

THE Senate Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

THE SENATE

Wednesday, May 13, 1998

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Wednesday, May 13, 1998 at 11.20 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Fred GOLLOP (President)
His Honour Senator C. L. BOLDEN (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. R. R. FARLEY (Minister of Industry, Commerce and Business Development) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator the Hon. G. S. H. MURRAY (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office)

Senator Miss C. Y. FORDE (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)

Senator T. E. BARKER (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs)

Senator the Hon. Miss O. P. SYMMONDS, G.C.M.

Senator D. T. GILL

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE

Senator N. A. LYNCH

Senator N. P. WELCH

Senator J. D. E. BOYCE

Senator J. A. WORKMAN

Senator Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON

Senator S. P. BERNSTEIN

Senator the Venerable Archdeacon J. L. SPRINGER, G.C.M.

Senator Dr. V. J. DAVIS

Senator C. LeR. TROTMAN

Senator C. K. LAURIE

Prayers were led by Rev. Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following documents before the Honourable the Senate:

1. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 7) Order, 1998.
2. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 8) Order, 1998.
3. The Duties, Taxes and other Payments (Exemption) (No. 9) Order, 1998.
4. The Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for the year 1997.
5. The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Barbados National Bank for the year 1997.
6. The Value Added Tax (No. 2) Order, 1998.
7. The Report on the Accounts of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarters ending March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31, 1998.
8. Instruments adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 85th Session held in Geneva from June 3 to 19, 1997.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE SENATE

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I beg to move that Standing Order 45 (2) be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Social Investment Fund Bill, 1998 be read a first time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

OBITUARIES

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I rise to offer my condolences to one of our colleagues, Senator Murray, on the passing of his mother Edwardine Murray. I extend also my deepest sympathy to the other members of the family, his sister and brothers and ask that the usual Resolution be sent.

Mr. President, the life of Edwardine Murray is one in which, not only her children, but all of us in the community can truly rejoice and give God thanks for. It is true that if there is one thing which is inevitable for all of us, is that we need to make that final great step as some would say, crossing that river from which no one ever returns to tell us what happens on the other side. But what is important however and what usually differentiates those who have made the great contribution from the others is the memories which are left behind during our time on this side of the river.

By acclamation it has been clearly established that the contribution of Edwardine Murray was one which was not only noteworthy and praiseworthy but one which is worthy of emulation by those of us who still sojourn on this side of the river.

Edwardine Murray, like other persons of her generation faced some of the greatest hardships, some of the great challenges which were perhaps more common place in those days than they are today. Born in the rural part of Barbados, St. Andrew, she would have had to face the challenge of traversing great distances in order to access some basic services as well as to pursue any possibility of economic and educational achievement.

Like many other persons in her day she was the beneficiary of a close association with the church, principles which were inculcated in her at St. Simons and remained with her throughout her life and throughout her various changes of address in her adult life, marriage, children and ultimately residence with one of her children where she continued to serve her family, her community and her Lord throughout this island of Barbados, eventually being a regular member at Christ the King Church in Rock Dundo

Her life of struggle and upliftment of family and the community reflects all that is good and gracious and

virtuous. In fact we quite fittingly heard her son-in-law, in delivering his eulogy, make reference to that great part of the Bible which describes the features of a virtuous woman, and in making his assessment of her contribution, I certainly agree with the deliverer of the eulogy that she was indeed a virtuous woman who brought much joy to those around her. But in terms of her contribution she was, in my opinion, fortunate to have lived during a period which spanned the major, social economic and political changes which have occurred in Barbados. She was able to see in stark reality through 20/20 vision by the privilege of being very much on the spot, the changes which were the result of the 1937 riots, the move to Ministerial Government, the work of the Trade Union Movement, Independence, the transformation of the economy and the like.

She was very much a committed person, a person who would be committed not only on a philosophical level but to those causes which she believed and also was not afraid to stand up and be counted. For example, in her commitment to the work of the Lord she was not afraid to stand up and be counted in that regard. In her commitment to the clear recognition of the importance of a certain political effort, particularly in those days, to go through and overturn the power of the economic and political oligarchy to bring Barbados into a truly participating democratic society. She was not afraid to let her conviction show and be an active part of the Barbados Labour Party. In fact she was one of the persons of her era who at a very early stage recognised the important role which Sir Grantley Adams and his followers had to play in making the transformation, and so she would have been able to look back with pride on her involvement with Grantley Adams in effecting the social revolution which is very much in place and which perhaps some younger persons would take as a matter for granted.

What is clear also, both by way of the stories coming out of the family and also by way of example, is that she was also very much dedicated to the cause of raising her family. She always ensured that her children in particular made the best possible use of every and all opportunities wherever and however they happened to arise.

Her commitment to family also demonstrates that in Barbados, whatever deficiency there happens to be and whatever the circumstance which may still exist in our social arrangements, that it is possible for the working-class community out of rural Barbados, through dint of effort, and through commitment to family, to achieve some of the highest positions in this country of Barbados including our friend and colleague, Senator Murray, who sits here with us in the Senate and who is a Minister of the Government, that alone, if nothing else.

11.30 a.m.

But there is certainly much else we can learn from her, that should inspire other Barbadians to recognise that whatever their present circumstances, Barbados is the kind

of place where one is still able to make it on the basis of merit. I would urge all Barbadians who have been able to either be touched with her life directly, she has been very active in the community and would be supportive and give assistance in any laudable effort and worthy cause. But those persons who have been touched directly and those persons who might only have learnt of her efforts since her passing by way of the eulogy and other comments which have been made of Edwardine Murray should gather some inspiration and to learn from her efforts. Perhaps the efforts of the Edwardine Murrays of this world, when combined with the larger more readily demonstrated and more highly attained efforts, for example, our National Heroes who would have been the focal and rallying points around which the Edwardine Murrays of this Barbados would have grown up, would show us that each of us in our particular sphere of interest and our chosen area of endeavour within our families and communities, would also mount a personal heroic struggle to overcome our particular circumstances and to achieve all that one can achieve in life. I often like to say and to remind myself and anyone who would care to listen, that success in life really has to be measured not so much by what we have achieved, but it has to do with the difficulties which we have had to overcome in achieving that.

So that in my estimation, a person who was born in an advantaged position, and at the end of the day has remained in an advantaged position, either slightly better, or slightly worse off than they did before, has not made any greater contribution or any greater achievement in life than someone who in absolute terms, has not achieved the same level of wealth or other attributes, who in relative terms has been able to increase their position in life, who has been able to help lift the consciousness, help to raise the confidence, to give education, to provide some monetary support and to spend time in the community generally.

Mr. President, therefore I am once again offering my condolences to Senator Murray and to the other members of the family at the loss of their loved one. I would urge them to take heart in the fact that her life was indeed a life of proud service and it is a life that I would certainly encourage any and all of us to emulate.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. President, I want to join with Senator Farley at this time to offer my personal condolence and certainly the condolences of my colleague Senator Thompson, who is not here today because of not being well and also the membership of the Democratic Labour Party.

I say at the onset, Sir, that I did not know Mrs. Edwardine Murray personally, but I certainly have heard of her and I had the opportunity to attend her funeral service, at least three-quarters of it and heard some of the eulogy. The tributes which were made on her behalf were indeed great testimony to the kinds of women that we refer to so many times in this Barbados who have worked so hard to bring this country to where it is.

At the time of loss like this, no words can really, I am sure, soften the impact. We know it is written that we all have to pass that road sometime and we can, as Senator Farley said, reflect on her contribution and the contribution of persons in her time and give ourselves heart.

Indeed, Sir, even as we work in our communities today, we encounter our young women in what is termed stressful conditions or stressful situations and we reflect on how many of us in here would have borne, and what our parents, those of us who have – we did not all have parents – but the leaders of our households, how they struggled to ensure that their children and their fostered children would be assured of an education, would be assured of sustenance.

Obviously, Sir, from the tributes being offered, Edwardine Murray was one such lady and we should reflect more on these kinds of contributions and these kinds of lives and give our young people some encouragement and the hope that if they put the right programme into action, they too can make it despite all the hardships. The times in which Edwardine Murray would have lived and brought up her children would have been extremely challenging times and, as Senator Farley said, that she would have lived through the riots of 1937 and the many changes which Barbados has encountered ever since.

To Senator Murray, Sir, I offer my personal condolences because I have not had the opportunity before. Also, to his brothers and sister, I also want to offer my condolences and the condolences of the Democratic Labour Party Membership. May she rest in peace.

SENATOR J. A. WORKMAN: Mr. President, very briefly I rise to join in the tributes being paid to the late Edwardine Murray, one of those of a generation passing who are unsung heroes of our nation, whose lives have been dedicated not to building edifices or seeking material things, but building the great virtues which are the pillars on which this nation has rested, pillars which indeed society today seeks to shake.

No words can replace the loss of a mother. I myself have experienced that. But today we come to support our colleague, Senator Murray and his family at this time, the time when one seeks to understand what it is all about, and seems not to have an answer. At a time which, if taken properly, and as we reflect on the virtues of those who have passed on, can bring us even time for joy as we reflect on the contributions made by those who have passed on.

I am sure that the goodly colleague and his family will enjoy a great measure of satisfaction when they understand how their mother – their loved one – was able to triumph over the adversities of her time and to produce the children she has produced making a significant contribution in her time and in the times to come through her offspring.

As I stand, Sir, I recall a hymn which is so often used at funerals and which is not for the dead but for the living – Hymn No. 27 in the Ancient and Modern Hymnal.

“Abide with me; fast falls the eventide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me Abide;”

I think we, as a nation, Sir, have to recall and recount those words, because indeed, in our society today fast falls the eventide and darkness deepens in respect of the moral decay in our society, where everyone wants to start at the top, where people are not prepared to work hard and diligently, to take rebuffs, stumble, to fall, to get up again and, out of the time of adversity or challenge, catch a vision for the future and a vision for good.

11.40 a.m.

From all that has been said and all that we can discover, our dear sister has touched many lives in our society. This is the legacy which she has left and the legacy which each one of us should seek to leave when our time for departure shall come, that our lives have indeed touched others and motivated others to continue to struggle for social justice and improvement of the under-privileged of our society.

So to Senator Murray and to his family we pray God's strength for you at this time, that in this time of loss His comforting grace will indeed be sufficient for you; that you will continue in the likeness of your beloved mother to make your own contribution on the scene of this country and even beyond. So I sum up all that I have said in the words of William Wordsworth:

“Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower,
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.”

Great strength remains behind out of the contribution she has made to society, great strength remains behind in the children she has mothered and fathered, great strength remains behind in that those she has left will continue to take up the mantle and press forward in the same vein as she has done in the years God gave to her. May she rest in peace.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss O. P. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I had the honour and pleasure of knowing Mrs. Isalene Murray as I knew her to be called. Therefore I feel a sense of loss at her passing. She was a very friendly person. As soon as you met her she made you feel as if she had known you for years. She was kind, amiable and loving, a very devoted mother and grandmother and she possessed great strength. I realised that especially when her granddaughter Juliette who had been a student of mine died at the age of 22, I think it was. She propped up that family and was the main stay in their grief.

She possessed values which society expects of its citizens and which she obviously instilled in her children and helped to instil too in her grandchildren.

Senator Workman quoted from literature and I, too, was thinking of a poem of Wordsworth, but not that one. She was:

“a perfect woman, nobly planned,
to warn, to comfort, and command;”

She was a very great person and one whom those who knew her can never forget.

Again, I offer my personal condolences to Senator Murray and to his sister Jean and to all the other members of the family. May she rest in peace.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, I want to associate myself with the remarks that have gone before and to note that Mrs. Murray was born in St. Andrew but spent a lot of her years in Spooner's Hill. It is significant to note that the whole of Spooner's Hill from that area from Green Hill down to Spooner's Hill – I use the term Green Hill deliberately because that is where I came from – was the area which gave succour and help to the national hero, Sir Grantley Adams, during that terrible period of the 1930s and 1940s. She, Sir, would have been associated in a very fundamental way with the change that took place around that time.

So, Sir, we want to salute the Barbadian women of which Mrs. Murray was a fine example, for their courage and their fortitude in the way that they helped this country, especially in those difficult years. Their labour has not gone unnoticed. Today, Sir, not only Senator Murray, but all of us, are recipients of that sacrifice and that great courage. Therefore we are lauding the life of a Barbadian woman who sacrificed for her children and for her country.

At this period which will be difficult for the family and all of us have been there before so we know that it is not going to be an easy period, we want them to take courage from the fact that it was not a life of idleness but it was a life of service not only to the society but service to her God which is of tremendous importance. I am sure, Sir, that the knowledge that her efforts were not in vain would be a source of comfort to the family at this hour.

Sir, I want to associate myself with all that has gone before and to see it as an example of the esteem in which we hold Barbadian women, who even though they may not have contributed in the form of great achievements in science and such like, have helped to build the nation by virtue of the fact that they have helped in the development of solid citizens who are making contributions in a most profound way for the development of this country and we want to thank them for their courage and the tremendous effort they have put into the development of this country.

We know, Sir, that you will pass on to the family our condolences and I want to do so personally on behalf of my family because my family knew the Murray family, my father and my brothers and so on were associated with the family and I think that my eldest brother used to go to lessons at Senator Murray's brother, so we have had a close relationship. Not to Senator Murray, but to his brother, I want to make that clear.

It is a personal loss to our family. Thank you very much.

SENATOR D. T. GILL: Mr. President, like Senator Barker there is a close relationship between my family and Senator Murray's family and although I did not have the privilege of meeting the lady, I must say that I was privileged to have met two of her grandchildren more than 20 years ago, one of whom I taught, her granddaughter now deceased.

As you put the pieces together, the grandchildren and Senator Murray, and you see their strong points and good manners it could only reflect the kind of upbringing that they would have been subjected to. Hearing the deceased's son-in-law eulogise her you could see what a great premium Mrs. Murray would have put like most parents of that day on education. As a matter of fact, I think I would have said it in here before, it was the only thing that people of that day had to leave behind for their children. It was, indeed, a good investment.

11.50 a.m.

Sir, when I spoke with Senator Murray shortly after hearing the passing of his mother, he said to me: "David, I am here reading one of the great classics." I think it was Oedipus. No doubt he was reflecting and buttressing himself during those hours of loss and picking the pieces up, as it were.

I know that the Senator is a very resilient person, a very matter-of-fact person, and as he reflects and he mourns, I am sure, Sir, that just as how the Easter follows the Good Friday, these sweet reflections would definitely uplift and strengthen him for the future as the memories wax and slowly wane.

So, Sir, on behalf of my family I would like to extend deepest condolences to the Murray family. May she rest in peace.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: Mr. President, I rise to say that it was only a few years ago in this very Chamber that I sat, much as Senator Murray is sitting now, grieving the loss of a parent and being very appreciative of the very kind things which Members were saying of him. It was my father. Although they did not know him they felt that indeed they had seen him. It was a source of very great kindness and warmth of persons to be able, not knowing your departed loved one, to believe that because you have lived,

and they have seen what you have contributed, they are able to reflect on what your parent has been and has been contributing.

I believe I would be sharing Senator Murray's appreciation, and I would want him to share our appreciation in understanding that it is at moments like these that we feel that our lives, though we are young, he certainly is, have not been totally wasted. And if persons are able to recognise in us some traits which our parents exhibited, then we are, on reflection, very happy that our parents have not gone to be mourned as persons who have lived and lost, but are persons whose lives we should celebrate because those persons have had a measure of success, even if that success were only the success in being able to bring us to a position in life where people are able to pay tribute to those parents through our own contributions.

I myself was not able to hear the tributes of which some of my colleague Senators have spoken, but I have before now heard of the tremendous public service she was able to do. I recognise that there were no trumpets sounded at her birth, and that there was no star which fell at the point of her death. But there are only few such occasions, and they are usually in the literature of the Shakespeares when that kind of thing happens anyhow. What we have to remark on is not so much the upheavals of nature, or the disruptions in nature that follow the life at birth or the life at death of an individual; but we must be able to see in what remains, after the departure of that individual, those footprints and those marks that individual has made.

Senator Murray works with us very much, Mr. President, as Co-Chairperson of the Social Partnerships Sub-Committee. We have known him before that in the various areas of his public life which do not have to be heralded. I cannot speak for the other members of his immediate family; but if there is an indication of commitment to purpose, dedication to purpose, and if during the life that he has been serving as a Minister of the Crown, we are able to look to where he may have got the charm and the grace, and he has been doing a good job, then there must be someone somewhere to whom we pay that tribute.

Senator Workman has said that his mother mothered and fathered him. We will have to look beyond the school to the home because the school has nurtured other persons and yet we have various points of departure and different behavioural characteristics, even though the school teacher, and head teacher, may have been as excellent a person as Senator Symmonds was as headmistress. So if it is not the school to which we must alone look, it has to be at the home that we look; we must recognise that the headship of that home must be credited on this occasion and, though not knowing directly, I hasten to say that I believe, as the others do, that here was a woman whose contribution was significant. I cannot think that only one child would have made that sort of contribution and if, in fact, Senator

Murray's brother managed to teach Senator Barker's brother, that in itself would have contributed very much to my believing that there was a great parent somewhere in the making.

I wish to make the further point in closing that I think others have touched on: we must not always expect that persons who have lived this life will be able to attain to the status of national heroes, or even to the status of famous persons in the sense that they are heralded in the newspapers.

Aside.

SENATOR C. LeR. TROTMAN: I am being reminded that women are particularly at a disadvantage in that regard but it is a position they are hastily correcting, and I have no doubt that they will continue to correct, not in the long-term future but in the immediate future. It must therefore be that we recognise that the contribution of nation building does not remain only with those great heroes but that there are very large numbers of persons who quietly serve, who bolster the rest of society, who at very great sacrifice to themselves have placed their children in the foreground of their lives, there are persons like that whose lives we must remember, and this dear departed soul, I believe, is only but one of those persons.

I am pleased to say that Senator Murray is himself placed by the Prime Minister in a very pivotal position where he will be assisting the Congress of Trade Unions in our effort to try to give life to the memory of those unsung heroes. As we work toward the year 2000 to build a monument to Barbados labour, to those people whose names will not be emblazoned boldly on the front of Government Headquarters, and who may not have special days attributed to them but who, nonetheless, have worked and built this society, we recognise those virtues that will help to create a society of which we may all be proud. Such a woman, I am sure, was the late departed Edwardine Murray.

In paying my own tribute to her and my condolences to Senator Murray, I do pray that she, with God's grace, will rest in peace.
12.00 noon

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Mr. President, I would like to add my words of condolences to Senator Murray and to his family. Two Bush Hall boys would have to cross paths at some times during our lives. I had occasion to see Senator Murray's mother, Sister Edwardine but I never actually met her. Then again, you do not have to meet people to know the kind of quality they possess and what they have done. You only have to meet their children. I certainly believe that knowing Senator Murray and knowing what he has done and what he has achieved that certainly his mother would have been of the highest quality. I do not think that people like Edwardine Murray need to have any

heroes day attributed to them. They are Barbadians heroes and everyday is their heroes day.

I would like to add my own words of condolences from my family to Senator Murray's family who I know personally and to tell him that in this time he only needs to look upwards for support.

Thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: This is, I believe, the fifth occasion in this session that a Member of the Senate has lost a parent. Those of us who have had that experience both during this period and in the past would appreciate and would understand the pain, the anguish and the grief which would have been felt by Senator Murray and his family in recent days. As Senator Farley and other Senators have said, the late Mrs. Edwardine Murray served her family, her country and her God and she served them faithfully and well. That was a total contribution.

I would like therefore to associate the Chair with the remarks made in tribute to the late Mrs. Murray and to say that we are the poorer for her passing.

May she rest in peace.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, first of all I would like to thank my colleagues for the fine things that they have said about my mother and to let them know that it was their presence, their calls, their support that have made what is easily the most traumatic experience of a person's life, tolerable and bearable. My mother would have been exceedingly flattered with all this attention being paid to her. I do not think she would have ever expected in her life that her name would have received this attention in one of the most august Chambers of the country. Because she was a very straight-forward, very simple, very matter-of-fact person, who knew what she wanted and what life was about. It might be invidious to extol the virtues of your mother given the primary place that motherhood plays in the human psyche and the society.

The fact is that she was a remarkable woman. As has been said she was both "mother" and "father" to four children. But as I recall, and this only occurred to me after she died, she carried out her role in raising those children, never once complaining about the circumstances, never criticising the system, never feeling that the world owed her a living. She just did what had to be done.

Like Senator Barker alluded to, she felt that education was the best way to get ahead in life. I recall that no matter what, she would ensure that we all joined the library, she would make sure that we study and that no matter how tight things were during the week financially, even if there was no coffee or tea on Sunday, there would be a *Sunday*

Advocate for us to read. She carried that avocation to reading throughout her life and even at the age of 86 just before she died, as long as she was feeling well, she would be reading the newspaper, watching television, doing cross-words and word searches. She had tremendous verbal skills and even at that age you could scarcely win an argument with her. Her ability to manipulate words was fantastic. She would even argue with doctors when they wanted to impress her to stick to her diet she would always find a way out, she was very good in that respect.

As has been said, she was born in St. Simon, St. Andrew. She never received a secondary education, but spoke impeccable English at all times. She was not formally educated but she got her respect for education from some of the people she grew up with in St. Andrew, such as the late Vere Carrington and Dr. St. Elmo Thompson and she realised that even if she herself did not have the opportunity, she wanted to provide it for her children. She always impressed on us, growing up as we did in Spooner's Hill, surrounded by the cane fields of Grazettes and Codrington and being very aware of the plantation system, that she did not want to see her children ever pick pond grass. That was her driving force in life and she made sure that it never happened to us. For that I am eternally grateful.

She was also very familiar with the realities of life. Chapel Gap, Spooner's Hill, was situated almost equal distance between the house of Keith Walcott and the house of Tyrol Cot of Grantley Adams and therefore she knew the realities of life and she knew where her bread was buttered. She knew where her allegiance should be placed and she made sure that all her children and all those who came into contact with her, know it. When you walked into her house there was always a picture of Grantley Adams, Tom Adams or Owen Arthur. If you had anything bad to say about the Barbados Labour Party, she did not take it lightly, if only because like Senator Farley said, she grew up through the 1937 riots and she knew what the hard times were. She used to tell us that when the riots broke out she grabbed my older brother, who is now a teacher in the Bahamas for the last 47 years, and ran behind the piano which we had and hid from the bullets. That is how she escaped injury.

She was also a very creative woman especially where cooking was concerned and she could stretch a pot for what it is worth. Her dumplings were very famous. Anybody who knows me, know how I feel about dumplings. I have a hanker for them. She could take some eclipse biscuits and make a whole meal of them, she could do many things with food and she was very creative in that respect. She was also very thrifty and could find some money to give her children or grandchildren when the occasion arose. She was a dress-maker, she was a shopkeeper, she was a hawker, she worked at the Cotton Factory. She was very, very aggressive in that respect. She also would come over and tell me stories about when she was a member of the Girls' Industrial Union and they had these great dances in Queens Park, etc.
12.10 p.m.

And the pork chop bags. I am also a product of the pork chop bag and I remember she would come home on Saturday mornings after the dance and the whole pork chop would be shared among the family. So she really epitomised some of the greatest virtues of Barbadian, and not only Barbadian women, but the Barbadian personality; the appreciation for life, the need to see that your children in the society at least turn out better than you did and that you make a contribution to their effort, and have respect for education, the church, law and order and above all God.

I have no doubt that if I am fortunate enough to get to heaven there I will meet her also. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I will now ask Honourable Members to stand in silence for 2 minutes in tribute to the memory of the late Mrs. Edwardine Murray.

Members of the Senate stood in silence for 2 minutes.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 1 – THE SOCIAL INVESTMENT FUND BILL, 1998

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I rise to move the second reading of this Bill, the Social Investment Fund Bill, 1998. The purpose of this piece of legislation, Sir, is to provide the framework for the support of programmes and projects that are designed to eradicate poverty, primarily through the creation of enterprises.

This Social Investment Fund Bill is part of the Government's overall approach to this whole business of the eradication of poverty. It must be recognised that any society which ignores its most vulnerable members is very much in danger of losing all that has been gained by others who are more fortunate. It has been noted, for example, by former US President John Kennedy in one of his speeches. He said "if a free society cannot help the many who are poor it cannot hope to save the few who are rich". Also it is noted by Marion Anderson, one of the great US Civil Rights advocates, where she observed that if a society hopes to keep down any of its citizens it needs to lead some others down there to keep them down. So that the whole issue of ensuring that the society is able to attain its full level of prosperity is really contingent on helping each and every member of the society to attain its full potential, that potential being the capacity to enjoy a good and acceptable standard of living in all its forms and facets.

This Social Investment Fund Bill will create a framework by which some financial resources can be committed as part of the effort for the eradication of poverty. I should say at the outset that this is not designed as or intended to be the only activity in that regard.

It is important for me to state that because we are debating the Social Investment Fund Bill and therefore all of our comments would be in relation to the matters revolving around the Bill and not about other issues which are also part and parcel of the eradication of poverty drive and the whole business of the upliftment of the society, I want to stave off the suggestion which could be made that this is the Government's only attempt in this direction and it is therefore insufficient because clearly the initial allocation, for example, of the \$10 million in this Social Investment Fund would not represent the Government's only excursion into this area, or incursion if you want to use a more realistic term, because we have to launch an attack, an all out offensive, against poverty.

Poverty in this society is repugnant to all that is good, all that is desirable, all of our aims and aspirations and none of us can feel that we have truly achieved and succeeded and that we have reached our full potentials when there are others amongst our brethren who are not in a position to enjoy some of the basic comforts of life. So I would make the point by way of illustration that the Government's expenditure in the social services has increased dramatically over the last several years of this administration. For example in 1994/95 some \$19 million was allocated to the area of the social services and the spending on the agency which delivered social services. In 1997/98 some \$62 million was spent in this area and that is a threefold increase in the amount allocated and this would be to an area ranging from the Welfare Department, grants to welfare institutions, supplies of materials, assistance to persons, National Assistance Board, Child Care Board, Poverty Alleviation Fund, Rural Development Commission, and Social Investment Fund and what not. So that what we are debating today is a legal framework for one aspect of this assault against poverty and the drive to raise the general conditions of life in Barbados.

Sir, the Social Investment Fund will be capitalised initially by some proceeds out of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. One of the reasons why we have created this separate framework is that the Public Enterprise Investment Fund Act, as it is presently structured, envisages that the expenditures out of that fund would primarily be in investment related expenditure and therefore we are advised that legally speaking it could not directly by way of how the Act is stated use the funds for this kind of purpose, poverty alleviation and so on which although it is a very good and great and laudable societal objective could not be done legally through that particular piece of legislation.

As you know, Sir, the Public Enterprise Investment Fund was created out of the proceeds of the divestment of Government ownership in a number of commercial enterprises, Heywoods, BET and BARTEL and so on. It is only fit and proper that the ownership of those shares and other forms of denomination which were held in trust by the Government should, in turn, be used by the Government for the betterment of the most vulnerable members of the

society. So that this Social Investment Fund will be capitalised initially by \$10 million from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund. The Act also provides for the voting of funds in Parliament for that particular purpose.
12.20 p.m.

I will get into some more details about the allocations and so on which are proposed. But just to say at the very outset that already we have earmarked some \$1 million each for the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission to establish a Rural Enterprises Fund and an Urban Enterprises Fund. Again, this is to provide some financial support for community development and enterprise oriented programmes to allow persons to work toward pulling themselves out of the cycle of poverty. It is that the heart of this approach is not a topping up of welfare benefits. That is done through the Welfare Department, but there are other individuals and circumstances. In fact, it is generally desirable that where able-bodied persons who, because of their particular circumstances have to obtain welfare benefits, that they should also be helped in moving off the ground and getting into income generating activities. So that they are able to proceed through life making the contribution with their full potential as well as enjoying a greater degree of dignity. So that whilst in the other aspects of the programme there are the welfare oriented benefits to be given. There is also the need to empower and enable individuals and communities to reach their potential.

Along that vein, part of the initial capitalisation of the Social Investment Fund will go toward the construction of the community facilities at Gall Hill in Christ Church on the site of the former Club Randall Dance House. That facility will provide employment and income generated activity for some 30 to 40 persons within the community. Therefore, this will allow those persons to lift themselves out of this whole business in respect of poverty.

