
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

SECOND SESSION 2008 – 2013

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Pursuant to the Adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m.

PRESENT

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B (Hons.) Prime Minister
Minister of Finance, 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. G. A. CLARKE, J.P., B.Sc., Dip. Ed.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN:

Hon. Miss M. 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 Economic Affairs and Empowerment, Innovation, Trade, Industry and Commerce)

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

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

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

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

Hon. F. J. STUART, Q.C., B.A., LL.M. (Deputy Prime Minister, Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)

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

Hon. E. G. HUTSON, F.C.C.A., C.A. (Minister of International Business and International Transport)

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 The Environment, Water Resources and Drainage)

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, Education and Human Resource Development)

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, M.B.A., B.Sc., (Minister of Health)

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, M.Sc., B.A. (Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Rural and Urban Development)

Prayers were taken by Reverend Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, February 24, 2009.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the Minutes so cited be confirmed subject to any omissions, observations and/or corrections.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following:

1. Presentation of the People (Identification Cards Replacement Fee)(Amendment) Regulation, 2009.
2. Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Sherwood Development Ltd.) Order, 2009.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please make your address from your assigned seat, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I thought I could speak from anywhere in this House on This Side. I was not aware that there were new Rules in the Chamber. Mr. Speaker?

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is the difficulty Honourable Member?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I was not aware that there are new Rules in the Chamber circulated or approved by this Chamber. I have been in this Chamber since 1994. I was not aware that there are any new Rules in this Chamber, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, based on my understanding of the Rules, a Member is required to make his or her presentation from his or her assigned seat.

10.30 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you are free to challenge that in the appropriate way, but that is my ruling, so, please, do not delay the business of the House this morning.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am asking now as a matter of privilege, where is that Rule contained? Mr. Speaker, I do not want to breach any Rules, but if you can tell me where that Rule is contained, I would abide by Your Honour's ruling.

As far as I know, after 15 years in this Honourable Chamber, Sir, I am not aware of any such Rule.

Mr. Speaker, I remember Members of the last Opposition speaking throughout the six or seven seats that they had. In fact, Sir, there was a jostling for seats at the beginning, as to who would get the last seat.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, as you are aware, the Rules require that before an Honourable Member speaks, he or she stands in his or her place, and when called upon by the Speaker, speaks. You are not standing in your place.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a matter of privilege. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. Please advise as to where it says that I have to speak from a particular seat on the Opposition Benches. Sir, if you can do so, I will abide by your ruling.

Mr. Speaker, I am not going to give up privileges that have been associated with this Parliament for the length of the life of this Parliament, which is in excess of three centuries.

I have been in this Chamber for 14 years, going into 15 years this year, and I am not aware of any such Rule. Can you, the Clerk or the Deputy Clerk show me the Rule? I am advised by the Deputy Clerk that there is no such Rule. If you can show me the Rule, I will sit down, Sir, and move to another seat. Sir, I do not believe that because Your Honour is the Speaker, that you can make up Rules as we go.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have given a direction and I expect that it will be followed. Honourable Member, I am just waiting for you to comply, so we may get on with the business of this House.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I have spoken on a matter of privilege. I have asked, Sir, that on a matter of privilege, if you can advise me where it says a Member must sit in one place, and one place alone, then I will comply with your ruling.

Sir, I have been in this Chamber, and I have seen Front Benchers speak from the Back Bench. I have seen Back Benchers speak from the Front Bench.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you do not have the Floor at this time.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, you asked me to respond to you. If you do not want me to have the Floor, then I will abide by that, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I want to be advised by the Clerk, because the Clerk is available to advise, not just the Speaker and the Leader of Government Business, but also the Opposition.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please have your say and let me give you my ruling. Have your say. I am listening.

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

Sir, I beg to give notice of the Motion of No Confidence...

Mr. SPEAKER: No. No. Sorry, not on the motion. On the position that the Chair has taken.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I am asking now to be advised by the Clerk or the Deputy Clerk.

Mr. SPEAKER: Would you like us then to have a short suspension so you may be so advised?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: As you wish, Sir. Yes, Sir, and to be advised formally by the Clerk and the Deputy Clerk.

Hon. F. J. STUART: If I may, Mr. Speaker, with the indulgence of the Honourable Member, I do not know that this matter needs occasion the House any hostility or any stand-off.

Standing Order 28.13 states and I quote:

“Rules OF DEBATE

28. TIME AND MANNER OF SPEAKING AND CONTENTS OF SPEECHES

13. A Member who desires to speak must rise in his place and, if he is called upon by the Chair, addresses the Speaker or Chairman.”

Of course, that Standing Order leaves it to Your Honour to determine what “rise in his place” means, and only Your Honour can determine that.

It may very well be, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East may be right that in times past, previous holders of Your Honour’s office, did not insist on the strict language of this Standing Order, but the practices of Your Honour’s predecessors do not necessarily bind Your Honour, in terms of interpreting these Standing Orders. If Your Honour is insisting that an Honourable Member must rise in his or her place before addressing Your Honour, I do not know that any Honourable Member can find any fault with that. It is a question of Your Honour’s ruling.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Erskine May’s on Parliamentary Practice, and to indicate, Sir...

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, just one minute. Let us hear the Member, please.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, Mays makes it clear, and I read as follows:

“A Member may not speak when standing before the Table or in the Isle, or from below the Bar. The Chair has declined to intervene when a Back Bench Member chose to speak at the Dispatch Box. A Member, however, should not move from his place while speaking.”

Mr. Speaker, all that is required is that I do not move from place to place. Mr. Speaker, some Members seem not to know what the Dispatch Box is, but I know that you know, Mr. Speaker.

The reality is, Sir, that so long as I am not in the middle, so long as I am not at the Table, so long as I am not on the Government Side, or behind the Bar, and so long as I do not move from place to place to place, I can speak from any seat on This Side.

10.40 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, I have done so on This Side and on That Side when we were in Government.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in here for 15 years. This is not an issue that in and of itself ought to delay the House. What ought to concern us is the fact that, prior to my getting up, I had no prior notice that your Honour wished to change the Rules of this Parliament. Sir, if you want to change the Rules of this Parliament, then I believe that the House has the right to do so, but we must be informed.

Sir, the most basic Rules of natural justice require that you cannot apply Rules to someone of which they have no knowledge.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well, Honourable Member. Honourable Members, I do not intend for this to go into a full-scale debate on what essentially is a very clear and minor ruling. I will hear the Honourable Attorney-General and then I will have my say.

Hon. F. J. STUART: On a point of privilege. Mr. Speaker, I do not want to drag this matter on, I am just trying to be of assistance to the House. I do not think that it is being fair to the facts, to suggest that Your Honour is trying to change any Rules of this House. The Standing Orders contain the Rules of this House and Standing Order 28.13 has always been there. The issue of interpreting Standing Order 28.13 has arisen this morning and Your Honour has placed an interpretation on it as Your Honour is entitled to do.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East has made the point that she was entitled to notice that the interpretation of 28.13 was going to be applied differently,

not changed. That is a matter on which Your Honour might want to express an opinion, but in terms of changing the Rule, the Rule has always been there. I hope, Sir, that I have helped to clarify the situation.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Standing Order to which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South pointed was the one which I indicated and recited to the Honourable Member, but of course she does not accept that.

I do not know what the Standing Orders of the House to which May's Parliamentary Practice refers are. I also know that these various articles, writings and so on are simply of assistance and general guidance. Our Standing Order is clear and specific.

Furthermore, I have seen in this Chair on at least one occasion, Honourable Members while walking out paused at a microphone and begin to speak. I can identify the Honourable Member, and the point was in fact made, that the Honourable Member would not be allowed to speak except from the assigned seat.

I believe, and my interpretation is, that it is an effort to some manner of order obtained in this august Chamber, and I will not allow Honourable Members, for instance, to just walk out and stop and say what they want to say and so on.

I am saying that the Standing Order says clearly, that you must stand in your seat if you wish to address the House of Parliament. My interpretation is that it is your assigned seat, so would you please Honourable Member, if you wish to address us on this matter, take your appropriate seat and let us proceed this morning? That is not your assigned seat, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: On a point of privilege. Mr. Speaker, as a matter of privilege, I am compelled to enquire as to who and where in the Standing Orders the matter of the assignment of seats is set out.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am not hearing you Honourable Member. You are not in your assigned seat.

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Who assigns the seats? Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in the Standing Orders about an authority for the assigning of seats. If the assigning of seats is by matter of Convention, then the Conventions that have always governed the interpretation of these Rules should apply. Mr. Speaker, there cannot be one Law for the Medes and another Law for the Persians.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am not hearing you. I will advise you to please take your seat.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of privilege. Mr. Speaker, who assigns seats in here?

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, as I indicated, there is no need for this matter to go on.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: I do not have any privilege, Mr. Speaker? I rise on a matter of privilege. I was in this House since 1991, before any Honourable Member on That Side, including the Honourable Attorney-General.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am sure that the Standing Order to which you would refer indicates that when the Speaker is speaking, you keep quiet and sit down.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Okay.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please do not let it get... Honourable Members, are we going to proceed with the matter? Honourable Member, let me hear you.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I have been in this House since 1991 and I have never been assigned a seat in this House. In January 2008, after the last General Election, the situation remained the same. I was never assigned a seat, so there is no assigning of any seat in this House. I have spoken from the Front Bench and the Back Bench in different seats.

Mr. Speaker, I have seen Honourable Members, in particular the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, speaking and swaying from seat to seat even during the televised debate. If you go back and look at the televised debate you would see that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West spoke from two seats. He spoke in the seat of the Honourable Member for St. James South. I am telling you, that is what they have been doing.

Mr. Speaker, if that is a ruling and it was a ruling which was at the beginning of this Session I would understand, but even since January last year, Honourable Members on That Side and on This Side have been speaking all over the place, so if there is a ruling, it would have to be a new ruling.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the ruling was made on an occasion when the Honourable Member for St. Joseph attempted to address this Chair from the area where he was sitting then and I indicated to him that he needed to return to his seat, and he did then. I do not understand what is the difficulty. I have given you the interpretation.

I have pointed you to the specific Standing Order, and it is really a minor matter simply aimed at keeping

order in this House. What is the difficulty? Does any Honourable Member want us then to be like the ZR culture that we hear about, so that we do anything that we want to do? It is just simply seeking to keep order in this Honourable House. I really thought that would be appreciated by Honourable Members.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I am not hearing you. You need to go to your assigned seat.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Who assigned the seats? I have that privilege...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, given the state of things now, I would accept a motion for a brief suspension of this House so that this matter does not escalate into unnecessary proportions.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 11.10 a.m. today.

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

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 11.10 a.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

10.50 a.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is resumed. Of course, we would have taken that brief Suspension to deal with the matter at hand. Honourable Members, I have looked at it, I have also discussed it with the Clerks at the Table, who are there to assist in guiding me on these matters.

I am satisfied that there is nothing wrong with the ruling. However, the point I do accept is the fact that given all the circumstances, today being the first time it has come up, it would be wise essentially to give Honourable Members notice with respect to the fact that is going to be the case.

What I have, therefore, decided to do is that on the next Sitting of this Honourable House, I will essentially indicate that is my interpretation of the particular Rule and, therefore, Honourable Members may sit where it pleases them, in whoever's seat today.

I also want to make the point, and I will refer to it again, that it is becoming a bit difficult to maintain order

when Honourable Members, who have been in this Honourable House, certainly beyond since I have been here, you know I only came in yesterday essentially, but the Rules have been there ever since. The particular Rule which I am very concerned about is that which has to do with the ruling of the Chair.

As we all know, the ruling of the Chair is considered to be final and there are specific Rules set out and indicating - you will also find them set out in "May's on Parliamentary Procedures," - how you challenge the ruling of the Chair, so that we can maintain order.

I am simply not going to accept what seems to be a fad by some Honourable Members to engage in a debate and crosstalk about the ruling of this Chair. I think I have been more than reasonable in all the circumstances. I am insisting, of course, that Honourable Members have a right to exercise their freedom of speech, that is why I have thus been reasonable but enough is enough. I hope we could now proceed with the day's matters at hand.

11.10 a.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: I have indicated that on the next Sitting, I will deal with various matters, including members walking in and out as they please without the due decorum, not to Michael Carrington, but to the Chair, and also the use of language in the House.

You may recall that there was a particular word used on the last occasion which has caused some concern. I have had the opportunity to have a further look at it and I will indicate my position on that as well and, that having been said, I hope that all Honourable Members are happy for today and we can now proceed with the business at hand.

PRIVATE MEMBERS NOTICES

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of A Motion of No Confidence against the Minister of Finance.

WHEREAS CLICO International Life Insurance Limited (CLICO), is a wholly owned subsidiary of C. L. Financial Limited, a company registered in Trinidad and Tobago.

AND WHEREAS CLICO operates a life Insurance Company in Barbados and has approximately 38,000 Barbadian policyholders;

AND WHEREAS CLICO also accepts deposits and holds many millions of dollars of deposits from a large number of Barbadians;

AND WHEREAS Section 25 of the Insurance Act, Chapter 310 of the Laws of Barbados requires Insurance Companies carrying on long-term insurance business in Barbados, to establish and maintain a Statutory Fund in which assets must be placed so that policyholders and depositors can be repaid in the event that a financial crisis arises within the operations of an insurance company;

AND WHEREAS as at December 31, 2007, the Statutory Fund of CLICO Barbados was in deficit to a sum in the region of \$93 000 000, leaving almost 40 000 policyholders, pension fund holders, depositors and their families extraordinarily exposed in Barbados;

AND Whereas on January 30, 2009, the Minister of Finance of Trinidad and Tobago and the Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago announced that the Government of Trinidad and Tobago had signed a Memorandum of Understanding, pursuant to which there was an intervention on the part of the Central Bank of Trinidad & Tobago to deal with the financial circumstances of CLICO Investment Bank, CLICO Trinidad, British American Insurance Company Limited and Caribbean Money Market Brokers but also in particular to deal with, among other things, a Statutory Fund Deficit with CLICO Trinidad exposing virtually 100 000 policyholders and depositors in Trinidad and Tobago;

AND WHEREAS the Honourable Minister of Finance of Barbados on January 31, 2009, made the following statements:-

I. "I am satisfied that the actions taken by the Trinidadian authorities are correct and appropriate for the circumstances facing C.L. Financial in Trinidad";

II. "We are fully satisfied that CLICO's Barbados operations are sound, prudently managed and well regulated";

III. "Barbadian depositors, investors and holders of insurance policies can, therefore, be considered safe in the context of our financial sector."

AND WHEREAS the Honourable Minister of Finance of Barbados knew or ought to have known about the existence and extent of the deficit in CLICO's Statutory Fund as of December 2007, the Honourable Minister of Finance misled the public and, more particularly, the policyholders, depositors and their families when he made the statement on January 31, 2009, to the effect that the depositors and pension holders were "safe" and that

CLICO Barbados was "sound, prudently managed and well regulated."

AND WHEREAS on February 13, 2009, the Governor of the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago had sounded concern at the fact that the deficit of the Statutory Fund of C. L. Financial, the parent company of CLICO Barbados, increased sharply in Trinidad and Tobago in the year 2008, in the vicinity of TT\$10 billion.

AND WHEREAS on February 22, 2009, on application from the Central Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, the High Court of Trinidad and Tobago issued an ex-parte Injunction restraining C. L. Financial or any of its subsidiaries or related companies, from in anyway disposing of or charging any of its assets, howsoever held by or to the use of, and or vested in C.L. Financial, wheresoever located and howsoever described;

AND WHEREAS on February 24, 2009, on application by the Registrar of Insurance Companies of the Bahamas, the High Court of The Bahamas issued an Order that CLICO Bahamas be wound up on the grounds of insolvency, and that the winding up of the company be under the supervision of the High Court;

AND WHEREAS on February 25, 2009, on application by the Commissioner of Insurance of Guyana, the High Court of Guyana issued an order to place CLICO Guyana under the judicial management of the Commissioner of Insurance;

AND WHEREAS the Honourable Minister of Finance of Barbados has failed to inform the public of the extent of the deficit of CLICO Barbados' Statutory Fund, and of what action he and his Government have taken or will take to urgently protect the almost 40 000 policyholders, depositors and their families, who are extraordinarily exposed at this time of great volatility in the regional and international financial markets;

BE IT RESOLVED that this House condemns the Honourable Minister of Finance for misleading the public of Barbados.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House further condemns the Honourable Minister of Finance for failing to take urgent and immediate action to protect the almost 40 000 policyholders, depositors and their families.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House expresses that it has no confidence in the Honourable Minister of Finance.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice as well that I will be writing Your Honour, the Speaker requesting that whenever the debate is heard that it be broadcasted on television, as has been the custom.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Bills be read a first time:

1. Property Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009.

2. Land Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009.

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

11.20 a.m.

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 remainder of this day's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 2

LAND TAX (Amendment) BILL, 2008

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, I beg to formally withdraw Order No. 2 under Government Business and that it is replaced by Order No. 13.

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

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

ORDER NO. 3 – CONSTITUENCY COUNCILS BILL, 2009.

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

Mr. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, the real problem here is that the Government finds itself on the horns of a dilemma as it seeks to establish these Constituency Councils and the way in which they are seeking to do it.

The Government basically has to reconcile two diametrically opposed positions. On the one hand the Government is saying that the purpose of these Councils is to empower residents of various communities across Barbados to identify their own needs and handle their own affairs, and on the other hand the Government is saying at the time, that it is stripping these same communities of the right to decide for themselves who will constitute these Councils and is giving, in fact, that right wholly and solely to a Minister of Government.

Sir, on the one hand the people will have the power and on the other hand the Government, through a Minister, is to have the power. Sir, that is really what that is about, reconciling two things that are as incompatible as fire and water. That is the position in which the Government now finds itself.

In fact, the Definition section where he puts it quite "Sincklery" in the legislation where it defines Constituency Council, Section 2:

"Constituency Council" or "Council" means a body of local representatives..."

Sir, when you hear the word "representative", which is then compounded by the word "local" and you have local representatives, right away you think that must mean that the locals will determine the representatives. In fact, when you look into the Oxford Dictionary for the definition of a representative, it speaks of "consisting of people chosen to act and speak on behalf of a wider group."

The Definition goes on to say:

"A Council means a body of local representatives who have been appointed in accordance with Section 3(4)."

Of course, in keeping with the standards on the Other Side, there is no Subsection 3(4). We have to assume that perhaps they mean subsection 3 (3), but there certainly is no subsection 3(4). That is the first concern I have, that the Government is on the one hand approbating and reprobating. On the one hand the people are to have the power and on the other hand the Government, through a Minister, is to have the power.

Sir, my second concern is the manner in which these Council members are to be appointed. If you look at the legislation, the Second Schedule, it says that the 15 persons may be selected from the following categories of a representative of a community group, and other categories are named.

Sir, the fact remains that the Minister can refuse to look at this piece of legislation at all. He can refuse to look at the Schedule at all, and decide he is going to appoint 15

family members or 15 friends of his. He can also appoint 15 constituents of his to decide to have the conduct of affairs of the Council in St. Michael North. That is a fact, based on the wording of this legislation.

Sir, even if the Minister were to be guided by the Sections here, the various groups, it does not say that “he may select from each of the following categories.” If he decides to be guided by the legislation, he can, in fact, circumvent all of the interest groups named, and still go on to appoint 15 of his own personal nominees. That is my second difficulty that, in fact, the Minister is going to decide and can determine anybody at all on earth to be a member of a Constituency Council.

Sir, I heard two Honourable Members speak, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central and the Prime Minister. The other night on television, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central made three references to persons in his Constituency who he said were icons in the community, who work, without any recognition or money, and he would figure those are the people who should be on Constituency Councils.

Sir, the Prime Minister, on television, said that if he had to name people he would automatically go to the District Relief Organisation or somebody from a fishing community. Sir, these people may be eminently qualified, and chances are they are, but I would expect the people who made those points would be the first to vote with us on This Side. If the residents of communities in Barbados had the choice to put people in place, doubtless, they would put those same people in place. Now they stand the chance of not being put in place, because the Minister can decide that they are not going to be put in place.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that they are for selection of members when the whole public knows that they are for the election of members.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I just heard that there was a fire in St. Lucy, and I think the Honourable Member needs to get into St. Lucy and deal with the fire that is there. That is the truth.

Sir, I would expect that Honourable Members on That Side, bearing in mind what they said, would want to support us on This Side in ensuring that people like that, whom they believe are eminently qualified, and whom I have no doubt that are eminently qualified would, in fact,

get on the Council. A Minister now can unilaterally, and not only unilaterally but without giving any reason at all, because nowhere in this legislation are any criteria set out for deciding who will be a council member, in circumstances where the Minister receives more than 15 nominations. If the Minister receives 30 nominations, the Minister has to choose a final 15. Nowhere in here it says what criteria the Minister will use to exclude the 15 he does not choose.

I am therefore saying that the Minister should be compelled to name publicly all the persons who are nominated by the various associations and organisations around the various constituencies, and should be required to state, as he will have to, the names of the 15 persons who are chosen.

11.30 a.m.

He should also be required to state the names of those that he has not chosen, and tell the public of Barbados why it is that he has excluded them. Sir, that would be accountability.

Sir, the next issue I have is this. What exactly are these Constituency Councils empowered to do on their own motion? Sir, if Mary Jane were to go to the Constituency Council, wherever it is located and say: “I live in an area that is desolate. I was attacked last week. Three of my female friends were raped. This area is desolate and we need some street lighting in this area, Sir.” Sir, this Constituency Council is powerless to act on its own to remedy that problem. This is worth spending some time on and I am going to Section 5 of the legislation, which sets out the functions of each Council.

Sir, what exactly is each Council empowered to do? It is required:

“5. (1) The functions of each Council are to

(a) build relevant databases with respect to the Constituency in collaboration with other Government Departments;”

Sir, it cannot act on its own. It must act in collaboration with other Government Departments.

“(b) to identify the priority needs of the Constituency based on supporting data;”

Sir, what will be gotten from building the databases? Identify priority needs. Sir, things that Members of Parliament do on a daily basis.

The third function at (c) is to make recommendations to the Minister on programmes and projects for the benefit

of each community. Therefore, it could only make recommendations.

At (d), it is empowered to refer residents requiring services in a Constituency to the most appropriate agency that provides the services required. Therefore, it is just a referring agency.

At (e), it is empowered to assist, once you are assisting - you are working with somebody under their supervision - with the delivery of particular services to the respective residents of each Constituency.

At (f), carry out activities designated by the Department - again, not on its own motion, Sir - on behalf of the residents of the Constituency; and

(g) to facilitate the flow of information to and from the Minister that is relevant to everyday life in the Constituency, in order to facilitate decision-making - it does not say by whom - on matters related to the Constituency.

Sir, so the Constituency Councils are powerless to act on their own, and to put that beyond any doubt, whatsoever, look at subsection (2) of the same Section 5, which says:

“(2) The functions of the Council referred to in subsection (1) are to be carried out with the approval of the Department.”

Sir, it does not say “on notifying the Department.” Therefore, a Mary-Jane, as I just said, who is under stress in a community, friends might have been raped last week, feel scared in her community because she needs something as simple as a street light, cannot go to this Council and have this Council say, “okay, we are going to have a meeting and get back to you, very shortly, with a decision.” It has to go and get the approval of the Department, but not notify the Department. Sir, that really is what these Constituency Councils are all about.

Sir, these Councils really are just another layer of bureaucracy, but a very dangerous layer of bureaucracy, because these Councils are really about ensuring that the de facto control of 30 constituencies across Barbados are to be vested in the Democratic Labour Party. Sir, it is about actual de facto control of all 30 Constituencies, although the Barbados Labour Party has nine, and about ensuring that the Barbados Labour Party loses de jure control of the nine Constituencies that it has. That is what this legislation is about, Sir.

Sir, these Councils will serve as a filter of information, from residents of communities and constituencies, up to the Minister. Sir, what is going to

happen at the very practical level is that they have this information that has to be referred - no option - for the approval of the Department. It will find itself on the desk of the Minister, who will then either take up the telephone, write or otherwise communicate with the 21 Democratic Labour Party Members of Government, or the nine caretaker Democratic Labour Party persons in the Constituencies that the Barbados Labour Party Parliament won.

Communication would be had with the 30 of them, and the Minister will then act accordingly in the Departments to ensure that narrow political purposes are served by this Council. Sir, that is what these Councils were established to do. I am not going to be any part of that, Sir.

Sir, that is a threat to democracy and I am not going to be part of any threat to democracy. Sir, our first option, as we have said, is that Council Members should be elected by the people. Sir, if the intention is for politics to be played...

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the House the impression that if you have elections within the Constituency that the Barbados Labour Party will get nine Councils. Sir, the Honourable Member must be consistent. The Honourable Member must be able to put the case that a Constituency Council is pre requisite, or he must be able to put the case that the Honourable Member and his Party want election in all 30, but it cannot be in the breach.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, if the intention is that there is to be politics in these Constituency Councils, then the Members of Parliament should be empowered to appoint them. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy said that in here some time last year. Our first option is that the community members should elect them, but if the Government intends to play politics, then with all due deference of the Members of Constituencies, they have decided whom they want to have to conduct of their affairs for the next five years. Therefore, it would be only but right, that if you are going to play politics with this, then the Members of Parliament should be the ones choosing the Members of the Constituency Councils.

I believe, Sir, that really and truly, in the absence of elections, the Government has a very viable option in the Urban Development Commission (UDC). If the

Government is saying - as the Minister said in his introduction that the UDC is too dirty for him to deal with today - that it is dirty, the Minister should clean it up and get it functioning the way it is supposed to function, Sir, and it would be better, Sir, than these foolish Councils being set up.

Sir, I can speak of the time when the Urban Development Commission used to function well. The Honourable Member for St. Andrew at one stage, was the Minister responsible for the Urban Development Commission, and I can point to instances in my Constituency, and every Honourable Member could point to instances in their Constituencies when, in fact, the resources were reaching the purposes for which they were intended.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I could point to instances when the people of Barbados were being served by the Urban Development Commission.

11.40 a.m.

Sir, I have to admit that after the Minister was no longer the Minister, things started to go off-track with the Urban Development Commission. Sir, what used to be a proper distribution of resources became very skewed in favour of one or two areas. That is a fact.

