government. They did not have to contend with a massive subsidy in respect of oil prices, for oil prices had increased prior to that.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, in 1976, a new Barbados Labour Party came to Government, after a fuel crisis. There was no subsidy nor debt that was waiting for that new Government to clean up, as a result of the irresponsibility of its predecessor in racking up a massive sum of money by way of subsidy. Sir, it was not a planned subsidy, but one that arose because the Minister of Finance had said to deal with it after elections.

Mr. Chairman, there was nothing on the books that says I am going to run \$100 million or that we could have afforded \$200 million. It was just an amount that was accumulated, because it would have been unpopular for a dying Government to have increased fuel prices. Therefore, a new Government came to office in 1976, after a fuel crisis, and there was no debt in respect of petroleum products to be paid off.

Mr. Chairman, in 1986, a new Government came to office, and fuel prices had increased. There was no debt then. No previous Barbados Labour Party Administration was as irresponsible as the last one. No previous Democratic Labour Party administration was as irresponsible. There was no provision in the Estimates of March, 2007, for any fuel subsidy, yet the Minister of Finance then allowed that subsidy to reach almost \$80 million.

Mr. Chairman, I am not moved by the talk about the movement of fuel prices from \$14 to \$104. Sir, for the last 14 years, by and large, the taxpayers and the consumers of petroleum products have met the cost of those petroleum products, at market prices, with excise taxes and with VAT. In 2008, we came to office and found, as I said, an unprovided for obligation of \$60 million to the Government of this country. Sir, even now, we have not passed on the fuel increases, and there is another mounting debt which is occurring in relation to energy prices.

Mr. Chairman, even as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East walks around and tells people we should keep subsidies in place, we are currently subsidising the price.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am not an Economist. I do not pretend to be one and I think people who are not, should not pretend to be either. Therefore, time and time again, when I hear this nonsense being trotted out publicly by people saying that the Government should be subsidising fuel prices, when, in fact, we are subsidising those prices, I did not correct anybody because I felt it would have been churlish and immature.

Sir, the facts are there. We brought the prices up to what I may consider to date, in respect of the existing debt, but since then we have had some astronomical increases in fuel prices. Sir, there will be further adjustments. However, the Government has a commitment to adjust the taxes, to ensure that the burden of any increased taxation is not passed on to the consumer.

It would be phased over a longer period of time, so we will consider keeping in place partial subsidies, but eventually it would get to the stage where a pricing mechanism would be in place, that could adjust the prices quickly and on a monthly basis. Sir, that is the policy of this Government.

Mr. Chairman, in the intervening period though, Government is putting in place an energy persuasion programme. There was none before. There might have been talk, there might have been documents on file, for example, the Legends of Barbados Bill. There was none before, but we brought the Legends Bill. Sir, there was nothing before and the Parliament of Barbados has passed that Bill today.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, you could get up with a thousand good intentions and achieve none. Likewise, there might be every intention, as the file is replete with recommendations, proposals and so on, but there was no public persuasion programme.

This, as I understand it, is a new public persuasion programme being introduced by a new Government. This runs in tandem with the subsidisation of fuel prices in Barbados and that is the way this Government has sought to deal with the challenges in relation to petroleum products.

2.41 p.m.

Sir, I want to make one last point about this because, again, I find it difficult to respond to intellectual dishonesty, not in here, but it might inform things that are said in here.

When PetroCaribe started, the then Government was asked by the then Opposition Leader, who was not me, he was an Economist, "why do you not get involved in PetroCaribe?" And that Government said there was nothing to PetroCaribe, all that is, is a financing programme that delays paying current market prices for a petroleum product and has the potential to run countries into debt problems. We are not going to go that route. We are going to meet our obligations.

Sir, that was the policy of the previous Government. We are not going into PetroCaribe, because it will run countries into financial problems. It is merely a financing mechanism and Barbados can pay its own way.

Mr. Chairman, who would have believed that having left office, they would have left a debt for financing the purchase of petroleum products in Barbados for a successor Government to inherit? Ad now, all of a sudden, you are hearing that we should get involved in PetroCaribe and consider subsidisation.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, that is the argument of a Government that was not going into the PetroCaribe arrangements but we should now consider new forms of financing, float a bond, or subsidise. Sir, that is why I am saying to you that it is difficult for me to respond to these things, because when I hear them, it takes time for me to internalise them and understand them.

I must congratulate the Opposition for its flip-flop, somersaults and its intellectual dishonesty outside of this Chamber in relation to the question of the pricing of petroleum products in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I am going to say a little bit about the offshore drilling programme in due course. Sir, I am not going to say it yet because, again, that is a very fine example. Sir, when I look at it, we have the financing of petroleum products, then you had Mobil. Sir, every week when we spoke about petroleum products on That Side, they shouted Mobil, so would you have believed that the previous Government paid some people to clean up the Mobil site and it is still in the same condition it was in? Sir, not only did they pay, but they also got ESSO, the successor to Mobil to pay too.

Mr. Chairman, there is a matter before the Law Courts now. Apparently, the former Attorney-General does not know about these things because, after all, it concerns

the Law Courts. I am surprised that the former Attorney-General does not know that a matter of such significance is before the Law Courts and that the Barbados Government is going to have to find a sum of money to settle because of the monumental incompetence of the previous Administration. Sir, it is these kinds of things that shock me.

I do not want to go into National Terminals yet. I am not going to go into the Mobil Refinery Remediation and Clean-up yet. I am not going to go into the Offshore drilling programme yet. I am going to confine myself to the Public Persuasion Programme and I am going to confine myself to the expenditure of the \$0.5 million on that programme, and I reiterate that this is a new programme designed and developed by the new Government to deal with issues of energy conservation in Barbados and also the use of renewable energy sources.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, if I ever had any doubt as to the extent to which the Prime Minister went on the back foot having come with a Press Conference in April to increase prices across the board, then to hold a press conference six weeks later in a policy somersault that doubt has completely evaporated today because he spoke like a gentleman and the Honourable Member, who is full of guilt in his bosom in relation to actions taken, which, when reflected upon should never have been taken in the first place.

Mr. Chairman, let me say that it is clear to me, having listened to him just now, that this Government has finally accepted that the Government in a small country such as ours must, in fact, protect the most vulnerable and cannot leave them open to market forces. I hope that recognition will lead to a reconsideration of the determination that you simply just pass gas and fuel increases on a monthly basis to the consumer at the petrol stations, recognising that because VAT is an ad volorem tax, that is 15 per cent of whatever you pay, that Government will stand to benefit, as it has already benefitted since the increases in April from increased taxes without there being any corresponding reduction in the Excise Tax.

Mr. Chairman, after all that has been said, the Prime Minister failed to tell this Parliament that there was a stated policy that whenever fuel prices increase, because of the increased take in Value Added Tax, we would correspondingly reduce the Excise Tax to ensure there was no net increase in taxes taken by the Government of Barbados.

Sir, we are on a fast return to the days of the early 1990s, a situation with which the Honourable Member for St. John is well familiar, when the taxes on both gasoline and diesel were so horrendous, such that we were able to reduce them. Sir, the price of diesel in Barbados last year was cheaper than what it was in 1994, largely as a result of a reduction in taxes.

Mr. Chairman, I say to you that I am not going to engage at the political level, because I recognise that it is the week of Crop Over and the Prime Minister might want to add a little levity to the debate in Parliament because of that but I will stay focussed on what our position is.

We believe that any policy that seeks to increase the price of diesel such, that the productive sector carries the full cost of the prices of diesel is on that reverses, not just the policy of the last Barbados Labour Party Government, but the policy of the previous Democratic Labour Party Government of which he was a member.

Sir, the truth is that we know it takes diesel to bake bread, it takes diesel to pump water and, on the Prime Minister's own admission, the largest usage of electricity in this country is, in fact, the Barbados Water Authority. It is, therefore, only a matter of time before that institution's financial circumstances will have to be reviewed largely because of the increase in the energy cost they are facing, because of the 77 per cent increase in diesel.

Mr. Chairman, we all know that to come back then, six weeks later and to carve out what you now call a subsidy, which is to create a special circumstance that you cannot enforce properly, that minibus men and public service vehicle operators all across Barbados are crying out about because they are losing one hour to two hours in order to refill at the Transport Board depots, congestion in traffic and recognising that in many instances a number of

2.50 p.m.

them are being reported as being off route when going to fill up. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East may well be aware of some of these issues.

Sir, I have not got into the issue of black-market trading.

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

His Honour K. St.C. BEST: On a point of order. Sir, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. I am not aware of any person being off route going to fill up their vehicles with petrol.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I would not expect the Honourable Member for St. Michael East to support the public service vehicles operators, because he is known for breaking for himself. That is my opinion, so I would not expect him to support them.

Sir, I say to you that we have a situation where the potential for a black market is now there, in circumstances in a country where the rule of Law has always been paramount. Now I trust and hope that the majority of operators will not allow other persons in this country who want to exploit a black market to do so. I really hope so. I am satisfied, having heard the mini bus operators and the ZR Association people, that they will not associate themselves with it, but there are other people who will try to do so.

You have also the invidious situation, where the petroleum dealers of the country have said that effectively one million litres per month have been removed from them, and that many of them now are seriously considering laying off people because they are not getting the margins and the volume of business that they want. They are hopeful that the Government will revise their margins as dealers.

