
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 2013 – 2018

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, March 12, 2013

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 12, 2013.

PRESENT

The full list of Members present is to be inserted from the Votes and Proceedings. Members identified from the record of this Sitting:

His Honour M. A. CARRINGTON (Speaker)
Her Honour Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON (Deputy Speaker)
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, J.P.
Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN (Minister of Housing, Lands and Rural Development)
Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Q.C. (Leader of the Opposition)
Miss C. Y. FORDE, J.P.
Hon. R. D. JONES, J.P. (Minister of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation)
Hon. R. L. SEALY (Minister of Tourism)
Hon. F. J. STUART (Prime Minister, Minister of National Security, the Public Service and Urban Development)
Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE (Minister of Health)
Mr. J. D. PAUL (Chairman of Committees)
Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE (Attorney-General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Hon. S. A. LASHLEY (Minister of Culture, Sports and Youth)
Hon. D. O'N. INNISS (Minister of Industry, International Business and Commerce and Small Business Development)
Hon. C. P. SINCKLER (Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs)
Mr. T. A. PRESCOD
Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND
Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW
Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR

Mr. SPEAKER: Members, this House is now in session. Members, the minutes of our last meetings are not yet ready, and therefore, that is for the usual motion that those minutes be deferred.

MINUTES

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that the minutes be deferred.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MR. SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: Members, first let me take this opportunity to welcome you, particularly the newer members, to our first real business session. And I expect that we will have a very fruitful session as we do the people's business. Just let me draw one matter to your attention so that we do not fall into untidy habits. You may have noticed that yesterday, the last session, I noticed that we tended to start a bit late unfortunately. Let me remind members, and particularly the new members, the provision is that we start promptly at 10:00 or on the adjourned time. If a quorum is not in place at that time, the Speaker does not take the chair, but rather we wait for 15 minutes. At such time, a bell will be rung for two minutes and thereafter we begin. Of course, the follow-up from that is, if there is still no quorum at that time, we expect to adjourn without any business being conducted. Now, of course, members will never let that happen, so we just want to have it tidy and let us see if we can start, please, promptly at 10.00 a.m.

Having said that, let me say that I am in receipt of the Auditor General's report for the year 2012. And I am also in receipt of the report of the Auditor General on the

financial statements of the Government of Barbados for the year 2011 to 2012.

PAPERS

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, sir, I am commanded to lay the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2013–2014, the Schedule of Personal Emoluments 2013–2014, and the Revised Estimates of Expenditure.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I want to give notice of the Appropriation Bill 2013.

PAPERS

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I am commanded to lay the Barbados National Strategic Plan for Intellectual Property.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. John.

Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON: I want to give notice of the following resolution. Whereas the throne speech of His Excellency the Governor General outlining the government's programme for this parliamentary session 2013 to 2018 was delivered on March 6, 2013, and whereas it is the commitment of the government to continue its programme of transformation of Barbados into a society that is socially balanced, economically viable, environmentally sound and characterised by good governance, and whereas the government, ever cognizant of its role to create an economically viable Barbados operating in a challenging global marketplace and having at its core a diversified entrepreneurial economy, and whereas the government has determined that this is best achieved through a three-pronged approach of disciplined macroeconomic framework, a focus on reducing the fiscal deficit and diversifying the economy, and whereas this government will pursue foreign exchange earnings growth strategies as the most suitable means of reducing the fiscal deficit and the national debt, and whereas the government has determined that the enhancement of the spirit of entrepreneurship and productivity is the key to the economic transformation and growth, and whereas the government has cited that the centrepiece of Barbados' economic strategy will be the creation of a renewable energy revolution which will enhance the competitiveness of the productive sectors by reducing the fuel import bill, creating new jobs and lowering the cost of living:

Be it resolved that this Honourable House take note of the speech of His Excellency and the determination of

the government to implement the various provisions therein. And be it further resolved that the Honourable House congratulate the government for its foresight, transformational agenda and people-centred policies outlined in the speech of His Excellency. I reserve the right to speak.

FIRST READINGS OF BILLS

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move the first reading of the Social Investment Fund Repeal Bill 2013.

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

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I beg to move the first reading of the Appropriation Bill 2013.

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

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Orders 16, 18, 42, 43 and 44 for the remainder of today's sitting.

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. CLERK: Government Business is the order of the day. Order Number One - in the name of the Honourable Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs, move the second reading of the Social Investment Fund Repeal Bill 2013.

ORDER NO. 1 – SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND REPEAL BILL, 2013

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, sir, this is a matter which our memories will tell us was previously discussed by the House of Assembly, or in its other iteration, prior to the dissolution of Parliament and the issuance of the writs for an election. It passed the House of Assembly, but because of that act it did not have the opportunity to make it through the entire parliamentary process by way of the Senate, and therefore because of the law and practice we have had to recommit this for passage through the House so that it can make its way up to the Senate and through the parliamentary system.

I therefore would not propose to go over things at length. I did give a brief speech in relation to this, but just to say, for the benefit of the newer members of the House,

that the Social Investment Fund was established by the previous Barbados Labour Party administration to serve as a resource to fund the development activities of various individuals and small businesses in the community, to be able to carry out activities that were considered to be of benefit to the community. Of course, as is the case with most of these things, it did not quite in practice stick closest to its mandate, and became overwhelmed, as it were, with requests for many individual treatments which properly should have found their way in other parts of the social development system of Barbados, particularly welfare and so forth. And therefore what was originally a reasonably good idea denigrated into a vehicle for the payment of light bills and water bills and so forth and so on. I do not think that was the original intention when the Social Investment Fund was first created, modelled as it were, to some extent after what is currently the social fund of Jamaica and other parts of the region.

In addition to that, of course, there were a plethora of other special funds for social development and poverty alleviation that came about and acted not in concert but sometimes in collision with the Social Investment Fund. Of course, some of these could be cited as the poverty alleviation fund that was in the Ministry of Social Care at the time. Of course, the existing welfare department, Urban and Rural Development Commission, themselves had small funds that they gave resources to persons in the community to do small businesses and other things. So there were a whole plethora of them existing, and one of the things which the then new government of the Democratic Labour Party had decided to do - by way of invocation from the then Honourable Member for St. John, who was then Minister of Finance, and of course agreed to by the Cabinet - was that some of these funds should be collapsed and brought into a tidier state of operation. Not that they should cease to do what they were doing, but that they should find a particular consistency and order in relation to mandate, philosophy and of course operation.

The Social Investment Fund was one of those. Cabinet decided, I believe in early 2008, that the Social Investment Fund should be closed in its then current form and that the existing resources at the time, adjudged by the Accountant General at \$2.4 million, should have been redistributed in the system. The large proportion of which, it is my understanding, ended up with Fund Access and of course allowed Fund Access to expand the services which it offered to the community. Indeed, as the last minister and the new minister will indicate, over the last couple of years Fund Access's clientele has expanded exponentially on the arrival of the extra resources which were made available to it, and some of the other resources from the fund were redirected to the welfare department to assist those persons in our community who might be experiencing difficulties from time to time.

Now, all of that was done administratively, but the fund itself in terms of the Act was not repealed, and therefore this is a bit of tightening that is required since the fund no longer exists. And therefore we are calling on Parliament once again to go through the process of repealing the Social Investment Fund Act so as to bring a pristine existence to this piece of business. So it is really a fairly perfunctory matter before the House of Assembly. And with those few words, Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I shall not be long. But a few things strike me. The minister may have been correct that this may have been done already. I don't think we were here at that time when it was done the first time in the last parliament. But I'm interested and curious as to the thinking of government for the abolition of the Social Investment Fund, given that when I look at the accounts which have been laid and the reports which have been laid, it really was a fund that sought to fight against poverty and to assist the needs of the vulnerable, in particular through institutions that currently exist.

This fund was established in 1998 through the provision of a \$5 million grant from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. And like most developing and developed countries, it was felt that however much you have government programmes that you still needed to be able to fund entities within the community and the economy who by their existence play a critical role in protecting the marginalised and vulnerable and assisting in the fight against poverty. We all know those organisations that exist in our country. They range from entities such as the Chaloner School. In fact, I think we had the honour of hearing the principal of the Chaloner School speak on Saturday as she delivered the eulogy for her father, the late Sir Branford Taitt. The Pinelands Creative Workshop, which the former member for St. Michael South East was one of the key practitioners and indeed which other members, including the current director of the Pan African Commission as well as Mr. Rodney Grant, have continued. In fact, if my memory serves me correctly, sir, the new Minister of Business, Commerce and Industry delivered the opening remarks at a workshop yesterday between Pinelands and USAID in relation to small business activity.

Similarly, other entities such as the Rural Development Commission, the Urban Enterprise Loan Fund, because this was a way of ensuring that small loans could be made and loans therefore were never made directly from the Social Investment Fund to any individual. What is of note - and I pull the records for, for example, going right back, the report for the quarter ended December 31, 2002 - one will see that at that time, for example, it had

\$6.98 million granted, all from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund, which, as you know, was the entity created to be able to take the proceeds on the sale of government's assets. And a determination was made that some of those proceeds had to go to protect the vulnerable.

The Rural Development Commission, for example, received \$1.5 million to do the community centre at Ball Hill in Christ Church, which is now so much a part of that community that we almost forget that it wasn't there. The Aberdeen Jones Centre is, I think, what it is named, and that allows for small entrepreneurs to function in the community, especially at these difficult times, as the member for St. James South prayed in earnest for Barbadians to do yesterday in his address to the Pinelands workshop.

It also assisted a number of persons. It assisted the Chaloner Creative Arts and Training Centre with \$442 000. Now this is a centre that is completely non-governmental, and while the Ministry of Education provides some level of subsidy, there is always a deficit, as the Minister of Education will in fact point out, and as he discovered - the Honourable Minister of Education discovered in his early years as minister, 2008 to 2009 - as I discovered when I was Minister of Education, that with the best will in the world, it can never meet the fundraising needs that it has in order to run the school, both in terms of its operational requirements as well as in terms of its capital needs, because they are old buildings that are in constant need of maintenance.

It also, for example, gave money to the Barbados Youth Business Trust, \$100 000. The Barbados Youth Business Trust was the arm that we used when we were in government to lend money to young people, because the Youth Entrepreneur Scheme does not actually lend money. What it does is to provide training, to do workshops, to build institutional capacity in young people's small businesses. But the actual money loaned is loaned by the Barbados Youth Business Trust, which once again is a non-governmental organisation which has largely been constituted with members from the private sector and indeed not from the government sector.

In addition, sir, there was something called a Needs Trust Fund, which was a separate entity so that persons who needed funds never interfaced directly with the Ministry of Finance or with the Social Investment Fund. But it was done through the individual entities that existed to provide that kind of support - some, in fact the majority, non-governmental, but some governmental in the form of the Urban Development Fund and the Commission and the Rural Development Commission.

Indeed, sir, if we move forward from 2002 to one of the last reports laid at the end of March 2006, look at how

the monies of the fund were spent. Rural Development Commission received \$1 982 000. Enterprise Growth Fund Limited - to which the funds are now going, I'm told by the minister, and we don't have a difficulty in principle if you're going to abolish it, but we felt that there was still a need for this fund to exist - \$2.88 million to the Enterprise Growth Fund Limited. Barbados Agency for Micro Development Limited \$375 563. Barbados Youth Business Trust \$100 000. Urban Enterprise Loan Fund \$8 000. Needs Trust Fund \$109 664.85. Creative Pinelands Enterprise Facilitation Services, which is the entity, I believe, that had the seminar yesterday, \$310 800. Urban Development Commission, \$1 491 563. The Chaloner Arts Creative Arts and Training Centre, \$665 563. And the Youth on the Block project, \$200 000.

So I'm not sure, sir, that we are doing the right thing in repealing it. I think that at this very time, when people are clearly suffering as a result of the economic recession, when the economy is smaller than it was six or seven years ago, when unemployment has doubled what it was five years ago, when prices have increased by 35 per cent, there is in fact a need for a Needs Trust Fund to be able to help ordinary people get through. I don't know about other parishes, but I know about St. Michael for sure. And in St. Michael, as I've maintained, a man that wakes up with \$20 in his pocket now feels like a lord because so many people are without funds.

Now the government has said, and the minister said, and I will take him at his word, that many of these things ought to be going to the Welfare Department. And I therefore look forward to an increase in the subsidy of the Welfare Department in the light of this abolition of the Social Investment Fund. By law, as we receive the estimates of expenditure and revenue for the next financial year, we look forward to that increase because there is no doubt in anyone's mind - all of us have just come out from an intimate connection with people in the field and we all know the extent of the hard times and the suffering. And to that extent, I trust and pray, sir, that while we may be transferring the majority of, or transferring the surplus to the Microenterprise Development Fund, to be managed, I think, by Fund Access, that is not the only purpose that the Social Investment Fund played. And to that extent, where and how are we going to meet the purposes that it met for a number of years?

I must tell you, sir, that my last comment relates to the implementation deficit disorder and members need to be aware of this because, sir - and young members need to be aware that it's always good to research - the report ending March 31, 2009, the fourth quarter, makes it absolutely clear that during the fourth quarter ending March 31, 2009, the fund was abolished and its resources were transferred to the Microenterprise Development Fund. Now, sir, what is this in effect saying? That this fund was

abolished four years ago and what we are doing now is tidying up that which was done and making legal that transfer which occurred without the legal authority of Parliament four years ago. And I am not blaming the minister. I am saying, however, that this is chronic and endemic and it's part of what we have to correct in Barbados.

If we are going to move forward and get the better of this economic recession, you cannot take a decision at the end of March 2009 - indeed, I believe that it was taken, for whatever reason, by the former member for St. John, the former Prime Minister - and then four years later, after the decision is taken, and I suspect after the funds have been transferred without legal authority, this House is now being asked effectively to ratify, even though the bill does not use that language. Perhaps the Honourable Attorney General might want to ensure that what he is certifying is not a nonsense or a fiction, and that perhaps what might otherwise have been here would be a validation and ratification bill. As is well known to this Honourable Chamber, and as has happened in almost every parliament, there are one or two things that sometimes have to be ratified. But then let us do that rather than simply one, using the Act to repeal the Social Investment Fund and two, to authorise the transfer of monies to the Microenterprise Development Fund as if it was going to happen next week or next month.

So with those few words, sir, we will not stand anywhere in the repeal. It is not our wish to see it repealed. The truth is we believe that there is a valid need for a Social Investment Fund, particularly at this time in Barbados's economic difficulties. But by the same token, we believe that the government has a responsibility to tell us how it is going to help those vulnerable and marginalised persons get off the ground in circumstances where this fund is no longer being used. And interestingly enough, the Honourable Minister talked about duplication and it was duplicating what the Welfare Department was doing. But I don't think the Honourable Minister has a problem, clearly, with providing funds for constituency councils that are duplicating welfare, that are duplicating a whole range of other government departments on an ongoing basis - the Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission - and is also creating services that do not exist at law or in the governance of Barbados, like paying for movie nights in constituencies. So I'm not sure that can be a valid reason for this.

The last point I would want to make, sir, is that I would have thought that this Social Investment Fund was the perfect vehicle to approach the Inter-American Development Bank and the Caribbean Development Bank for a loan to be able to cushion the marginalised in Barbados at this particular point. And the statutory framework would have passed all of the tests of the

development banks - the transparency, because this is not a fund at which any minister or any member of Parliament ever sat down and said give this or give that. But it was managed administratively by the officers of the Ministry of Finance and indeed the officers of other ministries from the Ministry of Welfare and those that deal also, sir, with other social care agencies.

So we are not going to vote against it, but I'm not sure that this is the right thing to do and that we would have preferred that the first item here would in fact have been asking us to agree to some kind of capitalisation of the Social Investment Fund to protect the vulnerable in Barbados and to help us to work together to go to the Inter-American Development Bank or the Caribbean Development Bank to provide some kind of loan resources and grant resources, a combination of the two, to be able to create that necessary buffer for persons who are caught in between. With those few words, sir, I trust and pray that we will soon see how the government intends to bridge the gap that it has now removed in the last term and indeed consummating and validating rather in this term. And I look forward to the receipt of the estimates to see how and where that bridge is going to be made. Thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member for St. Lucy. Four years.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I also rise to speak on this bill and to thank the Honourable Member for reminding the House that poverty was prior to 2008. But I find it rather regrettable, sir, that we will be in this House today arguing over a matter like this and making the point that this bill was set up for those who fell through the cracks. I thought what we would be arguing today, sir, instead of trying to keep a bill like this, is that we will be more developmental and trying to find new ways to create employment for the young people instead of creating funds for those who reclaim found poverty prior to 2008 and as far back as 2003. And if my memory serves me correctly, it was in 1996 that poverty was found in the north-west. So, Mr. Speaker, I hope that in the future we will be more developmental and that we would deal with creating jobs for people and not just looking to create less funds to look after issues like these. I thank you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Minister. Yes, the Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This is my third term in the House, and I am grateful to be here again to represent the good people of St. Michael East. And I am happy to be here with my colleagues on both sides. I have a fundamental difference - while I support this amendment or the repealing of this Bill, I have a fundamental difference, especially when I witness the murdering of sounds that are senseless in relation to putting

together constructive formations in the sense of a new mechanism to address some of the issues which we have.

The reality is this is not a time for us to be addressing just ineffective and inefficient issues. This is a time where, if you are going to address some of the legal instruments, we need to have, not just a pragmatic application of the justification for doing so, but at least you have to have some sound rational and theoretical framework that helps you to justify what it is that you want to do. You see all the contradictions revealing themselves as different members speak on it. If you are saying to me that you are duplicating different functions - duplicating the same function in different departments - and you believe that you ought to bring all of these things within a given framework under one specific ministry, then my view is that you ought to be very clear on what it is that you really want to achieve.

You cannot say this, but then, on the other hand, have a loose arrangement in the form of a constituency council which attempts to address the same objectives of providing not only grants and assistance to the vulnerable, but also allowing that finance to go all over the place, to the point where the Auditor General is saying to us that we have not had any financial statements from the constituency councils, at least to give us some assurance of the checks and balances and how money was spent underneath the community council. Because you are making a fundamental moral point - you do not want the abuse. Yes, let me put that caveat in if you want me to. The Israel Foundation has received funds to assist with marginalised people. And if you can demonstrate in any way, or if any member can demonstrate in any way, that the funds were abused, then I would not have to face any charge of being a carpet bargainer, whether it is the housing or the social services.

But the reality is that the accounts are there for anybody to see, and that whenever there is a system - and I say to both ministers who serve in the social services and community development, please, let us have some order and let me address both sides as the member speaks, please - all grants that were given to all NGOs across Barbados are subject to an evaluation. You have to give financial statements; you have to face credible personnel within the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Social Services in order to justify how those finances were used. And the finances must be used in a manner that coincides with what was requested within the project proposals. So no department can receive money for any specific responsibility and then spend it in another way, because you have to answer questions, or you would not be able to acquire finance from that ministry on the next occasion.

But the point that I am trying to make here - I do not want to be argumentative - the point that I am trying to

make is that we need to, rather than just concentrate on being more efficient, have a comprehensive package of how we intend to address all the different social funds that are coming from the various departments. And if you had done a thorough or consummate job in assessing the system as it stands at present, one of the departments that is loose in spending government funding is the \$3 million that is allocated to the community councils across Barbados. All I am saying is that we have the constituency councils - we do not want to give them that credible title. So all I am saying to you, before making a big fuss on this specific issue, is that while we may allow this one to pass, I think in the future we need to look at these things in a very consummate way and come back with a comprehensive mechanism that could address the issues that we are talking about and have a solid understanding of what it is we want to achieve.

Because I know that sometimes there are institutions who receive funding from government departments without any credible history, and you cannot apply that to some of the leading grassroots institutions in Barbados with over 20 years of standing - with records not only of funding from local contributors but funding from both regional and international institutions as well - that go through a very profound evaluation on whether the project proposals which you submit to them are ones that are standard to scrutiny.

So I am saying to you that in the future let us spend a little more time and do the government business in a very serious way and avoid these kinds of cosmetic exercises. Because I am hearing that in a very practical way we are already doing all that we are saying we want to do today, and that all that we are doing here today is going through a ritual - an exercise that will give legitimacy to something that you are applying in a very pragmatic way. Already four years ago you have been doing this, and now you are putting the legal cap onto what you have been doing. So in other words, you seem to be suggesting to me that you were doing something that was not legal before and you are coming today to do the honourable thing in making it legal. So that is my contribution to this warm-up session. Thank you.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Let me join my voice to that of your honourable self and all honourable ministers and welcoming to the Parliament of Barbados all those who will be here for the first time. Of course we look forward to their interaction not only with each other but across the aisle and also with the good people of Barbados. It is always interesting to hear the honourable member for St. Michael East speak because of course it seems to be grounded in almost an

archaic philosophy which has long escaped the minds of learned individuals. But nevertheless we are always happy to sit and listen to him because one can always deduce some level of humour from his presentation.

We are in a mess and this mess was created over time, a long time ago. And maybe this mess is created out of a desire to find applicable solutions to deal with some issues that are deeply embedded within the social fabric of our society and our economy, but more particularly within the social fabric of our society. Poverty, or elements of poverty, have always been with us and we don't want to have it continuing over time. But it is there. There are issues of family neglect that helps bring to bear poverty in our society. A lot of it goes back to the origins of our society, deeply embedded within the plantation economy of Barbados. We are on emancipation, I believe, 1838, full emancipation. Persons were forced to live on the periphery of the plantations, trying to equal to living out of the same plantations that did not want to pay them a reasonable rate of existence within the society. They never had any rooms to escape because most of them couldn't swim. So they couldn't swim to St. Vincent or St. Lucia, Grenada or Trinidad and Tobago, or take a boat to Jamaica and join the rooms, or to Trinidad, which was almost next door. And therefore one had a pattern of poverty emerging, embedded within the nature of the society and economy that we had then. And many of the vestiges continue right until now.

What we have seen over the years, over the years, you'll get your baptism, don't worry. Over the years was a situation where we have been adding plaster on top of plaster without making the kind of fundamental changes that were necessary under the Barbados Labour Party regime. Between 1994 and 2008, we had the welfare system in Barbados, welfare department. Then poverty was found in Barbados, and the other member for St. Peter exclaimed in a loud voice, all of a sudden, his head hitting the rarified atmosphere. We didn't know that poverty existed like this. And he walked and forgive him because he spent a lot of time in the vicious dichotomy of the social structure of Jamaica. So he understood poverty within the Jamaican context. But when he came back to Barbados, he never understood what was taking place, particularly in the urban corners of Barbados. So he never understood it. So that hit him like a hard punch in his bowels. And therefore, and I can't blame him because then he, along with the others who were in governance at the time, sought solutions. What did they do? National Assistance Board to deal with a particular cohort of the population, urban and rural, came into being.

Many of these things I remember - the creation of the Ministry of Social Transformation, and we all remember. The member for St. Michael East is well known to have displaced his good friend and buddy and confidant of that kind from being the leader of that ministry. All of

this is well known but all of it was to meet in their minds a particularly encrusted, deeply encrusted level of poverty in Barbados. Has it changed with all of these things, with all of the houses being built for those who were at the lower end of the economic profile in the urban and rural sector, with all of persons having access to land through the various land programmes that were developing Barbados?

The first real meaningful intervention that now that we're seeing, I don't blame anybody, is the ICBRACE project. That is the first real meaningful intervention because it is a holistic package which attached the nature of education, housing, what were the causes of the poverty that families can turn cycle over cycle and repeat that cycle from generation to generation when there are very good examples existing in this country, in both the urban and rural sector of Barbados where families who didn't have access to land, who were renting a small house held in St. George, St. Philip or in St. Peter or in Christ Church for that matter, or in St. Michael were able to, by their bootstrap and by intervention of the state and other social agencies including NGOs and CBOs, able to give the kind of assistance which allowed persons to pull themselves up by their bootstraps and because of the liberating policies, particularly of the Democratic Labour Party, over time access to free, inverted commas, education or state funded education, persons being given the support of families and communities were able to change their profiles. And many persons, including many who have sat in this chamber, many who have become judges and lawyers and teachers and policemen right across Barbados have changed their profiles. But there are some who've been unable to.

So do the honourable member for St. Thomas. And I use this as an example because just like the honourable member for St. George North, they intervene minutely with students coming from our communities, from our villages. You all remember the member for St. George North at Bradley Adams School, named after one of the founding members of that great party as they would call it, as you call it. They're not bastardising it in some cynical manner, but we'll talk about that later. Persons coming from all across Barbados, we would have seen, we would have intervened, we would have sought social intervention because it's what we do as well. So there's no need really to grandstand. But let us investigate, let us find the mechanisms which can assist. And I see the BRICKS project - honour the honourable member for Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, Family and whatever else falls into his capable hands. I want to emphasise that point. Without fanfare, without garlands wrapped around his neck, without parched shoots or whatever, to take him up into the sky - he is vigorously, along with the competent members of that ministry, addressing those fundamental issues.

I'm surprised, I'm surprised that the now resurrected member from the belly of St. Michael East having listened and not reading - it would be too long, don't worry - having listened but not reading, now comes and launches an attack on an interesting governance model that is still within its infancy. The Constituency Council, a governance model that is still within its infancy. The honourable member - and I support - I have a godchild, my second godchild, who is a good member of the Israel Foundation. Young lady in our University of the West Indies - you don't know her. She comes and she dances with you, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. And I've never told her, don't attend your institution. I support her in attending your institution. All I would say is that, look, there are important institutions within the social fabric. The Israel Foundation, all the youth books, sporting clubs - all of what we have established are important institutions. But somehow you only want to hold the umbrella over yourself. You have your organisation. I remember the St. Michael East organisation way back about four years ago, benefited from this social fund, benefited as the honourable member for St. Michael North West. Because the honourable member for St. Michael North West is the minister responsible for the portfolio now carried by the honourable member for St. Michael Central. And I was not too pleased, not because your organisation got some, but there were other organisations who too were at the door asking for support to also do the process. And what you are doing today is actually breaking the hand that fed you when you were hungry. That is what you are doing today. Because when this was being announced, when this was being announced, the honourable member for St. Michael East received a substantial amount of money from this fund. Check your history. I don't forget such things. A good set of money he got from this side because on this side we did not discriminate. We did not say that Israel Foundation should not get any of the taxpayers' money. There were several agencies that got some - the honourable member can speak to that. But you can get nice. This is not the time to be nice with those who sometimes want to indulge themselves in deep hypocrisy.

And let me say as well, that's one thing I agree with you, honourable member, that there needs to be a significant tightening up in all of these organisations, the NGOs, the CBOs, even the sports organisations who get money from the central funds of government. And I'm not departing from this - the honourable member for St. Michael North East running Gall Hill in the constituency of Christ Church West Central arrived for a tongue - like a poodle dog on the honourable member for Christ Church West Central. Member, refrain from turning your back when you made your presentation. Please refrain from turning your back and be relevant, please. Thank you, sir. Thank you. And she ran her tongue on the honourable member for Christ Church West Central and I had to restrain, Mr. Speaker, many of the young people in that

part of Christ Church from indulging in behaviour that I will never condone. We keep that for the yard, not in Gall Hill, Christ Church. Keep it for the yard. What I'm saying is there needs to be a regime where great persons who receive

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: improper motives as well as negative connotations, not only on me but on the good people of [Inaudible.]. If he is so upset that the good people of [Inaudible.] can find nothing worthy either in him nor the person who acts as his proxy, he should not be so upset. Accept it and move on.

Hon. R. D. JONES: I wouldn't comment on that at this time. All I'm saying is that there needs to be a regime where funds from central government or any of the agencies of government must fall under good scrutiny. The other member makes the point that money is given to them because somehow there are God almighty agencies. So they should not submit financial statements. I would like, even though it's a private institution, I would like to ask the honourable member - when was the last audited financial statement of the Israel Foundation? Because it has to have a board. Go to their board. It has to have finances and that you can put to public scrutiny the affairs. But some of them operate with the president of the same body, the secretary is the same person, the treasury is one and the same. There is no kind of clarity to what they do. But they receive money from central government, money from the ministries, and it's all going to do - start their own public accounts committee, investigate themselves, get their own Auditor General. So it's all well and good for these honourable members to get up and grandstand. They might do good work, I don't know. But at the same time don't try to dig up somebody's eyes when inside your eyes is covered

with scale. Let's get the clarity. Let's set the systems in place. Let's have the process working. And I'm sure that there are philanthropic organisations out there. There are organisations which might be willing to give more and more funds if you're doing effective work. And I would support that level of behaviour. But we cannot be taking from the national treasury, from the taxpayers of Barbados, placing large amounts of funds into these organisations unaccounted for. There was a period between 1994 and 2008 when large amounts of money were given to Pied Piper's Creative Workshop, when large amounts of money was given to the Israel Foundation. And we have not yet seen a record, a statement, an invoice which shows how that money was spent. Over a million and something dollars, a lot of money was given to these organisations. As I said, I am not critical of the organisations. I'm critical of the process through which they are accessed. And then there's no accountability. The Social Investment Fund was another creature of that, offended through that search. But

it has outlived its usefulness in our streamlining of the process.