Sir, reports used to come out that gave the status on things being done in the various Constituencies in the urban area. I used to see instances where it was said that such and such a house was repaired, at such and such an address in St. Michael North, and when you checked the address, the address given in the report was not a St. Michael North address.

There were other times when you used to get reports saying that such and such a house was 75 per cent complete, and when you go and visit the person, they would say they got one single visit from somebody and not a brick had been laid or a piece of wood had been nailed on. Sir, that happened after the Honourable Member for St. Andrew -

Sir, as best as my memory serves me, there have only been five Ministers responsible for the Urban Development Commission, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, and now the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Sir, I must confess that, based on the remarks being made now by the Honourable Member for St. Michael

North West, I have a bad opinion of the Ministers that were in charge of the Urban Development Commission. Sir, it is not fair that five Ministers should be painted with the same brush unless all five are responsible.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was careful to point out his disgust at an ackee tree being cut down for \$22 000, and I want the Minister to name who was the Minister at the time in charge of the Urban Development Commission. I cannot remember at this time who it was, and I want to know who it was.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West made a point about disappearing houses. Sir, I am not aware that there is any David Copperfield in Cabinet. There is nobody in Cabinet that can take up a magic wand and wave it and make a house disappear as far as I know. There has to be a documented point of reference to a house that disappeared.

Sir, I believe that it would be decent and right for the Honourable Minister as he speaks about these things, not to seek to paint all five Ministers, including himself, of any complicity in the disappearance of houses, or an ackee tree being knocked down for \$22 000 and that sort of thing.

Sir, I do not remember who the Minister at the time was. I do remember that at the time when the story on the ackee tree broke, that the present Prime Minister, then Leader of the Opposition, and certain Honourable Members on the Opposition Benches took the view that any decent person would have taken, that it was abominable and that he felt that heads should roll at the Ministerial level. The present Prime Minister even went so far as to say that the Minister at the time should have been in prison.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that he was not in here, when a head was rolled and was rehired at the Urban Development Commission because to the best of my knowledge the Director was fired at that time, but he was rehired.

Mr. SPEAKER: Very well. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, all I would say is that it seems as though a head rolled, but it rolled from This Side to That Side. Sir, that is all I can say.

Sir, a better option than these Constituency Councils, especially in the way in which they are being established, would be to go and fix the Urban Development Commission that the Minister said was too dirty to deal with in Parliament. I know that he has a job fixing it up,

because the problems there are endemic, systemic and all “emics”. That is a fact. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the Minister could clean it up and he would achieve a better purpose than the purpose that is sought to be achieved by the establishment of these Constituency Councils.

Sir, my other concern has to do with the funding of these Constituency Councils. Sir, Section 6 says that the expenses of each Council are to be defrayed out of:

(a) such money as may be voted for the purpose;

(b) moneys arising from gifts, grants or donations.

Sir, I have a fundamental problem with this thing about this Government, particularly putting in legislation that they would be taking gifts. Sir, I am concerned generally with the level of mendicancy and subservice of this Government.

Sir, last week we had a Minister of Tourism in here saying that we in Barbados ought to be either grateful or thankful that two American airliners should be coming to Barbados at all. That is what he said. Sir, that is a statement that would go down in the annals for a long time and it is going to be referred back to him, trust me, in the appropriate time.

Sir, you are going now from there to say in legislation, that you are going to be accepting gifts from people. I know that in certain circumstances, Sir, and in certain institutions you can have a donation of a piece of equipment like at the hospital, not the building of the hospital. The Prime Minister said he is going to be taking some money, some gifts and so on. He said that there are some philanthropic donors out there who would be playing a role in building the hospital. Sir, this has become a begging Government. Sir, it is beneath the dignity and the pride of Barbados and Barbadians, to put in Law that you are open for whosoever will come and throw gifts at you. Sir, do you know why? He who pays the piper will call the tune.

Sir, could you imagine if a company like CLICO... Not CLICO now, CLICO licked out everything it had already in the last Election, I do not think they would be in this now.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Fifteen million dollars to buy an election then, but it licked out now. Sir, could you imagine if a company like CLICO got its tentacles in this, they would be contributing with terms and conditions.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

Hon. R. D. JONES: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I do not think that such words should go unchallenged where an Honourable Member is making the assertion that some \$15 million was used by the Democratic Labour Party from some agency to buy an Election. Elections cannot be bought in Barbados and those comments should be withdrawn. It is really out of place in this Chamber, but it suits the Honourable Member's personality and nature.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I did hear the comments. He did talk about buying an Election, but based on what I heard him say, he did not in fact say that it was the Government buying an Election basically, that is why I did not Rule it out of order. However, it is unparliamentary essentially, in my view, to say that any Government is buying an Election. Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Sir, I will not, at this stage, say anything about the Democratic Labour Party getting money to buy a Government whether it be from CLICO, Stanford or whomever. I am not at this stage going to go into any of that. All I am saying is that it is dangerous for any Government to hold itself out publicly in legislation, that it is going to take gifts from people because people are going to be giving, especially depending on the character of the entity giving, on terms and conditions not only in terms of what they are going to get in return, but also who is to benefit from what they are contributing in terms of finance to these Constituency Councils.

11.50 a.m.

Mr. Speaker, it is dangerous, wrong, and I do not support it. Mr. Speaker, I want also to make the point that the legislation was hastily put together. There is another anomaly. Would you believe that a person who becomes a Council Member cannot even resign by choice? The date of his resignation is not even up to him. It says in the Second Schedule at 4(2):

“A member other than the Chairman, may resign his office by instrument in writing addressed to the Minister, transmitted through the Chairman...”

So he has to give it to the Chairman -

“...and from the date of the receipt of the instrument by the Minister, that member ceases to be a member of the Council.”

Mr. Speaker, if the Chairman now decides that he is going to hold the instrument of resignation, that he is going to take his time in passing it on to the Minister, all that time the member still remains a member of the Council, and still remains liable for any deeds done by the Council, until

such time, according to this, until the Minister gets the letter of resignation from the Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, someone who comes forward on his or her own, with all the goodwill in the world wanting to assist the Constituency Council, and trying to assist members of the community, that person then detects that there is some wrong-doing going on and decides that he or she wants to resign from the Constituency Council, cannot immediately resign. He has to give his letter of resignation to the Chairman, who can sit on it for as long as he wants before passing it on to the Minister. Sir, that member would still find himself liable because the Minister would not have received it from the Chairman.

Mr. Speaker, had the Honourable Member spoken to the Honourable Member for St. Philip West...If you would look at the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) legislation, you would see the point is properly dealt with there when it speaks about resignation.

Asides.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: This is the way that you are supposed to work. Mr. Speaker, it says:

“A Commissioner other than the Chairman or Chief Executive Officer may at any time resign his office by instrument in writing, addressed to the Chairman, who shall forthwith cause the same to be forwarded to the Minister, and upon the date of receipt by the Chairman of such instrument, the Commissioner ceases to be a Member of the Commission unless some other date is mentioned in the instrument.”

Mr. Speaker, as soon as the letter is received by the Chairman, that person would have effectively resigned. In this case, you have to wait for the Minister to receive it, then you find that you are liable for things that you would have long ago distanced yourself from or tried to distance yourself from.

Mr. Speaker, as I said, this is a very hastily put together piece of legislation which, in my view, is insulting to the people of Barbados across the various communities in this country.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you need to be concluding at this stage.

Mr. R. St.C TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, the immediate past Minister, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East, at least recognised the flaws in this concept and decided that it was better to wait, to sort out these kinks and to get them right, but he was moved from his position.

Sir, then in comes the new Minister who jumped in first without pausing for breath or thought - mouth first as usual - and proceeded to criticise his immediate predecessor and say that he was now going to ensure that work was finally done in the Ministry, but he should have paused and taken the approach of the previous Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I will not support this legislation. I cannot support it, especially if I were the kind of person who went around this country calling myself a community practitioner. I could never do it. Sir, as a self-professed community practitioner, I could not associate myself with this. I would see myself as a Judas. I would feel as someone who has sold out my people.

Sir, there are some who like to keep poor people poor, because it is the same poor people who would look up to them as though they were Gods, who would form a little sub-cult around them, but I did not go into politics to be in any sub-cult or anything like that. I am for the people. Sir, I stand by my colleagues. I will not be supporting this legislation. This legislation is hog-wash and this is what I think about it.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I can well understand now, why there seems to be fear on the Other Side relative to the establishment of Constituency Councils in Barbados. I think what the last speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, was trying to persuade us to do, was to live the experiences and behaviours of members of the Barbados Labour Party, particularly those who now sit on the Other Side.

Mr. Speaker, I use that statement “relive experiences” because when one listens to the Honourable Member, one is sort of captured up in a whirlpool of misdemeanors, corruption, bad behaviour, of all forms of malfeasance.

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

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I do not know if you were listening to the Honourable Member, but the Honourable Member is misleading this Honourable House.

Mr. SPEAKER: I always listen to Honourable Members.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is speaking about misdemeanors and corruption, in reference to members of the Barbados Labour Party. There has been no evidence. They came to Government on

January 15, they were speaking about corruption within the Barbados Labour Party and we have not yet seen a single prosecution.

Mr. Speaker, I am asking that those words be withdrawn. The Honourable Member cannot talk about misdemeanors and corruption, without having the evidence. You can see how the Attorney-General has been looking at him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is not a point of order. Please continue, Honourable Member.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I am saying that one sometimes tends to project how one is on to another individual. Sir, throughout this debate, particularly captured in the statements of the last speaker, was the feeling that somehow the Democratic Labour Party would behave like them.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, on this Floor when he opened the debate on the Constituency Council, spoke to how the Rural Development Commission, a commission under the charge, at that time, of the Member from the Other Side, dispensed whatever it had to do across the 30 constituencies of this country.

Sir, I have the statistics in my head. St. Thomas which was controlled by the Members of the Other Side was not denied. The Constituencies of St. Michael North, St. Peter, St. Michael North East and St. George North were not denied. In some instances more than \$50 000 were expended in some of those Constituencies.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. George North can speak authoritatively to it. We take the representation of the people of this country seriously and we will not divide them, regardless of the tie, neither red nor yellow, but that they need the service of the State.

Sir, through the Rural Development Commission, we ensured that everybody deserving of their fare, got their fare. Therefore, when one listens to the kind of cauterisation by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, one could now understand why they are opposing such a liberating piece of legislation in Barbados.

The history of the Democratic Labour Party is not about denial. It will never be about denial of the wishes of the people of Barbados. We are concerned with the provision of opportunities, but let us go further into the mind of the last speaker. I have captured some of his words. He called them "foolish Councils". Mr. Speaker, a Council is comprised of individuals, so already before one member of a council is chosen, the Honourable Member is calling them foolish.

Asides.

12:00 noon.

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

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. I was clear to point out that I said in the context..

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, are you denying that you used the word?

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: No, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I see no point of order. There is no time to clarify. Honourable Member, please take your seat.

Hon. R.D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I am glad that he has acknowledged that he has called the Councils foolish. I want to re-state the point that not one individual has yet been appointed or ratified by anybody, and they are already foolish, including the people from Grazettes and Eden Lodge, that this Honourable Member suggests that he represents. Sir, it is a travesty upon the good people of Barbados and should be shunned by all and sundry but, my good friend, your day will come, one day, coming very soon, because nobody in Barbados is foolish.

Mr. Speaker, then one heard the use of the word "man rat", that one man rat or two man rats cannot live in the same hole. Sir, that was being used in reference to the establishment of Constituency Councils, relative to the participation to the elected Member of Parliament. Sir, one does not understand this.

Mr. Speaker, I want to make the point because a lot of the Members on That Side, I do not know about all, so I cannot speak about all, but those Members who spent their time doing other things rather than looking after the interest of the people, will not understand the purpose of Community-Based Organisations and they would not understand the purpose of these Constituency Councils.

This country has relied heavily on the work of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in all their various forms. One could well understand the dynamics of the 1950s, the 1960s and the 1970s, when groups like Bristol Rangers Club, coming from the Constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, Blue Birds from in St. Philip, Cultural Society of Youth, Friendship Youth Group from Hothersal, and Sir, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition knows Friendship Youth Group very well, the League of Democratic Youth, Crusaders from St. Patrick's, All Saint's Youth Forum from St. Peter,

Northern Cultural Society, Four Roads Cultural Group, St. Christopher Old Scholars and St. Bartholomew. Sir, right across this country went past the Government's system and the State's system to ensure that development was taking place in the area of their operation.

Mr. Speaker, as we move through the 1980s, the youth movement was dismantled in this country by the Barbados Labour Party. It was completely disembowelled by all kinds of hair-brain schemes and lack of support for these organisations. Sir, they died and they continued to have difficulty.

Mr. Speaker, what this says, is that we will seek to revive and give sustenance to those which are currently in operation. Sir, a lot of them have been replaced by sporting organisations, but they do not have the structure and form of the previous youth organisations and other community-based organisations in this country. Therefore, we rather not put the country through the hurly-burly of rancid, political debate and cut-throat, because a country could only go through that maybe once every five years and, thankfully, this country is Barbados where we do not kill, main and harm. Sir, may be outside of the verbal barbs that may come across the coldness of the night, but we cannot institute in this country that intensely, dangerous levels of vicious partisan behaviour 24/7, 365 days, every five years because this country cannot survive that.

Mr. Speaker, there are Members on the Other Side whose characterisation would like that because that is their mantra and, Sir, it is the only thing they bring to the table. Sir, they curse you, they curse your family and they curse the born and the unborn and that is what they are happy with.

This legislation might not be a perfect legislation, but Sir, from time to time, when they were in Government they brought legislation to this Floor with minor amendments and minor adjustments, but Sir, the passage of time cannot stand still. There are persons in the various communities who need the kind of support and succour, the daily face-to-face contact that this legislation brings and they will not stop it.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I did not have to kick down any doors because when I went in, you did not have them bolted. You were tossed out, so do not worry about it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please direct your comments to the Chair and move on.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, there is some level of passion on this particular matter, because it is well-known that I have been involved in community

organisations from the time I knew myself and that was relatively young. I worked without pay, as many Members on This Side have done over the years.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South is a good product of the Blue Birds and there are many persons in the Civil Service, in senior positions, where their learning began at the basis of the community. Sir, I know them, but the Honourable Member for St. Thomas does not know them. Mr. Speaker, she cannot know them because she had no contact whatsoever with those persons. Therefore, there is an absence of certain creative juices in the minds of persons such as her.

Mr. Speaker, we are encouraging more and more persons to become involved in the development of their country without necessarily having to take from their country. This is one stage in the evolution of the governance process in Barbados. It cannot be the only stage. It is but one stage and it cannot be stopped.

Mr. Speaker, they talked about a Minister having an opportunity to appoint. Sir, I have looked through several pieces of legislation and in all those pieces of legislation is mentioned the word "Minister". I am currently the Minister of Education, until the Prime Minister decides otherwise and I do not ask, as has been the practice, who should constitute the boards of secondary schools in Barbados.

Sir, in my decency, I share it with my colleagues and, Sir, one Board controls \$6 million or \$7 million. This Constituency Council is being given \$100 000 in the first instance. As Minister, I have the right in the Education Act, to appoint, but I share with my colleagues every single member of the Board.

Asides.

Hon. R.D. JONES: I am not going to give you that information to confuse the Board of the Alleyne School. I am not going to give you that opportunity to confuse it because we have had enough confusion in St. Andrew. I am not going to give you the chance to confuse it anymore, so do not bring that to me. Sir, I share with my colleagues; I nominate and recommend good citizens of Barbados to sit on these Boards.

Mr. Speaker, the fundamental point I am making is that as Minister, where there is the control of over \$0.5 billion, every year voted in this Chamber, a substantial portion is passed to secondary schools, where there is a Board of Management, appointed by the Minister and answerable to the Minister, the Cabinet and the people of Barbados through that process. So Sir, what is the problem? Sir, they want to impute the character of those persons.

Mr. Speaker, I heard some imputations from the Honourable Member for St. Michael North that frightens me. Sir, the notion of philanthropy is a good notion and it is a notion that works in schools across the world.

12.10 p.m.

Oprah Winfrey went to South Africa. What do you call her, building two schools for millions of dollars? The Honourable Member did not seek to accuse her of planting those schools in South Africa for under-privileged girls, and say that she was looking for something. He was referring to all philanthropists as persons who are willing to manipulate, coerce and beg persons to their will. That is a most dangerous sentiment and it should be abhorred in this country. This country and this Government have no reason to fear the Democratic Labour Party or the Government of Barbados saying to those who have, share with those who do not have, share it with your Constituency Councils.

Sir, do you see the “Crocodile tear” pretense behaviour? There are stores in town, even when they were in Opposition, at Christmas, that received telephone calls from them. What do you call that? That is philanthropy or do you want to call that begging? I know some of the stores because they could not even step back at the time. They kept on begging to fill their food hampers and they kept on begging to have their Christmas parties. Maybe the only person on That Side who does not beg to that extent is the Honourable Member for Christ Church West.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Everybody else. That is correct. The Honourable Member for St. George North is now hurting and the doors...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please.

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

Mr. G.A. CLARKE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this House. I did not beg a single store in Bridgetown nor did I get a single item. It has nothing to do with me, so he cannot say that all Honourable Members have begged. It is not true and he cannot lump everyone together. I did not receive any item from a store in Bridgetown and we did not send out any items either.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I understand your point of order. That is no point of order. Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, one has to listen carefully to language. “I did not beg for a single item”. Those are the

words of the Honourable Member for St. George North, but you can beg for multiple items. I was told...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please direct your comments to the Chair.

Hon. R. D. JONES: The point that I am making is, there is nothing wrong in this country. There are many benevolent organisations in Barbados, established by both locals and persons who have come to this country and called it their own. There are service organisations, the Rotary, the Lions, the Kiwanis, Jaycees and The Maria Holder Foundation, who have come to this country and fallen in love with Barbados and want to make a contribution to this country.

In fact, and I want to state it here now, the Nursery School to be built in the Constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, no money has been there.

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Money there what? In your head? In your thoughts? A Memorandum of Understanding drawn up with The Maria Holder Memorial Trust, a caucasian lady who has established a substantial Trust in this country to support nursery education, the poor, the under-privilege...

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

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe the Honourable Member should really be as honest as possible.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member. Just a minute Honourable Members. Honourable Member, you need to withdraw that comment.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I can withdraw it. I believe the Honourable Member is misleading the House because he knew that since 2005 a project for a Nursery School at Sharon location was conceived. All the negotiations were done by the League of the Church for an acre of land at Sharon, for the Nursery School. There were funds in the Estimates of 2006-2007, more than \$1 million for the construction of a Nursery at Sharon Primary School.

I have no problem with the Honourable Member trying to win points on the process, but the concept has changed now that another entity has come on board, offering financial assistance to the project. The Honourable Member must not grandstand as though it is his project and as though I know nothing about it. It was my concept, Sir. I

therefore wish the Honourable Member to withdraw the remarks.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I am thankful that the Honourable Member would want to stand and deal with this matter the way she has dealt with it. At no time, if Honourable Members were listening to me, I said that the school to be built is to be built via The Maria Holder Memorial Trust. If money was placed in the Estimates of 2005, they did not use it. It was not in this country. In 2006...

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I have already made the ruling. Let us move on.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Sir, I do not have to go to any gravy train and lick, I leave that to those who like the taste of gravy from cans, so I am not going to get involved in that. I am stating what the facts are. That is the bottom line and the fundamental point that this Honourable Member is making, that there is nothing wrong at all with philanthropy.

Sir, when one adds up the amount of money spent in this country supporting organisations, even sometimes from Honourable Members, that is philanthropy too. What do you call it? Do you think you have to have legislation to say that? Therefore, it is highly offensive for the Honourable Member ...

Asides.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Go and tell Eden Stars that you never supported anything, but two years approaching an Election you are all about the place at the YMCA running about courting "Rastas". That is all you were doing, a waste of time.

Sir, there is a lot of noise from the Other Side, just noise, nothing of substance, has shown abhorrence to the person who will come to this Council. The only difficulty of the Minister and Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, I think that this Government will have is that the people are so enthused with this concept, that we need to get it going as quickly as possible and there are so many persons who have come forward to give service, that some who might not make it in the first tranche, might feel a bit grieved.

All I am saying to those is, and the Bible says it, "Many are called, but few are chosen" in the process, because 13 by 15 equals 450. Sir, let them know that there is nothing wrong in continuing to develop their communities through the Neighbourhood Watch,

community groups, various clubs, attending the meetings of the Constituency Council and ensuring that the Constituency Councils report to them. Therefore, the people of Barbados need not have any worry.

Sir, the good decent men and women of the Democratic Labour Party, that have formed this Government at this time, will ensure that we will not subvert the process, will ensure that we will not be involved in any malfeasance, will ensure that we will not be involved in any corruption whatsoever on this matter, but we bring to the people of Barbados a new system of governance to make them more involved, to make them interface more with the issues that impact on their various communities or work centres. There is nothing wrong with that.

Sir, this Bill will get my wholehearted and enthusiastic support, and anything of this ilk will continue to get.

I thank you.

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

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Mr. Speaker, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak on this important piece of social legislation. In my short time in this Parliament, I realise how difficult it is to be in Opposition. Sir, listening to the Other Side, Opposition politics is very difficult. It causes you, in terms of the politics that we practise, sometimes even when you have legislation like this, which is so socially conscious and so far-reaching to have to find something minor to criticise.

12.20 p.m.

Sir, another aspect is that we want to encourage a volunteer programme as part of the Constituency Councils so that persons would go to the Constituency Councils and say they have a particular skill and ask how can they assist.

Sir, in St. Philip South, I have seen lots of individuals, particularly retirees and the sector that we called "Returning Nationals" who have come back to Barbados with skills and who want to assist. Sir, we are providing an opportunity for them to know where they can go and say they have a particular skill. I used to be a nurse; can I help in terms of blood pressure checks for Gran? Can I help in terms of a health fair? I used to be involved in transport, can I help in terms of discussing your transportation issues?

Sir, what we are saying is that through the volunteer programme, we are going to embrace them and allow them

to come and give us their expertise and we will use it. Sir, that is what the Constituency Councils are there for.

Sir, there is one final point on the Constituency Councils which I have to make. I have noticed that there are many individuals who are reluctant to come to politicians because they do not want to be labelled B, D or E. Moreover, as with practice in the past, if you were not identified by a red shirt, you were not the recipient of Government's social programmes.

Sir, we will put an end to that through the Constituency Councils so that people would know that they do not have to be members of a particular party, or have to wear a particular shirt at night when they are going to public meetings or otherwise, so that when they go to a Constituency Council and say that they have a problem, they would, in fact, receive assistance regardless of what their political persuasions are.

Sir, I am happy about that and I want to encourage the people of St. Philip South to embrace the Constituency Council when we establish it and know, like I have practised, that whatever their concerns, once they can be assisted through the Government channels, they would receive assistance, which is unlike in the past where they had to pledge their loyalty to a political party before they received assistance. Sir, we have had enough of that, and we must put an end to that.

Sir, while recognising that there is no perfect system, we as a Parliament and as a people must embrace what the majority of Barbadians are saying to us, which is that they want to go back to a system where they could have some kind of a localised Government arrangement where they do not have to go down to Bridgetown for everything they want.

In other words, if you are a pensioner, you do not have to get on the Bayfield or the Sam Lord's Castle bus and come down to Bridgetown every time you have an issue, or you want something as simple as a passport form, that you do not have to go down. Those are the kinds of things we want to do. Sir, I want to ensure that my people in St. Philip South can receive as much services as possible in St. Philip South so that they do not have to burden their way into Bridgetown.

Sir, I support the Constituency Councils. I look forward to working with the Minister. I look forward to working with the Constituency Council in St. Philip South when it is established and I am sure that the people of St. Philip South would be better off as a result.

I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.40 p.m. today.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 1.40 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

12.40 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this very historic piece of legislation that is calling for the establishment of a series of Constituency Councils and for related matters.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start out by saluting all individuals who have worked so hard to make this occasion become a reality. Of course, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West and his predecessor in the Ministry, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East would stand out, but we must also acknowledge the Project Team and all of the work that has been done.

I would think this legislation has certainly hit a benchmark in terms of the level of consultation that has occurred in order to make this legislation become reality. There were a series of town hall meetings, a number of submissions, and a whole series of consultations which would have informed the passage of this piece of legislation.

I think what is also quite impressive, and it came through very clearly, certainly at the public meeting I attended at St. Michael School in my Constituency, is that the homework that was done, in terms of looking for the form of local governance or precedence from outside and within the Region, I think, therefore, I should start on that note. Mr. Speaker, I want to do so, not only on my own behalf, but certainly on the behalf of the people I represent, the people of St. Michael South Central.

1.40 p.m.

I want to thank them for giving me this privilege and to say to them that today is the first time that I could actually participate in a debate knowing full well there

would be real, tangible benefits being accrued to my constituents and, Sir, that is a first.

Mr. Speaker, we speak on so many things; we speak on so many Estimates Debates and Supplementaries and, sometimes, we do not know if our constituents would be the beneficiaries, but, Sir, in this case, all of our Constituencies will benefit in a real way and I must start out by saluting this effort.

Mr. Speaker, the context is that the Democratic Labour Party is determined, and has been determined for a while, because we did not wake up on January 16, 2008, and decided to have Constituency Councils. This is something we were shaping and developing while we were in Opposition. Sir, we made good use of our time in Opposition and this is something that maybe the current Opposition could draw from. You could actually do constructive activities while you are in Opposition and we certainly did.

Mr. Speaker, that is why when we came to Government, we could almost hit the ground running. This is not to say that we did not do the necessary consultation, get inputs and so on, but we were able to put a system in place to see that we could have more citizens involved in the decision-making process. Sir, there is absolutely nothing wrong with that.

Mr. Speaker, I salute the fact that we are bringing more citizens into the process without necessarily going back on a decision made by the previous Democratic Labour Party Government in 1967 to repeal Local Government. I think it was a sensible decision, and I do not think we need to go back to Local Government. We need not have the duplication of services or the extra layers of bureaucracy, but what we need is to have an effective vehicle that we could get more people involved in the process. Therefore, I think that aspect of what we are proposing should be acknowledged.