Mr. President, this is just a continuation and indeed a formalisation of the structure for some work which has already been done. You will recall, Sir, that in the last financial year, Government had allocated \$10 million to this Poverty Alleviation Programme. We started this programme already, but the Social Investment Fund will bring it all together and give it a more formal structure.

That \$10 million, as you know, Sir, was used to do a number of things, but I will discuss those details later. We need, Sir, in looking at this whole Social Investment Fund and the eradication of poverty, to ask and answer a number of questions. We need to understand quite clearly what is poverty. What is it that we are really talking about? What are the root causes of poverty and what are the characteristics? How does poverty manifest itself? We also need to have a fairly clear understanding of what is the extent of poverty in Barbados. And we need to be clear on what we are going to do about the eradication of poverty.

I propose, Sir, that given that the Social Investment Fund is part of that solution, to locate its function within the

context of the larger programme, effort and drive toward the eradication of poverty and for us all to have a better understanding of some of the issues which are involved.

One of the greatest encumbrances which has affected the sober discussion of this topic and which has hindered the attainment, Sir, of solutions to the matter has been the absence of hard data about this matter of poverty, what it is, how it is called and what is the solution. Thankfully, eradication of poverty has, after many long years of effort by a number of interest groups, the Labour Unions, the NGOs and other community-based organisations and so on, have attracted the attention of the international community as well.

The International Financial Institutions themselves have been the ones who have been commissioning a number of studies on the extent of poverty and so on. Granted there is still a time lag between their commissioning of these studies and an adjustment of their own policy, the impact of such policies on poor people in the communities that they serve. But they are optimistic that they will become as enlightened as we are in Barbados and that they will ensure that their monetary and fiscal policies will be in accordance with the whole business of eradication of poverty.

But we know, Sir, that in terms of the pervasiveness of poverty in the Region – because we need to take both the regional as well as the national approach to this matter – that across the Region the experience of the countries varies. On average there is some 38% level of poverty in the Region. A high of 38% in places like Haiti, for example, and a low of 5% in places like the Bahamas, but the average figure is in the region of 25%. In the case of Barbados there is a report which indicates that based on the particular measures that they use – which I will get to shortly – the percentage is in the region of 12%.

Sir, what is important is that we need to understand some of the characteristics and causes so that as policy makers when we implement policies, many and diverse aspects of national development, that we are able always first and foremost to consider the possible impact of these policies on the existing poor as well as the prevention, or the eliminating and the possibility of adding new elements to that group.

But, what is clear is that there are a number of contributing factors. For example, low or no economic growth, macroeconomic instability – generally speaking which has a number of problems attached to it. For instance low wages being paid to workers, low productivity affecting competitiveness, a decline in the quality of social services given in the particular communities and the like.

What is also clear, looking across the Region, is that those countries which have over the long run – let us say toward the period of independence in the 1950s and 1960s in

the Region which have maintained economic policies, which have insured stability and which have also consistently spent at a relatively high level on their social services that those countries, today, have lower levels of poverty than countries which have been less than steadfast in the maintenance of solid macroeconomic programmes and which have turned their backs on adequate levels of spending and social services.

What is also clear is that poverty in the countries such as ours, can affect long-term sustainable growth, both economically and socially. We know, for example that economic growth is fundamental to the reduction of poverty. It was therefore very important for us when we assumed office in 1994 to move manfully to the task of restoring economic stability and growth to Barbados. In spite of the fact that some will say the general state of the economy has nothing to do with the poor man. The facts prove that when the economy in general is down the poor man is the first to feel it and it also bears on him most severely.

12.30 p.m.

So the first order of business was a restoration of macroeconomic stability and that was not economic mumbo-jumbo. The hard facts are that an economy in trouble and on the decline cannot provide jobs. It cannot provide disposable income which is then spent in the acquisition of goods and services from small producers and the like. That is the harsh reality. We do not believe in jobless growth.

What is important though and we have always recognised this point is that there is a need to ensure that there is equity in the distribution of those economic gains once obtained. We have always held the view that it is a pointless exercise to squabble over the distribution of a pie of declining size. Let us make the pie larger and make sure that there is equity in the distribution of the pie. Therefore this focus on poverty alleviation on the building and the strengthening and empowerment of communities is all part of ensuring that having set the economy on the course of growth and macroeconomic stability that the average citizen is able to have a big piece of the action.

We know as well that poverty in the Caribbean region, and Barbados is no exception, can also result from low wages being paid in various sectors of the economy. There are sometimes low rates of return from self-employment activities in some of the rural areas particularly, as well as there are cases of under-employment, so that we have the whole phenomenon of the working poor. Generally, our efforts at working in the whole area of labour management relations, having an appropriate regulatory framework, having a focus on productivity improvement in enterprises, having a focus on technical and managerial assistance to persons in the rural areas and persons in the informal sector will ensure that they are able to earn better returns on their efforts.

Also, Sir, what is clear is that the whole matter of the continued availability of adequate education, health and other services is important. We can all agree, Sir, that the poor more than other members of the society depend on the Government for the provision of those basic services. Any cutbacks in those areas affects them more so than others, but also, what we in Barbados have long recognised is that an investment in the development of our people is an investment in our economic future, and that one of the reasons why, although we have poverty in Barbados which we are hoping to eradicate, that our situation is not as bad as it is in other parts of the world is that we recognise that attention to education and health has long-term impact on opportunities, the life-time earning capacity of individuals that are involved.

What basically has been done is that there has been the development of a fairly broad social safety net which has helped over the years to ensure some level of protection for the average citizen. What is clear is that there are still a number of persons who have fallen through the net and this is why we needed to go back to the drawing board to review where we are at as part of the delivery of social services, as far as the provision of a social safety net is concerned, to ensure that poverty does not become a major issue in the future of Barbados.

In terms of the safety net, for example, in the context of Barbados there is the National Insurance Scheme, the Welfare Department making welfare payments, pensions, free health and education services and a range of support in unemployment benefits, severance payments and so on to ensure that there is some mechanism for bridging the gap and for easing the burden on the unemployed, those persons who are temporarily out of employment and the list can go on and on.

From an understanding of that general situation with respect to poverty and its causes we also needed to ensure that we had a clear understanding of where we were at in relation to Barbados. Policy makers do not have the luxury of being purely anecdotal. That is a luxury reserved to the participants of call-in programmes and where at the level of general discussion, very useful discussion, often very positive discussion – I love my call-in programmes – but at the end of the day no one is required at the end of the hour to make a decision and to determine a policy. If one uses anecdotes and so on that is perfectly fine, but when one has to determine policies and come up with strategies to solve the issues which have been raised in the anecdotes one also needs to draw empirical data.

As early as 1995-96 the Government of Barbados commissioned a study to be done on the extent of poverty in Barbados income distribution and so on. A study on Barbados poverty and living conditions survey was commissioned which was meant to give us hard information on what were the income levels across different groups in Barbados, how many persons there were living in poverty, in

fact what was determined given the cost of living to be the poverty line.

Again, to some people poverty is not being able to afford a trip to London in summer this year or not being able to change the car every three years like before. So we thought that we really had to become empirical so that we speak about the same issue and come to some policy determinations. This is all borne of the fact that both poverty reduction as well as the improvement in the delivery of social services were part of this administration's medium-term development strategy.

You know, Mr. President, we are looking at the total reform of the social services sector, looking at the institutions that deliver services to see what changes needed to be done, looking at the institutional framework the financial resources and the like.

We were able on the basis of the empirical research that was done to determine that the per capita annual poverty line for Barbados would stand at an income of BDS\$5 503. So that those persons who were earning less than BDS\$5 503 a year were considered to be absolutely below the poverty line. Based on an assessment of cost of food, based on an assessment of the cost of the non-food items, goods, services and other things that one would need in order to survive basically in the context of Barbados. This absolute poverty line allows us to be able to do some other measures. Based on that number poverty can be said to affect some 8.7% of households in Barbados.

12.40 p.m.

I notice it is perhaps important in this context to use the framework of households rather than individuals because of the 79 867 households, just roughly 80 000 households in Barbados, you are talking about some 7 000 households which live below the poverty line, and that is important. It is very important that we have a feeling for what is the magnitude of the problem which we are hoping to address.

This Administration, Sir, is not satisfied that we can consider that we have achieved our objective until we are able to have these numbers reduced. We are not just about having economic growth for the sake of economic growth but ensuring that we are able to have economic distribution which would be able to reduce the number of households that are below this poverty line.

In terms of the number of people represented by that particular statistic, the Report indicates that the number of people in those households would be approximately 35 000 or just under 13% of the country's total population. Again, that is because one of the characteristics which was found of the poorer households is that there tend to be more occupants per poor household than for non-poor households. It is one of the unfortunate features that ends up sometimes creating a kind of a vicious circle and a vicious cycle in this matter.

Sir, in looking at other important indicators, one positive indicator is that although we still have some ways to go, the study also indicated that the level of inequality in the distribution of income is less than it was some 20 years ago. I would not get into all the statistical measures, Sir, but based on a scale where the level of total inequality would be one, the level of inequality in the income distribution would have been 0.46 in 1980 and for 1996 it was down to some 0.39 so it shows there is a way to go but we have been able over time to have some better distribution of the general gains of the society.

Now, Mr. President, it is important as well if we are going to be formulating strategies to attack this matter of poverty that we understand how it is spread, how it manifests itself. Looking again at some information from the survey, again it indicates that there tend to be more persons per poor household than in the non-poor household. They also tend to be more children of the ratio between the adult members of the household and the children tend to be greater. There are more under 5 and between the 5-14 age group than the non-poor households.

There is also, Sir, unfortunately, a higher rate of unemployment among those poor households and the non-poor households. In fact, unemployment is part of that cycle which is why again it was important for this Administration to attack the issue of unemployment in Barbados.

In 1993/94, Sir, the rate of unemployment was 24.3%, but if you do not like percentages, 95 400 people were getting up and going to work in the morning. In 1997, 116 100 persons were getting up and going to work in the morning. To help you with the numbers, Sir, that meant that 20 700 persons more, additional, added on, were getting up in the mornings and going to work in 1997 compared to 1993/94. Unemployment is an issue as far as poverty is concerned so that when we look at the whole issue of a household, it means that there were many more households in which someone might have been the only person or at least an additional person was getting up and going to work. So those who would want to say that the issue of macro-economic stability and economic growth and so on is not important, ask those 20 700 persons and they will tell you whether it is important or not.

Now, Sir, another statistic which all of us knew from inference but which we were able to quantify is the fact that in many cases the single parent households, particularly female headed households, tended to constitute a greater proportion of the persons below the poverty line than the other households. What was particularly interesting as well, was that once there were a number of elderly persons below that absolute poverty line, that the majority of persons heading households who were in that circumstance were really in the 33-44 years age group, female headed in that age group which means that we have two issues.

One is that we need to have programmes which will provide the necessary training and other opportunities for employment among that group. Also, if we do not take this approach, if we were instead to take a welfare assistance only approach, it means that the community has to bear that welfare grant for an even longer time. So it is imperative that in seeking to have a poverty eradication programme that we take an approach which is based on the creation of enterprises, which is based on providing opportunities for persons to earn their way out of the circumstances, and that welfare and other grants be used as a bridge to help persons while they are down and out and also at the same time we empower them to achieve their full potential.

Sir, the results of this particular survey which was done indicate that none of us can afford....

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order, Mr. President. The Honourable Member is referring to this survey all the time but I am not aware, or if the Chamber is aware of what survey he is referring to. I think it should be made available to the Senate, Sir.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Thank you, Mr. President, this survey is not a secret document either of Democratic Labour Party fame or Advocate fame, Sir. The Government of Barbados and the Inter-American Development Bank, Barbados Poverty and Living Conditions Survey, Preliminary Findings, Poverty & Income Distribution in Barbados 1996-1997, dated November 1997. 12.50 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Are you making that a document of the House?

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: I will have to do that if required, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: A Minister of Government should normally make such a document, a document of the House. An ordinary Member is under no such obligation.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: I am very pleased to do that, Sir. It is not a secret document, it is public information and as I have indicated, our approach to this matter of the formulation of policy is informed by this hard data. The annotate helps to set us in the right direction but this is what helps to inform. I will be happy that all lawmakers in this Chamber will be able to be the beneficiaries of this hard information as they seek to make their contributions in this matter of poverty eradication.

Sir, the facts of the matter are that all of the policies of this Barbados Labour Party administration to date have been informed by this view and an overwhelming desire to eradicate poverty from Barbados. Even those matters that appear to be simple hard economic objectives and strategies

are really part and parcel of allowing us to get to the point where we need to reach.

For example in the whole matter of reforms in the education system. The revision of the curriculum, the revision of teaching strategies, EduTech 2000, the revitalisation of the National Assistance Board which has its feet slashed from under it during the last administration, all of those are also recognising the fact that one of the features of poverty in Barbados, persons who are listed in that group of absolute poor, is the absence of particular skills and talents. Therefore, if we want to help those persons to lift themselves out of poverty that we need to ensure that they are provided with the skills which are necessary to help them to make a viable contribution.

Right now for example, the whole matter of the shortage of some artisans in the construction industry should not be occurring at the same time whilst there are still individuals who are not employed. As society grows and changes with time and the nature of the task which has to be performed will change, we are ensuring by the efforts of this administration that our capacity both to provide generalised education within the school system as well as to provide on going training and re-training possibilities, allows us to respond to the changes in economic opportunity and therefore to allow persons to make meaningful contributions.

Again the matter of access to social services. This Social Investment Fund is looking to shift some of the dependants on governmentally directed institutions towards more of a community based approach. One of the early beneficiaries of funding under the poverty alleviation programme was a non-governmental community based organisation because we recognised, like any sensible administration would, Sir, that community based organisations are in a very strong position to respond to the needs of the people who live in them and who are there with them. That the Government should be looking to get into forms of partnerships with the other stake holders, not only in this matter of poverty eradication but in all aspects of governmental endeavour.

We have been quite happy to work with the Social Partners on a number of initiatives, and at another point in time we will have full opportunity to speak, for example, of our partnership with our comrades in the trade unions and in the private sector in the social partnership and also reaching out to the community-based organisations. The Pinelands Creative Workshop was one of the early beneficiaries of \$1.3 million as part of this poverty alleviation effort.

Sir, just to give one example of why that programme was identified at an early stage and was a beneficiary of support is that the Director of Pinelands Creative Workshop was able to report recently that their Needs Trust Fund has been able to provide financing for small entrepreneurs in the community where one person for example is a trader in regional products. He obtains his finance from them to bring some products in and to sell them and so on and that the

process is working quite fine. The advantage of using a community-based organisation like that is that the important element of follow-up is more effectively done because there is that kinship, that synergy between the person with needs and the supplier of the services. That exists with community-based organisations in a way that unfortunately it does not always exist with large governmental bureaucracies who because of the wide range and number of clients and other activities they have to do, really do not have the opportunity to develop the bond and the kinship with individual clients.

We are pleased to recognise the work of community-based organisations and we propose to use that model and that approach to the provision of social services, to the provision of support for the eradication of poverty in a more extensive manner. In fact, even as we speak now, there are proposals being received from a wide range of organisations in this regard.

But what is important to note as well is that in terms of the broad approach to the delivery of social services, sometimes there are not as targetted as they could be and therefore both the poor and the non-poor are able to benefit. It reduces ones capacity to provide increased assistance to those who really need it and by using more targetted approaches through community groups that indeed would provide the kind of help that is required.

Sir, I think we have answered the question of what is poverty in terms of having some working definition on which we could proceed. We have look at the root causes and the manifestations of poverty in Barbados. We also have been able to reflect on the extent of poverty in Barbados, how pervasive it is across our household and our communities and so on. We now have to perhaps take a closer look at what we are doing about it.

I want to take the opportunity first of all to remind the Chamber of what we have done so far as well the general directions into which we will move.

1.00 p.m.

I have already spoken, Sir of our efforts in ensuring that we have the economy on a course of continuous growth and expansion so that this provides the impetus for development. I have already made mention, Sir, of the need to ensure that there is an appropriate framework in that where jobs are created conditions will also be attractive to workers as well as indeed to employers. But really the need to have a well trained and productive work force and also have a framework for the administration of labour and industrial relations matters which would ensure that the full benefits of job creation are spread far and wide and also that work becomes a place where workers are happy to go. That there is a minimisation of labour disputes, that there is a mechanism for the speedy and adequate resolution of labour disputes when they do in fact arise. I am sure that with the splendid representation of labour in this Honourable

Chamber that more perhaps might be said about that later. I am not trying to angle myself for a position in the labour hierarchy. Sir, I have spoken as well in terms of the directions in which we will go on the reform of the social services and the improvements to the efficient delivery of services which is another important aspect of the alleviation. I adverted as well, Sir, to the building of partnerships, the NGOs, the labour unions, the private sector and others as well as the international community to ensure that we are able to devise programmes and we are able to find the mode of delivery which is more suitable for the programmes which we have.

We also, Sir, must recognise that issues of crime and violence are important in the context of the eradication of poverty as well, Sir. That when it comes to matters of crime and violence, to a large extent the poor are most vulnerable, vulnerable from the direct point of view in that the harsh reality, if you look across any community in the world, you will find that there are more poor persons who are victims of crime than non-poor persons, whether it be in their capacity as workers who are exposed while they are on the job to the matter of crime, whether they are as persons who walk and live in their communities, because in the super rich communities the average criminal may not be able to gain access to even commit the crime but in the poor communities around the world, as you walk, as you do your business, you are exposed.

Also to the extent that crime is able to undermine the economic stability, the ability to attract investment and so on, then the jobs of those same poor are in jeopardy but also because crime in any society ends up making increasing demands on already strained public resources, increased resources are provided for greater security, greater police patrols and so on then there is a diversion of resources that could very well be used for the eradication of poverty so that the Government's efforts in that regard are to be noted. The improvement of the social safety net and the promotion of community participation, Sir, is perhaps the area in which this particular effort can in fact be located, where the poverty alleviation programme which was started in the last financial year with the \$10 million injection which was used to do a number of things. It was used, for example, to provide the cash grant of \$350.00 to the 14 000 minimum wage earners. It was used as well, Sir, to provide for the repair of a number of houses through the National Assistance Board. Some \$2.3 million was allocated to that. And, Sir, a number of houses for poor persons were repaired.

Also, Sir, in terms of this social safety net, Sir, allocations have been made to the crisis centre for battered women which is to be operated by one of our NGOs, but the Government has created the building and given the facilities, again recognising that some of these efforts are better managed by community based NGOs and that model is going to be used.

Allocations have been made as well, Sir, for the provision of facilities for fire victims and so on. Again

when that proposal is completed that is to be run by NGOs.

You have spoken of the rural and urban development commissions, Sir. The Rural Development Commission, Sir, some almost 2 000 street lights are to be provided throughout rural Barbados to ensure the safety of persons as they move through rural communities, Sir. Facilities where sanitary facilities were lacking in these areas they are being provided by these two commissions. Improvements in roads have been done as well, Sir, again making the areas a lot more attractive to live.

Under the Urban Development Commission, funding would be used as well on the general improvement of housing particularly in the urban area which is a particular problem issue as far as the poor are concerned.

Also, Sir, on the matter of the creation of enterprises, and based on wide community participation, the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme has been able to provide training as well as financing for young persons who are entering into business. I will provide details perhaps in my wrap up on their achievements to date. The Fund Access and the Barbados Enterprise Growth Fund, both the offshoots of the former Barbados Development Bank have started making their disbursements, particularly fund access again to small individuals who need some funding.

The Barbados National Bank has also set aside some funds out of their profits. As you know they have been performing profitably and in fact we have among the members of the Board one of our distinguished colleagues here in the Senate. The Barbados National Bank has set aside a small loans project operating to the benefit of persons requiring small loans and they average \$5 000 for improvements and so on.
1.10 p.m.

Again, Sir, I mentioned the Urban Enterprise Project and the Rural Enterprise Project and they have funds as well. So that this availability, Sir, of financing from the Micro Enterprise Development, particularly in a community based and an oriented manner, allows for an approach to the fight against poverty which this Social Investment Fund is all about.

As I said at the start of my presentation, Sir, the Social Investment Fund is designed to provide support for projects and programmes that are designed to eradicate poverty by the creation of enterprises. It is but one of several of the efforts of this Barbados Labour Party Administration to ensure that true meaning is given to our goal of the economic empowerment of all of our people and that all of our citizens are able to have economic opportunities made available to them and more particularly that we seek to enliven a number of communities around Barbados by moving those economic opportunities to the communities where people live.

Sir, I commend this Social Investment Fund Bill to the Honourable the Senate and urge their support and I close as I began by remembering the words of Marion Anderson,

"That no society can really move on with people who are down trodden unless they have some others down there trying to keep them down"

We in the Barbados Labour Party and this Government want to ensure that all of us are able to soar on the clouds together.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: We are satisfied, Sir, that this Social Investment Fund will go a long way toward helping us to achieve that truly laudable objective.

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

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, Sir, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.
1.15 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This sitting is resumed.

SENATOR Dr. V. J. DAVIS: Mr. President, I would like to make my contribution to this Bill, the Social Investment Fund Bill, 1998. I see that it is a Bill primarily aimed at seeking to alleviate poverty to help small enterprises with investments and so on.

What my contribution today is going to be concerned about – should I say it is sort of a philosophical debate and concern – and that the question of poverty and poverty alleviation I think is a question primarily of knowledge and information. Of course, all that is wrapped up in what we hope is going to be done.

May I please say, of course, that given all the things the Government has been doing in the past because we have to agree that in the whole question of Government in Barbados and the Caribbean from the word 'go' has been concerned with alleviating the lot of people, trying to move them out of the conditions of their lives. We just have to look back at our history and see that that has been the motivation and the driving force in all great leaders. If you have a country with a history of slavery, a history of indentureship, a history of exploitation, a history of man's inhumanity to man, a history

where it is almost common place that the only reason why you should enter into public life of any kind is to pull your fellow man out of that life of indignity, that life of disrespect and that life where one's humanity was not taken into consideration.

So much that we have done in terms of our policies and in terms of our social services and of course, I agree with all people who talk on these issues and we have done it. We have started trying to improve our health, education and so on. We have been in a process, then over this period of time of fine tuning all these institutions. We have all...and I would like to think that I am one of those people who liked to believe and I believe that people in public service are in public service because this is what they want to see. They want to have a better life for all our people.

Sir, investment in education is absolutely important, but I think my emphasis is going to be more on what I like to call the informal education sector. We have spent a lot of money and we know all this issue about education very well. Barbados of course has a very proud history in this whole question of education and literacy and all that. But I think we are going to have to begin to look at the informal education of our people as one of the corner stones in our bid to alleviate poverty. I think so much depends on the information people have and the information available to them.

I have been thinking about this matter very seriously and I was thinking about the people's right to know. I am one of those persons who generally believes that our media and journalists have very important work to do and I think they must recognise the importance of that job of work.

Having said that, because there are so many ideas swirling around my head, my concern is this. We have a Social Investment Fund. We are talking in terms of Rural Development and Urban Development, indeed, I have always felt there really was no good reason why people who live in the rural areas in Barbados should have a lower quality of life, or should live a life with less amenities or anything, so I think we are coming to terms with that.

What I am concerned about is a much more umbrella sort of concern, because I do not see our Social Investment Fund Bill in isolation. I do not see our rural development and our urban development in isolation from the larger issues of trade, of free markets, of globalisation, of the World Trade Organisation, of OECS, ACP, OAU, CARICOM. I cannot see this in isolation at all. As a matter of fact, sometimes I think the more one knows and understands and recognises how insidious is that external manipulation, if you would, of our lives, how much that has an impact on us.
2.25 p.m.

This brings us right back to the whole question of how much control do we have, for example, in the Leeward

Islands or the Windward Islands over the fact that our bananas... If we come closer to home how much control do we have over the fact that our offshore people, our information people, are going to stay, are going to come and after 2 to 10 years they are not going to pull out and leave our people unemployed?

I am saying all of this to say that we have to begin to develop some sort of position about what we in these islands and in these territories are going to create for ourselves. Having said that, I think that we must have as wide a base as possible of people information. This is where my whole theory about information and informal education is going to come in. I thought about the fact – let us start near home with the Barbados/OECS. Let me preface this by saying that I do not believe that they really respect the intelligence of our people and this is why I started by saying the role of journalists, the role of information, because I think if our people were genuinely informed and I do not just mean a little newscast but genuine information that people can understand they would be able to see their own lives.

I do not subscribe to the fact that we are entirely powerless, that we are the victims and we are vulnerable. I do not because I have great respect for what I consider Caribbean civilisation and Caribbean intellect and all that. While I am deliberately not entering into the technical, economic, fiscal issues and why I am pulling this whole thing back in terms of people is because I am convinced that given the information our average, normal human being in this society will be able to grapple better with the conditions of their lives.

I say this because I have heard Caribbean people who have been to the United States, or England or Canada visiting the islands saying things like, "things are so expensive here." I would turn to them and say, "Well, chocolates are cheap in England. Yes, in Canada you have this, but have you ever sat down to think about it that England does not plant one cocoa tree or one sugar cane blade?"

We must begin to think and when I have explained to them they change their tune because I feel that people say things not out of ill-will but more out of ignorance. Every time a Caribbean person is visiting the island and tells me that life in Barbados or wherever is expensive, I give them a lesson right away in the facts of life in terms of primary products, manufactures, trade. Then they understand. I want them to see that they are not just them and us, they are just as much the victims of that whole thing whether they are living in Canada, America or London as we are sitting here in the Caribbean.

Now, what do I mean about giving people information. If we take a simple thing – oh, well, it is not all that simple. That is why I am saying that we want information. We are now talking about Barbados/OECS confederation or

whatever. We have talked all these many years about CARICOM. I am still not convinced that people in the CARICOM have had the basic information they ought to have.

This is the thing about information. Who among us – I must confess ignorance too – would have thought for example that the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, Mr. Panday, would have said in terms of that whole Julian Rogers episode as a journalist that we made an agreement as CARICOM people, we subscribed to certain issues of freedom of movement for certain categories of people but there was something that was not passed? If I did not understand it, I think you will pardon the people in the Caribbean if they did not.

So I am saying this to make the point about information. What is the job of the Government Information Service? What is the job of journalists? How is it that these kinds of information do not get to us? How is it that we are not clear? What are these things that our Government and our Prime Ministers are signing and we do not know what it is they signed for? Was this something they signed? Did Panday sign something? Did Arthur sign something? I know that I spoke about something in this Senate that we passed that people can travel. I know that because I was here. I spoke. But what about the people out there? Do they know what it is their Prime Ministers signed for when they signed treaties?

I would like to see the whole subject that we talk about – poverty alleviation. We all agree and admit that it has to be done in communities and that it has to be a united issue that we have to deal with in communities. My concern, as I said, is with the fact that people must know and I want to see when we go to these communities...

You know, we have all the NGOs, mothers' unions, all these women organisations and youth organisations. We are going to use these organisations in the pursuit of the whole exercise about alleviation of poverty, about enterprises. Might not this be a good opportunity for us? We cannot just simply look at this as a question of money. We have to look at this as a question of information, the spiritual life, the understanding. We have to let them know quite clearly and I myself would like to get this information what do the agreements on CARICOM, Organisations of Caribbean States, Associations of Caribbean States, where do they overlap, differ or have something in common? Where does the Constitution of Barbados and its institutions differ as a member of CARICOM from the organisations of the Eastern Caribbean States?

You know, I really feel a bit distressed when I look at our local television and there are serious issues whether it is that of free travel in the Caribbean within certain categories. I keep saying, having said that bit of news, where are the analysts to sit right there now and start to explain and talk to people for them to understand where the issues are?

What I am saying is that people are terribly short-changed in terms of information. We have to begin. Well, we are fortunate we live in the computer age when we talk about information we do not necessarily mean getting something, and I would like to see that as a first step. Simply put, I am sure that we have the skills and abilities to put in simple language what agreements we signed up for, what do they mean for our people.

We have the ability to do that if even we send people out in communities to talk about enterprises and investment that we talk about. I would like to hear informed talk with those young men and women out there about the connection between their poverty, the things they produce, the World Trade Organisation, globalisation, all that. That is not too difficult for people to explain.
2.35 p.m.