To deal with many of the vulnerabilities existing in our societies we have to find systems and instruments that work. Many of these don't work. Give you an example. You go into a vulnerable environment. You don't only repair the house because it cannot be repaired. You build a completely new structure of three bedrooms, one bath. You put it on goodwill because you now have internal sanitation. But there is no income being generated within the family. So they live and they live. What we call - termites attack. It starts to fall and what you built six years ago is back into total disrepair. If the family had an income or sources of income, if they had other social needs met and many of them which they can meet themselves, they then won't have to come back to the state.

The Welfare to Work initiative. This was initiated through the NEAT programme, National Environmental Enhancement programme, where we moved persons from welfare to work. Every one of those persons, honourable minister, I believe every one of those persons are still working and they are not knocking on the doors asking for anything. Those are important and interesting social interventions done by the government, initiated by the government and you have to applaud such initiatives rather than coming to criticise. I support, Mr. Speaker, the repealing of the Social Investment Fund. But I also support the search to find different alternatives to help ease the difficulties on those who are most vulnerable in our society.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Sir, I wish to refer to this bill and I will not object to it either. But I have a tremendous difficulty in understanding certain aspects of what is being said here today. But at the outset, sir, I would wish to really express my deepest gratitude to the people of St. Thomas and indeed those in Barbados who would have worked assiduously to assist me in being here today to serve the interests of the people of St. Thomas first, and indeed, by extension, those of Barbados. I am extremely grateful for the trust that has been reposed in me, sir.

The honourable member for St. Michael North East would have spoken extensively to the fund that was in existence that would have served to benefit thousands of Barbadians in the past. Mention was made of the Pinelands Creative Workshop, rural and urban enterprises, Gall Hill Community Centre and the Aberdeen Centre, and different institutions that would have been established and funding would have been made available for the continued existence and the service of Barbadians. And I am really very aware of a lot of that. But where my difficulty comes

is how the benefits of this fund, that it will be repealed and the funds transferred, how will it meet the needs of those Barbadians who are really suffering on a daily basis?

I am not saying that there was not poverty before. That was the reason why the establishment of those other three institutions were developed, mainly the Rural Development Commission, Urban Development Commission, poverty alleviation, and of course, some of that would have been an extension of the project from since the early 1980s with the house repairs. And so for old people, the National Assistance Board, that institution, sir, and I want to refer to the millennium goals. There were eight goals, if we know they are eight goals that we in Barbados, like many other people in the rest of the world, are trying to work towards achieving by the year 2015. And the first one on that list, sir, is to do with the reduction of poverty and hunger, indeed, the eradication of poverty and hunger in our various nations across the world.

And I was a part of whatever decision was made then. And I felt justified in supporting it in the light that the committee that came under the social transformation ministry at that time would have been supervised by reputable civil servants who did not only serve the government then between the period of 1999 and 2008, but indeed those reputable civil servants are still serving this government in an outstanding way. And therefore, they were the ones who sat on the committee and approved the various projects that were put before them. It was not a minister who did it. It was not any ordinary person that was put there for any political patronage or anything. There were civil servants who, when the projects were directed to them, they sat, they analysed, they determined what projects would have been most useful. Of course, some would have been rejected if they did not have the kind of substance or the body to be able to justify their use. But those institutions that submitted projects, having been investigated, they are the ones who were able to benefit by the \$1.982 million that was offered to rural enterprise, the go fund and the fund that fest and the different agencies that benefited - the child in the school in particular. That is one that really takes my heart, with the disabled children.

And I feel that in shifting the funds, there still has to be the necessary mechanisms for community groups, civil society and other private groups to get the opportunity to access these funds. And not just because of who is the political acolyte or the person connected with any political party, like the site that would come for the funding, to be able to let it trickle down to those persons in our communities who need it, who are most vulnerable, and who must get the sensitisation to be able to benefit and release them out of poverty.

Now there is no time, Mr. Speaker, worse than this time in my lifetime that I have seen people suffering.

Despite what anybody says. I hit the ground like most honourable members on this side and I believe on the other side. I think you can see those who really worked hard, separate and distinct from other things that happened. But the point I am making is I see it every day among people, not ordinary poor people all the time, but people in the middle class who have lost their work, persons who are on a three-day week, persons who have been laid off, and a number of other challenges that people are facing who really need to get the extra help.

Now, the whole of last year - I would say between 2009 and, no, but more particularly last year - I was extremely saddened, and I still am, because there are hundreds of people in St. Thomas, and that is where my focus is. And I know that once it has hit St. Thomas, where people are coming with light bill and water bill, not telephone bill, they understand it very well. Having been promised by this government that the welfare would be able to have a \$5 million amount to assist them, and then those who were not able to meet that criteria - but would not be able to get to the welfare department to be able to get assistance - that they would go through the constituency councils. I have seen people's light bills cut off. They could do no better. And the sad situation is some of those officers who come - not all, some of them are extremely good - but they look at the flat screen TV people bought from Courts that they had five years ago, and say, can you not sell it? They look at their nails, they look at the little gold chain they have around the neck before the guy snatched it off, and all kinds of things that have me worried. They have me worried because we believed in the Barbados Labour Party that the fund that was set up served the purpose of easing the plight of the poor, the marginalised, the destitute, the impoverished, whatever name you want to put.

But when we look at it now, Mr. Speaker, the numbers have grown three and fourfold because the cost of living is still very high, unemployment has increased threefold or even more, and there is hardship all around with the increase of taxes and so many other different things. So there are really people who need the assistance and they need it without having to expose their dignity in the way that I had seen it at points last year. It brought people to their knees, it brought decent people to be embarrassed about getting help and I am not in a position to help them in the way that I would have loved to because I too am limited in funds. But that is not the crux of the matter.

And therefore, when we look at what is happening in Barbados where those major productive sectors are down, people are talking on the radio all the time about cotton and picking it and not getting people to help. But that is another problem and it shows how we are having more challenges in agriculture than anywhere else. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe that those projects that were put in place

through the fund helped poor people in Barbados to be able to get training in particular. And I know of those young men and women who got an opportunity to do some training to upgrade themselves and to make themselves ready for the market for employment. I know that the Rural Development Commission did extensive training. I can speak of 2006 where more than 700 people from rural areas graduated through the training in the communities to be able to help them to market the products that they would have prepared. There are hundreds of them, sir, who were able to do bookkeeping and financing, computer training and so on, as a result of the same fund that we speak of today, that will be repealed.

And why? I am not objecting to it. I am just asking, sir, that the honourable minister will ensure that there is equity because, having been in the field for the last five years, I have tremendous challenges in understanding why the people in St. Thomas are not getting the benefits that other Barbadians seem to be getting in constituencies that have been favourable to the Barbados Labour Party and not necessarily to the other side. And I think that, and I see people as human beings and not to segment people as that is A and that is B when it comes to needs, education, employment and other aspects of development. And that is the reason why I chose to make my little comment at this time, sir.

I believe that we must, as a people, continue to let the benefits trickle down to the people of Barbados. I made a note just now, sir, of a project that came out of that time called - carry note the promise - where 60 households were assisted with waterborne toilets and minor repairs to the houses. And so that is still very necessary now, especially when it comes to a chattel house term. Mice will take down a house in less than a year and a half if you are not careful. And even in our own houses, Mr. Speaker, we have to be doing continual maintenance all the time in order to keep it above our heads and to make sure that everything is in order.

And so, as I said, whether I do not object to the repealing of this bill, I would support it as long as I am given the assurance that the benefits will trickle down to Barbadians across the length and breadth of Barbados, not just to a few. That is the honourable member for St. Lucy's favourite word. I want everybody who meets the criteria, by whichever committee it is that will be under the new location of the funds, to be able to use it without looking through political eyes, but see it through the human needs of those community groups and the other agencies that will come into the communities and serve the people well. We need to be together as a Barbados and not just to segment individuals in the way I have seen it. It is the first time in my old age I have seen it. And I do not want to see it again in this term in office, either on the other side or on this side, where people feel left out and they feel they are being

punished because somebody assumes they voted for somebody else and as a result they are pushed in a corner and they feel less than human beings when they go for a job. They are being told, bring a letter from your MP. If I write a letter for somebody for the Transport Board or Water Authority, NWA, nobody is going to pay attention because people feel you are from St. Thomas, you voted for the other side. Therefore I feel we need to, as an educated people, rise above that and make sure that every Barbadian gets the benefit and ensure that every Barbadian gets the benefit that he or she deserves.

Because at the end of the day, we have to live in this same society. We have to be our brothers' and sisters' keepers. We have to use a different approach in looking at persons who are living in the poverty area because those are the persons who are most vulnerable. And when you are miserable, when you cannot feed your children, when you cannot put that food on the table, when you cannot give them the clothing they need, when you cannot pay your utility bills, a hungry man or woman is an angry man or woman and we never can tell what they may be capable of doing in a time when we are looking to come together as a people, show the brotherly love and help us to advance Barbados.

And so it is with those comments, Mr. Speaker, that I am asking that we get the necessary assistance and that those agencies like the Chaloner school, the Pinelands Creative Workshop, even the St. Thomas Development Council has been trying so hard to do things. Everything is now flat, flat, flat, because we are not being able to source any assistance and the private sector is not really able to give because business is almost dead. And therefore I will support what is happening. But I shall be watching with a very keen eye because at the end of the day I have been sent here not to grandstand, not to be fussy, but to look after the needs of the people in St. Thomas and the surrounding constituencies and I will do my best and speak on their behalf because at the end of the day I can live nowhere but on this island, Barbados. And if I see poverty, I cannot sleep, I cannot eat, I cannot do anything the way I would live. And therefore I support the project by the honourable minister. I am relying on him to give us the assurance on this side that every Barbadian, the groups and so that meet the criteria, will be given that kind of assistance. I am not asking for any help, any slush fund. I am asking that those individuals who really deserve it get the benefits that they can carry on with their life and live the dignity that is expected. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am obliged. Honourable member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for St. Michael North West in terms of the transfer of this fund. But I want to make a few comments here.

First, I want to thank the good residents of the constituency of St. Michael West Central for supporting me in terms of coming back to Parliament. But what is more important, and when you listen to the debate, what is more important, we have to be very careful that in our attempt to try to force or make a point, we don't inadvertently create or try to create two Barbadoses.

I'm going to listen to the argument from the opposition, sir. Clearly the Social Investment Fund was meant to achieve, sir, a particular objective. And when I hear the expressions of the member for St. Thomas it is the same civil servants to whom, sir, a residue of the fund will be supposed to administer, which I hear the opposition expressing complete confidence in, in terms of the integrity and their ability to manage the fund effectively. I do not see why we have the kind of protestations that we have coming from the opposition in terms of what is ready to happen in terms of the fund. Because clearly, when you look at the experience of government over the last five years, sir, this government, sir, has taken particular pains to try to ensure that the needy in this country are taken care of. We have developed programmes, sir, to try to ensure that those persons who are most likely to fall through the cracks are taken care of, sir.

It is really incredible to hear from the opposition, sir, the pleadings that we hear coming from them, sir. Let us understand that, for instance, one of the things that we need - we talk a lot, sir, about public sector reform. And if we are serious about it, certainly the institutions that are designed to assist the needy in our country, sir, need to be empowered even further to try to ensure that the particular support that they need should be given. And if we suspect bias, I really think that generally we have very good people within the welfare department, sir, we have very good people within the community development department who are responsible for working with groups in the community. And I believe, sir, that generally our civil service will be responsible in terms of trying to ensure that the funds reach those groups which are most needy.

What I do not understand is when we reach the position where we question, sir, the confidence or the ability, sir, of our civil service to administer those funds in a manner which is responsible. And that is what we are hearing from the opposition - that we are questioning whether or not, sir, our civil servants can manage the fund with any philosophy that we want to manage. And in that regard, I think that is a bit mischievous as far as that is concerned, sir.

The other point I wish to make, sir, we talk about addressing poverty and generally, sir, these institutions that are there, such as Fund Access, at least interact with people in the community to help them to resolve those critical questions of poverty. Because one of the things that we

need to understand generally is that if we can help people, sir, to develop projects through which they can change their circumstances, sir, that, sir, is the best approach. And to the extent that, even before the Social Investment Fund, there were already institutions within government which were supposed to help persons to do just that. And maybe what happened, sir, when the Social Investment Fund was established, what it really did, sir, is undermine the confidence of those very institutions which were established for that purpose, sir, to do the work that they were supposed to do.

That is what happened, and let us understand. You have institutions such as the same welfare department, the same community development department. Why is it, sir, during the period when the Barbados Labour Party was in power, what we found is that many of the social groups, sir, many of the social groups that we had in our community, sir, basically did not show the kind of vibrancy that they showed before? Why is it, sir, that in many cases the ability of community groups to actually help, to secure funds for themselves, to engage in projects with even the assistance of government departments, sir, that effectively was undermined?

I think, sir, that we need to be realistic and we need to be honest, sir, with ourselves in terms of understanding that sometimes, sir, we have too much government intervention, sir, in the activities of the communities to the point where we erode community self-confidence, sir, in terms of doing the things which are necessary in order to help to develop themselves. And that is the essential point, sir, that we need to make in regards to where the funds are being transferred to, which is in this case Fund Access. I think, sir, that as a result of that, what we will see, sir, is at least an enhancing of the ability of Fund Access to at least, sir, reach some of the actors in our community which need to be reached. Because sometimes, sir, when you take funds there, sir, and sometimes put them in these special funds, what you do is you do precisely what you were trying to avoid in the first place, which is not to politicise the funds. On the other hand, sir, if we empower our civil servants, give them the power to do what they originally intended in the first place, sir, we have a more positive impact, sir, on the community generally. That is just my brief contribution I wanted to make as far as that is concerned.

The other point I want to make, sir, just quickly, sir, in the presence of this implementation deficit that was mentioned, sir, we keep on from both sides of the House talking about this implementation deficit. As I said, both sides inadvertently are responsible for it. And I think, sir, it is a bit mischievous of the opposition - because maybe that could be parliamentary language, sir - but the point is it is a bit mischievous of the opposition to pretend that in the first place they are not responsible for the current state that we

are in, and to stop confusing Barbados, sir, with this thing of trying to say that I am not responsible at the same time for where we are. Because at the end of the day the ability to target poverty in this country, sir, depends greatly on the professionalism of the very civil service for which we are responsible, sir. And we cannot at the same time, sir, engage in actions and movements that seem to suggest that there is a prejudice in the way in which, sir, civil servants are conducting their own affairs. And that I think, sir, is unfortunate for what we are doing today because really what we are facing today, sir, in our communities is a challenge. What we are facing, sir, in terms of Barbados, in terms of what we have to do - the world is a challenge - because the situation today is far different than what it was 10 to 15 years ago. So in that respect, sir, we have to start now to build a more committed service, a more professional service that would attack the very essence of poverty, what has caused it. And really in two facts when we try to politicise it, I think that we have gone, sir, down a very dangerous road. And with that, sir, I would want to say I support the resolution, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Honourable member for St. Peter.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: I am grateful for the opportunity to participate in this debate. I believe that the debate raises two sets of issues, one concerning governance, the next concerning financial operations. In respect of the governance issue, it would have been helpful merely if the Minister of Finance had merely indicated that what we are doing here today is to correct an oversight. That oversight has already been referenced by the Leader of the Opposition. The Social Investment Fund was created by an Act of Parliament. The reports of the fund say that the fund was abolished on March 31, 2009. Its abolition was authorised by the Ministry of Finance and approved by Cabinet. A fund created by Act of Parliament just cannot be abolished by decision of the Minister of Finance, approved by Cabinet. What we are doing in many respects is correcting an oversight. I put it as an oversight, Mr. Speaker.

Secondly, sir, it would be interesting if the House was to be made more familiar with the history of this fund and the purposes that it served, because a lot of the discussion that is taking place now is not informed by the history. When the Democratic Labour Party prior to 1994 agreed to an introduction of a value added tax into this country, it was also agreed by then and subsequently embraced by us, that if the value added tax yielded a surplus far in excess of what was projected, that a significant part of the surplus would go into programmes intended to eradicate poverty. Members would be familiar with the fact that the first time a value added tax was introduced in this country was when the member for St. John in his budget in 1994 said that it was going to be

implemented from January 1, 1995. But there was always the intention that once the value added tax came into existence and it yielded significant revenues, part of the surplus was going to be used to enhance the fight against poverty. And so it was. And therefore it is not by accident that this Act and the fund was created.

In 1998, the VAT came into existence, a surplus was generated, VAT was given back in the form of a change in the base of the VAT. If you remember, sir, the VAT started with a tax on food, removed the tax on food, and then systematically, Mr. Speaker, some of the resources available to the government were put into institutions to fight poverty at different levels. You have to understand the structure of the Social Investment Fund relative to the other institutions that were created at the time to help to fight poverty, not by handouts, but by the creation of enterprise. And that is the important point, sir.

It was understood that Fund Access and the Enterprise Growth Fund were pre-existing institutions that were created subsequent to the closure of the Barbados National Bank. That has to be understood. The government created two institutions, the Rural and the Urban Development Fund Commissions, and each was given a fund to help the creation of enterprise by individuals. And it is not by accident, sir, that both the Urban and the Rural Development Commissions have these funds, because it was understood that individuals can help - in fact, the best way to deal with poverty is through enterprise creation. And enterprise creation takes place at a number of levels, at the level of the individual. But it was also understood, sir, that community institutions can also help to fight poverty by creating enterprises on a community basis. And therefore, in addition to the resources that were to be put into the Rural and the Enterprise Growth, Rural and Urban Enterprise Funds - and those happened - we decided as well to try to fight poverty by empowering an institution called a Social Investment Fund to be able to have resources to help institutions at the community level that wanted to create enterprises to reduce the level of poverty in the country. So that the Social Investment Fund, and when you look at the number of institutions, when you look at how best to distribute this resource, you will

see that it really went to institutions because they felt that there was a place for the fight against poverty through institutions being part of the exercise. This therefore had a purpose that was entirely separate and distinct from other institutions owned by the state that were involved in the fight against poverty through enterprise creation. Post the VAT, following the philosophy that any part of the increased revenues from the government ensuing from fiscal reform had to go to the purpose, that is a governance issue involved that this fund was in fact abolished in 2009 on its abolition, two million. And I am here to report, sir, that \$2 468 000 were transferred to Fund Access. The issue

is what has happened to those funds in the interval. Have those funds been utilised by Fund Access for the purpose of helping to generate solutions to the problems of poverty? By empowering institutions to be part of the process? And if so, sir, how do they reconcile with the focus of Fund Access itself? Because as I understand it, Mr. Speaker, Fund Access really is an institution that provides loan financing to entities on an individual basis. Now are we now by this act saying that we see no place in Barbados for community groups to be involved in the fight against poverty by helping to create enterprises at the community level?

And that is the essential point of an operational nature that this raises if Fund Access is to get involved in this matter, sir, and I have no objections to that, are there regulations defined that would enable Fund Access to be part of that exercise? Now I raised that point, sir, because this Social Investment Fund is a fund created under statute of Parliament. Fund Access is an entity operating under the Companies Act and therefore its operations have to be guided in some respects by the intent that at least it has to be able to make a profit on its operations and to run viably. A lot of these funds expended by the Social Investment Fund clearly had a very high grant component, if not a grant component, of a high contingency recovery element, namely that you give note the funds and that if it exits commercial enterprises that were profitable then you retail, but if it did not, you write off. But to put these funds into Fund Access raises a different set of issues. That Fund Access is an entity under the Companies Act and I would like the minister, perhaps I have no objection to going to Fund Access, but I would like the purposes, namely that there is still a scope in Barbados for the fight against poverty to be supported by enabling community organisations to be able to help create enterprises. The conditions under which they went to the Accountant General to get funds clearly will be different from the conditions under which we go to Fund Access, a company under the Companies Act, and if we bring this matter to successful closure. I have no difficulty in sitting here with the transfer of funds, but I will need to have clarity in respect to the way in which this gap will be addressed.

And perhaps in his response the minister may want to say whether the \$2.5 million transferred in 2009, if it is still there, followed by how much has it accumulated since then? Is it being utilised only within the now confines of the mandate of Fund Access or are community organisations aware that there are resources that can be available for support of their ventures to help to create enterprises functioning as community organisations. I want strongly, Mr. Speaker, to say how important this is. When the Finance Workshop and the group made applications for resources, neither of the two politicians associated with these organisations were then members of the Barbados Labour Party government. The Finance Workshop received

the resources. I wish it was because this member who is showing would be aware that just like the Poverty Eradication Fund, just like the eradication fund, there was no ministerial involvement in the approval of these resources. And may I make the point, sir, because there has been a fundamental change since the member wants this matter to be raised and he is too experienced to raise it without even wanting to speak about it. There was also in 1998, following the introduction of Value Added Tax, that we recognised also that poverty has to be addressed not just by creating enterprises, but that there were people who would want to fall through the cracks and that there is a Poverty Eradication Fund created. Again, it was run administratively because it was, in our view, poverty knows no political partisan boundaries and it functioned this way. People made application to the fund. A committee of officials alone appraised them. The Director of Finance, chairman of it, the Development Department and all of the social workers assessed and allocations were made strictly upon the basis of merit, without reference to the minister as Minister of Finance. So I never had to approve any applications from the Eradication Fund because we insulated those resources from ministerial involvement. That has changed and the member for St. Michael North West knows when it was changed.

Similarly, in this particular matter, Mr. Speaker, resources allocated by the Social Investment Fund were administered by a process that did not require ministerial direct involvement. Therefore, when Penguin Workshop made an application, it was appraised by public officials. Recommendation came forward, Mr. Speaker, and the same thing with all the others. But I still feel that there is an important role to perform in our fight against poverty by enterprise creation involving community groups. Most of these community groups are not-for-profit organisations. Most of them in receiving resources will be doing things that have a high social impact. The prospects and probability of high profits are going to be low and therefore they will not have projects that they can easily carry to a commercial bank or another development finance institution. Quite often they have a very high social dimension in the enterprise creation. To put them in a position, therefore, where they are going to have an institution that may be looking as well at the profit element needs some clarification. And sir, I would have no difficulty. If it is the issue, the government, to have these funds transferred, I would like to know, sir, if the funds are being used. I want to ask that question specifically because the government itself made a report to Parliament that indicated that the level of poverty, by reference to the survey that was done, had reached 19 per cent. So that it would be a very tragic thing, in my view, to have resources that were intended to help fight against poverty by enterprise creation. The resources are transferred to an institution, but resources are not being used at a time when poverty is rising.

I believe that this is an issue that needs some response, and I don't also feel so that many people were aware - people who would have been accustomed to applying to the Social Investment Fund for resources themselves would not have been aware of the cabinet decision that transferred the funds. I certainly was not aware, Mr. Speaker. If the resources are not available, sir, I believe that they ought to be publicised in each one of our constituencies. I believe that you will find that the institutions that would be glad to be able to help pull talents in the community together and to create enterprises - that cannot go to the bank, have a difficulty accessing the resources on a loan basis, have nowhere to go other than to institutions such as this - will benefit. But this is an oversight that is being corrected. And let us say that it is basically that the cabinet cannot take the place of Parliament on a matter that Parliament created. So all they are doing is that Parliament now ratify what cabinet agreed to in 2009. That is true. So there is oversight. These things happen. This is not the first government that has had oversight and has had the ratification. But it happened. But this is no full answer. And my only concern is that the funds were transferred. There is a gap. If these funds were transferred, it will leave a gap in the fight against poverty, because the fight against poverty can be fought by doing things of an infrastructure nature to improve living conditions. It can be fought by enabling enterprises to create individuals, to create their own enterprises. And those things are necessary, sir. But the fight against poverty in our market is not going to be rounded and complete unless we also encourage community organisations to become involved in that fight, not by handouts, but by enterprise creation.

And sir, I want strongly to say to the government that we should be looking to accentuate, rather than diminish the role that community organisations can play in helping to fight poverty through enterprise creation. I mentioned that once. The best way in which we can fight poverty is through creation of enterprises, the expansion of existing ones. The handout approach takes us that far but no further. Very often that aspect of the fight against poverty - fighting poverty by enterprises - is not given the accent that it requires in our society. Too many people believe that the fight against poverty has to be addressed by way of the immediate handout and the instant gratification that serves an immediate purpose, sir. But it does not get the job done. And I would still want urgently to suggest that whether this action has been taken for reasons that clearly the government has purpose for, that the purpose that the fund was intended to serve is still a valid purpose. And there are social investment funds in many countries that are intended to do precisely this. And I also want to finish on that point, sir. The point that the member for St. Michael North East made is that you will also find that international lending institutions do, in fact, like to see these kind of legislative arrangements in place to support

poverty eradication through enterprise creation. One is in Jamaica, but I am also aware that there are other social investment funds in other parts of the world attracting resources from multinational institutions. And if the government were to come with a project to have an entity like this to deal with poverty eradication, to community organisations, and was to borrow resources to amplify the scope of these institutions to get our job done, sir, I think it would attract resources. So say what we are doing here, sir - grant there was oversight and we are not going to quarrel with that, sir, because nobody on either side can plead perfect innocence in respect of doing everything that has to be done on time. But the other matter, sir, is what has happened to the \$2.5 million that has been transferred and are they being used? And can we get the assurance that rather than say that the purpose does not exist, recognise that there is a purpose that exists and see how the government intends to amplify it? Thank you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable member for St. George North.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Very quietly, very quietly. In their manifesto, Mr. Speaker, they spoke nothing at all about the abolition of this fund. And I want to ask the member for St. John, every member for St. John knew that the Mount Table Moribian Church had also benefited from this fund. They talk about the final creative workshop. They talk about Israel level, the Israel level. But do you realize, Mr. Speaker, that this fund was helping organizations that were providing a benefit to the society? This is what we are seeing. And I'm saying, Mr. Speaker, in a sad day, that when the government's first order of business is to abolish a fund that was designed to help communities across Barbados, it was a very sad day. And not only this, Mr. Speaker, to put it in a fund where all roles lead the Democratic Party because the fund access is run by a board. Fund access is run by a board and the board is appointed by the minister appointed by the Democratic Labor Party. I am saying to you, Mr. Speaker, that even though we are about to support this, I am saying that it is not the best intention to put it into this board. Mr. Speaker, we have to be clear. We have to be clear and the public of Barbados will judge the Democratic Party if you put this fund as a fund access in order to provide benefits to community across Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that this social investment fund, that this social investment fund for the last ten years would have provided benefits to the communities across Barbados. I want to find out what will be the position at this time. How will these organizations benefit? Do they apply directly to the fund access? What help will these community get if they fall through the crap? And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have seen the minister talk about accountability, talk about some ministers saying they cannot find any accounts for the various organization. Now

that's not a fault of the then government because we are told that this fund was run by the technocrats. We have to be that this fund was not run by the government of the time. Mr. Speaker, we have to be clear. I believe that the welfare department have been doing a job over the last 30 years to help protect Barbadians that are vulnerable and we have to continue. Now the welfare department as I know it does not respond to the minister and the minister does not oversee the day to day activity as to who get funds. Organizations are also, Mr. Speaker, established by law to help the community. And once these organizations are established then they can approach a fund in order to provide assistance to the community. In most developed countries, Brazil, Canada, USA, there are social investment funds that are created in order to help communities which the politicians and the government does not get involved on a dedicated activity.

And I think Mr. Speaker, that the minister would rather tell us what source are available for community groups to apply to help their local communities because we just came out of an election and we have seen, Mr. Speaker, a number of poor cases, a number of poor cases that need to be addressed and I want to hear how these cases will be addressed. I heard about the icy bridge project. We do not know very much about the icy bridge project but we need to know about it or Icbridge, whatever it is. We just heard about it. But what it is, what it is we have just heard about it but the minister have never been clear about it. Have never. The public out there do not know very much about this product. Tell us about it. We have to act and scratch our heads. What it is? What it is. It's not well known. It is known to the members of the Democratic Party, but it's not known to the general public. But we need to know about it. If you say is the project for the century, is it the project for the century, you're saying is the best thing that ever happened in the last decade or two decades ago. But much is not nobody about this project. It's not nobody. But people know about urban, they know about rural development and they know about the community groups that help them. Mr. Speaker, the Democratic Party will have to tell the people of this country more about why this fund was abolished and the fund that is going to be replaced. This fund, Mr. Speaker, I'm obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, thank you very much.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Mr. Speaker, sir, I am grateful for the contributions of the honourable members on both sides. Of course, I couldn't suspect that a matter which clearly is a fairly routine matter would have detained the house for as long as it has. But I guess in the eagerness to get the parliament on its way, that members would want to contribute, especially those on the other side would want to have contributed to this debate. I perhaps can start from where the honourable member for St. George North left

off. Clearly not much has changed with the honourable member because the honourable member sat in this chamber. Sir, when this matter was introduced, I suspect for the record, he might have spoken too, and in the previous parliament. I'm surprised that the honourable member now claims that we didn't alert the public. So I'm a little surprised by that. But anyway, I remember that the stage now where age wise these things happen, laughs at their memories. So I wouldn't trouble him for that, I think.