Mr. Speaker, what we have here is an attempt to be fair and equitable in how we go about the distribution of resources. I spoke earlier about having no idea sometimes when you are moving for resources of the State to be spent on Barbadians, whether or not your Constituencies would benefit.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South was quite right when he said that Opposition life can be tough and, Sir, I want to speak about that. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy has actually lived it longer than any other Member of Parliament since Independence, for three terms, and it is tough. However, the most impressive aspect of this legislation is that it protects members of the Opposition and guarantees that they will have a vehicle in which the State's resources could be accessed.

Mr. Speaker, I sat in Opposition for five years and I can say categorically that the Urban Development Commission did not spend five cents in St. Michael South Central. However, if I had a Constituency Council, at least, I would have had an avenue, even if it is polluted, by members of the other Party. Sir, I remember going to the Government of the day and saying "Give credit to my opponents, I do not care," because, Sir, it is not about me, it is about helping people, but that was too great to ask. Sir, it did not work, so I had to sit, wait and bide my time.

However, with these Constituency Councils you have a Constituency, which is considered fair, by way of determining who represents the country in Parliament and the same demographic and geographic boundary will determine how resources are allocated at the community level. I think it makes a lot of sense and, Sir, it is fair.

Mr. Speaker, let us face it, some community groups may benefit to a greater degree from the State's resources, from non-governmental organisations sources and from community-based organisations (CBOs) that may be well-endowed to a different extent.

Mr. Speaker, for example, you had the Pinelands' Creative Workshop that had the subvention of \$1 million. This is a worthwhile group doing good work, but on the other side of Collymore Rock, you had a Britton's Hill Club that did not get one cent of the State's resources. Sir, that cannot be right. Therefore, by having a system that calls for a fair distribution, you get these changes.

Mr. Speaker, you had the Israel Lovell Foundation benefitting to the tune of \$212 000 and doing good work, but under the hill, you had the Quaker's Sports and Cultural Club, a group that is older than the Israel Lovell Foundation and doing just as much good work in Carrington's Village, but got not one cent, because they are on the wrong side of the political fence.

Mr. Speaker, this system takes the politics out of it. Therefore, as a Member of Parliament, under the legislation you are protected. It protects the Opposition Member of Parliament. It protects the Back Bencher. It protects the Cabinet Minister and everyone is basically put on an equal footing, because of how the legislation is worded. Sir, I think that makes a lot of sense.

Mr. Speaker, the legislation actually guarantees that you would have a partnership between the Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) and the Member of Parliament. I do not think it is about man rats. I really think that is not how this thing should be looked at. I think it should be looked at as a partnership.

Mr. Speaker, I must make this point clear. I believe if you look at the Urban Development Commission and at

the Constituency Councils, even at the level of the Minister...

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I have heard a lot about what is being done by the Minister and the power of the Minister, but under the Urban Development Commission legislation the Minister actually had more power. While it is true that the Minister could give directions of a general nature to the Councils, which is fairly normal in governing most statutory authorities, under the Urban Development Commission, you could give directions, as appear to be necessary or expedient, in respect of certain activities.

If you look at the legislation at Section 13(b) and Section 13 (c), Sir, you could see the discretion that a Minister has in terms of what might be expedient, whether it is the disposal or the development of land vested in order to ensure the preservation of features of special architectural or historical interest, or whether it is the subject of the disposal of land held by the Commission in such a manner and subject to such covenants and conditions as may be expedient for the securing of an urban area.

1.50 p.m.

You can see that a minister has substantially more power because of the way resources are deployed under the Urban Development Commission legislation. I find it quite laughable for anyone to suggest that the Urban Development Commission legislation is any way fairer than what is being proposed. As I said, I lived it when I was in Opposition.

It was a fact that MPs from the urban area were invited to meetings, and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central was not invited. Do you know that they had the audacity to meet in these Chambers? Could you imagine a meeting in the Committee Room while I am here on the Floor and all of the members that are affected by the Urban Development Commission are invited to a meeting? But because I was the only urban representative in the Opposition, there was nothing, no invitation.

I would have done anything to have a Constituency Council then, even if it had political opponents on it, because I would take my chances with people who are from the community, whichever Party they support, for they would still take an interest in making sure that things were done in the interest of the constituents. We did not have...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable for St. Andrew.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He is trying

to make us believe that whenever there is a meeting in a Constituency, maybe that was so under the Barbados Labour Party, that the Representative for the area must be invited.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael Central had a meeting in Orange Hill. I did not even know the place. He was invited by someone who lives overseas who was giving land to Government. He was trying to sell land to Government, trying to build a Resource Centre.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West had a meeting in my Constituency, the Constituency of St. Andrew, and I did not know anything about it. I might have the wrong Minister.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: The Minister of Agriculture. No, he is misleading the House. Sir, he had a lady who ran in St. Andrew, who was beaten very badly, acting as Minister of Agriculture, who wanted the whole of Barbados to know that she was acting Minister of Agriculture, and she went to White Hill, St. Andrew and called in the Press, and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew was not invited. So you should not mislead the House to make the public - because this debate is being televised - believe that when there is any activity involved, a representative for a Constituency must be there. It does not happen. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: I notice that the substance of what I said cannot be denied. I am saying categorically that meetings were held for MPs within urban Barbados, while the Barbados Labour Party was in power, and I was deliberately excluded from those meetings, the only reason being, that I was a member of the Opposition at the time, and that is wrong. That is all I am saying. Now I am hearing that meetings dealing with the Urban Development Commission, something that is on the Laws of Barbados, is a Barbados Labour Party meeting. That is why you are in Opposition now.

Sir, I think that the efforts of the legislation deliberately deal with the issues of accountability enshrined in the Act in a major way, is something that should be saluted. Again, the comparison with the Urban Development Commission, the last thing that seemed to exist down there is accountability. That is not the view of the Barbados Labour Party.

The Auditor General, of course, had a lot to say about the way the Urban Development Commission was run, and apparently had some very stout support from the

Honourable Member for St. Michael North, who was very critical of the way in which the Urban Development Commission has been run, since the Honourable Member for St. Andrew had given up responsibility for it.

Sir, by starting on the right footing, Section 9 of the legislation relating to the Constituency Councils gives a very expansive programme of exactly what the role of the Auditor General is, and in terms of what is expected, in terms of accountability. That is extremely important, not burying something towards the end of the Act, as is the case of the Urban Development Commission, a little two or three paragraphs. We have an extensive Section making it very clear that everything will be transparent and accountable. That is why any Council that is properly run and that has a good system of accountability, no one should have any problem placing resources. I am talking about benefactors who may want to associate with something that is uplifting, something that is improving people's lives, something that is empowering people, I think that is something that should be encouraged and there is nothing at all wrong with that once the Councils are run properly.

I am satisfied, based on what I see here, that we will, in fact, have Councils that are accountable, transparent and are well run, unlike what would have obtained through many of those agencies under the last Government, particularly the Urban Development Commission.

Sir, I think that above all, by taking the concept of local governance and spreading it, I think it can do a lot to improve the whole perception of volunteerism and the whole perception of community activism. I think that is something this legislation will do that we probably have not heard as regularly as we should.

There is no doubt that there is rampant apathy towards our Government, but we actually have a chance through empowering our constituents at the community level, to inspire them with a greater sense of community activism. Therefore, I think that opportunity cannot be ignored and that aspect of what we are doing here should be saluted. It can be seen almost as a nursery may be for persons who want to go on to other forms of national service, not necessarily elected office, but whatever direction you wish to go in terms of participating in national service.

Sir, I particularly like the fact that even though each Council will have 15 members, there is the chance for committees of the Councils to be established, so, in essence, it is not about 450 people, we are talking about thousands of people being brought into the fold, being given an opportunity to create the way forward at the community level.

Sir, by making sure that these Committees are restricted to five persons, we are not having any large committees that would necessarily be dysfunctional, but we can have small focussed committees that can take on simple tasks, and improve life for all the residents of all the various communities in our Constituencies.

Sir, I will only say that the position of the Barbados Labour Party is very curious in this debate. I have been able to cite several reasons why this legislation can be supported. Frankly speaking, I am not certain that they are opposed to this legislation as they claim to be. I am hearing that the Councils should be elected, which would make it a form of Local Government.

The Barbados Labour Party had 24 years to re-institute Local Government if they wanted to. It was repealed in 1967. They were in power from 1976-1986, and again from 1994-2008. That is 24 years if they really believed in elected Councils which amounts to a form of Local Government. Surely they would have put it back in place during that period. They never did, so I do not think they are so opposed to it.

2.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are accustomed to hearing these noises. Whenever the Democratic Labour Party is about to do something that is an epoch market, something historic, they will get in a mad scramble, just to oppose it, and then they will come around. They opposed a whole slew of things - Independence, free secondary education, school meals and social partnership.

Everything was opposed and turned around when they were in Government and embraced them. I have no doubt that something as well intentioned, something as genuinely altruistic as this initiative, something that can transform lives, something that can empower people, will be embraced by all.

Asides.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Therefore, I am not at all impressed by what I have heard from the other side. I can only encourage the Honourable Member for St. Michael North

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West to continue to forge ahead and I, certainly, look forward to seeing the Constituency Council in St. Michael South Central established as, indeed, I look forward to all of the Constituency Councils established throughout Barbados. It does not matter which side of the aisle you are on and, I think, that is the point I want to end on.

Sir, I think that is really the ultimate litmus test of politicians who genuinely are interested in making a difference in their country and improving the lot of our citizens. Fairness will obtain and you will have a Council, no matter whether you are in Opposition or in Government and everyone is getting the same \$100 000 to start with. Oh what I would have done with \$100 000 in work, when I was in Opposition, but I could not get it. Nonetheless, we now have a system that is fair, and everyone will get an opportunity to benefit. Therefore, I commend the work that has been done in bringing us to this point. I am totally supportive of this legislation.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

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Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I note that in none of the presentations on That Side, they had anything positive to say about the previous holder of the office responsible for Constituency Councils. The Honourable Member for Christ Church East seems to be in the wilderness. He has been forgotten and one would have thought that something good would have been said about the work which the Honourable Member for Christ Church East put in, with respect to the Constituency Councils.

Needless to say that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East is my good friend and he has had his own experiences in my Constituency. I certainly do not expect to see him back in this House after the next Election.

Mr. Speaker, I never intended to speak in this House on this particular piece of legislation. I seriously thought that this legislation would have been withdrawn. I have been in this House since 1991, and when I look at this legislation, and I smell the stench coming from this legislation - I could understand why - the Honourable Member for St. Joseph is telling me, the foul odour -

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another whom I support 100 per cent would want to refer to the word "stinking", with respect to this legislation, not that I agree with the term. It is like a reflex action when you are playing cricket, a person bowls a long hop, you are a poker and you have to swipe. This is the most dangerous piece of legislation since I was a Member of this House.

The importance of this legislation has been gleamed by the Members on the Government side, seeing that they have decided to have a televised debate on this legislation with Constituency Councils. I have been in this House

since 1991 and never in the past have we seen a Bill being televised.

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I was elected to this House in 1994, and I sat on That Side of the House. There were amendments to the Vagrancy Act that were televised. The Social Investment Fund legislation was televised. A number of other pieces were

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televised, when the Barbados Labour Party was in office, because it was a stated policy of the Barbados Labour Party to televise as many debates as possible, as part of its assumed programme of accountability.

The Honourable Member is obviously misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of what he speaks. I am repeating that since I was in this House, I have not seen any debate being televised. The point has nothing to do with whether or not it has been televised. The point is that because of the importance of this debate, the Government has seen it fit to have the debate televised. That means it is an important debate, and for Honourable Members on that side to get up and speak about this is just a Bill for Constituency Councils and that we have mentioned it in our Manifesto, and it is not important whether or not persons are elected, is beside the point.

The Members made light of this point. I am warning

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Members. I will come to it a little later, but we are not going to be in this House 50 years from now. Whatever you might think about the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, however much you must boost his integrity, and however much you feel that he might select 450 people of integrity, who will represent the constituencies in this country, in the way that they should be, to the upliftment of the community, we do not know about the bandits that will come after us.

This Bill has nothing to do with the Barbados Labour Party. It has nothing to do with the Democratic Labour Party. It has nothing to do with the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. It has nothing to do with the

Honourable Member for St. Thomas. It has nothing to do with the Prime Minister.

Since I have been in this House, I have heard a lot of things being said about members in the Opposition, the worst possible things said about members in Government. I must tell you that the bad things I have heard about the Members on that side, have not been said by us. They have

been said by their own people, but I do not believe them. That is politics. Sir, when I heard certain things about the Member, the worst things I have ever heard about a Member in this House, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, not by us, and I do not believe them.

Sir, I did not come to this House in a wheelbarrow. The only person that probably came to this House in a wheelbarrow was probably the Honourable Member for St. John because he was actually given a safe seat. No wonder he cannot understand what it is for the Honourable Member for St. James South to send out Birthday Cards to his constituents because according to him, that is not representation.

Mr. Speaker, I am just saying that this legislation is not about us. I believe that the Honourable Member for St. John, the Honourable Member for the City, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, all the Honourable Members on that side, people of outstanding integrity, because I have never heard anything which would make me believe that they are dishonest.

Who could tell in 20 years from now that we might not have - I used the word, bandits - a group of unscrupulous people, occupying the corridors of power of Parliament.

2.10 p.m.

This is the reason why we have to look at this legislation very carefully.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the Honourable Members on That Side have not looked at this legislation very carefully. Even on That Side, Honourable Members are not even clear why their political party would want to inflict on the people of Barbados, legislation that takes away the rights which people like the late Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams and the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow wanted to enshrine, not just in our Constitution, but in the psyche of all Barbadians.

Mr. Speaker, we speak of democracy and when we talk of democracy, we always have a way of looking at the United States of America for some reason or the other and we normally use that definition by Abraham Lincoln,

‘government of the people, government by the people and government for the people.’

When the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West was speaking, he was very loud. By the way, he was speaking in his seat and he shifted from his seat to the seat of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, then he shifted to the seat of the Honourable Member for St. James South and to the seat of the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown. He shifted all about the place. I was watching it on television and when I saw the little strings in his neck, it reminded me of President Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Mr. Speaker, we have to understand that this legislation is not about us, that it is about our children and our children’s children. Mr. Speaker, even when you look at the legislation in the United States of America, democracy has not shifted. It has been refined and it has matured to the point where you were looking...

In the days when people were talking about democracy of the people, by the people and for the people, they were talking about white men. They did not include black men and women, but now we have a black man being the President of the United States of America. Mr. Speaker, if you transfer that to Barbados, the late Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams and those people who fought for our democracy, had to do the same thing.

Mr. Speaker, we had a situation up to 1951, where women were denied the right to vote. I could tell you that apart from, maybe one or two, I do not know, I would not like to call names, but I doubt very much that the forefathers of any of us in here in the 1940s - I will use the Honourable Member for St. Michael South as a barometer, not that I am picking on him, but I am sure that his grandparents were not able to vote.

Mr. Speaker, we fought very hard for that democracy and having fought for that democracy, we do not want Parliament now to come and say that this is a light matter. It has nothing to do with anything fundamental. Mr. Speaker, there is a fundamental difference between our position of having 450 people hand-picked by one person and persons elected by the Electorate of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed when I heard the Prime Minister on my television talking about only three persons voted in St. Andrew. Are you going to tell me that if we have an Election next time and the Democratic Labour Party tries to perpetuate a one-party state in this country and the people of St. Andrew decide that they are not going to the polls and if only three people vote, then we would have legislation coming back to Parliament to ensure that no longer would people in St. Andrew be allowed to

vote? That is the argument that they are using, although I believe that the three votes would be for me.

Mr. Speaker, if I had any doubt, when I listened to the Prime Minister on my television - I want to get back to that point, but I might not be able to get back to it - talking about when you are in Government, obviously you have a right to control the airwaves - not exactly in that language.

Sir, three years ago, he was on my television as Leader of the Opposition and my political leader, who is the undisputed leader of the Barbados Labour Party - there are no problems within our ranks - the next Prime Minister of Barbados within the next three years, cannot get on television to air the views, not just of the Barbados Labour Party, but the views of the people.

Mr. Speaker, if I had any doubts that the Democratic Labour Party had some other motive was when...

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, I was very disappointed when I listened to the Prime Minister on Sunday night and his explanation. Mr. Speaker, he is backing the Constituency Councils 100 per cent. Sir, we have no quarrel with that, because whether it is the Prime Minister, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West or some person with a nickname of CLICO, who is responsible for this legislation, the important thing is that he has to support this legislation 100 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, if I had any doubts as to any ulterior motives... I heard the Prime Minister indicating that this Administration is putting power, serious words. This Bill is not about power. This Bill is about our democracy and it is a threat to our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, it is an insult to our democracy to come and tell us that one man is going to nominate 450 people. This would mean that I would have nothing to do with this Bill when it comes to choosing the Constituency Council for St. Andrew.

Mr. Speaker, you have a Prime Minister on television addressing the nation. We are dealing with the threats to our democracy and he is coming and telling us that this Bill is putting power. This Bill is not about power, this Bill is about our democracy. It is a threat to what the late Right Excellent Sir Grantley Adams and the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow held dear.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of people do not understand that violence and force are part of our democracy. You have to resort to violence on occasions in order to uphold your democracy. Mr. Speaker, we have to be careful what we are doing with what. Some of the Honourable Members on

That Side called a simple piece of legislation, is not misplaced. There are so many things on this Bill, that I find it a little difficult.

This is a serious thing because they are bringing a Bill to establish 30 Constituency Councils. In their Manifesto, they did not indicate that they would have any Election but you have brought a Bill. They have also indicated in their Manifesto on the same page...

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: In their Manifesto, they immediately introduced integrity legislation. They mentioned in their Manifesto that they are going to introduce integrity legislation, but they did not mention that they are going to introduce legislation for Constituency Councils.

2.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, the integrity legislation must come before.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: No, you do not understand, because the integrity legislation must come before the establishment of the Constituency Councils, because the members of these Constituency Councils should have to declare their assets as well.

Mr. Speaker, in the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto, it talks about "immediately. You know, there is a little expression we like to use in Law when we know we are on the right side and somebody wants to sue, "Whatever thou doest, doest quickly". Sir, the Democratic Labour Party's Manifesto uses the word "immediately", so I thought that you would have done quickly the introduction of the integrity legislation but the integrity legislation, also includes a declaration of assets by public officials and a code of conduct for Ministers.

Sir, could you imagine my Prime Minister on my television - because he is also my Prime Minister as well - is telling me - I am looking for that part about declaration of assets, because I do not want to misquote him. I have been fairly fair to him up to this day.

Mr. Speaker, these are my notes. Trinidad and Tobago made such an attempt, but encountered serious problems. He, meaning the Honourable Member for St. John, could declare his own assets right away, but there were currently no means of verifying whether assets, ostensibly declared by anyone in or out of Parliament, represented the true picture.

Mr. Speaker, what nonsense is this? You are telling us that you are going to bring legislation immediately for persons in public office to declare their assets, you are bringing legislation which assumes that these people would declare their assets, yet you are not bringing that legislation first. You are bringing that legislation with respect to the Constituency Councils.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation has absolutely no place in here. I am hoping that Members on That Side would realise that this legislation, and I repeat it again, has nothing to do with us. It has nothing to do with them. It has nothing to do with the Democratic Labour Party, it has nothing to do with the Barbados Labour Party, but we are going to have some strange people occupying the corridors of power, 10, 15 and 20 years down the road.

Mr. Speaker, I came to this Honourable House in 1991, and when I look around, I am only seeing one person who was in here at that time. I came in as a young person. I am still a young man in my early 50s', for those who want to cast aspersions on my age.

Asides.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, we have to be careful. I would still urge Honourable Members on That Side to consider the withdrawal of this legislation. Sir, I say this against the background of the timing of this legislation. We are into an international recession. There are economic problems facing countries all over the world, even in the Caribbean.

In addition to that, we should be able to learn a lesson from what has happened, not to CLICO. We understand CLICO, and I could understand the dilemma that the Honourable Member for St. John is in. I have a good friend, I believe in my friends. Sometimes you do not know whether to move forward or backwards when dealing with your friend. I am not going to encourage anybody to send my good friend to jail, even though if it were in another country, I believe that my friend would have been in jail. We do not have the legislation here to put certain people in jail. I believe there are certain people, in this whole scenario, who I believe would be in jail.

Mr. Speaker, at this particular point, we should be discussing certain stimulus packages to stimulate the economy. We should be employing a bi-partisan approach to the problems facing our economy, even CLICO. Sir, I say the problem we are facing is not so much our economic problem. CLICO is not a serious problem as the other problems.

What Antigua has experienced should be a lesson to us, where persons coming to a small country like ours, wielding financial influence, where Antigua fell for it and

now a whole country is destroyed. That is what we should be discussing.

I believe that Government should be discussing bipartisan ways of dealing with the economic situation and not a Bill dealing with Constituency Councils. I understand what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North has said about this Bill. This Bill is rubbish.

Sir, when you look as far back as 1997, when Senator the Honourable Velma Newton did her report 12 years ago, Senator Newton was telling us - and we did not have any economic problems at that time. Sir, I quote:

"At this stage of our development, when it is clear that the Government has difficulty finding sufficient funds to provide adequately for education, health, welfare, and other services, any Administration which would consider setting up another tier of Government, instead of trying to see how a 'net needs' could be catered by improvements in the present system, would be foolhardy."

Mr. Speaker, that was in 1997. We are having serious problems in 2009, yet we are here discussing foolishness. I support the Honourable Member. It was cauterisation. This legislation should not have come before this Honourable House. It is foolishness.

Mr. Speaker, I speak about a threat to our democracy. I am proud of the Constituency I represent.

Sir, Ernie Bourne was the first female Member of Parliament and I will live to see the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East becoming the first female Prime Minister of Barbados, in three years' time, because I am told by Honourable Members on That Side that with the implosion that is likely to take place. Sir, I like to use the word "implosion". The Honourable Member for St. Joseph is prompting me with the word "mutiny", but "mutiny" is a little too harsh.

Mr. Speaker, why is this fascination? I had to ask myself why is there this fascination about Constituency Councils? Sir, it tells me that the Honourable Members or whoever is responsible, that this is just one little example, one little piece of the armour.

Sir, there are persons within the Democratic Labour Party, whether they are over there or elsewhere, whether they have a nickname "Cluco", or some other nickname, they have some other motive. We have seen signs, and I believe that 90 per cent of Honourable Members over there are probably not aware there are persons who they know nothing about, who want to control, not just the Democratic Labour Party or this Honourable House but the Government of Barbados. Sir, I am not saying it is CLICO, and I told you the lessons to be learnt from Antigua with

respect to the Stanford saga, but we have to look. We have to think as to whether or not somebody somewhere.

Asides.

2.30 p.m.

I want you to really consider this. It may not be in your psyche right now. You may dismiss it but I am seeing signs of a one-party State in this legislation. Sir, I want to hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, because I know what he thinks about matters like these. It would have been good to have him over here speaking about this legislation. If he is true to himself, he will not speak at all in this debate, unless he wants to support the position of the Barbados Labour Party, the true democratic that he is.

Mr. Speaker, I am seeing signs of a one-party State and, if I had any doubts, even though the language might not be like the Honourable Prime Minister, when he talked about power, because the Honourable Member for St. John fully understands the difference between power and democracy. I would not get into any argument about anybody to say that the Prime Minister does not understand that, and Sir, he understands that and, on a scale of 10, I would give him 10 with respect to understanding that. Sir, that is the type of respect I have for the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, when the Prime Minister goes on television and talks about power, you are giving one person power to appoint 450 people and you are talking about power in the hands of 450 people. Sir, you have to look at the power that is being given to these 450 people to perpetuate the Democratic Labour Party in Government and the one-party State to which I alluded.

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

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, remember I lost a lot of time. Sir, we saw signs very early in this administration of that one party State psyche. I have said it before, I will say it again and I am going to repeat it during the next three years until the people of Barbados understand what they are up against.

Sir, at a Cabinet meeting, I think it was the first Cabinet meeting, a Cabinet could meet and dismiss a public official for doing his job. Sir, that is victimisation and, Mr. Speaker, we have seen victimisation at all levels within the past year within the public sector. There has been victimisation throughout the length and breadth in the public institutions of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, what you have now are members in charge of Statutory Corporations with the agenda of the

Democratic Labour Party, sending out memos, and Sir, it is victimisation and it is harassment. There is dismissal, intimidation, tormenting...

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The meeting to which he must be referring is the Barbados Labour Party Cabinet, when in 1994, they dismissed four top leaders of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you need to be winding up now.

Mr. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Speaker, the Government has no say in the affairs of the Civil Service. I hope you understand that and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, at that time, was under the Minister of Health and it had nothing to do with the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say that when we speak about force in a democracy, that people, at times, have to resort to force in order to maintain their democracy.

We have seen a lot of citizens in Grenada took it for granted that what the then Prime Minister was doing was in the interest of the country, not realising that he was bent on a one-party State, but then the people of Grenada had to use violence and force in order to maintain their democracy, which they fought very hard for.

Mr. Speaker, I have to be careful in this small country that with these Constituency Councils and the way they are being organised and put together, that the people of Barbados will not in 10 years or 15 years from now descend to that level, that there will be an uprising in Barbados and that what we never thought would have happened in Grenada, happens in Barbados. Sir, I will be one of the first, God forbids, to take up arms in order to protect our democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you.

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

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I rise to make a very brief intervention in this debate and to add a supporting voice to the Constituency Councils Bill, introduced by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. I add a supporting voice to this Bill because its purposes are at one with what I believe good progressive Government should be doing.

Mr. Speaker, at Clause 4 of the Bill, the purposes of the Councils are set out as:

“(a) improving the delivery of social services to constituents.

(b) effectively and efficiently assisting in the management of resources assigned for the development of each Constituency within a framework of good governance.”

Sir, I think that these purposes are commendable purposes, and I want to take this opportunity to congratulate the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West for the hindsight, the insight and the foresight that would have given him to treat this matter with the sense of urgency, which is so obvious ever since this matter has been introduced to this House.

I have heard quite a bit said in this debate by Honourable Members on the Other Side and I heard the word “democracy” used with gay and sometimes, reckless abandon. I was reminded, of course, of Winston Churchill’s famous statement that sometimes when he hears people talk about democracy, he imagines democracy to be a harlot perched at a street corner and armed with a tommy gun.

Sir, I have not heard so much about democracy in this Chamber for as long as I have been in it. It is true that in the 1974 Constitution Debate, the then Leader of the Opposition, the late J. M. G. Adams, did indicate that it was notorious that Oppositions are more interested in democracy than Governments.