All of this has become necessary, because in carrying up the price of diesel by 77 per cent in one go, you have so placed everybody on the back foot, particularly the productive sectors, that you now have to consider how to carve out and shield a few, but you are still left with the inflationary impact in the construction sector. You are still left with the inflationary impact on freighting. You are still left with the inflationary impact on taxi operators. You are still left with the inflationary impact across the board in the society.

We simply say that while we recognise there would have had to be a pass-through of some of the prices, it is untrue to suggest that the Government has never been a buffer in relation to price increases in this country.

There have been many other occasions, when the Government had allowed the prices to remain at a level recognising that it would bring to book the debt owed to the Barbados National Oil Company because, at the end of the day, even if the Government was going to shield consumers, Central Government would have had to provide that shielding and not the Barbados National Oil Company.

Sir, when the Prime Minister referred to the fact that the former Prime Minister said "leave it until after Elections, it was not that he said: "leave it until after Elections," He said it in here in the Estimates. He said, "Leave it until Parliament can be reconvened." Sir, you cannot get the Supplementary if there is no Parliament. This is how we prey upon the innocent, who do not know

how the system of Government works. To that extent, I take it as innocent banter, and therefore leave it just where it was said.

Suffice to say, it is still our position that in an economy like this, where diesel is at the centre of production, and I am surprised that I am not hearing the voice of the Minister for manufacturing. I am surprised that I am not hearing the Minister of Agriculture more aggressively, because across the entire board, in terms of production in this country, people are feeling the consequences.

Sir, the Government is yet to tell this country or this Parliament, what is the value of the increased VAT take, since prices went up on April 16. It was not stated in the Budget. It cannot be in the Estimates because the increases came after the Estimates.

In spite of the twenty odd million dollars, projected as an increase of Value Added Tax for this year, you now have a situation where you are getting Value Added Tax on top of the increase. Fifteen per cent of \$2.47 must be higher than 15 per cent of \$1.41. The Government owes an interest in transparency and accountability to this Parliament and the people of this country, an indication as to what are the revised Estimates, in terms of value added tax as a result of the energy products.

In addition, in the Budget, the Honourable Member for St. John, the Prime Minister, announced that the flow-through would be coming, such that prices would be adjusted, automatically, without being reviewed by the Cabinet. That is the Government's prerogative.

Quite frankly, we disagree with it, because we believe that the same way a shopkeeper acts as a buffer to a village, when a village is going through difficult times, and can trust goods to the people in the village, the Government must also act as a buffer to the population, and to the extent that has always been our philosophy, I am happy.

It is perhaps true to argue, that cannot be the philosophy of this Government, when they imposed a 200 per cent on rum shops across the island, just in terms of registration fees. Sir, they perhaps feel that they did not act as a buffer to the people of Barbados, but shops should not be able to play their traditional role to support villages when things get hard in a village.

Sir, I say to you that one of the consequences of an automatic flow-through of automatic increases or reductions will be the issue of how you handle the Value Added Tax and the Excise Tax. I simply say, can the Prime Minister tell this country and this Parliament, whether he has, in fact, given instruction for the reduction in Excise Tax, such that there is no increased tax take in the increases

of energy products that he announced in April and subsequent to that?

It is a simple question. We can talk about Mobil. We can talk about matters that are before the court. We can talk about political conjecture, but at the end of the day, when he and I leave in here, the only thing people are interested in, are they paying more money? Are they paying more because the Government has not reduced the taxes?

You are collecting an extra 7 cents in Value Added Tax from the first price increase of gasoline. You are collecting an extra 15 cents per litre in Value Added Tax on diesel. Will there be a corresponding reduction in the Excise Tax, to stop the Government from causing people to pay that additional price per litre that is now going, not to give you what you got last year in taxation, but to increase the Government's tax take beyond the \$120 million you are projecting it will increase this year in this economy?

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, the reality is, that really is the only issue. We can get involved in the political banter. A simple question, will the Government reduce the Excise Tax, to accommodate for the increased tax take in Value Added Tax, that they are now receiving in gasoline and on diesel?

Sir, in relation to PetroCaribe, this Barbados Labour Party still believes, that the PetroCaribe is not worthy of signature, and we have not changed our position. The fact that an Honourable Member in here may have a different view, is no different from the fact that the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central has a different view, and is seemed to be arguing with the Honourable Member for St. James Central on whether you should not seek to protect jobs, rather than lower the tariffs in the market to allow goods to come in cheaper. It is a valid and legitimate debate, but there is a disparity in position within the Government's Benches on it.

Equally, there is an Honourable Member on This Side who may believe that PetroCaribe is good. We do not, and we say so, because in terms of the structure and the nature of that financing arrangement, it is not one that allows us the flexibility to be able to provide the buffering. We do not believe in long-term debt for a product that is used every day. We feel that you may have, however, to buffer the rate of increase.

Like with every other biological entity, the rate of increase determines its capacity to withstand the consequence of that increase. That is our simple premise.

Sir, if you would have shielded people by \$80 million last year, you might find the need to shield people to allow people to catch themselves, or you may cap it at \$40 million. The point is, you have to buffer that rate of increase.

3.00 p.m.

Does the Barbados Government have the fiscal space to do so? In other words, can it accommodate a little more debt? Yes. It can. Sir, for the purposes of ensuring that jobs are not lost, for the purposes of ensuring that the cost of living remains job number one, two and three, as promised by the Prime Minister.

Sir, what we have seen now is that instead of being able to fight off the 7.9 per cent projected inflation for this year, the Prime Minister, on his own admission, in his Budget Speech, predicts increased unemployment and increased inflation.

Sir, beyond that, we run the risk of seeing for the first time, again in recent history, double digit inflation. Mr. Chairman, we also run the risk - this is worse and this is where stagflation comes in - of seeing economic growth, where we are lucky if we are going to get 1 per cent.

Mr. Chairman, it is not that we want to be a prophet of gloom and doom, but we cannot have the conditions that we have, where prices from the outside are putting pressure on us and the next thing we do, Sir, is extract more than \$180 million in taxation from this economy, within a six-to-nine-month period. Sir, that is our simple position.

Therefore, we urge the Government with all sincerity to reduce the Excise Tax so that you continue to take what you were receiving, but not increase taxes because the person paying those increased taxes on diesel and gasoline, is the average consumer in this country, and the average employer in this country. Sir, this will have a negative impact, not only on what else they can buy, it will have a negative impact on the rate of price increases, but it will also have a negative impact ultimately on jobs.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member's time has expired. Please wrap up.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you, Sir.

In the same way that you could have reversed yourself from the initial price increase six weeks later, we say that it is better to do the right thing, if it is going to avert suffering, rather than to continue to hold a position for the sake of holding it.

Thank you, Sir.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on the Resolution that is seeking money for public persuasion. I find it very difficult to believe that you can be persuading the public to conserve and at the same time, encourage them to spend money on a product that has to be imported in the country. If I have to err, I would like to do so on the side of the Government, and ignore the advice of the Opposition, for if I were to go along with the side of the Opposition, I would be speaking against this Bill.

Sir, it is clear that what was said just now, could not be in agreement with what we are discussing here today, because we are asking the public to conserve. What the Opposition is doing is to ask the Government of the day to ignore what is happening in the world, and allow people to go out there and continue to purchase fuel and blow it through their muffler pipes. I am saying, Sir, that in this day and age, when one looks at what is occurring in the world, we cannot accept that as an argument.

Sir, this is the best thing that was said, and I quote:

"We do not believe in long term debt for current consumption."

Sir, I noted that and those words came from the mouth of the Leader of the Opposition. Anyone with the slightest knowledge of anything dealing with accounting, would have to recognise that what the Government was doing at the terminal companies, was building up a long-term debt for a consumable good. I am saying, Sir, that consumable goods was called "fuel".

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, because the nature of the debt chosen to be incurred was a matter for the Government to decide. You do not have to raise long-term paper to deal with the subsidy.

This Government has chosen to put a charge of 4 cents on each litre of gas and diesel to recover that debt, but you have options ranging from the types of short-term paper or long-term paper. Our view is that it should be short-term and that is all, but it is not automatically long-term debt.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, I am saying that anybody would know that the Barbados National Oil Company Limited (BNOCL) would have to treat this as a long-term debt, based on the policy that we heard in here from the Other Side. They said that they were prepared to carry on charging the same cost and accumulating the losses for that company. It would have to

be that the BNOCL would have to hold it as a debt for the Government of Barbados. It is a private company.

Sir, I am saying that we could not do that and the Prime Minister was right, because all we did, we came here and said that we were against PetroCaribe, and then we took the same policy as PetroCaribe and handed it to BNOCL, because it is the same type of behaviour.

In other words, we said we were protecting one group, but passed it to another group. I am saying, Sir, that is a consumable good and it should not be treated in that way. We are telling the consumers of Barbados that they need to protect the outside market but when it comes to local goods, they should complain.

I am saying, Sir, if there is any cost that the consumers of Barbados should bear, is the local cost and ignore the foreign cost. If we are going to subsidise, we should subsidise the local company and not a foreign company.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: You would not understand this. This is a bit too high for you.