Mr. Speaker, sir, the debate really was unnecessary for the perspective of some of the matters raised by first the honourable leader of the opposition, and then laterally as well by the right honourable leader of the opposition. The point that should be made, Mr. Speaker, sir, in relation to this is that this is not any governance, any breakdown in governance and administration and so forth and so on. There are two issues here. I thought I spoke to it, perhaps inadequately, but I did speak to it. There's an administrative matter and there's a legal matter administratively. Any fund, rather, created by parliament or not cabinet, is within its legal right to have those administrative arrangements changed, so much so that it doesn't necessarily affect the law. We understand that legally you're going to have to repeal it if it no longer exists. But the administrative arrangements were changed and I think they were changed for fundamentally good reasons. I know your prime minister would recall that the late prime minister and minister of finance on the advice of the public servants. I mean, this is one of the first things that we were advised when we got to office, that the social investment fund was not of any particular special value in achieving the objectives which it set out for itself, either by way of the letter of the law or the spirit of the philosophy underlining that which is said to have created it in the first place. And we were advised, he was advised and brought it to cabinet. That it be dissolved principally because there were other institutions performing the same function.

Now we like to get all tied up in law. I'm not a lawyer, so I am advised by the lawyers and the non lawyers who pretend to be lawyers. But if we really want to look at it, if you look at the Social Investment Fund Act, nowhere in this Act does it prescribe for any committee to say a judgment of any application by law made to the fund for the allocation of the resources which the fund had. That is what the Act does not provide for it. But yet the minister for that, then the right honourable gentleman, the member for St. Peter, admitted on his feet today, and he didn't have to admit because we know it anyhow, created a committee, accountant general, on the advice of the minister, and the honourable member stood up in here and said that I created a committee, I had nothing to do with it. So in fact, it was a direction of his legal duty under the law, as provided in the Act, which he himself, the honourable member, brought and championed through the House of Assembly to look after and see after the funds of this social investment fund.

So if you want to get tied down in the minutiae of law, the honourable member set up an illegal committee. But that is not entirely new because the honourable member admitted by his own voice, in his own clothes, and at a place in which he was clearly uncomfortable, that being the so called monarch thing at East Coast, that he not only had illegal, he's working at his house, but that he created a special fund out of money drawn out of the tax, a special tax, secret tax on petroleum in Barbados. So it's not nothing new in terms of how we deal with the law and so forth and so on.

So why are we going around in rings pretending that this is some major issue here? Look, we had a micro enterprise development fund, otherwise known as Fund Pex, doing precisely the same thing that the honourable member for - right honourable member for St. Peter and the honourable member for St. Michael North East, the leader of the opposition for the time being, indicated was the purpose of this fight. There is a political disease called torchitis and people just like to talk because they have the opportunity to stand up and talk. I am not one of those. The reality is that we should not. In fact, the object lesson, Mr. Speaker, sir, from this exercise is that we should not just create things because we have money. That is one of the things that bedevils current public administration inherited from the last administration or the last Barbados Labour Party administration. Now we have a whole plethora of things just created for style to give the impression that you're doing something. So you have a fund access, you have urban doing the same thing, rural doing the same thing. Poverty deviation fund, social investment fund. You create all of these things overweighting, weighing down the public administration in the country. And I get very scared or worried when I see a lot of funds hanging around because, you know, when I got a lot of little funds hanging around people to be able to switch but they see it now, you don't see it again. So I get very concerned with public funds when I see all these little funds existing. You don't worry about that. You don't worry about that. There is a particular reason why we created those to put the resources back in the hands of the people and out of these special select committees that were sitting down in governance over the poor.

Now of course I can tell you this, the honourable member for St. Peter made a very - it is safe. You can glean more from what a person says than what he didn't say. He said that when the resources large as they were given to Finland's Creative Workshop and the Israel Level Foundation were given, the two members were not members of the Barbados Labour Party as yet. And that is why I say. That is why I say it was probably an inducement. Mr. Speaker, the honourable member is misleading the House. The member never said that the members were not members of the BLP and one group got a million dollars and the other one got near to a million

dollars. I have no problem with these two institutions getting resources. No, I don't have a problem with these groups getting resources as one of the Christ Church Central educated because I think that they work with them. Certainly Pilot's Creative Workshop does good work in the community and Israel Level too, even in spite of its directorship, does good work in the community. But the point that I am making, Mr. Speaker, sir -

is that I recall very clearly because I was heading up a non-governmental organisation when these resources were given. And I know it created a lot of animosity among other groups in the community who felt that even though these two groups may have been deserving, that the vast amounts that they were able to attract should have been more evenly distributed among other institutions, community based organisations and NGOs that would have been able to contribute. And one of the reasons why this did not happen is because people felt that there was a lack of transparency governing how that process was done.

I didn't want to speak about these matters. I don't know why they dragged me into it because as far as I am concerned, this is a perfunctory issue that really ought not to attract this kind of attention. But I recall it. I recall, Mr. Speaker, sir, very clearly because I can tell you the origin of the Social Investment Fund then. He was chair of the NGO working group on the World Bank and staff in Mercedes, Washington. We agitated with the fund that one of the reforms - the Member for St. Michael East will tell you - one of the arguments that we made to the World Bank and the IMF is that when they were doing these structural adjustment programmes that they had to be accompanied by strong developmental processes. And that is where the terminology poverty reduction growth facility came from, that it was not just going to be, for example, where you can cut this and raise that tax and do this. That it had to be accompanied by a strong developmental programme that allowed people in communities to be able to buffer themselves against the ravages of what was then traditionally called Bretton Woods structural adjustment programmes. And one of the types of institutions that emerged was the Social Investment Fund. It is in Jamaica, it is in parts of Vietnam, Cambodia. All those places that have structural investment programmes have social investment funds. So nothing new.

And we tried to do something in Barbados similar without understanding the correct philosophical and other practical undertakings and considerations. So we rushed to create the fund because money was existing. The back was flowing like honey, all was good and well. And we created a fund here and created one there. If, Mr. Speaker, if I were to be so possessed by the demons to speak in this Honourable House about what took place at the Urban Development Commission with the funds that were down there given to people including members of the Barbados

Labour Party who have not paid back a cent of the resources. The auditor's report, the auditing report is there. The forensic audit is there. I didn't raise it in the election. I didn't think I needed to. But it is there. The information is there. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East knows it. The Honourable Prime Minister knows it. It's there. I'm saying that you just created these funds. You have no proper governance of them. You put these committees over them.

Honourable Speaker, I am not going to go down there. I think the point is made. Public administration in Barbados cannot be considered to be properly executed by duplication. Having many funds or many institutions does not suggest efficiency. In fact, it may very well be the contrary. So you're going to create a fund - understand it. You're going to create a fund, Mr. Speaker, sir, into which you're going to put resources and then you're going to tell the fund, I want you to give other funds resources. But why don't you just give the other funds resources directly? Why would you create an interlocutive fund? And you know who sat on this fund - in addition to the Director of Finance, the Director of Urban, the Director of Rural, the Chief Welfare Officer, the Director of Fund Access. So you say to them, I'm going to put \$10 million in a fund. You sit down and determine which are you going to get, how much amount it is. Poor administration, myopic. But when you're into smoke and mirrors, when you are into creating optics, to give the impression that you're doing something that so-called helps the poor - and you know, all of a sudden members of the Barbados Labour Party apparently discovered poverty in 2008. There were poor people existing before.

I hear a lot of crocodile tears in here for the Challenger School. But they said the Social Investment Fund gave money to the Challenger School. Let it be said for the record that the Challenger School also got a loan from the Social Investment Fund at an interest rate of four per cent. So all of the crocodile tears that I heard - you all remember, my good friend, four per cent. It should have been a grant. Should have been a grant. Of course I changed it. As Minister of Social Care, Constituency Empowerment, Urban and Rural Development, at the petition of the director of the school, I petitioned the Ministry of Finance and told them it should be converted into a grant. And that was done by this administration. So you can talk whatever you want, but I know. Look, 14 years of maladministration can't just be wiped away overnight.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: On a point of order, the Honourable Member is misleading the House by suggesting that the Barbados Labour Party never gave any grants implicitly to -

Mr. SPEAKER: Did he say that? He didn't say that. Please refrain from speaking when I am speaking. I did not say that. Point of order. Please take your seat and let him conclude.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, sir, for protecting me from the Honourable Member. But I still thank the Honourable Mr. Speaker, sir. I think the point is made. The public officers in their wisdom advised the Government that this was not only a duplication of effort, it was not serving the purpose for which it was created properly, and that given that there were so many other things out there doing the same thing, that we should wrap it up. And we wrapped it up. The resources were redistributed to Fund Access - or the Micro Enterprise Development Fund, that is the proper nomenclature for it - and we are happy today to say that in the last two years, with those extra resources, Fund Access has been able to expand its clientele. It's been lending more. It's been even demanding more because it now has had a reinvigoration of the thing. And therefore, sir, without delaying the House any further, with those few words I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and the Bill was read a second time.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: I beg to move that Your Honour do now leave the chair and that the House resolve itself into committee in consideration of this Bill.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee, Mr. J. D. PAUL, Chairman of Committees, in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 were called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee without amendment and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. C. P. SINCKLER, the Bill was read a third time, passed and cited as the Social Investment Fund Repeal Act, 2013.

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir, I beg to move that the House be suspended for lunch until 2.00 this afternoon.

The question that the House be suspended until 2.00 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Good afternoon, honourable members. This sitting of the honourable the House of Assembly is resumed. When the suspension was taken we were on Government Business. Before we proceed further, though, let me take the opportunity to welcome - to acknowledge in the chamber the presence of the family of the late Sir Branford Taitt, deceased. We are happy - although it is not a happy occasion for us - but we welcome you nonetheless. Lady Colleen Taitt and daughters Sharon and Monique. And we wish you all the best and God's blessings in your time of trouble.

OBITUARY - THE LATE SIR BRANFORD MAYHEW TAITT, K.A.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Prime Minister.

Hon. F. J. STUART: Mr. Speaker, this is the first opportunity I am having to address this Honourable House in this new session and I should like to congratulate all those Honourable Members who have secured election or re-election to this Honourable Chamber. The election to this House is the highest honour within the gift of the people of Barbados and I do not think that any Honourable Member of this Chamber should underestimate the significance of that fact. And therefore it devolves on the shoulders of all of us a solemn responsibility to so discharge the functions of our offices in this Chamber as to justify the faith the people of Barbados have so trustingly reposed in us. So I want to think that over the next few weeks, months, years that as we conduct the public business in this Chamber that the people of Barbados would have reason to feel proud at the standards we set or the standards we maintain. Since we are all custodians of the standards, the values and the hopes and aspirations of the people of this country.

I do not think anybody better understood that than the late Mr. Branford Taitt who on the 15th day of last month passed from this life and whose mortal remains were interred on Saturday last. And therefore in accordance with the traditions well known to this Chamber I am pleased to stand here today to pay tribute to a man who has made a massive, substantial and wise contribution to the public life of Barbados over many, many years. The more conspicuous part of that contribution, of course, started when he was at the still, one would think, fragile age of 27 when he was appointed Consul General of Barbados at New York. Now, subsequent or successor Consuls General have striven to follow the template of Branford's

contribution as Consul General at New York in those early years. The standards he set, of course, have been striven after but I have to frankly say never approached. And people at New York still remember with fondness and with nostalgic delight the contribution he made in the discharge of that function.

It is because of Branford - I like to think that when this Honourable Chamber had just 24 members, New York came to be considered as the 25th constituency. When we moved to 27 members, it began to be called the 28th constituency. When we moved to 30 members, of course, it has now become the 31st constituency, and that is because of the work done by Branford Taitt in those early years as Consul General for Barbados. The earlier talk signalled that he had a special contribution to make to the public affairs of Barbados. And that fact was not lost on the then Prime Minister of Barbados, the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, who saw him as being clothed in that indefinable splendour that marked him out as a man destined for great enterprises.

And therefore, after the 1971 general election, Branford was called home to assume responsibility for the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Commerce. Now, he went into that Ministry and immediately made his presence felt. It was clear that he did not intend to be an ornamental minister, but that he intended to make a difference. And therefore early on, with the interests of the consumers very much in the forefront of his mind, he put on the table the issue of price controls in Barbados. I know that in recent times we have been talking a lot about the cost of living and this has been a big issue for us, but it was a big issue back then as well. And young Branford Taitt decided that it was an issue that government had to confront and therefore he put it on the table and fought for price controls in this country. In so doing, of course, he pitted himself against the very powerful mercantile community in Barbados. But never once did his faith weaken or his enthusiasm fail as he pursued with determined vigour and with impressive audacity the claims of the consumers of Barbados.

Of course, he became the target of very harsh criticism and on many occasions found himself having to defend himself against those who thought that fighting for the consumers of Barbados at that time was something in the nature of a political heresy. There are some who argue, of course, that the way that battle was fought and the interests on whose preserves he encroached resulted in or contributed to the defeat of the Democratic Labour Party in 1976. That is an issue, of course, that will remain a moot point because it cannot be empirically proven. But also in that period between 1971 and 1976 was the first oil crisis. And as Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce, Branford Taitt was responsible for communicating with the country. I do not think you know Branford Taitt well, or you can claim to know him well, if you do not know - or if

you did not know - that he never frowned on an opportunity to communicate with the public. And during that period it was he who tried to calm the public's nerves and to keep the country informed as to the effects which were being felt as that first oil crisis raged.

He did not always recommend himself at the time to his Prime Minister, who on some occasions took a different view of Branford's response to the happenings around oil. On one occasion, Errol Barrow actually took exception to the use of the word crisis and thought that we may have been overreacting at the time to what was happening in the global oil markets and that it did not, in the context of Barbados, amount to a crisis. But Branford's role during that very difficult period entitled him to imperishable renown because it was a new occurrence for all of us. And his management of it and his management of public anxieties did much to keep the country in a state of calm.

The year 1976 came. Of course we had a by-election in St. Philip North, which we lost, but in which Branford played a very prominent role. And of course we had a by-election in the City of Bridgetown which we also lost. And when we went into the general election of 1976 on September the second, we were defeated. We were defeated. But Branford Taitt won his seat in St. Michael South West, as it was then called. The seat of St. Michael South West was previously held by the late Captain George Granville Ferguson. And when he announced that he was going to retire, the party thought that no better person was qualified for the filling of Captain Ferguson's shoes than Branford Taitt. And therefore he succeeded Captain Ferguson and won the seat in St. Michael South West, as it was at the time, resoundingly, and therefore opposition politics welcomed him.

Between 1976 and 1981, he did not just spend time, he used it. He entered the University of the West Indies at Cave Hill and he read a law degree. But he also deployed his considerable managerial skills in the service of the Democratic Labour Party, reorganising its structures and making it a more coherent and effective fighting unit. It was he who divided the party's administration zonally and of course mobilised the Women's League and mobilised the Young Democrats and got all the organs of the party so functioning that by 1981 the party was looking quite credible again. Of course, while doing all that, he graduated with a law degree of second class honours, doing particularly well in public international law and particularly in courses related to the law of the sea, on which he wrote a very impressive thesis as well.

During those years, he also so captured the admiration and the confidence of the membership of the DLP that he was elected to the post of President and held that post for a number of years, until around 1982, I believe. It was thought that his roots were beginning to run

a little deep. And I recall the attempts that were made - very sturdy attempts that were made - to ensure that he was not re-elected President. The then political leader of the party, Mr. Barrow, came back. Now, history has always been twisted on this issue. Branford was the incumbent against whom Barrow ran. But people like to say that Branford ran against Barrow. It just goes to show, Mr. Speaker, how large was the image of Errol Barrow at that time in the Democratic Labour Party.

So between 1981 and 1986, he continued his sterling work at the party level, and, of course, in this House, defended the cause of the party and because of its constituents and because of the voiceless and the oppressed and the marginalised across the country, with vigour and with determination, so that by 1986 the people were ready for the Democratic Labour Party again. And in a historic election campaign in which, if the truth is to be told, Taitt did not figure as prominently as in previous elections, because that was a campaign in which the whole tone attracted the advocacy of people like Don Blackman at the time, Bobby Morris, Dr. Steve Simmons, and, of course, Errol Barrow. There were two debates going on at the time. The debate which was being espoused by the names I just called, and a fairly arid economic debate which was going on on another wing of the party. Of course, there were even calls at that time for us to leave the issues that were being discussed by Barrow and Don Blackman and others alone, to get back to issues of supply-side economics and all the issues that were engaging popular attention at the time.

After the 1986 election in which the Democratic Labour Party got 24 of 27 seats, after a short stint at the Ministry of Tourism, Branford was appointed Minister of Health. And between 1986 and 1993, he held that portfolio. And it is still thought, Mr. Speaker - there is still a resounding consensus - that that was one of the most fertile periods for the Ministry of Health in Barbados. In fact, some people still like to say that he is the best Minister of Health Barbados has ever had. Whether it was the doctors, whether it was the nurses, whether it had to do with the functioning of our polyclinics, whatever it had to do with, Branford Taitt was there, putting his modernising hand on the structures and institutions of the health sector.

Again, he did not always win friends in his initiatives. In that regard I remember very distinctly on one occasion when he went abroad in contemplation of a more effective use of Barbados' diaspora, he went abroad and interviewed nurses in the United Kingdom with a view to getting them to come back here, having gained valuable experience in that metropolis, to come back here and to serve their country. As recently as Friday morning at DLP headquarters, one of the beneficiaries of that exposure spoke to me, introduced herself to me as one of the persons who was interviewed and who came back to Barbados as a result, and who has never regretted one half second coming

back here to contribute to the country's health sector in the way in which she was able to, thanks to the initiative of Branford. But it would have had to have been seen to be believed how much criticism was directed at Branford Taitt as a result of that simple initiative. Nowadays we talk about the diaspora quite routinely and we take diaspora issues for granted. But as far back as then, Branford saw that if Barbados is going to be truly positioned or properly positioned for great leaps forward, it could not ignore the skills and the talents of its diaspora in the various capitals of the world. And that story still remains to be fully told and developed.

But suffice it to say that in the health sector, Branford was able to make a serious dent on developments. And those developments, a lot of them, were traceable to - particularly among the nursing fraternity or sorority - the contribution that nurses were able to make to the health sector here in Barbados. His involvement, of course, and promotion of the government's decision to purchase the St. Joseph Hospital is well known and the initiatives which he took to develop that hospital need not detain us here. Of course, again, his foresight and his insight and indeed his hindsight properly informed him on that issue. And it is a matter of regret, of course, that his expectations on that issue were cheated of fulfilment by narrow partisan politics. But Branford, during that period, 1986 to 1993, contributed wisely not only to the health sector, not only to politics in Barbados generally, but of course, to the Democratic Labour Party then in government.

Between 1993 and 1994, he was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs, and his appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs coincided, of course, with the hosting by Barbados of the first Small Island Developing States Conference. That conference, of course, was attended by the then President of Cuba, Fidel Castro. And there is a memorable photograph of Branford and Castro embracing each other. Of course, for all of his sins he was called a communist and it was thought that it was very improper in those days to be seen so close to Fidel Castro. I am very pleased, of course, that subsequently a Prime Minister of Barbados received the highest honour that Cuba could confer on any citizen of its own country or of any other country.

But I make these points, Mr. Speaker, to say that for Branford Taitt in politics, there were periods when the skies were blue and when the sunshine was golden, but there were also periods when the clouds got dark and he had to fight for his political survival. In the parish of St. Michael, of course, he was the Democratic Labour Party's drawing card and he charmed audiences not only across St. Michael but across Barbados by his very impressive oratory. Now I know that it is fashionable in Barbados nowadays not to distinguish between public speaking and oratory, but I happen to know that all orators are public

speakers, but all public speakers are not orators. And Branford Taitt was an orator in the classical sense of that term. He had an almost carnal relationship with the English language and counted no pains lost in ensuring that he chose the right word when he was speaking. His tonal inflections were unique. And across the country in his mortality - in his prime - people flocked, people gathered just to hear those words that flowed from him. And it was not just an empty virtuosity, because the most skilful orator whose speech is not seasoned with thought is nothing but an empty vessel. And all of his utterances, sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, to use Paul's words - Taitt not only spoke, but he thought. And he not only thought and spoke, but he taught.

And that is what endeared him to the people of Barbados for as long as he remained endeared to them. And that is up to the time of his death. Of course. Between 1976 and 1999, he was a member of this Honourable House. And the most perfunctory combing of the debates of this chamber will bring one face to face with the versatility of his mind and with his passion not only for social righteousness, but of course, for public administration in which he had a particular and very deep interest.

After the implosion of the Government in 1994, a number of careers came to an end and a number of careers began. It was in the 1994 election, of course, that I contested my first election. So too the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, Honourable Members for Christ Church South, and a few others of us. I was one of the luckier ones to get elected and enjoyed the very special privilege of sitting on the opposition benches with Branford today and learning more from him, since I had learned so much in the council of the party itself, where we worked very closely together over a long number of years.

But it was a special honour to sit on the opposition benches with Branford and with Erskine Sandiford, now Sir Lloyd Sandiford, Ambassador to Beijing. And during that period, the new Government, of course, has a story to tell in terms of its young ministers themselves enjoying the privilege of being exposed to the politics of Sandiford and Taitt. Taitt in particular understood the Standing Orders of the House very well and used them to very good effect, whether the House was in full session or whether it was in committee.

Of course, in 1999 he lost his seat, as did most of us, and concentrated his energies then on the rebuilding of the Democratic Labour Party. Whereas on previous occasions or in previous incarnations he had served as the party's President, during that latter period he served as the party's General Secretary and again was responsible for the even more modern organisation of the party structures and, of course, imparting his vast and miscellaneous knowledge to the younger politicians in the party.

When we came back to office in the year 2008, there could be no question that we had to involve Branford again. He had, of course, been the party's campaign manager for the 2008 general election and had brought a vast experience and an insightful wisdom to the planning of that campaign which resulted in our resounding success. He was elevated to the Presidency of the Senate by my predecessor in office, the late David John Howard Thompson, and there served with distinction, steering the deliberations of that august chamber with exemplary skill, aplomb and efficiency.

But then, as happens to - or can happen to - all of us, failing health began to make crude incursions on his physical and, dare I say, his mental energies. And the time came when Branford had to decide to give it up. But even while he gave up the Presidency of the Senate, he was not able to give up his passion for politics and for seeing things done in the right way. And therefore he still continued to be a resource for the party at those times when we thought we needed the wisdom of a wiser and older head.

For all of his great work, for all of his contribution to the public life of Barbados, he was elevated to the Knights of St. Andrew, a richly deserved honour which he treasured very highly and which, of course, brought him a great sense of personal fulfilment.

Now that great poet Thomas Gray, who wrote the famous elegy in a country churchyard, hauntingly reminds us in one stanza that the boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, and all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave, await alike the inevitable hour. The paths of glory lead but to the grave. And on the 15th February, the paths of glory led ultimately to the grave of Branford, in that he was called to higher service. And, of course, as I said, his mortal remains were interred on Saturday last after a very impressive funeral ceremony at the Garfield Sobers Gymnasium.

Branford was born to none of those privileges which wealth and status are known to bestow. But he mobilised all of his God-given talents, maximised their possibilities, and deployed them in the service of Barbados. I think that he has placed Barbados everlastingly in his debt for the rich and enduring contribution he has made to its public life. He set very high standards, both in this Parliament and outside of it, and certainly within the corridors of the Democratic Labour Party.

He was not a politician one could afford to ignore. And because he was not a politician one could afford to ignore, he attracted the special attention and sometimes the especial venom of his political adversaries. I said that there were periods of blue skies and golden sunshine and there were dark periods. I don't think that in the public life of Branford anything hurt him more than that inquiry into the St. Joseph Hospital, and not so much the inquiry itself as

the public relations campaign that led up to it, which tried to give the impression that he was less than honourable in the discharge of his ministerial responsibilities.

Of course, we had seen a foreplay of that after the 1976 election, when the same thing happened to Errol Barrow, of course, only many years later to have him named a national hero by those who set out to destroy him. So that hurt Branford very deeply, it did immense damage to his family, and has left some disfiguring scars on those affected by the hunting down of a man whose only crime was to try and do his best for Barbados.

Now lies he dead. His life has enriched us for as long as it lasted, and his death has now left desolate that portion of our landscape which he so proudly, so uniquely and so gracefully occupied. Politics will have missed him. The congregation of the Anglican Church, in which he played so signal a role over many years as a synod member, will miss him, and he will be missed in the hearts and minds of Barbadians - missed by that vast number of people whose lives he touched and in many cases whose lives he healed and in many other cases whose lives he transformed.

So I remember him today with profound gratitude, and I pray for the unceasing refreshment of his soul in paradise. Always at his side, of course, and dutifully sustaining him during his recent illness was his wife, Colleen, Lady Taitt, who was always a present help to him in time of trouble. I don't think I am capable of paying a higher tribute to her than was paid to her on Saturday morning by that very eloquent daughter of Branford's, Sharon. And of course, Sharon and Monique, his two daughters, and Branford's son, were all close to him, all looked out for him and all made sure that they were available to him in his good times but also at those times when he had to deal with unexpected distresses.

He's gone, Mr. Speaker. But his respect for this House, his understanding of its atmosphere, is a lesson from which we can all learn. I began this tribute by saying that the highest honour within the gift of the people of Barbados is election to this chamber. There is no higher honour within the gift of the people of Barbados than election to this chamber. Many brilliant Barbadian men and women have tried to get elected to this chamber and have failed because it is a special privilege within the gift of the people of Barbados. And Branford Taitt understood that.

And I think that as members of this House today, the highest tribute we can pay to him is to understand that ourselves and to treat this chamber as it should be treated - the highest court in the land, the place where serious decisions are to be made, the place to which the country looks for the exemplification of its highest standards, the place where every young man and woman in this country should feel he or she wants to come because of the example

that we have set. And I certainly have felt it an honour to be in this House having seen actors of the past occupy seats in this chamber. And of course, my very good friend Branford Taitt was a parliamentary actor who always claimed my compelling admiration.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have had your indulgence to say these few words in tribute to my fallen friend. And I should like to take this opportunity once again to extend to his widow, Colleen, Lady Taitt, and his children Sharon, Monique and Branford, and to all of his surviving relatives, my heartfelt condolences. May Branford rest in peace. I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Peter.

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, sir, I presume that there will be a resolution expressing the condolences of the House and I rise to second that resolution in advance. So on the occasion that Branford announced his retirement from elective politics I sent him an extensive handwritten note expressing my friendship, great admiration and expressing, Mr. Speaker, my estimation of the contribution that he had made to Barbados, politics and polity. None of the sentiments that I expressed on that occasion I want to depart from.

On this occasion, Mr. Speaker, I really had to come to terms with the notion of a Branford who is dead. Because if there is a person who by his every action, his manner, the way he lived, his vivaciousness and life - with Branford Taitt, it is very, very difficult to come to terms with the notion that Branford Taitt is dead.

I would have to characterise him in his various capacities that I knew him. And perhaps he first heard us cite that work of Tom Brokaw in trying to characterise a generation of Americans when he referred to them as the greatest generation. I believe that the history of this Parliament, when it is properly written, will perhaps view the parliaments between 1981 and 1991 as perhaps the greatest parliaments in our history. I am proud, Mr. Speaker - sometimes I express that pride in a manner that I ought not to - but I am proud to have served in a parliament that contained the first five Prime Ministers of Barbados. And there was an occasion when the first five Prime Ministers of Barbados spoke in a debate and Branford commented upon it. But beyond that, sir, you had persons of the calibre of Richie Haynes and Henry Forde, Stetson Miller on the other side, Don Blackman. It was an Augustan age. And I really believe that even in that greatest generation, Branford Taitt stood out.

I think that he can easily claim to have been the greatest orator in a parliament of great orators. And he brought a liveliness, a great intellect, but he brought also, sir, a great voice. And what stood out about Branford Taitt

was that wonderful melodious voice, that chuckle that commanded those within earshot that you had to listen. There was a graciousness also in his manner and the way in which he conducted himself as a parliamentarian.