The truth is that I am sure those people out there would understand this better than we can. That is one way. Of course, I also maintain that every one of these communities out there by now should have had a computer. As my friend who is not here today, Senator Goddard, would have said that we should have had Internet. We should have all the information in Barbados that people could just pull out and see so that there is never going to be a one-pronged attack. It will have to be an attack by now that we could, at least, get information out into the communities, into the Churches, into anywhere that people meet or have to deal with the issues of poverty to look at hard facts about their lives.

Take an issue like the whole question about fishing in the Caribbean and the Barbadian fishermen cannot fish in Tobago. I talked about that somewhere. We know full well that Japanese trawlers are out there. Japanese trawlers are all out in the Caribbean taking our fish, but right here among us we say that people cannot go to Tobago. The point is, if the average person in the Caribbean, and I am saying this because I know, and as somebody said long ago, that the people are ahead of the politicians in terms of their sense of being one, and the people understand that this must be some form of games playing that you say you cannot fish out there but you know Japanese trawlers are out there.

I have already spoken about this whole issue of who moves and who does not move. The irony is that we all know that without these flags and Independence we were running up and down and living and eating from all the different islands so that we wonder if we have not taken a retrograde step sometimes. But, No. I will always say "No." It is all right to have Independence but it is also a right to be able to think for yourself.

I am very happy that my dear Senator on the right, Archdeacon Springer, is here because I was going to quote from something he said about what I would consider the approach having given people in all these communities the information and in as simple a way as possible. I remember

at the Workers' Union Thanksgiving Service on April 30 our dear Archdeacon preached an interesting sermon. I am not a preacher and I would not go into the text and all that but I do know that part of the theme of the sermon was the fact that Jesus Christ asked: "What would you have me to do?" meaning that it is all right for us to think we know what people need. It is all right for us to think that we can sit on high and decide what is the best way but I have really always had the faith in the ability of our people to come up with interesting ideas.

I think as part of our whole poverty alleviation exercise, as we go out and give people relevant information I think part of that whole exercise should be, what would you have us do? Ask those same people out there giving the information: "What is the best way, you think, we can handle these issues?" because we do not have all the answers. There is a lot of creative thinking and creative ideas out there. Beside the fact that there are creative ideas out there, you give people the kind of sense of empowerment and you give the people the sense of their own dignity and worth when you have the decency to say to them: "Now these are the issues. What do you think would be the best way to deal with these issues?" Then we could proceed from there.

Another thing is, unlike other people I really do not enjoy – I am sorry to say that – the call-in programmes because I tend to be a little impatient. I feel if people are just talking without information, if people are just talking out of emotion, it is just a waste of time. It is a waste of energy. People must have information on which to base their ideas and queries so that I am not a fan of the call-in programmes. I would much prefer to try and explain to people, this is the issue. This is what you can do. This is how we are circumscribed by what we can do because goodness knows, there are people who want to circumscribe our lives and limit our lives. They have been working at this exercise from the time they populated these territories. How can they control us, and we have to break out of that.

I was very amused. I said this to a friend and they thought I was quite crazy. We just had a Conference on the EU/ACP and people talked and talked. I said to a friend, "why do we need to have any more agreements with Europe and they were shocked". They said: "Why, you are mad!" I said: "Why am I mad? For 500 years you have always been manipulating us. You have been taking all our products. They have been living off us. They have built society off our labour, goods and resources."

They have two reasons why they need us. I like to talk to people. One German said to me: "But, of course, we need the ACP people as a sort of buffer against the United States." Okay, I can understand that. We are talking about US dollars verses EU currency.

Also, there is another reason. When you look at what Europe is today, they need us more than we need them. I do

not see why, what is this exercise about. Japan, China and Korea do not care about Europe. They just tested a nuclear device. I am not saying that is what our people must do. I am not saying that because as far as I am concerned I hope people in other parts of the world spend that money on the basic social services but the point is those are not people who are bothering about what Europe says or what Europe does not say. Europe is bankrupt of any ideas. Europe is the same Europe that is trying to get us again into a second form of dependence, not that the United States is not doing that too.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Davis, I was drawing to your attention that you have a further three minutes. I am wondering whether you could, perhaps, come closer to what is before us.

SENATOR Dr. V. J. DAVIS: Of course. This is what I was saying. Social investment, quite frankly, I cannot see this in isolation. I see this as part of that general situation which we found ourselves in at the end of the 20th century. I think it is very relevant to talk about EU and the ACP because the truth is that we are not going to have people to trade with when we want. We will be squeezed out of this whole thing if we do not look at our options.

The truth is that sometimes we hear that we get funding from these people, international development and so on to carry on these programmes as I ask myself whose money that really is. These people owe us money. I will not even go into that. I am happy to see this Social Investment Bill and anything that helps to alleviate poverty and to give people more dignity in their lives.
2.45 p.m.

I would end by saying that the way I see the journalists, the way I see the role of information, the way I see the role of knowledge, that all that has to be a very very integral part of any question of poverty alleviation. It must work from every nook and cranny of our society. As the Leader of the Senate said, information must be continuous. Information must always be there and available. We must not think simply in terms of the formal education structure but we must keep giving our people relevant information, simply put and that any ordinary human being can read and understand otherwise we want people who will be able to explain the situation to them.

Mr. President, thank you.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Symmonds, before you start I note that Clause 2(2) of the Bill says that the Act should be given such fair, large, and liberal construction and interpretation as would best ensure the attainment of its purposes. I would ask Honourable Senators who are yet to speak not to take that too literally because it might be in conflict with the Standing Orders which call for relevance.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss O. P. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, this Government is the first as far as I know to have earmarked funds for the alleviation of poverty. Barbados is one of the first islands in the Eastern Caribbean to do this. It is very very earnest about the problem of poverty and has a more focussed approach to improving the quality of life and the level of income. As our Leader has said, the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission can target pockets of poverty and deal with them.

Mr. President, again as our Leader intimated, for this programme to be a total success there needs to be all levels of support particularly from the non-governmental organisations even if it means creating more community based organisations – the more the better. The churches already have programmes. I have mentioned before in this Honourable Chamber that the Salvation Army is trying to develop strategies that will assist with the alleviation of poverty and release the poor from the poverty trap. I have mentioned the feeding programme and also their delivering food to 50 persons six days a week.

The Leader, Mr. President, mentioned indicators of poverty in Barbados. I was particularly interested to note his mention of gender being a key variable because gender, Mr. President is a key issue. He mentioned that most of the poor households are headed by females. In fact, these females tend to be below 44 years of age. I think that NGOs, especially women's organisations, should pay attention to this problem.

Mr. President, the Commission on Social Justice is looking at the alleviation of poverty. We have already addressed some matters and we are in the process of interviewing groups to see what can be done. The Advisory Council on Women has also earmarked that as one of its priorities and there is something which I particularly wish to draw attention to here, Mr. President – that is, that one of the reasons for poverty among children generally is that they are not getting the support from non-residential fathers as they should. It is very important when we consider the education of boys and the fact that from early I think that they must be taught to shoulder responsibilities. Responsibilities generally, responsibilities at school, responsibilities in the home, responsibilities as citizens.

Many of these cases do not go before the court or to Welfare. I hope that NGOs, as I have said before, especially Women's Organisations will see in what ways they can help poor children when it comes to alleviation programmes.

Again, this Bill is very important. I have the greatest pleasure in supporting it totally.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. President, in listening to the introduction this morning by the Senate

leader I was truly uninspired in respect to what the proper approach to a Bill of this nature should be. I am heartened that after lunch we have had at least one contribution which has brought, I think, the debate into the kind of perspective that is required.

Sir, this is a discussion about poverty and I sat here in awe and watch an expressionless Senate Leader as he spoke about his version of the Social Investments Fund Bill, the one we are now dealing with. I just could not make contact with what the Honourable Senator was trying to say to this Chamber.

Sir, the responsibility therefore lies with us the remaining contributors although he did promise in his wrap up he would get closer to the subject as he has two bites in the cherry and most of us have one. I have one hour and I will try to use it the best I can and represent the view of this organisation.

Sir, poverty is about people. We need therefore in putting our programmes together to first define who are these people we are talking about. I do not have the privilege of the document yet which the Honourable Senator used so profusely but I do not believe that I need it because if I am going to use it to source non-sensible meaningless figures like that the poverty index moved from .45 to .39 I do not need it. I do not know who in Barbados I can go to and tell them that the poverty index moved from .45 to .39 and what sense it would make to them.

The young lady who I was dealing with yesterday evening who called me in my office crying out for help and who I went to see yesterday evening if I told her that the poverty index is now down what difference would it have made to her about finding a home? What difference would it have made to her about feeding her children? Absolutely nothing.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please let us hear Senator Boyce.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: That is what we have got to make contact with in this Bill, Sir. We have got to make contact with the fact that we have an aged population for instance, who are not being satisfactorily taken care of. You talk about the call-in programmes and that the call-in programmes...
2.55 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator ...

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Not you, Sir. When I say "you" I really mean "we". We talk about the call-in programmes and as painful as it was, Sir, I took some notes while Senator Farley spoke about that and he made the point that the call-in programmes are essentially anecdotes and he does not pay them tremendous attention etc. I want to make the point...

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: On a point of order, Mr. President, the Honourable Member should really refrain from breaching the standing orders and misleading the House. I said the complete opposite. I said that I pay particular attention to the call-in programmes.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: The Honourable Member, Sir, has got a little more life. Really we should look at having lunch earlier and allowing the Senator to speak after lunch.

Sir, the point I want to make, the anecdote that he spoke about is the same anecdote that informed this country only about 2 weeks ago that the old age pensioners had not got an increase at the last increase in salaries. The phone had hardly been put down. Rev. Hatch had hardly disconnected the caller, Sir, when the Prime Minister announced that he would raise the pensions in consonance with the increase to the civil servants. So the call-in programmes do serve a purpose.

Sir, the aged therefore are a group of persons who must be targeted by a poverty alleviation programme and we know, those of us who work in communities know the circumstances under which many of them live. We know the circumstances under which many of our parents live and they are trying and testing and we know they need more. They built this country and nothing could be too much for them. If we are reaping sweets in 1998 and if the economy is doing wonders they must be numbered among those who we target specifically for assistance in any poverty alleviation programme.

I want to add to my list of special targeting groups, the physically and mentally challenged in this society. I do not need any survey to tell me that they are the people who suffer predominantly in this country and once you are suffering, Sir, you are encountering a level of poverty. I am saying that many mentally and physically handicapped need also to be specially targeted. We need the development and the implementation of programmes to reflect this kind of interest.

For instance we know that the allowances given to the physically and mentally challenged in this island are not adequate and indeed many of the challenges which some people face are not even recognised as cases for granting these allowances and I speak specifically of illnesses like cerebral palsy, Sir.

There are in truth and in fact very few ailments which prevent us from carrying on our normal work which are recognised adequately by our social services programme and I would love to ask that if we are looking at a meaningful poverty alleviation programme these people need to be drawn into that net, the net which the Honourable Senate Leader did point out so many of them had fallen through. If you are falling through the net, Sir, you need to narrow the holes. That is a simple principle of fishing, Sir. If you agree

to fish for dolphin you are not going to use the same size net as if you are going for pilchards or for whale. Of course I am only using the analogy figuratively. It is not supposed to be an accurate reflection of how fishermen do their work. It is not supposed to be that. Anyhow, talking about fishing, fishing is of course at the heart of the community which is so dear to me and it is the breadline for a number of people living in the Oistins area and the Sayers Court and Silver Sands area. And we have had a very tough season, Sir. The fishermen are complaining and the boat owners are complaining to the enterprise owners, the same enterprise owners that we talked about because the definition is clear that the removal of poverty is going to be brought about by programmes and policies designed to eradicate poverty by the creation of enterprises. So these enterprises are suffering at the hands, Sir, for instance, of the same non agreements which the Honourable Senator who sat just two times prior to me, not the one who just sat, Senator Davis if I may refer to by name, Sir, when she spoke about our inability to harness an agreement with the Trinidad Government for instance and publicly not pay enough attention to the importance of getting that agreement finalised. Because if 5 years into an administration we cannot boast of even getting near to the desk of the responsible Minister in Trinidad we are in a sad way and a number of people in the community that I work in depend on fishing for their livelihood and their enterprise is being washed away.

Sir, there is another very special group and it was referred to. This is one of the few things he did refer to and it was the question of the working poor, the ones who, because of the cost of living, because of the cost of doing business in this country, cannot operate on the salaries that they encounter and these persons are not limited only to the \$200 and \$150 a week jobs that are being created by the Ministry of Trade, Sir, down on the Harbour Road, but they include some of us who are earning salaries in excess of \$2 000 and \$3 000.

It might be surprising but because of the financial net we find ourselves in today, because of the cost of living, the cost of a motor car, the cost of wear and tear on a motor car because of the ridiculous conditions of roads, this is the worst condition of roads I have ever encountered in Barbados without a doubt and as if to compound the issue, Sir, wherever the road looks too smooth they send an agency to dig it up, Sir, and cover it over with some kind of marl. Wherever the road looks too smooth, they send an agency to dig it up, Sir, and cover it over with some kind of mud. That has been a consistent observation of mine throughout Barbados. The South Coast Sewerage Project is at the tip of the iceberg. That is a special case and we will have many opportunities, I am sure, to discuss that question because that is a very serious question.

3.05 p.m.

Sir, this working poor needs to be addressed. They can only be addressed by meaningful programmes for instance and relief in taxation. The reality is that we are paying more

taxes today than we were paying in 1994. We are paying 36 cents in every dollar in taxes in 1998 in the year of boom, in the year of plenty, in the year of extraordinary foreign reserves, we are paying more taxes than we paid in the year of lean of 1993 when the programme for restructuring clicked into gear and we have seen the results of that programme.

So we have to address in our programme, the question of the working poor, single mothers. I think someone might have mentioned them too. They need special treatment. We should be hearing programmes coming out of the mouths of the policy makers of that Side...well, it does not matter now. Their time will soon finish. They will be soon over anyhow, Sir. There are only a couple more months before the people of Barbados will have the opportunity to go out there and return the Democratic Labour Party to the Government of this country, Sir, and we look forward to that day, Sir.

The single mothers, Sir, have got to be included in this grouping. Senator Symmonds did mention the fact that some of our fathers are not necessarily as responsible as they should be and they do not have to be addressed necessarily by hand outs again. There can be programmes in place and the Senator alluded to the strengthening of the family for instance. She said specifically and I embrace her comments because this is a position which, when taken by the Leader of the Democratic Labour Party just around January this year, he was poured scorn by the Members of the Barbados Labour Party.

SENATOR THE HON. Miss O. P. SYMMONDS: On a point of order, Mr. President, I did not refer specifically to any strengthening of the family. I talked about education at all levels of the society, in the school and other areas.

Aside.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Barker, you are not in the Chair, I am. I do not wish to hear your voice again.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: I will continue, Sir. I think that if Senator Symmonds wants to now join other Members of her organisation and try to pour scorn or discredit the programme of the good Opposition Leader, Sir, let me say it myself. Let me put it in the record myself.

A family first programme, led by anyone in Barbados will be useful in alleviating poverty. If Mr. David Thompson believes that it can work in his area in St. John and that he wants to spread it as he sees fit throughout Barbados, I think that he should be applauded for his efforts, Sir. I am seeing it work in St. John. It will strengthen the family unit, a unit which we all know deep down in our hearts is at the core of a lot of the difficulties that we are encountering today, Sir.

So let us not trivialise this question of the strengthening of the family either by way of education, either by way of providing facilities, or recreation for them. Do not

let us pooh pooh it, Sir, it is very, very important. It is crucial. We cannot move from here this evening unless we acknowledge and accept it. We cannot leave here unless it is firmly grounded in the minds of all of us. I think it is absolutely important. That is how important I feel it is.

Young people – that is the next group I am coming to and I would have thought, for instance, when the Honourable Senator spoke that he would have referred to his programme with the Small Business Association. There are \$2 million which the Prime Minister – and I am going to ask the Prime Minister about it because if Senator Farley cannot answer the question, I will ask the Prime Minister myself, what has become of the \$2 million for the Small Business people in Barbados? The last time I asked that question, Sir, was about a year ago. I heard no answer then. I hope in the wrap up – because I have a note that he said that in his wrap up he would deal more specifically with other matters. I hope in the wrap up, Sir, he addresses that \$2 million. He tells us how much of it has been used, how it has been able to stimulate – well I was going to say, stimulate manufacturing, but the truth is that manufacturing is in an absolute decline in Barbados right now, Sir. He would probably want to explain to this Honourable Chamber what is happening in this regard.

We need, through facilities like that...because if you add that programme to the Access Fund and the Enterprise Growth Fund that we heard talked about, Sir, we should be able to build, in truth and in fact, a core of entrepreneurs in Barbados who would be able to take care of any poverty that might exist. Any person with a modicum of common sense would recognise this and this has been stated throughout this world. Whenever you read about employment figures, they tell you that the answer to unemployment through the world is about small businesses.

So any Senator who believes that is foolishness, Sir, is in trouble. His thinking or her thinking must therefore be out-of-date because small business is where it is and that is where the growth is taking place in most economies.

Sir, I want to move to this misguided view by the Barbados Labour Party that theirs is the first programme in poverty and it was repeated again this evening. I want to side fully with Senator Davis on this, Sir, Successive administrations in Barbados and in all our countries have been elected solely for the purpose of bringing some relief to the masses of our countries. There is no other break whatsoever that they are given than when we gave the right to vote to all Barbadians and when adult suffrage was obtained in this country, it was for that precise reason. No other reason. So the Barbados Labour Party propaganda can fill their ears. It will not fill mine and it will not fill the people's out there. It will not fill the Barbadians' ears, because the Barbadians know the truth. This is absolutely no new programme.

Successive Governments have responded to the people by programmes of social development, Sir. One of the features of the programmes of this administration has been the parallel destruction of many of the programmes which have existed. We only need at the organisations like the Child Care Board who are now, after four years in recognising that their slumber is over, trying now to come with hodgepodge programmes here and there, having slept for about two years and done nothing. We read daily in our newspapers about the suffering of children in this country. If the Barbados Labour Party administration believes that coming into this Parliament and making grandiose statements or going up in Bay Street and letting off fire works is going to be enough for the people of Barbados, I warn them, 'it is not so'.

The programmes have got to make contact with the people. I should not be glad because when an administration is elected in this country, it is elected to work for the masses. The programme that we are seeing is a complete subjugation of the masses in this country once again. Look at access to our beaches. Look at the West Coast. What are we playing around with? I am saying it is time to wake up over there and recognise that all this razzmatazz and all the cocktail parties...I do not go to them. They could save the mail and stop sending me invitations because I am not going to them.

Mr. PRESIDENT: That is totally irrelevant, Senator.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, what I want to say is that we are actually seeing the destruction of our National Assistance Board, for instance. We are actually seeing the destruction of our National Assistance Board, the destruction of our Youth Service and I will speak to that specifically. The officers of the Youth Service have now been disbanded throughout Barbados and even overseas, not to work, you know, Sir, they have just been disbanded and left out there and the programmes have been put in the hands of children in respect to what youth services are all about.
3.15 p.m.

We are getting Ministers in this country who want to manhandle and micro-manage these kinds of operations and have no record of competence in the discipline. I say that the question of youth services is very unique and one has to be specifically trained to deal with these issues. If this programme is one which is paralleled by destroying what we have, I say it is also misguided and it is misplaced.

Let us talk for a little bit about the continuity of this assault on poverty. Even the phrase "poverty alleviation" is not a creation of the Barbados Labour Party, 1990 was declared the decade of poverty alleviation by the United Nations so it is plagiarism to claim it. It is terrible. It is a crime for them to claim "poverty alleviation" as their buzz word or even their programme. It is nonsense, Sir.

The Democratic Labour Party introduced the National Insurance Scheme aimed at providing for the people of

Barbados when you are ill, when you cannot work and providing when you are old and you are finished working. Is that not about poverty alleviation? Isn't that about making life more bearable in our few hours down here? That is a programme introduced by the Democratic Labour Party. Do not tell me that we were not in contact with what is good for poor people! Nonsense! We were created because of that.

Errol Barrow bore this great party with the other founders of this party, the 12 of them. In 1961, when we started our first programme towards poverty alleviation it was the school meals programme. On that Side there were even suggestions that we take the pots and the pans that we contemplated using for the school meals programme and put them in a boat and ship them out. That was the contribution from Senator Symmonds and that era, that group of Barbados Labour Party supporters.

Sir, the greatest gift ever given to the poor masses of this country was free secondary education.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I have already issued a warning. The Senator on his feet must be heard in silence. Please, continue Senator Boyce.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I do not mind the noise because I can deal with that.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No. I will deal with the noise.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: I will just raise my voice a little bit.

Sir, education. I think without a doubt that the granting of tuition free education has been one of the master strokes in terms of poverty alleviation. Sometimes you wonder why is it that we have to go back to this but when we hear uninformed comments like we hear sometimes from that Side one needs to remind people that in 1961 many of us, none of us in here, probably with the exception of one or two could contemplate a secondary education. Our parents could not think further than only getting what they called the primary certificate and moving on. You could not afford it, Sir.

I know a gentleman who works very close to me now and he explained to me that they used to have to roster who was going to school this term and who that term and who would be going to school the next term. I can bring him in if you want and let him tell the story because you tell me it is nonsense. So if you want me to bring this gentleman – I think he can fit through the doors – and let him tell the story. They used to have to roster terms at school.

I am only making a passing reminder of that jewel of poverty alleviation called access to free education. The IMF programme which might have alluded to any changes in that was merely a report in the International Monetary Fund, the

same thing that we read about this morning. They can write what they like but you do not have to listen to them. If they wrote in 1992 and said that we had a charge for education and if they write in 1998 and say we had to increase bus fares we can treat them... We treated them in 1992 one way and you can treat them the same way now. Ignore them!

Those are the facts that we have experienced. If I am not speaking truthfully then one of them should get up and tell me, "No, Senator Boyce, what you are saying is incorrect." None of them dare say so because the International Monetary Fund and the Inter-American Development Bank's people are paid to write their reports. Of course, we were told that we are no longer in any programme with the International Monetary Fund but then again and it was repeated here today we were given certain figures about employment or unemployment and it was said that employment moved from 1994 to 95 000, to 1995/96 from 95 000 to 105 000. Of course we know that that story about the first year's growth in employment in Barbados subsequent to the election of the Barbados Labour Party caused great concern in this country.

To this day even, when you read the Economic Report for 1997, it has in it as a footnote to the unemployment figures something to the effect that you can disregard these figures because they are probably not right. The good Senator stopped at 1996 and has not gone past as far as employment or unemployment. He got 6 000 jobs and he stopped.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: On a point of order, Mr. President, I hate to stop the Honourable Member's voluminous presentation. However, I quoted unemployment figures for 1997. I referred to 1993 and the numbers and the 1997 numbers. The Honourable Member is misleading the House to suggest that I even made reference let alone stopped at 1996.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, he boasted about the figures of 1996 and did not boast after that. He switched right there to a programme of poverty alleviation.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, on a point of order. I did not mention 1996 at all in my presentation. I would request you to request the Honourable Member not to misquote me.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Mr. President, this strengthens my position that the Honourable Senator should be allowed to speak after lunch when he has more energy and he can...

Mr. PRESIDENT: No. No personal reference.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: No personal reference, Sir. After lunch we are used to...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Boyce, please proceed.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, the point I want to make is that like the Barbados Labour Party administration, the Senator this morning shifted from unemployment and employment figures to a programme of poverty alleviation, and the Labour Party has taken that position too. They no longer want to defend the question of 30 000 jobs. They cannot any longer defend the question of 30 000 so they are very much into this programme of preaching that they are the founders and the sponsors of poverty alleviation.

They set a programme in place for Pinelands and were it not for the agitation of the MP for the area and the Democratic Labour Party that money would probably not be available to them yet. We had to go in there with Mr. Hamilton Lashley and force this Government to honour its promise to the Pinelands Development Council. It is a masterly programme.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is misleading the Senate. The Government was at pains to try to offer all possible assistance to get the Pinelands Creative Workshop to meet the conditions which had been agreed for the disbursement of the funds. There was no meeting with any Democratic Labour Party or any pressure to force the Government. The conditions were set at the point of agreement and the money was released when those conditions were met. The Honourable Member is misleading the Senate to suggest that the Government had promised them money which it did not want to deliver and it is only on the basis of some action by the Democratic Labour Party that those funds were reluctantly released.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I know that you will be noting the time that is being taken from my contribution by the Honourable Senator who, in my opinion, is deliberately trying to...

Mr. PRESIDENT: This is not a football game, Senator.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: The question of the money for Pinelands Development required the interventions of a number of persons and I am not going to get in here and have any contest about who intervened.
3.25 p.m.

I spoke to many of the Permanent Secretaries responsible for the problems and I know the problems. I would not be so uncharitable to discuss the difficulties that were had here but I am saying that it could be fast-tracked. Everybody knows that you do not pick up Government money and push it anywhere just like that. You cannot do it.

The point is that when you go out there and make promises you should also put that caveat in the promise.

Stop grandstanding with your promises because if you go out there and grandstand with your promises the people are right to interpret that you are coming immediately. Tell them what the facts are. If there are difficulties that accompany this kind of grant, explain to the people involved that this is what is involved. It just cannot happen so. Do not give the impression to the people involved and to the public of Barbados that you just write a cheque for \$1.5 million. It does not work so in Government or anywhere. It does not work so in families so I do not understand what the quarrel is about. There is no difference in that.

The point is it took some urging and the MP for the area, Mr. Hamilton Lashley, was involved in that urging so that is an interruption by the Honourable Member. It is not any point of order. But I am not ruling on it, Sir. I am only making a comment. You rule on those things, Sir.

I want to come to the origin of this Fund, Sir, because we are only talking about this Fund today because there existed something called the Public Enterprise Investment Fund and the creation of that, because that too when it was created in 1994 by the then Minister of Finance, David Thompson, it was accompanied by the contributions on that Side which akin it to the creation of a political pork barrel from which Democratic Labour Party politicians would dip. It was to be a slush fund. Those were the kinds of terms that were used by them on that occasion.

Sir, the facts are that when one examines the records in terms of the handling of social services in this country one recalls, for instance, I think it was 1985 the enquiry into the National Assistance Board, just before the 1986 elections, and the kind of findings of the Commission. I would beg the Honourable Members over there during our tea break this evening to go and search it out or even ask the Clerk to have it for them so they can glance at some of the things referred to. That was an instance, Sir, of pork barrel politics.

We created the Public Enterprise Investment Fund with specific terms, but today we find it necessary to shift the funds from the Public Enterprise Fund. Let me make it very clear. The Democratic Labour Party is not voting against the creation of a Social Investment Fund but one has to put in perspective and put the "now-comes" in a position that they understand what is going on and where the history of this debate is grounded. The fact is that when we created the Public Enterprise Fund first of all, we were charged with all kinds of things, that we were selling the family ware, we were disposing of valuable property, we were disposing of this and that, we were destroying this and that. What have they done? Have they bought them back?

The shares of BET have been available for this Government to buy from the time they got into Government in September 1994. Have they repurchased them? No. Have they bought back Heywoods? No, Sir. Have they bought back Arawak? On the contrary, they are wallowing

in the wisdom of putting the future of Arawak and enterprises like Arawak and Heywoods into the hands of the private sector. As I mention that there is an important point that if I have time I am going to get back to the private sector, and the private sector has been able to run with it.

This is not an unfamiliar theme. No. A lot of investment in this country has required that nudging from Government. When tourism was first thought about in Barbados, the largest tourism venture in Barbados was the Hilton Hotel and it was undertaken by the Government. They were the ones who went out there and put the risks up and they did the same thing at Heywoods.

There came a time when it was prudent and it was clear that we could only move these enterprises forward by including private sector in it. This is a normal progression. This is nothing unusual. It did not happen because the Barbados Labour Party is now Government. This happens, and then the private sector got involved. The private sector is driven by the bottom line. They are driven by profit motives. That is a fact. Governments on the other hand are charged with a social responsibility which does not always allow them to look at the narrow ideals of making a profit. They have sometimes to subsidise certain areas like education, health and social services. So do not let the private sector in Barbados get away with any theory that they have the answers, that they have done more than their share. They have done some, yes, but they have been essentially nudged by Government, certainly in my living memory.

There are a number of big businesses in the private sector in Barbados which are replete with failures too. We know that and they have struggling times. We can think of the projects like the agricultural projects both the one in the south and the one in the centre of the island. Both of them are in trouble, not to talk about Carib Express, so do not let them get away with anything about they having any greater knowledge than anybody, that they know how to make enterprises work.