Sir, the next point I want to make is that we are hearing in here that inflation is 7.9 per cent and people are giving the impression that this 7.9 per cent is only for Barbados. I am saying that when one looks at how the economy of Barbados is structured, one would see that we are a consuming economy. If we are a consuming economy, then it means that the consumers of Barbados will have to pay the inflation. The Government cannot subsidise imported inflation. Government needs to use imported inflation to ensure that it develops its local manufacturing and agricultural products to give them the advantage.

Therefore, if we as a Government tend to ignore the important inflation, what we are doing we are actually destroying local manufacturing. What we need to do is to ensure that we keep that gap between the imported goods and local goods, and give the local goods the advantage. I am hearing the Opposition complain about that, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, over the years, they have been so structured that they believe that anything imported is good and anything that is made local is bad. This is why they cannot understand that there is a change of Government and a change of policy.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St. E. KELLMAN: I have no problem with the Excise Tax and I will say it publicly,

because it is an imported good. I have consistently made the point in this House that we need to punish consumption as it relates to foreign goods and that we need to use that, and let me say this. Barbados is in a very good position to restructure its economy and ensure that it has an opportunity to rekindle the local manufacturing industry and the agricultural industries. If you do not understand the point, you would never understand it. We have an opportunity now to give our manufacturers and our agriculturalists an opportunity to survive once more.

People seem not to understand that because of what is happening in the world, we need to look at the positive side of it and deal with it, and that is exactly what this Government will do. We will ensure that any advantage is given to our local manufacturers and our local agriculturists to ensure that they are now able to get into the market.

If people do not understand this, they need to understand what is happening with the Guyana's economy, because that is the best example of an economy in the Caribbean. Sir, it is structured on manufacturing and agriculture, and has seen inflation increasing and has taken advantage of it, Sir.

Those of us who get here and cry down the Guyanese, I want to warn you that the price of rice on the world market has doubled or tripled.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I understand what is happening with the economy of Guyana. Those of us who believe that there is a negative, I want you to know that the inflows from rice alone will triple. Sir, if rice alone will triple, think about the other products that they are producing.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, I listened with interest to the President of Guyana making the point that previously 94 per cent of Guyana's revenue was used to pay its debt. Now it is down to 4 per cent. Sir, we seem not to understand what is happening. That is why I will continue to make the point that Barbados, as a country, cannot continue to export jobs, which is exactly what we have done for the last 14 years. We introduced technology and exported jobs. We went overseas and borrowed bad loans and exported jobs.

Sir, if we were going to be fiscally prudent, that policy had to stop. Sir, it did stop on January 15, 2008.

Sir, the present Opposition would not be able to understand these policies, because they are still caught up in those policies that were not enlightening and did not take

the country forward. Mr. Chairman, even though you had a country that had growth for 14 years, you could not see it because the growth was structured more for the import market where people were prepared to send into us instead of us exporting to them. I am saying, Sir, that the reverse has to occur.

Sir, people have to understand that when one looks at the structure of our economy, we cannot, as asked by the Opposition, subsidise the cost of foreign living, but that what we need to do is to subsidise the cost of local living. That is why I have always said in this Parliament that you cannot practise globalisation until you have mastered localisation.

Mr. Chairman, I know that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew would never understand that statement even though he should. He is a very good man.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: That is why you could get Sweet and Dandy Mauby at \$11.50, the cheapest in Barbados or anywhere in the world.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Is the Honourable Member saying that Sweet and Dandy Mauby, Mount Gay rum or Banks beer are not local products?

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I have just made this point in the House that the Opposition does not understand local products. The Honourable Member does not even understand that Banks beer, Mount Gay rum, ESA Fields rum or Sweet and Dandy Mauby are all local products. I cannot believe, Sir, that a man who has been in this House longer than I, does not understand these things.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Sir, if I were talking caviar and not sea-cat or barbecued pigtail, he would understand. The Honourable Member would understand spare ribs and things like that. I cannot even say shrimp, because shrimp is from the Caribbean, so that is local.

Mr. Chairman, when one looks at what is occurring within the world, we cannot do anything about inflation. Sir, it would be foolish for any Government, based on what is happening in the world today, to try to swim against the tide. That is exactly what is being requested by the Opposition. They are suggesting that we should go and swim against the tide and drown ourselves. We are not

going to do that. We are going to swim with the tide and take what comes with the tide and support the local people at the expense of the foreign people. This Government will change the policy that was left for it that was in place for the last 14 years.

Sir, Barbadians have to understand that there is a cost for importing goods and there is nothing the Government can do about it. What we would do is to ensure that we empower our manufacturers and our agriculturalists to ensure that we get cassava. Mr. Chairman, it is very difficult to find cassava to eat in Barbados now. Bajans are eating real cassava, yams, sweet potatoes, proper food, healthy food.

Mr. Chairman, a lot of people on the Other Side would tell you that English potatoes are good but they do not tell you about the health risk when you use them. Sir, This Side will promote cassava, yams, sweet potatoes and eddoes, local chicken, sea cat and things like that.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I would hate to believe that all of those doctors who are on the call-in programmes telling you the negatives about English potatoes and that they are more dangerous to eat...

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member needs to speak to Dr. Doughlin and then come back to me.

Mr. Chairman, I have said already that the biggest social transformation issue after education is transportation. We do not need the Other Side to lecture us on the importance of transportation to the productive sector of Barbados. Mr. Chairman, we need to ensure that we have time enough to study it to come up with some solution to solve it.

Sir, the people of Barbados know that we will not put anything that would interfere with any social cost to the people of Barbados. Sir, that is why we understood the impact of transportation on the lives of Barbadians and that is why we ensured as a first step, that we stop school children from paying bus fares. That is because we understand the social cost on poor people.

Mr. Chairman, if we believe that the increases on the PSVs have an impact, we will come with something to correct that too. Mr. Chairman, we would not be rushed into it because anybody in Barbados would have known that there was a debt accumulated by everybody. If the previous Government had instituted the cost at the time, we would not be in here discussing it now.

Sir, if the debt is there, everybody has to pay that debt. Sir, when we are satisfied that it is done on a fair basis, then we would come back and ensure the necessary correction.

Sir, it was not only accumulated by people driving cars. It was accumulated on the behalf of the PSVs and the taxi men. They understand that. If they have an expectation, we will deal with that expectation. Mr. Chairman, the time is right for us to look at it and we will look at it.

I thank you.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a contribution to this Resolution that seeks to carry out the public education campaign in respect of where we are in today's world.

Sir, the previous Government, which is now the Opposition, sat for 14 years. Sir, in the period of that 14 years one has to say, judging from the comments made by the Leader of the Opposition, that it does not seem that they took stock of what was happening to try to chart a path for Barbados that they would be able to survive in these troubled times.

Sir, we have seen a situation where, under the stewardship of the Barbados Labour Party the productive sectors in this country were compromised in every way to the point where it is the responsibility of this Government to try to put measures in place to revitalize them.

Mr. Chairman, what the previous Government did not clearly understand is the importance of the individual in economic development and in fuelling economic success. Sir, that is why this campaign which is going to be carried out is so important.

Sir, sometimes we take for granted that the ordinary man on the street understands what is happening. Sir, do not be fooled. We have a situation out there where the ordinary man on the street is continually bombarded by things that suggest to him that everything is okay.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, we have to say that we are disappointed that, at this point in time, when we need to bring forth the consumers of this country, where there is the need to conserve energy and to move in a new direction, we are hearing comments coming from an irresponsible Opposition, that would seek to suggest the Government of the day is not managing this economy with

a sense of responsibility, as is demonstrated in this particular Resolution.

Mr. Chairman, we must understand that we need to have a new approach to the way we do things in this country. We cannot continue to behave as though the price of oil is not rising. We cannot continue to behave as though it is rising to record levels and that it would not have an impact on our lifestyle.

Sir, if you listened to the Prime Minister in his presentation, in terms of the issues or the things that it would seek to deal with, in respect of the campaign that is being done, one of the things the Prime Minister mentioned was the area of car-pooling.

Mr. Chairman, we know there is already a tendency on the part of Barbadians not to work well with each other. Therefore, if we could bring a programme that seeks to change certain practices within Barbados that would facilitate the better use of energy in households, what would be wrong with that?

Mr. Chairman, a public education policy must take root. Therefore, instead of repeating to the Prime Minister what the Opposition has said, I would want to encourage him. Sir, I would also want to encourage the Prime Minister to make sure that public education takes root in the communities, because we have to understand that if we could influence community practices, we would then be able to get persons to be more responsible in the manner in which we utilise energy.

Mr. Chairman, we also have to recognise that what has happened in the past is that Barbados's future, in a sense, is being mortgaged. Sir, we had and still have a situation today where the Opposition tells us that it is okay, that we need to be able to finance the subsidies that go out in terms of energy and that we need to cushion it.

Sir, as was already stated, this Government is not saying we are not prepared to cushion the impact to the extent that we could. As a matter of fact, in the recent Budgetary Proposals, the Government clearly shows that it intends to cushion the impact of what is happening in the world today, which would impact on the poor and the disadvantaged in the society. Sir, this, of course, is a different approach that was taken by the previous Government. Instead, we are trying to ensure that we do not mortgage this country's future.

We are trying to get Barbadians to indulge in certain behaviours which would assist Government, as far as ensuring that we do not go overboard, in terms of our consumption of energy that is required at this point in time. Furthermore, there could be spin-offs in terms of the campaign.