I want to say, perhaps, Mr. Speaker, that we were all part of a vanishing breed of parliamentarians. There was a time when in this House Don Blackman would speak on the other side, I would speak in opposition to him, and then we would proceed to give an awareness and become those partners. There was a camaraderie in parliament. Branford and I shared a lot of laughter together in parliament and out of parliament, and our spirit was that we might have been on opposing sides, but that we were part of a great enterprise of nation building - a spirit that demanded the way in which he related to all of us on the other side. And I wish in some respects sometimes that spirit of camaraderie in this House could properly be restored.

He was moreover a man of great faith. I think there was no doubt in his strong commitment to the Anglican Church, nor was there any hypocrisy in the way in which that faith pervaded so many aspects of his life.

I first met Branford, Mr. Speaker, sir, in my by-election in 1984. He was the general manager of the Democratic Labour Party's campaign in 1984, in that first by-election, and against all the odds, he brought the Democratic Labour Party within a whisker of winning. That really is not a Democratic Labour Party seat, it has to be said. That is true. The courts had to settle the matter, sir, in my favour, but had it not been for Branford Tait, I would not have had a parliamentary career - to the chagrin, perhaps, of members on the other side. But we became friends as adversaries, and that speaks to his character. We became friends in the 1984 by-election. And I believe, sir, that it was a mistake on the part of the Democratic Labour Party to relieve him of that leadership role that he performed in that first by-election campaign and to replace him with Mr. [Inaudible.], who I do not believe, although he was a greater leader, enjoyed Branford's political acumen as a campaigner. And I really must tell you, sir, that in some respects I owe my presence in parliament to that decision to move Branford from management.

I tried to capture him as a parliamentarian and I have spoken about his great oratory - that among that greatest generation of parliamentarians he stood out for intellect and for presentation. But he believed that he was part of a vanishing kind of policy paradigm that informed development in his time, but is no longer operative today. He would have been a minister and member of parliament in an age when the specialist in international trade law would understand what I am talking about - when the enabling clause of the Tokyo Round obtained and it was possible for countries like Barbados to establish enterprise in our country by using licences and using the infant

industry argument. That age has passed; we can no longer do those things. He would have been a parliamentarian that understood public policy in the context of an age when countries like ours had access to concessional financing. That age has passed. He was a parliamentarian in an age when bilateral relationships, for example with Canada, would have yielded the resources to enable us to finance the construction of an airport. That age has passed, and as a result, therefore, it is not surprising that he, like many of his age, believed in either an entrepreneurial state or an interventionist state. And Bernard St. John on our side also shared that view. The state had to build things. The state had to do things. The state could not retreat. And St. John's village - and I had to build the Hilton. Those gentlemen felt that the state had a positive economic role to play.

And I am saying if you capture him in his developmental mode, shared with Bernard St. John and others, what I would believe is the ethos that arose from the structuralist school of Raúl Prebisch, Celso Furtado and others who saw development as proceeding in a particular way - which is the state doing specific things. And it might explain, therefore, sir, why he felt so strongly that if there was an inflation spike in the country, the state had to be interventionist and had to use price controls - very much to the chagrin of people who did not feel that the state had any such role to play.

It is not always remembered, but as a Minister of Trade, Branford was one of those - and this is cited in works of [Inaudible.] - that Branford Tait is one of those who put in place the first Lomé Agreement in 1975, and that for many years stood as a model of development cooperation between developed and developing countries. Many people feel still that the Lomé Convention of 1975 was a model of development cooperation that has stood out among all models of development cooperation. And persons who were part of the putting in place of that model speak of it and to it with a sense of pride and patrimony that is astonishing.

The Member for St. Michael South spoke about his work in the oil crisis of 1974. The people who feel so - that record is interesting. As you remember, during the oil crisis, sugar prices also spiked and Barbados was able to sell sugar to other countries at very, very high prices. What it meant, however, was that at the same time Britain was having to join the European Union and the old Commonwealth Sugar Agreement had to be replaced by the new Lomé Agreement. And there was a view - mistakenly so - that the prices being fetched for sugar that obtained during that spike would obtain, and that Barbados locked in a quota under the Lomé of 53 000 tons. That was far less than the 112 000 tons that we used to get under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement. There are many people - and they do not necessarily share this view - but there are many people who feel that once Barbados' sugar industry

had only a guaranteed market of 53 000 tons, then the old dominance of the sugar industry in our economy could not any longer persist. But that is hindsight. At the moment, it had seemed logical to lock in at a lower target than under the old Commonwealth agreement. But Branford's role in restructuring the shipping industry through [Inaudible.] is part of the record. So that has, I think, eventually, properly to be told.

Sir, this is not a moment for cheerlessness, but I believe that those of us who served on the Public Accounts Committee - the Nardogen investigation into the St. Joseph Hospital - should not let the record be improperly written. There was no finding against Branford Taitt. And if members were to read the transcripts - and you might find this interesting, because I sometimes felt that Branford was underappreciated by his own, the Democratic Labour Party. I mean that not as scripture, but he ran twice for office and sometimes he felt that he was not always given his full due by the party. But if you read the transcripts of that committee, a lot of the investigations were led by some members of the Democratic Labour Party. And in fact, the committee's report was at first, in committee, a unanimous report. And it was thereafter, Mr. Speaker, altered when certain members changed their vote.

But the issues on which the work of the committee turned concerned the exercise of ministerial power. As much as we applaud him for having gone abroad and sought to recruit nurses, the truth is that a minister is not a recruiting officer. And it was an extension of his powers beyond the law. But more to the point, there was a St. Joseph Hospital Act that vested the responsibility for the running and the financial affairs of the hospital in the board under the law, but the ministry held onto the authority. And those were really the issues around which that investigation really turned - that it was more about the use of ministerial power improperly rather than the other things that were in the public domain. That said, there was a blemish to his parliamentary career. I am not meaning this in the adversarial way that the Combermere-ians may not like me to speak about.

You are aware, sir, of course, that there was no school called Combermere that was formed in 1695. But there was a conspiracy of the bipartisan willing on both sides to try to put Combermere on an impossibly high pedestal by bringing to this Parliament - and I call it a conspiracy of the bipartisan willing - by bringing to this Parliament, I think, many years over 100 years prematurely, a resolution to celebrate the 300th anniversary of the founding of Combermere. Now, those of us who are not Combermere-ians felt that we had to rescue Parliament and that we had to let the Combermere-ians in this House know that, much as they would like to elevate Combermere beyond what some of us feel merit, history still had properly to be respected by Parliament. And that to the

extent that there was no school called Combermere formed in 1695, Parliament could not be part of validating a fiction, and that therefore the resolution brought by a Combermere-ian on one side and seconded by a Combermere-ian on our side had to die for reasons that it could not be validated by reference to the facts. And it is that, sir, as a blemish that I think does from time to time occur in this House as those who are of that Combermere mould - and there are still some, sir, who are of that inclination - want to find some way of putting Combermere on this impossibly high pedestal where it does not properly belong. And I say that, Mr. Speaker, knowing that I shall incur the wrath of the Combermere-ians. But it was really that moment in the House when, quite frankly, Branford should have known better, because he knew, as I knew and all the rest knew, that the school formed in 1695 was not Combermere. But that apart.

Mr. Speaker, sir, I believe that it has to be said that he enjoyed being a member of this Parliament. All his speeches were without rancour. They were intended only to present his side's perspective on the issues. He drew from a deep wellspring of reading. His love for the language was obvious, Mr. Speaker. His use of the language and the vernacular elevated language to the highest courts in the land. And in that respect, Mr. Speaker, he was a model of a parliamentarian that young parliamentarians would do well to emulate.

But I say all as well said that he was a good friend. And I was able to call him first on a number of things, many things. I think he was a member of that great Barbadian tradition that did not scruple in the consumption of fermented beverages, Mr. Speaker. And we were able from time to time - almost tolerant allies in that regard, Mr. Speaker, unapologetically so. And it brought a humanity to the relationship, sir.

But this was a fine man, a fine gentleman, a Christian gentleman. And as I said, from time to time we have divisions in this House, and sometimes the nature of public policy requires the divisions to come across as being bitter and difficult. There was no bitterness in the affairs of Branford, no matter how hard might have been the knocks of history. And in his case, I believe, Mr. Speaker, sir, he had ambitions that were not always realised. I do believe that Branford would have loved to have led the Democratic Labour Party and to be a leader of this country. I feel so. But that was not to be. His lot is a matter that he took with grace and it did not in any respect, I believe, ever diminish his loyalties nor his support for the party that he loved. He loved the Democratic Labour Party. He loved our business, Mr. Speaker. And he loved this Parliament. And I believe that this Parliament, the country, sir, has lost a lot in his death. I would know that his family, whom he loved dearly, sir, have now lost even more. And it is in that spirit, sir,

that I want to join in this resolution of condolences. I hope, sir, that the trumpets may sound for him on the other side.

Mr. SPEAKER: I am blessed. Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Hon. D. St.E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I too joined in this debate and I would like to speak about Branford the Alpine, Branford the Barbadian and Branford the international man. There is no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that he was a gentleman who cared a lot for the party of which he represented. And not only did he defend it in the wider public and also at George Street, but he was a vice chance defender of the party here in Parliament the years I served with him between 94 and 99. I can tell you, sir, that no one could have said anything about the Democratic Labour Party or no one could slip because if slightly slick they made. Branford was on his feet to correct you, sir. And sometimes I smile when I see the type of things that are allowed to get through the records in this House. Because the truth is when Branford was in here, it is no way that the other side would have been able to pull anything because he would have been up and he would have been correcting them and the slightest slip using the Standing Order, sir, he would be always showing you the Standing Orders and pointing out where you have made the error, sir. I was also part of the 1984 by-election, sir, and the Honourable Member for St. Peter's right, because I think that he has been fortunate too, like the Honourable Member for St. Thomas where he might have been allowed to slip in - two occasions in my life, sir, that I've seen where that great leader took charge of a campaign and at the end of taking charge of those two campaigns, that two opposition members were allowed to have seats in this Chamber. I am not surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Peter can recall the 1984 election when he lost in 1984 and then he was allowed to slip in, in the other one. I'm very glad that he was very gracious in admitting that the Honourable Member for St. John might have allowed him to be in this Chamber. So I want to thank him for being honest about that one.

But also Branford the Barbadian, sir, who when he came back in 1971, he came back not only to take part in the politics of Barbados but to change the whole industrial atmosphere of Barbados. And that is where it was a striking change - him from the three-piece suit to the shirt, that suit. And where he was able to revolutionise the manufacturing sector and put it on a different footing, sir. There is no doubt, sir, that he loved import substitution and he used that opportunity to help push the local usage and the local consumption of the goods and also push the export aspect of it. And Mr. Speaker, one of the things I would like to say about him is that up to 1994 when we left government he was the master of import substitution. But it is also clear that the other Member for St. Peter reversed that, and it is clear that there is a difference between the two - one

believed in import substitution and the other one believed in comparative advantage. I remember many debates between the two. One spoke a lot about import substitution and demonstrated it by the garments he wore, while the other one saw advantages in believing that there are certain items that we could not produce at the right price and it would have been better to import them. The judge is out on that one, sir. And I will leave that debate up to those two Honourable gentlemen. But I think I know my opinion on that matter, sir, because there is no doubt that I have followed in the footsteps of the gentleman of which we now speak, sir, because I am also a strong believer in import substitution. And I believe that Branford would have done a lot for this country in pushing that aspect because there is no doubt, sir, that we tend sometimes - and I share his view on this one - that it is not the cost that you pay in Barbadian dollars but the foreign exchange that you output that you must use as your measurement. And too often, sir, we in Barbados tend to measure the cost of an item by the number of Barbadian dollars that we output. But the truth is, if you are serious you will have to measure it by the foreign exchange that you are using. And he was very strong on that.

Branford defended Barbados wherever he went. And whenever he went to an international conference he ensured that he participated because he always maintained that you could not leave Barbados and warm a chair - that you were an ambassador. And whenever you went overseas you had to carry the name of Barbados and ensure that you left that mark so that people would understand that you are from someplace too. And also because of his love for tourism, he always felt that was the best way to promote Barbados. And that is why he did not only debate at George Street, he did not only debate in this Parliament, but he debated overseas because he felt that was one of the better ways - or actually the best way - to promote the country. And I am saying, sir, that this Parliament will always remember Branford the debater. The Democratic Labour Party will remember Branford the member. And Barbados will remember Branford the man who fought and loved it and who helped to revolutionise it. And if we want to remember him, we should remember him not only because of his political contribution, we should remember him for his industrial revolution that he was able to help create in this country. So, Mr. Speaker, I am very much obliged to you and I want to say again my deepest sympathy to his family and also to St. Lucy, that he was also very famous. And recognising that he recognised that St. Lucy was the most important constituency and that not only was she that important, but he also respected the fact that it was St. Lucy which gave the Democratic Labour Party its first seat and its second seat. And that is why whenever there was a conversation about St. Lucy, he was always quick to let you know he was from there too. So, Mr. Speaker, he had good grounding. And I am not surprised, sir, that he went where he had to go and that he contributed and he was able

to deliver at the rate he was able to deliver at. I am very much obliged to you, St. Michael North East.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. Thank you.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Speaker, sir, I have listened attentively to the three speeches that have gone before me, and in a sense, each of them has spoken to the greatness of Sir Branford Mayhew Taitt as an orator, as a parliamentarian, as a party builder, as a nation builder, as a practitioner of international treaties in the settlement of Lomé. My perspective is perhaps slightly different because in a very real way, I first knew Branford Taitt not as a politician, but as a close family friend and the father of two good friends of mine going to school. And it was in that vein that relationship continued for just over ten years before I even entered this parliament.

Indeed, the first time I ever met the former member for St. John, former Prime Minister, was at Branford Taitt's house one Christmas time when all of us perhaps were a little jollier than we should have been. And he was as loquacious then as I would find out that he would be in later years. And he was as much a politician then as he was to become in later years. And I refer to the former member for St. John. And he was the subject, as was I, of Branford's telling us to cool it and settle and that we were all going overboard.

I remember the first time I entered public life in 1989. I spoke in Eagle Hall in February, and Sir Branford called me the week after to tell me that he noted with content that my first appearance on a public platform was in his constituency and that while I had been misguided in my choice of party, that would not stop him from nevertheless playing the role of mentoring me in the affairs of politics and if I were ever to be successful in parliament. And that was the kind of relationship that continued.

I recall that when I lost in 1991, his was the first voice of encouragement from that side. And at the opening of parliament, he spoke to me and said, I hope that you are continuing. And it was that kind of relationship that we had. I was fortunate that the first time I did enter this honourable chamber in 1994, he was still a member of the opposition benches and a member of this parliament. And indeed, I suppose it is easy to speak now, but many people may not know. I faced the first no confidence motion of that parliament. And the morning before the motion started, he called me outside and told me, just relax. This too shall pass. And that kind of comforting relationship was one that meant a lot to me.

Indeed, we were on different political sides, but there was for him the notion of a unity of purpose as parliamentarians. And to him I was simply the daughter of

two of his close friends, and that he had the responsibility of looking out for me in the broader sense of my welfare, in public life and political life. And I share these things, Mr. Speaker, at this point, because it is easy, especially after we have come out of an election, to get caught up in the extreme partisan behaviour that sometimes elections will invite us to. But at no stage should we ever forget that which unites us as Barbadians. And that was the example that Branford Taitt gave to us as young parliamentarians when we entered this chamber. That, yes, there is a physical divide, literally, and there is a political divide, but when we all leave this chamber, we go through the same door. And when we come back into the chamber, we come through the same door. And to that extent we need to be mature enough to know that which should separate us in respect of our views, but that which should unite us in respect of our common purpose as parliamentarians of this country.

I also, sir, recall that the one occasion that he did rebuke me - and the member for St. Peter might recall it, the member for St. Joseph is not here - was the last Public Accounts Committee meeting that he did come to attend, a Friday morning. We were reviewing the estimates of the Public Accounts Committee of parliament. And we finished early. We finished about 11:30, I believe, and he rebuked me in the strongest possible way for not ensuring that lunch was being provided. And I had to apologise profusely. And the truth is that he then took, I believe, the member for St. Peter and the member for St. Joseph. And they participated in their own pre-luncheon session. Exactly. But it allowed for a symmetry of purpose and action between the member for St. Peter and the former member for St. Michael West. But that is the nature of the man.

And, you know, Mr. Speaker, I believe that public life will have its ups and downs. But I once watched a movie that stood with me about 30 years ago, that at the end of each person's life we are not judged by any single action or statement, but people make a judgment on balance as to what kind of human being we were and what kind of life we led. And if we accept that to be the appropriate test, then I think all of us will be agreed on the fact that Branford Taitt was a giant of a Barbadian, that in a sense, he was ahead of his own time. And I think that perhaps may have been responsible for the difficulties that he might well have faced in the early seventies in respect of communication to the Barbadian public with his own leader, who was not of that generation and of that view. And it is difficult sometimes to appreciate the nuances in political life, because people, as I say, have very much a prism that is very partisan.

But even in respect - I know I laugh - because when I met the honourable member for St. John, as he then was, the former member for St. John, at the house of Sir

Branford Taitt, he was the campaign manager for Sir Branford in his challenge in the presidency of the party. And if you did not understand either man, you would take it out of context, because it was not a reflection of a statement against Errol Barrow equally, but it was a perspective that, as was stated that night, it was a generational difference and change. We have all learned that things cannot be as neatly compartmentalised as that. But the truth is that from those early days I was aware of the very intimate and close friendship between the two gentlemen who regrettably have now both gone to the great beyond.

In respect, sir, of sing-ins. I learned about the art of sing-ins from two people. The former member for the City of Bridgetown, Billy Miller - and she cannot sing, but she liked to go to them - and Branford, who could sing and who sang and who I met in the early days at many a sing-in and who I learned the art of knowing when to step back. And I remember one night at [Inaudible.] there was a sing-in, a place opposite St. Mary's Church. And Billy was holding a sing-in. So Branford came early, but then he left. And as we were getting ready to leave at about 11:00, along came Sandiford. And as I started to pick up my stuff to walk up, Billy called me back and said, where are you going? I said, I had to go. No, no. When your opponent arrives, you do not leave the ground. And we then had to remain there for another two and a half hours because the Lloyd had turned up. The singing was influenced by - as the later the night went on, the more the singing was influenced by the volume of spirits that were surrounding the activity.

But that strong association with the Anglican Church stood out in his life. And indeed his membership of Synod reflected his interest in not only things temporal, but things spiritual. And to that extent, he stands as a renaissance man in post-independence Barbados. He appreciated books, he appreciated music. Indeed, I believe he was probably closer to my uncle [Inaudible.] initially, although having started practising with my father, that bond became close, I think, again later on. But the appreciation of music was the other thing that stood out for me.

I am perhaps like them at an age and stage where the reality of those who are close and dear to us and their ability to just be here for a time becomes more and more present. And listening to Sharon deliver the eulogy on Saturday morning, I was distinctly touched by the love with which she spoke of her father and his relationship with them, not as a politician, but as a father and a family man. And it is something that means a lot to me. It is something that I believe is critical in even the strengthening of this society, that in many instances, that bond of family is what makes the ultimate difference to the level of security and self-esteem that a person has as an adult. And therefore, one is not surprised that all three of his children reflect that

level of confidence and capacity to take on any challenge that the world has to offer because of the grounding that they got from him and from his wife, who was their mother, who was very much present in the house at the time he would visit in his later years.

He was one of those men who was fortunate to be able to have that again in his current wife. Many will tell you that some people do not ever get it, but he got it twice. And for that, he deserves to feel as though he was blessed. And I believe that his children appreciate the fact that he had with him a companion to walk every step of the way in the last 10 to 15 years of his life. That would make the difference, because, as you all know, children go on and lead their own lives. And that level of loneliness can become a very difficult thing for human beings to bear, particularly in the older years of their life.

So, Mr. Speaker, my reflections and tribute are somewhat different from the others who will speak today. But I felt that it was important equally for me to place on record, one, the kind of mentoring relationship that Branford played for me and the kind of support that he gave to me in spite of the fact that we were on different political sides. And that may well do much in explaining why I keep making the point that I do not have an exclusively partisan approach. I accept the responsibility of political divides and political parties. But I believe that first and foremost, as Barbadians, we must always remember what unites us, and that we walk in that door together and we walk out the same door equally.

I would like that we find some appropriate way to reflect his excellence, oratorical excellence. He used to complain a lot about the quality of broadcasters on radio and the inability to pronounce words appropriately. I remember once a conversation that he had with my uncle, that the introduction of dialect on radio gave people an excuse not to speak the English language properly. And those are some of the things that will forever stand for me in my memory of him. And I think that if there is some way of us reflecting that, that commitment to excellence in the use of language and oratory ought to find some way, whether it is through the broadcasting or through this parliament itself, recognising and reflecting it. But he really stood apart from most others in terms of pure oratory, and I believe that we should find some way to do it to commemorate it.

Mr. Speaker, I would only want to say to his children, his grandson, his wider family, his wife, that our prayers remain with them. We are cognisant that after the funeral and when things settle down and when the attention is no longer on people, that the hurt is perhaps greatest and most acute, but that it is the memory and the love that attaches itself to those memories that will make all the difference. I know the special relationship that fathers can

have with daughters, and therefore, I know fully how Sharon and Monique must feel. But equally, I know that Branford is Branford, and he was correctly named in that respect in his own way. So that I would wish to associate with this resolution and to offer my own condolences on behalf of, one, the Barbados Labour Party, and on my own behalf, to the family of Sir Branford Mayhew Taitt. And to recognise that his was a contribution deserving of commendation. And that in a very real sense, he was a renaissance, post-independence Barbadian man that will stand tall in our history.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member for St. Michael West Central.

Mr. J. D. PAUL: Mr. Speaker, sorry. Thank you for the opportunity to speak last week. I said that she knew Branford differently. I just wanted to say that I also knew Branford in a different way. Actually, my first association, Branford began from, I would say, very early days, because a lot of people might not recognise it. But Branford was actually my representative. And he was actually the first person that I knew as a politician. And in those days, of course, I was not very interested in politics because I knew him really as a friend, as a family friend. We all came to know him was because of the fact there was a gentleman named Robert Allen, who I was closely associated with in the church Star Brigade. And, of course, if you know Sederance, you know Branford. And we first got into the habit because in church navigate in those days, you had to go by a certain house. In Prescod Kendi Drive. And at that particular house, you were introduced to a man who was always there - Branford Taitt. And really because of the nature of the man, basically, when you do see his family and everybody as friends. But the thing is, really that, at least in those days, you lived in a community, you became part of it. But generally, I think you sort of began to associate with the norms and the values of that particular community.

I say that because of the fact that I attribute in large part who I am today, because of that particular influence that I had as a young man then - Branford - because the truth is, I was not very interested or had very little interest in politics in those days. And really, I just viewed him as a person. And when you look back at those days and remembering who he was and the things that he said then, they were not really done from a purely political perspective. But I think that one of the messages I want to get over to young people, when we look at politicians today and we engage in that kind of value judgment of them, is that essentially they are really people first, politicians second. And what we need to recognise is that people generally have values. They have the same way everybody has a value. Politicians do have values. And I think that what I learned from those early days about Branford is that he was a man who had certain values, had certain beliefs,

and generally, in those early days, he formed your perspectives, and he helped, at least as a young man, to help you to form your opinions on certain things.

What I learned about him then, too, at that point in time, is that he was prepared to allow you to have your own opinion. And, of course, you had to be able to debate. Because I think that I want to at least say that my debating skills also were helped by him, because I was very argumentative in those days as a young man, again, not interested in politics, but he, at least, even on every Sunday that we passed there, we had a lot of arguments. But what I began to appreciate, he was one of those people who actually, in a community, took time out for you, and other people didn't have the time to spare you. And the thing is, he was the kind of person who would not run you, but he had time for you. And I said that was very important. But I want to say that you began to understand him for who he was.

I want to say that in terms of politics, he was not the person that actually introduced me to politics or influenced me to run in politics. But still, even as far as that is concerned, I think that he also helped me to, at least in terms of politics, understand who you are and what you also stood for. At the same time, very often a lot of us go into it, and we go into it sometimes for reasons which I believe sometimes is not the best of reasons, but we have our own individual reasons for doing it. One thing I can say for Branford Taitt, though, is that at least he helped me as a person to help understand why I'm going into it and basically to have my own opinion as to who I wanted to be. And I think that in that regard, he realised in those days that he did it or not, shaped the kind of person and the kind of politician who I was able to be. And I think in that regard, we owe him a depth of gratitude for the fact that despite who he was, he was at least able to impart the kind of principles, the kind of values to young people who wanted to get that kind of life in politics.

In that regard, I really want to say that, as his family is here now, I want to say that I really appreciate the fact that he took the time out to actually spend that kind of time with me in terms of shaping the person who I am today. I know a lot has been said, and I think Sharon, in the eulogy that was delivered on Saturday, I think spoke a lot to the type of person that he was and the kind of life that he lived. But he also had a lot of time for fun. I always remember going by Loma on Sundays, and I cannot beat him at Scrabble at all. At all. And the thing is about him is that he always had time to - took time out to relax with you and to have some fun. And one of the things is that he taught you that in the very simple things in life, there are also pleasures that you need to appreciate. And that was the type of man that he

was. He was not one that basically held himself aloof. I always remember, I just lived down at Prescod Kendi Drive at the time. And I like to go to the beach on mornings. And I always found it unusual that here was Branford every morning, walking Spring Garden Highway, or just going through the community. I always remember the story that they told us, really, when they had the fire. When he came into politics. I remember he was in Arkansas when they had a fire. And here was Branford at the time. My mother told me that particular story with the fire hose. I think he was trying to put out some house that was actually catching fire. People learned about him. But the point is, really what I was impressed with was the fact that he was there for people most of the time, even in terms of the excursions.

My mother actually was a very avid Democratic Party supporter. And you really couldn't speak anything else beside the Democratic Party in a house, because that was that village for her. But the point I'm trying to make generally is that even despite the fact that I don't think she knew him that well, but somehow she felt that she knew him in terms of how he related to people within communities. And that is something I think that a lot of us, in terms of talking about Branford Taitt, we seem sometimes to get a vision of the man being larger than life. He is larger than life in many ways. But I think also to his ability to sit down and relate to people and having time for you, despite who you are. Because that's the other thing. I mean, he would welcome anybody in his home, anybody. To the point, of course, I was one of those people that he actually welcomed, although he didn't know he was welcome there. But he said, it's really that he was the kind of person who had time for you, and he gave you a chance.

And I want to say to that, Ben, I really want to thank him for this, because at least thank his family for this. Ben, we were preparing, I remember the last time for the 2008 elections. I don't know if he was - he was very aware of the fact that he was preparing for the first time. And I really think that in respect of our success then, that in large measure, it had everything to do with him and for the many talks that he sent and gave us at that particular point of time, even in terms of how he related to constituents generally. Branford had a way of relating to people that made you feel that he at least was interested in who you were. He was interested in your problems, and it was not an interest that in itself was false in any way. In no way. After speaking to him, will you consider that he is just trying to put it on for you. He displayed a very genuine interest. And I really think that aspect of it is something that I really found magnificent.

The other point I really found magnificent about him is that his ability to relate to people, despite the social background - many of us today, I find that even a young politician today, that many people seem to want to dismiss

persons depending on where they view them in their social setting. Branford had the ability to go into whatever that social setting was and try to determine the wrongs and sometimes the rights of the matter and try to give advice. And in that respect, again, it demonstrated the tremendous patience of the individual as far as trying to understand situations and trying to address them. I'm not saying that he was a saint, because I know Branford very well in the community in which I live. As I said, he was my representative and I knew him very well. But I want to say that, in a sense, he brought that kind of pragmatism and approach in terms of dealing with people, which I think many of us can be able to benefit from in terms of if we want to continue in politics, or even apart from the fact that we want to continue in politics. But if we also want to serve people in terms of representing them out there in a community.

I would tell the honest truth. I was not the one to - and even his daughter would tell you, even when she was trying to encourage me in his latter days, when he wasn't doing as well, to go to him very often - contributing to encourage me, to tell me, go to him for advice in terms of particular things. But I felt that, in a sense, because of the role model that he was at that point in time, he had imparted as much as he can give to me in terms of trying to learn about politics. I tried to learn about people in life, but I really felt that way. But a friend of mine, who I met on Saturday at the funeral, he did say to me - when he was choosing, and not bragging or anything like that, but when he had a conversation with him - I don't think the friend reminded me, saying that, about who was likely to be winners in this particular 2030 elections. He said in a confidential way, that he expected I would have been one who would have gotten through. And he asked him why. And he said, because basically he's well satisfied. He felt I learned a lot in terms of what I needed to do.