Government essentially in the initial stages had to prop them up and then let them go. Governments in the Caribbean bleed because of their input into airlines and other agencies that require assistance are not given that assistance, so we have to put things in perspective when we talk about this question of enterprise, who is to lead enterprise, and where we should be directing our efforts.

When they criticised the Democratic Labour Party for creating this Fund, and referred to it as a political pork barrel from which the politicians would take, it had certain restrictions on it which it will not even have when we are finished tonight because tonight when we are through, after we have dealt with the clauses, the facts are that the Social Investment Fund into which such financial resources are as determined by the Minister of Finance, he alone is going to decide where the funds are.

Clause 5 says:

"The Fund shall be administered by the Accountant General under the control and direction of the Minister of Finance."

He will decide on everything from the resources of the Fund and who will get the sums. It says: "All sums made available to the Fund by way of gifts." He will make all the decisions in respect of the Fund. Already, taking that power and leaving it with the Prime Minister is causing some difficulty.

We have had situations where Members of Parliament on both Sides are complaining about having to send people up to the Ministry of Finance. This is not right. We have institutions set up for these things. We are stigmatising people when we ask them to go to Bay Street to get any handout. That is stupidity. That is a backward step. We should be looking to even divest the Child Care Board and these kinds of institutions and the National Assistance Board into the communities as I think Senator Symmonds said. We need to be looking at that kind of programme not a programme of more centralisation.

3.35 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, on a point of order. I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member but I think I have to set the record straight. He quite rightly alluded to the Public Enterprise Investment Fund which his Government set up in 1993 but I have here an outline of that fund and it says that just as in the case of this new measure "the fund shall be administered by the Accountant General under the control and direction of the Minister". These are the same conditions.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, I did not think that I would have to spend my valuable time lecturing to the Honourable Minister about the subtle differences. The Public Enterprise Investment Fund was specifically designed to make money available for specific projects. In other words a person who may want funds for a hotel, that was the conceptualization of that time. That is what was going to happen with the Fund. Nobody is quarrelling but what they are doing now...

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order, Mr. President. The Honourable Senator is misleading the House. I am going to read from the debate...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I would advice you not to read from the debate but make your point as simply as you can.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Sir, the monies that were obtained specifically for the Barbados External Telecommunications and Barbados Mills were to meet obligations of debt both here and externally. That is what the money was taken for. There was no specific programme laid

out here by the Minister of Finance for the day, to say what was going to be done with the money.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, if that is the position then Senator Murray is duly informed about the difference so I need not go down that line anymore.

Sir, we need to move away from this question of 'pork barrel' politics and understand that the people in Barbados have gone way beyond this stupidity in politics and I am not going to be subscribing and partaking of it. I will allude to it in here from time to time as it is relevant to the debate but I am going to make it very clear that when I am out there talking to the people of Barbados about important developmental matters, we do not have any need to go into who is providing the assistance or who is going to provide the answer. When I meet a traumatised family it is the answer they are after, they are not concerned with where it is coming from so much.

If the Barbados Labour Party feels that sending \$350 to the people who work for minimum wages in Barbados is sufficient, let them send the \$350. If they send nothing to the unemployed and they feel that is logical and that it makes sense, let them proceed. If there is wisdom in this kind of activity, let them proceed. They should have solace in their judgment and in what they believe is wise and pursue the programme with all their energy.

The people in Barbados have specific needs which we on this Side have a responsibility to deal with also. I want to say that the unemployed should also be recipients of some of these funds that are being bandied about by the Barbados Labour Party administration. I mentioned the single parents and the aged who have not been able to derive sufficient benefit, Sir.

I want also to indicate to this Chamber that the funds speak too of the creation of the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission and we have had our say on this. One of the things that we must recognise is that when the Rural Development Commission gets up and say that they have done five or six roads, what is it? The Ministry of Transport and Works in Barbados has been for donkey years responsible for the building of roads in Barbados and they do it. If now you feel like doubling up and taking workers from one place and putting them somewhere else to build the same roads under, that is your business. It does not add to the total picture. All that has happen is that it is easier for acquaintances to have arrangements made for them to build roads *et cetera* and participate in this programme. It is derived to drive entrepreneurial activity and this is being recognised. I hope that pie is being spread evenly. I have a list but I cannot refer to it nor can I make it a document of the House. I know where I can find information about where these things are being awarded and we know what is happening. In the fullness of time we can talk about that.

The National Housing Corporation has been all the time responsible for the building of houses in this country and the repair of houses in this country. Also, agencies like social services and the National Assistance Board. This is nothing new. On this occasion the Prime Minister can hold up a list instead of the Minister of Social Services. It does not make a difference to the people of Barbados, it does not make the Prime Minister any larger in the eyes of the people of Barbados. I think that if we have agencies that are set up to deal with specific task, we need on occasion to look back and to strengthen those agencies instead of putting agencies on top of agencies.

The question of derelict houses has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Health for years and the Act makes clear the position to the removal of derelict houses off properties in Barbados. To create an Urban Development Commission now charged with this responsibility is no big thing and I say it unreservedly. It is no big thing as the Senators over there want to say. That they have discovered poverty and that they have declared war on poverty and that they are going to have the answers for poverty alleviation, eradication, elimination or whatever.

These things have been going on for years uninterfered with by Prime Ministers in this country and we need them to remain so. We need that the relevant Ministries be given a clear mandate as to how they should operate. We have a situation now where departments are tripping over each other. There is confusion. For instance in education. I am astounded to learn that the criteria reference test which the children are taken through, that there is absolute confusion between the Ministries and the schools.

I have in my possession documentation which shows a principal of a school in Barbados writing to parents and saying that there is confusion in respect to the information that they submit to the Ministry and the information the Ministry has sent to the parent. This has created havoc in families in Barbados. When that letter came home to parents and their children are graded unsatisfactory and because of the confusion that exist in that Ministry. If there is no education there can be no eradication of poverty. Children have got to learn so that they can eventually earn.

We are saying that if we are going to so manage our affairs at the policy level as to create this kind of confusion where hundreds of children in Barbados have been graded zero and a Ministry can allow that kind of information to go out unattended. Can you imagine the kind of havoc that reigned in families where you know very well that your child has been doing well all these years and then to find that kind of confusion.

While the Barbados Labour Party administration may want to come in here and parade what they term their social programme, I want to caution them that they are not serving

any useful purpose when they are in parallel seeking to destroy existing programmes for development in this country. We are seeing a situation where quite rightly the people of this country are characterising these activities as merely Barbados Labour Party vote catching exercises and we are going to ensure that where they are such we will make sure that the people understand that. You cannot skim over these problems and then tell me you are dealing with poverty alleviation.

3.45 p.m.

We had hearings about this poverty alleviation. The relevant Ministry organised a series of hearings around this country and I went to at least 2 of them, maybe 3, if I recall and the fact is that people are going over things that were discussed. I remember those programmes in the 1960s, all the contributors young and small. We have the information, Sir. Whose propaganda exercise is it? Who is trying to pretend? What is new when all these programmes are in place and there needs to be a strengthening and there needs to be a provision of information and that fact was made absolutely clear by Senator Davis when she spoke. We need to provide information so people can find the answers, so people can actually get involved in the kind of enterprise which this fund contemplates.

Sir, a nation can only be built by people who are healthy. We can only have enterprise in a healthy environment and I mean healthy both in the broadest sense and in the narrow sense that you want to feel good and the nation cannot be well if our health services are at the level that they are at.

I am hearing all kinds of rumblings in the Ministry of Health. Only today, I think it is something to do with the health inspectors, a vital link in this whole question of health in this country. If we have an outbreak of any kind of disease, is the Minister of Health going to get on a bicycle or something and ride about and pour out disinfectant? I do not understand. We have got to build confidence in our institutions so that they can work. We have the situation where the hospital is in disarray. There is no question at all about it. There is no question in my mind about it. People are complaining daily and I do not want to get specific and talk about any cases but people are complaining daily. The St. Joseph Hospital has been shut deliberately by this administration and the enquiry has not even dialled the number yet, Sir. Whenever the St. Joseph Enquiry is ready ...

Aside.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Well even if the present Minister is not the Minister, if the start of the enquiry cuts across her leave, Sir, she might not be able to deal with that enquiry herself but her substitute, the acting Minister I am sure will deal with it. So we have got to have a healthy nation if we are going to have the environment of enterprise that we talk about. We have got to have a nation of hope.

The Honourable Senate Leader, he talked about it. I listened very carefully to what little he said. He said earlier that in any society where there is poverty there will be crime and that crime is indexed to poverty. I am asking the Honourable Leader of the Senate now, where is crime today in Barbados? Do not come to me with any book figures. I do not want any book figures like what he related to.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, in the interest of accuracy I have to rise again. The Honourable Member is clearly prone to inaccuracy today. I did not, Mr. President, as the record will show, make the assertion that poverty is indexed to crime. I did draw a connection between crime and poverty. The issue of indexing is an assertion which would be based on empirical evidence. I have no such evidence. I said the poor are particularly vulnerable to crime and I went on to discuss the impact which crime has on the poor and the ability of the society to commit resources but I did not say that poverty and crime are indexed and the Honourable Member should withdraw that false attribute in terms of attributing that false statement to me.

Sir, there were very few attributes to the presentation this morning so I would be hard pressed to find one anyhow so I do not know what the Honourable Member is speaking about.

Sir, crime in Barbados is on the increase. Do not let anybody put any figures in front you, Sir, and pretend that is not true. There is more violent crime in Barbados today than there ever has been to my living knowledge and if as the Senate Leader indicates it is poverty begets crime, increase in crime means that there is increase in poverty so the poverty programme is not working.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, on a point of order, I did not make any such assertion and the Honourable Member by simply changing the words cannot attribute to me things I did not say. I did not make any assertion by whatever words he may want to use that poverty is the cause of crime, poverty 'begets' crime as he puts it, to use his incorrect wording, and so on. If he wants to make the point let him make the point, Mr. President, do not attribute it to me.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Boyce, will you please wind up?

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: Sir, crime in Barbados is on the increase. If we have a poverty programme that is working, those violent senseless crimes that we are witnessing today would be diminishing. The facts are that they are not. The incidence of breaking and entering, the incidence of petty theft. I was reading the newspaper today about \$300 being taken from bus conductors. Sir, this is not good enough and I think that this Government instead of getting out there and worrying about me they should be out

there worrying about the people in Barbados who are suffering these crimes. They should be worrying about whether their poverty alleviation programme is in truth and in fact making contact with the people of Barbados. I am saying that is the position of the Democratic Labour Party that a poverty alleviation programme must highlight its contact with the people of Barbados and the results should be manifested in an improved environment in which we are operating, not one that is more risky and one that is more dangerous. I am sure we will have more opportunities, Sir, to go further into this kind of discussion, Sir, and I look forward to the contribution of the Leader of the Senate when he gets the chance to speak on the Bill this evening.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. President, this Bill to provide for the establishment of a Social Investment Fund is expected and has been performing certainly to assist in the formalisation of processes to alleviate poverty.
3.55 p.m.

Mr. President, this Bill provides for the establishment of a Social Investment Fund. It is expected and has already been performing, certainly, to assist in the formalisation of processes to alleviate poverty.

But, Mr. President, there are some comments that have been made today that I really would want to address and spend just a little time on. The last speaker talked about meeting traumatised people in the road and that those people are not interested in where aide or assistance is coming from. I would want to suggest that he is really lapsing. Because it is directly the responsibility of those in public service, like every one of us in this Chamber, whether appointed, elected or otherwise to serve the public and to be able to direct those individuals to the correct places for counsel and direction.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order, Sir. I cannot allow the record to be misinterpreted like this.

I made it very clear that the emphasis is not where the aid is coming from but that the aid is coming. I am not for any moment suggesting that you can just offer any kind of aid to any person. That is far away from anything that I would contemplate. I am much too responsible for that, Sir.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Yes, Mr. President, so it is with all of us in this Chamber as well as those elected in the Other Place, all persons working in the Government service and all persons generally, who have access to information and knowledge have a responsibility to direct those who may not be aware of where to go to find the means, the resources, the aid and the assistance to complete the quality of life to create a better quality of life for themselves.

This Social Investment Fund, Mr. President, has many factors, the Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission, the Micro Development Fund and several other areas where assistance can be had.

Mr. President, one of the reasons is to create funds for the development of projects in communities. Projects that will most certainly aid in poverty alleviation as it gives individuals opportunities to realise real income and therefore become somewhat self sufficient. And, I must reiterate again that it is our responsibility to direct individuals.

The case was made that perhaps the media and other agencies were not given as wide a choice...the question was asked really what is the media doing in terms of spreading this information. Senator Davis raised that point in her debate as she spoke about giving people the opportunity to find out where to get information...the sharing of information to the people, and that it is important for them to know where they can go and source this information to help to improve their dignity and their self worth.

Mr. President, a lot of the problems that rise up in our communities that cause individuals to have to go to the service agencies, stem in part I believe, from the inability of families, particularly single parent families to cope in trying circumstances. I would like with your permission to quote from a document which I would be happy to make a document of the House, as it looks at the whole question of the society in which we live and some of the problems that could occur and cause funds such as this to be necessary to assist in many areas.

I am quoting from a Richard Carter document from 1994 – "Family Disruption and Dysfunction" and it goes on to divorce and the use of the social agencies and in part it states,

"While it is important to note that one-parent families can be successful, it must also be noted that in the study, more than 80% of the households using the services and those services are the Welfare Department, the Child Care Board, the Government Industrial School, the Juvenile Liaison Scheme and the Probation Department, the biological father was absent.

The study further stated that in our cultural context, fathers often represented the ultimate disciplinary power in households where they are resident, being resorted to for example, serious behaviour infractions and to reinforce maternal discipline.

It is hardly coincidental that father absence in households presented at social agencies is above the national average. The general tendency presented in the data here for households of social agency users are largely in terms of number of persons. More crowded and low income is hardly surprising. Those small spacious middle-classed households also have problems. Such families are far less likely to be represented in the case reports of the social agencies.

Parents in such households have fewer resources at their disposal. The urgency of economic survival detracts from the carrying out of other familiar functions. Close physical proximity. The lack of physical and social space exacerbates the extra familiar pressure facing such households."

Mr. President, the children in such households are therefore far more likely to suffer neglect, verbal and other abuse and to be the objects of vented frustration. And more importantly the atmosphere in such households is less likely to offer the stability, structure, and direction needed by many young people in order to properly organise their own lives. Unfortunately, by the time they are presented to the social agencies identified here, considerable damage has already been done, sometimes irreparable damage.

Mr. President, this Social Investment Fund, the Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission and the Micro Investment Fund will give some of these very young people the opportunity to realise their true and full potential. Whereas in the past there were really no avenues for them to turn to for direction or for advice.

The Fund speaks about creating funds to support projects and programmes designed to eradicate poverty. Projects, Mr. President, such as one that I would like to see, aside from the availability of setting up small businesses and cottage industries which will automatically give young persons and other persons of a more significant age as well, opportunities to be self sufficient.

I would like to see targeted specifically funds to the Government Industrial School. Just this morning I was at the school and somehow or other I said, 'God moves in mysterious ways' because I just had to be there this morning to take care of a matter and here I am today dealing with something like the Social Investment Fund. I was at Summervale, The Girls' Industrial School and I had opportunities to sit with 14 young ladies and Mr. President, it saddens the mind, really that the young ladies in this particular scenario may well find themselves stigmatised and not in anyway able to provide for themselves once they leave that institution.

To that end, I laud the efforts of the many agencies which are seeking to create the opportunity for these young persons who are confined, to become self sufficient once they leave that particular institution. That is how I came to be there this morning so that I could offer in part what I could to make a difference to their knowledge and to their education and to their understanding.

I would and have every intention at the end of today or as early as tomorrow, because Senator Boyce said when we leave here tonight, so there will be no chance today, but in the next coming days and weeks to try to solicit funds from one of these very agencies to work towards the development of a programme to assist these young ladies so that when

they come out they will not be in the position like so many of their forefathers, or mothers more specifically, where they are unable to provide for themselves and find that they have to be knocking on doors, begging, asking, pleading at the whim and fancy of whoever for funds to create a decent way of life.

Mr. President, it makes my skin crawl because I do not believe that people should have to depend on soliciting in any form to eke a living anywhere in this world. It is incumbent on Governments to create the environment which would make a better quality of life available, provided that we channel the minds and channel the resources which this particular Bill that we are addressing today seeks to do to create that better opportunity for those who need it and they indeed are many.

Mr. President, the fund will continue to give opportunities for those who require assistance in developing their homes in such a way as to become a proper habitation and not for many to be squeezed up in one very small area and that, as I quoted from the document, Sir, leads to a lot of antisocial behaviour.

Mr. President, it also speaks of giving assistance to the clearing of slum areas in and around the City of Bridgetown area and other areas. It speaks to providing for the acquisition of lands for sights and services so that people can have somewhere to put a house, or for lots to be created that they can afford because they are now "respectable" in that they are earning a living through legal, comfortable, proud means. It also provides for tenantry roads in the country. I live in the country and I was very happy not so long ago to go into an area which was dark and rocky and on the occasions when I had cause to go through there it made you feel almost ashamed because you were coming through with a car. That, today, I am happy to say, has changed.
4.05 p.m.

As I said before, Mr. President, this Fund will create the opportunity for small business, our cottage industry, something that we must pay special note within the advisory body that manages these funds to ensure that even at the cottage industry level management and marketing skills are brought to bear because too often we go into markets, not only here in Barbados, but regionally in our sister CARICOM countries and the countries of the region, and you find that everybody sells the same thing – tee shirts, baskets, mats etc. If there are 100 stalls all sell the same sort of product rather than being advised and guided that if there are 100 stalls and you have 50 different varieties then everybody can get a little piece of the pie instead of everybody trying to use the vernacular "juk out each other's eyes".

I would really want to see included in the cottage industry funds allocated towards marketing and direction in terms of getting the product out there on time and getting your product out there in such a format that would

be appealing and to structure the whole cottage industry and the sales through market industry in such a way that everybody can get a little piece of the pie.

I am hearing an aside which we are always urged to ignore that we only want big industries. Mr. President, you have to start with the first small step. Big industries sometimes I am sure I have heard one of the other senators saying or other person outside in the wider community...

Aside.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Senator Boyce loves to interrupt but I am ignoring him, Mr. President, I am not even looking that way.

Mr. President, I am a product of small business and I have no shame in admitting to that because that has caused me to be employed for the past 21 years this month. I feel good and proud because like many small businesses when we first started we did not know that we were going to make it 21 years ago. There were many obstacles that presented themselves to my partner and myself.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order. I really hate to interrupt the Senator in her presentation but I am not in any way a product of small business. She is referring to me all the time but I am small business.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. President, I would not waste time speaking about Senator Boyce. He had his hour and he could have raised all that he wanted to on small business and laud himself however he felt like. I would want to compliment him. He is insisting that he is a small business man and I have no problem with individuals who set themselves up in business and one day those businesses will grow if you keep working at it and keep focus and direction.

The responsibility remains, as I said before, to those of us who have made it, whether we came through the cracks or however to make sure that we do not seep through the cracks and that we keep our young persons and other small entrepreneurs on target and on the track by giving of ourselves, giving of information, directing them to the source of information and the source of development so that these small business people can form the bulk and body of an economy.

I am extremely proud of the work that I do. Just this morning I had to share with the young ladies that when I indicated what was my intention to practise as my livelihood at age 6, because I do not make any bones, when I make up my mind about something I have made my mind up. For a family member to decide and say why would I want to do that, why don't I leave it for somebody who cannot do anything better, I did not understand what she meant at 6 but, in the wisdom of grandmothers, my grandmother directed me and I followed my course.

Mr. President, cosmetology may in some people's minds be a vain and trivial profession but I will tell you it leads to self-sufficiency. I can tell you that it leads to self-esteem and for the passage of that self-esteem to many other individuals in communities.

Mr. President, it may appear at first glance as a vain business but I think and I feel that in that capacity we are almost lauded as psychologists because when people sit before you in a big mirror and see all of their life's problems and their flaws we can turn that around to something positive. They go out from our establishment, small or large, and go out there and create the environment of self-esteem where they can do whatever they choose to do.

As one of the Senators is saying, if you look good, you feel good. I am proud that we can make them look good, feel good and stay away from the street corners and it comes out even more forcibly and I do not mean to ponder long on the cosmetology profession but, as I said before, I am a proud product of such and as I go across the length and breadth of this world, because I have had the opportunity through this profession to go into avenues in other very small, remote, poverty stricken countries and to see that those men and women who have chosen this profession as a livelihood are able to make a difference to the economy of the country.

Government certainly knows that taxation on cosmetic goods used to be real high. They have reduced significantly now as we have to pay VAT on them and it has reduced in some small way aspects of the cost of providing service but we do our part.

Mr. President, I am happy that this Social Investment Fund is available and all the other adjuncts to it to continue to give all small entrepreneurs and to give those who may even be bigger business people direction, access to funds and whatever else is needed to help to create the environment that poverty indeed can be alleviated and that Barbadians at large can enjoy a better quality of life.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: Mr. President, let me begin with a concern I have about these debates on these very important social issues. I always have some question in my mind as to whether what we do here in the Senate is really as important as it ought to be or seems to be because it seems to me that with all the useful information that we hear around this table from members on all sides, that it is unfortunate that by the time a decision would have been taken we would hardly have made any input into the legislation that we debate. I do, however, hope that the Leader of the Senate and other leading members of Government present with us would make a point to take back some of the useful elements of the debate and so encourage whoever to apply some of them to whatever the procedures are.

I believe that by the time a Bill comes into law and that is to say when it has passed the Senate that there are still

some little matters to be ironed out which I believe would be done at the level of Cabinet, matters such as getting straight the rules and regulations. That is where I hope perhaps that some of the useful information can be used. Otherwise, there really is not much point in the long debates that we have here. That is a concern that I have almost every time we debate matters of this nature and in this case, because I see the discussion on the Social Investment Fund Bill of 1998 as a debate on a Bill having far-reaching consequences, as others have already said.

I do not think, Sir, and this is my first basic assumption, that it is a partisan debate. It concerns all parties, all persons, all groups in the society. I think there is not anything to be gained and certainly no virtue in determining whether I am a BLP poor or DLP poor. If I am poor, I am poor, and none of the sides should want to claim the poor as theirs except in the sense that they belong to all of us as the Lord Jesus himself said in St. Matthew, chapter 26, verse 11: "You have the poor with you always" and that was not intended to be a way to dismiss the poor, but to say, "deal with the matter in hand now. Deal with the poor in due course because they are going to be around you for a long time."

My second assumption is that this Bill is speaking about poverty eradication. If you check the text of the Bill you are going to see – I do not think I saw alleviation in that Bill at all. The word is "eradication" so that we have to determine which one we are after, for it seems to me, Sir, that alleviation is about making the load a little lighter. But is that the goal of the legislation? Is that our aim?
4.15 p.m.

Our aim must be, Sir, and this is what I support, ultimately the eradication, as the Bill itself says, and that is what I am supporting, the efforts being made and to be made in due course for the total – let me introduce the word "total" – eradication of poverty in this society and ultimately on earth, that is to say that what we are after is the fact that we will have no more poor people in Barbados.

Alleviation would be about treating the symptoms and not really getting down to the important aspects of poverty. For example, in the late 18th Century with the emergence of almshouses and other institutions like Childrens' Homes, some of them now 100 years old like the Bessie Yearwood Home, these institutions did not focus on eradication or perhaps even alleviation of poverty. What they seemed to do at that time was to emphasize handouts to those people who were poor and in need of help. All they were doing, as our social scientists have come to realise, was to further pauperise the poor. People who were already poor were being found to be even moreso as a result of this introduction of what should have been to bring some form of alleviation through these institutions.

Sir, the Bill does not define poverty. I think we need a definition of poverty. I believe somewhere about there is a United Nations definition of poverty which, perhaps, ought

to have been incorporated into the wording of the Bill. But if I might venture my own understanding of poverty, I would say, and I have not found this definition anywhere, it is my own composition, that the poor are those who are below subsistence level and who lack the means or the ability to lift themselves up above that level.

Now, there are therefore, in my view, two broad categories of poor in Barbados that we must be concerned with. The first category is that which I call the functional young, male and female, and I include their dependents. Those dependents would be the children of those persons, or groups, or families as well as the dependent handicap. Someone made reference to the need to remember the handicapped person as well, I think it was Senator Boyce. Naturally, they are dependent and even if at a fairly advanced age, those handicapped persons would have, perhaps, the same effect as children who are totally dependent on these persons who are under the subsistence level and so I include them together.

Now, what is necessary for that category of poor? First and foremost they need jobs and they would need to be prepared for their jobs through training. Of course, the children in their care will continue to need the education that is available and be directed along paths that would lead to a form of education that is appropriate, that is to say, that this is in line with the kind of occupational tasks that are available because for too long our education system has, while providing aspects of the technical for people who are so inclined, continued to push people along academic streams. I think the time has to come when those who do not have a lot of money and time to play with, who have been poor and unemployed, and who need help should be helped to find the kind of educational opportunity that would quickly prepare them for the kind of technical pursuits they should be seeking, to help them rise above the poverty line.

They need homes and you could include with that, perhaps, a bit of land. To own a bit of Barbados is the term we are hearing about nowadays quite frequently. They need to be able to support their families and not suffer the humiliation of having their families supported by others or accepting handouts.

I am proud to record that there is still a great deal of pride in our Barbadian people even in their poverty. They want to be able to help themselves and others, their families especially, and not to be accepting handouts from others. In other words, they want back, and to maintain, their self respect. One might say then that they need a jump start, not handouts, that would allow them to continue to achieve.

Aside.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: In whatever way. A jump start with their jobs, finances, grants to help them, in all the ways. We need to

know that these things are going to be done and that the people who need the help will not be bypassed.

If you are looking for a text, Sir, thinking now ecclesiastically, my text would be, "No handouts, but meaningful grants and assistance". When it devolves to the level of a handout then we are demeaning the personality of the persons involved.

There is an old African proverb which I do not recall exactly as it is. I am sure, Sir, you remember it, but it is a proverb that goes something like this. "If you want to keep a man down, and in his poverty, give him a fish but if you want to help him out of it, teach him how to fish". I think that is applicable in this situation that we must not leave any stone unturned in seeing that the right kind of help in this programme is given. You can have the best intentions in the world and have any kind of programme and still miss the mark because your goals are not what they ought to be. So in that category, no handouts. We need to do everything we can to put that workforce, or labour force to work again. 4.25 p.m.

The second category, Sir, that this legislation must be geared towards helping is the category of the elderly poor. There are a number of conditions that must be dealt with, that must be remedied if we are to eradicate those elements and those aspects of life that are related to the poverty of the elderly. For example, Sir, there is a lot of abuse of old people who are badly treated by relatives and others.

At the moment I have to repeat what I have said in an earlier debate that there are professional people who come into contact with abused elderly who are poor. They recognise that there have been abused but there is no law in this land at the moment that requires them to report these conditions. That is an example of something that has to be handled in keeping with our desire to eradicate poverty from among the elderly. We need to deal with the matter of abuse.

Then there is what we all know now, Sir – we talk about it but I do not know that anything is being done in a hurry to deal with it – the elderly being abandoned. They are either abandoned in the Accidents & Emergency Unit of the hospital or on the wards of the QEH or in the Geriatric Hospital or in the Christ Church District Hospital and in some private institutions, I am told. That is something that goes hand in hand with poverty because the people who are able and who have got private sources of funding and whose families are better off, do not have this kind of problem. We are talking about the elderly poor and a very specific need.

Also, there ought to be a law that prevents a utility company whether it be the Barbados Light & Power or whether it be the Barbados Water Authority to turn off the facilities in the homes of elderly people whether or not they have paid the cost. That protection for these people who are poor ought to be such that no one could dare to take

advantage of them. I know, Sir, that several of these elderly poor are left in darkness and then they have to start struggling with the kerosene lamps that could eventually be fatal. They have their water turned off and some of them have not had a wash for days and days at a time, all because there is no particular protection here. We cannot be serious about poverty and new areas and new aspects of poverty if we are not dealing with the current aspects that are related to the poor in our society.