Sir, one of the disappointing features of the last Administration was in the area of alternative energy.

Sir, while these things were happening around the world, and while other countries had seen it as being important to encourage the development of alternative energies, on the other hand, we in Barbados seemed to have been putting our heads in the sand and saying that things would be okay, that we could continue to go on in the same way that we were going all the time.

Mr. Chairman, at least this public education campaign could cause Barbadians to recognise the importance of researching alternative energy. Therefore, if we could do that, it would at least help to reduce the energy bill. Further, in that regard, we could also get community involvement in those efforts.

Mr. Chairman, one of the sad things about Barbados is that we seem to think that we cannot do things in relation to energy generation. Sir, I want to point out that there are Barbadians who are trying in their own ways to reduce the consumption of energy. There are Barbadians who are trying novel ways of producing their own energy. Sir, I believe this public education campaign that is going to be conducted, would help to sensitise Barbadians to the importance of doing these things.

Mr. Chairman, I do not understand why the Opposition should have any problem with the current Resolution. Sir, I would want to embrace it. I would also want to give encouragement to the Prime Minister to make sure that it goes into place, because it is important and necessary. I also want to encourage the Prime Minister to ensure that ordinary communities in Barbados are able to take advantage of these particular initiatives that would be conducted in the programme.

Mr. Chairman, I support this Bill and I want to thank you.

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

Dr. the Hon. E. R. BYER-SUCKOO: Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this Supplementary because, as has been said on the Floor of this Honourable House, one has to speak from one's conscience. Therefore, I think that in so doing, I must speak to this.

Sir, as Minister in the Ministry of the Environment, my Ministry will endorse this programme whole-heartedly, because this is the kind of programme that we would want to see implemented. Sir, the fact that we have been "beaten to the gun" on this one is okay. The fact is that we intend to support it wholeheartedly.

Sir, this programme has all the obvious benefits for the country. The financial benefits are there for all to see, with regard to reducing our energy bill. There are obvious environmental impacts as well. As we all know, when fossil fuels are burned, that allows more carbon dioxide, which is a green house gas, into the atmosphere. This only adds to the global effect and to the climate change phenomenon that we are hearing so much about. It has the whole world alarmed, because it is a real phenomenon and, therefore, we need to do everything that we can, to reduce the impact of climate change and global warming.

Mr. Chairman, we know and we are told repeatedly that the Small States, such as Barbados, are responsible for only about 1 per cent of these gases being released into the atmosphere, because of the fact that it is the bigger countries, the more industrialised countries, that are using these fossil fuels heavily. That says it is still important for every one of us to play our part, because at the end of the day, whatever happens anywhere on the globe is going to affect all of us. Sir, we are just one global community and, therefore, we need to do our part to reduce these green house gases.

Mr. Chairman, Barbados has been a leader in the Caribbean and in the world. Indeed, when we go to international conferences and talk about the sustainable development of Small Island Developing States, everybody refers to the Barbados Plan of Action, which came out of the 1994 Conference that was held here at Sherbourne. Therefore, Barbados is recognised, not just in the title of that Plan of Action, but Barbados is recognised and is sought out internationally for our views on environmental issues, on global warming and climate change, and on what we are doing.

Sir, even though we are a Small Island Developing State, and we are not contributing much of the green house gases, because of the fact that we are not industrialised, people still look to Barbados to see what we are doing and how we are approaching the problem. Therefore, as a leader that we have aspired to be as a nation, it is not enough for us to just sit back and do nothing. Sir, there is a saying, if you are not part of the solution, then you are part of the problem. Therefore, we have to do whatever is necessary to be a part of that solution.

Mr. Chairman, what concerns me is that though this information is there, and now added to that we have the rising cost of fuel, not enough Barbadians appear to have altered their lifestyles significantly, and I think that is why this particular Public Persuasion Programme is timely. It is also important because, as a Government, we need to send that clear message.

3.30 p.m.

We are the leaders and we need to send that clear message to the people of Barbados that they need to take stock of what they are doing and see how it is that their actions are contributing, not only to their spending and their budget, but how it is contributing to our society and our environment. We need, as a Government, to set that standard. We need to set the pace. That is our role.

I do not see that any of the measures we are going to be putting forward to the people of Barbados will in any way reduce the quality of their lifestyle. In fact, I think there are many advantages that can be gained because, certainly, we will be encouraging people through this programme to use energy wisely.

We will also be encouraging people to walk more and take shorter trips. Sir, when you get home in the evening, you realise there is no bread and you take a ride down to the shop, just two minutes away, just to get a loaf of bread, but you do that repeatedly and it adds up. Sir, that is an opportunity to walk to get some exercise, to get some fresh air, to get to meet your neighbours, things that we probably do not do enough of today and so, I think that is an obvious benefit.

Mr. Chairman, car pooling is something that we need also to do some more of. There was a time when more families travelled in one car, and the time in the car was family time. In an era where you do not have enough family time, when the family got together in the car on evenings and after work, that was extra family time but now everybody is driving their car, everybody is going in their own direction and that bit of family time is lost as well, so we have this opportunity now when we talk about car pooling or where neighbours get together and car pool.

We have situations where you have three children in three houses, living side by side, all going to one school and driving three separate cars to get there. Sir, that kind of thing does not benefit Barbados and it does not benefit our environment but if now we encourage people to use opportunities like that to car pool, our communities are the better for it.

Mr. Chairman, we have spoken earlier in a previous debate to the need for community spirit and reviving the community spirit. Sir, again there are benefits that are not seen initially in this programme, but they are there and I just wanted to outline them to this House.

Mr. Chairman, I have heard and I think it unconscionable that the Opposition should even bring to this House that the role of Government is to protect the most vulnerable when we showed clearly in the Budget debate that is exactly what our Budget had done. It is to protect the most vulnerable. We saw it with the welfare programme and the bus fares that were removed for

children, protecting the most vulnerable. That is what it is about.

Mr. Chairman, we heard that Government should attempt to buffer and, indeed, Government has been attempting to buffer inasmuch as it can, but Government has other vital roles at this time that we are going through. Government has important roles and one is to assist Barbadians by programmes such as this.

Sir, another important role that Government has and we spoke to it also in the Budget, and I just want to remind Honourable Members of this House About that, and it is that Government is perhaps one of the biggest users of fossil fuels and electricity in this country and so, as a Government, we are talking about a public persuasion programme, about reminding citizens on how they can improve on their electricity and about how they can reduce their use of electricity.

We as a Government, need also to lead by example in our various offices across this country and audits are being done, certainly in the Ministry of the Environment an audit is ongoing to see where energy has been wasted, where lights are being left on all night, where lights are being turned on when people are not in the room, where air-conditioning is not being used effectively, where people find the need to open windows even while the air-conditioning is on, where seals on doors are not effective and where air-conditioning is leaking. Sir, things like that.

Those kinds of audits are ongoing in some Ministries and will be completed in other Ministries because, again, we need to show the country that we are leading, that these things do contribute to our energy bill and so, we need to do our part in reducing our dependance on fossil fuels. Sir, that is what we want to do at this time to reduce our dependance on fossil fuel.

Mr. Chairman, to that end Government is also looking at alternative energy and Government is committed to outfitting some of their properties with alternative energy. We have the technology for using our solar power for heating water and that is being used in many of our buildings, but it has been said already this evening that is only a scratch on the surface, but the solar technology can be used for so much more.

Sir, certainly the Ministry of the Environment and other Government Departments are looking at photovoltaic for cooling, for generating electricity, for running appliances, using that kind of technology. We are looking at integrating photo voltaic into the roofs of some of our facilities that are existing now and also, in the planning of some of our new facilities, it is being investigated because we see the need to reduce our reliance on fossil fuel.

Mr. Chairman, you would have heard a lot about our energy programme, which is to commence at Vauxcluse, which again, this is a commendable effort. Sir, it is not to talk about these things. We do not want to hear what people have been talking about for the last few years because the time to talk is over. It is time to get up and do the things that are going to redound to the benefit of Barbadians and, Sir, that is what we are about.

Mr. Chairman, through this programme we are going to be encouraging citizens to do in their homes and in their small offices what Government is going to lead by example, in doing in our building. We are going to encourage them to turn lights off, to turn off appliances that are not being used, to unplug appliances that are not being used, to reduce the wastage. That is what we need to do and, as I have said, to be able to car pool more and to be able to walk more. Sir, things like that is what we need to do as a people to get people cognisant, to get people aware and thinking of where it is they are wasting electricity and what it is they can do to make it better.

Mr. Chairman, if any of this is to work, I want to go on record as saying that we have to get the young people involved. It cannot just be something that parents, teachers and Government leaders are doing, but we have to get the young people involved. The young people need to understand why we are doing this. They need to understand the importance of it and the young people need to be given ownership in it. In the classroom the children need to be made responsible for turning off the lights.

In our house, the technique that has worked in many areas is to appoint a young child as the energy police and that person is responsible for going through the home and making sure that lights are off when nobody is in.

Sir, I can tell you that if you have a young child given a responsibility like that, they take it seriously, sometimes to the point of nagging you, but if you give that responsibility to a young child, you will see how effective it would be, especially if a teacher gets involved and tells that child to go home and make sure every light is off tonight. If you are not careful, the child will turn the lights off in the middle of reading the book, but we need to get our young children involved. We need to get the buy-in of our young people.