But the reason why I'm saying that is that Branford - I didn't go at that point in time to see, as Sharon recommended I speak to him. But I really felt that, in a sense, he did do his best at that point in time to teach us the things that we needed to know. I think he was a great human being in many ways. We tried to emulate those persons in our lives that we grew up with, that we see that we think make a positive impact on us. And I want to say that for all of his faults and when you look at his successes, I think that future generations, when they judge him, will have to say that he's a man that came up in a society, appreciated his circumstances that he had around him, and tried to at least bring positive change to that society, even by the way he lived. And in that regard, I want to say to his family that, one, I appreciate very much the fact that Branford was around for me. I think that I appreciate the fact that even in terms of his community, I think that he made a very significant impact in terms of the contribution that he made to his community. And I think that he has left

a legacy which I believe that a lot of us would do good to follow.

Colleen came into his life afterwards. And I really want to say to you that I understand the circumstances under which you would have felt. Branford is one of the people who was there for me when my mother died. He basically was around at that point in time. And, you know, Branford was a regular feature of funerals in St. Michael Central. He took the time off for everyone. And I think really, in that regard, again, I want to say that he was there and say to you that I understand what you would have gone through generally, but also more so, his daughters and his son. I understand what we've gone through. And in that regard, I want to say, sir, that again, my deepest sympathies, condolences. And I'm sure, though, that the legacy that he would have left is something that I think, as Barbadians, we can all be proud of. And also for the fact that as a community person and as a community builder, I think Branford would have made his contribution in terms of trying to build the community of St. Michael Central. And with that, sir, I thank you very much.

Mr. SPEAKER: Now I remember, for St. Michael South Central.

Hon. R. L. SEALY: Mr. Speaker, as I rise to associate with this resolution, I have the interesting opportunity to, of course, thank the constituents of St. Michael South Central for returning me to this House to represent them for a third occasion. But I also can, in paying tribute to Sir Branford, thank him for his role in allowing me to serve at this level. But doing so not necessarily from purely a self-centred point of view. I can do so on behalf of all of those many people who have, in fact, enjoyed the benefit of Sir Branford's tutelage. We've heard of some of it in here already. And it is nothing, again, that has been restricted to this side of the House. Indeed, the phenomenal nursery, the young Democrats, that Sir Branford was so close to, has provided politicians for both sides of this floor, this House. And it is just, again, testimony to the fact that, as the Member for St. Michael North East said, it wasn't necessarily only to do with political affiliation.

I too, like the Member, would have to describe myself as being a family friend of the Taitts. And so I'm very familiar with Stanmore Crescent over the years and the many visits. And it wasn't only cutting across political divides, the fellowship and the debate. It was a very interesting experience, sometimes spending a couple of hours there. And Sir Branford really was a man for all seasons. I can associate with that assessment. Lawyers would sometimes come by to ask for advice on law. Historians would come by to argue points of history. Theologians would come by to discuss theology. It was really a firmament of so much activity and, again,

testimony to the depth of the man, how well read he was, and, of course, what a tremendous patriot he was as well. And he was determined to impart all that he had enjoyed from his nearly 50 years of service to this country - for that matter, to this colony - because it even started before Barbados turned independent.

And he did it not, again, in any condescending way. He was a natural teacher. I often hear of, in the days long ago, when people would have left whole standard and gone into teaching, and they were natural teachers. I think that Sir Branford was a natural teacher, not only in what he would have done in the university environment, here and abroad, at Pace University and so on, but he had the capacity to try to educate you in a way that allowed you to have your own space. I benefited tremendously from that kind of counsel. And many others have as well, including, as I say, persons who will not, of course, have an opportunity to posit a contribution on this floor. But I can think of several people from all walks of life who would have benefited from having been inculcated with good sound lessons from Sir Branford.

The other benefit, of course, or the reality, was that, as the young people say in local parlance, he kept it real. And it was not necessarily suggesting that you should try to attain some standard that was beyond what was achievable. Because he used to like to remind me of one of his favourite quotes from the New Testament, Paul's letter to the Romans, saying that we are all sinners and we have all fallen short. None of us are perfect, and therefore we are all doing God's work. And it is a constant quest to continue doing His work. But we are not perfect. And he was not perfect. None of us are perfect. However, we still try our best to ensure that we can remain committed to the things that are important. Of course, he used to like to use terms like remembering who is important in public life. And anytime you can't recognise that you are in public life to help the most vulnerable, it is time to get out. And that advice has lived with me.

People talk about the way Sir Branford used to, quote unquote, work a funeral, and sometimes suggest that this was some attempt to garnish political favour with a grieving family - far from the truth. It wasn't about working a funeral. And if you were around him, you understood that he genuinely believed that if you're going to represent people, the very time that you have to be there for them is when they are at their lowest ebb. And that is what that was about. And I again began to understand that. And it has in many ways shaped my very being and indeed so many others who have served in this Parliament and those who have served in many, many other capacities. I could think of secretaries and school teachers and lawyers and people all over Barbados who would have enjoyed the benefit of Sir Branford's counsel. And I can therefore pay my tribute in that context and do so again on behalf of so

many other people who would very much be in the same position that I was in.

I also believe, too, that in respect of his contribution, a regret that I do have - and it's something I had spoken to him about while he was alive - is the fact that he hasn't written, *per se*, or hasn't been published. I'm sure there are plenty of manuscripts, but too many of our political icons are graduating elsewhere, moving on, and we don't have something that they have left behind. I remember making this point when we were paying tribute to Sir Harold Bernard St. John, when he too had gone on, having actually served as Prime Minister briefly, and having had an excellent career as a lawyer and a politician. And we have nothing. And even on the regional level, the Right Excellent Errol Barrow and Forbes Burnham come to mind right away. We have to rely on speeches that they would have made while they were around. And I think that we should perhaps not allow that to continue. And maybe it's time for the state to intervene. When a certain period of time has elapsed in public life, I don't see why we couldn't provide the resources - we're not talking about a lot of money here - for research capacity and even assistance to help with pulling together, so that we don't allow more of our icons to go without leaving behind what their experiences are.

And I, again, could not think of anyone better than Sir Branford, who believed in teaching and imparting. And now it is that other generations will again have to rely on his speeches, and again, from the accounts of persons like myself, who would have interacted with Sir Branford. And it is unfortunate, and too many of our icons are going without having that information recorded. I pay tribute to Sir Lloyd. He has written two books, and I think that's a good thing. The former Member for St. James North, my good friend - he's written books, albeit novels, but that's still good. And I think that we need to see that become more popular. In other parts of the world, politicians retire, and next month they have their memoirs out, obviously collecting manuscripts along the way, and that's something that we need to look at doing. So I say that because I think that is really and truly something that needs to happen.

His distinguished career has been spoken of by previous speakers, but I do share the point that the zenith, for me, would have been his period at the Ministry of Health from 1987 to 1994. I say so because a number of very positive things occurred. But there was a very clear statement on just how Sir Branford believed with respect, as I say, to how people should be treated. He had an unrepentant view that the best health care on this island should be socialised. State health care should lead the way. And that was the thinking that no doubt informed the energy with which he went about with the DLP manifesto pledge of opening the St. Joseph's Hospital. It would have explained why he was very proud of the fact that open

heart surgery occurred for the first time during that period. Very proud of the fact that more nurses were trained, and nurses were recruited from abroad to come back to Barbados. And many of the very best nurses we have in our healthcare system today are people who were recruited during that period - Barbadians abroad encouraged to come back home.

We talk about the diaspora and using the diaspora as if it's something new. But yes, Sir Branford was ahead of his time in terms of trying to improve the quality of health care, not necessarily by getting more doctors or better doctors, but getting better nurses, because he always used to make the point: a hospital visit is a function of the nursing care you get, not the doctors. Nurses make hospitals, not doctors. And he went about understanding that those components need to be put in place. Of course, the eye care centre - unfortunately, that wasn't totally realised, but it was visionary. We have a serious problem of diabetes-related blindness and other eye conditions in Barbados, and we were able to attract, again, foreign investment to address that. We heard of the distinguished way he conducted himself in international forums, and no doubt that would have led to the Pan American Health Organization deciding to have their regional headquarters here in Barbados. So a lot of very good and positive things happened during that period. And for me, that is the high point, as I see it.

That's not to take away from what happened, of course, prior to that, in his earlier days, and for that matter, since I only got an opportunity to actually serve with him in a public capacity in that Public Accounts Committee - the first one in the last Parliament that the Member for St. Michael North East spoke about. And I, in fact, was also present at that meeting that you referred to. I, of course, left early before the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter. And later, Sir Branford decided to go and enrich two separate bodywork men in Barbados. I wasn't there for that part, but even that PAC meeting, I got to see firsthand the thoroughness of Sir Branford. Yes, a few years under him, but still as sharp and as committed as ever, paying attention to detail and always remaining focused on what is important. To his very last day, he would always say: it is the little people that matter and you have to be in politics for that reason. And anytime you fail to see that, then you need to leave politics. And I think that is really putting it in a nutshell.

And I, too, would like to see an appropriate memorial. I know we have the polyclinic in Black Rock named after Sir Branford, but there is something that we should do within the precincts of this compound. He was a parliamentarian's parliamentarian. He loved this place. And even after he left, he would go out of his way to try to impart as much as he could about maintaining good standards in this Parliament. I'd have to say that along with

the former Honourable Member for the City, Dame Billie - Dame Billie Miller - they are probably the two most entrenched parliamentarians you would want to meet. These are people that believed in this institution. And of course, I suppose that we need to recognise that, because this institution may have its chequered past - it is true there was a time when not a member looked like anyone in here - but it still has an incredible history and it's something that we have to preserve as it approaches its 375th anniversary. And we must do so, of course, in the memory of those parliamentarians like Sir Branford, who would greatly appreciate that.

So I, Mr. Speaker, just want to again associate with the statements of condolence to Lady Taitt, to Sharon and Monique, Branford Jr., of course, the grandson Marlene, and all the other relatives and everyone. I, of course, do so not only on my personal behalf, but most certainly on behalf of the constituents of St. Michael South Central as well. And I do sincerely hope that he does rest in peace and rise in glory. I'm obliged to you.

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

Hon. S. A. LASHLEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I too would like to join in this tribute to Sir Branford, as this House, the highest court, so to speak, in the land, pays justifiably so tribute to someone who not only made an indelible contribution in this House to public life, but, of course, would have touched the lives of so many Barbadians in his so many roles as he performed in public life.

As I rose to speak, certainly, I believe that if Sir Branford was alive, he probably would have smiled very widely, knowing that Stephen Lashley would have been rising to speak some words in relation to his church and the contribution that he made in public life at the onset. I want to say, Mr. Speaker, that I would like, and I believe the constituents of Christ Church West Central would first and foremost want me to, on their behalf, extend sincere sympathies to his relatives on a number of levels, because to a large extent, he was not only a representative for his constituency, but his stewardship in public life extended beyond the bounds of the people that he represented. And he showed by his care and dedication that his purpose in public life was more than just representing people from his own constituency.

For my part, Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed perhaps that unique opportunity of being able to have known Sir Branford in different capacities. While I was a junior reporter reporting in this House, from as early as 18 years old, 19 years old, I was able to witness the stellar performances of the great, such as the late Excellencies Walton, Barrow, Tom Adams, Bree, St. John, many of the

leaders of that day, and certainly among those would have been Sir Branford, who would have been in his place and taken certainly his role extremely seriously. And little did I know that those very early days, those impressionable years of being exposed as a journalist in this chamber, would have translated itself into perhaps being exposed to a school of instruction in the very intricate art of oratorical delivery, and being able to understand the nuances of parliamentary procedure from persons who would have been schooled in all of its intricacies way beyond the time that I entered this world.

And to that extent, it reminds me of the important role that we in this House have to play, and certainly the eyes and ears that look up to us as we represent the interests of the broad masses of Barbadians. I believe that my impressions of that time in viewing persons such as Sir Branford was one in which there was significant and careful attention to detail. And in his deliveries in this House, I remembered him as someone who not only fiercely defended the integrity of the Democratic Labour Party, but he was very serious about his role as a Minister of the Crown, and his delivery and preparation was always such that you could tell that he paid a lot of attention to detail, and he did not present a speech without the kind of research that warranted the extent to which that speech was being delivered.

In another capacity, of course, I would have spent more time with Sir Branford when I worked with the Government Information Service and the years that he spent in the Ministry of Health. I had the good fortune, to a large extent, of working along with Sir Branford as the Government Information Service officer assigned to the Ministry of Health during that time. And I was placed in a position of trust because I had to advise Sir Branford on public relations matters and matters pertaining to how the Ministry should be portrayed. And for me, that was a very significant event for me. Sir Branford, as you know, was, to my mind, a PR specialist. He was

able to master the art of public relations. He was very much a scholar in the area of public delivery. He understood all the nuances which would attend to how a ministry should be portrayed, how speeches should be delivered. And therefore, when I entered the Ministry of Health with the responsibility of advisors and one of such high stature, it really made for a very interesting experience. But coming off of that experience, and I'm sure that Sir Branford would perhaps want me to say that experience was enlightening for both of us. In that while I sought to enlighten him, he also sought to enlighten me. And we had some very interesting moments in time. Some of them, of course, were moments in which I not only challenged him, but he challenged me as well. But he was that kind of a person who encouraged challenge. He did not simply work with you, but he encouraged and welcomed

your challenge in him in of course, a respectable and decent manner. And the nature of being a public relations advisor, as you know, requires you to challenge the person or the entity that you're required to advise. But I must say in all of this there was a mutual understanding of respect and therefore, out of that there was for me an education, a kind of experience that made me much more knowledgeable about the affairs of public administration.

I believe that if we were just to locate Sir Branford's greatness or his achievements only within the realm of his accomplishments in the Ministry of Health, we would have not provided to the historians of Barbados the full extent of Sir Branford's contribution. And I say that within the context that his overall contribution and his interest transcended the ministries to which he was assigned. I was able to work with him predominantly in the Ministry of Health, but he would have also gone on to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the same time that I was going on to law school. But his interest was very starkly in the area of public administration in Barbados and what he sought to do within the Ministry of Health in particular and also in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to place in its proper context his own stamp of how public administration in Barbados ought to be conducted.

And I remembered very clearly the kind of standards that he would have set himself and the kind of examples that he would have placed before those that he worked with in the public service, so that anyone who worked within the ministries that he would have been responsible for had to operate at a level which he thought should have been emulated within the context of the public administration of Barbados. He would have been very unapologetic in relation to where Barbados had to go. And in relation to the kind of contribution that persons in public life ought to make. I recall that during the very trying times when we were faced with those very challenging economic times leading up to, I believe, 1999, the kind of leadership that he would have extended within the Ministry of Health, I believe, at the time, and the kind of focus that he placed in relation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

It is true that Sir Branford accorded much more importance to the role of nursing and the role of nurses within the context of the delivery of health care in Barbados, because he believed that, notwithstanding the contribution and the importance of the doctors and other clinical staff, that without well trained and certainly well positioned nursing, that you could not take the delivery of nursing care, of health care to the standard that we are now able to enjoy today. And those years were relatively difficult years because we had, in a sense, to manage the affairs of government in rather stringent economic times. But I would say that the transformation that we have seen in relation to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and certainly the vision for the St. Joseph Hospital are squarely to be

placed at the feet of Sir Branford in terms of his determination.

I was able to witness not only his performances publicly, but I was able to witness his performance within the Ministry of Health when he would have had to chair the various management committees of his most senior officers. And I was able to experience different characteristics of Sir Branford, the serious Sir Branford, of course, who was very focused on establishing systems. He was one of those ministers who set very clear targets and objectives and insisted on the attainment of those objectives, because he felt that you could not relinquish the kind of standards to mediocrity. And without that kind of drive, he felt that, of course, you will not be able to get the kind of results. But there was a side of Branford that I believe that all of us know, because he was also very witty and he never conducted a meeting without injecting into that meeting a great sense of humour and laughter. And that, to a large extent, was able to not only calm some nerves that he may have rattled, but in a sense, his wit and his ability to laugh was able to disarm many of his adversaries.

He was a fierce defender of the philosophy of the Democratic Labour Party, and I remember and recall his performances and contributions in this place in which he saw himself as perhaps being one of those forefront defenders and persons who would take the fight to the Barbados Labour Party. And he did it justifiably so, with the kind of candour and effectiveness that one would have expected of someone who stood on the front benches of the government. And his example was such that once you stood on the front benches of government that you had a responsibility to speak and to defend the policy agenda of the government and that your purpose in parliament was not simply to sit and look good or to warm the proverbial seat.

That to a large extent came out while he was the President of the Senate. And in my conversations with him, and I certainly know that in the other place, many of the senators who would have sat at his feet, so to speak, would have known that he too would have made some observations about what he wanted to see in the Senate. He often would have surrendered his position in the chair as the President. And if he could take to his feet and speak in a manner that he thought honourable senators in that place ought to have spoken. And he was not one of those persons who did not speak to his philosophy. And I believe that one of the things that we will remember for many years is that you knew quite clearly what was the philosophy of Branford. He was one of those black leaders in Barbados who took a position based on the fact that he saw himself as a fighter on behalf of those who were less fortunate and those who needed a voice. And if there was an example or something that we ought to hold on to as persons who are

now called to take the baton in this great place, is that essentially must become our focus. It must become endemic in terms of why we are here as persons in public life.

I want to say too, that the suggestion, and I'm sure that we will speak to and give our own views as to how we could perhaps remember forever the contribution of Sir Branford. In what way we should set up some kind of a symbolic remembrance of Sir Branford. And the Honourable Minister of Tourism did speak to some of it because Sir Branford perhaps will be well remembered for his attention to detail. I remember he would have spoken to me sometime recently in relation to the use of the word government. He always said that to remind me to tell those guys that it is not government, it is the government. But he spent a lot of time dealing with the spoken word and how it ought to be delivered.

And within the context of the national youth policy, we, as a policy decision, have taken the decision to establish a national youth parliament in Barbados. And I believe that one of the lasting and profound tributes perhaps to Sir Branford would be the role that the National Youth Parliament has to play in relation to the enlightenment of young people in all the forms of public discourse and in the true traditions of parliament. He was very focused on tradition and how things ought to be done. And I believe that must be one of the ways in which the memory of Branford ought to be immortalised.

The other thing, of course, that I share, and I agree that we need to also, through that forum, through the National Youth Parliament or through the National Youth Forum, invite our young people to work with our political stalwarts, those who would have journeyed through this chamber, those who remain, those who are not here, but to work with them in the compilation of their memoirs. Because I believe that we have to pay more attention to the transfer of political knowledge to our young people. The understanding of our political institutions must be one of the concerns of this chamber. And that can very well be a project which certainly my ministry would be very keen in pursuing, where our stars, our icons, those who would have spent many years in public life, can be assisted by young people in the preparation of their memoirs. And I believe that experience can benefit both those who would have been in public life and certainly those young people who we are trying to encourage.

So for me, Mr. Speaker, the experience of working with Sir Branford and of experiencing him as a public figure has been one where it has certainly been a rewarding experience. His contribution to public life in Barbados and his contribution to public life in other countries will not be forgotten. His contribution at the level of the World Health Organization and PAHO and the leadership that he brought

to those organisations will be remembered at an international level. And so too with his contribution within the context of our local political landscape, I believe he would have served for three terms as the President of the Democratic Labour Party, and he also served in the capacity of General Secretary of the party as well. And it was indeed phenomenal, because within the context of the rigours of functioning as a Minister of the Crown, to have the kind of interest and certainly time and determination to function at the party level as one of the great maestros of political strategy, certainly is an example that ought to be held up for emulation.

I want in winding up, Mr. Speaker, to say that the passing of Sir Branford ought to be seen within the context of his great contribution to public life in Barbados, and that contribution was one based on sacrifice for the betterment of this country as a whole. It is one of those contributions that will be forever written in the annals of history of Barbados and one which I believe his family can take comfort in, that their father, their husband, their uncle, their grandfather, Sir Branford would have sacrificed a lifetime of public service for the betterment of the development of Barbados. That is perhaps the greatest tribute that anyone can pay to the contribution of anyone in public life. It is the kind of contribution that makes us proud as black Barbadians who are now called to take on the mantle of political leadership not too far removed from that time when we were in another place and our ancestors journeyed in a system of chattel slavery. And it should be a solemn reminder to us that that journey had not come to an end.

The contribution of Sir Branford and others before him remind us that we have now to take that mantle on and hold the baton of great political national contribution. And that our journey will not be fulfilled unless we take forward that very positive action. And that in our contributions we seek to not deflate the high standard that he would have set, but that our young people remember that we listened to the words and example of Sir Branford and that we charted a path in which we can ourselves be justly proud when our time comes to move on as he has had to move on.

I would like on my own personal behalf and certainly on behalf of my family, to extend to his widow and his children, all of whom I am so familiar with, to extend to all of them my greatest condolences and regret. But that in all of this the smile that must remain on our face must be in relation to the stalwart and the outstanding contribution which Sir Branford would have made and the fact that with him we have a Barbados that is largely better off in terms of the contribution that he has made to all of us. With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, I wish again to extend my condolences and to record for the annals of parliamentary record the remembrance that the contribution that Sir Branford made was one which will forever stand as

one of the greatest contributions in the history of parliamentary practice in Barbados. I'm obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the Honourable Member for St. James Central.

Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. Speaker, I would wish to register a few words of condolence and commemoration to one who I viewed as both a friend and a mentor. And perhaps I should begin by saying, Mr. Speaker, that I am thankful to the very gentle folk of the constituency of St. James Central for making it possible for me to return to this august place so that I may be able to participate in these deliberations. I say return, sir, because the word resurrected was used with respect to another honourable member on this side this morning. And I would want to urge those who may have been of a similar mindset, with respect to myself, that the rumours of my political demise were greatly exaggerated.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps I should say to you at the outset that I feel constrained to make a confession to you about a matter about which you may not be aware. And in all good conscience, I should begin on that note, sir. I was in my youth and I still am very attracted to many of the philosophical positions taken by the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow and, Mr. Speaker, sir, that attraction led me to the youthful indiscretion of associating myself very closely with the Democratic Labour Party. It would have been, sir - and you must understand, sir, that I come from a household and a family which is robust in its support of the Barbados Labour Party - and it would have been something almost unforgivable, sir. It would have been viewed as a sin of commission which is almost unforgivable, had it not been for the fact that in the Democratic Labour Party there was a Branford Taitt. He was viewed as a very close friend of my father and mother, highly regarded, and I think it made that which would otherwise have been entirely unpalatable - all the more, sir - we cannot see strangers in the public gallery, but rumour has it that Lady Colleen Taitt is present and she could attest to the fact, sir, that sense of comfort that a parent would feel when confronted with what otherwise might be described as a wayward child was reduced by the mere fact that Sir Branford was the person with whom I found mentorship.

And so it is in that sense that I really would want to speak about him, because he was, as I say, a friend and a mentor, sir. You know, the Book of Romans tells us that if we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord. So whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. And in the context of Sir Branford's Christian devotion, sir, in the context of his dedication to nation building, in the context of his dedication, sir, to the improvement of the common good of all of us in Barbados, in the context, Mr. Speaker, sir, of his dedication to public

service - and I think his life was a life devoted virtually in its entirety - we heard the honourable Prime Minister make the point that at the very fragile age of 26 and 27, he began a life of public service to this country. And I certainly was present in the Senate, sir, when he ended his public service aspect of his life. And that was a period of time that would have encapsulated perhaps close to 35 years of public service.

It is perhaps, however, sir, in another aspect of the scriptures that we find humanity's purpose and usefulness in this very fragile crucible that we call life. And the Book of Job reminds us that we bring nothing into the world and we take nothing out of it. And part of that which we all are going to have to confront, and certainly that which Sir Branford now confronts, is the measure of what is a man. It has nothing to do, sir, with the material wealth and possessions we might amass while we are here. But more so, sir, it speaks to the way and the extent to which we touch the lives of those around us in society. And Sir Branford Taitt - the member of Parliament, the minister - transformed lives.

I speak of him as a mentor. I remember well when I was offered the position in the cabinet of the Right Honourable Gentleman from St. Peter. And shortly after it was announced, I think the very first call that I got was from Sir Branford. And he said to me, young man, I want to make something very clear to you that you must never forget - when once you come to the water's edge, the political divide ends and you are dealing only with Barbadians. And it is a truism, sir, I have encountered that reality throughout the entire period of time that I spent in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. The fact of the matter is that whether you visited New York or England, Miami, anywhere where there was part of the Barbadian diaspora, you found persons who were eager and anxious to tell you about their interaction with the late Sir Branford and the way in which, irrespective of their political colour or complexion or creed, he treated them first and foremost as part of a Barbadian family living, albeit in the diaspora.

The mentor, sir, in Sir Branford, came out in many, many ways. And again, sir, you must please forgive me if I make another confession. I often, in my youth, found the companionship of the honourable member for St. Michael South Central, the member for St. Michael North West who is not now here, and even more egregiously, sir, the member for St. James South. And I think it is true to say that in all of the interaction, sir, in all of the interaction, Mr. Speaker, it became very clear that Sir Branford viewed young people as an opportunity - or he saw in young people, in all of us, an opportunity to instil new things and to instil ideas. I sat and I listened, sir. I remember the member for St. Michael South Central making the point about his attention to detail. I remember Sir Branford

taking us under his charge on a Saturday morning and walking us through what he considered to be fundamentals of a passion that he held for public service, and he did his best to transport and transmit that passion into the hearts and minds of all of us.

He felt strongly, sir, that there was a need to follow through as a young politician on every legitimate concern which was made to you by a potential constituent or constituent at the time. He felt, sir, that there was a necessity for us to develop a deep familiarity with all of the issues in the constituency. And of course, that you had to be in a position to robustly advocate on behalf of those who are affected by whatever those issues were. And I think, sir, that perhaps most importantly of all, he used to emphasise the importance of building bonds at a personal level. And it is true, Mr. Speaker - I suspect it was also your experience - that Sir Branford enjoyed his Saturday morning exercise, which could often begin around 8.30 and run until around lunchtime, where he tried to imbue all who were interested in a career or a future in politics with a sense of purpose and direction as to what we were about.

Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I am one of those younger members of the chamber who feel that there is much to be found in reading Hansard, and a regular contributor to parliamentary debate, obviously, was Sir Branford Taitt. And Hansard is enriched by his contributions for two reasons. One, because of the legal orientation that he possessed, but also, sir, because I really enjoy the spirited and intellectual nature of the particular debate I am going to refer to. I have often read and reread that debate which took place around the Administrative Justice Act in Barbados. And the contributions, sir, in that debate were exceptionally important in my judgement, because they showed not just Sir Branford but on both sides of this chamber, a depth of intellect, an ability to rise above the cut and thrust of parties and politics and the divide of parties and politics, and to engage in a serious way in nation building on issues - or on an issue which was critical to Barbados' development. And that, sir, is the development, of course, of administrative justice in this country. And some of the fundamentals which now, unfortunately, we take for granted - such as the right of people to access natural justice and the duty not to be arbitrary in decision making and the duty to give reasons for things that you have done when you have been empowered to make a decision - those are things, sir, that were debated thoroughly and extensively in this chamber. And it was one of those debates - and there are others - but it is one of those debates where the rich intellect

of the chamber was shown. And as I say, sir, I have often enjoyed reading Hansard for that purpose.

I also wish to say, sir, very briefly, that in Sir Branford, there was a willingness when he was President of

the Senate to make the other side feel exceptionally comfortable and at ease. He and I exchanged robust discussion and disagreement in the chair, but it was also a very principled affair. And when it was all over, there was never any hard feelings. He would be the first to extend a hand, to invite one downstairs to have a drink, and we often would sit and talk for hours thereafter. And when I felt, sir, quite frankly, as I often did, that my mentor had taken a turn on me and had perhaps been a little unfair to me, he would remind me that that is what politics is about. And, young man, keep your head held high. There will always be a tomorrow. And you left the chamber, sir, almost reinvigorated because of that mentorship aspect. There was never bitterness, I thought, in my interaction with him politically.

And I know that he has seen, as has been said, sir - I think the phrase used by the Prime Minister - he has seen golden sunshine, blue skies, and there are times when it was not that way. But, sir, through it all, I believe that Sir Branford was the consummate political personality, the consummate political figure. Sir, I used to tease him. I thought and I said to him several times that his happiest moment would be if he could depart this earth right here in this chamber. And that was not to pass. But, sir, the reality is that I think he enjoyed some of his happiest times in this place and in the other place as well.