Then there are other related problems. For example the shortage of the nursing facilities and public health nurses. There is a need to add to the number of these because they do not reach the people who need to be reached in the neighbourhood. There is overcrowding which is related to the poverty we are talking about because those people who are not poor would not be subjected to the overcrowded situation in the Geriatric Hospital or the Christ Church District Hospital.

There is a need, Sir, to protect the elderly poor in these institutions from falls and so on by making it mandatory that there should be stairs with the adequate protection and bathrooms with similar protection. We know that these things are not attended to with great diligence in these institutions.

One simple thing that for years we have been talking about – we have been talking about giving spectacles to the elderly who have their sight affected. I cannot understand why we have not included hearing aids, because to be able to hear and hear properly is very essential for elderly people who live alone. Somebody will come and knock and they do not hear or somebody will attempt to speak to them and they do not hear. They are very vulnerable in this regard because if one tries to help a person who cannot see well and cannot hear well, with what the medication ought to be, can you imagine what confusion there is among the poor trying to determine what medication to take and probably ending up overdosing or not taking anything because they are afraid? They cannot see well and they cannot hear well. We can at least begin focusing on those two aspects of their well-being.

Sir, I think it was Senator Symmonds who referred to what the churches have been involved in. I support what she said and can add a whole range of things to what she said. I believe that Government must take the churches – I say churches because I am not speaking for any particular church – into its confidence and work along with the churches as institutions already trained in giving help to the poor. It is not one institution only, a lot of us, churches included, support the Salvation Army. People go around and talk as if it is the Salvation Army alone that helps people. It is that the Salvation Army has specific areas of help but all of the churches that I am aware of, every one of them has got programmes geared towards eradication of poverty. I speak of such areas as financial relief for those who come to them. There are church offices that are functional many hours a

day now, as against the days when they were opened for just a service. Nowadays churches have offices opened all week long, every day of the week, including Sundays. Financial help is given out but it is not adequate, it is not enough.

Asides.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: Yes, they have to take it in their hand so it is a handout.

Asides.

SENATOR THE VENERABLE ARCHDEACON J. L. SPRINGER: That is exactly what we are trying to avoid. We are trying to avoid Government getting involved in the same handouts that obtained in the past from institutions. We have to deal with that. I thought that this Bill was to correct those errors that we have been making in the past. We have been guilty about handouts and it is unfortunate that churches could only give handouts but they were doing the best that they could do. Many people receive clothes in the privacy of a church office that enables them to present themselves on the street when otherwise they would not have been able to do that.

A lot of what I am saying, I know from personal experience because I was involved in it. We have gone around repairing people's houses, fixing floors and putting galvanise on roofs. These are all church projects that I know of and they budget for that. In most of these cases there were elderly people alone in their homes. I am not guessing, I am talking from experience. What I am saying is that there is a cry for help to do more, because this is not adequate at all.

I am saying as well that Government might take a leaf out of the church's books and do some of these things or note them down for future reference. Funeral and burial funds have been set up at churches so that when the elderly came to die, they had a fund somewhere in their names. Credit unions have been established. I had a hand in establishing a credit union at one church and there are other churches that have them specifically for the purpose of helping the poor who were not able to present themselves at a bank or some such public financial institution to get help but who could go to their credit union officers who were their people and their friends, and not feel afraid or embarrassed, and borrow their own money, their credit union monies to get on with what they had to get on with.

I think we should do more as an aspect of poverty eradication to encourage the formation of credit unions all over this country. I hope the churches find a way to listen to what I am saying here too because I think every church ought to have a credit union.

4.35 p.m.

Then on top of all that, Sir, counselling services are provided for those who have had it so rough that they are

about to stop the world and get off. The churches come to their aid sometimes with little more than their ability to comfort them and counsel them and their families. This fund thankfully will help us to go further than that. So, Sir, I mentioned all of that to say that the time has come for Government to challenge the churches to come up with programmes and if they can come up with programmes that are meaningful, acceptable, geared towards the poor then they should be guaranteed funding from the funds of this Bill. I think that is the way forward for us today.

Then I want to end, Sir, by referring to what I regard as two useful experiments which I would like to see in relation to the help they are giving to the elderly poor here in this country. The first one is about a new type of home. Most of the homes we have tend to house either old people or young people. I would like to see a programme where we have homes for the elderly and the young together. They would have perhaps, separate wings in the same institution but provide the opportunity for there to be some kind of inter-relationship between the old and the young because too many of our old people's homes put them there and isolate them and leave them there to die. Some of them age faster and die more quickly because they are not in touch with the vibrancy of youth. I think that if we could provide a new type of home in conjunction with the programmes in this Act that we could bring these two elements together. The old would benefit the young by telling them about the norms and the values of our culture, by telling them stories about life and helping them in that way. The young would give their help to the old by the very life that was bubbling in them and remind the others that life is real and important and also they could do chores or errands on behalf of the elderly.

I look forward to the day when programmes focusing on the poor and the elderly and the children too will move in that direction.

The other one, Sir, is another type of home which I think we should contemplate and that is a home where persons having reached a certain age, when they are now weaker and vulnerable and in danger of attacks by the vagrants would be given an opportunity to move into a kind of home where husband and wife can be and can continue to help themselves, having been provided with a stove and bathroom facilities so that they can continue living the way they are used to and make this available for couples as well as areas for individuals. So they do not become totally dependant until that time is upon them. Very often we take people when they are still useful and can cook their own meals and so on and we rob them of that last facility they have and put them under the care of someone who orders them around and pushes them around as though they were mere animals.

Sir, I think this is a useful Bill that is before us today and it challenges us not to stop at the exact wording of the Bill but as I have tried to indicate, to look beyond that to see in what direction we need to go in terms of not just the

alleviation of poverty but the total eradication of poverty in our country. We do that, not by treating the symptoms but by struggling to remove the stigma being attached to poverty. Thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.15 p.m. today.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.
4.45 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, this Social Investment Fund Bill that we are now here discussing had its genesis in a financial statement which was delivered by the Honourable Minister of Finance on September 29, 1997 where he announced that the Fund will be created and he said specifically that its resources will be specifically geared to supporting projects and programmes which are designed to eradicate poverty by the creation of enterprises.

Sir, this Social Investment Fund is another in a series of measures which this Government is undertaking in order to further this country toward the eventual goal of removing poverty from our economic and social landscape. I firmly believe that this country has the resources, both physical and human, to fulfill the mandate of eradicating poverty. All that is required is the political will to make poverty alleviation part of the programme of action.

I believe that poverty will not go away unless we make a concerted effort towards its eradication. This effort, Sir, must not and cannot be the pursuance of Government alone. We must take the lead role, but the supporting casts must be the churches, youth groups, social groups, charter organisations, all of us, Sir, have an important role to play in the eventual eradication of poverty.

This Government has set the lead. It has made poverty alleviation part of its programme and this Honourable Chamber must support the Government by giving a resounding and unanimous vote of approval to this particular piece of legislation. It is too long in coming because poverty will not go away just like that. Sir, some people take solace from the fact that our good Lord said in a different context that the poor will be always with us. That is taken out of context because it is taken to mean that there is some seal of approval of poverty. But 'no', it is a statement of the human condition, but it must be seen as something which must be eradicated.

Sir, the Government's programme is noteworthy because we believe that poverty will only be eradicated if we

make sure that there are enterprises created to lift the masses socially and psychologically out of a quagmire of despondency and despair.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I heartedly endorse the view that there should not be a question of hand outs. The Government has endorsed that view by its very actions. We are not in this for political gain. We see it as a social and moral obligation borne out of the fact that a lot of us on this side know first hand the effects of poverty. We see it. We came up in it. We learned lessons from it. But now is the time for us to go that extra mile to ensure that we put in place programmes because, as I said before, people in Barbados have no right living in poverty. They have no right living in poverty. We have the resources and the capability to do much better in the area of poverty eradication.

It hurts my heart, Sir, when we read the paper and see a person who, because of social conditions, now 80 years old, who should be proud to see where they have helped to put this country and to see their grandchildren and their great grandchildren attain positions of influence and power in this country, they have to spend their last days in poverty and despondency and despair.

These things ought not be so because we can do better. That is why this Government has put money in the Social Investment Fund and part of the money has gone straight to improve the resources of the National Assistance Board. The Representatives of the people have identified the worst cases and the Government has acted and is continuing to act to remove the pockets of poverty that are still dotting our social landscape.

Our aged and our infirmed must be well taken care of because, Sir, these are people who no matter how much enterprise you create, because of age and infirmity will never be able to participate in the economy of the country again. So we have to make sure that, that group of persons is well looked after. We have to make sure that the programmes are put in place, that the home help programme is given all the resources both financial and otherwise to ensure that our old people do not suffer in the way that they have been.

Sir, a lot of it is not really a lack of money. A lot of the home helpers do not take their job serious enough. I know of cases where there have been charges. All may not be necessarily true, but there have been enough charges to convince me that some of the home helpers are not fulfilling their roles as effectively as possible. A lot of them leave their jobs and let somebody else come and do the work. Maybe, Sir, this is a case for extra training, but whatever the cause is we must make sure that those who are entrusted to look after the elderly in our society do the job efficiently. That has to be done and the National Assistance Board should make sure that there is adequate supervision.

Even if it means, Sir, that there are surprise visits to the home to make sure that the supervisors really see what is going on and to ensure that the old people are well looked after. The workers are paid a wage to look after these people and we have to ensure that the state benefits from the money it expends in this exercise.

Sir, that group, the aged and the infirmed must be properly looked after. Right now we have to both expand and intensify the work of the National Assistance Board. I heard the Archdeacon mention the fact that the utility companies should not be allowed to cut off the utilities of the older people. There are programmes in place where the state takes the taxation from me and from you and uses the money from those taxes to pay the utility bills of *bona fide* cases. It happens in this country that the state, through the same National Assistance Board pays the utility bills of poor people in our society. If they have to be cut off it is probably because it is felt that, that case may not have qualified for assistance from the state or there may be a breakdown in the mechanism.

The point is, Sir, that at present there are provisions where the utilities for the old, especially the elderly poor are taken care of. I take the point that if the light is cut off they have to use kerosene and we know the dangers associated with using kerosene and so on.

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Yes and, Sir, as an energy man I would have some knowledge about this. There is another group that we have now to focus on. That is the working poor. There are lots of people with jobs but the pay is not sufficient to enable them to live in a decent manner. That is a fact. And this Government as a short-term measure has put some money in place last year to augment the income for some of the working poor.

Sir, the Opposition is castigating us for that measure. They do not understand that –

1. In the interim it is human nature.
2. It is stopping a hole.

At this present time it is not possible instantaneously to raise the wage levels of these persons. First of all, most are not employed by Government.
5.25 p.m.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order, Mr. President, I hate to interrupt the Senator but the Opposition did not castigate Government for paying the \$350. We said we supported the measure. I, in my presentation, merely alluded to the fact that there were also the non-working, the unemployed which should benefit. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Chamber.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: The Honourable Member does not understand the word "opposition". I did not say Opposition in here. I said "opposition" and on the call-in programmes we are castigated for doing it. If he is the only Opposition I am glad for that. Maybe he is like the "boy on the burning deck". I said "opposition" in the wider context, in the generic sense, but he would not understand the term.

Sir, it is an interim measure because, as I said before, it is not possible at this point in time instantaneously to raise wage levels across the board. It is not practical. Over time we have to ensure that mechanisms are put in place where decent wages apply. We must note that even in the Income and Wages Protocol, the Comprehensive Protocol, I should say, that provision was made that the wages of the very poor were given special consideration in terms of the protocols that were negotiated. The point is that it has been recognised that there are people in our society whose wage levels are less than what they should be.

The long-term solution is being worked on but, in the interim, the money I am told was supported by the Democratic Labour Party. For the first time we hear that they are supporting it. I want their actions to match their words. To use a biblical analogy, it is the voice of Jacob but the hands of Esau.

Sir, we are working on the aged. We have done something about the vulnerable poor and above all this Government is proud of its record on unemployment. I hear a lot of nonsense from the Opposition but since there is only one opposition and all of us know who I mean but this Government has done more for alleviating the unemployment situation than any other Government. The record is here. What are the facts?

When we came into office there were 104 000 people working in the second quarter of 1994. The last figure – 117 000. That is the statistical record. They are not figures that I made up because I do not make up figures. I interpret figures. The figures were calculated and were estimated from the source that we have estimated them from time immemorial. For the benefit of Senator Boyce he can look in the March 1998 Economic and Financial Statistics which is already a document of the House and the figures for 1997 are in here in black and white.

The last recorded figure is 117 000. When we came in it was 104 000. If that is not a good achievement perhaps Senator Boyce can tell me what is a good achievement. The point is that we recognise that all this talk about poverty alleviation will mean nothing if the basic problem of unemployment is not addressed and the record is there, one of the first things that this Government did in 1994 was to remove the onerous and stifling taxes on the productive sectors and as a result, Sir, manufacturing grew tremendously and agriculture grew and the other productive

sectors grew. The result is that we have this amelioration in the unemployment situation.

They can talk about unemployment. Our record is outstanding in the area of unemployment and the best is yet to come. We are not going to be satisfied if one person in Barbados cannot find a job. We will not rest on our laurels. We will push on because we see full employment as our goal. It has to be achieved and this country can and must achieve the goal of full employment in this country of ours.

Sir, what I also notice is that the level of hope in this country has gone up tremendously in a few years. The years of despair under Senator Boyce and his crew have given way to an era now where the young people especially are now saying that there is hope for them and a lot of young men and young women are being creative and innovative in hauling themselves out of the gutter of despondency.

Sir, the Government is doing all in its power to help them because when we came in we found a Barbados Development Bank which was bankrupt not only of money but of ideas. That is what we found, technically insolvent, and what did we do? We said this will not continue to be a drain on the public because we understood that unless we get that situation righted the area of lending which was catered to by the BDB would no longer have any institution to look after and the result would be that our young men and our young women who have ideas and who want the extra money to turn the ideas into reality would find no such avenue.

Sir, that is why we righted the situation and a few months ago we put in place Fund Access and the Enterprise Growth Fund will soon come on stream. It is our signal to the people that if you have the ideas and the creativity this Government will put the Growth Fund at your disposal because we recognise that the growth area in terms of employment is in small businesses. We understand that.

Even the Honourable Senator who spoke knows that because he himself is an entrepreneur. I am sure, Sir, that he is benefiting from the programme that we have put in place. I see no problem with that because our programmes are for all the people in Barbados. We do not discriminate. All are there for the John Boyces of this world whether he is B, D, N or independent.

Sir, we are making sure that the young people in our country who are full of ideas that money is put there to help them. Senator Boyce makes a lot of fuss about the \$2 million venture capital fund. They were in power for long and they have not yet given even the thought of making any venture capital available for small business. We have gone the first step and we have earmarked funds because we are cognisant of the fact that it is the people's funds and we will not be irresponsible.

We remember what happened in the last administration when they mashed up the cotton industry and that is not going to happen again. We have more responsibility than that. So the level of hope that is created in this country is astounding. As you look around you see young men whose method of employment was sitting under a tree a lot of them now are taking part in the economic life of this country. As the Attorney General noticed, there has been a corresponding decline in the criminal activity in this country. What has happened is that whenever there is an incident it is going to make headlines. I have no problem with that. That is how newspapers sell. But the fact remains that there has been a decrease in criminal activity in this country and a lot of it can be attributed to the level of hope that is now so prevalent in our society. This Government is making progress and on the way to solve the social problems which plague this country. We are well on our way to solving our social and the current problems that plague this country and which intensified in a tremendous way under the inept governance of the last Administration.

5.35 p.m.

Sir, the Rural Development Commission, the Urban Renewal Development Commission and the Social Investment Fund are three vehicles that this Government is using to tackle the problem of poverty and hopelessness in this country.

Sir, I heard a Senator talking about the proliferation of bodies but each of these bodies has specific roles and specific levels of activity. Do not forget, Sir, and we ought to remember this that there is only one level of Government in this country. Unlike most countries in the world, large or small, there is only one level of Government in this country so we know from our own experiences that in order to get minimum action to take place in target areas we have to create special institutions with the mandate and authority to go and carry out special remedial work in these areas.

To talk about the fact that the Rural Development Commission is building roads that other agencies were building for years is not understanding the point. The Rural Development Commission is not about roads. It is about improving the lives of the rural communities, and roads form a part of this activity. This is not the only activity that is created because, in my view, the important part of the Rural Development Commission's work is the Rural Enterprise Fund. That is the important part. These other activities are important but in an integrated way together with the Rural Enterprise Fund they are bringing new life to the rural communities.

What has happened in the past, and I make no apologies of saying this, is that the last Government was basically an urban Government and the level of neglect in the rural communities has been astounding, especially St. John. We felt, Sir, that to reverse the process we had to get a special commission with special powers, with special money to go and work specifically in the rural areas.

Sir, it is about two years now that the Rural Development Commission was in existence and the amount of work it has done in the rural communities speaks volumes of the wisdom of setting up the Commission in the first place. There is a transformation. Places in Barbados that have never had roads yet, never had street lights yet are now the target of special action and activity by the Commission. The result is, Sir, that in a short time the level of the urban drift which was destroying the social life in this country will be reversed in a short time and that will redound to the benefit of the country itself. Sir, to criticise the Rural Development Commission is to misunderstand its role. It is not about roads. It is about improving the overall life in the rural communities.

In a similar fashion, the Urban Renewal Commission is targeting those areas of poverty within the urban communities. We know from our own experiences, especially within the inner city, that there is need for special work to be done at times away from Central Government. That is why, Sir, we decided to set up the Urban Renewal Commission. We want to renew the life in urban communities so I do not understand the criticism.

I know that the lone Opposition has to criticise something because it is his *raison d'être* but he should also be careful when he is criticising that he does not spit up in the air, so to speak, and it falls back down on him, but the point is that he does not understand.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Barker, it is less than Parliamentary expression, I would think.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I withdraw it and say that he does not embarrass himself.

The point is, Sir, that again he misunderstands the role of the Urban Renewal Commission. It was only around for a few short months and already we see that it is working. Those of us who read the newspapers, I do not know if the lone Opposition Senator reads the newspaper but the point is if he looks he will see the amount of work that is done by the Urban Renewal Commission so to criticise it is true to his form.

Sir, we on this side are proud to be part of a Government which is pro active. This country has begun to see and will continue to see the results of the tremendous decision it made on September 6, 1994 when it got rid of that group and put in place a set of people dedicated to the development of this country. The results are already clear and this is another manifestation of the fact that the Government is thinking and working, vision and action, because we know that where there is no vision the people perish. One thing we are certain of, Sir, is that the people of this country are pleased with the progress this country is making. We will continue to see the results of the Poverty Alleviation Programme.

Sir, the passing of this Bill will put in place a funding mechanism for more poverty related action. I cannot finish, Sir, unless I make special reference to the fact that youth groups and community groups are involved in the process. The Pinelands Creative Workshop is one of the most progressive groups in this country and if they have a programme the Government will ensure that they have the means where they can put that programme into action.

Sir, I hear the Opposition talking about the fact that we give money...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Barker, your time is up.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I just wanted to tell this Honourable Chamber that the money given to the Pinelands Creative Workshop is money that is well spent and will set the tone for community groups in this country to come forward with proper programmes because they are sure they have a Government which will help them in achieving their goals.

Thank you very much.
5.45 p.m.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, it is indeed a pleasure to pick up this debate after the pleasant and erudite presentation by Senator Barker and also following in the trend set by Senator Springer. I always like Senator Springer because he has an appreciation for the social sciences and for society that is not always evident in some of the other things that we hear in here.

First of all, I would like to change the tact of this debate somewhat by trying to put it in context and affirm the fact that poverty is a relative concept, a relative term, a relative position; relative to time, relative to place, relative to country, relative to culture. In other words the criteria that would define a person's poverty level in 1930 are different from what they would be today. At one time if you had a fridge you were living in luxury. Nowadays, it is quite possible that if you do not have a fridge in your house, you might be considered poor. On the other hand, who is poor in Barbados might not necessarily be poor in Haiti and who is poor in the United States might not be poor in Barbados. I am saying that there is a lot of relativity in the whole concept of poverty and one has to be therefore aware of these factors when one is seeking to discuss this topic.

In addition, this Government is approaching the eradication of poverty in the same manner as Barbadian Governments over the years. The Barbadian society has concluded both explicitly and implicitly, that it has a moral obligation and a social responsibility to fight disease. Nobody will accept that disease and illness should be the norm and that we should not fight an ongoing battle against them even though we know that they reoccur in different forms, in different people, in different times. It is understood that we have a responsibility to fight disease and ill health.

The same thing applies to illiteracy. No self respecting Government in Barbados or no self respecting Barbadian would think, far less say, that people not being able to read or write is alright and that there is nothing wrong with that. Again, we have a responsibility in ourselves to fight illiteracy. We see the same thing with poverty.

Poverty is not only related to Barbados. Poverty is an international phenomenon and countries all over the world are fighting it. From China to the United States, people all over the world are fighting the cause. As a matter of fact, I have here a copy of the book "China Today". The headline on the front is "The Decisive Battle on Poverty". It deals quite explicitly with how the Chinese themselves are battling the whole phenomenon of poverty. They have had some successes but they too recognise that it is an on-going battle. They start off in the editorial by saying "Poverty is a global problem and its eradication and obligation to human kind holds to itself". We are all part of that international movement for the eradication of poverty.

Sir, when one considers that the Barbados Labour Party in its 1994 Manifesto states at page 22:

"The Devaluation of Barbados – The New Poor

After 8 years of DLP rule, a serious devaluation in the quality of life and the creation of a category of the new poor have emerged as the greatest challenges to the creation of social development programmes.

The new Barbados Labour Party Government will commit itself to determining the extent of this new poverty and the status of persons who have lost their jobs and providing the means for their re-entry into the economy in a productive capacity.

We will put people first and in this context will ensure a strong safety net to alleviate the hardships to which our more vulnerable citizens are exposed.

Our policies will focus on upliftment of living standards among the poor by creating opportunities for raising income levels.

Strategies will include:

access to training and retraining

job counselling

credit to support small enterprises

land reform

encouragement at community level of cooperatives for business development.

community based self-help schemes."

Sir, with that kind of historical background, nobody can say that poverty alleviation or poverty eradication is something which sprung out of the St. Michael North West by-election or that it is a political gimmick. It is stated in our Manifesto, and the country accepts that we take our Manifesto seriously. We see our Manifesto as a social contract and this is an instance of our fulfilling that social mandate. Let us settle that once and for all.

In addition, this programme is all part of a regional and hemispheric movement. Barbados has been represented at a number of conferences in Brazil, Chile, Trinidad and other parts of the Caribbean dealing with the whole question of eradication of poverty. As a matter of fact, I was watching television a few days ago when they were talking about preparation for the G8 Summit which is taking place this weekend and they talked about poverty. There is a story in today's newspapers about the new thrust towards the eradication of poverty. So to try to set the poverty eradication programme by the Barbados Labour Party as some cheap, political gimmick just seeking to get jobs for the boys or to be a pork barrel, is to misunderstand what exactly is happening.

Sir, for too long we have been spending too much time romanticising and intellectualising and even trivialising the whole question of poverty. I think one has to look at it in the real terms of persons who have lived in poverty. The Honourable Senator Boyce has tried to 'poo-poo' the work of the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission about repairing roads, etc. I have lived in poverty and I remember when we had our first tar road in Spooners Hill and how it transformed that neighbourhood. Merely by putting in a road, where people were able to run pipe water, you could play in the gap during the day, you could walk about without fear of having to stump your toes. It changed the whole life of that neighbourhood. One simple tar road. I have seen it manifested itself all over Barbados simply as a result of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. I have seen it as a result of what is obtaining in the Rural Development Commission. In St. George, I have seen a road being completed between Lower Estate and Salters that has uplifted the area and people are now rebuilding their houses and bungalows are springing up like wild fire as part of the whole construction boom in Barbados. So do not trivialise this, because what might not be important to you, and because you might have been accustomed to paved roads, it does not mean that everybody in Barbados is so accustomed and do not suggest that it does not mean anything in a person's life. Therefore, I have no quarrel with the whole question of the practical application of providing these things for persons to improve their quality of life.

On the other hand, while a person might see the lack of proper paved roads as an indication of their poverty level, another person may see the ability to open a small business in the neighborhood as an indication of their poverty level. It varies from level, it varies from person, it varies from

community. What this Bill has sought to do is to provide opportunities for persons to improve their way of life, the quality of their lives and also to generate economic opportunities. Also to fulfill their ambitions to become entrepreneurs in their own right and to basically play their part in improving themselves. It is acknowledged that nobody wants a handout. The days of the soup kitchen are over. What people might have been satisfied with in the 1950s and 1960s and people were prepared to line up to get things as an accepted way of life, that is no longer acceptable. We have other institutions and other ways of doing it. I acknowledge the work of the church in this regard. Indeed, this Government has acknowledged that work through its support for the Salvation Army. We have just given a lease to the Salvation Army for the property at Reed Street to enable it to expand its facilities and its services to care for the poor. It was sitting there for years and they were confined to a narrow building, a narrow piece of land and they were never able to expand their opportunities and programmes.

I know that the churches of various denominations help people across the society every day in various ways and this was acknowledged by the Government, as I have said. One of the first public meetings to deal with the whole question of poverty eradication was in St. Peter and held by the Prime Minister, had the support of churches all over St. Peter. All of the churches were invited, they attended the meeting, they spoke, he explained the principles behind the programme and he recognised and sought their expertise. Because they had been doing it for years, they had the respect and trust of the people, they know the people intimately, the people will relate to them, the people are prepared to talk to them freely. And rather than seeking to re-invent the wheel, rather than making it seem as though it was the Government seeking to hand down something from on high to persons, a concerted and explicit effort has been made to embrace the churches, youth groups, community organisation and community leaders in this programme.

I have witnessed the same in St. George North when a similar activity took place and letters had been sent out across the society inviting persons to participate, and inviting persons to submit their recommendations so that they can receive the necessary funds.

5.55 p.m.

But like in everything else that we do where the taxpayers money is concerned, we have to be careful that we do not leave these funds vulnerable to vultures. Because even though it is a church there are people in the society who would come and rip off the church in the same way they would break into churches and steal the cross, the Bible and all that kind of stuff, they would do it for cash. So we are prepared to make sure that there are safeguards, that there are certain criteria that have to be met so we can see that the taxpayers money is being protected. It is the same principle that applied to the Pinelands Creative Workshop. They

waited their turn, they waited until they satisfied the criteria and they got their money. As a matter of fact, I read in the newspaper a few days ago where Mr. Rodney Grant himself is saying it has begun to bear fruit, it is reaping success and it is already producing enterprising young people across the society who are developing businesses.

Certain remarks made by SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY were ordered to be expunged from the record by Mr. PRESIDENT.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: So it is proving itself in a very clear and precise way and no amount of seeking to minimise the importance and trivialise the significance of the programme can eliminate that.

Sir, the fact is that Senator Boyce may not want to acknowledge it, but we accept that over the years every Barbadian Government has sought, especially since adult suffrage, to attack poverty in various ways. This is the first explicit, coherent programme where poverty has become a buzz word. People talk about poverty in a way that they never did before, because we were brought up to believe that if you are poor you should be ashamed of being poor. In the same way that you were taught to be ashamed of disability and if you had disabled family, you would keep them shut away in the back in a bedroom and never show them in public. Poverty was not supposed to be a subject that you discussed. It was there, but you were supposed to sweep it under the carpet, ignore it. We have brought this to the forefront of national consciousness. In the same way that VAT has become part of the national consciousness, in the same way that inflation is now part of the lexicon of the average Barbadian, poverty, its existence, its causes, its origins, and above all its attempted solutions have become an accepted part of the Barbadian psyche, the Barbadian consciousness and the Barbadian objective to eradicate. We accept that.

We realise also, Sir, that looking at the operations of the established institutions, the Child Care Board, the Welfare Department, the National Assistance Board, they have not had a change in 30 to 40 years. They have been doing the same things in the same way for a very long time. Meanwhile, the society has changed, the needs of the society have changed, but structurally and functionally these institutions have not changed.

We realise that they have been set up by legislation. It would take a great deal of time to amend laws and bring legislation. If you sought to modify those institutions to do the work that we are now seeking to do through the Public Investment Fund, the Social Investment Fund, the Urban Development Commission, a lot of time will pass. Meanwhile, we know that while you are taking all the legalistic steps, people would be suffering and we realise that we had to speed up the effort. Hence our approach in this manner.