Of course, he proved it, because while in Opposition, he proclaimed all the virtues of democracy, but when he got into Government, it was he who tried to introduce the Emergency Powers Bill, that would wipe out practically all the democratic rights about which the Honourable Member for St. Andrew spoke with such passion a few minutes ago.

Mr. Speaker, the charge against the Government, the charge the Government is called upon to answer, is that we, by introducing this piece of legislation, are threatening democracy in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, many years ago, I believe it was in the year 1962, the English political scientist, Bernard Crick, authored a book to which he gave the title “In Defence of Politics”, and both at the level of title and at the level of content, Professor Crick accentuated the need from time to time to defend politics, to defend it from those who

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would try to dilute its essences, defend it from those who would try to pervert its purposes. Having sat and listened to the debate, especially the contributions coming

from the Other Side of this House, I am satisfied that politics has to be defended in this Chamber.

Sir, to discuss politics as though it had no belly, no bowels, only consonants and vowels is to mistake, in my view, what politics is ultimately about. When we get past all the definitions and all of the nice distinctions between words, ultimately, what politics is about is the use of power to enhance the lives of people. That is what this Bill is about. Therefore, let it be widely known and clearly understood, that we on This Side of the House are unequivocally committed to passing this Bill in this Chamber, when it comes to an end and when the matter is put, because we are convinced that it is for the betterment of the disadvantaged and voiceless in Barbados. We are convinced that it fills a lacuna in the public life of Barbados in terms of the delivery of service to people and in terms of the solving of their everyday problems.

Sir, it is not as though, in introducing the Constituency Councils Bill, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central indicated, we got up one morning and had a brain wave, and came to the conclusion that this legislation should be introduced. Barbados was, so the historians say, settled in the year 1627 and two years later, a Governor by the name of Sir William Tufton, thought that for the better administration of this country, it should be divided into parishes. He thought that six parishes were enough for Barbados and he so divided it.

Each parish was administered by some form of Government. The form of Government at that time was called a Vestry and, of course, the system of Vestry, or the introduction of the system of Vestries were virtually coterminous, with the introduction of Anglicanism in Barbados, so that the Chairman of the Vestry was usually the parish Priest, so Barbados had local Government even before it had Parliamentary Government, because Vestries came to Barbados exactly 10 years before this Parliament was established. We had Local Government before we had parliamentary Government.

Then came 1631, when another Governor, Philip Bell, thought that six parishes were not enough and he increased the number from six to 11, the 11 which we have to this very day. So five more Vestries were added and Barbados has had a system, therefore, of parliamentary practice and Local Government from 1627 to 1958, when the Vestries were abolished and Local Government was introduced.

Sir, I hear a lot of talk about these Constituency Councils not being democratic, that the Government, by introducing these Constituency Councils is threatening democracy, because rather than opt for Election of the Councils, we have opted for selection of the Councils. So in the mind of the Opposition, there is an equation between

voting and democracy. There was voting in Barbados from 1627 when Vestries were introduced up to 1951, and although there was voting in Barbados, there was no democracy, because the overwhelming majority of people in this country, did not have the right to vote. So the idea that because you can vote, or because certain people can vote, you have a democracy, and where people cannot vote there is no democracy, is really a logical and also a philosophical howler which we on This Side reject because, of course, it does not accord with Barbados' history, and it certainly does not accord with political reality in any other part of the world.

For the full period of apartheid in South Africa, there was voting, but there was no democracy, because 20 million could not vote while 6 million, who controlled State power, could. So because people can vote or because there is a system of voting, does not mean there is democracy.

Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe, told the same story after the Unilateral Declaration of Independence in 1965. I do not understand what Honourable Members on the Other Side are trying to communicate when they say that this Bill is a threat to democracy.

In any event, using their argument, this Bill does not stop anybody who could vote now from voting. People voted in the last Election and there will be another Election and they will be able to vote again. The right to vote has not been taken away. We still have a Parliament in which we are speaking on this Bill, because democracy is alive and well in Barbados. Somehow, Honourable Members on the Other Side have gone wide of the mark, in trying to claim that this Bill is a threat to democratic practice in Barbados.

In 1951, Universal Adult Suffrage was introduced in this country. That is when what we would call real democracy happened, because all the property and income qualifications that formally applied in the society were removed, and the only qualification was age 21. Even then, there were people in the society who would claim it was not democratic either, because they could not participate in the voting process either. It was subsequently reduced to age 18.

There are still people in the society who can complain that the society is not democratic, because they cannot participate in the voting processes either. Sir, persons under age 18 in Barbados cannot vote in Elections. They can claim that the society is not democratic, because it excludes them from the decision-making processes, and on and on we can go.

Sir, that is why when Nelson Mandela came out of prison and began to discuss democracy in South Africa, he

went on record as saying that it was his view that 14-year-olds should have the right to vote, but South Africa has not made that change. Democracy ultimately is, and remains all that it has ever been, a method at arriving at decisions, a method by which people who the Accident and Emergency Department deemed to be politically relevant, influenced the decision-making process.

Sir, what has happened in Barbados today is, persons who are under the age of 18 are not deemed to be politically relevant, so relevant as to allow them to directly influence the decision-making process.

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We deemed persons at age 18 and over as politically relevant for those purposes. It was not always so, as I have just indicated. Therefore, all of this talk, Mr. Speaker, of this Bill being a threat to democracy, makes no sense, in my view, because no rights that Barbadians now have are being taken away by anything contained in this Bill.

In fact, rights that Barbadians did not have before, are being granted in this Bill, because 450 persons - as the Prime Minister so well pointed out on television on Sunday night - who previously would not have had access to the decision-making processes - after this Bill has been passed and the regulations have been put in place, they are at present occupying the attention of the Government - will be part of the decision-making process. Therefore, this Bill broadens democracy. It does not cause it to contract, and it does not undermine it. In fact, it strengthens democracy.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised about any of this. Mr. Speaker, I have been around this place for a while and I sat in the public gallery of this Chamber in 1974 and listened to the famous Constitution debate. Of course, before sitting in the public gallery, I was in the courtyard. I saw when a young man with an Afro comb, nearly punched out the eyes of the then Prime Minister, the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, so inflamed with this society, or certainly elements of it, over the fact that the Constitution which we had settled in 1966, was going to be changed.

The then Barbados Labour Party Administration was telling all who would listen to them, that democracy was under threat, that we were going to have a One Party State, that Barrow was going to be a dictator, that Elections were going to be abolished, and that the Judges would not be able to make decisions, in and of themselves, because they would have to do what the Prime Minister wanted. All of that was said. The Debate is still available. It can be read.

Mr. Speaker, those Amendments were passed in 1974. We are now living 34 years later and of those 34 years, the Barbados Labour Party was in Government for 24 years. Sir, not one of those Amendments made in 1974 has been reversed by the Barbados Labour Party.

In fact, all the appointments of judges, the facility to appoint Judges had been utilised by successive Administrations of the Barbados Labour Party, and truth to tell, the system has worked well, largely. But all of the hysteria that was sought to be stirred up in 1974, has come to naught, because the very systems that the Barbados Labour Party was saying then would undermine democracy have, in fact, strengthened it.

Barbados is a strong and vibrant democracy as a result of those changes. Let us be very clear about that, so what we are hearing today is déjà vu. I have heard it all before and I am not moved by it. We on This Side are not moved by it. This Bill is going to be passed this afternoon.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, of course, this would not be the most signalled achievement of the Government since it came to office, I have to confess. We had some very interesting contributions coming from the Other Side of the House, that of the Honourable Member for St. James North, always a serious Parliamentarian and a thoughtful debater, and less usually, but commendably, the Honourable Member for St. George North.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Sir, both Honourable Members really supported the Bill. They obviously took cognisance of their Party's allegiance, the need to close ranks with the Opposition, but when you read the fine print of all that they have said, the truth is, they have no fundamental problems with this Bill. I commend them. I applaud them for towing the Party line and when the division is called, I expect them to vote with their Party, but I want publicly to thank both of them for the support they have given to this Bill.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Sir, we had another very signalled achievement of the Government in this debate. All those people who believe that the age of miracles is over, must now have a change of heart on that issue, for this Government can, perhaps, be described as the only Government in the history of Barbados to have brought a measure to Parliament that so ruffled the placidity of a Member of the House that it caused the dumb to speak.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: The Honourable Member for St. Andrew, who for many years behaved in this Chamber as though his tongue had been ripped out...

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: ...found it today, and had to find it, because of the contents of this legislation. It is true that the contribution will not go down as one of his better contributions and, of course, it has a lot of competition...

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: ...but he spoke, expressed himself with some passion, and left us all, in no doubt, of course, that whenever occasion presents itself, he will ensure that he lets no opportunity pass to deliver himself of the un-wisdom that resides in him.

Asides.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, here we are, dealing with a piece of legislation that seeks to fill a void in Barbadian politics. Sir, this void existed for many years. It has to be conceded that with all the failings of Local Government, it still filled something in the nature of a void, which has not been filled since its abolition.

Now, I do not want to see Local Government back. I accept all the reasons given in the Jackson Report for the transfer of certain services to the Central Government.

I note that in that Local Government debate, when the Councils were being abolished, that the late Right Excellent Sir Grantley Herbert Adams, who was then leading the Barbados Labour Party did not speak in the debate. The late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, who was then Leader of the Democratic Labour Party, did not speak in the debate either, and the late Ernest Deighton Mottley, who was the Leader of the Barbados National Party, and who stood to lose most from the abolition of Local Government did not speak in the debate either. Therefore, that left me with the clear impression that the abolition of the three Councils, was not a big issue to the three leaders of the three Parties in Barbados at the time.

I really do not want to see it come back. It never attracted a large segment of the voting population, neither that nor the Vestries that preceded it. But this lacuna, this void that existed, and conscious of the existence of that void, the Barbados Labour Party came to this House around 1996, their response to the void was to divide Barbados into urban and rural and to establish two

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Commissions. One to provide services to rural Barbados and the other to provide services to urban Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I sat in here and participated in the debate and I heard the rationale for the existence of those two Commissions.

Mr. Speaker, the rationale given generally, was that there were certain services that needed to reach the people and needed to be fast-tracked and that the best way to do it was to establish these two Commissions.

Mr. Speaker, I heard a lot of talk in this debate about how the Democratic Labour Party is contriving to so structure these Constituency Councils that the Barbados Labour Party held Constituencies would be disadvantaged.

Mr. Speaker, when the Rural Development Commission was being debated in this Chamber, the Honourable Member for St. John and I went downstairs to lunch and we were confronted by the Honourable Member for St. Peter and other Honourable Members of the Barbados Labour Party, some not in this Chamber now, and were told they were setting up this Rural Development Commission, and then they were going to set up an Urban Development Commission and when they throw some money behind both, the Democratic Labour Party would be dead.

Sir, we understand the fears of the Barbados Labour Party, because they honestly believe that we would try to behave in the same way, which is not true. We are committed to an equitable distribution of this country's resources across Constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, over the last 15 years, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has consistently, insistently and persistently agitated for that equitable distribution of this country's resources across Constituencies in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, this Democratic Labour Party is faithful to the ideals of the Honourable Member and we are going to ensure, as the Minister has indicated, that the resources of Barbados are fairly distributed across constituencies. Mr. Speaker, we know that the Bill does not go as far as the Honourable Member for St. Lucy would have wished, but this represents a start. We are going to make sure that we do not lead our footprints down those horrible paths which we have inherited from the Barbados Labour Party.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West were systematically excluded from the benefits conferred by the Urban Development Commission, on no grounds other than the fact that they were the Democratic

Labour Party's Members of Parliament for those Constituencies. The then Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, when he had his Damascus road experience, was taken off the hit list leaving only the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central on that list.

Mr. Speaker, at a meeting over which the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East presided, the Director told her to give him a blank cheque and he will get her all the seats in St. Michael, and that happened. I am not saying that the Honourable Member is complicit in it. I am not saying that at all, but that happened.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order. I really thus far have been reluctant to interfere with the flow of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, but it is a distinct and clear untruth to suggest that any Director of any Commission indicated to me to give him a blank cheque and he would guarantee the seats in St. Michael. It is untrue. It is not a behaviour that I normally associate with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, and it perhaps reflects the level of desperation that Government reflects with its defensive posturing in this Bill.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, your time has expired immediately and you need to wind up at this time.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mercifully. Sir, it may be that the Honourable Member did not hear when she was told it, but it means that all the other persons present in that meeting lied, but that happened.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, as I conclude, I repeat that we on This Side of the House are committed to the support of this Bill and to achieving this objective as set out in Clauses 5 (a) to (g). We look forward to being of better service to the people of Barbados than has up to now been the case, because of the absence of pieces of legislation of this kind.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, as I start in this debate, I would wish to first of all salute the Honourable Members who have spoken on This Side for articulating the policy of the Barbados Labour Party, the concerns of the Barbadian public and indeed, the desire to ensure that this country does not see the hands of time roll back.

Mr. Speaker, may I also say that not only do I believe that all Honourable Members on This Side spoke very well, but it bears repetition for me to speak to really

what are the two dividing points between the Opposition and the Government. Much has been said in here today, and the previous Tuesday and the previous Tuesday, to try to confuse what really is the division between the Government and the Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I shall attempt today in the few minutes that are available to me to speak to it, because I believe this to be a serious debate and one that, in fact, would influence the character of this country, the social capital that we are capable of continuing to rely on, and ultimately the quality of life that Barbadians would benefit from.

Mr. Speaker, two actions of the Democratic Labour Party were taken within the last 40 years that have influenced events in this country significantly. Sir, very often when we pass legislation in here, we are not aware of the consequences fully that it would have on the functioning of our society, and the values that it may erode in our society.

First, in 1967, much had been said about the decision to abolish Local Government in this country. In fairness to those who spoke in that debate, there was speculation whether the centralisation of services would, in fact, lead to the efficient delivery of services to the people who needed them at the community level in Barbados. Mr. Speaker, that was a genuine reflection.

Secondly, there was the same 1974 constitutional debate to which the last Honourable Member who spoke referred. In that debate was the contention that the decision of the Prime Minister, to be able to have the right to make temporary appointments to the Public Service, was one that would lead to the politicisation of the Public Service.

Mr. Speaker, I think that it is fair to say that in both cases, fears that were expressed at the time at the passage of the Bill in relation to the abolition of Local Government, and the Amendments to the Constitution in relation to appointments by the Prime Minister, were legitimate criticisms that we have seen come to pass in one way or another over the course of the last 35 to 40 years.

3.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, if I can perhaps start with the First 1974 Constitutional Amendment.

Sir, the last Honourable Member said that the Barbados Labour Party has done nothing to reverse those Amendments, but the Honourable Member, I believe as Deputy Prime Minister of this country, is acutely aware of the fact that the Public Service Act, passed in December 2000, now vests the power of temporary appointments in the Public Service Commission, not in the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, secondly, in relation to the more substantive issue for this debate, there have been genuine concerns across Barbados that services delivered by Statutory Boards, have not been efficiently delivered to the benefit of those persons who most need them.

Sir, there is no divide between the Government and Opposition on that point. Indeed, the National Commission on Law and Order, which I would have recommended to Cabinet for its appointment, and whose Report exists, states clearly in Chapter 4, "Governance in Civil Society" that there was, in fact, in their consultations and walk-a-bouts, a clear recognition that services directly provided through Ministries or Statutory Corporations, have not necessarily given the most satisfactory service, and that in some instances, there has been inappropriate management and excessive political patronage.

Mr. Speaker, that is the Barbados that this Parliament faces today. That is the Barbados that both political parties faced as it entered the last Election. That is why in both Manifestos there was an attempt to address the issue of how do you deepen the level of participation on the part of ordinary Barbadians in the governance of their affairs.

In the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto, under the Chapter "Governance of Barbados" we speak to it. We speak to it by stating specifically that we would seek to widen the participation of people in their communities by the establishment of Community-Based Organisations, to work with Government Departments and Statutory Boards on the delivery of services at the local level, and that it will be mandatory for those organisations to report on a quarterly basis.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party spoke to it too. In their Manifesto at page 46, they indicated that the Democratic Labour Party will put systems in place, to reverse the trend of concentrating power into fewer and fewer hands, as well as to attempt to rekindle trust and confidence, in the system of Parliamentary Elections and Constituency representation.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, to the public of Barbados, there is no divide between the two main political parties in relation to the issue of deepening the power into the hands of ordinary people, to be able to assist in the delivery of services. Sir, the difficulty comes, not in the objective, but in the manner in which we seek to achieve it.

Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Labour Party believes it is fine to select, through a Minister, 450 persons to serve in 30 Constituency Councils. The Barbados Labour Party said: "No, we do not believe that selection is appropriate, that each and every one of us who sits in this Honourable Chamber is only here because the people whom we

represent have chosen us, and that if you are therefore, asking ordinary Barbadians to act in a representative capacity on behalf of the people whom they are living among, it is only fair that those people have the right to elect them and not to have them hand-picked by a single person.”

Sir, it is ironic that the Democratic Labour Party’s Manifesto should speak in terms of not wanting to concentrate power into fewer and fewer hands, but that this Bill does not do it in fewer and fewer hands, but vests that power in the hands of one person only, for the sElection of those 450 persons.

Mr. Speaker, while we would want more people, therefore, to be involved in the exercise of Government, and while there is agreement that we should not go back to formal Local Government, we find it repugnant that there should be an attempt to have that power for the manner of appointment vested in one person.

It is further compounded by the absence of transparency and accountability in the Schedule, which does not require the Minister to indicate how many nominations came in, where the nominations are coming from, or how he would deal with them.

Sir, I trust and hope that we would not have a system in Barbados, where we do not know whether or not there were 30, 50 or 100 nominations, neither would we know what is the basis for the selection of the nominations.

Sir, what is curious is that our system of Government recognises that the manner of the exercise of discretion by the Executive, can sometimes be arbitrary and can sometimes be lacking in transparency. Sir, that is why this Parliament would have some 20 or more years ago passed an Administrative Justice Act that is supposed to be the panacea against arbitrary decision-making in the Executive. Mr. Speaker, the mere fact that Act exists, recognises that once you have powers vested in the Executive, there is the danger for that power to be abused.

Mr. Speaker, while I may agree with Honourable Members on This Side, I am not seeking to ascribe any ill motive to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, but the reality is that we do not pass legislation for today, we pass legislation for all ages until such time that legislation is amended or repealed. Therefore, in the circumstances, it is unfortunate that we should have before us, a Bill that does not even meet the basic test of accountability coming as it does, and as an attempt to improve the good governance of this country.

Sir, what are some of the tenets of accountability that we are talking about? Sir, one of the tenets of

accountability is that right to account whose application and nomination to accept and whose to refuse.

Sir, I go further. I could not believe it, but in today’s newspaper, there is a letter written by a gentleman who wrote at length. I am not calling his name, because I did not give notice, but that gentleman was indicating that he found it a travesty to democracy for persons to be appointed to Constituency Councils in this country, and recognising that if you seek to act in a representative capacity, that representative capacity must, in fact, give vent to the voice of the people.

Mr. Speaker, this is so basic a right, that I never believed that in the year 2009, a Barbados Parliament would be seeking to discuss a new tier of Government, a new tier of deepening representation in this country, without giving people the opportunity to vote.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South was half-right when he pointed out to instances where in our own history, and in the history of South Africa, there was the right to vote, but there was no democracy. Sir, what the Honourable Member did not finished telling you, as I know the Honourable Member is capable of doing, was that there can be no democracy without the right to vote. There can be no democracy without people being given the opportunity to exercise their decision and their choice in a fair manner.

Mr. Speaker, it is significant for me that the Democratic Labour Party’s posture in this whole debate has been one of defensive playing. Indeed, from the opening speech of the Honourable Minister, rather than articulating what he wanted to achieve, he spent his time defending why there was no Election of persons. Sir, speaker after speaker, including the last one, spent their time trying to defend that one issue, as if in their heart of hearts they know fundamentally that there ought to have been a system of voting in this country.

3.20 p.m.

...as if in their heart of hearts they know, fundamentally, that they ought to have been a system of voting in this country.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is basically misleading the Chamber if she is suggesting that I was on the defensive. As a defense Lawyer, the first question I ask myself is what is the charge. The charge, in this case, was that this Bill was a threat to democracy and, Sir, I responded to that. I defended the Government against that charge because, Sir, I am a Lawyer.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member is entitled to interpret your contribution.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, he is entitled to reinforce my view that he spoke like a man who knows that his lawyer's heart was not in it. He spoke as a Lawyer who knows that his client was about to face the hangman's noose. He spoke as a person, who, if he were on This Side, as the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said, would probably have given one of his most brilliant speeches in this Parliament. Sir, having been constrained by the very ignoble task of having to defend the introduction of a layer of Government without the ability to allow people to choose for themselves, he tried his very best, but he fell short.

Mr. Speaker, it is easy to confuse the issue. Sir, many people in here have spoken about the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, as if it were the same thing as a Constituency Council.

Sir, the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, like the Welfare Department, like the National Assistance Board, like the new Drainage Unit, that I understand is being set up, are entities charged with the execution of Government's projects, based on Government's policy.

Sir, Constituency Councils, however, are entities, who are required to represent the interest of the community, or the Constituency, and therefore, there are apples and oranges. You cannot compare a Constituency Council to a Statutory Board that has the ability to execute policy.

Mr. Speaker, let me go further. This Government like to pull the wool over people's eyes and divert issues. I am not surprised that there has been the attempt to talk about the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission, because the truth is, as has been commented on many times, they seem only to be keeping their eyes on the rear view mirror but they would not press the accelerator and go forward. The rear view mirror is informing their daily activity and their daily discussion. Sir, I say to you that is unfortunate because, I really do believe that we did have and still have the opportunity to be able to deepen the power of representative Government in this country.

Mr. Speaker, I feel strongly, as did the National Commission on Law and Order, comprised of persons who are known to be associated with both political Parties, that what are needed in Barbados are Community Councils and not Constituency Councils because Constituency Councils are two closely delineated to the politics of Central Government, but equally, Community and Parish Councils

that act as umbrella bodies to allow existing community groups to be able to serve.

Mr. Speaker, every Mother's Union in this country votes for their executive, every cricket club in Barbados votes for its executive. Every men's fellowship votes for its executive, and we have now a Government wanting to establish Councils that would be appointed in a way that not even the persons who are coming to serve on those Councils, if they come from community groups would have had the opportunity to have been elected. Sir, that is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, I say that is fundamentally wrong. It goes against the grain and causes us to roll back the hands of time, to a time when people believed when they occupied the corridors of power in this country, that they could choose who they want to help maintain them in power. Sir, that is what the plantocracy felt and the mercantile community felt in this country. Sir, that is why women never had the right to vote until 1945 in this country, and that is why ordinary people of all colours, all classes and all religions never had the right to vote until 1951.

Mr. Speaker, I say that the principle of believing that you can arrogate unto yourself the right to choose, is wrong, however noble the intention is in the establishment of an objective to deepen the democratic process in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, there should be no attempt to confuse it with the Urban Development Commission, or the Rural Development Commission or that was later tried by the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central in comparing it to School Boards. Sir, School Boards are not representative of the community, because they are charged with the mandate of managing the school and, therefore, are accountable to the Minister because of the policy of the Minister and because also of the funds allocated, but Sir, it gets worse.

Mr. Speaker, I regret that this matter was not addressed by the Honourable Attorney-General, because there are issues with the legal character of the Council. The council has the ability to accept donations. The Council has the obligations to keep accounts, but what is the legal character of the council? The council, in this Bill, at Clause 8 is given the power to engage persons.

Sir, unless you can settle the legal character of the person, how could a Council engage anybody? Sir, I say to you that this Bill represents a rush to judgment. It represents an attempt by the Democratic Labour Party to, at least, fulfill one of its Manifesto's promises, having not been able to fulfill the majority of them, especially on good governance, transparency and accountability.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Yes, in 12 months and perhaps if the Attorney-General would go back and look at the slew of legislation that came down in every Parliament in the first few months, he would see why I am dismayed that this Parliament has not worked harder and the volume of work that has come down, has caused me to wonder if there is a problem.

Mr. Speaker, I go forward. Sir, not only is there an absence of a legal character..

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, it is going to be a real issue, because when the question how they are going to engage is asked, and when the question of who is going to write cheques and how they are going to contract are asked, Mr. Speaker, I guarantee that we will be before this Chamber again with amendments to this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, I go further. If ever there was an attempt to politicise communities, it is in this Bill. I have said before that we do not support Constituency Councils, that we support Community Councils.

Mr. Speaker, do you know that the community of Bush Hall, that both you and I have the honour to represent, would now be divided, not only in two different Councils, but in two different zones? Sir, it is one community that lives together and one community that has community clubs that draw people from the same two square miles but, Mr. Speaker, do you not know that the community of Hothersal Turning will not only be in two different Constituency Councils, but two different zones as well?

Mr. Speaker, do you know that the community of Bibby's Lane and Lears would not only be under two different Constituency Councils, but two different zones? Sir, do you know that the community of Bournes Village would also be in two different Constituency Councils and two different zones? Sir, I say to you that from the time I enter public life, I have always had a difficulty with playing politics with community life.

There is no Mia Mottley sports tournament or there is no Barbados Labour Party North East tournament, and I know there are Honourable Members on both sides of the House, who have chosen to do that. I do not believe that you imposed your character as a political representative to be a divisive force in a community. Sir, I believe that if we are to get the best from this country, that there must be the ability to allow communities to function just as there are communities.

3.30 p.m.

I believe there has to be a recognition that 260 000 people - I know that there may be people on Both Sides of the House who do not necessarily agree with me, but this is my belief.

Sir, I go further. A country with 260 000 or 270 000 people on 166 square miles cannot afford the luxury of communities divided on the basis of partisan political lines. That is why I supported the National Commission on Law and Order, when it said that our challenge is to make all of this happen in an orderly manner, that is insulated against manipulation by political or other areas of significant influence.

Sir, there will be times for us to talk about that other significant influence too, but suffice it to say at this stage, I feel strongly that Barbados has the responsibility to open the corridors of Government to people to be able to serve, but it must be the people who choose for themselves and not a single Minister to hand pick 450 people from 500, 1 000 or 2 000 nominations.