I would want, sir, in the closing stages of this short tribute, to extend condolences to his widow, Lady Colleen, to his daughters, Sharon and Monique, to my friend Branford Jr., his son. I would wish to say to the rest of his extended family that I offer them condolences as well, sir. And in closing, sir, I ask that we reflect on him and ask the Saviour above that light perpetual be allowed to shine upon him, and that his soul, together with the souls of all the other dearly departed, rest in peace. I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: The honourable member for St. Michael North West.

Hon. C. P. SINCKLER: Yes, Mr. Speaker, sir, allow me the opportunity to add my voice to the tributes. And I would do so very briefly to our fallen comrade who has been called to higher service. And as you've heard in the addresses which have been made here this afternoon, in tribute to his contribution, not just as a politician in the sense of the word, as we are called, sometimes quite derogatorily, by members of the public, but as a statesman and a citizen generally of Barbados, that of Sir Branford Taitt. Of course, I myself would have benefited from Branford's counsel and wise counsel and tutelage, as many members in here could attest, including the former member who just spoke, our member for St. James Central, and our member for St. James South and St. Michael South Central. And others who would have sat at Sir Branford's feet being properly tutored in the art and skills of public oratory and

political organisation and, of course, in the proper use of the English language.

And these were all fun times for us because he often imparted his knowledge not with disdain or condescension, but with a love and caring for all of us as young political aspirants in the process. And when we thought about who it is that we were being tutored by, being counselled and chaperoned through the process, it stood to us that we were being handled by one of the best political minds to have traversed the landscape of Barbados politically.

It has not been said, I presume, often enough, or it has been said often enough outside of this Parliament, perhaps not as much today. But I think it would be remiss if I didn't make the point that Branford, in my view, is the single politician that we can point to as responsible for the modernisation of political practice in Barbados. In relation, for example, to the introduction of constituency offices, doing clinics, organising files - as you would have heard from his daughter in her beautiful eulogy on Saturday - about how to organise politics. And it was not until that time, when Branford would have introduced these elements to political practice, that it became a consistent feature on the political landscape in Barbados. And we all came along and were tutored either by him directly or copied the practice by hearing it from other persons who would have benefited from his level of organisation, the modern-day canvassing techniques of working the electorate and going through it with a fine-tooth comb. This is Branford. And I mean, it has to be put in the record that that is his seminal contribution to political practice.

I mean, as actual politicians in constituencies, working with people, meeting people, canvassing their houses, understanding how to judge a person - not so much by what they say, but by what they do not say - how to judge looks, whether they look you in the eye. I mean, these are things that people take for granted. Branford imparted those things on us. Body language, how you do a canvas, how you can detect whether a person really supports you or not, being on the lookout for Labour Party supporters, as he would say in our time, who would encourage you to come in and spend the afternoon having tea and talking about everything political, from local to international, just to detain you so you can't get on with your canvas.

And he was always very punctilious when it comes to these things, because he felt that this was not something that should be taken lightly, that politics was an important part of human endeavour, that it meant too much to the development of not only the country itself, but individuals in their own personal life, that it should not be taken flippantly. And that if you are going to get into the practice of politics, then you really ought to equip yourselves with the tools necessary. And I feel it is incumbent on us to put

that in the record of the House that he is one of the persons, if not the leading person, in relation to the transformation of what we could then call the traditional style of politics into a more modern-day practice. And that is one of his contributions.

And the other one, of course, would have been at the level of a minister. And if there is one thing you can say about Branford, he had a healthy respect for the process of government and governance. And he understood how government functioned and was supposed to function, the roles of ministers, the role of the Permanent Secretary and other officers, and how those lines should collude rather than collide in the administration of public affairs. And it is for this reason in particular that I think the unfortunate situation of the St. Joseph Hospital inquiry, in many ways, brought out - however, in the testimony given in that inquiry - Branford's seminal understanding of government and what government was supposed to do to help people and to transform societies, and the roles which the actors in that process played.

I think it is, tragically in some sense, a tribute to his understanding of how government is supposed to function and how it actually functioned when he administered as a minister, that at the end of the day, after being withheld for many years from public view, that report was finally released by the Democratic Labour Party government on the reduction of office, only to, of course, discover what we already knew - that, in fact, Branford Taitt had not done anything awry, nothing had gone awry under his leadership of the Ministry of Health, that he, in fact, respected all of the organs of government, and that the unfortunate situation that hung over the latter part of his career ought not to have happened. And I hope - in fact, I expect - that history and historians would be kind to his memory and to his work in making it very, very clear that he was in fact exonerated by that very inquiry and the findings of that inquiry for anything that people may have considered, without empirical evidence, to have been something which ought not to have been done.

And we knew that in the Democratic Labour Party because we knew that if there was one body in the DLP that understood government and how it worked, it was Branford, and therefore things that people were saying we knew could not be true, because he was a stickler for process, he was a stickler for procedure and how files should be dealt with, how instructions should be given, what is the role of the minister and the Permanent Secretary and so forth and so on. So we knew. However, unfortunately, we had to wait many, many years for that exoneration to come. But these are the ways of politics, unfortunately, and these things happen.

But today, as we celebrate really his contribution and memorialise his work, we are happy to note that he can

stand tall among the pantheon of political stalwarts and contributors to the development of Barbadian society. Of course, I mean, it doesn't bear mention, but I can say nonetheless that he is considered - with all due respect to the Honourable Member for St. James himself - to have been the best Minister of Health Barbados has ever had, and that he too really put the Ministry of Health on the course for modernisation and in particular the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In fact, the things that Branford did in the Ministry when he was Minister of Health are just absolutely phenomenal. He really moved the practice of public health administration to an entirely different level and received, I think quite fittingly, much public acclaim from all of the practitioners in all stations of public health administration and public health delivery.

Whether doctors, nurses, administrators - you name it - they will tell you that the transformative impact of Branford Taitt on public health administration in Barbados is something to write home about. And I think that is very, very instructive because it clearly showed how a very powerful intellect - which could otherwise, as we have seen in many instances in public administration at the political level in Barbados, go on a tangent of its own, on a frolic of its own, and do things which may not necessarily be things to applaud - that he took a powerful intellect, a clear and clinical understanding of the needs of the average citizen in relation to public health, and applied those in such a studious way in the administration of the Ministry of Health as political leader of the Ministry, that he in fact transformed modern public health delivery in Barbados. And today all Ministers of Health, whether it is the member for St. James South, the new Minister of Health, or the one previously in the other administration, have all built on the platform laid by Branford in public health administration in Barbados.

Of course, you know, politics is a fairly unforgiving thing between political parties, sometimes perhaps a lot more than it really ought to be in circumstances. I heard the member for St. Michael South Central make reference to at least one of them and the Lions Eye Care Centre. And again, it was to the not so welcome intervention in that case, in terms of political administration, that care centre which Sir Branford would have used much of his esteem as a leader in politics and government to convince the Lions establishment as an institution internationally to invest in that eye care centre and have it built and constructed - not to have seen it opened immediately. I believe we had doctors, ophthalmologists from the University of Indiana, whom Branford had met with and spoken to, who were ready to come down and not only practise, but more importantly, impart their skills to local practitioners here, and didn't get the opportunity to do so because the incoming government didn't see it as an immediate priority. And the eye care centre was there lying fallow for

an unfortunate period of time before it was taken up and done.

Similar to the hospital, it was always felt - and it is still believed - that we have these things because it is in tribute to Branford's tremendous vision. The eye care centre, the St. Joseph Hospital, as a critical part of the primary health care delivery system in the country for the north - people still talk about the fact that we need to have that type of institution in the north. He contributed overwhelmingly to the bringing of St. Joseph on stream. And again, unfortunately, his vision for a complete and holistic public health system addressing the needs of Barbados in different parts of the country did not fully materialise. But these are the ways of politics. We make no argument today over that particular point, but I am saying it so that, for the record, it is stated that the late Sir Branford in fact coalesced a very strong vision for where public health should go in Barbados.

And then, of course, and I think I should make the point as well, because Branford was one of the first, if not the first, Barbadian - if my memory serves me correctly - to have been elected as the head, the Chair of the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, and led tremendously in that inter-regional body and made a tremendous contribution there as well. So we know of that.

But then finally, Mr. Speaker, sir, in terms of his transformative impact, it would have been at the level of the ordinary citizen, the average man or woman in the street with whom he came into contact, whether through his work as a politician, whether through his work in the church as a member of the Anglican Synod representing his beloved St. Leonard's Church, whether it was just as an individual living among ordinary people and with ordinary people in the community, being able to transcend the narrow confines of his middle-class origin, his middle-class status, to mix with anybody, whether high or low, and to remain humble and true and be considerate of the plight facing citizens wherever they may be.

There can be no better contribution or greater contribution than that a person felt they could pick up the phone at any time - any time of the day, morning, noon or night - and call Branford to have a problem addressed and have it genuinely reflected upon and acted on in satisfaction of their particular desire. That, I think, is the greatest legacy that he would have left. And as myself, a Black Rockian, as you would say - yes, as a Black Rockian - Branford stands tall as a stalwart of Black Rock, as a general, as a leader, as a son of the Black Rock soil who rose from humble beginnings, who achieved much but did not leave behind those on whose shoulders he was hoisted upon to great office in Barbados.

And I think that as we pay our tributes, as we remember this great Barbadian citizen, we must say a special thanks to his family for the sacrifice which they would have made in giving him to Barbadians to be used and perhaps sometimes, as well, abused in the service of his country. And that is a great sacrifice. And we want to thank, from the bottom of our hearts - those of us from the Democratic Labour Party, but I am sure for the entire House and the country as well - to thank them for their selflessness in giving this wonderful citizen to the people of Barbados. He has been a tribute to his family and to his country. And long may his memory and work live on in the annals of Barbadian political history and in the human endeavour of the country. Mr. Speaker, sir, with those few words, I am obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: For St. John. Thank you, Mr. [Inaudible.]

Mrs. M-J. M. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, for finally permitting me to speak. I rise to also pay tribute to the late Branford Mayhew Taitt. And I do so as a lone female sitting on this side. I suppose for that matter, anything that I speak on, I would be speaking as a lone female sitting on this side. And I will bring a gender perspective that none of my colleagues may bring. Mr. Speaker, we can say that death often brings out the good in people because it is in tribute such as these that much good is said about a person. The Branford that I got to know had much good in him. And during his lifetime, I can say that there were many, many accomplishments that we ought to acknowledge today.

I want to suggest that Branford should be remembered for the footprints that he left in the sand, as these footprints left a trail that cannot be ignored. I have a recollection of this gentleman speaking at my wedding on behalf of the groom, during which he spoke suitably, glowingly of the said groom. And he successfully convinced all those who might have been a little concerned about the fact that I was leaving my home country and going to live somewhere else. And he convinced everyone that I was warmly welcomed into the bosom of the Democratic Labour Party and welcomed to Barbados and that I would be safe, sound and well taken care of.

And as a young lady travelling to Barbados and settling into married life away from my homeland, I also engaged Branford as part of my educational and socialisation process here in Barbados. And you somehow, as a female, could not escape his advice and his support in life. And that is what I think is most important to me about the man that I met. Branford was about imparting knowledge, which sometimes could be construed as his taking over. I don't think it was that he was taking over. It was just that he had an insatiable appetite for quality. I can't say that Mr. Branford, that I knew, was not interested

in departing from that desire to see quality at all times. I think it was that he believed in standards. There were standards that he expected, that he had hoped to achieve and that he expected of others. Some of us may see that as being old school, but I think that we must admit that standards are extremely important and that if we are going to grow as a people and be able to resolve our issues in society, we must maintain certain standards.

I want to reflect for a short while on his passion for family. He exuded a love and a loyalty that is essential in the sort of relationship required for enabling children to grow and to develop confidence in themselves. And clearly, he was a full-time father whose children believed in him and who today exhibit no lack of confidence whatsoever. And it wasn't only a passion for family that I saw in him. There was a passion for whatever he did - passion for politics, passion for public speaking, passion for party, passion for people. And that, for me, is what really stood out about this man, the passion that he had for everything that he did. And I see that as a message to all of us or to other people.

So I wish to end my very short address by extending my condolences and that of my daughters to Colleen, Monique, Sharon, Branford, and to the entire family of this great parliamentarian. May you rest in peace. I am obliged.

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

SUSPENSION

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended for 20 minutes until 20 minutes past five.

The question that the House be suspended until 5.20 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, Honourable Member, this sitting of this august chamber is resumed. Yes, Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, sir. I wish at the outset of my tribute, sir, to indicate that the name Branford Taitt is a household name in this country. Almost every household would have made mention of Sir Branford Taitt, certainly when he was a distinguished member of Parliament and indeed, after he became the President of the other place. Sir, I got to know Sir Branford exactly 40 years ago in the then constituency which he represented. He always used some very flowery language, sir. And, of

course, his persuasive skills to change a diehard BLP like me to become a DLP. Of course, you recognise he was terribly unsuccessful in being able to achieve that.

But I met Sir Branford, sir, at the house of an in-law in Alkins in the early 1970s. I admired him greatly and, of course, jealously so because of his sharp intellect, his oratorical skills and his endearing personality which positively influenced the lives of thousands of Barbadians, both old and young. We became great friends even though we were on different sides of the political fence. We often agreed to disagree on political matters because being a St. Thomas person and the Labour Party died hard, especially in the time of the great Tom Adams, the great late Tom Adams. We would have a lot of discussions and I, being a little political neophyte of the country, would not have been able to articulate so much about the whole political arena. But indeed, I was never ever stumped by the great man, the late Sir Branford Taitt. So we always agreed to disagree, but we always left with good relationships in place all the time because of the respect that we had for each other - me then being a young woman, only 110 pounds, and he being a full man whom I always loved and respected as an uncle or even a father.

I remember distinctly the reprimand he gave to one of the members on the Democratic Labour Party once downstairs when I attended this Honourable Chamber, sir, to listen to some debates. And I know that the insulting comments that were made towards me were untrue. But, of course, like the true leader that Sir Branford was, he made sure that the person gave an apology because it was so wrong to be doing an action like that without any evidence or indeed, any care or respect at that particular time.

We were such good friends, Mr. Speaker, sir, that people even added silly rumours about our relationship which was built on politics and, of course, mutual respect and understanding for each other. So close that our families became, sir, that he was adamant at the birth of my son in 1975 that he must be his godfather. Of course, I had already had two godfathers from the Holiness Church because the priest at that time was always very particular that the person must be from the area and not a stranger. But when he heard the name Branford Taitt, he obviously succumbed to the request and I obliged, sir, to Branford. And he was one of the three godfathers of my only son and he attended the christening and actually played an integral part and spent time socialising with my family and his father's family after that event. And of course that made my family and his family - his meaning my son's father's family - extremely happy because here we were, two sets of families on the different political sides of the fence, but socialising together in a real decent and amicable way.

Now, I met him as a result of being in Alkins, as I said earlier, at the Cumberbatch families. And of course the

Cumberbatches at that time were really strong supporters of the Barbados Labour Party with the late Norman Weekes. And when Branford Taitt came into the political arena, he was so persuasive and his word seemed to be his bond. And eventually it proved that his word was his bond where he had made certain, not promises, but certain arrangements with his family and he followed through with the plan he had and that full family joined the Democratic Labour Party and remained faithful to Sir Branford till his death. He was not successful, sir, in pulling me into that net. I am not sorry either. I'm very proud to remain a strong member. Net it would never be yet, sir. Net I still remain very happy and satisfied being a member of the Barbados Labour Party.

Sir Branford was a mentor and a decent man who never, in his conversation, sir, raised negative issues like some politicians do now. As a matter of fact, never ever have I in my entire life of dealing with politicians on either side of the fence have ever been approached by any of them to be able to say, have you got a boyfriend? Would you like to have a relationship? Never ever. Perhaps it is something to do with me. But I know, Mr. Speaker, sir, that most of the politicians someday and most this time have absolutely no control around young women. And therefore they persuade them. They do all kinds of strange little things that end up being negative in the eyes of the public. So Branford was never like that, at least where I was concerned, because we always respected each other, as I said earlier, like uncle and niece and so on and so forth. He was always a decent and well respected man. His behaviour, sir, is exemplary and is worth emulation by thousands of others.

Mr. Speaker, I knew that he was a family man. So he often spoke of his first wife and his children. And of course, I happened to know Lady Colleen otherwise. And I really felt proud to have recognised that a man who had such a heavy portfolio and so many activities within his work as well as in his community life, that he still placed family first. For me, that is another example that many individuals in the political arena must make sure they pay close attention to, where one is able to divide up the time for dealing with constituents or dealing with the responsibilities assigned to them in the political or professional arena, and make sure that it is balanced out with time spent with family, to make sure that you build that bond and that children still do their homework, to take them out to treats. I had the distinguished pleasure of listening to the presentation of the tribute by his daughter on Saturday. And I felt really very proud to see that is one politician who has held his family together, who made sure that he was able to juggle the two, ensuring that none was left out. And I think that is really very critical for all of us to be able to practise as we go on in our political lives.

And now, referring to the very young individuals on both sides of this distinguished chamber, I learned from him about two years ago, sir, of some efforts that were made from the other side to speak ill of me during the by-election in St. Thomas. Only about two years ago. We had a good long chat and I learnt about persons who said, 'Branford, you have to go to St. Thomas and curse that girl, Cynthia Forde, real bad.' I tell her about who was what and who did what and so on and so forth. And he said to me, 'I went to St. Thomas because I would not have heard all the speeches.' He said, 'Cynthia, I went to St. Thomas. I spoke on the platform of my distinguished party, but I spoke about challenges with the Barbados Labour Party and where they went wrong and crossover runs and different things, but I never touched you and they know that I never will.' As a matter of fact, he said, 'When I returned, guys pilloried me and said, you should have gone up there, man, and lambast that girl, man, and make her lose some votes.' He said, 'Never. Because the person I know in you, I could not in my conscience say anything negative about you, because there is nothing for me to say about you, except you too have a strong personality.'

And I felt really proud to see that he was able, with his professional approach, his political approach and his love for humankind, did not go up to try in any way to assail my character, because it would have been a negative in any case, with the other side. And so I felt very proud that he revealed to me what he did. And, of course, I felt happy about that. But indeed, what others would have been encouraging to say at that point in time. And I think that we in the political arena need to be extremely cautious about how we tear down people's characters and the things we say. And so Branford made sure that he did not go down that path. And I am eternally grateful for him and the stance that he took at that time. He was very strident in his remarks, as I said, and I feel really great about that.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I also want to speak to Sir Branford, who lived and breathed politics in a way that some of us in the political arena do not. I said earlier he was a man true to his word, and if he said he will do something, he always made an effort to do it. And where I found out from him that if he could not fulfil that promise, he will always come back to say things did not work out. I will make another effort to try. And I think that is honourable. That is what people like. They like you to be forthright and honest with them if they are to put their trust and their confidence. And it is no wonder that the people of St. Michael West, where his last stint would have been as a member of Parliament, would have loved and dedicated their hearts to him.

I can talk about Rotten Town - down what we call the Harbour Road, coming up on the main to St. Leonard's School - and the condition of that place in the late 1970s. And Sir Branford, with all of his efforts, would have

assisted in the transformation of that community. And we had called it Rotten Town because most of the houses were in a bad state of repair. And I know that Sir Branford took a personal interest in ensuring that the quality of the housing in that area would have been upgraded. And we can see now the transformation of that community. It is no wonder that people loved and respected him in that particular constituency.

I also want, Mr. Speaker, to talk about his exploits in the Anglican Church and, being an Anglican as I said myself, we served on a number of national committees, particularly at the Synod, where Sir Branford for many years was the representative for the St. Leonard's Anglican Church. And it speaks of his strong belief in the Christian faith. And I think, as politicians, we too must make sure that we have that quality time to spend it, not only in God's house, but displaying the Christian beliefs that we have in the treatment of people, ensuring that those persons with whom we treat will then take a leaf out of our books and transfer that to our villages, into our homes and the communities from which we come. So I knew him from that particular situation. And of course, I recognised how he performed when there were activities at the St. Leonard's Church - always out and about. That was his personality, to always want to be able to assist. And not to assist, I did believe, because he wanted to be recognised for political reasons. I thought that was his personality and therefore he would be up and about. And when he knew people and there were funerals, he would help to lift the coffin. He would help to assist the family in some way or another. And I think that too was an honourable aspect of the contribution that he has made to national development.

I will conclude, sir, by referring to the late Sir Branford Taitt as a mentor, a confidant, a friend, a loyalist. And I heard some of the contributions from the other Honourable Members on the other side. And I can tell that there has been an indelible mark left behind by him as a result of his engagement in nurturing the youth and giving them little tips and so about politics and, of course, advising them how to carry themselves. And what are some of the important things to do to remain successful or to become successful in the political arena? And last but not least in that respect, how to serve the people with distinction. And so he exemplified certain characteristics like compassion, love and affection for his family, for his church, for the community, for his people, industry. When it came to hard work and dedication and sacrifice, he displayed that he indeed had a good character and was recognised in whatever he did and whatever he said.

So I will conclude by saying excellence was always his hallmark. The loss of him as a Barbadian will be tremendous in this country. He has left a void in the political landscape that would be very difficult to fill. I trust that all persons who would have come in contact with

Sir Branford, not only locally but indeed in the international arena as well, would be able to emulate some of those values and those attributes that he displayed throughout his life, whether he would be at home or abroad in the missions and in the other capacities where he worked. Barbados has again lost another outstanding leader whose service to Barbados will be surely missed. And of course, we know it will be put in the annals of history because our records here and the service from the church and the other communities will be recorded in history's book about the late Sir Branford Taitt.

To Lady Colleen, his children, Sharon, Monique, Branford Jr., other relatives and friends, I wish on my behalf to express deepest condolences and, of course, to do the same on behalf of my family and the people of St. Thomas with whom he would have come in contact at some point in time. I ask, Mr. Speaker, sir, that Almighty God will grant the family, all of the family, strength and peace as they mourn their loss. And, of course, I would want to extend our prayers and well wishes to all of them now, under the weeks and months ahead, because, as we know, at the exact time when death takes place or any sad experience, thousands of people will come in and share their comments and give their prayers and do their counselling. But as the two weeks or so go by, then the numbers begin to lessen. And in the saddest moments, three months later, six months later, a year later, the thoughts then flood us. And we really would want that kind of mentorship, that kind of guidance, that kind of warmth and support, that kind of empathy coming through from families and friends. So I ask that all individuals and groups continue over the next few months to work with the Taitt family to help them in their time of mourning. It is not easy to lose a husband. I have never lost one, but I have lost my mother and father six weeks apart.

I've lost nieces and nephews and aunts and uncles and so. And the void is always there. It cannot be filled easily. And so for the kind of individual Sir Branford was, with his family connections and so on, he will be sorely missed. And I trust that this entire distinguished chamber, the other place, as well as the people who are friends and family in the churches and the communities, will continue to work with the Taitt family and not assume at all that because they are adults now, that they will not need that kind of comfort. We need it as human beings forever in our lives. And therefore, Mr. Speaker, as our prayers go up, I ask that the blessings will come down to soothe the aching hearts of the Taitt family and trust that Sir Branford Mayhew Taitt, his soul, will rest in peace. I thank you, sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes, the other member for St. James South. Thank you.

Hon. D. O'N. INNISS: Mr. Speaker, I rise, of course, to lend my voice in relation to the tributes for Sir

Branford. And I certainly wish to endorse a lot of what has been said before, not only in this honourable chamber, but also in the public domain and other fora over the last couple of weeks since his passing. And I want, at the very onset, to, of course, on behalf of myself, my family and my constituents of St. James South, express condolences to his wife, Lady Colleen, and his children, grandchildren and stepchildren and entire family.

Sir Branford has, of course, been aptly described in his role as a parent, as a husband, as a diplomat, as a politician, as a statesman. And I think it is certainly correct when we can say that he has excelled in all of these areas. As we listen to the tribute paid by his daughter Sharon last Saturday at the funeral, we got an insight, and I believe a very deep insight, into his role as a father. And I certainly believe that in that respect he can certainly be a mentor for all of us who face the ravages and challenges of political life while at the same time balancing that as a parent or as a spouse as well.

He certainly has been an inspiration to many of us young ones who are now in the political arena. I certainly remember the formidable Branford Taitt as a debater during my very early years. I believe at the age of 14 or 15, when I would occasionally on my way home from Harrison College, stop by Parliament to listen into some of the debates that were going on in those days. We had really real giants, as we call them, in the political arena, who stood up in this chamber and debated issues formidably on behalf of the country. And so it is that individuals like the honourable member for St. James Central, St. Michael North West, St. Michael South Central, and many others who may not be in the House today or are not in the political arena, benefited tremendously from Sir Branford's tenure and leadership in the Democratic Labour Party as young men and women, young boys and girls.

Many of us, including the late David Thompson, the late member for Parliament for St. John, all members of the Young Democrats, would have converged at George Street on a regular basis to engage in our own debates and discussions, but certainly to learn at the feet of stalwarts like Branford Barrow and many others. And so it is that I can certainly speak of that experience and relationship with Branford based on my own practical experiences and not what others would have said. When he walked into a room, all of us sat in silence. You certainly never could predict what would come out of his mouth. And he had a way of putting us young upstarts in our place in a manner that we did not feel offended, but we knew that we certainly had to respect him tremendously and be guided by his wisdom.

There are times in George Street when we felt as young Turks that we could take on the likes of our Walton Barrow, Cameron Tudor and others, and our debates were willingly expressing their views as young people against

what we perceived were these old men - oftentimes to be cut down by the likes of Branford Taitt and made to understand that you have to learn, that you still have a lot more to learn. I think as we reflect on these things today, we certainly can attest to the fact that all that Branford did for us as young members, the Young Democrats, was done in their own interests, in the interests of the Young Democrats, in the interest of the Democratic Labour Party. And as time has proven, in the interest of Barbados.

We have heard a lot, as we said earlier, about Branford as a parent, as a politician. I remember in 1994 when I was being assigned to New York to work as Vice Consul in the Barbados Consulate and Business Development Officer for the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation. I had the privilege of having a conversation with Branford, then Minister, on what this assignment meant and he took the opportunity to remind me that in the late 1960s he had served the Barbados Development Board and had then been Barbados's first Consul General in New York. As a young officer in my mid-20s journeying to the US to take on this assignment, I can well say that I was adequately prepared in part by the wisdom imparted by Branford Taitt and what it meant to be a young man going into a far-from-home place, working on behalf of your people, on behalf of your country.

I certainly enjoyed my few years in New York City. I can say that some almost 26, 27 years after Branford had left New York, his reputation was still well recognised. Through the Consulate in New York, oftentimes we could hear officers referring to the Branford legacy, referring to the high standards that he set in the office in New York. Not just the pomp and pageantry associated with the office, but the fact that he really represented Barbados well. He was a very proud Barbadian and certainly was a voice that was well heard within our diaspora, certainly in the fora where it mattered most on behalf of Barbados and those of us who would have journeyed into Brooklyn, Bronx and Queens. Among the Barbadian community, even in those days, in the mid-90s, Branford Taitt was still a household name, one who many people still looked up to. Certainly those in the age group of about 40 to 50 would always look forward to their visits back to Barbados and the other occasions that they had a conversation with Branford. Such is the mark that Branford Taitt would have left in the Barbados community in the United States from way back.

Of course, as a young man, he was given the opportunity by the late Errol Barrow to come down to Barbados in the early 1970s and serve as Minister - I believe of Trade and Industry - and he came at a time when Barbados, like many parts of the world, were going through, or about to go through, very challenging times, not in many respects dissimilar to what we in Barbados today have been facing in the last couple of years. That is where Branford Taitt really showed the mettle of which he

was made and rose to a leadership position, was a formidable debater on national matters, as a Minister really exhibited all the fine qualities of our Westminster style of parliamentary democracy and certainly ensured that he led from in front and helped Errol Barrow and the Democratic Labour Party face head-on the challenges that confronted this economy and this society.

Of course in many respects related to the oil industry, but of course as a Minister of Trade and Industry he would also have been an outstanding leader and visionary in respect of industrial development in this country, which of course would have journeyed with him from his days with the Barbados Development Board in the United States, working to promote the provision of good Barbadian goods and services in the US market and certainly back home in Barbados in the early 1970s - that helped us to continue to attract business to Barbados and place them on a sustainable footing whilst at the same time ensuring our indigenous entrepreneurs and their products and services were allowed to function at the highest possible standard. I believe that in all that Branford did, both in his personal life and certainly his life as a politician, exemplified the fact that he did not settle for mediocrity and always opted to pull individuals and institutions up to his level rather than to allow himself to stoop to their own level.

