

THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

THE SENATE

Monday, March 27, 2000

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Monday, March 27, 2000, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

His Honour Senator Sir Fred GOLLOP, K.A. (President)

His Honour Senator C. L. BOLDEN, C.B.E. (Deputy President)

Senator the Hon. P. C. GODDARD (Minister of Public Works and Transport) (Leader of the Senate)

Senator the Hon. G. S. H. MURRAY, J.P. (Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office and the Civil Service)

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

Senator T. E. BARKER (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources)

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

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE

Senator G. S. GRIFFITH, S.C.M., J.P.

Senator G. E. N. BROME

Senator Miss J. P. THORINGTON

Senator D. D. MARSHALL

Senator C. A. MASCOLL, B.Sc. (Econ.) (Hons.), M.A. (Public Finance)

Senator Miss C. S. THOMAS, LL.B.

Senator C. LeR. TROTMAN

Senator Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON

Senator C. K. LAURIE

Senator Sir John Stanley GODDARD, K.A.

Senator B. R. COLLYMORE, C.M.G.

Senator the Rev. L. W. B. ROCK

Senator Mrs. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is now in session.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I am commanded to lay the following documents before the Senate:—

1. The Value Added Tax (Refund) (Syrian Lebanese Women's Association) Order, 2000.
2. The Annual Report of the Community Legal Services Commission for the year 1997-1998.
3. The Annual Report and Statement of Accounts of the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation for the period January 1 to December 31, 1998.
4. The Annual Reports of the National Productivity Council for the Years 1996-1997 and 1997-1998.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I move that Standing Order No. 45 (2) be suspended for the remainder of today's Sitting.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

BILLS READ A FIRST TIME

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I beg to move that the following Bills be read a first time:

1. The Appropriation Bill, 2000.
2. The Money Laundering (Prevention and Control) (Amendment) Bill, 2000.

The question was put and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 1 – THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 2000

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to move the second reading of the Appropriation Bill, 2000. The Accountant General may, on the warrant of the Minister or persons authorised by the Minister in writing, issue out of the Consolidated Fund or applied towards making good the supply granted to the service of the year ending 31st March, 2001, a sum not exceeding in the aggregate, \$1 052 336 304.

That the sum referred hereto in Section 2 is hereby appropriated to the services and purposes set out in the Schedule in accordance with the Section 109 of the Constitution and is so appropriated as from the 1st April, 2000.

Mr. President, in discussing the Estimates of Expenditure for 2000 – 2001, this is done in the context of an unparalleled period of economic growth over the past seven years and with every expectation of further healthy sustained economic growth. The growth in the economy over the past year has been unbalanced, however, with, greater growth being experienced in the non-trading section than in the trading sectors. It is expected that this trend will be reversed.

We must take these factors into account in the Estimates of Expenditure for the next fiscal year 2000- 2001. The international environment is still quite turbulent and undergoing rapid change. Trade matters are very much on the front burner with issues being raised in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), the Organisation for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) and with the post-LOMÉ IV arrangements with the European Union.

The Government has targeted a maximum of 2.5 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (on the financial institutional basis) as desirable and has been able to maintain low deficits over the past five years. This has largely been achieved through prudent expenditure and carefully controlled capital expenditure to avoid an overheating of the economy.

This has to be constantly monitored since dramatic shifts in revenue or expenditure can derail the process. There, we must constantly apply a discipline to the management of the inflows and outflows of government to ensure that the economy is kept on an even keel and that unwarranted expenditure does not take place.

We have achieved much in the latter half of this decade and we must not fritter it away for short-term benefits. We must not return to the parlous state of the 1991 fiscal crisis, for in the future it will be harder to correct the results of such improvements. The accelerating pace of change and rapid evolution of the new economy in an increasingly hostile environment for those who cannot or will not manage their economic affairs prudently.

This year, these Estimates of Expenditure have incorporated two main wage issues. In this fiscal year the wage settlement of four per cent as well as the repayment of the first tranche of the eight per cent pay cut will be brought to book.