I go further. We must, if we are talking about - Sir, nobody can talk about hand-picking when it comes to representative forms of Government. You can hand pick or choose when it comes to the Executive. I believe that we have a responsibility to make sure that stability can remain in this country, and this is not the path that will guarantee that stability.

Sir, I go further. It is clear to me that these Constituency Councils, would also be an attempt by the Government to destroy the Youth Development Programme, only because it did not start it. The mere fact that 16 Youth Commissioners will come from it, and it will also destroy the Community Development Programme and 16 Community Development Officers will also come and go to the Constituency Councils, is an unfortunate development. I believe that if you are going to have Constituency Councils recommending to people who should be chosen, and who should not be chosen, you should allow the other Executive agencies and Statutory Boards to function.

Sir, remember in the Throne Speech we heard that these Constituency Councils will be dealing with drainage, street lights and all kinds of things. I cannot tell you today, having read this Bill, that I am aware what the Constituency Councils will truly deal with. I cannot.

Sir, when you look at the functions at Clause 5, building relevant databases, identifying priority needs, referring residents who need services, making recommendations to the Minister of programmes and projects, does the Minister have a separate budget for those

programmes or projects, or is he going to be executing them through the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission? Also, assisting with the delivery of particular services? How would a Constituency Council assist with the delivery of a particular service and what services are we talking about?

Sir, this is too vague, even if we were disposed to support it, because you were electing Honourable Members of Parliament. It is bad legislation, apart from the fact that it is a breach of our democratic rights, in the manner in which it chooses to appoint persons. It is bad legislation.

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

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, I say to you that the Party of Grantley Adams will not dignify this Bill with our support, because what it seeks to do is to take a Parliament who in 1950, when they debated the Representation of the People's Act, every single political Party represented in the Parliament of Barbados in 1950 supported the franchise being widened.

Sir, it is only when the talk about Election and non-undemocratic came up, that all of a sudden, this was no longer trumpeted as a new form of governance, a new form of representational introduction.

Sir, I started by saying that we have reached a point in this country where there can be no gain-saying, that the actions of 1967 and 1974 of this Parliament have had unfortunate consequences, that Barbadians have come to reflect negatively on, in particular, as it relates to the delivery of services by Statutory Boards that replace Local Government.

Sir, I go further and say that there is no doubt that there must be a system that involves the people of this country through people's power, but that people's power must not be at the whim and fancy, or at the crack of a whip of a member of the Democratic Labour Party, or a Minister on Either Side, or the Barbados Labour Party, for that matter, if it were in Government.

Persons, just as they have done with the Parish Independence Secretariat, the Mothers' Union, the cricket clubs and in the Churches, must have the right to choose who represents them. The word 'represent' has its specific origin and its specific meaning, and if we are, therefore, to talk about representation, it cannot be at the dictation of a single person as this Bill proposes to foist on the people of Barbados.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party has taken a considered position on this matter, and we are satisfied that this will not add to the democratic process in Barbados. We

are satisfied that it will consolidate hands into the few people in this country, and we fear Sir, not that we expect it with the current Minister, the abuse of power that this legislation portends, and we do so recognising that the Executive of Barbados has had for over 25 years, a piece of legislation that contemplates the potential abuse of power by the Executive in the form of the Administrative Justice Act.

If we truly want to be faithful to the people whom we represent, in the same way that they choose the Honourable Member for St. John, (in the same way that they choose) the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central, (in the same way that they choose) the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, (in the same way that they choose) the Honourable Member for St. Philip West, (in the same way that they choose) the Honourable Member for St. James North, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the Honourable Member for St. George North, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, in whose name this Bill stands, in the same way it was required for us to be chosen as a representative of the people, by giving the people the right to vote, then they must have the right to vote for the members who represent them in any deepening of the democratic process in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Sir, if there is a cost to it, then let that cost be borne by this Parliament and the people of Barbados, for there is a cost to democracy and nothing in life comes free. If that cost to democracy is \$3 million every two to three years, then it is well spent, because it ensures that the future of this country is not consolidated in the hands of a very few.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment the Honourable Members on This Side who contributed to this debate, and in particular the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West who led off this debate with a very erudite dissertation on the reasons for the establishment of Constituency Councils in Barbados. I would say that in that presentation the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, augmented by several other speeches in this Chamber, made it very clear what role, responsibilities and functions of the Constituency Councils in Barbados will be.

Sir, we had a number of options in establishing Constituency Councils in Barbados. We chose the route of legislation, but that is not the way that Constituency Councils can be established. There was a Constituency Council in St. John when I first came to the parish.

3.40 p.m.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael South East said that he already has a Constituency Council. The Honourable Member for St. George North, basically said he already has what is akin to a Constituency Council. None of those, to the best of my knowledge, had the characteristics of this Bill.

In this debate, Sir, we have heard arguments from the sublime to the ridiculous. You have a former Attorney-General, Queen's Council and Leader of the Opposition arguing about the legal character of a Constituency Council, when it employs and how it is going to receive donations.

Mr. Speaker, political parties in Barbados are unincorporated associations that employ people, receive donations - and she would know about that...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: ...substantial ones, and invite people to Chefette to discuss how to get those donations into the coffers of the Party - and I will get to that soon, but not in this debate - and employ people, receive donations, and own property. The Honourable Member for St. James North would never make such a basic elementary error in relation to the Law.

Sir, unincorporated associations, like political Parties, have trustees.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: If they do not have them, the Court appoints them. Go and check the Law. I am not telling you about the Law. Read the white book, if you have one.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: When you go to sue an unincorporated association, you have to get leave of the Court and they establish...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Prime Minister is clearly excitable today and I can understand why, and I will forgive him.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please state your point of order.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. Sir, where in this Bill is there a provision for Trustees of the Constituency Councils to be required? There is no provision in this Bill and let me go further, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, what is the point of order? You said that he is misleading the House and you are saying that there is nowhere in the Bill for a provision of Trustees.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, I am telling you now.

Mr. SPEAKER: Is that the point of order?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: No. Mr. Speaker, it is the same point of order.

Mr. SPEAKER: I know that the Honourable Member never said there was.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, in the Second Schedule, which in every Act that establishes a Board or an organisation or a Department, sets out the structure as the Second Schedule does in this Act, by telling you how many persons are on the Council, how they are appointed, what they are doing. This Second Schedule does not require the appointment of Trustees, does not state that it is an unincorporated association, and therefore, the Bill is, in fact, deficient. It cannot be in Regulations.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I have always said that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East delivers speeches in this House, which are so deficient and so confusing, that whenever somebody speaks after her, she gets up on points of order to try to reconstruct an entire speech that she never delivered. This is what is happening now.

Sir, the Law is clear. It does not have to be clear in the Bill. An unincorporated association is not required to appoint Trustees, either. When they set up a bank account, they set up Trustees for that specific bank account. When you go to the bank, they give you some forms and usually the President, the Secretary and a floor member have to sign. Those become the Trustees of that property, the corpus of funds in that bank account.

If they buy property, the Committee will be required to appoint Trustees to sign the Deed. The Honourable

Member for St. Andrew at least should know that, and as Chairman of the Party, he should advise the Honourable Member what the Law says. Therefore, you do not have to spell it out in the Law. This is nothing new.

Many years ago, a gentleman sought to sue me as General Secretary of the Democratic Labour Party and the President. The case was thrown out, because the Law is clear. When you go to sue an incorporated association, you have to get the leave of the Court, in respect of the people whom you are suing. Therefore, that is nothing new and if the Honourable Member does not know the Law, then she should not speak to it and try to seek to give the impression that we are some kind of last class politicians on This Side, that all the legal brains in Barbados reside on That Side, that we do not understand or know what we are doing, that we are not the brand named politicians of Barbados, and that we are a lesser class of individuals. Therefore, they can pompasette, all kinds of non-existent legal principles.

I am saying that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is going to have a difficult task in replying to this debate, because the gold post has moved so dramatically, from the very first night I saw the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East on my television. What was the argument then? The argument was that the Constituency Council would be competing with the Member of Parliament, and she said that two man-rats cannot live in the same hole.

Asides.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. Sir, that is still the position of the Barbados Labour Party, which is still of the view that the functions conflict with those of the Members of Parliament. The Honourable Member is misleading the House to say that is not our position anymore.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I think it is unfortunate for any Leader of the Opposition to describe 450 Barbadians as rats. That is a very unfortunate designation.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. John must not allow his head to interpret things that were not said by me or anyone else on This Side. Sir, if he wants to make those interpretations, let it be known that it is a reflection of his perspective and not ours.

Mr. Speaker, if the use of a metaphor offends him, then he should say so but, as usual, he would try to cast innuendo without speaking the facts.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, what are the facts? I am going to repeat the facts to you, Sir. I put on the television one night. I saw the Leader of the Opposition on television speaking at a Barbados Labour Party branch meeting. On the television, the Honourable Member said to the people of this country, that the reason the Barbados Labour Party has a problem with the Constituency Councils, is because when she reads the legislation, that the role of the Council comes into conflict with the role of the Member of Parliament. Then, she threw down the paper and said: "Two man rats can't live in the same hole." Exactly like that, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The person who was sitting next to me said that they could not...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I might be a man and I would not call myself a woman rat. If the Honourable Member wants to call herself a man rat, that is her business.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am a man, so if I call myself a man rat, there might be some justification but, Sir, when you hear the Leader of the Opposition, who is a woman, say, "two man rats can't live in the same hole," there is a problem.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Therefore, the person sitting next to me had a problem with all of that. They asked: Who are these men rats?

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member ought really to tell us whether the person who was sitting next to him was Leroy Parris.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: But it was not Miss Holder.

Asides.

3.50 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, please. Honourable Members both know that you are not supposed to call the names of persons in this House, so let us proceed please.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I never intended to speak in this debate because I felt, and I still feel, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is more than capable, both by his application to details, by his charisma and his ability to speak, along with all the other presentations that we have had so far in here on This Side in this debate, to make it clear why we are establishing those Constituency Councils.

Mr. Speaker, the person sitting next to me was gravely offended by any association that the 450 people who are going to be selected as Councillors in this country to be describing them as rats. It was an offensive remark, but that is where it started and then it has moved all around since then.

Mr. Speaker, I think buffoonery reached its height on that night. Somebody emailed me a speech by the former Honourable Member for St. Michael East in this House, that is why I say buffoonery reached its height. That Honourable Member started by extolling what a great intellectual he was, how he only took three quarters of the time that the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown took to get a degree, and then he went on to talk about the great intellectuals in the world.

The Honourable Member loves to drop names of all the sociologists, but he called Hitler, Adolphus Hitler, and all through the speech he was talking about this Adolphus Hitler. Sir, he ended his speech on a point that the public of Barbados needs to understand why the Barbados Labour Party is concerned about what we are doing.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to respond to the dumb according to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South. The Honourable Member suffers from no impairments, except the fact that in this House, as he said, he sat down like the three monkeys, see no evil, speak no evil and hear no evil.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Sir, I was talking about the meeting at Codrington. How did he end? He ended the meeting by saying can you imagine the Democratic Labour Party being given the right to select 450 community workers in this country and put them on the payroll of Government? It would be the end of the Barbados Labour Party.

Sir, I listened to that very much in consonant with the speeches made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, this idea that everybody in Barbados has a price. You only have to know what their price is and that these 450 people, once you give them a little stipend, would lose all of their commitment to community work, and all of their history as people who have helped in the Church.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, I have not reflected on any Constituency Councils. I talked about CLICO buying Government.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, all of these people who have worked in the Mothers' Unions, the small Churches, the District Emergencies Organisations, football clubs, netball clubs and community organisations, will all of a sudden lose their history as people who have worked voluntarily in a community for a stipend, and that stipend suddenly makes them spineless supplicants to the policies of a political party and they suddenly lose all independence and become...

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Member wishes to make that point, he should not attribute it to me. I never said any such thing and he must withdraw that comment.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Thank you, Sir.

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: Mr. Speaker, I never said that and I am asking that it be withdrawn. It is misleading the House and the country.

Mr. SPEAKER: I find no point of order.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, it was a British politician who talked about being savaged by a sheep after a certain member of Parliament spoke.

Sir, I am not going to get side-tracked by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North. I know his philosophy. I never said what he said. I am saying that consonant with his philosophy, that everybody in Barbados

has a price, because from the time the Government changed, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, elected in a working-class Constituency in this country...

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN: On a point of order. Sir, that is his philosophy. That is why there is a on tofund deficit now because everybody got a price and CLICO came with a price.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, please continue.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: You would have a chance to talk about that. What are you agitating yourself over. Sir, every time the Honourable Member has spoken, he has made reference to the change. The word changed for him. He then does like this, change.

Sir, he really believes that the change Barbadians made in the last Election had nothing to do with people's heartfelt concerns about corruptions by the previous Government, immorality, abuse of power, lack of accountability and what was going on in this Parliament week after week, and in the last closing days of this Parliament. He believes that all they had to do was to walk around with a little change in your pocket to give Bajans and that is the basis on which they changed a Government.

Today, in this debate, Sir, it resurfaced again. Sir that is his perspective. Sir, I found it rather strange that a man who says he comes from a community background in St. Michael East, who has an organisation which is doing good work in St. Michael East, the Israel Lovell Foundation - I have seen the dances at various events - could find himself on a political platform not supporting a logical development in the process, not only of democratisation in Barbados, but in the process of building up community life in this country.

Sir, he found himself instead railing against the Democratic Labour Party for establishing a process where over 450 people, because we are not only talking about councillors because those Councillors also have spheres of influence.

If a representative comes from St. John's Cultural Cricket Club and you put him on the Constituency Council, you are empowering him as well as the other 120 members of St. John's Cultural Cricket Club. If you take somebody off of the Church Council at St. John's Parish Church and put them on the Constituency Council, you are empowering that person as well as the 1 000 regular communicants at St. John's Parish Church.

When you take a guy from Family First St. John Sonics Football Team and say we want you to sit on a Constituency Council to advise us on how best to build up community life in this Constituency, you are empowering him or her as well as the 30 or 40 people who are members of that Club.

Therefore, the kind of criticism that has been targetted at the Democratic Labour Party that this practice is anti-democratic, that it is the most dangerous thing that has happened to Barbados since the 1950s, that they were going to march and demonstrate - they did not last too long on the road, after Oistins everything petered out - their power as a political party to stop this attempt at dictatorship in Barbados by the Democratic Labour Party seeking to put 450 man rats on Constituency Councils in Barbados.

4.00 p.m.

That was the essence of the argument, Sir, up to that point. That is why I say I do not have time for these childish charades which this country is currently being put through by an Opposition that cannot get its position straight.

Sir, what the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East said was the Barbados Labour Party's position is not what the other Honourable Members said was their position. We would have heard seven, possibly eight speeches on the Other Side.

The Honourable Member for St. Peter, who was very charged-up one week and came in here one day to debate it, we have not seen him since that day.

This is now about three Sittings of this Honourable House that he has not been here, but he came in very charged-up. He spoke at meetings night after night where he was very charged-up about it, but his absence is extremely conspicuous in this particular debate. We would have heard eight different positions from Members on That Side, with a very thin, tenuous thread of consistency in the arguments which they have used against the establishment of Constituency Councils in this country.

Mr. Speaker, let us understand where we are. What is the reason for the establishment of a Constituency Council? From as far back in 1991, the Democratic Labour Party said in its Manifestos that we will establish Constituency Councils. In those days, as I said, Constituency Councils already existed. There was one in St. Michael South, of which Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford was the patron. There was a Constituency Council in the Pine, there was one in St. John.

Sir, we said that we were going to use this model throughout Barbados to establish Constituency Councils,

the purpose of which essentially will provide a very important advisory role, as I understand it, in prioritising the delivery of social services, the delivery of improved infrastructure, building up community life, helping sporting, Church and community organisations with resources, and a whole range of small things which we were promised by the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission - which were also not elected, either by this Honourable House or by the people of Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, in fact, it was so ludicrous that the then Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, who then became Minister of Finance, said in this Honourable Chamber that there were people on the Board of the Urban Development Commission who could not read or write. The then Honourable Member for St. Michael North West argued that they should not be any Board of the Urban Development Commission or the Rural Development Commission, and I am certain that the Honourable Member for St. George North remembers that.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am saying in my 20 years in Parliament, but in my years prior to that, I can think of so many things, some worthy causes in this country that have fallen by the wayside, in communities and even nationally, which Constituency Councils could assist in getting going.

Mr. Speaker, we want to start a process, for example, in our fishing villages in St. Philip, St. John, St. Andrew and across the East Coast, to have activities at those communities that are akin to street fairs like what is happening in St. Lucia.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the problem with the Honourable Member for St. Andrew is that he is vexed that a man wants to build something in his Constituency, but that the gentleman did not get in touch with him. He got in touch with me. That man wants to give land to the people of Barbados and he did not call the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, but that man knows why and I know why.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: We want to start a process, for example, in our fishing villages in St. Philip, St. John, St. Andrew and across the East Coast, where we can have year-round economic activities in those communities that are similar to what takes place at Oistins and at Holetown.

Mr. Speaker, we used to have cultural events in Barbados, for example, active community groups holding street fairs. In this country, sporting organisations were always supported, not only by the players in those teams, but by a core of older individuals. These older individuals have now disappeared from lending support to these sporting organisations, because social tension between younger and older people has created problems. Sometimes on Saturdays and Sundays, as you pass pavilions you do not see a single older representative of these communities.

One of the fixtures at the Gall Hill Pavilion on Saturdays was the father of the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, the late Mr. Lashley, with his radio listening to something else and watching cricket. While the fellows were out there practising, he was there watching. You do not even see that now.

Mr. Speaker, I heard an Honourable Member on That Side say - and it is to the eternal discredit to the Barbados Labour Party, I am not going to say which one it was - that in Barbados we have seen the emergence of several Neighbourhood Watch Programmes. Now, a Neighbourhood Watch Programme can only exist, in my view, where there is a neighbourhood, in other words, a people who have a community of interest. We have a lot of Neighbourhood Watch Programmes in Barbados that have only been established for the protection of properties.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: That is not a community group, there are some that are genuine community groups, but a lot of them are not community groups. They are established to protect people's properties, a normal and natural incidence of a society that is becoming more and more wealthy, which has a larger middle class in which people move away from the places where they were born.

Sir, the underpinnings of those Neighbourhood Watch Programmes are not community activities such as building up knowledge base, helping young people. Sir, none of that happens. It is the protection of property.

Mr. Speaker, if the Honourable Members on That Side want to hold up Neighbourhood Watch Programmes as their example of what community development is all about, we are saying we reject that. Neighbourhood Watch Programmes have their role to play, but we believe that Constituency Councils can play a very vibrant role in this country, in reviving the community spirit.

Mr. Speaker, when I first became a Member of Parliament 20 years ago, there were 13 community organisations in St. John, from Kendal right across to St. Margaret's. Sir, for example, there were Sussex Cricket

Club, St. Margaret's Group, St. John's Cultural and Families First. Every year we took a different community group to St. Lucia and the current Prime Minister of St. Lucia, the Honourable Stephenson King used to facilitate them in St. Lucia. He also has sent exchange groups to Barbados. Sir, right now, if there are four of those community groups still existing that would be a lot.

Sir, that is the experience throughout Barbados. There are places where people in this Honourable House were born. Sir, Honourable Members should go back there and see if the community groups that they were once a part of still exist and are still functioning. Sir, 90 per cent of them have disappeared, despite the fact - because I heard a lot of talk about youth development programme.

What youth development programme? You mean you had a lot of booklets and literature. They put out all kinds of documents. They actually have a booklist that sets out every youth group in Barbados, but if you were to telephone any one of these groups, you would see that 90 per cent of them do not exist. If you were to write letters to those groups, you would see that those letters would return undelivered. But the Opposition would want to walk around the world, at United Nations' meetings, talking about youth development programmes, about Project OASIS.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not going to deal with that today. That will come in another debate because allegations were made in here two weeks ago by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, who is very good at picking up gossip and repeating it without thinking.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I said she is good at it. I did not say she was bad at it. The Honourable Member is good at that.

Asides.

4:10 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. The Honourable Member cannot impugn the character of a person in here in that way. The Honourable Member knows that and he has to withdraw it.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, I would agree with that. You said that she is good at making gossip and repeating it.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw the fact that the Honourable Member picks up gossip so well. The Honourable Member is very cavalier and indifferent in the manner in which she repeats what she hears. Sir, when the corrections are made, I hope the Honourable Member would remain in her seat.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Do not worry about that. That is why I am here and you are there. Anyway, Sir, I am not going into that, because we are not in any defensive mode.

Mr. Speaker, we understand what Constituency Councils are supposed to do in Barbados. The Minister is clear. We have set it out in legislation and there can be no doubt about the role of the Constituency Councils.

I look forward to the inauguration of the first set of Constituency Councils in Barbados to see ordinary Barbadians, who may never have the opportunity of coming into this House of Assembly, who may never have the opportunity other than within their own spheres, their family, their Church, their District Emergency Organisation, their community group, would never have had the opportunity to be acknowledged by this nation, or received into any formal process of involvement in the political system, until the Honourable Member for St. Michael West gets this legislation on the way.

Mr. Speaker, it is an important development in our society. It is a pity that the grand-children of those who most benefitted from the Local Government process cannot understand that. Sir, the real travesty of this debate is that you have in here a person, who should be proud to see a process of local governance being reintroduced in this country, being the foremost critic and opponent of that process. It is remarkable that person...

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is adept at misleading the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you also need to be winding up at this stage. Your time has expired.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Is my time not unlimited, Sir?

Mr. SPEAKER: Your time has expired.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my time is unlimited. The Prime Minister's time is unlimited.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, that is correct. Please proceed.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to go for much longer. The Rule is very clear. The Rule has always been that when the Prime Minister speaks the time is unlimited and I accept that Rule. Sir, this morning we were going on precedents, so I am going on precedent now too.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, the error has been pointed out. Please let us continue.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I am not troubling you. I am just reminding Members. It is a sign of the time, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that I made a statement about the grand-child of somebody who was involved in local Government in Barbados. The Honourable Member has not waited to see if anybody else has those credentials.

Sir, no other Member seems to have that pedigree, and I have not checked to see if any of my relatives were involved in Local Government but, Sir, the assumption is automatically, that I could only be referring to one person. Sir, that tells you why those kind of attacks are levelled at the Democratic Labour Party in this country.

Mr. Speaker, we are not the grand-children of anybody. Sir, we are not anybody, so when we come with an initiative, we cannot clothe it in the heritage. The Honourable Member for St. George North, you could never clothe it in the heritage that would make it good enough for this Parliament and this country, because you do not have that lineage. Sir, I do not have that lineage; the Honourable Member for St. Andrew does not even know that he does not have that lineage, despite all he talked in here today about people not being able to vote.

Sir, there is only one person who has that lineage, apparently, in this Chamber to say whether an initiative to reintroduce local governance in this country is desirable or not. Sir, it starts from that point. When somebody tells you that two man rats cannot live in the same hole, when the person says man rat, the person is not referring to himself or herself. They say men rats like the people in this house and men rats meaning the 450 Councillors, that they cannot live in the same hole and understand, Mr. Speaker Sir, that is where they are today. Therefore, what is the mechanism that we are using a Constituency Council of 15 people?

Mr. Speaker, the Minister is exercising, under this legislation, the right to select these people on the advice of four Permanent Secretaries from four Ministries. He is not saying that he would sit in his backyard and that the Prime Minister would come to his home and pick these people. He is saying that they should be nominated, put before a panel of Permanent Secretaries, and let the Permanent Secretaries advise him and put it in the Regulations. Sir, that was said so already, twice in this debate.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. He needs to point to the part of the legislation which talks about the four Permanent Secretaries. Sir, we have been told about Regulations and the Opposition is being asked to agree to something that it has not seen, has not been put before this House, and has no knowledge if it will ever come. Sir, that is what we have been reduced to in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. D.J.H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I was Leader of the Opposition for 11 years, prior to becoming Prime Minister and I have never, ever seen Regulations come at the same time as a Bill. Sir, my recollection is not as foggy as the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, who said he has never seen a televised debate of a Bill in this House. Sir, my recollection is very clear. The Road Traffic Bill came without the Regulations and the Family Law Bill came without the Regulations and, Sir, you could go through the entire list of legislation.

The Minister, in his opening, said it was the process that he was going to use and somebody else repeated it right after him, that he would act on the advice of a panel of Permanent Secretaries, so that argument falls to the ground.

Mr. Speaker, what is the other argument that falls to the ground, that you cannot divide up communities? Sir, because Bush Hall can vote in different Constituencies, which is the most important thing to establish democracy, but when you set up Constituency Councils, you must not set them up in different Constituencies.

Mr. Speaker, when I first came into this House; when I first ran in St. John, the Barbados Labour Party had devised a way to get Brereton, which is in St. Philip.

4.20 p.m.

A boundary went down a road - you know when you come to the bottom of Halton, by Kendal, the boundary went down the road like that, then opened up to take in one part of Brereton, Ebenezer, Evelyn, Carrington, Edgcombe/Sunbury. One half of the road voted in St. Philip North and the other half of Brereton voted in St. John, the first time I ran. That had to be rectified immediately prior to the 1991 Elections after we came to office.

There are parts of St. Lucy and St. Peter in which a road divides them. Venture, St. John is divided by a road. If you want one part of it fixed you go to the St. Joseph Depot, and if you want the other side of the road fixed, you go to the St. John Depot. They designed that. Sir, we railed

against that. We said that you should go back to the old parish lines and try to keep communities in tack, wherever possible. Now there is a big criticism in this debate of the mechanism used, that we are dividing up communities which are already divided up for the purposes of electoral matters.

Sir, you have to deal with a house sometimes, in which some people vote in one Constituency and some vote in another. That is not unusual in Barbados, and people have found a way to get around that. You have football teams in which people from other parts of Barbados come and play, but communities should be speaking to each other. The Councils are not islands unto themselves.

I would make the assumption that the Constituency Council in St. Michael North East will talk to the people on the Constituency Council in St. Michael Central, St. Michael West, St. Michael North and St. Michael North West. There must be some mechanism, but in any event, our Manifesto has made it abundantly clear that we will have an annual exercise, as well as a quarterly one, but an annual State of the Nation exercise, in which every Member of Parliament and every Constituency Council will have to meet to prioritise projects nationally. Then the Minister will have the final determination as to what agencies, entities and projects will come on board. Sir, that argument falls to the wayside. That was supposed to be some big problem in a country which is 14 miles wide and 21 miles long. That poses a problem for the Opposition.