Mr. Chairman, we have spoken about the buy-in of our corporate citizens and they also need to follow what Government is attempting to do. We know some of them are doing this already. I think if this is to be effective across Barbados, we have to get the buy-in of our young people. We have to remind our young people that what we are doing here is not only for this generation. It is for their generation. It is for creating an environment in which they can live, it is for cleaning up our atmosphere. It is for

helping to reduce global warming and climate. It is not just for us, but for our children and our children's children.

Mr. Chairman, that being said, again I would like to endorse this public persuasion campaign and give it my full support. Sir, I thank you.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I am a bit perplexed as to the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

3.40 p.m.

I want to thank those Honourable Members on This Side who spoke, because I think they focussed on what the Energy Awareness Programme is all about, which is to change people's perspectives, and to assist in pursuing the renewable sources of energy, but also pursuing energy conservation.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East seemed to be quite agitated in her second presentation. Sir, I am giving no undertakings to anybody, least of all the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Sir, the previous Government introduced a VAT in this country that was supposed to be revenue neutral. If the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East wants to do her Budget reply, I can do my wind-up too. It was supposed to be revenue neutral. It raised over \$400 million more over the two years, and I am supposed to give an undertaking, to the benefit of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, about the VAT on energy products. Sir, I know what it is like to be in that position, in which you think that if you do not speak people will forget that you exist.

I assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East that we know that she is alive and well. I went through all of those pangs of withdrawal from public office and the need to satisfy your Members that you are on the Prime Minister and you are there battling and fighting. Sir, nobody is listening to that. I can assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is saying that she wants to know why people are not getting up and keeping noise about these issues. It is because the people of Barbados are not only interested in what they carry home or have in their pockets, sensible people are also interested in whether they have a future, and whether they have a Government that is going to protect that. That is why Barbadians will make sacrifices for things that they feel are important.

Sir, one of the reasons this country is so respected internationally, and we became respected before the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East came to office, or was even associated with politics, was because this small country set a precedent in relation to the international institutions and their orthodoxy on adjustment.

We have many options available to us to deal with the impact of the Value Added Tax. The Reversed Tax Credit is one of them. I do not have any qualms in pursuing policies that help the most vulnerable. I am glad that the Honourable Member started by saying, "The new Government has now accepted that it must protect the most vulnerable." That is a major concession for her to make.

I know what made the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East say it. It is because there is an Honourable Member on her Side, who already said that about two weeks ago, that this Government was more compassionate to the poor in this country, than the Party that he supports. Therefore, I am glad now that we have two persons, including the Leader of the Opposition, who accept that this Government must protect the most vulnerable in our society.

Sir, I understand some of the other points. I have made a note of them, the petroleum dealers.

I find the Barbados Water Authority point interesting. If it was only the Value Added Tax that would have affected the vulnerability of the Barbados Water Authority, then the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East could make that point. Sir, the Barbados Water Authority has been beset with a level of corruption and theft unknown of in the history of Barbadian statutory corporations and institutions.

Sir, when the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East gets up to speak - nothing was done by the previous Government about it - they know it is so. They know what went on at the Barbados Water Authority and yet nothing has been done, but six months later the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East forgets that history of theft and corruption that has been swept under the carpet for the past 10 years, and now tells me that the biggest threat to the Barbados Water Authority is not the illegalities that went on there, but the Value Added Tax, or diesel. That is now the biggest threat to the Barbados Water Authority.

Sir, I am saying there are many threats to the Barbados Water Authority, the most significant of which is one that you turned a blind eye to, as Honourable Attorney-General of this country, when you knew there were infelicities taking place there, and there were people who should have paid for those infelicities. Simple as that. But

the Honourable Member said that she does not know. She must be the only person in Barbados who does not know about it, but I do, and we are determined to ensure that matter is dealt with.

Sir, it is not the Value Added Tax that affects the Barbados Water Authority. Let us go a step further to the final point that I want to make, which relates to the statement about, we do not believe in long-term debt for recurrent obligations.

What is a Bond, Sir? I do not pretend to be what I am not. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said that Government should float a bond to finance the operations of the Barbados National Oil Company, or the debt that it is carrying, so, what is a bond? She did not say to get an overdraft facility, which is a short-term obligation.

The Honourable Member does not understand what signal she is sending. I daresay that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East does not understand what she is recommending. You can get a 12-month bond, pay the financing cost on a 12-month bond, obviously you will have to pay a higher interest rate on a 12-month bond, so what benefit would that be to the Government of Barbados?

Sir, the Opposition has no advice to give this Government, relative to dealing with the challenges of increases of oil prices, and we are not going to accept hurriedly put together sweet-sounding intellectualising nonsense. We do not believe in long-term debt for recurrent obligation.

Why should we float a bond for people to pay for current consumption of petroleum in this country, so that somebody who jumps into their car at 6:00 O'clock in the evening says that they are going down the road to buy bread and come back, should be subsidised and future generations of Barbadians should pay the cost of that? That is where we really are in relation to energy.

We have a systematic programme that includes energy awareness, seeking alternative energy sources, seeking to get those alternative energy sources producing electricity that can go into the national grid. We did not always have a Fair Trading Commission, and there was a slight amendment to the Light and Power Act that would have been necessary to achieve that before.

The Fair Trading Commission was created, and it has therefore introduced regulatory conditions which previously would not have obtained. In other words, it has made it more difficult and also more costly to get that back into the national grid. It includes a realistic passing on both

the petroleum price increases, and where there are reductions, to pass on the reductions immediately.

3.50 p.m.

Sir, if we were to seriously carry out an analysis of energy prices, we would see that there were also times that the price had fallen, when the previous Administration did not pass on the benefit of that price reduction to the public. We are saying it is not up to us. If the price goes down, it is passed on automatically. If the price goes up, it is passed on faster, so that people could make adjustments to their incomes accordingly. Sir, that is all the Government's policy is. It is very straightforward. It is what obtains in other countries.

I want to say this, Mr. Chairman, I am glad to have the honour to lead a country in which people make sensible decisions and are well-informed. There are countries in the Caribbean, where they cannot touch petroleum prices. They cannot do anything with them because of the social unrest that has been created. Therefore, they cannot get their pre-school educational programmes going, because the money is being used to finance the consumption of petroleum products. They cannot support university education because every cent in their Budget is going towards supporting price adjustments in fuel prices.

I think that the people of Barbados have made sensible choices, made sensible choices, and down through the years, and from time immemorial, made sensible choices.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Choices that focus on an improvement in the quality of life, and the proportionate bearing of sacrifice in this country. Despite all the doom and gloom, I have not seen a single financial analysis, either of the last Budget or of Government's petroleum pricing policy, that has been critical of this Administration's policy in that regard.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Therefore, there is a consensus on that. Those are the same sources that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East and her cronies held up on the platforms as reputable. Standard and Poor's were the leading experts on the Barbados economy. I do not know what changed since January 16, 2008. Every international institution that praised the previous Government was held as the people you should listen to, but all of a sudden, you are not to listen to their advice anymore. Their support of the policies of this Government, is to be condemned.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I said your cronies.

I could give you a list.

Sorry, Mr. Chairman, Sir.

Mr. Chairman, the point is that those institutions are the same institutions that are saying that those subsidies are not sustainable. Sir, no less a person than the former General Manager of Barbados Terminals Company Limited, a lady who ran as a candidate against me for the Barbados Labour Party twice. A lady, Sir, that spent her entire political career supporting the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, came out and said, basically, that it would have been madness for the Government to keep those subsidies in place and that the Democratic Labour Party did the right thing.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, if people want to jump on a bandwagon on short-term political posturing, as I said, I know what it is like to have had that job before and I know the tendency, Sir, as Shakespeare said - and I do not mean this in a pejorative way - I should say for Leaders of the Opposition to rush in where angels fear to tread.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, that is what happens in debates like this.

Sir, with those few words, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the motion of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Supplementary Resolution in Committee of Supply, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, seconded by Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, the Resolution was read a first time and second time, and passed.

ORDER NO. 5 – THE FINAL APPROPRIATION
(2007-2008) BILL, 2008

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Final Appropriation Bill is before the House. These matters are not usually controversial because Members would have debated both in the Estimates as well as in the period between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2008, the Supplementary provisions.

The Constitution requires that in respect of all of the Supplementary expenditure for any given year, be totalled up and before the end of the financial year, the House passes a Final Appropriation Bill, containing any such sums which have not yet been included in any Appropriation Bill.

This Appropriation Bill is before the House for consideration, therefore, I move the passing of the Final Appropriation (2007-2008) Bill.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

4.00 p.m.

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS (Recommitted)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, allow me to retain the attention of the Honourable House to issue what ostensibly is my first Ministerial Statement and I think one of the utmost importance, not only to Barbados, but equally to the Region as well, given the importance of the subject matter to be addressed.

Mr. Speaker, as you and Honourable Members are aware, on December 16, 2007, right here in Barbados at the Barbados Hilton, the Draft Economic Partnership Agreement, EPA as it is so called, between the States of CARIFORUM, which comprises the CARICOM States plus the Dominican Republic and the European Union, was initialled by the principal negotiators acting on behalf of the parties. This signalled the conclusion of negotiations for a new trade and economic relationship between the Caribbean and the European Union. Of course, these negotiations commenced in April 2004, in Barbados' case, under the previous Barbados Labour Party Administration.