Apart from that, we said that we would carry out surveys and try to establish how we would deal with programmes we set out in the manifesto. We have lived up to it by commissioning a study which is properly known as the Roett Study. It is called "The Way Forward – Rationalisation Study of the Social Services" by Phyllis Roett and Elesius Joseph dated July 1997, Final Report. The point is, Sir, that is a comprehensive study of the existing institutions, their work, their shortcomings, their strengths and weaknesses. The summary of this report, Sir, concludes on page xvii stating "This study has evaluated the effectiveness of the present social services by investigating how the services are being delivered and to whom they are being delivered. This examination has revealed many gaps in service delivery. We hear about the affairs of the NAB etc. The recommendations for restructuring will mean increased costs in some areas of Government but the outcome will be a more effective service delivery programme. The team believes that any caring Government would want to invest in the vast unused potential of persons who utilise our social services and who are crying out for empowerment". Now, we did not seek to do this as a result of discussions at some rum shop or cocktail party or some dinner or some lunch or even in an *ad hoc* way. This is as a result of work by professionals, a professional study, a rational study and it has forwarded 125 recommendations which Government is taking on board and taking into consideration. I do not remember exactly when this was set up, most likely somewhere in 1996 and the final report came about a year later. Could we have waited seemingly forever, for a year long study and then for legal draftsmen to examine the laws and make recommendations and draft the laws and to amend the laws and to consult the parties while persons were suffering? No. We said we would fast track matters by developing these institutions.

SENATOR J. D. E. BOYCE: On a point of order, Mr. President, I hate to interrupt the Honourable Minister, Sir, but he again is referring to a study, a document which, Sir, I do not have. I do not know about the other Senators. Can we have ...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Earlier today it was made a document of the House.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: I will lend you a copy. Sir, that is our approach to the whole question of poverty alleviation.

Some mention was made of the disabled. The Government has established a disability unit staffed largely by persons who themselves are disabled and they themselves are providing the service to fellow disabled persons. Other actions are being taken to deal with the whole question of disabled community. There was mention of Barbados' growing aged population. We have acknowledged that by having the 1998-99 Estimates contain a sum of money to look at the whole question of the Geriatric Hospital to

encourage private sector agencies, to come on board and help us relieve the situation, if only by freeing up those beds at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which are now occupied by aged persons who have been dumped there either by relatives or who are not really sick and deserve to be in an acute hospital, but need other care in the geriatric hospital or a nursing home.

The programme will entail the evaluation of private nursing homes. Again we are not going to pay them money to take care of persons unless we know that they meet the required standards. They will be required to meet specified physical and other standards. They have to satisfy certain criteria established by a broad-based committee that would look at the problem, so that we are satisfied that when we entrust the care of our highly valued elderly persons or senior citizens into their keep that they would receive good care, professional care, that there will be value for money and that they would be treated in a dignified manner, that they would live in proper conditions and that they can have a comfortable way of life for the remainder of their days. So again here is another scientific and professional and studied approach to how we will deal with that constituency.

The whole question too, Sir, of enterprise in the community is also being looked at in Christ Church. I am sure that Senator Boyce would be glad to hear of Christ Church. Unfortunately for him it is not Christ Church South. It is Club Randall which is in Christ Church East Central. I am happy to report that work... I have spoken about Club Randall in here when the measure first came before the House. I think I even danced there, near Aberdeen Jones' rum shop and I drank a rum at Aberdeen Jones' rum shop too. The point is too, Sir, that work will actually begin on that facility, tomorrow. I spoke to MP Carter today at lunch and he said, "work is starting tomorrow." The ground is being broken tomorrow. They will have a formal ceremony on Monday 25th May, but work starts tomorrow.

6.05 p.m.

Sir, I am happy to report that it will not just be another dance hall or a replacement dance hall where you can go back in time, it will not be just another modern facility. It will also have provisions for a dozen small businesses to operate and service the community. This is a community which was largely looked down upon and seen only as a housing area. Gall Hill has been seen for too long mainly as a housing area. Now we have people from within the community using their skills. If one had seen the condition of Club Randall before it was demolished in preparation for a higher calling on the site, one will recall the high level of the graffiti that one saw on the wall. I mean excellent art put to the wrong use. But we can see that the artists themselves were very talented. The idea is that artists and other creative persons will have a chance to produce their work, exhibit and sell their work within their community for the good of the community.

Sir, I am very comfortable and happy with all that we are seeking to do with this programme. In the same way that one does not feel that where education is concerned, we can only have one school or one type of school, but you have different levels and types of schools catering to different educational needs. The same has happened in health. You have Polyclinics, you have geriatric hospitals and you have acute care hospitals. I am sure that Senator Peggy Rickinson will correct me if I go wrong. That is the same way we feel about poverty that you cannot straight jacket the eradication of poverty and try to force it through one institution, or even the existing institution, like I said, if only because it is ill equipped. One has to do it in a manner that recognises the variety of needs and approaches that must be adopted if one is to cater to the needs of the society.

A young man who is seeking to set up his own business in the community will not be prepared to go to the Welfare Department even to apply for it. That is because the social stigma attached to the Welfare Department will not permit the average Barbadian who is self respecting and who sees himself as one to improve himself and contribute meaning to the society, going there. Therefore, we have to create institutions to cater to the needs of such a person. So this is the broad and well-meaning framework, Sir, in which we are operating.

Sir, I close by quoting a book called "Underdevelopment is a State of Mind" written by Lawrence E. Harrison. I quote a very short paragraph, Sir.

"I believe that the creative capacity of human beings is at the heart of the development process. What makes development happen is our ability to imagine, theorize, conceptualize, experiment, invent, articulate, organize, manage, solve problems, and do a hundred other things with our minds and hands that contribute to the progress of the individual and of humankind. Natural resources, climate, geography, history, market size, governmental policies, and many other factors influence the direction and pace of progress. But the engine is human creative capacity."

Sir, I believe that Barbadians are possessed with immense potential in this area and I am glad that this Government is providing the means whereby they can fulfill that potential.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR J. A. WORKMAN: Mr. President, much of which I had hoped to say has been said by many others and said in many other ways and at one stage I thought that I would have spoken immediately after Senator Barker because for one moment I was wondering if Senator Springer himself and myself could have formed the Trinity, 'Father, Son and Holy Spirit'.

Asides.

SENATOR J. A. WORKMAN: But, some of the things Senator Barker said...he is my friend, I could not think he was purely Jesus. So that Senator Murray interjected and gave way to the Trinity.

Aside.

SENATOR J. A. WORKMAN: But, Mr. President, good things do come in small parcels and I would think, Sir, that anyone just looking at these few pages which form the Bill before us which I am sure we will pass into law in the not too distant future, as we look at this small Bill, we discover that there is what I call the legislative infrastructure for something that can be very big and creative if we use it wisely and if we use it in accordance with the vision which I believe it has conceived and which must be brought into reality.

Indeed, Sir, the very essence of the Bill lies in section 2 and even excluding the section 2(2) to which you made reference of being given such fair, large and liberal construction and interpretation, if we were to look at it, it seems as if all that is happening is that some dollars will be put into a fund and these will be disbursed for certain programmes and projects.

I was very glad, Sir, when I heard the Prime Minister say that this is not intended to be another welfare project. It is a project which is intended that human beings may fare well. It is a project, Sir, to my mind which goes or ought to go to the very root of our social structure which is quality life for all people, to alleviate much of the poverty which has existed and has continued to exist in this society as it does in others.

Much has been said in this place and in the other place concerning the question of poverty and much of it has been said in terms of material possessions or material wealth. While I agree, Sir, that it is necessary for us to improve the material possessions and material wealth of individuals, we need to understand money and material possessions in another light because money and material possessions are not just wealth, but they are also a tool for other wealth.

I think, Sir, we need at this time, as I give support to all of those understandings and promulgations concerning this poverty alleviation, I think it is necessary for us in our country at this time to zero in on one aspect of poverty that is prevalent in our society and which seeks to undermine all of those things which have underpinned our society in the years just gone and which will bring us into further social erosion and social dislocation.

I think those of us who are honest with ourselves will agree that in spite of the economic achievements and advancements in our age, we in this country have declined in our social life and we need to understand that as social

poverty. We need also to seek to understand and to determine the reasons for that poverty. The underlying factor, Sir, is that in our country, there is an atmosphere of hopelessness among many and this Bill seeks to redress that very hopeless situation in our midst.

It is this situation of hopelessness that is raising its ugly head in forms of violence, crime and deviant behaviour of many sorts. I am not saying this, Sir, to look at a particular sector of our community because too often we believe that the poverty in our community rests only with those whom we call the poor class. But there is that same deviant behaviour among many of the other sectors of our community and we need to understand why this is so. It is because quality life has been put on the back burner in this country.

Quality life has been sacrificed on the altar of material possessions. So I am reminded as I speak, Sir, of one of the many occasions when Jesus, as he was accustomed, had many crowds around him, and one among the crowds had called upon him to judge between himself and his brother because he thought he was dispossessed by his brother.

Jesus seemingly did not address the problem, but he went on to tell this man that a man's life consisted not of material possessions. He went on further to follow that up by giving the parable of the rich fool who pulled down his barns to build bigger and from that, Sir, I discover that we cannot discuss the question of poverty in isolation. We cannot discuss the question of poverty by looking at the 'have nots' without looking at the 'haves' and the attitudes of the 'haves'. Many of the attitudes of the 'haves' are causing the 'have nots' to be further 'have nots' and to go further and further into the quagmire of which Senator Barker spoke. So they all go hand in hand and it is a social problem which must be addressed and must be addressed at this time.

Our people need to be mentally liberated so that they can have opportunity to use the resource that is within them without fear and in an atmosphere of knowing that there is equal opportunity for all. We need to let people know, Sir, that there will never, ever be a time in the history of human life when all people will have the same economic wealth or the same material possession. But all must have that equal opportunity which brings dignity to a human purpose which makes life meaningful, rather than hopeless and a life of despair.

I want to send a signal of warning to us in our country today. I do not believe, Sir, that there are many who are recognising what is happening.
6.15 p.m.

There are many of us, those of my age group and those of my grouping, who have had opportunities for what I may call being the first of the *nouveau riche* among our middle

class society. Many of us have been misled by this same quest for material possessions. Many have sacrificed the virtues which they have been taught and which have brought them to those illustrious heights on the altar of very big houses and so forth and on, the altar of giving their children what their children want; and this is an area of poverty, because we are blazing a trail of material excellence which is too high for our next generation to reach.

My son at the beginning of his career got a salary of 10 times what was my salary at the beginning of my career. My salary was \$350 a month. His \$3 500 cannot do the same things my \$350 could. So if we have brought our children up in a material atmosphere and they have not recognised the lack of value of a dollar in today's economic situation we have put them into that position of hopelessness as we are about to pass over the mantle of this scene and they cannot in their own right acquire what they understand as being the fundamentals of the day, and that is material possessions.

That is an area of poverty we have to face to save us from this untoward generation. It is something that has been burning in my heart and this is the first opportunity I am getting to speak about it from this forum. There were other pulpits I have been able to speak from but we need to recognise that the result is that we in this country have virtually, without noticing, wiped out that middle class society which has always been a buffer between the 'haves' and the 'have nots'. This middle class of society also gave opportunity for some to aspire to greater heights, for the middle to go higher and those below to come up to the middle. Alas, that middle class is disappearing or has virtually disappeared and the gap has widened and this is the stark, naked poverty in which we find ourselves in our country at this time.

That is why, Sir, I believe that the enterprises, the programmes and the projects which the Government together with the private sector and other organisations and interested people undertake must forcibly address in order to arrest the erosion of social life which I call social poverty. We need to be open with ourselves. We need to have opportunities to address and redress the situation and we need to listen.

I was very heartened and touched by the words of Senator Springer two Thursdays ago as he spoke because I have said before in other places and I believe in here already, Sir, that we need to listen to the cries of those around us so ably put in the words of Senator Springer from the gospel, "What do you want me to do for you?"

The Government, the churches, the organisations, the people of kind and tender heart must mix with those who have the needs. They must have rap sessions when they can hear what they are really saying and also address what they are really saying to us.

You see, Sir, those who have fallen into the category of the three rich persons that Jesus talked about the – rich

fool who pulled down his barns because he was selfish. We have many in our country who are selfish and their only intention is to get out of this country what they can even if they crush others and it means absolutely nothing to them.

There are those like the rich young ruler who pretended that he was on the right track but when he was asked to give up his possessions and give to the poor it was a hard thing to do. There are many of us who pretend we are concerned about the poor but when it comes to the crunch of putting your hand and your dollar where your mouth is we pull our hands back from the plough.

There are many like the rich man – “Dives” – who had Lazarus, the poor man, outside his gate and passed by without even noticing that he was there but in later life, the after-life, there was need for “Dives” to be where Lazarus was. There will come a time in this society when we who say we have and lend a blind eye will find that we need those we have passed by because we, like “Dives”, will need our tongues to be soothed by a little water.

So, Sir, the message of this Bill before us is to come to the very core of our problem. What are we as a people doing to assist our fellow men and women and boys and girls?

The whole of our society is made up of children, youth, young adults, middle aged and senior citizens, male and female and in all of these areas we will find opportunities where poverty is raising its ugly head.

I believe, Sir, that this is the greatest opportunity the Church has had in our country to show that it is the Church. I challenge the Church. In challenging the Church, I want to challenge all of us because we must remember that the Church is not just Canon Springer and bishops, priests and pastors but all of us are the Church. Therefore all of us together have that responsibility to be concerned about the poor and to recognise that the Church is not here just to save souls. That is for hereafter. The work of the Church here is to liberate human beings, to transform the nation by eradication of social injustice. Those who truly study the Scripture will understand that was the purpose and nature of Jesus, to bring liberty to the captive, to make people who had no life have life. So, Sir, Government, the private sector, organisations of all kinds, human beings of all kinds need to stop at this time, come together and join hands, reflect positively and act positively, and put in place a good framework for alleviation of poverty.

6.25 p.m.

Sir, we need to lay hold on life. We need to recognise that each Government of every age needs to create the correct infrastructure that is necessary from time to time to allow us to fulfil the responsibility which is ours because within our community, right there among the poor are many worthwhile ideas which are lying in cocoons and which need

to be able to germinate and become the butterflies which will beautify and pollinate our national landscape. We owe it to them to have the same standard of living and the same standards of opportunity to rise above the quagmire and remember that having money is not all.

I remember, Sir, very vividly a very beautiful young Canadian who came to my office. She was served a divorce petition. I could see her now in a black dress. She was served a divorce petition by her multimillionaire husband but she came here and found true life in a glass-bottom boat man who could not read or write. In spite of all the wealth she took him, married him and educated him, and that is what we need to do, Sir. It is when we are educated, when we have information, when the things of life and the opportunities of life are explained to us in simple detail that all of us are able to rise above our respective levels of poverty and have a meaningful life.

I would like to urge the Government, Sir, to continue to prepare the groundwork for poverty alleviation. I would like to urge the Government, Sir, to create the necessary environment and catalyst for achieving maximal results from this legislation and other legislation. I would urge the Government, Sir, to create on a continuous basis opportunities for listening, hearing and heeding the cries of those of our society who are calling out for help.

I would like, secondly, Sir, to urge the Government not to attempt to do this business on their own, to recognise that no Government is or ought to be the sole arbiter in matters of this nature, that Governments are not the only source for these proposed enterprises and programmes because as we read section 2(b) one may think, as we narrowly do in this country, that because the Bill talks about projects, programmes, resources and enterprises these are limited to Government. All of us are the Government of this country.

Thirdly, I would urge Government to create facilities for education, including further education, and for disseminating knowledge and programmes which are suitable to the fulfilment of those areas of activity which create jobs and economic opportunity, those things which tend towards self-esteem, self-motivation, self-achievement, self-advancement and self-sustainability.

Fourthly, Sir, I would urge the Government to create a package of incentives by way of tax relief and other concessions for individuals, firms, corporations, and institutions who through their own initiative, through their own finances and their concern for human upliftment, provide things like homes for the aged, homes for the underprivileged and who in any way go towards the fulfilment of the purpose of this legislation. I am asking Government to grant concessions to those persons who put their money there so that those who have money, ability and concern will recognise that there is an avenue for them to contribute to the alleviation of poverty and that Government

recognises this by granting these concessions through legislation.

I trust, Sir, that all of us in this country, irrespective of colour, class or creed, irrespective of what strata of society we are in, or have come from, or believe we are in, and irrespective of our political or other affiliation, will together join hands for this worthwhile cause because, Sir, I am speaking prophetically now, this is the last opportunity we have to redress the situation of this type of poverty in this nation.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. President, I would like to carry on from where the last three to four Honourable Senators closed off. I can speak with a certain measure of authority because I have no embarrassment when it comes to anybody in Barbados knowing that I came through the poverty line and therefore I cannot speak for anyone but myself at this point in time. Therefore, I want to say that despite the fact that we talk about handouts and all these various things, handouts worked for many of us in Barbados and handouts will continue to work for us until we can reach a particular position where we can ease ourselves out of that dependency mould.

Mr. President, Senator Springer used his Biblical text, so did Senator Workman. I may not be as eloquent or as knowledgeable as they are in that particular respect. I support the view that you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish you feed him for life, but meantime you are teaching the man to fish he must have that fish to eat to satisfy his physical needs. He must have the capacity to think, rationalise, get the strength to hold that hook or rod and to do his fishing. Therefore, opportunities are now being made available to Barbadians who are in the poverty line and who want to be able to better the situation they are in to gradually climb from that particular situation as perhaps many of us in this august Chamber have.

I have a particular difficulty, Mr. President, with many of our Barbadians who have achieved and have forgotten the bridge they have crossed. My grandmother and my mother always spoke of a politician, I do not even remember, the name, some leader, who got up the ladder and kicked it down. That was the only expression my mother ever used, and I could not understand.
6.35 p.m.

I am saying that if we, as a society, having been able to benefit from the free education mentioned by Senator Boyce, if we get up the ladder and kick it down, where will be go by the year 2010 if we continue in that particular mode?

Mr. President, we need to look at poverty from the past, we need to look at poverty as it is at the present moment and we need to look to see how the measures that we intend to put in place would improve the situation in years to come. I

want to say that despite the fact that there was poverty among us in the past that there were some virtues that helped to hold us together in this society. There were some middle class people who never looked down on us in our plight to make us feel less than human beings. That is the current situation today.

Mr. President I say this because I live on the embarrassment street, so I know. The social snobbery in this Barbados, if we do not look at correcting the situation, it is going to destroy this society despite whatever measures we put in. Mr. President, I particularly make mention of this because I see it every day. Let me get back to the past because I cannot talk about the present and the future unless I refer to the past because I know about the past already. I know about the present now and I would want to be a part of the group of individuals in this society helping to chart the course for the future. We were in the dependency mode to a certain extent but the humility was there, the appreciation was there, industry and thrift were there, honest and love permeated throughout the society despite what ever level we were at.

We have reached a stage at the present moment, Mr. President, where there are numerous social influences that impact on us in this society. There is the breakdown in our moral values, disrespect, the demoralising behaviour that people have meted out to them when they go to certain social agencies and when they go to certain institutions of entertainment or otherwise, the lack of role models and the scourges that impact on our youth in this society. A lot of them are promoted by people of my generation and older people who we expect to know better and who we expect to be role models but they are all lacking in that respect.

I would like to think, Sir, that as we move forward to the future, that we look at how we will revalue those standards and help to develop certain appreciations and attitudes in our people, qualities and attributes that our young people will be able to emulate from us in this Chamber, from all of the teachers, the police officers, the doctor, the fire officers, the bus drivers and all of those people out there who were the role models for us in the communities where we lived. I want to see care for the fellow man within the community because everybody puts up a fence and nobody seems to be interested in what is happening in the community where they live since the problem is not on their door step.

I want to say, Mr. President, that despite whatever happens in our society age has no social boundaries, AIDS, mental illness, health problems generally, they know no boundaries. We must not wait until the problem is on our door step, impacting on our children who will leave our homes and go into the various institutions to mix and meddle with children at all levels. We must not wait until it gets on our door step to want to be able to deal with it. We must deal with it from now. The little hungry girl and boy next door who has no Sunday meal but our food that we are

willing to throw away goes into the garbage bin, says that we are not a caring society any more. In the words of our distinguished preachers in here, we should be our brothers' or our sisters' keepers.

Mr. President, the Social Investment Fund Bill will give our people further opportunities for development. It will help them to grow out of their present situation, it will help to generate some employment particularly for the creative and skilled people. There has been, as a result of the rationalisation study, consultation at all levels in this society and I think that it is unfortunate that when we hear of a meeting in a school hall or in a community centre that many of us in the middle class level in this society do not attend or play our part. We hide behind all kinds of... I do not want to say cloth because I do not want the Honourable Senator Springer to feel that I am attacking the preachers although some of them want attacking, I will not do it in here. I will get my opportunity at Synod and elsewhere to say what I have to say. Some time next week for three days I will get my chance to say what I have to say. The call-in programme will work for me too, Mr. President because the call-in programme is where you can hear the working class in particular and the few middle class people who call in use those opportunities to see what they can get out of it. The same points that are registered by Mr. Submissions might be ignored when he calls through but the point may be made by Mr. X or Miss Y. What an excellent idea, the moderator will say when they call. Mr. Submissions said it the day before or the economist, but it was of no worth because, who are they? They are the scruff of the earth. That is the problem that we are getting in our society. I will get my chance to talk about those in this society who walk around purporting that they are the ones who stand on this side of the working class but then they hide behind an umbrella or they hide behind a piece of cloth or behind a wall and they are the biggest enemies of the working class. They do not play their part in helping us to grow from the level we are at in society to be able to be with the others and to be able to make our contribution by giving back some of what we have to society. I will get to that later, Mr. President.

Mr. President, Senator Boyce has a short memory. I am sorry that he is not in his seat because he knows how to throw little insults under the belt but when he has to take some licks, he does not. Where was Senator Boyce in the early 1990s. Where was Senator Boyce with the squandermania that took place in Barbados. Nobody remembered any poor man. Where was Senator Boyce with the CARSICOT issue? With 240 000 odd dollars turning Nelson around from facing in one direction to the next. Where was Senator Boyce when \$240 000 could have developed the whole of Welchman Hall with community projects for the people living in St. Thomas? Where was Senator Boyce when over 3 000 workers in Barbados were sent home from the poverty line? People who were bus conductors, bus drivers, janitors, maids, nurses, and ordinary general workers. I say ordinary not to be facetious but I just want to place emphasis on the level that the persons were at, with six and seven and eight children, half of them could not

come to school and teachers had to subsidise and neighbours had to help out. Where was Senator Boyce? I want Senator Boyce in his seat, Mr. President because I cannot be a hypocrite. Through the Anglican Church I have been able to develop some standards that help me to have feeling for my fellowman and therefore I am going to use them to the best of my ability. I am not going to sit in any administration that will talk down to poor people or put them in a worst situation by instituting austerity measures that have destroyed this society.

Our people in the early 1990s were set back by five years as a result of the implementation of projects and programmes by the administration of the Democratic Labour Party that has put us in this plight today but thank God for the Barbados Labour Party. If we had not come to the rescue... I think it is unfortunate, Mr. President that every time Barbados is in a state where the Democratic Labour Party pushed it in the quagmire, the Barbados Labour Party comes to the rescue. Then as soon as people are feeling happy and they start to look up socially, they say, "Go along home and let we give the rest a chance". Some times the only reason for a change is that they feel they want somebody else but there is no other reason.

Mr. President, there is nothing that has helped the poor people of Barbados like the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. Absolutely nothing else. When I saw people who already were poor like my mother and my aunt and my neighbours that worked hard in the fields, working with sugar cane, working with potatoes, working with peas to feed the Barbadian population and they now have a little house spot. What else can you call that but social legislation that has empowered the people of Barbados, the working-class people, to be able to give them a little piece of this rock that they can say, this belongs to me.

The Barbados Labour Party will do more as they did in 1970s and 1980s to improve the plight of the poor working class in Barbados.
6.45 p.m.

Mr. President, we have free education, yes. Senator Boyce boasted of that but Mr. President, if I were to tell you some of the stories that emanate from within the school walls and on the street. Sir, your hair is curly but it will curl even more. It is okay to say free education is there but when we look at the problems with the scourges in our society, the problems with drugs, the problems with illiteracy, because we must not bury our heads in the sand or walk around with our shoulders and our collars up to give the impression that there is any 98% literacy. I do not have the statistics but I know we do not have any 98% literacy. Simply looking at the television or reading of cases in the daily newspaper, Mr. President, will tell you that our literacy level is lower than we might want to believe. Therefore it is okay to boast about delivering free education but we must deliver quality education as well. If the quality education does not reach the children within our schools then we are all lost.

The current situation in schools, Mr. President, and I am speaking with this kind of, not emotion, fire simply because only this morning I came to this Honourable Chamber late, Sir, because I was chairing a committee of all the social agencies in Barbados to see how we can come up with a framework, how we can come up with strategies to deal with the myriad problems within the schools with non-attendance because the people lost their work and we cannot employ half of them. Gradually it is coming. People have lost their work and there is no bus fare for the children, there are no school clothes for them to wear to school and many problems with non-attendance or irregular attendance. Late attendance because some of them have been failed as a result of the kind of educational system we have so they go into the bus stand and they lime. No school clothes so we have to draw on the welfare agencies. Devious behaviour as a result of the drugs and the crime in this society. Mr. President, the list can go on.

This Barbados Labour Party administration in its wisdom, because we do not feel that vision is vision and action is action. We feel that vision and action together will carry our people forward to help them to be able to develop and to give back some of what they have achieved to the society. Therefore, Mr. President, the Youth Affairs Department that continues to hold licks on a daily basis has within its compound the Youth Development Trust, the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme that gives young people under the age of 30, opportunities to develop a business idea and it is an on-lending situation there for them to improve themselves.

The Youth Commissioners are out there on the streets mapping and working with the young people and pointing them towards agencies to help them in their plight. It does not rest with the young people, it even goes further to deal with parents and the aged in the society who need that kind of assistance. They are pointed to the various agencies for help.

Mr. President, there are non-governmental agencies and I am happy that the Soroptomist and the Salvation Army were mentioned before. Because of the track record that they have in pulling projects together and delivering them in a very efficient manner, they have put forward their project proposals and as a result money from the Fund has been allocated to those two institutions so that the plight of Barbadians can be improved.

The Pinelands Creative Workshop was already mentioned Mr. President, and therefore I am not going to deal with that but I want to touch on the Urban Renewal Commission where they are projects for ordinary people and I use the word "ordinary" not in any facetious way as I said, but ordinary people with a business idea can start to look at how can we extend the homes where we live to accommodate 4 or 6 of the elderly in the community since they live on their own. I think it was Senator Springer who

spoke about them using kerosene lamps and not having a proper meal and the various things that will happen to them if they are not given the care and attention that is necessary for their survival. That money is there to be allocated to individuals who come forward and say, I have a project and the officers within the department of the Rural and the Urban Commissions are there to assist them in pulling the project together so that they can get the funding to help. I think that is the route we should also go, not only to look towards putting our senior citizens into the public institutions like the District Hospitals and so on but we need to hold them in the community because they are more comfortable with the people they know. They can communicate with them and they can do certain skills and then in the evening they can go right back into their home environment. So those are included in the project.

Mr. President, there are plans for water-borne toilets for the same senior citizens, for the houses to be wired for electricity, for individuals within the community to get grants depending on the projects they come up with, or even small loans to help them to crystallise the ideas they have in order for them to put their projects forward.

Mr. President, I know of young women and men who have been able to access the funds from the Rural and the Urban Commissions for the cosmetology shop that they have extended in their homes and have put in their little dryers. They are generating business within the communities where they live. Some people have gone into farming as a result. The street lighting continues to be implemented by the Light and Power Company.

Mr. President, there is a plan for the Bush Hall area in Alleyne's Land where there are many houses in that area that need to be resited because if a single fire should break out, no fire truck can get in to put it out. I know of one house that has been lost only recently because the fire engine could not get in to put that fire out. Ambulances cannot get in and therefore that plan is to resite a few houses, to put in walk ways or to put in driveways so that those services can get to the people of Barbados. If that is not a good project, Mr. President, I would like to know what else is. Those people have been living under those conditions for the past 30 and 40 years, now is the time for us to give them an opportunity to improve their lot.