Sir, what will be the result of what we are proposing here? I am firmly of the view, that this is going to result in a resurgence of pride in Barbadian communities. I believe it is going to enhance democracy and give people who, as I said, would never have had a look-in, the opportunity to have some say in the development in Barbados.

I believe that a lot of activities that communities could not previously finance, will find some resources through the Constituency Council process to undertake those activities. I believe you will see the development of small business. You will see the strengthening of football, cricket, netball, road tennis, all of those informal activities and the formal ones, because Constituency Councils can employ coaches for netball teams. They can give assistance to teams that need money for lights, tokens for lights, which is a big problem in Barbados, prize money for major league competitions that are properly run, gear for footballers, netballers and so on. So you do not have a situation where, if you come from rural Barbados and you cannot get somebody to sponsor you, you have to wear a white Tee shirt and some blue shorts, whereas when you come to town you found that teams that are given resources, can come properly outfitted for sporting activities. All of these things will happen.

Sir, we gave a commitment that our responsibility, and I want to say it has been the highlight of my career so far as the Prime Minister of this country, is to see a process where Barbadians can believe in themselves again, and where our communities can benefit significantly from this process.

I have reflected on the criticism that has been made. We have what the Honourable Members on That Side declared is an entity, that is almost viewed as over the Parliament of this country. The Social Partnership. During their time the Social Partnership made decisions that never came to Parliament. Parliament had to ratify decisions of the Social Partnership after. I am not knocking the Social Partnership. They are not supreme over Parliament and I want to let them know that up-front. But the Social Partnership has a critical role to play in Barbados.

Let us look at how the Social Partnership, which the Honourable Members on That Side sat down with month after month to plan Barbados' compose. The Government's Leader is elected, invariably he is elected both by the Electorate and then by the Members of the Cabinet, who say this is the person who should be the Prime Minister, so he has authority to represent that area of the Social Partnership.

The Trade Union Leader is elected, he gets elected in the trade union, which he belongs to, and then within the level of CTUSAB, they select their leader and the person who represents the workers in the tripartite arrangement. However, the third arm of the Social Partnership, which is described as the highest level of governance in Barbados, the person who represents the private sector is not elected and the private sector, as presently composed - and I am not knocking it for the sake of knocking it - I want to do everything to help them to improve it, does not involve a whole set of both informal and formal, but small activities that take place in this country, the Public Service Vehicle people, vendors, water sports operators...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The small farmers will get it through the Barbados Agricultural Society. There are discrete activities which do not specifically fall under any area of representation, where people are constantly left out of the process, and the Barbados Labour Party allowed for 14 years that process to take place.

Sir, one of the first things that happened, when we were negotiating the Social Partnership is, we asked the private sector to please get to the stage where you have Elections to determine who is in charge of the private sector, because you cannot have a social partnership, which is supposed to be our highest form of representation, governance and so on, and it is not elected.

Why are you railing against Constituency Councils? All of those people out there who are joining you in this process are grossly misguided. A democracy like the Barbadian democracy has always had people who have been selected for the offices for which they hold. The process of the selection of the highest office in this land does not involve any Election by the citizens of this country. The process of the selection of the Chief Justice of Barbados, only three people are supposed to be involved in that. I was once one of three who objected, and yet the matter still proceeded. Not an Honourable Member over there had a word to say.

Sir, I am certain that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would not have anything to say, because if she had objected she would not be in here now. So I assisted...

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Do not worry about that. I am speaking facts. Had not for the fact that the then Member of Parliament for St. Thomas went on to higher things, despite my objection, the current Honourable Member for St. Thomas would still be the Secretary of the Branch.

4.30 p.m.

There is nothing wrong with that, because I want to dispel any myth or notion that I knocked membership of a political party.

Sir, membership of a political party is something that should be respected. Those who like to say that everybody who joins a political Party, loses their soul and cannot think for themselves, that is not so. Therefore, it is quite possible, even within the context of a political Party for persons of independent minds to be selected. We all have branch members who stand up to us, when we have branch meetings.

We all have members of our General Councils who stand up to the leadership and membership of political parties. That is nothing new. I joined the Democratic Labour Party and found people standing up to late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow and saying I disagree with that. In fact, there were some people and there are some people in politics, who will stand up and oppose everything you do, even though they are Members of the same Party. It is in their nature. There is nothing wrong with that, but this idea that, because you pick people who have known political affiliations, that they have no contribution to make to the development of Barbados is wrong, and should be rejected.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There are people in both political Parties, who have served communities, sports clubs, cricket clubs, Church organisations with distinction. There are some people who - despite the criticisms of the Other Side that we are not going to select any supporters of the Barbados Labour Party - will be natural choices to serve on the Constituency Councils. I hope that they will not listen to the proclamations of their leaders, who have advised them, essentially, not to participate in this exercise.

I am calling even on supporters of the Barbados Labour Party, who want to do well in their communities, to come forward and to serve in this process. It is not for me. It is not for the Members on This Side. It is for the development and future of Barbados, as a whole.

Asides.

Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Therefore, Sir, as I say, I am very disappointed at the way in which this debate has been characterised. The amount of time that it has taken to try and get across a very simple point, in which the reason for the establishment of the Council, is clear. The mechanism that we are using, is clear. People are free to criticise it and say that they do not want that mechanism, but the end result is going to be, as I say, that 450 people, who previously had no say in the development of this country, will be involved. I am certain that at the end of the day, the result will be an improvement in the social, political and even the economic life of this country, greater accountability, greater involvement and a feeling that Barbadians belong to the communities from which they spring.

I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I rise to conclude this debate, and I promise that I would not be too long because, I think, after the very erudite presentation of the Honourable Prime Minister, it really would be unfortunate, if I were to prolong this debate and try really to bring down the level of the debate after the Prime Minister clearly brought it to such substantial heights. I think he covered very well all of the key and critical aspects of this process. I want, in congratulating him, to also congratulate Honourable Members on This Side for their outstanding presentations.

I can think of no one that fell below the high standard that we expect of Honourable Members in this House, particularly on This Side. Therefore, I want to congratulate them for their own presentations.

I equally, Sir, am going to be generous enough this evening, and thank the Honourable Members from the Opposition for their own contributions to the debate, even though, Sir, if one were to use a philosophical term or a term that is used in the study of logic, to describe 99 per cent of what I heard from the Members of the Opposition as mere philosophical reductionism.

Sir, reductionism is a concept in logic, in which you seek to isolate one particular aspect of a process and reduce everything contained therein around that particle. Therefore, the Members of the Opposition predetermined, even before they got to this Parliament, that their one and only argument was going to be that these Councils are not being elected and, therefore, everything else associated with these Councils is bad.

They are not going to consider what they were designed to do. They are not going to look at the purpose, the objectives, the meaning, or the philosophical thinking behind it. They are not going to be elected, therefore, we can dismiss the entire process. It is a naked form of reductionism that I thought was beyond the Honourable Members on That Side.

I am particularly intrigued about the performances of three Honourable Members in particular on That Side, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew.

The Honourable Attorney-General made the point that it is not often that we hear from the Honourable Member for St. Andrew. Therefore, to expect a high level of debate is really - even many times and the times that we do hear from the Honourable Member - surprising. Today, in particular, the Honourable Member's level of debate fell to an extraordinary low, in my opinion.

I do not know how many other Honourable Members in here heard what the Honourable Member for St. Andrew said. Indeed, he said it repeatedly through his speech, and concluded very strongly on the point that he felt this Bill was such a threat to democracy, that he would at some future time contemplate picking up arms, seizing on weaponry, taking up not an intellectual coggle, but seizing on some type of weapon, arms, guns, knives, cutlasses, in order to fight for some democracy, which the Honourable Member says is under threat. This is a debate that is going live, not only in Barbados, but through the Internet, across the world.

Sir, to think that an Honourable Member who was in here since 1991, could get up and speak in this Parliament an Honourable Member, whom I might add, is so fortunate that the same democracy that the Honourable Member claims is under threat, has been able to produce a seat for

him, in this Parliament since 1991, never mind the fact that since 1991, the Honourable Member visited this Chamber about five times.

4.40 p.m.

The democracy is so mature, that the Honourable Member could treat this Chamber and his constituents with such disdain and contempt, that he could come here only five times and democracy was not under threat.

Sir, we argue for an Election of members. We want to elect Constituency Councils. If I were to be a person who put together a Constituency Council that should be elected, and a member of the Constituency Council turned up only five times out of 500, I would have to question the commitment of that person.

Sir, that is why there is written in this legislation that members on the Constituency Councils have to come and do some work, not to come, sign in the book and go back to their Law offices, or wherever they may be, or to come and get the lunch.

Mr. Speaker, I am not arguing with the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, because I said in the opening of this debate that many times when I go home, I do not get to see television because my children always have the television on Cartoon Network.

Mr. Speaker, I like back-in-time stuff and there is a channel on MCTV called TV Land that shows re-runs and I have not got to see the Jeffersons recently. I never thought I would come to Parliament and miss what I miss at home. Sir, the Honourable Member's performance reminds me very much of what we see on TV Land.

Mr. Speaker, I tried my level best to start this debate off at a high level. I sat down, I did the research, I consulted with my members, I spoke with people in the community and we worked with the project team, and with the Ministry's staff, to bring a level of debate that was high enough and deserving enough of this ground-breaking piece of legislation, in the political history of Barbados. That is why we carried the debate live.

Mr. Speaker, I must confess that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, even in spite of his own intellectual failings, tried his best to match the level at which I pitched this debate. I was amused, like all Honourable Members in here who pay attention, that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, in response to the fundamental definitional clauses to define the different modes of democracy as a part of social science, was able to seize on an Oxford Dictionary to find a definition of democracy. He said: "Mr. Speaker, democracy says one man one vote". That was the end of the Honourable Member's definition of democracy.

Mr. Speaker, I do not want to be uncharitable to the Honourable Member. He is an attorney-at-Law and as an attorney-at-law, he knows something about Law, we hope. He is not a political scientist, so I do not expect him to know that much about political science.

Mr. Speaker, I would equally believe that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North, who went to Law School would take the opportunity to read a little bit of Law. He does not have to inundate himself with a lot. The Honourable Member stood up in this House of Assembly and made the charge that we have put in this legislation lawlessness, that if a member of the Council wanted to resign he or she could not resign.

Mr. Speaker, he said: "I have never heard of it before, where you could be on a Council and you give your resignation to the Chairman and the Chairman walks around with your resignation in his hip pocket and does not deliver it to the Minister, therefore you might be liable for the acts of the Council, even though you said you wanted to resign." Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member, who is not in his seat, could not have come into contact with any piece of Law whatsoever, certainly not in relation to this matter.

Mr. Speaker, only a few weeks ago we did an amendment to the National Assistance Act, which was passed in this House. Mr. Speaker, in the Schedule of that Act it states at item 7 that:

"A member, other than the Chairman or Deputy Chairman, may at any time resign his office by instrument in writing addressed to the Minister, and transmitted through the Chairman, and from the date of receipt by the Minister, the member ceases to be a member of the Board unless another date is stated in the instrument."

What is so hard? The Honourable Member said it does not exist. He said he has never heard of it before. Mr. Speaker, I am not surprised at all. The Honourable Member then there-upon stood up and ripped up the legislation, foolishness.

Mr. Speaker, if you look through the vast majority of Acts establishing Statutory Corporations and Boards in Barbados, you would see that all of them have that clause in them. Mr. Speaker, he would have to spend all of his time standing up in a chicken pen making bedding for the chickens by tearing up those pieces of legislation as he tore up this one.

Mr. Speaker, they want to make a point that we are disenfranchising Barbadians. This is a simple Bill that is seeking to empower people, to bring people closer to the system of Government and they are trying to make the point that we are trying in some way to take something

away from Barbadians and that we are going to create this monster Minister.

Mr. Speaker, I have made my point on that already. I am only the Minister of Social Care for as long as the good Lord, my constituents, the Prime Minister and the Governor-General keep me in this position. I could be gone tomorrow. Three months ago I was a demoted Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business. Today, I am now supposed to be the most powerful creation that the Honourable Member for St. Andrew says he saw me looking like Mugabe or something like that.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I am not going to cast any aspersions on the Honourable Member's character, not with so much steel in his mouth, I am not going to do that. I am not going to say that he looks like anybody and he speaks like anybody. I know that I am going to watch him very carefully, because he said that he is going to seize on weapons to defend something called "a threat to democracy."

Mr. Speaker, I know that Ghangis Khan and Poi Pot seized on weapons to defend their version of democracy, so I am going to watch the Honourable Member very carefully.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, their entire argument hinges on this Election.

Mr. Speaker, I have said in the opening stanza of my speech that Elections cannot produce certain outcomes. Elections cannot produce gender equity. They cannot guarantee you that persons with disabilities can serve. They cannot guarantee you that women will serve. Mr. Speaker, that is a fact and not one Honourable Member can dispute it.

4.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, what I know Elections can do, because I have seen it myself, is to divide communities. Sir, we have one set of Elections, and I thought that Honourable Members on That Side would have risen to the occasion, where they would have engaged in a discourse on this debate with a level of seriousness, that would have allowed us to look in a panoramic way at our entire governing structure in Barbados, our entire democratic tradition, but we did not get that from the Honourable Members.

Mr. Chairman, I want to quote the Honourable Prime Minister of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Dr. Ralph Gonzalves, on the issue of Elections, because I think what

Dr. Gonzalves had to say is very instructive. Sir, I have already made this a document of this Honourable House. It is called, "Governance in Caribbean Communities. United Nations Development Report", by Mr. Cedric Clarke, Professor of International and Caribbean Affairs. He is quoting Dr. Ralph Gonzalves, and I quote:

"On the issue of representation, Prime Minister Gonzalves considered direct local Government Elections as superfluous and undesirable in St. Kitts, St. Vincent and the Grenadines. In the Prime Minister's view, such competitive Elections at the local or community level would simply replicate the vibrancy of competitive Parliamentary democracy that existed at the national level in a small St. Vincent and the Grenadines community.

His preference is for Councillors chosen on the basis of elective representatives in the Constituencies in Kingston, the capital."

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say:

"Prime Minister Gonzalves was also opposed to partisan competitive politics in local Government in St. Vincent and the Grenadines, on the grounds that it runs the risk of descending into political tribalism and the so-called garrison constituencies of the Jamaica-type. In order to blunt the forces of party politics Prime Minister Gonzalves has also proposed that St. Vincent and the Grenadines uses a nominated component to draw from non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations."

Mr. Speaker, people have read this, people have studied this, people have, in fact, considered it. Sir, in Senator Velma Newton's document - The Honourable Member for St. Andrew read the document, he wrote out parts of it, but he obviously did not read the whole thing.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, Senator Newton recommends that a Community Council Act, in which the size of an area of population which a Community Council should serve is delineated, the procedures whereby there are established and gain recognition, and what assistance should be given as the way forward. The Antigua Village Council's Act, minus the provision of the Council's to levy taxes should be instructive.

Mr. Speaker, if one considers what is happening in Antigua, one would know that the Councils in Antigua are not elected. Sir, Senator Newton is simply saying, do a Community Council, do a Constituency council, do a Parish Council, whatever you want to call it, but do not go in for Elections, do not go for levying taxes or any such thing. Sir, our position is firm on this and I do not think we

need to repeat it constantly for Honourable Members on That Side.

Mr. Speaker, the Barbados Labour Party brought an Antiquities Bill to this Parliament, in which they were proposing to give power to some officer, to kick down the doors of Barbadians and to seize upon their properties. Sir, a lot of people did not know this.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: It did not get through. They had to withdraw it, just as they had to withdraw the Emergency Powers Bill, that sought to give extraordinary power to a Prime Minister and Ministers in Barbados to declare some kind of pseudo marshal Law. Sir, there was no word from them on it, but we are now to be brow-beaten and considered to be these dangerous activists, who are trying to unravel democracy in Barbados. Sir, it is absolute rubbish.

Mr. Speaker, we have said that we put these Constituency Councils together as a starting point. It is not the finish. It is an experimental phase in which we are seeking to bring people closer to Government. Sir, if Honourable Members on That Side do not believe that people need to be close to their Government, then they should say so, because that is the reality with which we are dealing. Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Members are afraid of ordinary Barbadians having the power and responsibility to manage their own affairs.

Sir, it is the Barbados Labour Party who only a few years ago, after members of my community came together and put together a community project at Deacons, sent in the Task Force, the Town Planner, the "Baileys" and everybody else, to knock down those kiosks at the Farm. The Barbados Labour Party then turned around and rebuilt those kiosks, because they did not want communities to determine what was important for them. That is all it is.

Mr. Speaker, just as operatives of the Barbados Labour Party saw in the last Election to saw down the billboards, because they believe that they and only they can run Barbados. It had nothing to do with the Town Planning Department.

Mr. Speaker, if the Barbados Labour Party has a problem with ordinary people sitting on a Constituency Council, if they do not want people to have that power, I do not share their view, but I appreciate their position, because it is a long-held Barbados Labour Party's position, and has always been the case. We are not going to be side-tracked by this talk about Elections because I know what Elections can do.

Mr. Speaker, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East talking about Elections in cricket clubs. Well, have you seen what happened to the Barbados Cricket Association? They have elections too. There is a fellow called Nicholls who cannot tell a hopping ball from a hard ball and he wants to run for Elections.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, we are not going to let this election thing side-track us. We are going to deal with the substance of what is here. As the Prime Minister has said, I am not selecting 450 people. There is a process and the process is clear. We invite people to nominate. If you want to hold Election in your organisation and elect that person, please do so.

5.00 p.m.

Sir, they will nominate them, they will come on to the council, they will come to us and it will go to a Committee of three Permanent Secretaries. The Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Social Care, the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Community Development and Culture and the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Youth Affairs, plus the Chief Community Officer and the person who heads the Constituency Empowerment Department. Sir, they will then make the recommendation to the Minister. The Minister will then take those recommendations, ratify them, submit them to the Cabinet for noting and then the Minister will appoint. Sir, that is the process and what more could you want than that?

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member is trying to distract me, but I am not going to be side-tracked. Sir, we said we would create an Empowerment Department that would be responsible for assisting the Councils in managing their affairs. The Councils do not need to have a legal status in the sense of being a body corporate. We said that the Constituency Empowerment Department and the Ministry would enter into any legal arrangements, which the Council may have with service providers that they may require.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: It is not difficult to see. If the Councils want to hire a consultant to look at the difficulties in the Constituency, they have resources that they could do it. Why would you want to deny people in your community the chance to do this?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I had a project in my Constituency which was the Deacon's Development Project at the Farm. Sir, that project was an excellent project but as soon as the

then Honourable Member for St. Michael North West lost his seat to Mark Williams, the former representation of St. Michael North West, as soon as he lost his seat to the then Minister, who then became Minister of State in the Barbados Labour Party, funding for the entire project was withdrawn, the project came to an end and the building is still there dropping to pieces.

Mr. Speaker, I give the assurance to my constituents that that building and project would be restarted and, Sir, it is going to be done in the next financial year, not just by me or the Government but it would be handed to the Constituency Council because, if we had a Constituency Council in place at that time, the politics would not have allowed that building to come to the ruin that it has come to. Mr. Speaker, the work on restoring that building will be started and it will be finished, and the Council will have the responsibility for dealing with it.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that we understand what is happening. The Honourable Members on the Other Side are scared. They feel that the Government wants to entrench itself and that we want to pick up all 30 seats, and therefore, we are trying to consolidate power, but Sir, they have nothing to fear.

I give the public the assurance, as I give the assurance to some of the Honourable Members of the Opposition, that the persons they recommend would be given fair consideration. I know the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East is looking around and wants to know which of them has supplied a list already, but Sir, I am not going to reveal which one gave me a list already.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Honourable Members on Your Side have already recommended to me who they want to see on the Councils. I am going to receive those recommendations. They will be put into the process and go through the process like every other nomination.

Mr. Speaker, as we bring this debate to a close, I want to say that I think that Members of the Opposition did not prepare themselves. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East got distracted obviously by other business. The Honourable Member was up and down in this Chamber and could not sit down. I could have concluded the debate, but I thought it was important that the Honourable Member spoke, and I asked the Leader of the House to delay until the Honourable Member returned, but even then, the Honourable Member did not seem interested in the debate. The Honourable Member lost steam after the first sentence, could not pick back up in the debate, and therefore, belied the truth of her interest in defending democracy.

Asides.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Sir, I am happy, because today is a great day for Barbados. Sir, today we will pass legislation that would empower ordinary Barbadians. We will pass legislation today that will bring people closer to their own Government. Sir, we will pass legislation today. I assume they will call for a divide. If they call for a divide, we will vote on it, but we are going to pass legislation today that gives this country an additional hope that ordinary people, like you and me, Mr. Speaker, Sir, can participate in this process and be able to contribute to their own development.

Mr. Speaker, I do not begrudge them and I do not think the Opposition should begrudge them, that on the razor thin reductionist argument, that every thing you do in Barbados in order for it to be called democracy, must be engaged with a vote. Sir, that is absolutely unnecessary. It shows a lack of appreciation for where development and democracy have gone, and what governance means in modern societies. We have voted already. Members are in here representing their constituents, I hope, and we will continue to do so as long as they give us the privilege to do so.

Mr. Speaker, we need to bring other people on board. We need to bring on board the Churches, the youth, persons with disabilities and women of all types. Sir, not man-rats, she-rats or whatever they are called. We need to bring citizens who want to make a contribution, who do not want to be involved in the glare and nastiness that has become politics in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you need to wind up at this time.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, I am happy that we have been able to give them an opportunity to do this in this Constituency Council debate.

Sir, with that, I want to commend this Bill to this Honourable House and ask that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

On the separate motions of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, the House resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

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

Clause 1 was called and passed.

5.10 p.m.

Clause 2 was called.

Hon. C.P. SINCKLER: Sir, I beg to move that an amendment be made to the Section that reads:

“Constituency Council” or “Council” means a body of local representatives who have been appointed in accordance with Section 3”, as opposed to Section 3(4).

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

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

Clauses 3 - 13, inclusive, were called and passed.

The First Schedule and the Second Schedule became the Schedules to the Bill.

On the motion of Hon. C.P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. R.D. JONES, Mr. CHAIRMAN, reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Bill in Committee with amendment and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

A division was called for.

The bell was rung.

The question that the Bill do now pass was put and resolved in the affirmative, the House dividing as follows:

Ayes: Hon. D. J. H. THOMPSON, Hon. R. D. JONES, Hon. F. J. STUART, Dr. The Hon. D.C. ESTWICK, Hon. M. A. LASHLEY, Hon. R. L. SEALY, Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE, Hon. E. G. HUTSON, Hon. S. D. BLACKETT, Dr. The Hon. D.S. LOWE, Hon. P. M. T. TODD, Hon. D. O'N. INNISS, Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN, Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE, Mr. J. D. PAUL, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY and Mr. H. F. LASHLEY - 18

Noes: Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Mr. D. D. MARSHALL, Mr. G. W. PAYNE, Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN, Mr. G. A. CLARKE, Miss C. Y. FORDE, Dr. W. F. DUGUID, Mr. R. C. EASTMOND - 8

On the separate motions of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, seconded by Hon. R. D. JONES, the Bill was read a third

time, passed and cited as *The Constituency Councils Bill, 2009*.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.45 p.m.

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

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 5.45 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the Sitting accordingly.

5.20 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This Sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 15 – RESOLUTION TO MOVE THAT THE HOUSE RESOLVES ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF THIS ISLAND.

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the House resolve itself into Committee of Supply to consider the grant of sums of money for this island.

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

Mr. Speaker left the Chair and the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. S. A. LASHLEY in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

ORDER NO. 15

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$7 046 844 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.20 2008-2009 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION AND THAT THE EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 25 BE AMENDED AS SET OUT IN THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION

HEAD 19 TREASURY - \$2 063 380

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, this is a fairly straightforward request for some \$2 million to supplement the Ministry of Agriculture and to assist in the acquisition of portable crane equipment for the Fisheries sector in Barbados.

I say portable crane equipment for Fisheries, because of the simple fact that it is intended that this piece of equipment, this crane and haul-up equipment, will be available for any of the sites that are in need of this equipment. Indeed, Sir, Members of this Honourable House are aware of the woes of our fishermen throughout the season during bad weather, when fishing equipment has to be removed from the sea and brought ashore for routine maintenance or occasional repair.

Sir, so often, we promise these fishermen more and more equipment and, indeed, the case is made in the Oistins Fishing Village, which I have the honour to represent in this Chamber, for the dire need and the high cost of using privately-owned crane equipment to manoeuvre their boats in and out of the safe Harbour. It sends up the cost of an already tightly budgetted fishing industry. The fishing industry is one to which I am committed. I know that this Democratic Labour Party is committed to maintaining the continued viability of the fishing industry throughout Barbados. I, of course, in this regard, have a particular interest in the one that operates out of Oistins. I believe colleagues would forgive me for that slant.

I visited most of the operations. I have visited Speightstown, and the very massive and cramped facilities at Bridgetown. I think Honourable Members would be urged to have a look at some of these facilities because there are things we take for granted, which are not necessarily so. The facilities at Bridgetown are quite tight, when there is a rush. Sir, one cannot help but ask the question: What was being done with the money between the years 1994 and 2007? I hope Honourable Members on That Side can tolerate me asking that question again, because it is a fact.

When you look around Barbados at a simple matter as the fishing industry, you ask the question again: Where have the millions and millions of dollars gone?

5.50 p.m.

Sir, you go to Tent Bay, you go to Consett Bay, you go to Skeete's Bay - Skeete's Bay is a special area. Skeete's Bay has the challenges of being a very difficult port to land at. You come down to Oistins itself the one which I represent and which I am sure members of your Constituency also find a living.

Mr. Chairman, we have the fishing facility which is in dire need of urgent repairs. I have been assured during the recent visit by the Honourable Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, who sits in the Other Place, that he will make sure that the lockers, the cemented areas, the driveways, the parking facility which is used by both the customers and the fishermen for their own direct vending. These facilities are absolutely urgent.

I will continue to lead the charge for the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to come into the Oistins facility and carry out a comprehensive survey of the Oistins fish facility.