The mandate for these negotiations emanated from the ACPEU Partnership Agreement signed in Cotonou in 2000. The mandate, among other things, called for the negotiation of a World Trade Organisation compatible agreement, the essential feature of which is reciprocity. The Agreement represents a fundamental departure from the previous ACP/EU Conventions, that is, the LOMÉ Conventions - of course, we know there were four such

Conventions, LOMÉ I, II, III and IV - and the Cotonou Agreement as the successor to the LOMÉ Agreements, which were based on the principle of non-reciprocity.

The stated objectives of the European Partnership Agreement are:

1. The reduction and eradication of poverty.
2. Promoting Regional integration, economic cooperation and good governance.
3. The gradual integration of CARIFORUM States into the world economy.
4. Improving the capacity and trade policy in trade-related areas.
5. Supporting conditions for increased investments and private sector initiatives and enhancing supply capacity, competitiveness and economic growth in this Region; and
6. Strengthening relations between the two parties on the basis of solidarity and mutual interest.

Mr. Speaker, the Agreement covers areas of market access for both industrial and agricultural products, services and investment, trade-related issues including intellectual property, competition policy, trade and environment, trade and Law and consumer policy.

Mr. Speaker, there are also provisions on how the Agreement is to be managed, so-called the legal provisions. These are covered under the section entitled "Agreement on Legal and Institutional Issues".

Mr. Speaker, the key elements of the European Partnership Agreement are as follows:

The elimination of all tariffs by CARIFORUM goods with the exception of arms and ammunition entering the European Union.

In other words, our goods going into the European Union would receive quota-free and duty-free access.

The elimination of CARIFORUM States of tariffs amounting to 86.9 per cent of European Union goods traded with the Region over a 25-year period commencing three years after the Agreement comes into force.

Sir, this is critical because in all of the debate we have been having, those persons who have been arguing against the European Partnership Agreement have failed to point out these salient facts, that, in fact, we do not start implementing the Agreement until three years after - in other words, that is a grace period - and then when we start reducing tariffs, we have a 25-year period in which to bring

down our tariffs. Sir, it is not an immediate tariff reduction in the process.

Mr. Speaker, it should be noted that the European Union has agreed to allow all CARIFORUM goods to enter the European market duty-free and quota-free as of January 1, 2008. Sir, this means that an unsigned Agreement, even as it is now, allows us duty-free and quota-free access into the European Union market.

Sir, if we may say so quietly in this House, that represents a breach of the World Trade Organisation Law, because, technically, the waiver needed to give effect to the European Partnership Agreement has not yet been sought, because the Agreement has not been signed and has not been notified in the World Trade Organisation as under Articles 5 and 24 of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT).

4.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, another critical point is the exclusion from the Agreement of products considered to be sensitive. It means, therefore, that agricultural products produced, for example, by colleagues of the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, would be excluded entirely from tariffs liberalisation. These are what we call our sensitive products.

Sir, I will tell you, there is no modern trade agreement in the world that gives as long a transition period of 25 years. We have secured 25 years in this Agreement. The World Trade Organisation gives you 10 years, we have given 25 years. Sir, in spite of the 25 years, we have also secured that our sensitive and special products are not subject to tariffs liberalisation.

Mr. Speaker, we have agreed to the elimination of other duties and charges which are considered discriminatory, and I believe the Honourable Prime Minister has addressed some of these matters in his previous Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals, in relation to the Environmental Levy, but we are going to do that within 10 years. In other words, after 10 years, we would start to address the issue of "Other Duties and Charges".

Mr. Speaker, the removal by the European Union of all subsidies on its agricultural exports to CARIFORUM States. That has not been agreed to before by the European Union in any of its trade agreements, but it has been agreed to in this instance. Sir, these agricultural products are those on which CARIFORUM has agreed to remove duties. Therefore, where we have agreed to remove duties, the European Union has said if it was not a sensitive product excluded from liberalisation, the European Union would

not export subsidised products, therefore, we have even additional coverage in that regard.

Mr. Speaker, both parties have agreed not to grant to any major trading partner better treatment than was granted to each other under EPA, the so-called MFN clause, which is a little controversial, which we can say is a major concession that we have made. Sir, to be honest and fair, it constricts our policy space in terms of negotiations with other countries and under that regime, we have agreed that we will not give MFN treatment beyond what we give to Europe, either those developed countries that control more than 1 per cent or in the case of developing countries, 1.5 per cent of global trade.

Mr. Speaker, regarding trading services, the European Union is to liberalise approximately 90 per cent of its services sectors, while CARIFORUM Less Developed Countries (LDC's) and More Developed Countries (MDC's) are to liberalise 65 and 75 per cent respectively. Both parties have also agreed to undertake negotiations to further liberalise trade in services in the future.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of the temporary movement of natural persons - what we call Mode 4 in the technical language, which is of special concern to Barbados - the European Union has granted access for CARIFORUM professionals in 29 sectors. Sir, never before has that happened. Therefore, our doctors, engineers, Lawyers, architects and cultural industry workers, for the first time, would be able to access markets of the European Union, without having to get work permits. In fact, they would be able to go there for as long as six months. We believe the only two exceptions to that would be Belgium and Italy.

Sir, we would have negotiations with these two countries in the future, to ensure that we bring them on board. Sir, the European Union has also liberalised 11 sectors in temporary entry by CARIFORUM's Independent Professionals and self-employed persons.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of investment, both sides have liberalised most areas of manufacturing, except for the sensitive areas identified. Sir, CARIFORUM has not liberalised public utilities or public services, as we are known to call them the common service for the public good.

Mr. Speaker, the Subject-specific Development Priorities are as follows:

(1) the provision of technical assistance to build human, legal, and institutional capacity in CARIFORUM States, as to facilitate their ability to comply with their commitments under the Agreement.

(2) the provision of support measures aimed at promoting the private sector and enterprise development and enhancing international competitiveness of CARIFORUM firms;

(3) the diversification of CARIFORUM exports of goods and services through the development of new sectors and the facilitation of new investment;

(4) the enhancement of the capacity of CARIFORUM States to develop and comply with internationally recognised standards in sanitary and phytosanitary standards, technical barriers to trade, and environmental standards.

(5) the development of CARIFORUM innovative systems and technical capacity in critical areas;

(6) support for the development of infrastructure in CARIFORUM States, particularly that which is necessary to conduct trade.

Mr. Speaker, I must make the point here that at the European Union/Latin American Caribbean Conference in Peru, a group of Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers, following negotiations with the European Commission, were able to extract from them the agreement that they will support, handling a CARIFORUM Infrastructure Development Fund.

Sir, this would be, not only to assist in building that capacity, but also in supporting our efforts to build infrastructure in telecommunications, highways, airport and ports, as a support mechanism for the implementation of the EPA. Sir, of course, we want to help develop marketing, exports, promotion, research and development.

Mr. Speaker, a number of concerns have been raised by both local and Regional actors regarding some provisions of the EPA. These concerns have mainly centred around the level of liberalisation which the Region has committed to undertake, the capacity of development financing and cooperation with the European Union, which the European Union has committed to assist CARIFORUM States, and the impact which the MFN clause could have on our future trade negotiations with other countries.

In addition to the Ministry's own in-house examination and assessment of the Draft Agreement, allow it to be said in the open that on assuming office, this Government instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business, to retain the services of an independent source, to examine and to assess the EPA. That work was conducted by the Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade and Services, by a team headed by Dr. Keith Nurse, a well-known economist and team expert, along with his other team members. Sir,

the result is that we have received that completed assessment, independent as it is, in June 2008. That assessment says that regardless of whatever is the commentary, the facts point that this Agreement, though it has some Laws - and all negotiated trade agreements have Laws - by and large, is in the best interest of Barbados.

Additionally, on receipt of both assessments - the internal assessment and the external independent assessment - we in the Ministry conducted a public consultation with our stakeholders on June 25, 2008, along with the stakeholders from civil society, private sector, public sector and the wider trade unions, and concluded as thus, that in spite of the fact that the Agreement has some issues that can be identified, by and large, the Agreement would be in the best interest of Barbados and that we should sign that Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, Government is now satisfied that it should sign the EPA and move expeditiously to: (1) give legal effect to the Agreement;

(2) put necessary programmes in place to implement its provisions.

4.20 p.m.

Therefore, in this regard, my Ministry will shortly be sending a paper before Cabinet for the establishment of a People Coordination and Implementation Unit to be housed in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business to coordinate Government wide, across Ministries, the implementation of the provisions of the Agreement, but more importantly, to take advantage of the access, which we have been given to the European market, particularly in services. I think this is critical to our own survival and benefit.

Mr. Speaker, I have just returned from some very grueling negotiations at the WTO. I will tell you that the big countries are not cutting us any slack. They are asking us to make major concessions and to make contributions to world trade. We have been able to negotiate an Agreement that gives us the space to be able to plan our intervention into the global economy. I urge all Barbadians, I urge all Caribbean citizens to take this agreement to hand and to work with it as it is, and to seek changes whenever and wherever we can but, essentially, to sign this Agreement into Law.