Quite apart from the domestic and parochial realities that face us, the challenge of the changing international economy confronts us. While underlying economic fundamentals of Barbados are strong at this time, we cannot ignore what is happening to other economies around the world. The outlook for the year 2000 in the medium-term is sensitive to a number of factors. These include the price of hydrocarbon energy, the growth of economies of our major trading partners, and the effect of natural disasters.

Since last year, there has been a strengthening in many areas of the world economy and as a result, Barbados' ability to borrow on the international market is not as constrained as it was a year ago. During the fiscal year Barbados has earned a new sovereign rating for external debt from Standards and Poors. The (A-) investment grade rating is two increments above the upgraded investing Baa2 rating given by Moody's. This Baa2 rating however, is still two increments above the Ba1 rating held by Barbados with Moody's until recently. As a result, Barbados should be able to borrow at much better terms and rates than we could during the period of contagion with non-investment grade rating.

This improved rating by Standards & Poor's is of some significance in the light of recent comments made by the Opposition who would seize on any temporary negative situation to turn it into a general trend. In arriving at the credit rating for Barbados, this is what Standards & Poors had to say about our economy: "Barbados' ratings reflect its tradition of prudent economic management that has contributed to seven consecutive years of economic growth and resulted in a per capita GDP approaching US\$10. The country's high education and health standards – Barbados ranks 24th in the United Nations index of human development – have allowed it to shift towards a service economy and away from one dependent upon commodity prices". I repeat that. We have been able "to shift towards a service economy and away from one dependent upon commodity prices". This is being managed in a smooth and effective way.

In 1999, the world economy recovered substantially from the emerging market crisis of 1997 – 1998 in Asia, Latin America, and Central Europe. World output was estimated to have expanded by three per cent, an increase from the 2.5 per cent growth of 1998. Some of the larger developing economies such as South Korea, Singapore and Malaysia have shown remarkably higher rates of growth for the year 1999. Others such as Brazil and Russia have experienced more modest downturns than were expected given their massive currency devaluation.

11.25 a.m.

World trade volume in goods and services grew by an estimated 3.7 per cent. Imports by advanced and developing economies grew by 5.9 per cent and 1.15 per cent, respectively, while economies in transition saw imports declining by 2.7 per cent. The economies in transition are those former communist countries who are now going through the evolutionary change to a market economy.

The economy of Barbados recorded its seventh consecutive year of growth in 1999. The economy continued to expand with real GDP increasing by an estimated 3.2 per cent compared with 4.1 per cent in 1998 and an average of 3.6 per cent over the past five years. This growth was accompanied by a reduction in unemployment that saw a further decline from 12.3 per cent to 10.4 per cent.

Growth was led by the non-trading sectors that grew by 4.5 per cent compared with a growth of 0.9 per cent in the trading sector. The construction, mining and quarrying, wholesale and retail sectors were the main engines of growth in 1999. Growth in the trading sectors was slow due to the expected downturn in tourism because of the closure and reconstruction of major hotels, and the loss of a significant portion of cruise business due to a ship accident early in the year.

Construction continued along its growth path begun in 1994 and grew by 7.9 per cent. As a consequence of the strong growth in this sector, output in the mining and quarrying sector rose by 39.0 per cent.

Real GDP in the tourism sector grew by 0.1 per cent as was expected, compared with the robust growth of 8.5 per cent in 1998. The UK remained the dominant market and arrivals increased by 10.9 per cent. The performance of the UK sector of the tourist market has been assisted by the strong visibility of Barbados in the marketplace.

The agricultural sector performed moderately overall in 1999, despite the fact that it was severely affected by the fish kill during the third quarter of the year. Sugar output rose by 10.8 per cent compared to a decline of 25.7 per cent the previous year due to increased acreage of reaped canes and more favourable conditions. Notwithstanding the fish kills,

total output in the agricultural sector increased by 3.7 per cent in 1999. This was as a result of increased production of food crops and increased production of chicken.