Sir, there is room for going to the next stage in terms of the display and the presentation of our fish products. Sir, the kind of artistry to which the vendors and the fish boners go to provide their cuts of fish, requires a Government and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development to go to the other yard with them, and provide them with the appropriate tray display facility. It does not have to be refrigerated. It can be just ice, which is refreshed from time to time and really make for a healthier environment.

Mr. Chairman, the physical infrastructure, the cold storage, the locker rooms for the staff and the toilet facilities, is in need of urgent attention. I cannot beg hard enough that this be brought to the top burner at the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, and I would certainly make sure that my voice keeps ringing in the ear of the Minister, to ensure that the people of Oistins who make their living in that fish market, have a facility which they can treasure and which they can be continually proud of.

Mr. Chairman, in a few weeks, we will once again be celebrating the famous Oistins Fish Festival and I would like on that occasion, to be able to speak to an improved environment. We may not have everything completed, but certainly the repair work and the simple maintenance stuff should be out of the way.

Mr. Chairman, we then come to what they call the boatyard itself in Oistins. This area is in need of particular attention. This is where this equipment would operate. The loading area which was once properly ducted, has essentially been eroded with the weather, and needs some physical infrastructural work. Sir, some civil engineering works need to be applied to that area urgently.

Mr. Chairman, there is then the crane and equipment that we talked about. Mr. Chairman, any equipment we look at in the future should be capable of moving around to the different facilities, so that it is not stuck at one facility, but is available for application in the most urgent needs around Barbados. This is what this piece of equipment will be able to do.

Mr. Chairman, there is a need to make repairs to the surface of the boatyard. That surface has never been properly finished. There is a need also for the cleaning up of a lot of the older equipment and old boat equipment that hangs around, and really lends us to a derelict site rather than one of which we can be truly proud.

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would not appreciate this. There is no beach or fish market in St. Thomas, so the Honourable Member should really give the Honourable Chamber the pleasure of hearing contributions from others who need to speak to these things. We cannot be selfish.

Mr. Chairman, I keep saying that one wonders what happened to that money that was so plenty during the 1994 to 2007 period. Sir, here we are in a much tighter economic situation, still being faced with these items which should really have been dusted off and put out of the way.

Sir, we are committed in the management of process and by application of new methods of cooperation. We would not exclude the cooperation of the private sector in this venture. Indeed, even in the maintenance of the crane and making it available, it may be useful to look at some kind of partnership which could see the crane, when it is not being used for purposes of the fishing industry, being put to useful work and so bring monetary benefits to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development. Sir, if something like that can be worked out, I think that this Administration would be happy to support the Minister in such a venture.

Mr. Chairman, we are asking that this provision be made, so that this particular piece of equipment can be brought into the island, and be made available in a much needed area, so as to maintain the ability of our fishermen and our fishing fleet to respond to the very urgent need of getting out there, and not only providing opportunities for making a career with the fishermen and the boat owners themselves, but also to provide a very nutritious alternative to our dietary needs in Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, we like to talk, but there was a time when there was much more fishing activity in Oistins than there is today. There were small boat owners and so many others who operated in Oistins and, indeed, in other places in Barbados.

Sir, we could call names the whole evening. We have the Frank Brookes', the Kenrick Nurse and Miss Berinda Cox from Oistins. Sir, we are still looking forward to honouring this stalwart of Oistins very soon in a most suitable fashion, while she is here with us still. I look forward to being part of that activity when the time comes. Sir, when we carry out our economic evolutions, are we actually growing the business or are we shrinking the

business? As I said, I am sure the Honourable Chamber supports me. There were a lot more players in this fishing business than there are now. I understand from meeting with them that the economic challenges are there and the margins are shrinking, so the profitability of the business is more challenged. Sir, that is why I get back to the same question I asked at the beginning.

Mr. Chairman, it is indeed amazing that after those 14 years of plenty - and the Honourable Member for St. George North knows what I am talking about - of the VAT money and all the other revenues that we had floating around Barbados and managed by the wizard from St. Peter, that we are still in a situation where you could find such a challenge in a big fishing community like Oistins.

6.00 p.m.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, this is a start and we intend to work with the fishing community of Barbados, and with the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development directing the way, we will make sure that the fishing industry grows from strength to strength.

We will provide the necessary repairs in the fishing markets that are required, and by way of this particular item, we will provide the kind of equipment that will allow our fishermen to bring their equipment out of the sea and to take them back into the sea in a quicker and effective way.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

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

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, I rise not to speak as a Lawyer, which I am, but to speak as Shadow Minister of Agriculture which, as far as the shadow portfolio is concerned, includes Fisheries. Sir, the Honourable Minister who has just concluded his speech posed the question: where did all the money go, from 1994 until the Barbados Labour Party demitted office?

Sir, with your permission, let me highlight a number of factors, a number of variables, which are by no means irrelevant to what we are looking at. Mr. Chairman, Tent Bay, located on the East Coast and reasonably challenging to all who use it, has provided challenges and for a number of reasons. The Barbados Labour Party Administration had more than once, since 1994, done significant work on the sluiceway at Tent Bay. Sir, what was being realised too, was that some of the fishermen at Tent Bay seemed to prefer coming to Bridgetown, and there must be reasons for that.

Sir, as I speak, I will probably reflect on why fishermen prefer to come to the Bridgetown Fisheries Complex, even when their locations are way out, like Consett Bay, Skeete's Bay and such like.

Mr. Chairman, where did the money go? We developed Consett Bay out of European Development funding. The Consett Bay project was on the cards for a long time, but the Barbados Labour Party Administration, between 1994 and 1999, saw to it that the facility at Consett Bay was developed. Sir, certain people were curious why you would take the risk of investing in Consett Bay, bearing in mind how it would have been before the development. Before that new road from Fortesque, going down to Consett Bay was built, the old Consett Bay road from the St. John entrance was a forbidden proposition. In fact, to this day, the old Consett Road is in a state of total and absolute disrepair, and it is good that the road from Fortesque, coming past St. Mark's, can now get you down to Consett Bay.

Mr. Chairman, we in the Barbados Labour Party had taken the initiative to develop the fishing facility at Consett Bay.

The same applies to Skeete's Bay. Again through European Development funding, we were able to develop Skeete's Bay. Mr. Chairman, if I am going to be honest with this Honourable Chamber and with myself, I have to say that even after a substantial investment was placed at Skeete's Bay, challenges have still remain.

Sir, it is a pity that some of the fishermen can only come in so far and no further, and even though Ministers Wood and Griffith would have done their utmost to do their best for Skeete's Bay, the hard fact of the situation, for those who do not know, is that when fishermen come in towards Skeetes Bay, they sometimes literally have to stop at a certain distance and swim their catches ashore.

This obviously is a time for this Government to look again at Skeete's Bay, because there have been more than one complaint from the fisher-folk in that area, that the situation is untenable when it comes to actually landing their catch. Indeed, a lot of fishermen at Skeete's Bay sometimes find greater comfort in coming to the Bridgetown Fisheries Complex than in doing their business in St. Philip.

Mr. Chairman, what effect does that have? It affects the morale of the traditional Bayfield area. It means that when other challenges such as shortage of ice occurs, they would be further disadvantaged. What it also means is that when, on account of these factors, the fisher-folk of St. Philip, Bayfield and surrounding areas in particular, come down to the Bridgetown Fisheries Complex, there is congestion in the Bridgetown Fisheries Complex.

Mr. Chairman, the Other Side is in Government and there is no question that the congestion at the Bridgetown Fisheries Complex has to be eased, for more than one reason. At the same time, we have to bear in mind that there are those who do not really belong to the Bridgetown area, who are involved in fishing in Bridgetown. We, therefore, have a situation where we have to find ways and means of getting people to function as fisher-folk in their original location.

Mr. Chairman, I think too, as we consider this, that we should consider the situation at Pile Bay. Pile Bay operates a not-too-insignificant fishing business. It is a fishing port, but it lacks modernity. It is a tribute to the people who ply their ware or do their business at Pile Bay, that against all the odds they are still able to conduct a fishing enterprise that does a lot for Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, we have an ongoing problem almost nationwide with a shortage of ice, and fisherfolk the island over, including fisherfolk at Skeete's Bay, Conssett Bay, Oistins and Bridgetown, have been complaining about the shortage of ice. In my Constituency in Weston, which I have the honour to represent, a lovely area with a reasonable modern facility, this problem of shortage of ice has also reared its head. Notwithstanding that, the fisherfolk at Weston, though they are not numerous, are determined to continue making their contribution, not only to their families and to those who buy their fish, but so determined are they to protect their interest that they have done a very laudable thing.

The fisher-folk at Weston have all gone to the National Insurance Scheme and have registered as self-employed persons, at the urging of persons in the community like "Eugene", "Janet", "Arlette", "Milly". These people have taken the cautionary step of seeing themselves as self-employed persons and have deliberately gone to the National Insurance Scheme and registered as being self-employed persons.

Sir, the reason I would like these fishermen to follow that lead, is that if they are self-employed, they should do something to ensure that in their later years they would have a type of safety net, such as social security, which is important.

6.10 p.m.

I am not punning. I know we are talking about fishing and the question of a safety net comes up, but social security is important and I call on all the fisher-folks, the small business operators and people in the informal sector, to get on board and join up with the National Insurance Scheme.

Sir, I would like to praise people like Eugene, Janet, Arlette, Milly, Mr. Thompson and the people from Weston and Viola Hall, deceased, who actually decided that they were not only small businessmen but that as Barbadians, self-employed, they were not going to break the Rules by refusing to pay National Insurance.

Mr. Chairman, there is another problem too. If we look at the total quantum of the Supplementary before this Honourable Committee, it is not a significant amount of money, if you realise the many challenges.

Mr. Chairman, let us turn now to the question of what we call the haul-up facilities in this country. It has often transpired that the haul-up mechanisms fall woefully short of what they ought to be.

Sir, picture a situation of a dangerous hurricane affecting Barbados or a hurricane, not necessarily affecting Barbados directly, but a hurricane hitting Grenada with a spill-off effect on Barbados. A hurricane hitting as far north as St. Lucia or Martinique with a spill-off effect on Barbados, then you hear the weather says that small crafts are advised to remain in harbour.

Mr. Chairman, we do have this situation where we have had an insufficient amount of haul-up facilities. Sir, a Supplementary to the tune of \$3 million will not solve the problem if there is only one or if there are only two tractors to service the whole of Barbados. Sir, I am challenging the Government to investigate how many tractors there are for haul-up, not just for the hurricane season, but year round. If you investigate the matter very carefully, you will notice, Mr. Chairman, that we are short on facilitating the fishermen who want to bring their boats and crafts either to safe harbour or to the beach.

Mr. Chairman, Half Moon Fort is an area of intense economic activity, sometimes urged on by a local hero, who has been empowered to speak on behalf of the people of Half Moon Fort.

Sir, Half Moon Fort people are excellent fisherfolk and excellent fishermen and His Right Excellency, the Ambassador would tell you - but in this area - is a mere shed, similar to what you had at Weston 20 years ago is sufficient? Sir, a fishing shed is like the ancient structure with a gable roof and a few columns, a bar or slab. If you look at the facilities at Paynes' Bay and Weston, we have gone past in St. James, the fishing shed era and Half Moon Fort people must go past the fishing shed era as well, Sir.

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, in fairness to the Barbados Labour Party Administration, we have

always seen fish as an important source of protein. We have always seen the fisher folk as an important grouping in Barbados. We have seen fishing as an important economic sub-sector and we both empathise and stand in solidarity with the fishermen of Barbados, who, notwithstanding many challenges, still continue to play a pivotal role in our national development.

Mr. Chairman, I am deeply obliged to you.

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise to speak on this Supplementary and to make the point that the biggest problem facing the fishing industry in this country is appreciation for the profession called "fishing."

Too many people believe that because people are fisherfolks that they do not contribute to the economic gains of the country. Sir, that is because the money paid for fish is not paid in green dollars, but in Barbadian currency. One has to recognise that import substitution is a lot better sometimes than actually getting that green dollar, because the multiplied effect of what occurs within the fishing industry is much greater than some of the foreign exchange that we earn. Sir, people must recognise that because someone smells fishy, it does not mean he is not a professional.

Mr. Chairman, people also have to recognise that to get up 11:00 o'clock a night and travel on the high seas, one has to experience being out there to understand what the fisher folk of Barbados have to go through. Sir, I can tell you because I have tried it already. I have done "brimming", I have done casting. I have gone fishing to catch flying fish and I have done many things that a lot of other fisher folk might not have done because I went brimming in a "moses".

Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member is talking about a fishing agreement, but the Honourable Member would not want to tell the public of Barbados that the fishing agreement is not signed as yet, because of the Rules laid down by them and the Rules which have to be followed.

Mr. Chairman, when you traverse Consett Bay, Oistins, Skeete's Bay, Speightstown, Tent Bay, the Bridgetown Complex, Six Men's, Half Moon Fort, the Sand Pit, Paynes Bay and Weston, the problem is the same. Sir, it is one thing to put a group of people together, but it is another thing to find the necessary facilities for those persons to work with.

Mr. Chairman, the biggest problems facing the Fishing Complex in Bridgetown are boats that cannot

work. Sir, we have to face this fact and a decision has to be made by the Ministry of Agriculture to clear the Complex. There are too many fishing boats in the Complex that should not be there. Sir, they need to be removed because, if we have a serious problem, the boats in the water will not be able to come on land because there are boats on the land, in the Complex, that should be somewhere else.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to the day when the Ministry of Agriculture makes a decision, calls the owners of those boats and tell them that they have to remove their boats, or to sell them, because they are taking up valuable space and interfering with the fishing industry of Barbados.

Sir, another thing, you have equipment. The fishermen tell you that the equipment is about to have a problem, and that if the problem is not fixed, that the equipment would break down. Sir, would you believe that in order for the officials to fix that problem that there must be a break to fix the problem, even though you could see that it would break? Sir, in other words, a hose would have to break for it to be replaced. Sir, I am saying it is wrong because in any other profession, it would have been changed.

Mr. Chairman, what is needed is preventative maintenance to ensure that when the fisherfolk need the equipment, it is in working condition.

Mr. Chairman, I am saying that this \$3 million was on the books for too long and that something should already be done about it. If you go back to the Budget, you would see that this was in the Budget more than a year ago, but there are some senior people within certain Ministries, who believe that the fishing industry is not important, and that you should not be proactive.

Sir, when one considered in the month of September, when we had high seas, how people had to be scrambling all over Barbados and the Minister could tell you the amount of headaches the fisherfolk had. Sir, I cannot see the Minister in here, but if he could, he would respond and tell you how the fisherfolk had headaches trying to get their boats to safe harbour, and Sir, that is not fair, because the Government was proactive enough to move \$3 million within the Budget, but yet still, the persons you would expect to carry out and implement the policy of Government frustrated the policy of Government.

6.20 p.m.

I am saying that we cannot continue to treat fishermen like how we treated them 10 years ago. One of the biggest problems facing the fishing industry is to get boats to safe harbour. We are so outdated, that we believe the only place for a boat is next to the sea on a sand bay.

There is equipment that lifts boats and places them on a trailer to be taken elsewhere. The truth is, if this is not done half of our fishing fleet will remain in the water, while half is on the land, waiting for that half to come out, and the next half to go in to be repaired. We have passed that stage.

Sir, a man's boat should be like his house or car. He should be able to travel with it. If you have space by your house, there is equipment that can take your boat next to your house, just like how you park your car next to your house. There is no reason why you should be waiting for another boat to come out of the water, for you to put your boat in the water or take it out. I am saying that we are operating in outdated times and it needs to stop.

Sir, there is another problem facing the fishing industry. As I traverse Barbados, fishermen are telling me now that they cannot find vendors to sell fish. I was telling the fishermen to stop bad talking the vendors, because they believe that the vendors did not have a right to make money. A lot of them did not realise that the vendors protected their interests by buying their fish.

Sir, if you went to the sea at 11.00 a.m., 3.00 p.m. or 4.00 p.m., when you came to shore, you had a sure market, because there were vendors, but because the vendors used their initiatives and were scaling and boning fish and making a little more money, jealousy stepped in. Do you know what is regrettable? They are worried about the vendor who - and a lot of them during the hurricane season they could borrow money from, but when they sell their fish to the large fish processors that they do not see until the next season, they do not worry about what they sell to the processors, but they worry about the price they sell to the vendors.

I am saying it is wrong. They need to develop a relationship, and stop being jealous of each other and recognise that two hands must clap in order to create a relationship. There is room in Barbados for vending.

I am also making the point - a point that I have been making for nearly 14 years - that the same rights the boat owners have, the vendors should be given too. It is wrong in this country for a boat owner to get duty-free concessions, and the persons selling the fish cannot get them, but the fish processors can get them.

Sir, there are people in Barbados who believe that a vendor is nobody, utter foolishness. It must stop, because it is the vendors that regulate the market, and the vendor that can expand the market. I am saying that the same concessions given to the boat owners and large fish processors, the vendors should receive also.

Sir, if you give the vendor the right to get a duty-free van, tomorrow you will see how many vendors there are in Barbados. We are frustrating the fishing industry not doing those proactive things that are needed. I am saying that the vendors must get a proper vehicle to take the fish across Barbados and stop people from blocking the roads in one particular location.

Sir, it is regrettable that Barbadians can now order goods on the Internet, but if they want flying fish they have to go to a fish port. Can you imagine this foolishness? We are prepared for imported goods, but we are not prepared for our own local goods.

Sir, we are becoming backward, because in the 1960s and 1970s, as you would know, we did not have to go anywhere to get fish. We used to hear the horn and the call "flying fish, five for a dollar," and all of that, but not now. If you do not catch a bus and go to the port you are in trouble now. I am saying that we have to recognise that.

Sir, in the Half Moon Fort area, things have become so bad, the fellows had to move from Half Moon Fort to Six Men's. I had to change that, because Half Moon Fort had a right to sell fish, at least they had a shed to provide cover. I told them it does not make any sense leaving a shed to go and sell next to the road. Sir, there is room in Half Moon Fort for the development of the market. On top of that Half Moon Fort also had a Jetty and this is where the Ministry of Agriculture and BTII need to come in and correct this problem, and also provide parking. Sir, on top of that there is something called "Community Tourism", which is much bigger, and I was very happy to hear the Prime Minister speaking about what should happen in St. John and St. Philip, which I support.

I believe that every fishing community should get involved in Community Tourism, because there is a natural relationship between the two. It must not only be Oistins and "Moon Town". I am saying it could be anywhere.

Sir, at one point in this Honourable House I told a certain Member of Parliament, after his speech about Skeete's Bay, I was convinced in my mind that the money being spent on Skeete's Bay was wrong. I remember making the point that the Member of Parliament made such a good case for money not to be spent on Skeete's Bay, because it would have been a bad allocation, and a Speaker of the Honourable House asked me to withdraw the remarks. Sir, you know me, I had to put them in the record so I rephrased my statement and put it right. Sir, the Member of Parliament convinced everybody.

Sir, I was happy to hear the Honourable Member for St. James North making the same point that the Member of Parliament made. Instead of people fishing at Skeete's Bay they should go to the Bridgetown Complex. Yet, we picked

up a lot of the taxpayers' money and spent it on Skeete's Bay, even though we knew the end result.

Sir, I am saying that the money spent on Skeete's Bay could have been better spent on Consett Bay. If you go to Consett Bay, you will have a better understanding. Sir, do you know that Consett Bay is a natural area for a marina? Instead of constructing that road, they should have built a bridge with a safe harbour at Consett Bay. Sir, where you currently drive, you should not be able to drive. You should have been able to drive over a tunnel, allowing the boats to come inland into a safe harbour at Consett Bay.

We must be proactive. The area where they now repair the boats is so large, and once cleared, you can develop the bridge allowing the boats to enter safe harbour. At the East, there should be a break water to lessen the impact of the waves to make the area safe, simple. The fishermen know it. I know, but yet for some reason people cannot understand the contribution of these people to the economy of Barbados. That is why we are going down hill, because we do not value import substitutions anymore. The same thing I am speaking about relating to the fishing community, can be said of farming.

I have said in this Honourable House that there is no logical reason why...

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

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: I will finish in one minute because this is my winding up statement. Sir, English potatoes could be shipped from miles away, landed in Barbados and be sold cheaper than sweet potatoes and yams. Sir, this is a big Ad and I intend to prove my point this week. I intend to show that yams can be sold in Barbados at \$1 a pound. If you want yams, come to "Moon Town", for white yams.

Sir, it is one thing to make a statement but if you know me well, any statement I make I set about to prove.

Asides.

His Excellency D. St.E. KELLMAN: This is not advertising. That is why I keep making the point in Barbados, that we are so caught up with revenue, that we do not understand the importance of foreign exchange. The biggest problem facing Barbados is, the wrong accountants. What we need in Barbados are cost accountants.

6.30 p.m.

What we need in Barbados are cost accountants and I will continue to make this statement over and over until I die. The cost of selling goods in Barbados has no

relationship to the actual cost of producing those goods. Sir, do you hear me? That is true. We are stopping ourselves from exporting goods in this country. I am saying to the Minister of Finance that he needs to study this statement, because the export potential of this country is much greater than we know.

Sir, the Barbados Agricultural Management Company, which was set up in the 1990s, needs to understand its true export potential. Sir, based on the small example that I am about to create this week, I hope that the lesson will be learnt that sweet potatoes and yams have no right being sold at \$3.00 to \$5.00 a pound.

I thank you, Sir.

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

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Mr. Chairman, I rise to make a brief introduction in support of this Head before us. I believe it speaks volumes to this Government's commitment, to some of the less fortunate in our society, as well as to improving the lot of a wide cross-section of people, including our public officers.

Sir, this sum of \$6.23 million, \$2 million towards the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries and \$63 000 for the Barbados Drug Service, well captures the importance that this Government attaches to these sectors.

The Honourable Member for St. James North, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy spoke well of the importance of the fishing industry to the Barbados economy. I certainly commend them for their comments. Perhaps, it would be remiss of me, as the son of a fisherman, not to lend my support to this in particular.

Asides.

Hon. D. O'N. INNIS: Sir, like the Honourable Member for St. Philip North, who also is the son of a fisherman, we would have had wonderful days growing up in Skeete's Bay in particular. It is rather regrettable that the former Administration did not place enough emphasis on the development of a fishing industry in Barbados.

Many of us, a lot of individuals in this society, can point to the importance of fishermen in the development of their own lives and their own communities. Certainly, growing up in Bayfield, St. Philip, in the area of Skeete's Bay, all of us can attest to having some relative or someone who was perhaps the sole bread-winner, earning their income from the fishing industry. Sir, those were the days when we had wonderful communities, where the men

fished and their wives sold the fish, and we all lived happily.

Sir, times have changed, and a lot of the youngsters these days are not getting into fishing as a profession. Notwithstanding that, we have a duty as a responsible Government, to ensure that the fishing industry survives, and is ably supported by the Government. Sir, that is why I am very pleased to see that today, in the face of the situation, where you do not have the manual labour, which was readily available in the communities in those days, to haul up the boats or to push them down, as a responsible and enlightened Government, we have seen it fit to invest a few million dollars in providing the requisite equipment, which can very well avoid damage to the fishing boats and, by extension, to the fishing industry and the lives of many Barbadians. I certainly want to commend my colleagues for giving support to this fund that is being proposed.

It goes further, and I agree with many things that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has talked about today, and has always spoken about in this Chamber and elsewhere, in respect of the development of the fishing industry, because it is not just the fisherfolk.

Sir, as an enlightened Government, we are also looking at what needs to be done in respect of the boat building, a sector I think that we need to maintain. Rather, develop a boat building industry, including design of modern fishing boats for the Barbadian scenario, in respect of engine repair and maintenance for the fishing industry, as well as going into the realm of the fish processors and such like, so that we can truly have a developed fishing industry in Barbados. It certainly brings tremendous benefits to Barbados. It helps us in the saving of foreign exchange. It helps in the maintenance and development of jobs. It certainly does a lot in respect of community development as well.

I agree with the comments made by the Honourable Member for St. James North, who opted this afternoon to bare his soul, and to indicate clearly to this Chamber that his Administration failed miserably in the past, particularly in respect of this industry.

Sir, I could not believe a few years ago that the former Government, would have actually spent the kind of monies, to do the kind of follies that were done at Skeete's Bay in particular. It speaks volumes to how sometimes, professionals embark upon projects and do not listen to the residents of communities, who are affected by these projects.

Sir, had the former Ministers of Agriculture and Fisheries and their advisors listened to the fishermen, who made their livelihood from fishing in the Skeete's Bay area, and listened to the men and women who bathed down there

every day and sometimes at night, and listened to all of us who are residents in that community, they would not have done what they did.

Instead, they went out there and spent millions of taxpayers' dollars to build a jetty, which today is used principally for just the guys who wish to fish, and those who may wish to land some substances that I rather not have on our shores, under the cover of darkness.

Mr. Chairman, I certainly believe that, as a Government, we must not make such mistakes in the future. Skeete's Bay is a part of our physical development on the coast, that we rather not have had developed in that way. I certainly believe, now having done that, we have to find ways in which we can utilise the facility up there.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. John speak earlier today about festivities and cultural activities along our shoreline and I certainly support that as well. I believe that this \$2 million being expended in the purchase of equipment for the fishing industry, will certainly go a long way, in alleviating a lot of the plights of the fishermen, particularly in the hurricane season, when they are challenged to get their boats hauled up in a timely fashion.

Mr. Chairman, the other part of this Head speaks to \$63 000 being allocated for the Barbados Drug Service, to facilitate its movement to the ALICO Building in Fontabelle. As I said at the beginning, this Head, all be it not necessarily a large sum of money, does speak volumes to how we, as a Government, attach importance to certain segments of our society.

Sir, for almost 14 years, the public officers in Barbados, were forced to function in less than standard accommodations, and that is truly regrettable. One of the bigger challenges we have had as a new Government, is to be able to provide reasonable accommodation for public officers.

The public officers of Barbados were not just demoralised, by the political victimisation that permeated the system during the last Administration, but by the sheer dilapidated conditions that many of them were forced to work in.

I have said it in other places and I will say here that, I believe, the Ministry of Health, unfortunately, has some of the worst buildings for public officers to function in, in Barbados.

It is regrettably that the Ministry of Health, which is responsible for the health of this nation, is forced to have public officers operating in less than substandard conditions.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I do not want to stop you, but I do not want to spread the debate beyond the confines of the Bill.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Thank you, Sir.