Mr. Speaker, several dates have been proposed for the signing, but we have now settled on the September 2, 2008, the previous date being postponed because of the WTO Ministerial and on that date, we hope that the Ministers would join us as we affix our signature to this historic Agreement and to give a new impetus to development across the CARIFORUM States.

Mr. Speaker, finally, as I close, I want to thank all those persons, the negotiators of the Regional Negotiating Machinery, who have had their fair share of criticism, to thank the CARICOM Secretariat, the OECS Secretariat and others for their contribution.

Finally, Sir, it would be remiss of me, if I did not highlight the role and contribution played by the former Honourable Member for the City in negotiating this Agreement, the Honourable Dame Billie Miller, who was the lead Ministerial spokeswoman for CARICOM and CARIFORUM in putting this Agreement together, and negotiating the process through to the end. Sir, I want to thank her for her service and to recognise that as it is.

Mr. Speaker, with those words, I want to commend this Statement to this Honourable House and make it a document of the House. Sir, I am obliged.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice that the Replies to Parliamentary Questions 1 and 2 are ready.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Question No. 1

To ask the Prime Minister:

(1) (1) Will the Prime Minister state whether he undertook any overseas travel between February 17, 2008 and the February 25, 2008, in his official capacity as Prime Minister, or public capacity as political Leader of the Democratic Labour Party?

(a) If so will the Prime Minister indicate which aircraft or airline was used and whether such aircraft or airline was commercial or private?

(b) If such aircraft was not a commercial carrier, will the Prime Minister indicate the ownership of the aircraft and the operating conditions of the licence?

(c) Will the Prime Minister state whether this entity, its related companies whether parent, affiliate or subsidiary, has any contractual relationship with the Government of Barbados?

(d) Will the Prime Minister state whether Government has paid for this official travel and if not, who?

(e) Further, what was the amount paid for each trip?

(f) If the trip and/or trips were paid for by Government, will the Prime Minister please state if this is the commercial rate normally charged or was there any subsidy received by the Government or any premium paid by the Government?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please note that in future the Orders provide just for your just making reference to the number. There is no provision to read such.

The Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker,

(a) The Prime Minister paid an official visit to Trinidad & Tobago on Wednesday, February 20, 2008, in his capacity as Prime Minister of Barbados along with a delegation and the Prime Minister made visits to New York and Miami on February 17 and February 23, respectively. In each instance, the Prime Minister travelled on an aircraft owned by the Barbadian Commercial Enterprises.

(b) The Prime Minister's Office is not aware of the details of the aircraft licences.

(c) The Prime Minister is unaware of any new contractual relationships between the commercial enterprises and the Government of Barbados other than those which existed prior to the Government assuming office on January 16, 2008.

(d) The Government has paid for the official travel and not the private visits.

(e) The cost of the travel was BDS\$5,000.

(f) The Prime Minister is unaware of the commercial rate normally charged for the use of the aircraft and is, therefore, unaware whether there was any subsidy or premium paid for the official travel.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, a supplementary question, Sir.

"Will the Prime Minister indicate whether he is aware that the licence operated under, by private aircraft does not allow for it to be chartered out commercially to anyone?"

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I saw no reference to the word "charter" in any of the questions and, therefore, I did not investigate that matter.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: "Will the Prime Minister indicate whether he is aware that the licence under which such private aircraft operates does not admit for it to be hired, engaged or otherwise use for any type of

consideration other than for the purposes for which the licence is given?"

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I have indicated that I am not aware of the details of the aircraft's licence.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the final supplementary question.

"Will the Prime Minister admit, therefore, that it is possible that these arrangements would have been made in breach of the licence, if such licence prohibited the use of the aircraft for hire for \$5,000 or any other form of payment."

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, the Prime Minister is not aware of any such thing.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: A further supplemental question.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of privilege.

4.30 p.m.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: The question that was raised when the Honourable Leader of the Opposition read the question earlier, when the Honourable Member Prime Minister referred to me as "you", he did indicate that the questions are not read.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is not on a point of order. Therefore, I can rise. I made no reference whatsoever during the course of the debate to the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, because he was not in his seat for the whole day. Sir, he has now arrived.

Mr. SPEAKER: If you were speaking to the Honourable Member when the Honourable House was in Committee of Supply I would not have been aware of that.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Sir, this point becomes relevant with respect to the remaining questions which have to be read from This Side. It has always been the practice in this Honourable House, since I was a Member, that the questions are read. There is nothing in the Standing Orders...

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order. I do not know what he is speaking on, Sir, but you have allowed him to speak. Therefore, I am rising on a point of order. I have been in this Honourable House for 21 years, and never in the entire period in which I was a Member of this

House have any Parliamentary Questions been read except when they were being introduced, but when there are being replied to, all that happens is that the number of the question is called and the reply is given. They are only read when they are introduced.

The problem in the past is, questions were introduced and remained on the Order Paper for so long, that the Honourable Member forgets what the question is. That is why the Honourable Member wants somebody to read the question, because he was not in here when it was read on the first occasion.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just for the record. I am being guided by the Standing Orders and this one has not been suspended, as far as I am aware. Standing Order 16 (1) states as follows:

"...an oral answer to a question is required, the Minister shall, when "Replies to Questions" is reached in the Order of Business, inform the Speaker that the Reply to the question asked by a Member is ready. At Question Time, the Speaker shall call upon the Member in whose name the question stands. The Member so called shall then rise in his place and ask the question by reference to its number on the Order Paper, and the Minister to whom it is addressed shall give his reply."

Honourable Members, that is what will guide these proceedings.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: There is nothing in the question that says the question should not be read. It says by reference to the number, but the question has always been read.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have indicated what will guide these proceedings and I made my ruling on that matter. If you have a supplementary question, I will entertain it at this time.

The ruling, as I stated earlier, the question will not be read. There is no need to read it. It will be referred to by the Member as provided in Standing Order No. 16(1).

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with your ruling, Question No. 2.

Question No. 2 If so, will the Prime Minister State:

(a) (a) Whether a contract has been executed to give effect to such a post?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Government has not created a post of Political Advisor to the Prime

Minister, but has contracted political advisory services for the Prime Minister.

A contract has not been executed.

(b) Who is the holder of that post and what are the terms and conditions of any such contract and/or engagement?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Hartley Henry has been invited to provide political advisory services and the contract is being negotiated. However, Mr. Henry is paid on a month to month basis at a salary lower than that paid to the former Special Envoy to the Prime Minister, or to the former CARICOM Ambassador, in the sum of \$135 000 per year, along with the annual entertainment allowance of \$10 000 and travel allowance of \$10 000.

Question:3.Further, will the Prime Minister State:

(a) whether the holder of that post has undertaken overseas travel in such capacity since January 15, 2008?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: (a) There is no such post.

Question:(b) The details of such travel and how it was financed?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Hartley Henry was a member of the Government's delegation to the 19th Intercessional Meeting of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, which was held in Nassau, the Bahamas over the period March 7 and 8, 2008.

Mr. Henry was also a member of the delegation which paid an official visit to China over the period May 5-10, 2008.

In relation to the trip to Nassau, Mr. Henry was provided with an airline ticket and was given funds to pay for his accommodation on an accountable basis, as well as a per diem in accordance with Government regulations.

In terms of the official visit to China, funds were provided by the Government to cover air fare, accommodation and per diem, but Mr. Henry is yet to accept these funds.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Supplementary Questions. (Certain remarks made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, were ordered expunged from the records by Mr. SPEAKER.)

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that question is not relevant to the question.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: It must be relevant, because if you are paying, effectively, the salary for full-time service at \$155 000, it does matter how many other countries he is working for. It means that he cannot provide the same level of service to the Barbados Government, if he has to provide it to four or five other Caribbean Governments. It is entirely relevant. Sir, to say that it is not relevant ...

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am entitled to ask.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I rule that it is not relevant, and I will not entertain any further discussion on it.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, the Prime Minister is not yet the Speaker. I am entitled as a Member of this Parliament to ask you for clarification, because the question purports...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are entitled to ask for clarification. You asked for clarification. I am also entitled to rule as the Presiding Officer that it is not relevant, and to indicate that it will not be entertained. Furthermore, the relevant Rule permits me to direct that the question be struck from the record, and I so direct. It is not relevant in my discretion.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, you have ruled without my asking for the clarification, and I find that a very strange and unique position for a Member to be in. In the middle of my question you have ruled.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is this a second Supplementary Question?

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, just a minute. Honourable Member, you know there is provision in the Standing Orders for you to challenge the rulings of the Chair, and you may choose to so do. I have ruled that it is not relevant. Unless you have another Supplementary Question then, in my view, the matter is at an end.

The Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Will the Honourable Prime Minister please indicate whether it is a term of the contract that individual will not provide services for any other country or any other Government in the Caribbean?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: In my reply I said there is no contract.

4.40 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, will the Prime Minister please indicate whether in the instructions given to those who are conducting the negotiations for the contract, there is an explicit instruction that he should not be providing political services to any other Government in the Region, given the scale of remuneration that he is going to benefit from, Sir.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I have given no such instruction.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Will the Minister state whether the draft agreement with Mr. Henry will be brought to Parliament?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I undertake to bring that draft agreement, and all of the previously concluded agreements with political consultants, including Mr. Roy Boyd, as well as all consultants employed by the previous Administration, including the Special Envoy to the Prime Minister who was paid at a salary way in excess of \$180 000 a year, in fact, the same salary of a Minister of Government and the Ambassador to CARICOM, who was paid at the level of a Permanent Secretary. Mr. Henry does not enjoy any of those benefits. Sir, I will bring all of those contracts to the House.