The continued fall in unemployment during 1999 has resulted in the lowest recorded rate of unemployment since 1982. For the first time in the history of Barbados unemployment figures are in the single digit range with the most recent rate of 9.8 per cent being recorded. During the year, a record 122.4 thousand people were gainfully employed compared to 119.6 thousand in 1998. The annual rate of inflation was a moderate 1.6 per cent.

Mr. President, the expected revenue and expenditure showed a fiscal deficit of 3.1 per cent of GDP on the basis used by international financial institutions. Current revenue is projected at \$1 571 300 000, a 1.0 per cent increase over that for 1998-99, while the total expenditure is estimated at \$1 928 500 000 million. The deficit is expected to be financed by a combination of sources – local, as well as \$130 million of the \$150 million loan raised on the regional capital market, with the remainder, \$20 million, being in a special reserved account at the Central Bank.

The local financial sector remained strong benefiting from the strong regulatory system. Interest rates were increased to assist in stabilising the credit situation. The minimum bank deposit rate moved from 4.0 per cent to 5.0 per cent. Total deposits in the commercial banks rose by 10.0 per cent in 1999 with private individual deposits accounting for 62.4 per cent of total deposits. The Central Bank increased the cash reserve requirement by 1 per cent to 6 per cent, raised its discount rate to commercial banks from 9 per cent to 10 per cent and also withdrew 1.5 per cent of deposits under its control.

The level of liquidity in the banking system continued to decline and reached 4.0 per cent compared to the 8.4 per cent recorded in 1998. This was some indication that the monetary measures started to have some impact.

The external position of the economy was somewhat weaker than in 1998, with strong growth in construction leading to a fall in the foreign reserves.

CARICOM economies continued to experience positive growth overall in 1999, although at a lower rate than in 1998. Performances ranged from no growth to 8.5% among CARICOM countries in 1999 as most countries continued to record growth in that year with the possible exception of Jamaica which had another difficult year. Trinidad & Tobago and Grenada grew by 6.9 per cent and 4.0 per cent respectively and were the fastest growing economies of the region. The slow down during the year in the vitally important sectors of the hospitality industry and agriculture resulted from factors such as hurricanes and lower export commodity prices.

The region's susceptibility to natural disasters such as hurricanes and their negative impact on sustainable economic growth was amply demonstrated on the islands of The Bahamas, Antigua and Barbuda, Dominica and St. Kitts and Nevis. The islands of the Bahamas and Antigua and Barbuda were both hit twice in the space of two months by hurricanes. There was a minimal loss of life but severe damage was done to the infrastructure of the island. The cost of the repairs was significant and in some instances concessionary loan financing was sought to achieve the repairs.

The banana dispute between the United States and Latin American producers on the one hand and the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries on the other continued in 1999. The modified agreements proposed by the EU to conform with the WTO regulations have been rejected by the United States and the Latin American producers. The US has announced its intention to impose punitive duties on EU exports to the USA as compensation for lost earnings from the EU trade regime. In fact, an order has been issued to demand that the wide range of products being exported from the EU, from handbags to various other articles must place a bond of 100 per cent of the value pending the resolution of the final determination on the duties that will be levied on those imports.
11.35 a.m.

The region also saw a move by one of the Windward Islands banana boards to sell their product to East Incorporated as well as through the West Indies Banana Development Company (WIBDECO), the umbrella marketing organisation from the Windward Islands. Prices from the CARICOM grouping's main commodity exports have continued along a downward long-term trend in concert with the movement of global commodity prices. The main exceptions have been petroleum products which have benefitted from the OPEC agreement to cut production, and nutmeg as a result of economic and social instability in Indonesia which has severely affected the Moluccas Islands of Indonesia where nutmeg is an indigenous product.