Of course, as was reflected earlier on by some of my colleagues in the Democratic Labour Party, he was in many respects a political giant, served ably as General Secretary of the party, President of the party, as an officer of the party. He really worked tirelessly to ensure that his political acumen and experience did not only benefit those of St. Michael West and later St. Michael South West, but certainly was shared selflessly with all of the branches throughout the island. And I remember in my earlier days in St. Philip North working with another political giant in those days - quite frankly, Mr. Branford Taitt was the one who you could call at the last minute to come to a branch meeting to speak, or when you had difficulties with your internal organs and your branches. He was always the one to come, to be the referee, to provide a soothing air and comfort and of course guidance based on his experience to ensure that what was just a little matter did not erupt into internal turmoil that could damage your branches and damage your political party.

He certainly, in my mind, in my estimation as an organiser of political parties and political events, has been one of the best that I've seen in Barbados. And let me say that even though Walton Barrow is considered the father of independence and first Prime Minister and all the accolades quite rightly ascribed to him, in my mind Branford Taitt is the one who did so much to keep the Democratic Labour Party a formidable political party and as an organisation, particularly into the early 2000s era. So certainly he has

done exceptionally well in terms of reforms and keeping our political party plotting in the right direction.

His work in other ministries cannot go unnoticed. Of course he had a short stint as Minister of Tourism. I believe his last ministerial portfolio would be the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is pretty much where he started. He would have started as an officer working on behalf of Barbados abroad - by extension

therefore a foreign officer and ended his career as the minister of that very important ministry, serving Barbados, representing Barbados at the international fora and doing exceptionally well. He certainly recognised and I wish to lend support in respect of his stewardship and leadership in the health sector in Barbados. I certainly take no offence whatsoever when he is referred to as Barbados' best health minister. I did my best in the four years I was there, but it does not compare to Branford Taitt's tenure as minister and I am very grateful for the fact that he laid a solid foundation in the reforms of public health in this country, which some of us have had the honour, the privilege to try to build on thereafter. So I certainly hold steadfast to the view that Branford cannot be surpassed in terms of his leadership, vision and work in healthcare reform in Barbados. And I therefore want to thank his family for allowing him to have had the opportunity to serve this country in that particular portfolio. As we all appreciate, the health sector is a very turbulent one, as you say, where you are always on edge - some work where it can make you or break you politically and otherwise. And I believe that Branford's tenure was one that, despite all of the naysayers, despite all of the hurdles thrown his way, he rose to every occasion and certainly brought meaningful reforms to the public healthcare system.

Those who would have criticised him for going abroad and seeking to encourage Barbadians to come back home and make a contribution to this society - I believe that all ministers on both sides of the political divide have done that from time to time. All of us would have certainly been cognisant of the need for us to fill vacancies in our various departments and we would have sought to encourage those who we know have the skills to make a necessary application and facilitate them. I believe that is part of the political process and that is part of management and leadership at the highest level. And even though today we may talk about diaspora conferences and attracting Barbadians and recognising the contribution that Barbadians living abroad can make to Barbados, Branford practised it at the very onset. So his work in terms of attracting healthcare professionals back to Barbados is one that certainly was in keeping with what he had been doing since the late sixties during his work in the United States of America, but also was a deep reflection of his commitment to raise the bar, to not settle for mediocrity - to say that Barbados, despite its size and its economic constraints,

could certainly still punch above its weight and function at international levels.

So whatever he did in terms of seeking to attract the best brains and skills back to Barbados, he recognised two things: that these are Barbadians he was seeking to ask to come back home, that he did so to make a contribution to their society; and secondly, he was seeking to say to Barbadians across the board that we cannot settle for mediocrity and if you wish to raise the bar and really set international standards, we have to certainly bring those who already function at that level to help pull others up. So certainly, I believe where the history of Barbados is well written in terms of his standard there, he will be exonerated and certainly given the level of accolades that he so rightly deserved.

He also recognised that a healthcare facility like the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's success could not be measured in terms of just bricks and mortar. He recognised that we needed to bring cutting-edge technology and new skills to our public healthcare system. And so it was that he settled on a journey to diversify the clinical skills available to Barbados and Barbadians, by working with facilities in the United States in particular to expose our healthcare practitioners and others to the various skills and specialties available. And the one that really comes to mind is the area of cardiovascular services - establishing that capacity and also bringing skills such as cardiac thoracic surgery to Barbados. I mean, those were the days when, if a Barbadian had a heart attack, you pretty much died. I think Branford, even though he was not a clinician, listened to those in the field and certainly used his good office as Minister of Health to expose Barbadian clinicians to such a high level of training through partnerships with the USA. I believe one institution that comes to mind was North Shore University Hospital and I certainly remember in the late nineties thereabouts, working in the USA and seeing individuals like Dr. Jerome Walker - who later became Minister of Health - at the same facility learning laparoscopic surgery. And certainly these individuals must pay some measure of tribute and gratitude to Branford Taitt for his work in exposing Barbadian doctors to these training opportunities to hone their skills, to raise the bar in Barbados and also to reduce the need for Barbadians to go abroad for clinical interventions.

And that principle - that fundamental principle of building capacity in the human resource side and diversifying the clinical skills available to Barbados - is one that has continued since Branford's tenure and one that has really been instrumental in transforming our healthcare system and putting it on the most sustainable path. His work, of course, with the accident and emergency department - I believe it used to be called the casualty - and it really and truly was a casualty until Branford Taitt decided to raise the bar in terms of really making it an

effective accident and emergency department. And while for some individuals these things may not seem significant, really and truly they have been integral parts of reforms in our public healthcare system, because there is not just a name change - there is also a change in attitude, a change in the range of services available.

At the end of it all, one thing that you can say about Branford Taitt in his tenure as health minister: he was very patient-centred, ensured that whatever he did, whatever policies he enacted, whatever programmes he supported, whatever personnel he sought to put in place, he did it because he recognised that ultimately we are all there to serve the patient and ensure that the patient gets the best possible care. And that is why also, Mr. Speaker, he would have certainly worked hard on the St. Joseph Hospital project as well. It is rather unfortunate - and I mean, this tribute is not the place for partisanship - but rather unfortunate that that particular idea, that particular project could have fallen prey to political mischievousness in subsequent years that sought really and truly to destroy the character of someone who really was a nation builder. And I mean, at the end of the day someone will sit and write correctly about that particular part of his life.

I had the privilege of laying the St. Joseph Hospital Commission of Inquiry report in Parliament a few years ago. It took quite a few years for it to be found and laid in Parliament. I believe those who were the architects of having the commission instituted in the first place did not have the intestinal fortitude to lay it in Parliament, but we certainly laid it. And that certainly has identified the fact that really and truly, once again, Branford was just doing what he considered and what the Democratic Labour Party Government of the day considered to be in the best interest of the country in terms of healthcare reforms and in terms of building a strong and viable healthcare service.

Likewise, the Minister of Health had the foresight to hold on to the St. John Polyclinic and also to ensure that the Black Rock Polyclinic was completed - not for his constituents alone, even though one may argue that as the parliamentary representative of the area, he certainly forged ahead in getting the Black Rock Polyclinic completed. But today that Black Rock Polyclinic serves most of my constituents in the south. It serves some in Sargeant's Village, those in the north-west. It certainly - had it not been done - we would have been in a lot of trouble today in terms of access to affordable healthcare in Barbados. So it was with a great sense of pride that this Government, two or three years ago, took the decision to name the Black Rock Polyclinic - or to rename it the Branford Taitt Polyclinic - as a small token of appreciation for what Branford has done for the public healthcare system.

The reality about it, Mr. Speaker, is that we are very grateful that there has been some great recognition of his

contribution not only to our public healthcare system, but to the public service of Barbados. Wise is still alive and in a position to recognise it and I wish we could do more of this in this society - not just talk greatly about men and women after the Almighty has called them home, but to certainly, while they are able to recognise things and to speak and engage, say thank you, ma'am or thank you, sir for your contribution. It is one thing to speak about individuals when they die - you always say only good things about them. But when you recognise the sacrifices that they have made on behalf of their country, as a nation builder, as a mover and shaker, it is really appropriate that we say thank you while they can recognise it and they can say, you are welcome.

So it is, Mr. Speaker, with a great sense of pride that I stand here today to pay tribute to Branford Taitt. Undoubtedly, he has been a nation builder. He has been classified in some respects as one of the architects of modern Barbados. And when you reflect on his work in trade and industry and public health and diplomacy, when you recognise the work he has done not only at home but abroad in the United States of America and all around the world - his work with the Pan American Health Organization, his work certainly with LOMA and many trade agencies and trade bodies - there are undoubtedly very few men or women in this contemporary society that could walk closely in the footsteps of Branford Taitt. So on behalf of myself, my family, all the residents of St. James South - whom I wish to thank also for giving me the opportunity to serve them again as their parliamentary representative - I express deep gratitude to his wife, Lady Colleen, to his daughters Monique and Sharon, and his son Branford Jr., and his grandson Marty, and his adopted family and all of the entire Taitt and Rochford family. And to say to you: he has been a good soldier on behalf of this nation. May he rest in peace. I am obliged.

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

Miss S. J. O. BRADSHAW: I rise on this occasion to join other members of the chamber to pay tribute to the late Sir Branford Taitt. It is quite ironic that the first time that I spoke in the Senate chamber, Sir Branford was the president of the chamber at the time and my first speech in that chamber was to pay tribute to the late David Thompson. I remember on that occasion that I spoke in glowing terms of the late leader of the Democratic Labor Party, particularly because of the relationship which I had enjoyed over the years with him and his family. His wife, the current representative for St. John, was my physical education teacher at the foundation school. And at the time I took the opportunity to be nonpartisan in that particular speech because I was raised to appreciate persons who had contributed to the development of this country and by extension to the constituency and also to the region and to

ensure that despite how I may feel about the policies of any particular administration, that I was still able to recognize the contribution of persons from both political parties.

And so it is ironic that the first speech that I make today in this chamber is one to pay tribute to the late Sir Branford Taitt. I do so feeling a sense of sorrow. I feel a sense of joy as well in having had the opportunity to serve in the chamber when he was the president of the Senate. And I do so feeling a sense of reflection on the life of Sir Branford Taitt. I also wish to share with this chamber that Sir Branford was one of the persons in politics who as a child I looked up to. And it didn't matter that he was on the other side. But he, like so many of the leaders of the Barbados Labour Party and members of the Barbados Labour Party, demonstrated a love for politics and a love for country and a love for their constituents. When he spoke, he spoke proudly of being a Barbadian at heart. He defended the Democratic Labour Party when it was necessary, but also in the corridors of this chamber and outside.

I came to know of Sir Branford Taitt through the lessons of my father, who did not allow the political differences to divide his friendship with persons on the other side. And so, from the days of listening to Sir Branford in this chamber and then taking up the position in the Barbados Senate, I also had the privilege of witnessing him being knighted as well and meeting his oldest daughter, Sharon, on that particular occasion, and feeling a sense of pride in the achievement that he had made to this country, but also the proud honour that had been bestowed on Sir Branford in the presence of his family. And as the last speaker indicated, and I would have to agree with the member on the other side, that it is important that we recognize persons who have contributed to the political landscape of this country and who have assisted in shaping not only the lives of their constituents, but of all Barbadians.

I was also present on the occasion of his retirement from the Senate, and I made my contribution there in that particular session. And I understand from his children that he listened to the contributions that were made from various members on that particular occasion. And in particular the contribution which I had made in paying tribute to him as well. And my understanding is that he was quite happy on that occasion to know that not only had he had the opportunity to witness my entry into politics, but I think he shared a sense of pride in also knowing that he had served with my father, Delal Bradshaw, on previous occasions and had witnessed the coming of age of one of the members of parliament with whom he had shared several debates in this particular chamber.

On many occasions in the Senate, Mr. Branford seemed as though he wanted to contribute to the debate,

and I believe he wanted at times to stop members on their feet and interject so that he could somehow change their words and deliver the presentation in the Senate. In his own way, it was clear that he loved what he did. He enjoyed the cut and thrust of politics, and he wanted to impart on other young politicians as well, a sense of mentorship and a sense of pride in being a politician and being able to serve one's country.

But I believe what is most telling for me is the tribute that was paid by his daughter Sharon on Saturday. Because as a child of a politician, I certainly could relate to much of what was said on Saturday, because whilst we stand here and we talk about Sir Branford as the politician, we speak of him in glowing terms as it relates to his contribution to public life. His children, more than ever, know him as dad. They know him as their hero. They know him and will remember him as their mentor, their friend. And no doubt, on occasion, they would have had exchanges where they may have disagreed on certain things, but at the end of the day, he was their father and one who, in the tribute made by Sharon, it was clear that they loved him and equally he loved them. So whilst we pay tribute to Sir Branford as the great orator, the great debater, the contributor to the national development of this country, I believe we must remember him in the way that, or through the eyes, rather, of his children and the contribution that he would have made to their lives.

Because it's not easy for children being raised by politicians or being a child of a politician. And I speak from personal experience, because to enter political life is very - or to see rather political life through the eyes of a parent is sometimes very difficult to understand why it is that you would put yourself into the public domain and face the harsh criticism sometimes that is thrust on you by members of the other side and even from your own political party. But I believe that what Sir Branford and certainly my father and others have shared, and that particular generation have shared, is a sense of pride in being a Barbadian and ensuring that the children that they have and that they've had understand what it is to serve one's country.

There are a few of us that have taken up the batons who come into public life. I believe the honourable member for St. Michael North East is one of the other few who have entered this chamber as a child of a politician. And I believe that it is a difficult decision to make. But I think that the children of Sir Branford have demonstrated in their own ways, despite not coming to public life, that they have something to contribute to the development of this country. And I pay tribute to them as well, because it is not easy to experience, I'm sure, some of the criticisms that would have been levelled at their father through his political career and through the commission of inquiry and

at other stages on political platforms by members of the other side and even within his own political party.

But that notwithstanding, I believe what you take from that as a child of a politician is you realize the resilience of your parents. You realize that they have come to public life to serve, and that what, more than anything they instil in you is the ability to serve the people of your country and your nation to the fullest of your ability, any opportunities that you are given. And I believe that is the true legacy that has been left behind by Sir Branford.

Oftentimes we do not take the opportunity to honour members of either side until they are either very sick or until they have passed. And I'm glad that the government took the opportunity to honour him before his passing. I'm interested to see what steps will be taken to highlight his legacy by the current administration. And I believe the support will come from members of this opposition in any way that is necessary to be able to highlight the contribution that Sir Branford has made to this country.

When I was a child growing up, I never quite understood the contribution that my father made to the landscape of Barbados. I think that as you grow older, you realize that politicians impact on the lives of people in different ways. And it may be that it could be a house that they provided to someone, it could be a pair of boots that they provided to a young child. It could be the first job opportunity that they may have given to someone. But the fact remains that those are the important things sometimes in the lives of people and in the lives of constituents. And that whilst we in this chamber and in other chambers may sometimes be divided on policy, when all is said and done, it is the legacy that you leave behind and the lives that you have changed and transformed that will make the difference in not only your life but also in the lives of others.

And therefore, I believe the constituents whom Sir Branford would have represented will in their own way, have a tale to tell about the legacy that he left behind and the contribution that he would have made to their own personal development. And I'm sure that all of the people whom he would have interacted with would also have their own story to tell about the way in which he impacted on their lives. But I believe what will not be forgotten is the contribution that he has made to shaping the landscape of this country and being able to mentor several of the politicians as we've heard here today. Because in his own way he was certainly proud to be a politician, proud to serve at the highest level of this country and proud to pass on to other generations the opportunities that he would have had and to ask them to pursue opportunities themselves to serve in public life.

And so I pay tribute to the gentleman whom I respected despite being a member of the Democratic Labor Party, to a gentleman who I believe has served this country well, to a father whom it is clear from the children that he has raised. And their contribution to this country have demonstrated that he still took the time to pay attention to his children and to his family, despite participating in elective politics. And I think that we must pay gratitude to not only his family but also to his wife, Lady Taitt, for giving to Barbados the opportunity to have a piece of Sir Branford Taitt and also to his late widow as well.

I would also say that in the eulogy that was delivered on Saturday by his daughter, I believe she demonstrated to this country what Sir Branford's legacy is all about. Because in her delivery, which it was clear that had he been in the audience, he no doubt would have been smiling and satisfied that he had certainly produced a daughter that could not only represent him while he was living, but could represent him well in his words as he lay in the coffin. I think that there's a certain pride that I certainly felt in hearing the words that were expressed by his daughter Sharon, in listening to the lovely rendition by his other daughter, Monique, in paying tribute to the man that was her hero, and also by the presence of all of his family, who, no doubt, he had impacted on each of their lives.

In closing, I take the opportunity to express condolences to the family of the late Sir Branford Taitt, to Lady Taitt, to his siblings, to his extended family, to all of his friends, his supporters, to his constituents, and to all members of the Democratic Labour Party who would have worked closely with him and who would have served with him in various capacities. I know that it must be a tremendous loss to all of you, and certainly for persons like myself, who had tremendous respect for a man of such character, it is certainly a loss of one of our great soldiers as sons of this soil. He has written his name well on history's page. And I hope that the appropriate commendation is made for the late Sir Branford Taitt. I thank you. I have a pleasure.

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes. The member of Parliament for St. Michael East.

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD: Let me express, on behalf of the urban poor and the people of St. Michael East, in particular, the shared sympathy and love for the family of the late Sir Branford Taitt. As I stand, there are some spontaneous lines of a moving stanza which capture my imagination. And I'm going to do a little modification to those lines. And as words and works of great men all remind us that we can live our lives sublime and departing, leave behind us footprints on the sands of time.

You take guidance from the contribution of greatness, especially when you shared and witnessed it in

your lifetime. Anybody coming to this honourable house and had an opportunity to interact with Mr. Branford here and in the trenches - I had the opportunity to work with him in the trenches in 1987 in Ebenezer and Britain, in the by-election for the success of the late David Thompson. And I recognized there that this was a tactician, but a real human species that had a way of interacting with people and making them feel warm and he used his endowments, his persuasive skills, in order to get people to do a lot of things in that election that were righteous, obviously righteous things that were very important to the success of that by-election. Then prior to that, we have had the privilege of sharing times within the temples, George Street and so on. And I know the type of individual he was.

Now, Branford was rightly described a consummate human species. He was a patriot, he was a social interactionist, he was a visionary. And he certainly was an intellectual. I haven't heard many people talk about him as an intellectual, but I know from discussions with him that he was versed in so many different disciplines - law, politics, government, understanding of the bureaucracy - and in general, a genuine scholar, that was probably underestimated in that specific sphere.

Branford achieve things as a consequence of merit. There are people who achieve things, especially in politics, because of friendship, some form of clientism, they receive handouts and so on. But Branford worked assiduously to achieve the things which he achieved. Obviously, when a man is vested with such endowments, people always a bit reluctant, especially when there's a struggle for power or office. Some people like to water down these terms. People get a little uneasy when such persons are close to you. But his education was more of a utilitarian type, more so than a classical type. He was able to use education and his wisdom to apply himself to the tasks to which he was assigned as a result of the electorate of Barbados. I'm not going to say he was not an arctic or he was, but I think what ought to be more fundamental about his contribution is his general contribution to the development of people and his focus on ordinary people in the society.

I recall seeing him every weekend at Richmond's gap, going to his campaign headquarters. And you will see he's probably one of the first politicians. My good friend was probably second, Sir Donald. But Mr. Donald, I gave him the title, the honour. My good friend Branford was one of those persons who I saw from very early would have long lines of people outside his constituency office, and he would spend the entire day giving service to them. I don't believe that those people would have returned over and over again to visit him every week if he was not delivering in a positive way to the general upliftment of the quality of life that those people share.

I want to say that his life would be etched on our minds and hopefully in the history books of this country, in the books on political history, as a result of his contribution to the general development of humanity, more so than what a great bureaucrat he has been, how melodious his oratory was in the House of Assembly or even in the public domain. Branford was a great human being. That's why he said he was a human species. He gave hope as a result of his efforts. He also gave hope because he was able to interact and communicate with people in a very warm manner, never at any time making you feel less than a human being in his presence, regardless of who he was talking to. You always felt a sense of equality and you felt you were in conversation with a man who saw you as an equal.

I think that when you reflect on his work, the tangible things that he has done, especially in Richmond and Blackrock, you can see the transformation of people's lives into the physical development within those pockets. Across Barbados, house repairs, people who got work, people who he was able to talk to and give a good word of advice. I think that the collective qualities which I want to highlight, or which I have highlighted in my presentation, will give you an idea of why I think he has earned the title as constantly a complete politician. A man who prepared himself for the task. He did not come to parliament just on a party ticket, but he came to parliament with the correct tools and he made sure that he armed himself well by doing the required research and planning. And as a result, he was able to deliver in a positive way to the general development of the urban people.

In those early days, in the 1980s, all across Barbados, Branford Taitt was seen as not only the parochial icon in Barbadian politics, but he was seen as the icon within the Barbadian black diaspora for the work that he had done before he came home to Barbados and work that he did subsequently. And I think that as we make mention of his contribution, I think that some of those fundamental issues must be inscribed in our memory in a way that they will remain memorable for a lifetime.

I just want to make a small contribution because I think that you have to agree with almost all the opinions that we heard here today. And sometimes, especially when it comes to occasions like this, people say the best things, sometimes about the worst people under the sun, some of the worst people. You hear good things about them at times like these. But this is not the case. This is a genuine belief. And there are genuine views being expressed here today about a great man who made a significant contribution to this Barbadian civilisation.

It is difficult sometimes to explain why people gravitate to a particular individual. It's not easy - sometimes we intellectualise it, but we just can't

understand what is responsible for that aura, that spiritual presence around a person that makes him great. And I think that you are identifying in the late Sir Branford Taitt a man who possessed those positive qualities that really deserve the best that can be said about him. He is a legend and he was a legend in his own time.

To the family, once again, these are the views that I express, a mirror of not only me but the people of St. Michael East and mainly the poor people across urban Barbados and beyond. May he live in peace. May he die in peace and rest in peace. Farewell, Mr. Speaker, my brother.

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

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Speaker, I rise, Mr. Speaker, to also bear my compliment to a man who has made a great contribution to Barbadian society and like Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Sunset and Evening Star, and one clear call for me, and may there be no mourning of the bar when I put out to sea. Mr. Speaker, I believe that the late Sir Branford Taitt was, to my mind, a great humanitarian, a man who, as all honourable members have said, stood tall in Barbados over the period, certainly for the last, over the past 50 years.

I first met him in the 1970s, 1974 to be precise, when I was requested to go to his office. The very first time I went to a member of parliament's office. He was then the Minister of Trade. And I went to his office and I remember seeing him sitting at a desk with his dark suit on. And he recognised that I was a member of the Barbados Labour Party. And of course, as a young member at the time, we were requesting on behalf of the Barbados Volleyball Association some assistance for the various volleyball clubs across Barbados. And he readily agreed to make a contribution on behalf of the ministry and also on his own behalf. And I believe that sent a signal to me at that time that this was indeed an honourable man whose word wasn't born and who not only spoke a lot at the time, eloquently, but he kept his word.

I must say, too, that I followed to some extent his career over subsequent years. And I recognised that he was not only a politician because having served in this House for more than 23 years is really a great feat - to serve your constituent for 22 years, dedicate your life to parliament, to your constituent, is indeed a great feat. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we must not only look at what he has done over time, because there was a time that we thought in a country that Sir Branford was a consummate politician. I remember that his excursions, his bus excursions, sometimes took up most of the buses at the time for the Transport Board also. Michael, in those days, went out in his function. He was a man who also served his constituency week after week. I believe he was one of the

first persons that had a constituency office. And it is important for young politicians to look at what he has done and try to emulate to some extent what he has done over time with little money.

Because in a period that he started in the 1970s, do not believe that parliament contributed any money at all to the upkeep of a constituency office. I don't think so, unless the amount was very little. And I believe that he would have contributed significantly out of his personal funds for the upkeep of that office and also to remain in politics for so long.

I believe that the period between 1986 and 1994 was really the period in which one saw Sir Branford at work. It was that period that he became the Minister of Health in the Democratic Labour Party government. And it is true that he has made a valuable contribution to the Ministry of Health. I think it is fair to say that he was indeed a good Minister of Health and he has served this country well and he was nonpartisan during those years because I recall many persons from this side and persons from my constituency and indeed across Barbados were able to get help in the Ministry of Health. He did not seek to minimise or trample on the work that was done by the previous Barbados Labour Party. For example, he expanded the polyclinic service, he expanded the work at the QEH, and he sought to demonstrate that the bureaucracy at the time was a bit slow. And I believe his attempt to bring forward certain programmes because he wanted to increase the capacity at the Ministry of Health. And by so doing, one can appreciate to some extent what a minister sometimes had to go through because all roads lead to the minister. And he tried his best to ensure that the function of the Ministry of Health was successful.

I admired him. I admired him at the time too. And he mentioned to me some years after - he became the parliamentarian in 1994, when he became member of parliament in 1994. And as all our members said, we saw in him the greatness of the man who came here week after week, sat in his chair and debated. In those days, I guess, the Prime Minister - no Prime Minister was a young member of the House. I too, and we admired speeches from Sir Branford, speeches from Sir Louis Cull and Sir Richard Cheltenham, speeches from Henry Forde, and of course, my favourite politician, Sir Harold Bernard St. John. And those were men who stood in their chairs. They stood there and delivered fine speeches. And I must say that Sir Branford was of that class. Sir Branford was of that class - a man who spoke the word and kept his word. And it's very important to speak the word and keep your word.

I think it is something that we have to learn in this House, that members of the cabinet, members of this House, because this is an honourable House. This is an honourable House. And we have to learn, because I heard

the member for St. Michael East spoke about the psalms of life and how great men, how greatly we can learn after persons have left the shore. And we can learn from these honourable men. I believe that he has paid tremendous respect to this House. He has paid tremendous respect to his country. He has paid tremendous respect to the Caribbean - he was a Caribbean man. And Mr. Speaker, I believe you and all of us can learn from what he has done over the period from the 1970s, whether in this parliament or outside of parliament, he has made a contribution to our society.

I believe that a lot of words have been said about his legacy. We have said a lot. I went to Garfield's gymnasium on Sunday and I also heard the eulogy that was presented by his daughter and many have spoken about that. And we really admire what his children have said about him and the community. We admire too those persons who have lined the street and witnessed his coffin go to his final resting place. He had a great life. He was a diplomat, as members have said, a member of parliament, an [Inaudible.], president of the Senate. And that's why I said, Mr. Speaker, he had a great life. He had a great life. How many persons in this society would ever become a diplomat, parliamentarian, president of the Senate? He surely has made history. He has written his name on history's page and we salute him today.

He is gone, Mr. Speaker, to the great beyond. But like the poet Lord Tennyson, we one day will be put out to sea and we will miss him. We will surely miss him. But we are glad that we can say here today that this was truly a man who has left behind not only for the Democratic Labour Party, not only for the Barbados Labour Party, but for Barbados and all oral men and women, something to emulate. He was a great organiser. And I surely looked in 1974 at this man when he first visited the office of the Minister of Trade. I looked at how he organised his constituency in the 1980s right down through. And I will tell all young parliamentarians this, that when you want to give service to your country, look at how this great man organised his constituency. Look at how he organised his ministry. Look at how he organised his life. And how he came here and debated, even when he was in opposition.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we can say without a doubt that he has made an invaluable contribution to this society. On behalf, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of myself, my family, my constituency, and indeed on behalf of all right-thinking persons, we salute him today. And we want to recognise the contribution that he has made to this society - for himself, his wife, and his children. May he rest in peace. Thank you.

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

Hon. R. D. JONES: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I thought that I should just add my voice to the many who have spoken today about Taitt. And I'm not going to be long, because I cannot profess to have known Sir Branford, as so many have stated that they have known him. I was not one who visited his home. Our journeys crossed in wide open spaces, particularly either in a church situation or in a political environment. So it's to those that I most definitely will speak.

Sometimes, when we seek to address the contribution of any individual in his earthly pursuits, or in our earthly pursuits, we tend to structure our language in a particular way which would remember, and so should it be, all of those good that men have done, and the men here, both in his feminine form and in a masculine form. We don't understand this form of language. And so we do with Sir Branford Matthew Taitt this evening. He gives service to humanity. There are many who are called to do that, but some fall upon the wayside. Because in order to give service to humanity, humanity must readily accept that you want to give service, and you want to give service selflessly. And in the instance of Sir Branford, I believe he achieved that. Because the people of Barbados - not only in the political realm or in the religious realm, but generally across the many areas of the service that he provided - the people allowed that to happen, because it is generally a relationship where service can be given. And therefore, as a result of persons allowing him to give that service, he then exemplified the best of humanity in the giving of that service.