Mr. Speaker, I am also going to bring to the House, the information relative to the payment of pensions to individuals outside of the Terms of the Pension legislation in this country.

I am going to bring to the attention of the House, the payments made to Mr. Roy Boyd, a former Political Advisor to the Barbados Labour Party, after every General Election to carry out a study into the operations of the Government Information Service. Sir, I will bring the full package to this Parliament.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Are there any more Supplementary Questions?

Honourable Members, please let us keep it orderly.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, for clarification. Sir, since you struck the first question, it means that I still have that question.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you have one more question.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Will the Prime Minister please indicate in relation to the funds which are being made available to Mr. Henry for airfare, accommodation and per diem for the trip to China, will that cover only the period of time when the official delegation was there, or would it also cover the period of time, while he remained in Hong Kong?

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Henry was being paid for the period for which there was an official visit by the Prime Minister to China. It is as simple as that but he has not drawn the funds, so that question, to my mind, Mr. Speaker, is irrelevant.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, Question Time is closed.

In anticipation of the Motion for the Adjournment of the House today, I would like to indicate to the Honourable Members that I will be away for the period of July 30 until August 13, to attend a conference of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. In my absence the Deputy Speaker will carry out the usual duties.

I do anticipate too that we will be going on our Summer recess shortly and, therefore, I take this opportunity to thank you for your cooperation and your assistance during the recent period, particularly during the Budget debate and earlier the debate on the Financial Statements.

I want to especially thank the Staff for your dedication and support. I wish you all well. I hope you would come back from your recess, refreshed and re-energised.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to move the Motion for Adjournment, Members would remember on July 9, 2007, we experienced a terrible accident at Joe's River, which took the lives of some of the citizens of this country and caused injury to some others. I think it is only fitting that this Honourable Member on the occasion of a year hence would stand for one minute of silence in memory of those persons.

Mr. Speaker, we are now at the height of the Crop Over celebrations. On This Side, we would want to

encourage persons to be careful and cautious as they go about the business of enjoyment and merriment.

We are also asking persons to respect the rights of others' space and property, give persons a chance to enjoy themselves, not to invade their costume bands, not to get themselves so involved in the consumption of good molasses refined to such a way that it becomes good rum or whatever else you use, to infringe, disrupt, disturb or to bring harm or any such thing.

This country enjoys a good reputation in its festival activity and we would want to keep it that way. Our interest, of course, is in the protection of life, limb and property, an essential component of our democracy. Therefore, let us embrace each other in a true spirit of love and understanding, rather than allow the merriment to become fractious and to cause problems.

4.50 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Opposition would wish to associate itself with the request that a minute's silence be observed in respect of the persons who, unfortunately, lost their lives last year on this occasion. I think that we are aware that there was a service this morning that was held in memorial for them. Indeed, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition would have represented us at that Service. Therefore, we would want to associate ourselves with this act paid by this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, as we move into the rest of the week, I, like the Honourable Leader of Government Business, would urge restraint and discretion, because very often people have innocent intentions, but unfortunately, that is when tragedies occur, not because someone sets out to hurt somebody else.

It is certainly the time of the year that we expect people to enjoy themselves, but we must remind persons that it is also a time to, perhaps, pay a little more due care and attention, because they are not only acting for themselves, but also for the next person who is next to them who may not be thinking about you or themselves at the time. In those circumstances, we associate ourselves with the words of the Government.

A minute's silence was observed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Friday, August 08, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.

Hon. F. J. STUART: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Friday, August 8, 2008 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

5.00 p.m.

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BYER-SUCKOO, Dr. the Hon. E. R. (St. George South)
EASTMOND, Mr. R. C. (St. James North)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, His Excellency D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Mr. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
PAUL, Mr. J. D. (St. Michael West Central)
PAYNE, Mr. G. W. (St. Andrew)
SEALY, Hon. R. L. (St. Michael South Central)
SINCKLER, Hon. C. P. (St. Michael North West)
STUART, Hon. F. J. (St. Michael South)
THOMPSON, Hon. D. J. H. (St. John)
TODD, Hon. P. M. T. (City of Bridgetown)

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. Statements by Ministers, Hon. C. P. Sinckler. Near the end of the Ministerial Statement on the Economic Partnership Agreement, the sentence ‘Mr. Speaker, Government is now satisfied that it should sign the EPA and move expeditiously to’ has been set in the source as though it were a speaker’s name, followed by ‘(1) give legal effect to the Agreement;’. The statement continues under Hon. C. P. Sinckler. Printed as in the source.

Q2. Order No. 5. The source records the question on the Final Appropriation (2007-2008) Bill, 2008 as put and agreed to, but gives no Committee stage or third reading before moving on to ‘STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS (Recommitted)’. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Oral Replies to Questions. The text of the questions contains doubled numbering ((1) (1)), ((a) (a)) and run-together headings ((Question No.2If so, will the Prime Minister State:)); the opening part of Question No. 2 appears to be missing. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Order No. 3, call of Hon. R. D. Jones. Mr. Speaker calls ‘The Honourable Member for Christ Church South’ before the speech of Hon. R. D. Jones, who elsewhere in the report is the Member for Christ Church East Central; Hon. J. D. E. Boyce is the Member for Christ Church South. Similarly, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley is called once as ‘the Honourable Member for St. Michael North’ in Committee of Supply. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Take-slips. Time stamps appear as paragraphs within speeches (‘12:00 noon.’, ‘12:10 p.’, ‘3.00 p.m.’, ‘4.40 p.m.’) and one take-slip reads ‘Tuesday, July 29, 2008’ in place of a time; there are no slips for 12.40 p.m. or 3.00 p.m. in the regular sequence. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 29th July, 2008 at 10.15 a.m., with Mr. Speaker in the Chair. The Minutes of 7th July were confirmed, and Mr. Speaker welcomed the Honourable Ernest Elliott, M.P., of Guyana. On behalf of the Minister of Finance, Hon. R. D. Jones laid the Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for 2007 and the Report on the Social Investment Fund for the

year ended 31st March, 2007, and moved the first reading of four Bills. Standing Orders were suspended.

The Minister of Family, Youth Affairs, Sports and the Environment, Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo, moved the second reading of the Cricket Legends of Barbados Inc. Bill, 2008, which exempts the company, incorporated on 23rd August, 2005, from Corporation Tax, Withholding Tax, stamp duty and import duties on specified goods for its Cricket Centre of Excellence and Cricket Museum. She said the 42 Cricket Legends were its shareholders, that the company had received a grant of \$300 000 from the Arts and Sports Promotion Fund and a pledge of \$375 000 for coaching DVDs. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley said the Bill had its genesis in her work as Minister of Economic Affairs, offered the Opposition’s help and called for a professional cricket league and a public company to run the commercial side of West Indies cricket.

His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman wished the Bill had covered all sports legends and criticised stands at Kensington Oval that left spectators in the sun. Mr. R. C. Eastmond recalled the founding of the Barbados Cricket League by Mitchie Hewitt. The Minister of Tourism, Hon. R. L. Sealy, spoke of a sponsorship agreement with the Legends worth \$300 000 over two years and of the tourism potential of Herbert House, and Hon. R. D. Jones spoke of sport as an industry. After the suspension, Dr. Byer-Suckoo replied, and the Bill passed all its stages, Mr. S. A. Lashley in the Chair in Committee.

In Committee of Supply, the Prime Minister, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, moved a Supplementary of \$500 000 under Head 52 for an Energy Awareness Programme, of which about \$140 000 was for advertisements. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley supported conservation but asked who would execute the programme, recalled oil rising from US\$12 a barrel in 2000 to US\$104 in January 2008, and urged the Government to reduce the Excise Tax rather than pass fuel increases through, arguing that VAT on diesel had risen by 15 cents a litre. Hon. P. M. T. Todd, Hon. J. D. E. Boyce, His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman, Mr. J. D. Paul and Dr. the Hon. E. R. Byer-Suckoo supported it. The Prime Minister replied that the fuel subsidy had reached almost \$80 million without provision and asked why a bond should be floated to pay for current consumption of petroleum. The Resolution was passed.

The Final Appropriation (2007-2008) Bill, 2008 was moved by the Prime Minister and agreed to. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, then made a Ministerial Statement on the CARIFORUM-European Union Economic Partnership Agreement, describing the

25-year transition period, Mode 4 access in 29 sectors and the intended signing on 2nd September, 2008.

At Question Time, Mr. Speaker ruled under the Standing Orders that questions be referred to by number and not read. The Prime Minister answered Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley's questions on his travel in February 2008, which had cost BDS\$5,000, and on political advisory

services from Mr. Hartley Henry at \$135 000 a year plus allowances, with no contract yet executed. The Prime Minister undertook to bring the draft agreement and earlier consultants' agreements to the House. A minute's silence was observed for those who died in the Joe's River accident of 9th July, 2007, and the House was adjourned until Friday, 8th August, 2008 at 10.00 a.m.