Reform of the telecommunication sectors of the region has shown some marginal progress. Agreement has been reached between the Government of Jamaica and Cable and Wireless to phase out its monopoly over three years. However, in achieving this agreement Cable and Wireless has succeeded in including other services which were not previously in their monopolistic arrangement but as their Internet services. The agreement between Cable and Wireless and the Government of Jamaica was signed for a twenty-year period in 1998 giving it an exclusive licence and a guaranteed annual profit margin of 17.5%.

An option process has been instituted for the sale of licences for wireless communication service providers who will act as direct competitors to Cable and Wireless. In Dominica the High Court has upheld a Lower Court verdict

ruling the agreement with Cable and Wireless to be illegal. The OECS countries are also examining their relations with Cable and Wireless with a view to introducing competition in both fixed and wireless telecommunication services.

These developments underscore the vital role that telecommunication systems play in the region's economic and social development. The distinction must be clearly made between telephony and the broader issues of telecommunications network systems that allow clear, unfettered, swift and easy access to the new medium of commerce, information, learning and the many other areas of human communication – The Internet.

It is about the introduction of new technology and relinquishing obsolete systems. It is about introducing the vibrancy of competition to provide choice in the market place and to adequately meet consumer demands. The issue is not just cost of a telephone call to New York, Boston or London, it is about the cost of dedicated data links and the provisions of adequate band widths to the Internet supported by the appropriate technological systems to allow the efficient development of electronic business sectorised in Barbados and other countries of the region. It is to create a new business environment where we as a people can earn our way in this economic environment and not just be consumers.

The information age has redefined and continues to redefine the role and nature of telecommunication companies. We have stuck to the industrial age model for far too long and it is time that we move swiftly to provide the environment for the information model of telecommunication systems to serve our people and our economic development and our business community.

The prime beneficiaries of a liberated telecommunication system will be our hospitality where small hoteliers will be able to market, book and sell their rooms on a global basis without having to go through many, many tiers of agents and individuals who make a profit off of us for doing very, very little. It frees our business community to access the global marketplace in a very cost effective way at a very low investment. It is the greatest benefit to the small and medium size business of Barbados and the Caribbean region.

Review of the first quarter of 2000: Preliminary data suggest that real economic activity during the first quarter of 2000 has improved beyond that of 1999. The Net International Reserves rose by \$100 million representing a massive turn around from the \$4.5 million decline in the first quarter of 1999. The Net International Reserves as of March 23, 2000, stood at \$743 880 000. This is a significant achievement for our economy and it belies the dire prognostications of some who would say that we were on the verge of a calamity just a few short months ago.

Purchase from commercial banks indicates that a healthy hospitality industry performance is being recorded. Contrary to the dire predictions of some, the Ways and Means now stand at zero when it was forecast to burst the seams at over \$160 million just a few short months ago.

Prospects for the rest of the year 2000: The economy of Barbados is projected to expand between 2% to 3% achieving its eighth consecutive year of economic growth. Growth will be distributed among most sectors of the economy with the trading sectors expected to perform better than in 1999. Construction is expected to remain the major contributor to GDP even though growth in the year 2000 is projected to be lower than in 1999. The hospitality industry will continue to depend mainly on growth and arrival from the United Kingdom market. Cruise ship arrivals are up and expected to increase and will make a significant contribution to the earnings of the hospitality industry sector.

There is a need for expansion of our room capacity to properly capitalise on our room potential in other market areas. The construction of the Hilton Hotel and Sandy Lane Hotel will go a long way to addressing this potential. The continued closure of some leading properties will restrict growth somewhat in this area.

The construction industry is likely to suffer from shortages of important inputs such as skilled labour and supervisory skills. However, Government has increased its subvention to the Barbados Vocational Training Board in 1999/2000 and it will provide further funding. So that if necessary, skill/training is available to fill the demand created for skilled labour in the Barbados marketplace.
11.45 a.m.

Continued strong consumer and business confidence in the management of the economy should stimulate the wholesale and retail sector, giving added impetus to the economy.