I listened on Saturday as well to his first daughter. She spoke with such eloquence and passion. And only someone who is of blood, who is of seed, really, and had an understanding of that individual, could have spoken. I listened to the second daughter in a recorded piece. I know she associates herself with cultural offerings, but I didn't know that she could bend an ear with a song or two. And therefore, if I'd be so bold, I might want to invite myself - lip syncing or otherwise - I would want to invite myself to hear her lip sync, particularly accompanied by Nicholas Branker, an outstanding Barbadian musician. So, lip syncing or otherwise, I would want to be in her presence to hear her once again. Don't be jealous. I understand.

Nevertheless, I've seen Sir Branford perform several duties. I remember in 2007, of course, not knowing when the other side would have called the election, but, of course, being always seeking to be prepared, we had engaged in the Democratic Labour Party the services of a political stalwart, in the personage of Branford - as he was then called, Sir Branford, as he was later recognised - to bring us all to a state of readiness for when the political bell was rung, and to some extent, not taking anything away from all of those who were participants in that great victory. Sir Branford's contribution to our re-emergence

after 14 years in the wilderness must be recognised. His easy tutelage, his demands that sometimes irritated many of us, because that can sometimes happen - then the demands are insistent, and the demands are heavy, can fall on the shoulders of those who are the students, those who seek to learn. And therefore, his contribution in that realm is well known. He eventually became the President of the Senate.

But like all of us, like all of us, I sometimes reduce these things to common denominators. In reality, we are just passengers through a given journey, from birth or from conception to death. And in that journey, how do we contribute to human civilisation? How do we contribute to human life, to human action, to human behaviour? The words of so many others speak to the contribution of Sir Branford. And we view contribution either through the words of that individual, to the actions of that individual, how that individual represented himself or herself to us all. But then the question can be asked, do we truly know? Do we truly know? And that might be a spiritual or deeply philosophical statement. Because if we can say that we truly know, then, in fact, we might be taking the place of God. Because the assumption is, within a Christian ethic, within a Christian society, the deity is the one who truly knows. The deity are not men. Men are just, in their words, reflecting an image, as presented - an image, as I said, through words, through actions, through behaviours, through given attitudes. And within that context, I would make the assumption that there was a part of Sir Branford that nobody knew, nobody of flesh knew. No human being can know, because that is impossible. Don't care if you're a brother, sister, wife. And it so exists with every one of us in this chamber and every human being on the face of this planet - that is that special

place that only the spirit can understand, only the deity can understand. And then there is that connection because of that understanding that is there. And therefore, as we use the word, celebrate the life of Sir Branford, we celebrate the life that is human. We celebrate that life that interacted with us and rubbed shoulders with us and shared a drink with us and had conversations with us wherever those conversations were held - that we listened to from political platforms or we read speeches or whatever - that human part. And therefore, Sir Branford was human and exhibited that humanness with us, and that is which we celebrate and which we salute.

Sir Branford had dark moments in his life. As a youngster in the 1970s when he came back from the United States of America to Barbados, I was just out of secondary school, pursuing studies at the Barbados Community College, which was established maybe 14 or 15 years then by the Democratic Labour Party. The oil crisis had kicked in the world. The Democratic Labour Party's government was facing some of its dark days. He was Minister of Trade, I believe, operating from somewhere down Reef

Road. And in the midst of this oil crisis, in the midst of the adjustments to the constitution of Barbados, in the midst of all of this, there was a potato crisis - an English cost of white potato crisis in Barbados. Comment to that, Prime Minister. History. Those of us who study history don't forget. As a means to buckle the means of the Democratic Labour Party's leadership in this country, of course, facing difficult circumstances where the price of oil just like that, over 100 and something percent, and you have to reorient your economic and social circumstances - when food, that necessary ingredient of the physical body, was needed and necessary, a potato crisis was manufactured in Barbados. Come on. The dark moments that we face by political adversaries, aided and abetted by elements of the mercantile past in Barbados. And when Sir Branford said that potatoes came into the country, I remember them as a little youngster following the politics of Barbados, learning how the cotton trust and the deviousness and wickedness of men can sometimes undermine anything that is good - potatoes stored in a barnyard up in Apple Lakes as it joins St. George and St. Thomas. And those potatoes never saw the light of day because white potatoes, as you know, deteriorate very quickly in an exposed environment. And all of that caused Sir Branford to feel pain, all of that. So there was political wickedness. So he felt his dark moments.

He felt his dark moments when, in his zealous effort to improve the health conditions of Barbadians, he later used the phrase recruiting. He was simply facilitating the movement and speaking to Barbadian nurses in what we now refer to as our diaspora in Britain, to return home to give of their services, because they moved from here, up there, and they honed the skills and the talents that they knew, and had gathered, that they could return. So it was not a recruitment, it was a facilitation, a motivation and encouragement for them to return home. A person saw sinister, perhaps. Don't let them fool you. Don't let them dress you now in garland, Sir, as you make your journey to your Creator, to your God. Because sometimes we forget that sin is always present and that the devil is also present in order for God to be present. That's the reality.

And then the harrowing experience of dragging innocent children through the muck and mire of long and protracted accusations. So I listen to the Honourable Member for St. Peter, as we should do, as we pay tribute to a fallen soldier. But let us not fall asleep. Be awakened of it, and be conscious that not all men walk the same road. Not all men journey along the same path. Not all men's deeds are done in light. Some are also done in darkness. And the St. Joseph Hospital witch hunt was done in darkness. And therefore, when we waited for the report to be laid in this Honourable House by those who ordered it, who commanded that it happened, they never brought it to this Honourable House. Millions of dollars spent. The event became - I believe that had to be brought before this

House because it was to be secreted, sequestered from the gaze of the public. And our man should have been held up on the cross, sacrificed on the partisan political wheel or wagon. So don't let us, in our celebration of Sir Branford, forget - history must not be about forgetting. History is about learning and understanding so that you do not repeat the same errors, the same calculated errors, if you want to call it the same misdeeds, the same bastardising of human beings who have flesh and blood and have a being. That is what we have to speak about. And then our foul tongues that sometimes can become so sanctimonious - we need everyone to clean, do some Clorox, wash your hands.

Let me say, I appreciate the contribution of all good men to their societies. And therefore I appreciate the contribution of Sir Branford to his society, which encompasses family, the constituency, his village, his church. If he played cricket - come here for Sir Branford - I'm not going to get the tones that he did this morning. I leave that institution alone. It is under my remit. Great people come from that institution. As they come from all other educational institutions in Barbados. Even Foundation, Prime Minister. Even Foundation. Great men and women. Look.

Death must teach us lessons. Death must teach us how to look at each other. How to constantly care for each other. How to appreciate our strengths and our weaknesses. Knowing that at some moment in time we all have weaknesses. Some moments in time we all have our strengths. And that it takes someone to say, I recognise your weakness. How can I aid you over that bridge which you need to travel, which you need to cross over. And therefore Sir Branford will most definitely rest in peace.

I firmly believe that he, like so many of us, in the words of John Donne, whose poem - Death Be Not Proud, though some have called thee mighty and dreadful. I'm reading it. No, I don't put all of these things in my head. All I need to note is how to find them because they would have passed my eyes sometime before. For thou art not so, for those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow die not, poor death. Nor yet can thou kill me. From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be, much pleasure - then from thee much more must flow, and soonest our best men with thee do go. Rest of their bones and soul's delivery. Thou art slave to fate, chance, kings and desperate men. And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell, and poppy or charms can make us sleep as well and better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then? Our short sleep past, we wake eternally, and death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die.

I want to wish the wife, three children, all those grandsons who have us connected to the family, the friends, the members and supporters of the Democratic Labour Party, the deepest condolences. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. George South.

Mr. D. G. SUTHERLAND: Mr. Speaker, I rise in this Honourable House to pay tribute to an icon of parliament and a distinguished son of the soil. But I must first start by saying thank you to the people of St. George South for placing the confidence in me to serve them for the next five years, plus or minus how many times you see it fit. The Honourable Members and I vote to serve you, the members of St. George South as I've served you before. And I'll serve you like how Sir Branford would have served this country. A true, distinguished son of the soil.

It is with a certain amount of irony that my voice should be first heard at such an occasion. And I say irony - not because Sir Branford was a member of the Democratic Labour Party, but because I will never get that opportunity to engage Sir Branford, so what I have to rely on is his record and what people would have told me about Sir Branford. And there are few qualities of Sir Branford that endeared him to many of the parliamentarians and public servants. And I strongly believe he will be remembered for his strong debating skills and his contribution to this parliament.

And I wish to say, therefore, that he was known for a certain decorum - the non-tribal, the approachable, and his non-partisan approach to this Honourable House and parliamentarians. His non-partisan approach. We heard it mentioned by the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, and of course, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East. And I wish that we, the members of this Honourable House, will take what Sir Branford tried to impart upon us to ensure that we carry out the business of this country with honour and dignity, so that when our tenure has ended here in this Honourable House, people can speak of us as having made a meaningful contribution with pride and dignity and with great honour.

And I move on to focus on something that the Honourable Prime Minister said. And he didn't say it in these words, but he literally summed up by saying, many are called, but fewer are chosen. He says, many men aspire to come to this Honourable House. And I will go further to say that many men and women would have passed through this Honourable House and have failed to make the contribution that Sir Branford would have made to this country and to this House.

I have not had the opportunity to engage Sir Branford, but I have been associated with the Ministry of Health for some time. And I know that is one of the sterling contributions that he has made to this country. And I wish to state just a few. Sir Branford in the Ministry of Health would have started a planning and priority committee

which sought to subject projects and programmes to interdisciplinary discourse. He too would have had the foresight in creating health tourism, because what we saw is the return of villages creating. As a result of his foresight, we also saw aspects of the private sector specialist clinic. And this is some of the work that Sir Branford would have done in the Ministry of Health.

I have been told of details of the strength of his representation and what I've been told is that he always sought to put the constituent first. And I would like us, as we enter this House for the next five years, to put the people of this country first, like Sir Branford did. And we must always seek to do our job as honourable men and honourable women, like Sir Branford did. And it is in this sense that as we move forward I wish to emulate the best of Sir Branford and what he meant to this parliament. And in so doing, I have a clear vision but trust in the skills to implement whatever task is entrusted upon me. And I vow that most of all I will give a lifelong, heartfelt passion for the people of St. George South and for the people of this country as I seek to do good in this House of Parliament. I thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Philip South. I thank St. Philip South.

Hon. A. D. BRATHWAITE: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I shall be very brief. I would not wish the records of this Honourable Chamber to reflect that a tribute was paid today and my voice wasn't added to the voices that we have heard. I do not wish to go over most of what was said before, but I want to mention the fact that I remember in 1982 when I first met Sir Branford. Indeed, at that time, the cabinet of Barbados - in fact, the number two cabinet of Barbados, as it was then called - used to meet at Pelican. And my doctor at the time, Alfred Rolston, he invited me down to Pelican. A very good friend. He invited me down to Pelican to meet with them. And he said to me, young man, do not be afraid to engage anyone around this table. You're an equal when you come here. And many a Friday I found myself walking from Bartlett's Bank down to Pelican - not because I didn't have to pay for the beverages, but certainly because of the stimulation, the intellectual stimulation that I received there. And Sir Branford was one of the stalwarts of that cabinet who I saw there from time to time. So I do have a history.

Little did I know that our paths would have crossed when I became a member of this great party in 1985. Suffice to say that I've always admired Sir Branford. He's the kind of individual that, frankly, you either like or dislike because he has such an imposing personality that it took some time to understand all of the many facets of the man. But I believe that as a member of this great party I am proud to say that I've had a tremendous amount of respect for him from the time that I met him. And that respect

continued up until the time of his death. I cannot remember any time that I've had an opportunity that I was concerned about any diminution of my respect for Sir Branford.

I remember in 2007 going down to Sanmore Crescent and having a long chat with him. Indeed, he invited me to come down and sit down with him. And although we drank from different glasses, we certainly spent three or four hours together. And I left there, I believe, with a better appreciation of what I had gotten myself into when I decided that I wanted to enter elective politics. As I said, it was a one-on-one with him. And as I said, I left with a serious appreciation of what I had volunteered for as a political aspirant, and that, I might say, enhanced the relationship considerably.

Those of you - I heard one or two members from this side mention the fact that Sir Branford played an integral part in the 2007-2008 campaign. And I remember with some fondness many of his utterances on Saturday mornings. And I do believe that Sharon, in her presentation last Saturday morning, did say that he never meant to treat us like children, even if he felt that way. But certainly he left no stone unturned. He did not allow us to miss any aspect of what he thought that we required to make us acceptable to the good people of Barbados. And I do believe that those individuals like myself, who paid careful attention to what he had to say and who made changes where necessary, are the beneficiaries - or were the beneficiaries - of his many utterances. And indeed, I will say that it plays some part in me standing here before you this afternoon, sir.

So therefore, I want - not only because I did not wish the records of parliament not to reflect my contribution, but I want, in particular, speaking from my heart - to say that we have lost a man that I've had a tremendous amount of respect for. I've learned many things from Sir Branford and I hope that when my time comes to pass that road, that if I can hear half the tributes, half the things that are said about him in this chamber and outside this chamber, if only but a small part can be said about me, then I would have felt that my time on this earth was well spent.

Indeed, sir, before I close, the one thing that struck me most in Sharon's presentation on Saturday was the fact that Sir Branford, although he seemed always to have been engaged in politics, although he seemed always to be out and about in his constituency and doing the business of the people of Barbados, that indeed he found time to be a good father. And that is one thing that I committed to in 2007 - to be able to have that balance that enables me to be a good Member of Parliament and a good father. And so that struck me head on, frontally. Because I know that there are many politicians and many children of politicians who, if there is one thing that they've said they would have liked to have done better, it is to have that relationship - to ensure

that, because of the time spent away from home, their children did not feel neglected or indeed never wanted to be part of politics because they felt that politics took them away from their children.

I will end by saying to the Tait family - and indeed I've known Sharon and Monique for many, many years. I remember them and I can see them in their uniforms now. Although I'm slightly older, young Branford I have not known for as long. But certainly I want to say to the Tait family that my prayers continue to be with you. I too have lost my father several years ago. And there are times when he comes to me for no apparent reason. And I'm sure for many years to come that you will have a similar experience when there is something that will happen and Sir Branford - you will hear his voice around the house or in your office or otherwise. So rest assured that even though his body is gone, he will still be with you. Because he will always be part of you. So with those words, sir, I thank you.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Christ Church South.

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. Speaker, sir. Permit me to join in these tributes to the late Sir Branford Tait. And in my presentation, start by thanking the constituents of Christ Church South for the honour they've bestowed on me once again to be their representative in this Honourable Chamber. I'm sure they would want me to add my words of admiration for the work and the contribution of Sir Branford to Barbados and the example which he set and the trail which he blazed and which has been spoken to so eloquently by members who've spoken almost all day in tribute to Sir Branford.

We heard about the excellence which Sir Branford demanded. And I want to say even now that I certainly enjoyed - if you are permitted to do so - enjoyed the funeral service which was held in his honour on Saturday. And I want to commend the organisers of that service for following his script to a T, as they say, and making sure that everything was perfect. Sir Branford would have been proud of those who executed that event on his behalf. And I am sure that these kudos are worthy of those who set that stage. And, sir, the tribute by his daughter Sharon was lively, it was witty and it was true about a man, a father, a friend.

Indeed, the comments on his first contribution as a diplomat, then as a minister in the Senate, later as a minister in the House of Assembly, as a Member of Parliament - and the example he set in terms of how we tackle the business of constituency representation, the ability to gather people and support around you, as exemplified in the many events which he led, his excursions, which were probably the largest excursions

ever held on behalf of a Barbadian constituency and which continue to be popular.

Sir, indeed you are the inheritor of a great political organisation at St. Michael West. Many spoke about his friendship and I cannot leave this tribute without recording my appreciation on behalf of my brother James for the honest friendship which these two gentlemen enjoyed. And I remember, even as James faced his serious challenges, Sir Branford found time to be with him every moment of that episode. And I want to express on behalf of my family our sincere appreciation for that friendship which obviously the two of them enjoyed - and enjoyed to the last. Enjoyed to the last because there were occasions when I had the pleasure, even as Sir Branford's health was failing, to join him and my brother at my brother's residence and chat a while, enjoy the camaraderie and a beverage,

even at those late stages. So the trail he blazed at the Ministry of Health - and the Member for St. James South was extremely kind in his remembrance - and the example which Sir Branford set. And I want to, along with recognising the standards he set and the trends in healthcare which he promoted, I think it would be remiss of me, now that I have inherited that office, if I didn't record too the honest good work of the Member for St. James South in following that fine example in the Ministry of Health. And I look forward to being able to add to these great contributions. And Barbados will continue to benefit from a carefully thought out and executed healthcare programme that is befitting of a nation such as ours.

Sir Branford has been remembered as one of the architects of a modern Barbados and this is a tremendous tribute. And the men and women of that time would have administered the transition of Barbados from a mainly agricultural community into an industrial and business community as we are accustomed to today, with all of its challenges, of course. And indeed this service of Sir Branford was culminated not only in the naming of that Rock Polyclinic in his name, but also in 2010 when he received the ultimate honour of Knight of St. Andrew.

I am sure that the example set by Sir Branford in representing people, in being there for his constituents, for the people of Barbados, and his example of service is a good one for us to follow. His insistence on excellence is an important standard which we must not relinquish. And although he is gone to his final rest I know that the great example which he set will be remembered in this chamber and all over this country. Great country, Barbados.

It is left for me, sir, just to add my words of condolences to Colleen, Lady Tait, to his children Monique, Sharon and Branford Jr., to his grandchildren and to the extended Tait family, and to wish them comfort in this time of their great loss. But knowing that their father,

their husband, their grandfather has contributed greatly to the development and growth of Barbados. I'm obliged to you, sir. I'm obliged.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, as I add my voice to and identify with the various comments which have been shared about the late Sir Branford from both sides of the political fence, let me say that I am reminded, of course, of the British writer Jane Austen. I believe she would have been an 18th century writer - in either *Pride and Prejudice* or *Emma*, one of those two epics - when she remarked about the hypocrisy of British society. She said basically that people say good things about you on at least two occasions: either when you marry or when you die. Of course, she was just suggesting that on either one of those occasions a lot of what was said was not necessarily true.

Fortunately, from where I am sitting and knowing Sir Branford as I did, we can say that a lot of what has been said about him can be substantiated. And we recognise the great man whose memory we seek to honour today. As you know, I am the beneficiary of the quality of his work. His stamp has been indelibly left on St. Michael West. And of course, given the nature of the man, he would have left some large shoes to fill. I suppose history will tell whether or not I have been successful in filling those shoes appropriately.

As you know, Sir Branford endeared himself to many people and I have had occasion recently to say to his beautiful wife Colleen, Lady Taitt, that he endeared himself to so many people throughout the length and breadth of Barbados and beyond, but particularly in St. Michael West. So as I join you in bringing this segment to a close, I speak not only on behalf of myself and my family but on behalf of the good people of St. Michael West, who have seen it fit to return me as their representative for this term. And for that, I thank them. And I say that I too would have been the beneficiary of his tutelage, his mentorship, and so on. So I know the stature of the man about whom we speak.

I therefore say to his widow and to his children: we thank you for your generosity of spirit in sharing him with us in St. Michael West. We understand your loss. And I say from a personal level - cry if you will, grieve as you will - but always remember the contribution he made. And I honestly believe that once you remember and you concentrate on the good things which you shared together, the impact which he made on your lives, the contribution he made to who you are, in time the tears of sorrow and the moments of sadness will turn to joy as you remember a great man.

Now, in keeping with the best traditions of this House, the appropriate resolution will be taken as having been passed and will be prepared and a copy sent to the

family. And we now ask that we stand and observe the usual minute's silence in memory of this man.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. J. D. E. BOYCE: With that, we have come to the end of Government Business for the day, and I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Monday, March 18, 2013, at which time we start consideration of the Estimates at 10.00 in the morning. So Monday the 18th, Sir, at 10.00 in the morning, at which time we start consideration of the Estimates 2013–2014.

The question that the House be adjourned until Monday, March 18, 2013 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

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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 correcting and preparing this report. Members are named as in the 2013–2018 Parliament.

Q1. Front matter. The source does not record the PRESENT list or the officiant at Prayers. The Members listed are those identified from the record; the time of meeting, 10.00 a.m., is as stated in the source. Please supply from the Votes and Proceedings.

Q2. Throughout. The bracketed time-checks in the source are out of sequence (for example '[12.30 p.m.]' during the morning and '[1.00 a.m.]' and '[02.00 a.m.]' later in the day) and have been omitted.

Q3. Throughout. The source spells the name of the late Sir Branford Taitt in several ways ('Tate', 'Brantford', 'Bramford', 'Bamford', 'Barnford', 'Bradford', 'the Tapes', 'Tay'). These are printed as Taitt and Branford throughout. Mr. SPEAKER's 'Lady Colin Taitt' is printed as Lady Colleen Taitt, the name other speakers use.

Q4. Papers and Notices. The headings ANNOUNCEMENTS BY MR. SPEAKER, PAPERS, GOVERNMENT NOTICES and PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES are supplied from the Clerk's calls in the recording. The calls do not appear in the source, which runs the items together. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce gave notice of the Appropriation Bill, 2013 between the two sets of papers. Mr. SPEAKER's calls of the Member for St. John and of the Leader of the Opposition (Order No. 1) are also taken from the recording.

Q5. Order No. 1, Hon. R. D. Jones. The intervention by Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley begins mid-sentence ('improper motives as well as negative connotations, not only on me but on the good people of [Inaudible.]'); its opening is not recorded. The captions give the place as 'Bashal'.

Q6. Order No. 1, Mr. J. D. Paul. The source has Mr. Paul thanking 'the good residents of the constituency of St. Michael West' (captions: 'St Michael West India'). Mr. Paul was the Member for St. Michael West Central; corrected.

Q7. Order No. 1, Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur. The call before this speech reads 'Honourable member for St. George North' in the source, and the next call, for Mr. G. A. Clarke, repeats it. The speaker was the Member for St. Peter, as Hon. C. P. Sinckler's reply ('the right honourable

member for St. Peter') confirms, so the first call is corrected to St. Peter.

Q8. Order No. 1, Hon. C. P. Sinckler (reply). The words 'Mr. Speaker, sir,' appear at the end of Mr. SPEAKER's call in the source and are printed as the opening of the Minister's reply.

Q9. Committee. Mr. CHAIRMAN is not named in the source; the Chairman of Committees, Mr. J. D. Paul, is presumed. The Committee stage is condensed to the Official Report formulae. Clauses 1 and 2 were passed without amendment.

Q10. Obituary, opening. A procedural aside by Mr. SPEAKER ('the honourable member for Christ – or the Clerk? Clerk. I think we are going to do. Yes. Clerk of Parliament.') is omitted, and the heading is supplied. The Clerk's reading, if any, is not recorded.

Q11. Obituary, calls from the Chair. Two calls are garbled in the source: 'Thank you, Mr. [Speaker uncertain – review]' before Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, and 'Mr. Speaker.' before Hon. S. A. Lashley. They are printed from the recording as calls of the Members for St. Michael North East and Christ Church West Central.

Q12. Obituary, Mr. K. D. Symmonds. Headed 'HON. DALE D. MARSHALL, M.P.' in the source and captions. Mr. SPEAKER called the Member for St. James Central, and the speaker thanks 'the constituency of St. James Central' for his return. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley had earlier remarked that 'the member for St. Joseph is not here'. Printed under Mr. K. D. SYMMONDS. Please confirm.

Q13. Obituary, Hon. C. P. Sinckler. Headed 'HON. CHRISTOPHER D. L. GIBBS, M.P.' in the source; he was not a Member of the 2013–2018 House. Mr. SPEAKER called the Member for St. Michael North West, and the captions name Hon. Christopher P. Sinckler, so the speech is printed under Hon. C. P. SINCKLER. Please confirm.

Q14. Suspension. The motion was to suspend 'for 20 minutes until 20 minutes past five'. The source's closing line, '[THE SITTING WAS SUSPENDED AT 5.20 P.M.]', gives the time of resumption, not of suspension.

Q15. Obituary, Hon. R. D. Jones. The call reads 'Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central' in the source (captions: 'Bless for Christchurch. Essential.'). The Member for Christ Church West Central, Hon. S. A. Lashley, had already spoken, and the speaker is Hon. R. D. Jones, Member for Christ Church East Central. The call is printed accordingly.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The House of Assembly met at 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 12, 2013, with Mr. SPEAKER presiding, for its first business sitting of the new Parliament. The Minutes were deferred. Mr. SPEAKER reminded Members that sittings begin promptly at 10.00 a.m. and announced receipt of the Auditor General's report for 2012 and his report on the Government's financial statements for 2011 - 2012. Hon. C. P. Sinckler laid the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2013 - 2014, the Schedule of Personal Emoluments and the Revised Estimates. Hon. J. D. E. Boyce gave notice of the Appropriation Bill, 2013 and laid the Barbados National Strategic Plan for Intellectual Property. Mrs. M-J. M. Thompson gave notice of a Resolution taking note of the Throne Speech delivered on March 6, 2013. The Social Investment Fund Repeal Bill, 2013 and the Appropriation Bill, 2013 were read a first time, and Standing Orders Nos. 16, 18, 42, 43 and 44 were suspended.

Under Order No. 1 Hon. C. P. Sinckler moved the second reading of the Social Investment Fund Repeal Bill, 2013. The Bill had passed the House before the dissolution but not the Senate. He said that Cabinet had decided in early 2008 to close the fund, whose resources of \$2.4 million were redistributed, largely to Fund Access. Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley said the fund had been established in 1998 with a \$5 million grant from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. She cited grants of \$1.5 million for the Ball Hill community centre, \$442 000 to the Chaloner Creative Arts and Training Centre and \$100 000 to the Barbados Youth Business Trust. The Opposition would not vote against the Bill, but would have preferred the fund to be capitalised with help from the Inter-American Development Bank or the Caribbean Development Bank. Hon. D. St.E. Kellman called for a developmental approach to job creation. Mr. T. A. Prescod asked for a comprehensive framework for social funds, noting the \$3 million allocated to constituency councils and the Auditor General's comment that they had produced no financial statements.

Hon. R. D. Jones traced poverty to the plantation economy, commended the ICBACE project and the Welfare to Work initiative, and questioned the accounts of some non-governmental organisations. Miss C. Y. Forde supported the Bill but asked for equity in assistance to

bodies such as the Chaloner School, the Pinelands Creative Workshop and the St. Thomas Development Council. Mr. J. D. Paul defended the civil service's ability to administer the funds. Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur said the Bill corrected an oversight in governance and asked what had become of the \$2.5 million transferred in 2009. Mr. G. A. Clarke asked what sources community groups could now apply to. Replying, Hon. C. P. Sinckler distinguished the administrative from the legal matter. He said the Chaloner School's loan from the fund at four per cent had been converted to a grant, and that Fund Access had expanded its lending. Mr. SPEAKER ruled on a point of order by Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley. The Bill passed through Committee without amendment and was read a third time, and the House was suspended for lunch until 2.00 p.m.

On resumption Mr. SPEAKER welcomed Lady Colleen Taitt and her daughters Sharon and Monique, and the House paid tribute to the late Sir Branford Taitt. The Prime Minister, Hon. F. J. Stuart, traced his career as Consul General in New York, Minister of Trade, Industry and Commerce after 1971, Minister of Health from 1986 to 1993 and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1993 - 1994. He noted Sir Branford's membership of the House from 1976 to 1999, his Presidency of the Senate and his elevation as a Knight of St. Andrew. Rt. Hon. O. S. Arthur seconded in advance the expected Resolution of condolence, called him the greatest orator in a parliament of great orators and recalled his part in the first Lomé Agreement. Tributes followed from Hon. D. St.E. Kellman, Hon. Miss M. A. Mottley, Mr. J. D. Paul, Hon. R. L. Sealy, who asked for a memorial within the parliamentary precincts, Hon. S. A. Lashley, Mr. K. D. Symmonds, Hon. C. P. Sinckler, who credited Sir Branford with modernising political practice, and Mrs. M-J. M. Thompson. The House was suspended until 5.20 p.m.

After the suspension tributes were paid by Miss C. Y. Forde, Hon. D. O'N. Inniss, Miss S. J. O. Bradshaw in her first speech in the House, Mr. T. A. Prescod, Mr. G. A. Clarke, Hon. R. D. Jones, Mr. D. G. Sutherland, also making his first contribution, Hon. A. D. Brathwaite and Hon. J. D. E. Boyce. Mr. SPEAKER added his own tribute and said that the appropriate Resolution would be taken as passed and a copy sent to the family, and asked Members to observe a minute's silence. On the motion of Hon. J. D. E. Boyce the House adjourned until Monday, March 18, 2013 at 10.00 a.m., when consideration of the Estimates 2013 - 2014 would begin.