I am speaking to the issue of providing reasonable accommodation for public officers. We recognise that the building the Barbados Drug Service is existing in, is infested with termites. It is certainly not the place that we, as a Government, believe public officers should be working in. Therefore, we decided to relocate them to a modern building.

Sir, it speaks also to the importance, as I said, of housing public officers that is why, as a Government, we talked about providing new buildings for them. Sir, we certainly will provide that for them in this upcoming financial year.

Mr. Chairman, I therefore give my full support to Head 19, as we seek to move things forward.

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

Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, the matter of purchasing haul-up equipment, crane and boat jacks is one that resonates with the fisher-folk, who operate in Tent Bay. History will show that at one point in time, I believe, as far back as the 1950s, that the fishing fleet operating out of Tent Bay was the largest, in Barbados.

6.40 p.m.

Today, Sir, the number of boats that operate from Tent Bay could not claim to call itself a fleet.

Mr. Chairman, there are some particular challenges that are faced by the fisher-folks at Tent Bay. Over the years, the Coastal Zone Management Unit actually had a plan to ameliorate the conditions at Tent Bay. Sir, the matter of haul-up equipment is especially critical, because there was a time in the old days before the market and the dredging work was done, that Tent Bay actually had a nice sandy beach. The work that was done there caused that sandy beach to disappear, and now it is a very stony and rocky beach and it is very difficult for the fisherfolks to haul up their boats.

Mr. Chairman, over the last term of Government, there were two occasions that come to mind immediately, where there was usually very, very heavy surf, and boats in Tent Bay were under threat of destruction. Mr. Chairman, I attended at Tent Bay on both of those occasions. Sir, the fact of the matter is, that individuals had to try against that

very pounding surf to swim out to their boats and to get those boats around the island to Bridgetown.

Sir, we tried desperately to get hold of anybody from the Fisheries Division, to get the tractor to come up to provide haul-outs. We eventually got hold of a watchman, who of course, was of no assistance. We then called the Soil Conservation Commission, because they, of course, had heavy-duty tractors that are four-wheel drives. Sir, that took a bit of doing, because obviously, somebody is calling to tell them to come and do a haul-out when in truth and in fact those tractors had never done haul-outs before.

Sir, the tractor operator was quite rightly a little reluctant to come and put his vehicle to do something that was not part of his ordinary experience on a Sunday morning. Eventually, Sir, we managed to speak to management and they okayed it. Sir, when the tractor came, it was not powerful enough to pull the boats out.

Sir, on both of those occasions, the fleet as it was in Tent Bay, suffered significant damage. On one occasion a boat was completely destroyed. Sir, when asked about the length of time it would take to get a tractor to come from down town, which I think was the nearest place, we were told that tractors drive very slowly, and it would actually have been a matter of hours, even if they had an operator, before they could provide us with haul-out services.

Sir, it becomes a more stark perspective when you consider the difficulties that we face during the hurricane season. Sir, having had responsibility for disaster preparedness, one of the things that we sought to do, was to formulate a full plan for the hauling out of vessels in circumstances where we were under threat. The Barbados Defence Force and the Fisheries Division worked on it and their calculation was, that we had nearly 800 vessels, the majority of which were fishing crafts.

Sir, the haul-out facility operated by the Fisheries Division was done by a tractor, not what is called a Tommy Lift. We had two of them at our disposal. One of them is at the Shallow Draft and the other one is at the new Defence Force Headquarters.

Sir, what we realised was that when once we hauled out the boats, we really had no place to put them, and the best that could be done would have been to put them in areas nearby, because most boat owners do not have trailers and then, of course, you had to find jacks to put them on.

Sir, we recognised that a significant part of our fishing fleet, even if we could get them hauled out, would have been under severe threat if there was a storm surge or if there was serious flooding.

Mr. Chairman, the vessels that were not big enough to be pulled out, found themselves in a bit of predicament because, as the Honourable Member for St. James North pointed out earlier, the Fishing Complex in town is under pressure and could not accommodate many of those fishing boats, and Port St. Charles, because of the fact that they have now sold all of their berths, could not accommodate them either.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that those facts still obtain today. Therefore, we would be under tremendous threat, if we did not see to the proper provision of haul-out equipment. The Minister has not said what kind of haul-out equipment he is talking about. The fact is that we need to take the issue of our fishing boats under very serious consideration.

Barbados cannot afford to be out of a fishing fleet. Our food security, foreign exchange earnings and the daily bread of many Barbadians rely on the fishing industry. Therefore, Sir, I am very pleased to see this supported.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a call for some kind of haul-out capacity to be provided on the East Coast, because Skeete's Bay also has the challenge. I am not sure if a tractor is kept at Skeete's Bay, but certainly on that day in question, there was none. The suggestion that I had made to the then Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development was, that we should consider locating a significant size tractor that could handle the haul-out of those boats in an area that is perhaps equi-distance between Skeete's Bay and Tent Bay, and also cover any boats that are in Consett Bay.

Sir, to provide this kind of equipment and to have it on the West Coast and the South Coast, would really not be of a whole lot of comfort to the fisherfolks who are operating from the East Coast of Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to make an urgent plea for the Minister to consider locating a suitable size tractor, somewhere in the area between St. John and St. Joseph, so that individuals who are in urgent need of a haul-out can have it. Mr. Chairman, it does not mean that it has to be there all the time, but in situations where we know that bad weather is expected, it is incumbent on us to make sure that the individuals who would suffer significant damage in those areas are safeguarded.

Mr. Chairman, I support this particular Head, and I hope that this Minister would give favourable consideration to my request on behalf of those boat owners and fisherfolks on the eastern side of Barbados.

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

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, in wrapping up, I want to repeat for the Honourable Member that these funds are earmarked to purchase a crane, a hydraulic trailer and boat jacks so that haul-up services for fishermen may be provided in a timely manner and at reasonable rates. I would not suggest this makes null and void his entire contribution, but most of it.

Sir, I want to thank those Honourable Members who have spoken to the discussion this evening. The hour is late. We get an opportunity to speak on agriculture, particularly on fishing, pretty often in this Honourable Chamber, and I am sure there are a number of us who would want to contribute otherwise if the time were not so spent.

Mr. Chairman, it is at least encouraging to be able to support this Head. I look forward to the acquisition and indeed the application of this new equipment to the benefit of our fishermen.

I beg to move that Head 19 stand part.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 19 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 25

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT \$183 464

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 25 stand part.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 25 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

6.50 p.m.

HEAD 61

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, FOREIGN TRADE, AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS OF \$4 800 000

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

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Chairman, I rise to propose this Supplementary of \$4.8 million to the Medical Transcription Programme. Sir, for the benefit of those Honourable Members in this Honourable Chamber, and for those persons who may not be aware as to the medical

transcription process, let me just give some background information.

Mr. Chairman, medical transcription is an act of translating a patient's record of medical care and treatment from voice to electronic form. The person who transcribes that data is responsible for the transcription of this spoken information into an electronic form of organised well-expressed communication.

Mr. Chairman, initially this programme was introduced back in 2007 by the previous Administration and some \$8.5 million had been approved for a programme that would have lasted some three years. Mr. Chairman, that programme was subsequently revised and the number of persons to be trained as medical transcribers, who originally were expected to be 100 persons, was modified in an attempt to train some 280 persons.

Sir, eventually the programme ended up with about 148 students, with some 112 persons graduating last September, 2008. Mr. Chairman, those students have been taken up by two firms, TRSI (Barbados) Inc., which is a foreign company, and ACR Business Services, which is a locally-owned corporation.

Mr. Chairman, this particular programme is one that when I first took on my responsibility as Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce, it was one of the programmes I noted within the one arm of the Ministry, the Barbados Investment Development Corporation. It really is a programme that I have a lot of time for personally, because it speaks to the creation of what could be considered almost a new industry in Barbados. It certainly is reflective of the vision of our founding father of Independence, the Right Honourable Errol Walton Barrow, in terms of his vision for creating a knowledge-based society, which is the need for students in Barbados to become more computer-literate.

Sir, to be more familiar with the information technology, is generally accepted among the population of this country. In fact, the previous Government had implemented a programme commonly referred to as the "EduTech Programme". I think one of the failures of that programme was the fact that we still have a number of our students who are not as computer literate as they should be. I believe in going forward, that we need to look at our curriculum reform, at things like computer science.

I believe that the ability of our ordinary students to be able to take computer classes, in my view, needs to be compulsory. We need to be seeing that with the same level of importance as we see Mathematics and English Language.

Mr. Chairman, every family in Barbados has, over the years, recognised the importance of education and the

need for us to have our students very well educated. I believe that is the direction we certainly need to be taking our young people. We are in danger of creating two societies if we do not address the issue of accessibility to computers within the homes of those persons at the bottom end of the social economic scale, with a view to ensuring that those students are having that extent of training. Sir, we will run the danger of having two societies being created within our own communities, if we do not address that issue.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, the time certainly has come that we need also to look at our 11-plus programme, in terms of the relationship between those persons who are successful within the programme, and the social economic background from which those persons who have performed very well would have come. Mr. Chairman, that is an assessment that could be done at the level of the C.X.C.

Mr. Chairman, this programme of medical transcription as I said, is one I have a lot of time for; it creates the opportunity for our people who are looking at a career as medical transcribers in terms of self-employment. As I understand it, the duration of that programme is nine months.

Sir, that is one of the reasons we have had such a high fall-out of students, because a number of those persons who came into the programme, found that they were unable to sustain that training over the nine-month period, without having some source of income. But I believe, certainly from the information that has been discussed with me when I was at the Ministry of Trade and International Business, that there are opportunities within this particular industry, once people are qualified as medical transcribers, for them to operate businesses in a domestic environment, at home, because the programme requires you

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to be translating from voice electronic format, and once you have your computer facilities at home, once you have two years of experience, one could actually do that process at home.

Sir, that has other social implications, because it addresses the whole question of volume of traffic on the road. Mr. Chairman, people will have their own home offices and it addresses the whole question of flexible hours so that you work at your own speed.

I believe as well that the basis of your remuneration is based on the level of how many words you can process over time. It certainly gives the opportunity for that person that is productive, that person that could process with a high degree of efficiency, it gives that person an

opportunity to earn a bit more than the person that is not able to operate at the particular level. It gives you that opportunity for greater productivity and for your income to be tied directly to your out-put.

Mr. Chairman, in speaking with some of our disabled persons within the society, I understand that those people who are visually impaired could also benefit from this programme and this certainly is one additional avenue that those people with disabilities could benefit again from this programme.

Mr. Chairman, that is why I believe that this programme has a lot to commend to our young people as a profession that they could develop. I believe that the starting level of remuneration is comparatively high for the type of work being done.

Mr. Chairman, I want to commend this programme. I believe that Invest Barbados has so far spent over \$9.3 million in training of students within this programme. There is an amount of \$1.5 million, which is also to be expended within this financial year of 2008/2009, which would bring the total expenditure to \$10.8 million. Sir, so far, Invest Barbados has been able to fund some \$6 million out of that programme, which gives a deficiency of \$4.8 million and, therefore, we need to reimburse Invest Barbados its funds to the extent of that \$4.8 million.

Mr. Chairman, with that, I ask that this Head stand part.

Hon. P. M. T. TODD: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND: Mr. Chairman, my disappointment lies in the fact that when I read what I have before me I would want further and better particulars. What I have before me says, "Head 61 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business. The sum of \$4.8 million is required to supplement Head 61 - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business, Programme 337: Investment Promotion and Facilitation, Sub-programme 7083: Invest Barbados, Account Code: 316 -Grants to Public Institution - \$4.8 million."

Mr. Chairman, the reason for my disappointment is that there is no proper Explanatory Note at all and, let me reflect somberly and soberly on Explanatory Notes. Sir, from time immemorial, this Parliament has been short-changed, when particular people, with no known political or policy agenda, would prepare Supplementaries for the political class, and even when they put Explanatory Notes, those Explanatory Notes would not be full enough.

Mr. Chairman, I call on the Democratic Labour Party to reverse that by insisting in every Ministry that when it comes to presenting a matter like this to Parliament, that full particulars are given for the benefit of Parliamentarians. Were it not for the intervention of the Honourable Member for St. James Central and Minister, we would not have known exactly what this figure is for. The Honourable Minister said it is for facilitation of medical transcription, but he said other things as well. Sir, because Invest Barbados is part of the Supplementary, permit me, Mr. Chairman, to reflect on a number of things.

Mr. Chairman, the Minister said he was personally disappointed in EduTech. The difficulty that the Barbados Labour Party had with EduTech, having made a solemn pledge to make Barbadian students computer literate, was the question of financial constraints and so, we had to do a phased EduTech. At the last count, EduTech would have cost in excess of \$700 million and the Barbados Labour Party Administration, as committed as it was to EduTech could not locate \$700 million all at once and, therefore, introduced EduTech in phases, then to realise that in many schools there was a crying need for repairs and adjustment to accommodate the civil works that went with the introduction of EduTech.

Mr. Chairman, EduTech so far, has permitted many a youngster right across Barbados to be able to access computer technology, to be able to become computer literate and also to learn some skills which, as the Minister correctly said, could lead to things like self-employment.

We also decided in the Barbados Labour Party that, notwithstanding our commitment to the EduTech programme at the level of the school system, we would introduce computer technology in particular community centres and, Sir, these centers were converted into what we call, in the Barbados Labour Party resource centres, opened to John Public, his wife and his children, open to what the Spanish would say, *todo el mundo*, but since the Standing Orders require me to speak in English, open to all and sundry.

Sir, the Community Technology Programme captured the imagination of the public, in that in its first few years of operation, I saw people from 17 to 70 go to particular resource centres to learn the tricks and trade of computer operation.

Mr. Chairman, I am heartened, for example, that in the Constituency of St. James North, there is the Weston Resource Centre, which was never un-utilised, when the community technology centres got going in this island of ours.

Mr. Chairman, when we speak in this Honourable Committee on this particular Head, we also have to look at

the whole question of medium and long-term investments. Sir, after all Sub-programme 7083 speaks of Invest Barbados and, it must not be forgotten that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East successfully piloted a programme called YES for youthful entrepreneurs.

7.10 p.m.

In the meantime, we will keep the Government on its toes. We will ensure that the Government puts Barbados first and we will do our best from out here to ensure that the Democratic Labour Party can continue to look back at the policies that we have introduced and engendered, and use those policies to enlighten the programmes that they want to introduce.

I thank you very much, Sir.

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

Mr. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I shall indeed be brief at this time in the night.

It is always good to intervene after my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. James North. He always moves the debate to another level. However, I just want to make a couple of point, because I am sure that we will have reasons to discuss Invest Barbados at length, sometime in the future.

Mr. Chairman, at the outset, I believe that the role of Invest Barbados and the success of Invest Barbados is paramount, in terms of the development of Barbados over the short to medium-term. Therefore, it is actually an area that we need to pay particular attention to.

This area of the medical transcription, I happen to see the young men and women, mostly young women every morning and every afternoon going to their classes. I, like the Honourable Member for St. James Central, am heartened by the success of the programme. I have discussed it with various persons who are actually involved in the programme and some who are going on because there are opportunities for Barbadians to actually become teachers. I believe after the nine-month programme, you work for a while and then there is a further study period, that they can actually then also become teachers. Right now, we have non- Barbadian facilitators.

I am advised that there are opportunities for Barbados to actually become facilitators and thereby not only train persons in Barbados, but also outside of Barbados. I am actually heartened by what I am hearing and by my interaction with people who have been involved in the programme.

It is regrettable that not very many young men have been involved in the programme. Rather, those who have come on board, many of them have left the programme, part of it, because of the nine-months' study period, and part of it because somewhere in our society, we have told our young men that there are only certain jobs that they are supposed to have, which actually is a misdemeanor, a bit of a "no no".

In this day and age, I believe that honest work for an honest dollar, in programmes like this, which can make you self-sufficient, and self-employed, should not be for our young ladies only.

I go back to my role in terms of my vision for Invest Barbados and how important it is. I have spent the last couple of weeks, and I am sure my friend from St. Michael North West will be happy to hear this, looking at the EPA and the opportunities that there are for Barbados in terms of the EPA, now that we have signed it, which is the European Partnership Agreement.

Mr. Chairman, one area we reckon that Barbados will be able to benefit, is the area of services, which is consistent with our vision, in terms of Barbados. I heard again, the Honourable Member for St. James Central mentioned our founding father, that in fact his vision was that one day we would, indeed, be a services economy. Yet, we can see in 2008 that we have executed the EPA, and we have found that the one area of opportunity for us going forward, would be in the area of services.

This is where I believe that Invest Barbados would have to play a leading role. Bear in mind, Mr. Chairman, as you know that Invest Barbados is not only about investing into Barbados, but also exporting our talent.

One of the articles I read recently which gave me lots of comfort, as I am sure which gave you some comfort, was an article on young Hal Linton, who said he was heartened by the fact that they shared his vision that Invest Barbados was able to work with them for over a period of time, to invest their money in resources. Today, I am sure that all of us as Barbadians are happy to hear that we have another international artiste.

It is hard for us to quantify the exposure that Barbados derives from an individual like that, but I am sure that money, energy and technical expertise, lent by Invest Barbados would have been time, money and expertise, well spent. This is just an illustration in terms of how Invest Barbados can contribute, in terms of services going out of Barbados and not necessarily bringing businesses into Barbados.

However, there are two other points I want to make, in terms of when you do bring businesses into Barbados.

Sir, one of the things that I have noticed, in terms of someone who has actually been involved on the practical side, is that when we have businesses in Barbados, which we have invited to Barbados and we have encouraged to set up in Barbados, there seems to be a lack of communication between the various Departments, which we need to examine.

A good illustration is that I recall just last year, meeting with a group from Warrens, who are involved in the on-line pharmacy trade. Whereas, when they go to Invest Barbados, there is a lot of encouragement to come and set up, and Invest Barbados sees the vision in terms of employment for Barbadians. This vision seemed to have gotten lost, when it comes to the interaction with the Barbados Drug Service, and when it comes to turning around things like the International Business Companies Licence. Therefore, we need to ensure there is an understanding that we are all on the same page, within all of our various Departments, in terms of Invest Barbados, the Barbados Drug Service, Immigration, whichever Department that is involved, in terms of encouraging people to come to Barbados to set up their businesses.

My final point as we are dealing with Invest Barbados is this. We also need to ensure that we have the correct regulatory framework. Again, I am sure that we will have lots of opportunities to discuss this going forward, because the Stanford example is one that we should bear in mind, in terms of what happens, if we do not have a serious and committed regulatory framework, and to police what we have and whom we have. When I say "police", I do not mean it in the terms of bringing action against them, but in terms of ensuring that we have regular inspection and so on.

Yes, I heard my colleague from Christ Church South saying that even when you have it, things can go wrong. The point though, from an international perspective, it is recognised that even when you have it, things could go wrong, but if you do not have it, then it is even worse. Therefore, we need to ensure that we do have the correct regulatory framework.

Mr. Chairman, in terms of investors into Barbados because - again, I speak from my experience - just two weeks ago, I attended a meeting, where I thought that the particular individuals were asking a bit too much of the Government of Barbados, in terms of giving concessions. The chap said to me: "Well, I could make a call to Ralph in St. Vincent and he would grant me the concessions". I said: Do you know what? Feel free.

Mr. Chairman, every once and while, we have to say no, and have to recognise that there is only a certain standard that we will withhold. Therefore, while recognising that we want to encourage inward investment,

we have to set a high platform and maintain it, because our reputation is all that we have. If we fall down in one area, it is going to cause damage in other areas, so we cannot say that we made a mistake in terms of financial services, but it does not have repercussions in terms of tourism. It does not work like that. The world sees Barbados. Our reputation is what we have, regardless of which area of business we are speaking about.

I want to support this Money Resolution and I look forward to a full debate on Invest Barbados in the near future.

Asides.

7.30 p.m.

Hon. E. G. HUTSON: Mr. Chairman, I want to thank the Honourable Members for their contribution to this Head and ask that Head 61 stand part.

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

The question that Head 61 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

EXPLANATORY NOTES TO HEAD 19

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that the Explanatory Notes to Head 19 be amended as set out in Schedule II of the Resolution.

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

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

On the motions of the Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the SPEAKER the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motion of Hon. R. D. JONES, seconded by Hon. F. J. STUART, the Resolution was read a first, second and third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. R. D. JONES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Friday, March 6, 2009 at 10.00 a.m. at which time the Vote of No Confidence will be debated.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, let me also note that permission has been sought to have that debate televised and has been so granted, so we will meet on Friday.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Friday, March 6, 2008 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

7.40 p.m.

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CLARKE, Mr. G.A. (St. George North)
EASTMOND, Mr. R. C. (St. James North)
FORDE, Miss C. Y. (St. Thomas)
HUTSON, Hon. E. G. (St. James Central)
INNISS, Hon. D. O'N. (St. James South)
JONES, Hon. R. D. (Christ Church East Central)
KELLMAN, His Excellency D. St.E. (St. Lucy)
LASHLEY, Mr. S. A. (Christ Church West Central)
MARSHALL, Mr. D. D. (St. Joseph)
MOTTLEY, Hon. Miss M. A. (St. Michael North East)
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)
TOPPIN, Mr. R. St.C. (St. Michael North)

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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. Adjournment. Hon. R. D. Jones moves the adjournment until ‘Friday, March 6, 2009’, but the closing sentence records the question as put for ‘Friday, March 6, 2008’. Printed as in the source.

Q2. Order No. 3, third reading. The third-reading sentence cites the measure as ‘The Constituency Councils Bill, 2009’ rather than as an Act. Printed as in the source.

Q3. Committee of Supply, Order No. 15. Head 19 is headed ‘TREASURY \$2 063 380’ although it is moved as a supplement for the Ministry of Agriculture and the Barbados Drug Service; the Resolution’s title provides for amending the Explanatory Notes to Head 25, but the motion made is to amend those to Head 19. In debate Hon. D. O’N. Inniss refers to ‘this sum of \$6.23 million’ against the \$7 046 844 in the Resolution, and Mr. R. C. Eastmond and His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman speak of a Supplementary of \$3 million against the \$2 million moved. Printed as in the source.

Q4. Government Business, Order No. 2. Order No. 2 (the Land Tax (Amendment) Bill, headed ‘2008’ though read a first time as the 2009 Bill earlier in the sitting) is withdrawn and said to be ‘replaced by Order No.13’, but the House proceeds to Order No. 3. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Private Members’ Notices, Attorney-General. Within the Attorney-General’s quotation of Standing Order 28.13, the line ‘28. TIME AND MANNER OF SPEAKING AND CONTENTS OF SPEECHES’ is set in the source as a heading. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Calls from the Chair. In Committee of Supply Mr. A. D. Brathwaite is called as ‘The Honourable Member for St. Philip West’; earlier in the sitting he is the Member for St. Philip South. The calls also contain slips such as ‘Memer’, ‘Honourale’ and ‘The Honourable for St. Andrew’. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Take-slips and paragraph breaks. Several time stamps appear as paragraphs within speeches (‘12:00 noon.’, ‘3.40 p.m.’, ‘4:10 p.m.’, ‘4.30 p.m.’), and a number of sentences are broken across paragraphs (for example in the speeches of Mr. G. W. Payne and Hon. R. L. Sealy). Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met on Tuesday, 3rd March, 2009 at 10.20 a.m., with Mr. Speaker, His Honour M. A. Carrington, in the Chair. The Minutes of 24th February were confirmed and the Prime Minister, Hon. D. J. H. Thompson, laid two papers, among them the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (Sherwood Development Ltd.) Order, 2009.

When the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, rose to give notice of a motion, Mr. Speaker directed her to speak from her assigned seat. She asked on a matter of privilege where such a Rule was contained; the Attorney-General, Hon. F. J. Stuart, pointed to Standing Order 28.13, and Mr. D. D. Marshall and Mr. G. W. Payne asked who assigned the seats. The Sitting was suspended until 11.10 a.m. On resumption Mr. Speaker said that he was satisfied the ruling was right but that Members should have notice, so that Members might sit where they pleased for that day. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley then gave notice of a Motion of No Confidence in the Minister of Finance over his statements on CLICO International Life Insurance Limited, whose Statutory Fund she said had been in deficit by about \$93 000 000 at 31st December, 2007. The Property Transfer Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009 and the Land Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2009 were read a first time.

The House resumed the debate on the Constituency Councils Bill, 2009. Mr. R. St.C. Toppin argued that the Minister could appoint the 15 members of each Council without criteria, that the Councils could act only in collaboration with the Department, and that they would place de facto control of 30 constituencies in the Democratic Labour Party. Hon. R. D. Jones defended community-based organisations, amid points of order from the Opposition. After the luncheon suspension Hon. R. L. Sealy said each Council would start with the same \$100 000. Mr. G. W. Payne warned that one man would nominate 450 people, that integrity legislation should come first and that he saw signs of a one-party State.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney-General, Hon. F. J. Stuart, traced the parish Vestries from 1627 and argued that there had been voting without democracy until 1951, and that the Bill gave 450 persons access they had not had before. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley said the Party of Grantley Adams would not support a Bill that vested selection in one person without transparency, that the Councils had no legal character and that elections would be a cost of democracy worth \$3 million. The Prime Minister answered that political parties were themselves

unincorporated associations. The Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment and Rural and Urban Development, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, closed the debate.

The Bill was read a second time and, in Committee with Mr. S. A. Lashley in the Chair, clause 2 was amended and the remaining clauses passed. A division was called on the passing of the Bill, which was carried by 18 votes to 8, the Opposition voting against, and it was read a third time and passed.

After a further suspension the House went into Committee of Supply on a Resolution for \$7 046 844. Hon.

J. D. E. Boyce moved \$2 million for a crane, hydraulic trailer and other haul-up equipment for the fisheries; Mr. R. C. Eastmond, His Excellency D. St.E. Kellman, Hon. D. O'N. Inniss and Mr. D. D. Marshall, who recalled hauling out nearly 800 vessels before a storm, spoke. Head 25 passed without debate. Hon. E. G. Hutson moved \$4.8 million for the Medical Transcription Programme, which Mr. R. C. Eastmond questioned and Mr. A. D. Brathwaite supported. The Resolution was reported and passed, and the House was adjourned until Friday, 6th March, 2009, when the motion of no confidence would be debated with television coverage granted.