The trading sectors of the economy are expected to resume positive overall growth with the recovery of the sugar and non-sugar sectors. Continuing with the continued positive growth in the manufacturing and hospitality industries, there should be increases at the level of net international reserves.

The hospitality industry is also expected to attract foreign investment, boosting long-term capital flows, and there is a significant pipeline of investments in this area.

Government revenue is projected to increase by 5.8 per cent compared to the 6.1 per cent increase in 1999. The fiscal deficit is likely to remain below 2.0 per cent of GDP, increase of expenditure on salaries and wages.

Capital expenditure will increase as Government's capital works programme continues, but caution will be exercised as the potential for overheating must be avoided.

External borrowing should finance the fiscal deficit. Barbados is poised to take advantage of its new and upgraded ratings to achieve this. And it must be noted that we have announced our intention to go to the marketplace for \$200 million. We are doing so as a precautionary measure, because we are entering into a new trading environment where the trade liberalisation that is taking place and our agreement to remove licences at the beginning of April and replace the licences with high levels of import duties to protect sensitive products, may have unintended consequences. Therefore we are ensuring that there would be no damage done to the economy by taking out this loan at an early stage and placing it in a special account to shore up our reserves should it be necessary to do so. This is the sort of prudent action that a wise Government will take rather than wait for the 11th hour and scramble around Bridgetown asking companies to lend it money.

The rate of inflation should remain moderate at about 1.5 per cent. There are no major inflationary pressures in the economy that should give rise to a surge in prices.

The level of unemployment is expected to decline further as more jobs are created with the continued expansion of the economy. There is some expectation that the full employment rate in the economy will be realised.

Liquidity in the financial system is expected to decline further with financial institutions being forced to be selective in their distribution of credit. The balance of payments should record a modest overall surplus in 2000 as economic activity will continue to sustain the growth of imports.

The Government has set itself the goal of transforming Barbados into a fully developed economy during the next century. The fulfillment of this promise will depend heavily on our ability to adapt to a very dynamic international landscape and our capacity to adjust to the most rapid air shift in history.

The Estimates of Current Revenue for 2000-2001 have been constructed on the following key economic assumption. Real GDP growth on a fiscal year basis of 2.7 per cent, Real GDP in the fiscal year is estimated. A GDP deflator of 1.1 per cent. Nominal GDP growth on a fiscal year basis of 5.4 per cent and a nominal GDP in the fiscal year estimated at \$4 336 million and growth in retained imports on a fiscal year basis of 3.5 per cent. The retained import level in the fiscal year is estimated at \$2 134 million.

Current revenue estimates taking into account a programme to collect \$.7 million in tax arrears. Revenue is expected to increase by \$153.7 million or 9.8 per cent over the revised 1999-2000 level to \$1 725 million. Taxes on incomes and profits are projected to increase marginally by \$.5.8 million or 1.1 per cent to \$524.9 million.

Income tax is expected to decline by \$7.2 million or 2.6 per cent to \$268.9 million. This decrease is chiefly due to the increasing numbers of individuals who qualify for the reverse tax credit and those taking advantage of tax deductions through increased savings.

Corporation tax is projected to rise by \$9.8 million or 4.4 per cent to \$233.1 million. It might be pointed out that the enormous tax losses incurred at the beginning of this decade during the times of financial difficulty have now been eliminated, thereby reducing the tax write offs currently being experienced today.

Taxes on property are expected to grow by \$8.2 million or 8.8 per cent to \$101.1 million. The Land Tax department has set a target of \$25 million to collect in arrears, seven million more than was collected in 1999-2000 fiscal year, and measures have been put in place to bring pressure on those delinquents who refuse to pay land tax, despite the general moratorium that had been allowed in previous years.

The taxes on goods and services are expected to rise by \$87.5 million or 12.3 per cent to \$798.6 million. This tax category received its principal impetus from the receipt of VAT and excise duties which are expected to contribute \$699.7 million. It is expected that \$35 million will be collected as arrears in excise from the Barbados National Terminal Company and \$5 million in VAT arrears.