Mention was made already, Mr. President, of the project at Gall Hill so I would not touch that. I want however, to talk about the cash grants that were given to individuals who earned \$170 or less per week and to inform this Honourable Chamber, Mr. President, that many people came to say, Miss Forde, you do not know the hole that \$350 has stopped because I had owed for this and that. It has never happened in the history of Barbados before, Mr. President, and therefore I am happy to know that our people in Barbados are getting the benefit, working class people are getting improvements.

There is a small business project as well, Mr. President, for the Glebe in St. George area where just as we have the huts set up in Oistins, that kind of project for the young people in that area who are interested in doing the art and the craft and making souvenirs and selling of fruit and various things. We are bringing employment to the people and they too in turn would be able to improve their lot. They too can employ others as their businesses progress and that too, Mr. President, is another area.

We have heard about the churches so I am not even going to touch that Mr. President. I want to say that yes, there is a need for training and retraining of our people so that they can sharpen their skills to be able to meet the needs of the market.

The Women's Affairs Department has its role to play because our women need to be empowered. It is not only jams and jellies but there are numerous other projects that can be presented so that women can get involved in cottage industries, into other areas of enterprise so that they can improve their lot.

Mr. President, I also am of the view that the Barbados Association for Reading and I know that they have plans – Proposals were written in 1996-97. I have mentioned the literacy rate already, but I want to inform you, Sir, that an agency through which many young people go to seek employment was able to draw to our attention a tremendous problem that young people have when they come. They do not know how to deliver themselves well and when they have to fill out the application forms they take 3 times as long as would be normal because they do not have the simple skills. They do not have the skills that are necessary to help them to be able to process that kind of information. Therefore, I would want to encourage the Barbados Association of Reading among other institutions to set up some literacy programmes. You will appreciate, Mr. President, that any project that will help to eliminate or eradicate or alleviation illiteracy in our society will help to go a long way in improving our standards when it comes to our health, because an individual who can read, better knows how to look after his or her body, better knows the things that will impact on his or her health. Therefore, it will eliminate some of the health problems we are experiencing.

6.55 p.m.

Likewise, the dependency on welfare will gradually be eliminated. The problems with drugs and with the police and so on will lessen as a result of a better literate society. Our people will learn about how to help themselves and move them away from that dependency syndrome. They will learn about prioritising. That is another big problem we have. When the welfare cheque is sent to a home, should we buy food? Should we buy the text book? Or should we buy the pair of gold ear rings? Or should we buy the nighties? Prioritising is very important. If we do not teach our people

how to prioritise, then that is also going to destroy the whole process that we are looking at, but it cannot happen without education. We must teach our people to read and write, to be literate and to be numerate in order for them to be able to cope and be able to reason out how they are going to use their funds, how they are going to train their children and how they are going to improve their lot and that of the generation that will follow.

Mr. President, the literacy programme will also help to eliminate the crime situation. Our people will develop an appreciation for what is being offered and not sit back and wait to think that a Government or Church will give you everything. They will need to learn how to help themselves.

Therefore, I want to encourage all Barbadians to give back some of what they have achieved, back into the communities from where they have come. Look back and assist the less fortunate and help them to be able to go to the level that all of us in here have gone to, as a result of caring teachers, parents and other persons within the communities.

I encourage all Barbadians, Mr. President, to come out with interesting and creative ideas on projects. And with the help of the Officers at the Rural Development Commission, the Urban Development Commission, within the Youth Entrepreneurship scheme and certainly in all the other areas that have been set up to assist them. I am sure that will help to bring Barbados back on an even keel. Mr. President, I also encourage that there should be parenting programmes set up in a structured way to assist our parents. A child with a problem that has a parent who does not care or who does not know any better and you help the child, you must help the parent along as well in order for that family to go forward. I want to encourage some parenting programmes so that parents can be aware of their roles.

You will all remember, Sir, that this Barbados Labour Party administration in 1995 examined the role of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and said that the entrance examination will continue to destroy our children. We need to look at programmes that will be important to them and will help them to get over the situations they are in. Therefore the implementation of small engine repair and the tourism craft courses and things of that nature, we ensure that the Barbados Community College drops that two certificates or more for entry, so that our individuals within the hotel sector and the tourism sector could get the training that is necessary to help them.

So that if a lady is there and she is an excellent housekeeper, but she does not have the certificates, she could not go before. Now, that situation has improved. That is the kind of situation that I am looking toward, from this particular project, so that people can be helped from where they are, so that they can climb the social ladder to give back some of what they have earned.

Mr. President, the other comment I wanted to raise is for the retraining of the persons in the social agencies. I do not remember if I mentioned before, but I know that many people who visit the agencies with the best intentions of getting helped, are talked down to, insulted and are criticised. All kinds of comments are heralded toward them. I think that the social snobbery should go. If we are going to open up agencies to assist the people, then our Officers must be trained at the highest level, so that it illuminates some of that social snobbery and that maligning that take place when Barbadians have to visit these agencies to solicit assistance.

Mr. President, I am happy to report and particularly for the benefit of Senator Boyce that the Rural Development in the same Forty Acres that he comes in every time this Honourable Senate meets and he takes about the problems at Forty Acres...the people of Forty Acres, Sir, are conscious of the people who cares for them. They had to wear two and three pairs of shoes to get out of Forty Acres for generations. The Democratic Labour Party had power in this country for almost 30 years and never did anything for the plight of the people at Forty Acres because the district would always give support to the Barbados Labour Party. The people of Forty Acres, Sir, have a proper road today that Senator Boyce and all of us can drive through and they do not have to worry about the two pairs of shoes. Rural Development did that for them, Sir. The people at Hopewell have been able to benefit. Before it was a cul-de-sac. Now, the rural development project has put a road that vehicles can exit so at night the people of Hopewell, can board the minibus and drive through and come out onto Ayshford main road. Senator Boyce has a keen interest in those areas. Therefore, the rural development project has made that difference in the lives of those people.

Mr. President, if our adult poor do not get the assistance now and our young poor do not get the assistance now, then that poverty trait will continue from generation to generation. I want to encourage Barbadians to take advantage of the opportunity. I am not telling anybody to go out there and await hand-outs. That was the norm in the day I grew up. The way we were trained, we accepted it even if you could not use it to the fullest extent. I do not want for anybody to go out there looking for handouts but I want that whatever situation that develops where people can be offered opportunities whether it is in training or in a grant, or whatever, that they take full advantage of that opportunity.

Mr. President, finally, I may have mentioned this to this Chamber before. I conceived a community project but because of lack of time I will be unable to work with to the fullest extent. I want to say without getting personal that many of us in here have not only gone into community work having come into this Honourable Chamber. Many of us have grown up working in communities with people and helping them to improve their lot. I make that point very clear, Sir, because I heard earlier today about those that now come and comments like that. Almost everyone in here I

can point to and say that we have been accustomed working in our communities.

We have hundreds of retired teachers, hundreds of retired nurses, hundreds of young people who have gone through the educational system and may have acquired a certificate or two, or none at all, but they have the capacity to share knowledge to develop good working attitudes or good discipline as a whole. I would encourage them, Mr. President, to work on a small project where they only need two rooms added to their house or the house where they live. We have too many latch-key children in Barbados. Our children come home from school and let themselves into the houses. Sometimes big people stand in a corner and target them. They come in and they watch all types of movies. They go on the Internet and they watch all kinds of vulgar information.

I want to recommend to those individuals out there in the society who perhaps did not come up with the idea but think that it would work to give consideration to the children within their small communities who are left on their own to wander the streets. It is an unsafe situation – to go in to light the stove, to prepare a meal, and this is even more unsafe than anything else because of fire and scalding and they do not get a proper meal as a result. They can go home and eat whatever they feel like because it is in the cupboard. Then we get obesity and all of that coming in.

I would encourage them to put some proposals in this project so that when they add on the two rooms children can come straight from school to that household and have a cup of Milo, something to eat. They can have a shower. They can change off into their own clothes. The person will ensure that they do their homework, that they get some kind of rest. They would be able to get that link between the old and the young through cultural activities, through story-telling, through folklores, whatever the situation. At the end of the day, when their parents come in at 7 or 7:30, they have absolutely nothing to worry about because those children are safe, both boys and girls. I am not thinking now about girls only because our boys are just as vulnerable in this society as our girls.

Therefore I would encourage individuals to look at that project. It may sound like something that cannot work but once a good proposal is put forward I am sure that it would help to build the community spirit that we knew worked well for us and of course those traditions that worked well for us will continue as we approach the year 2000.

Mr. President, the reports from Mr. Richard Carter indicated that 4 out of every 10 young people said they do not belong to any community organisation. The youth development programme within the various communities across the length and breadth of Barbados have indicated the number of organisations – I think we have about 35 – that have sprouted up as a result of the first set of programmes in craft and sports. That is what our young people want in

drama; in craft and a number of other areas and it says that if we continue to work towards activities of that nature that would attract young people we can gradually start to build back our communities.

So whenever we set up, whether it is a Neighbourhood Watch or whatever, within communities, it would be strengthened by the work of the community group that will start to develop. Certainly, the Community Independence Parish Committees will be able to work along with them and the Youth Commissioners to be able to help to build stronger communities.

If we in the communities know individuals and their particular needs and their plight then we can work together to help them to improve those situations.

Mr. President, politicians, preachers, teachers and other individuals in Barbados have their role to play. They have that role of educating, mobilising, developing skills among our people. All the school halls in Barbados, all the community centres in Barbados, are to be used to the fullest advantage by our people. There is absolutely no point in building million dollar institutions and shutting them down at 3 or 4 o'clock. The facilities are to be used for the benefit of our people. I encourage all individuals in Barbados to give their time and their talents to the people in our communities because we in Barbados have a responsible role to play. I want to congratulate Government for this initiative as is expressed in our manifesto on page 94 which says:

"The wealth of Barbados must be fairly shared among all of its citizens and those now excluded or denied must be given every opportunity and means to be a central part of the new economic order."

Mr. President, I want to encourage this Barbados Labour Party administration to continue to keep at the forefront of its mind those words and the motto of the Barbados Labour Party - a better life for our people. As long as we work together I am sure that Barbados will become the paradise that all of us can live together in unity. I thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I rise to support this Bill but I would like to raise some questions concerning the Bill which I do support wholeheartedly.

My problem, Mr. President, is that although there is an urgent need for assistance to help alleviate poverty I have a concern about what role the Child Care Board, the National Assistance Board and the Community Development Division is going to play in the alleviation of this poverty.

It is my personal view, Mr. President, that in an age when we are talking about public sector reform and an age when we know that these agencies were the main agencies established to deal with poverty alleviation, was it not

possible to examine them quickly and see how they can be restructured as indeed they must, if we are going to travel the route of this new Bill, and bring them on stream as soon as possible, rather than bringing them on stream as what would seem to some persons as an afterthought?

I must make it very clear that I support the Bill. I know there is far too much poverty in Barbados, much more than people realise. I do not know if people realise that we still have some places with dirt floors, without any flooring, and when you go in, you will see a television and a radio but no bed or anything else. I do not know if some people realise that there are many people who go hungry day after day, and they are ashamed to go and tell anyone they are hungry, but they will talk to the nurses and say they have been vomiting because they have nothing to eat and they do not know what to do.

It is not that some of them are not working. Some of them are working for a wage but some of them do tell us that they are so weak at times that if, for example, they have to make so many coils they can only afford to make so many and probably end up with only \$70 a week.

I know, Mr. President, that the debate has included alternative ways of addressing this type of situation but what concerns me is that how far these ways or mechanisms will go. What concerns me is that although we have a lot of young people with a lot of ideas and a lot of talent, how are we going to channel these ideas and talents into productive investment? Is there going to be an institution or a mechanism set up for project identification, for project funding, for project evaluation, for the writing off of bad projects? If so, in which department will these mechanisms lie. These are questions that concern me. As I have said, I agree with the bill but I cannot in my mind's eye see that if we by pass Child Care Board, Welfare Department, National Assistance Board, Community Development Division, how are going to fully implement this fantastic idea of alleviating poverty? That is my problem. If I can be convinced that there is an alternative way, no problem. If not, I would like us to first put the mechanisms in place for identification, continuous evaluation and monitoring of the various projects.

7.15 p.m.

Mr. President, we have on many occasions talked about teaching people about investments. Let us face it, a lot of those families that are involved in productive investment have been born into it. They have been eating, sleeping and drinking investment. It is not easy to teach profitable investment in one or two or three sessions. It is something that is long-term, it is something that we have to try and introduce into our schools and make it part of the being of the person so that they can learn how to be successful entrepreneurs. We do not want the Government to have funds and then have to write off most of the funds because of bad investments. We want them to be successful so we

are going to have to find the ways and means, and it is my submission that we cannot do without the inclusion of the Child Care Board, the Welfare Department, the National Assistance Board and the Community Development Division because the Rural Development Commission cannot do it by itself. We must find a way to amalgamate all of these various agencies. How we are going to do it, I do not know but a way must be found, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I would like to give my contribution regarding the alleviation of poverty in the area of the aged and infirmed. Quite a few people have mentioned that we have an aging population and we all know that. There has been a lot of rhetoric but very little action about the aging population. It is true and I must acknowledged that I read that some two million will be earmarked to get private nursing homes and private agencies to assist with the care of the elderly. Again, Mr. President, I support this but I have a very strong feeling that the best place for the elderly is growing old in their own homes, in their communities, with grace and dignity.

To do this, Mr. President, one would need to set up mechanisms again that will work. I do not mean the existing home help service because that is not working properly. I think that that home help service needs to be part of the polyclinic service whereby you have a cadre headed by a public health nurse, some staff nurses, some nursing assistants, some nursing aides and the home help going into the homes and giving education and care to our people. I say this not because I feel that this is the best thing but I say this because it is what the people tell me that they would like. They would like to stay in their homes.

Unfortunately, Mr. President, we have not been able to educate our people when they are young about the aging process. Unfortunately, as some people tend to get old they give away their homes by Deed of Gift or some legal document that is irreversible to find that the very children and relatives that they have given their properties to, to look after them in their old age, put them in the Geriatric Hospitals and institutions. Mr. President, this is an education that is very important in alleviation of poverty in this country. These people are not really poor because of poverty, they are poor because of greed by the very people that they give their properties to by Deed of Gift.

This is a fact because there are many people in the Geriatric Hospital who do not need to be there and who have homes. When you talk to them, they will tell you that they gave it by Deed of Gift and they were turned out of their homes because their relatives wanted the homes but do not want to look after these people. Therefore, we need to get mechanisms in order to try and keep these people in their homes. Many people do not know this but I have the information and I am going to share it. The nurses will tell me, "I am not willing anything to anybody. When I close my eyes, so be it". That is probably not the attitude but they see

what has happened to a lot of people who are taking up extremely valuable beds in the Geriatric Hospital. This is one area in the alleviation of poverty. It is education and more education. We need to educate our people about the advantages and disadvantages of property management and what could happen and could not happen as they grow old.

Mr. President, these same nurses have acknowledged that in the care of the elderly, they would like to see some paying patients in the institution because they are some of them that receive pensions and can afford to pay and their relatives take that pension and do not spend it on these persons within the Government institutions, they spend it on themselves. The nurses say that they would like to see that some of those persons who can afford to pay, would pay in order to help with the upkeep of some of those persons who cannot afford to pay for their upkeep in the Geriatric Hospital.

Mr. President, it is very important that we try to find out from the people and the communities what they want and not tell them what they are going to have. For example, on World Health Day, instead of finding out from the people what they wanted, they sent the nurses into the Community Development Centres and only one or two people turned up. This happens time and time again because the community does not want people in their centres at that time. Let them know that you have a service to offer and people in the community will mobilise each other. If they want you, let them know that you have a service you can offer and people in the community will mobilise each other and they will be there, but do not just decide that this is what you are going to do, you are going to go and have a health fair when the people in the community do not want a health fair and then you waste the Government's resources by taking nurses from the Polyclinics and putting them in a community to do things that the community does not want.

We have to examine ourselves in this alleviation of poverty because that is making the Government poor. That is wasting the resources and making us all the poorer for it.

Mr. President, there is quite a lot of money and I would hope that some people can take some of this money and build day care centres but they must be vetted and the people must be qualified who build the day care centres. Because, this has been another suggestion, that people who go to work. They cannot leave the elderly at home because they might go and light the stove or they might walk away, they feel very comfortable taking their elderly and leaving the elderly at a day care centre, and on their way from work, collecting the elderly and taking them back home. Also having such centres that if you want to go out, you can leave them there at night and go to your party or go to your function and collect them on your way home. These are ideas that people can use in the alleviation of poverty instead of taking the people and leaving them in the Government institutions for 365 days a year.

Mr. President, what we would like to see done is some of this money being used to repair some of these hospitals. The nurses there in the Geriatric Hospital have to stuff the windows at night to prevent people from getting in to do violence or attempting to rape them in the institution. The windows are dropping off. They are in sad need of repair. At the Christ Church District Hospital where there are a lot of poor people, it has a steep step and the nurses have to take a sheet and put the elderly in the sheet and try and get them up the steps. That is what the nurses have to do. We need a lift. We need proper provision for our elderly. We need to use the money like this. It is very sad. I was there and I saw a trolley come out and the tea was served in a big plastic bucket. They need proper utensils in order to serve our people and let them live in dignity. Big plastic buckets on a trolley with the tea.

Mr. President, we need proper utensils in order to serve our people and let them live in dignity. I have heard how these people have made contributions to our country etc., and in their old days they need to live in dignity and I do not consider getting plastic buckets across the yard that are open and not covered, any form of dignity or the way we should treat our elderly.

Apart from the repair of some of these institutions, Mr. President, our social conscience needs to be extended to those persons at the psychiatric hospital who are mentally ill. A couple of weeks ago we had a little rain and the whole place flooded out. Patients and nurses got wet. The termite roofs are leaking and the rooms that patients are placed in do not lend themselves to giving any form of quality care to these persons. What is needed is a hospital, a building, a whole building that they can sit or stand and watch and observe the patient and they would not get wet.

Mr. President, it would take more money to repair those buildings than to actually build a small hospital in order to house those patients.

Unfortunately I was not here on time but I heard about the report but one has to be careful. I am not casting any aspersions on that report. One has to be careful about reports and what they contain because earlier today I was with a group of nurses and we were going through another report which is being submitted to Government by professional persons, a task force report on nursing and some of the recommendations were carrying nursing in the wrong direction and misleading the Minister. One has to be very careful about these reports and what people write in them because the Ministers rely heavily on professionals to give them the correct advice and when you get some professionals that are giving blatantly the wrong advice, even though they had access to other persons whom they could ask if they did not understand what they were doing, it is very bad. It is not only embarrassing it is bad for the profession and it is bad for the people of the country. You have to be very, very careful about reports. You cannot ask a Government to legislate a workers union to be part of a nursing council.

That is not a professional body. These are the sorts of things being recommended to a Minister and they are very misleading so one has to be very careful. We will put the Minister on the right track about that.

Mr. President, in trying to alleviate poverty, the Government will also help to get rid of some of the diseases of poverty itself. There are certain diseases that arise mainly from poverty and one of them is tuberculosis. It is coming back. One is cholera, one is diarrhea, one is gastroenteritis. The diarrheal diseases, Mr. President, in particular can cause epidemics as a result of not having running water in your homes and available to wash your hands after going to the toilet. That is why Governments throughout the world attempt to put at least one pipe in each person's home so that they can be taught to wash their hands when they go to the toilet. You only need one person, Mr. President, not to wash his hands and go to a hotel and start serving food and you have an outbreak of gastroenteritis. You need to get people in the habit of washing their hands and having running water even if it is one pipe. I would like to congratulate the Government on its attempt. They have said they are going to put water toilets and running water in people's homes and that is a step in the right direction. That is going to go a long way towards alleviating some of the diseases of poverty and making our elderly very comfortable. The Government is doing a lot of good things.

7.35 p.m.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: They are, but they need guidance in some areas in order to make some of the things that they are doing much more productive.

Mr. President, there is another type of poverty that I would like to say a word or two about. I am not so sure how to word this. I think that what we have to do is to give some sort of direction or some instruction to persons who employ persons in the Government Service.

I am talking about care of the elderly. I am talking about substitutes that people use up to 13 years. If somebody goes on holiday they will send and ask them to come and work in the institutions. Mr. President, I am aware and all of us are aware that there are lots of women who are heads of households who are looking for work.

We are aware that they themselves are poor and they would like to have a job in order to feed their people. But, Mr. President, at the same time, one has to be careful that one does not take a substitute that has been serving you faithfully up to 13 years and working in the Geriatric Hospital when nobody wanted to work there, and send them home or virtually ignore that person, and then bring in the young ones who are looking for work. That is an area that one has to be careful about and that is what is happening.

Mr. President, the way the substitute system works is that these persons are sent for. They call them and tell them, "I would like you to come to work tonight, or I would like you to come to work this afternoon." They drop everything because they need the job and they like working with the elderly and they go. And you are going to tell me that somebody who has been doing that 13 years and 10 years, you are going to bring a young person who does not have the responsibility of a household and give them a health aide and put them ahead of those substitutes.

It is wrong, Mr. President. However it is examined, it is wrong. It is sending these substitutes into a kind of poverty in which they should not be in. Those substitutes who have been working for all of those years should be the first people who should be considered for the position of health aides in these institutions and then the little ones can relieve. Their turn will come. They must be made to wait.

Mr. President, a lot of these young ones are not really interested in the elderly and they are on the telephone every minute. As soon as they see incontinence, through the door they go. An excuse. A lot of them are just interested in working for the money.

What I am saying, Mr. President, is that if you have somebody who has been working for you loyally, and you have been calling them to work for you for 10 years, do you not think when a position opens up or when you are going to open up 100 beds, are you not going to look at those people who have served you well and give them the position? That is the way it should be. It is causing a lot of dissatisfaction among the other nurses who now have to come and start training these young ones. Because the older ones served them for 10 years, have been trained on the job and they know how to care for the elderly. These are things that we need to look into and stop from happening, Mr. President.

Mr. President, there is just one area that I would like to touch on that some people have asked for and I would like to add my voice to the call and that is the question of removal of VAT from some food products for persons who get a very small pension and who are finding it very difficult to survive.

I do not know what system one could use, if one would have to use an ID card or if we can give them a special card. There are so many cards around that I guess one could get a card that they can take to the supermarket and upon showing it to the supermarket, they can be relieved from the imposition of VAT on some of those food items.

In addition, Mr. President, salaries have escalated over the years and there are many persons who have been retired for many years and who are getting poverty pensions. They are finding it impossible to exist. We must not forget them. We must be able to do something in order to supplement their pensions in some form or other, so that these years would be more palatable. I would like to say although I was

criticised for saying it before that we need to start an educational programme and educate our people that when the nest gets empty and the children go away and get married, you really do not need a house with eight and ten rooms and six and seven rooms. One can look in terms of getting either a smaller house or an apartment so that it can cut down on some of the expense and the land tax *et cetera*.

I know people like to live in big houses. But I think it is our responsibility to educate them about the advantages and disadvantages of having a smaller house or having an apartment and renting out the other part of your house...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, would you please wind up?

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Thank you, Mr. President...so that it can supplement your income.

I would like to congratulate the Government on their attempts to alleviate poverty and I wish them success in this venture.

SENATOR D. T. GILL: Sir, I rise to make my contribution to this Bill and I think it is best described as not only, but part of the social and economic re-engineering so happily carried out by this Barbados Labour Party administration and earlier administrations.

Sir, it is greatly needed at this point and time of our development and I would like to refer to the Bill, sections 4(a) and 4(b) in which it says,

"The purposes of the fund are

- (A) (1) To receive all revenue that is transferred to the fund from the Public Enterprise Investment Fund, and
- (B) To finance projects and programmes that are designed to eradicate poverty by the creation of enterprises."

The other part, Sir, speaks about defraying the cost incurred in the administration of this Act.

Relatively speaking, Sir, as one part of the society moves on, or speeds by the other part seems to be going in the opposite direction and something has to be done, and, Sir, something is being done to help with the real and relative poverty. The relative poverty being the one where, as I said, one section of the society is moving very swiftly and the other section is moving exceedingly slow. Like a train, you were not bad at physics. It is like a train. It is therefore not pork barrel politics as one Senator would have us believe. Sir, there are measures to attend to the current problems.

Sir, in 1976-1986 when the Barbados Labour Party Government came to power and I make no excuse about

using the word 'power', there was a disequilibrium in the taxation system. Everybody was taxed a basic \$96 a month and it did not matter how many times a week you worked, how frequently or how infrequently and I am being reminded about the small earners. There was back then a gradual and meaningful tax reform and year after year the BLP administration sought to bring the abject poor out of the tax net.

Sir, I have heard talk about poverty alleviation in the Other Place where other speakers say that to alleviate poverty it must address education.

7.45 p.m.

Sir, when you talk about education one must remember that it is an earlier BLP administration that saw to it, and if Senator Symmonds had not already spoken, I am sure she would have alluded to it in her speech because she was right there in the forefront when 14-year olds were being sent home and today some of the problems which we have inherited are a direct consequence of what transpired then.

Sir, right now with EduTech and the White Paper on Education all of these bits of legislation have helped to alleviate poverty by way of improving and offering good opportunities for our young people. The same cannot be said in parts of the world like Africa and Asia where a good percentage of the present generation will never ever be exposed to technical education or exposed to the computer and its workings.

Sir, we cannot say that this is pork barrel politics. If you follow the system, if you follow the style and the design of the current administration you will see that extending primary health care to the poor, the underprivileged, is nothing new. It started again under an earlier administration in 1976-86 which saw to it that the whole health care system was taken from Martindales Road into St. Peter, into parts of St. James, other parts of St. Michael, Speightstown, Oistins. This cannot be seen as a political football or cheap politics or pork barrel politics as I have heard an earlier speaker indicate.

Decentralising the health system as Senator Forde so aptly put it. Sir, not so long ago and I am not going to dwell on this because earlier speakers have addressed it, during the austerity measures – it is fresh in the mind of the public of Barbados – in the early 90s, for example, poor people were sent home from the NCC working for \$175 a week. Some were put on half pay – \$85, two and three days and the heinous thing about it was they went and took 8% out of two and three days. A heinous act, Sir, one which can never be forgotten. Sir, it is akin to ethnic cleansing.

A new BLP administration came to the fore and said no longer must this happen, let our people go. Okay. No 8% cut? Sir, is this not social reform?

I would like to address the Archdeacon in what I think was a very profound address but notwithstanding that there were areas which I would like to clarify. When the Archdeacon spoke about having a definition for poverty and the poor in the Bill it reminded me of an interview with Olga Lopes-Seale when she said one of the most distressing and stressful parts is when she has to supply evidence of poverty and impoverishment. She said she must know it because she has worked with it long enough.

Sir, these social agencies that demand of you to outline clearly and delineate what is poverty when a person needs assistance are all part of the bureaucratic bungling. You know exactly where the person stands because you have worked with that sort of milieu for years and therefore it is drawing out the situation to justify a system. It is frustration to say the least. What I would like to let the Honourable Opposition speaker know is that there are persons in the field who are working with the various commissions, whether rural or urban, field officers who are collecting information and it is not done on a willy-nilly basis.

Sir, the other point where the Archdeacon slipped up is when he spoke about jump-starting. There are areas which helped to jump-start the under-privileged. There is the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme, the Fund Access Facility. Unheard of before. I had heard of a window to access funds under a previous administration but that window was crowded out in no time and not by people who were at subliminal level. These were people way above and they went, "Close it out, shut it, bolt it, lock, stock and barrel."

Sir, the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme was launched in 1996. Listen to what it does! It offers services in business, counselling entrepreneurs, development, technical assistance, referrals for financial assistance. That is in 1996. Look at what transpired in 1997-98 to include a marketing service and an accountant service. If this is not social reconstruction, if it is not social re-engineering, if it is not investment for the social fabric of the country, pray tell me what is it.

In 1997-98 in those Estimates and I would like – I do not know if Senator Boyce was in here in 1997. I will refer you to those Estimates and go and see \$10 million to assist with poverty alleviation. \$4 million in the same very subsidies that were cut. Only today I had to refer an individual, a poor chap, whose little assistance was withdrawn in 1993 for no apparent reason to try to get the assistance restored. \$6 million in grants to public institutions.

Sir, there are people who will try to make you think that this is priming the pump. There is no pump priming in this. There is no pork barrel politics in this. This is the total. This is the complete. This is the whole. This is the whole. It is not just one little annex or one little appendix to something. It forms the entire framework.

7.55 p.m.

Sir, those who were disadvantaged by the VAT in 1996/97, and who were working for less than \$170, we have heard that from two earlier speakers, but the point must be made again and again that those persons, some 14 000 souls, received cheques of \$350. This has nothing to do with priming the pump. This is a de facto tax return. It is a cheque for those of us who have oversubscribed P.A.Y.E. getting back something at the end of the year. That is it, simple. So if someone has paid more than is pro rated and you send them a cheque, there is absolutely nothing wrong with that. What it does show is that it is a progressive and forward-thinking Administration and not an Administration that believes in handouts.

Sir, I am elated to learn that under these new social measures, for the first time in 25 years, the playing field at Gully Field, Carrington Village will be getting a decent facility of \$250 000. Only last Sunday, Sir, when it was more than ninety-six degrees in the shade, and folks were playing the quarter finals of the Heroes Tapeball Cricket, longing for some shelter from the rays of the sun during the interval, the people from that area had to make the trees the pavilions.

Sir, I am heartened to see under these new social facilities new structures at Villa Road for the old, poor and the impoverished, at Valerie, at Nurse land, Hunt's Road, Halls Road, all part of the public Enterprise Investment Fund, all part of the Social Investment Fund, all part of the Urban Development Fund, all part of the Urban Development Fund.

Sir, it is a four-pronged attack, an attack which we know only too well in the days of the West Indies when we were firing on all four cylinders. It is an attack on poverty. If we have never in our time seen poverty attacked as we have today, then our work and workings would have been in vain. Sir, I have no regrets. I have no discomfort. I have all joy, all pride in being associated with this Bill which breathes a new life into Barbados.

Sir, I am most obliged. I thank you.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Sir, I rise obviously to lend my support to the Bill. As I listened both in this place and another place, I was obviously amused and bewildered by the contributions that were made by some persons regarding who started poverty alleviation, who started the Fund, under what administration it was done and who began to alleviate poverty in Barbados.

Sir, what is important in the debate is not who started it, or how long it has existed. What is important about this Fund is whether or not the Fund is relevant and credible in this day and age. In other words, at this time in our development, do we need the Social Investment Fund or do we not need it.

Everybody knows, Sir, how the Fund was created. I have heard all kinds of things about how many funds exist globally, over two hundred Social Investment Funds exist all over the world and Barbados, like any other nation which is developing, obviously if there is a need for some type of fund to alleviate poverty, well then there must be a fund.

Sir, the whole concept of the alleviation of poverty or poverty eradication is just as Senator Gill says, just one prong of an entire attack that the Barbados Labour Party Administration is launching against poverty in Barbados. What is important is not again how long it has existed or who started it. The fact is that the \$10 million is needed at this time if Government is to really wage a substantial and serious war upon the alleviation or the eradication of poverty.

Poverty alleviation and eradication are fundamental to the development of any small nation, particularly those who are dealing at this time with the multinational institutions. As I have just heard in Guyana that Clair Short simply said that in Guyana whenever they are looking now to help small developing nations, one of the things you are going to be looking at very seriously is how they are attacking the problem of poverty alleviation in their countries.

Sir, the most advanced societies in the world, particularly the northern European countries, have very sophisticated and serious systems of welfare, of social development and look very seriously at the alleviation of poverty. Whether you talk about Sweden, Switzerland or Denmark these are the countries, even though their per capita incomes are much higher than any country in the developing world, and whether or not we think we are in line with them these are the nations who look very seriously at waging an onslaught on poverty and poverty alleviation.

I believe, Sir, that how a society treats its poor and elderly, in most times who are in many instances the same, is a pretty good gauge of how that society is developing, and no matter how we try to guard against poverty, there are still going to be some people who are going to slip through the cracks in our society. Some people will just not make it up and those are the ones we have as a Government and as a people to help.

Now, there must be some fundamentals about tackling poverty alleviation. And poverty alleviation, in my opinion, is best tackled in a sound socio-economic climate. Now people believe, and I like to relate very clearly to the Democratic Labour Party and all the mouthings they put out, that you can only tackle poverty, and tackle it effectively if you have a sound socio-economic climate. Obviously, they would not be in any position to talk about tackling poverty particularly during the early 1990s. You are talking about your infrastructure, your human resource management, investment in the country, wealth distribution and redistribution and how we govern ourselves and our constitution. These are the fundamental things that must

exist and must exist in a very stable climate if we are to tackle poverty effectively.

8.05 p.m.

Our educational system and how we manage it, the cultural climate, specifically how we deal with the psychological welfare of our people, our sport, our history, our heritage. These are the things that are important and we must have if we are to even start to look at alleviating poverty.

I have heard people talk about entrepreneurship and the creation of small business. About whether or not you give a man a fish or you teach him to fish. Like Senator Forde I believe that if the man is starving and he does not have the rod and the line, he still cannot fish. There must be some mechanism to give him some leg-up in the beginning, to be able to acquire the rod and the line to be even able to cast it out.

I grew up with my grandmother who lived in poverty in Jackmans Alleys, Orange Hill, St. James and she used to tell me, "boy, a goat head is more than a cow head a year". Because you cannot start with the cow head we must be able to supply the goat head first. Whether or not anybody knocks the concept of giving anybody the \$350, there are those people in our society who because of some concept of less opportunity than we had, have slipped through the cracks. There are a number of them that I see in St. Michael South when I walk through. People who do not work, who have children, who got pregnant when they were thirteen and fourteen, who have never worked, who have never completed school. So how do you start to alleviate poverty? How do you start to deal with them and tell them about going to a skills training unit or getting themselves involved in an educational programme or some mechanism for getting themselves to work better? Do you think that one of those people can start a small business?

There must be some means and mechanism of seeding them initially and for giving these people some sort of upward mobility to start with. You cannot start out by sending them to any skills training unit. You cannot start out by sending them down to collect any money from any fund or borrow any money from any where because you have got to create some form of basic skill or basic training. But in the interim, you have got to be able to seed them and help them up in the beginning. When I hear people talk about the concept of whether or not the \$350 is a handout, my answer to that is that it is a goat head and you need the goat head first before you get to the cow head because those people must have something to begin with.

I have heard people talk about welfare and welfare distribution and whether or not people will be embarrassed. A lot of those people who got the \$350 in the first place were able to pay for something, even the ones that are in the poverty line. If a man does not fall below the tax limit, the

\$15 000 and you say that he does not pay income tax, obviously he must pay some other indirect taxes and you want to create an environment in which that tax also is eliminated. In the beginning you have got to start with giving him a handout. I want to say that this is a start, this is not to go on forever. You must in the beginning seed them in some form or fashion that he or she can get a 'leg-up' to begin with.

There is a need, Sir, for the Fund. I am one who believes that there are only two ways to tackle poverty alleviation. Through education and through honing a skill to such a level that you do it better than most other people or maybe everyone else around you. That is why enhancing our global competitiveness in the things that we do best, must be a fundamental plank of tackling poverty alleviation. The Fund offers opportunities in areas where opportunities did not exist previously. And that is important.

For example, take the area of tourism and the area of services generally. Barbados is a service oriented society and that is where we are going to take our place in the world. We have to look globally at what is happening and take the best advantage of what the global economy is serving up. This is going to be a service led economy and Barbadians have got to be trained in those areas. Barbadians have got to be trained and given the opportunity to get into areas where they can become service oriented and into the kinds of environments that breed that type of service orientation.

When people talk about whether or not the Barbados Labour Party is just giving away the VAT money and all kinds of pork barrel existence, I have always felt that in any society you need cash to care. You cannot start to care unless you have cash. Whether or not somebody believes that we are becoming materialistic, unless you start with a sound environment and a sound economic environment at that, and one that can continue to lend to becoming a sound economic environment, you cannot start to help anybody or be with anybody. You need cash to care. When I hear people relating all the parables that they relate..... you know the parable of the good Samaritan is not only one about a man helping a man, it is a lot about finance too. I am well versed to know this. That if the man had a donkey when he stopped to help the man that day, a donkey then is like a Mercedes today. So the man would have to have had in some form or fashion some cash or a piece of change. He passed by and told the innkeeper that he would pay something now and whatever he owed when he passed back he would pay. He would have to have had some kind of credit, he would have to have been creditworthy.

There is no way in the world that you can start talk about helping anybody or helping anybody up unless you have something to help them with. Therefore when I hear people say that it was a story of good intent, it was also a story about finance, banking, worth and money. It had to be that. If you do not have cash, you cannot care.

Asides.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: The Fund also has the concept of curing a lot of the other social ills. Look at it from another way. I have always believed that in Barbados, Central Government cannot deliver all of the things that we need in any society to people who are poor. I believe that unless you tackle poverty alleviation at the community level we will never ever be able to totally alleviate poverty in Barbados. Who better could know who is poor in my community than me. There is no way that I can go into Senator Boyce's or Senator Workman's community and know this. When we were growing up we knew the people down the gap, up the gap and cross the gap. We knew who did not have, we knew which houses they went to and which are the ones which gave them something.

I am saying that trying to get help under any administration from one of those central agencies you stand a better chance of winning the lottery or winning the Olympio. That is why I laud the efforts of the Government in looking to let communities create the kind of base for their own help. There is no where in the world that anybody does not know who Miss Jones is or who does not have a bread today or who eats at somebody else. That is better known within the community. There is no where either that anybody in Barbados being as proud as they are will line up anywhere down at any place to collect any handout from anybody. You must be able to handle it in some form or fashion at the community level. There must be projects at the community level that start people on some form of welfare programme and then gradually wean them off welfare. In other words, there must be broader based help programmes in which the community creates its own environment for work and creates its own jobs. That is done in societies all over the world, it is nothing new. However you tackle it, you have got to be able to empower communities to be able to create their own environments for work and their own environments for getting people to move on.

I believe, Sir, that this Government is tackling the problem head on. Senator Murray made reference to the Needs Assessment that was done through the Social Services Study. Obviously now we are in a better position to know the people that need help and how best that help can be delivered. What kind of units we need to set up? What kind of agencies that need to be created to be able to deal with that. That in essence is why all of these agencies were created.

8.15 p.m.

Now this, Sir, cannot be about any gimmick or any gimmickry. This is sound Government policy. The BLP administration, Sir, is doing all that it can. Let us face it, the concepts of social partnership because it was social partnership all around, the concept of creating a fund. You talk about the working poor. There are people in our society

who work for very small wages and a lot of these people cannot even meet their own commitments, that is why it is necessary also to be able to feed these people. The creation of non traditional means of making a living whether that comes through sports and culture. Whether you do it right and create a community of people earning money within sports. That is why I think of the whole concept of creating stadiums all around in terms of playing fields because, the concept of building community centres that people can work at and people can ply their small trades every evening. That is the concept that will keep people out of the hospitals and will keep people off the treading floors.

People need, Sir, to be private citizens and not statistics of some welfare roll. Their business must not be an open book for all Government officials to look at. And that is why I am interested, Sir, in the community base that it has because their lives should not seem like public information to any welfare officer or any Government official. I understand that people are humiliated when they go to some of these places and that is one of the reasons too why a lot of people who need help do not end up in any of these places.

Now there must be new approaches also to social assistance and poverty alleviation and I believe, Sir, what is needed in concept is something like an emergency housing assistance programme. Now I have been recently saddled with a number of people in St. Michael South who are fire victims. It is almost impossible...

Aside.

SENATOR N. A. LYNCH: Well I say saddled because I have to put my hand in my pocket. I am worried, Sir that we do not have some form of emergency assistance with a housing programme for people who find themselves in deep trouble. It has nothing to do with any licks. It has to do with what is commonsense and what is needed. A lot of these people go to the public agencies, try to seek assistance but there is not a lot available because the same housing stock that they are looking for is the same housing stock they are looking to house people on a normal basis. There are people who come in through emergency situations who should have some form of assistance provided for them under some emergency assistance programme.

There also, Sir, should be a department of the homeless and homeless services under the National Housing Corporation. I believe, Sir, that there are creative means of creating housing for people who find themselves in a real situation. I believe, Sir, there is nothing wrong with creating some tax incentive or some way of paying private landlords and subsidizing the rent in private houses or private apartments for people who find themselves without housing until housing is built. There must be some mechanism for doing that.

There also, Sir, should be some work related benefits programme that defers child care and other expenses for a

maximum period of say one year until people get a job. Let the Government pay and let these people defer all their payments that they have got when it comes through some form of Government subsidy and particularly, Sir, for women who run these families and who in most cases are the heads of these families. Many of the people that I encounter who have social problems or who end up in poverty are households that are headed by only a female. There are no males around. At least the male is transient, he comes and goes as he pleases.

I believe too, Sir, that there should be some family support Act in Barbados. I believe that 90% of the social problems that we have in Barbados can be tackled in another way. There are people in Barbados every Sunday who throw away food and there are people in this society who do not get a meal on a Sunday or who starve. I have honestly always believed that what needs to be done is some form of mentoring, some form of adoption of a family. I believe that in a society, for example Government can create a fund that pays a family to adopt a family or take in a family within their own community which people would be more inclined to go to. If a lot of these people have a sound environment or at least see some structure of a family they are less inclined to go any further into the kind of problems that they have got. I believe, Sir, that it can be done through Government, through some kind of community fund that can screen out families, that can mentor other families and pick up other people. Men and women in Barbados who do not have children or have children who are grown can mentor and do something about another child. It can be done through some form of tax concession. A man who mentors a child, that you make sure that it is properly screened and monitored, can also be given some kind of concession or some kind of direct payment to be able to take care of that child.

You also need, Sir, to find community initiatives that seek to move people from public assistance to employment within their own communities. People must be given a welfare period but it must be proven that they can get back off this welfare period and back into work.

I think, Sir, it is important and I want to turn here to some statements that were made regarding what is happening in Barbados because of all the problems that we are experiencing.

Sir, I think it is unfortunate that any Senator should just get up and try to say that in Barbados because of what is happening there are increases in crime without even trying to substantiate it or support it. There is no evidence anywhere in any statistics to prove that crime in Barbados has gone up. As a matter of fact crime in Barbados, under any police statistics, has gone down and I challenge anyone to get up and tell me exactly where the crime was.

In 1991 crime was 12,742. In 1992 it was 12 857. By 1993 thirteen thousand serious crimes were committed in Barbados. In 1997 there were only 10 203. As a matter of

fact every year since 1994 it has been going down, 10 541, 10 312, in 1995 and 1996 respectively. When you talk about violent crimes committed against the person, in Barbados in 1991 and 1992 there were 20 and 19 murders respectively. Last year there were only 11 murders. The rape indices have also gone down with over 100 rapes between 1991 and 1992 to 81 last year. Crimes against the person in 1991 we have 2 281 crimes against persons. In 1996 and 1997 we had 1 651 and 1 623. All this propaganda that people put out and all these gut feeling things that people bring and say, but this society is showing renewed signs of hope. This society is not as lawless as it was 5 or 6 years ago and if people believe that there is a renewed sense of being in Barbados and of people belonging, then they are certainly out to sea and they are not coming back. There are no statistics to prove that crime in Barbados has gone up and I challenge anyone to get up and tell me how it has been done and where. I do not care what anybody is saying about Barbados. This is a fact and this society has begun to understand that we need to take care of our brother. It has been happening. You can feel it if you walk around and listen to people talk. If the economy of Barbados at the macro level is doing so well, even at the micro sectoral level it is doing well, it does not translate into helping people at the bottom, people who are poor and people who can get nothing. I do not agree with that.
8.25 p.m.

As I said before, you need a sound economic climate. But you also need a mechanism to be able to deal with people at the bottom even in a society like this. When the economy starts to get better, the people who get jobs are the people who are trained. The people who have gone out there and looked for jobs. If you walk down any one of these street corners where all of those boys hang out and lime, and you find 20 or 30 boys...and I am going to stick my life on it that whenever you deal with them, 90% of them have never actively sought a job on a consistent basis, one. Two, 90% of them have no marketable skill or certification and three, they have never been taught in any way how to look for a job. When the economy expands the people who get jobs are the people who have some form of skill, education or certification.

Now that part too, the Government is tackling in a serious way, because this is not a Barbados Labour Party, or a Democratic Labour Party thing. If 65% of our people are coming out uncertified, and coming out unskilled, who is going to handle them? They cannot start any small business. Those people cannot be any entrepreneurs and those people cannot get any work. So do not tell me that they are out there liming and that the Barbados Labour Party is not creating jobs for them or that we promised them jobs.

The concept is that they have ended up out there because of the lapsed way they ran the educational system in Barbados in their administrations in the past. That is why they are there now. And then I hear people like Senator

Boyce, honourable people, I must add, saying that we are not creating jobs for them. How are you going to create a job for a man when he has neither a marketable skill nor is certified in anyway to do a job? That is something that the Government needs to tackle.

The Government is tackling that now by being able to create the... they have them like they are deaf. They have them in schools. The unions do not want you to do any institutional testing in schools. They do not want you to access teachers. They do not want you to do all the things that are necessary to make the educational system work.

But then they complain that we put out people every year and they do not have any certification. What madness? This is totally ridiculous. If in Barbados we are able to tackle the problem of education in a very serious way, we can totally eradicate poverty in Barbados in the long term. The problem is however, Sir, that a lot of these changes must take place and in the interim we must be able to create institutions in which we can seed and help people up.

I am one who is interested in helping people and seeing people get up. That is why I have gotten into politics and that is why I have come to this Chamber. We need to put a human face on what we do in Barbados every day as it relates to these things and stop coming here and grandstanding and doing a lot of posturing for people to hear you reporting in the press, or something else.

The concept is that in this country you need to start seeding people and you need to start helping people through a fund. At the end of the day, you need to fix the educational system and you need to fix the skills training.

A woman came to see me today at my office. She went into skills training for 10 weeks and learned something called 'needle point' that bears absolutely no relevance to what is happening in Barbados today because she is a woman. We cannot find carpenters, masons and joiners. You cannot find these people in Barbados and we are sending people to skills training to learn nonsense that cannot help them out of any kind of poverty at all.

I am saying that all of these things are things that need to be corrected and they are being worked on. Those are not things that started with the Barbados Labour Party, those are things that have always existed. It bears no relevance to the types of developments that we are looking to deal with.

When the Barbados Labour Party Government decided to get rid of the onerous qualification aspects that they had to get into the Community College, Hospitality Institute and to go to the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, places that bear relevance to the kind of economic development that Barbados needs. These are the places that people need to get into. They do not need to have any four 'O' levels or no four 'CXC's' at General and all this nonsense to get into them.

Because they are a lot of people, who can come through this society and who can gain from them. That is the kind of society that I am talking about that we are trying to build.

Sir, I am proud to be associated with it. I am proud to be associated with this Bill and I commend it to you. I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR N. P. WELCH: I do not know if there is much more left for me to say. But I know that this Social Investment Fund Bill is a wise investment in Barbados at this time. I believe that history will show us that future generations when they reflect on us they would say that it was a wise investment in our future.

Sir, there are a number of people in our society, the old people, the disabled, the mentally challenged, the middle-aged people, particularly those who head households and do not have, unfortunately in a lot of instances, access to a permanent job. Then there are the young people in this society who, as the last Senator who spoke said because of educational circumstances are not trained and therefore they are having difficulties in acquiring certain jobs.

I think that when I reflect on the type of vehicle that Government has put in place through the Social Investment Fund, I can see where Government has taken its deliberate approach of targeting people. They have targeted the old, the infirmed and the physically and mentally handicapped. You look at the middle-aged people who have skills, but do not have the finance to turn these skills that they have into successful businesses and you have the young people.

I believe that those older people in our society, some of them in their 80s and 90s have made very valuable contributions to the development of this country. As I said, the Social Investment Fund is a wise investment at this time in Barbados because they ought to be given the right to serve out the balance of their days in dignified conditions.

Many of us in here who are involved in party politics in what we commonly call 'canvassing', come head on with some levels of poverty that I can only say is embarrassing to me at this time in the development of our country. I make this point to make the further point that I would support any measure that seeks to bring welfare handouts to this cadre of people who cannot help themselves.

Sometimes they are old. Sometimes they are crippled. They have no help in spite of the very good programme we have for home help. If we do not target these people and make financial contributions to their upkeep, for example, the paying of their water bills, and electricity bills, and the provision of home help for them and even in some instances providing welfare cheques so that they can be fed.

So I want to make the first point that we owe it to these people in our society that we must continue to provide for

them. I have encountered circumstances where...and there are a lot of us in here who could go home at night and sleep comfortably without having a second thought about, "how will I make it through the rainy season this year?" But they are those out there whose houses are leaking, who, as a matter of course, year after year, have to dodge positions in the house and have to move carefully because of the rotten floor boards. I think that we, as a people who have received an education and who are now in policy making positions must ensure that these people are taken care of. I believe that the Government has taken a step in the right direction in making funds available so that we could at least alleviate the discomfort that these people live in during the remainder of their lives.

But then, Sir, there are a number of people in this society who have worked steadfastly at a job and have developed a skill. They are experts in the area, but for some unfortunate reasons, they lose their jobs. Sometimes they work in very specialised areas and they cannot really qualify for a job in another area. I believe that programmes like this can target those people.

Let us say for instance, a young lady who worked 20 years at Chickmont or wherever and she knows everything about processing chickens or rearing chickens. She loses her job. She has all the ideas and all the technologies. She probably has the 400 or 500 square feet of land next to her house and all she needs is the finance to be able to get a couple bags of cement and some wire. She needs to be able to buy a couple bags of feed for the seven weeks that it would take to bring a day old chick to slaughter some seven weeks later.

If we do not place systems, Sir, that would allow people who find themselves in these circumstances to be able to still make a living, to be able to be in a position where they can operate from their home base and probably lend assistance to their old grandmother or where they can still lend assistance to their young two or three-year-old baby. In fact, I think it is an excellent idea if we can target these people specifically and help them to develop this area of business activity, so that we would not only be tackling a problem by providing a job for them, but we would also place them in a favourable position where in addition to having a job they will have time available to them. You spend two hours during the morning feeding the baby chicks and cleaning the pens and you will have perhaps the whole day left until evening before you feed them again. This time you can look after your mother and your old father and you can look after your kid and you can get involved in other activities.

8.35 p.m.

When I look at the Social Investment Fund and see the tremendous potential it lends to this area of activity I am pleased about it. Take a look at the youth, I remember at the

last Budget the Prime Minister was at pains to point out that Barbados' society had changed and that although young people might not come out of schools and colleges with the traditional education, they come with skills. I think it is a blessed time when a lot of secondary schools in Barbados place emphasis on music, art and culture. Let us take for example Edwin Yearwood and Allison Hinds. I know that Allison went to Foundation and Edwin went to Parkinson. They probably came out of school with a couple of "O" Levels but they would not have had the opportunity without the skills and the artistic talent that they have to make the type of living that they are making now.

When Government made a decision to exempt from duties the inputs into areas of art, culture, music and the manufacturing of CDs I think that was another excellent idea in which Government is focussing on ways in which poverty could be alleviated by helping those people who have God-given talents into areas where they can turn their talents into a viable commercial activity.

If you look at Gregory Lalu Goodridge, the first Barbadian footballer to make it in First Division football in Britain, we see another excellent example of the benefits of the money that the Social Investment Fund is investing at the community level through sports programmes, whether through a community group, like the Pinelands Creative Workshop or the Youth Entrepreneurial Scheme or the programme they had with the Defence Force where we might find 5 or 6 or 8 individuals who can reach that level of excellence that although they may not have 4 or 5 "O" levels they can use their God-given skills to go out there and earn a living, in much the same way as the many cricketers throughout the Caribbean went to England and played county cricket and made a living. They came back and invested their monies wisely in a couple of apartments and now can serve out the rest of their non-playing days secure in the fact that they can live off the investment that they put in place through the artistic talents they had developed over the time that they spent in school and participating in these activities within their communities.

Sir, I am particularly pleased that Government has taken this step. A wise man once said that it is more difficult to gain your first guinea for an investment than to make your first million. It speaks to the fact that we have a lot of young and middle-aged people in Barbados who have lots of ideas, old people even, who have worked a full life and have retired pretty fit and healthy. We have a few of those who have retired and are still full of ideas and have a clear concept of how they could develop a business.

One of the strange factors is that you can have all the ideas but if you do not have the money to make those ideas into reality you cannot get anywhere. If you pass up Oistins on a weekend we know that the reason why the Oistins project has succeeded was largely because the people who were involved in the project had good skills. They had an opportunity where the rents are as little as \$40 a week and

this speaks to the whole matter of the Social Investment Fund that you can create a situation where the headaches of large rents that operate in Broad Street are removed, where people are presented with nice places to operate from – they are right next door to the fish. They have been making, I understand, a very good living in these activities.

Look at Cheapside or the Fairchild Street Bus Stand – only a couple of weeks ago I went to Palmetto Square to buy some fruit and although I was hearing all of this opposition to the location of the mall I find the stalls crowded. You could not even get near to buy your fruit and the people seemed very happy to me.

Look at what this Government has done at Palmetto Square, Oistins, Cheapside – I went to get a hair-cut a couple weeks ago somewhere down Hincks Street and I walked into this beauty complex which a youngster from Parish Land who was unemployed 2 or 3 years ago is operating now. He said to me, "Patrick, business is good. I am looking at going over to the other side where the Shipping and Trading has a Complex. I asked him for a couple of fellows from Parish Land and he said to me, "They are down in Cheapside selling. You see that show at the Stadium with those guys from Jamaica? They are going to make about \$3 000 or \$4 000 between Friday and Saturday selling clothes."

These are the types of activities that I am talking about. So anybody whose eyes are open and who drives around the new Barbados – I like to call it the new Barbados – must appreciate the programmes that this Government has put in place. These are not hairy-fairy programmes where the girls and guys in Parish Land, in Oistins, where the fellows that were in the sun without toilet facilities in Palmetto Square are smiling and happy because a Government has put a human face on itself and come face to face with the problems of people. If we are going to be the society that I think all of us want Barbados to be we must thank God for this Government for the vision that allowed it to see that the monies that were honed from the sale of the flour mill and BET and all these places that might have gone elsewhere into other developments to benefit a few have been put in places where people like me, young people, old people, middle-aged people can benefit in a way that Barbados has never seen the like of since I have known myself to be a man.

I want to thank this Government and thank other Senators in here who I am sure will support this Bill and I commend it not only to this Chamber but to the entire country of Barbados.

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I am sure that you will agree with me that after the excellent contributions which have been made by the last few speakers on my side in addition to the earlier ones they have done an excellent job in wrapping up the debate. We were guided through a full discussion by all members of the

Senate on this matter. The last several members on this side who spoke took us through the crowning elements of the performance of this side in the representation of this Social Investment Fund. We were taken to visions of the new Barbados.

Mr. President, at the end of this debate I think everyone is clear on the important role which a social investment fund will play in the eradication of poverty, recognising that the two elements in that direction will be some immediate relief to those persons who are most pressed and who need to be assisted in getting over the immediate circumstances as well as a longer term developmental focus and moving in the direction of enterprise development.

All that remains for me to do, Mr. President, in this debate is to beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, SENATOR THE HON. MISS O. P. SYMMONDS in the Chair.

8.45 p.m.

COMMITTEE

MADAM CHAIRMAN: The Senate is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 – 10 inclusive, were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY, Madam CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour, the PRESIDENT, the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. PRESIDENT resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Social Investment Fund Act, 1998.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Honourable Senate do now adjourn *sine die*.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before putting the motion, I just would like to make an observation which I very rarely make. It is just to say that this has been a debate of the highest quality. I think every single Member of the Senate made an important contribution to it.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn sine die was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.

8.55 p.m.

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3. The Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 9) Order, 1998.
4. Annual Report of the Central Bank of Barbados for the Year 1997.
5. Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Barbados National Bank for the Year 1997.
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7. Report on the Accounts of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the Quarter ending March 31, June 30, September 30 and December 31, 1998.
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RICKINSON, Senator Mrs. P. E.
SPRINGER, Senator the Venerable Archdeacon J. L.
SYMMONDS, Senator the Hon. Miss O. P.
TROTMAN, Senator C. LeR.
WELCH, Senator N. P.
WORKMAN, Senator J. A.