Import duties are expected to increase by \$26.7 million or 19.7 per cent to \$162.5 million. Special receipts are expected to rise by \$4.9 million or 11.9 per cent to \$46.1 million. Land tax revenue is expected to increase by \$17.9 million or 30.8 per cent to \$76 million. The current expenditure in 2000-2001 financial year is expected to increase by \$49.4 million or 3.0 per cent to \$1 717 600 000 from the revised 1999-2000 level of \$1 668 200 000.
11.55 a.m.

Expenditure on personal emoluments in 2000-2001 is projected to increase by \$45.8 million or eight per cent to \$615.5 million. The public sector second wage and salary settlement of 2.5 per cent in 2000-2001 and the repayment of the second tranche of the eight per cent reduction in personal emoluments estimated at \$22.7 million represents the major contributing factors for this increase.

Expenditure on goods and services is expected to rise by \$23.8 million or 14.4 per cent to \$188.8 million. Current transfers are projected to increase by \$9.4 million or 2.2 per cent to \$430.6 million. Domestic amortization is projected to increase by \$12.1 million or 8.2 per cent to \$160.3 million because of maturing debentures. Foreign amortization is expected to decline by \$53.3 million or 54.1 per cent to \$44.4 million because of the repayment of the \$30 million Bankers Trust Loan in 1999 - 2000.

Capital Expenditure 2000-2001

Capital Expenditure is projected to rise by \$63.4 million or 24.4 per cent, which is \$323.7 million. Total expenditure associated directly with projects is estimated at \$277.2 million. Total non-project capital expenditure is estimated at \$46.5 million. Capital formation is expected to increase by \$49.9 million or 25.3 per cent to \$246.9 million. Acquisition of land and property is projected to increase by \$1.9 million or 15.6 per cent to \$14 million. Capital transfers are projected to rise by \$12.2 million or 25.6 per cent to \$59.9 million. Capital lending is expected to decline by \$700 000 or 18.8 per cent to \$2.8 million.

The financial programme for 2000 - 2001 provides \$5.5 million for the further computerization of the financial accounting, human resources and payroll systems of the government as well as improved inventory control systems. The plan is to have an additional 15 sites online to the new computerized financial system, with a similar number of sites online using the human resources and payroll system. A large number of public officers will be added to the computerized payroll system using the Smart Stream payroll programme. In addition, weekly payroll programmes will be computerized. This will go a long way to improving the efficiency of Government and its administration, as well as moving towards better control of inventory, consumable stores.

While it is important that we manage the economy with prudence, it is also important for us to address the development of our people. In this regard, the continuation of our social, educational and health programmes are of the utmost importance. Ultimately, the economic management of the country is all about people and not about dollars, and the improvement in the quality of life. Thus, it is the social sectors that are of major importance. Education, labour, social transformation, rural and urban development, housing and health all play their part in the development of our people and in proving our national productivity so that we can make our way in this world with pride, confidence, and a sense of independence.

There will be the continuation of the restructuring and reforming of the basic educational system in Barbados which commenced in the 1998 - 1999 financial year. The financial programme provides for \$45 million for the Educational Sector Enhancement Programme, popularly known as EduTech 2000, to continue the momentum therefrom and the restructuring efforts of the Government in education.

This programme will continue the development of individuals who are digitally literate and who will be able to engage in the economy of the future. While we are talking about a one-year, the programme indicates the long range nature of the plans being laid so that we are looking to the development of future generations for the continued growth and enhancement of our community.

During the financial year 2000-2001, the major thrusts of the Ministry of Health will be to address the major problem areas at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the psychiatric hospital, the care of the elderly programme and the Barbados Drug Service. In addition, the Ministry will be funding a study on the economic impact of HIV/AIDS to be conducted by the Chronic Disease Research Centre of the School of Clinical Medicine and Research at UWI, Cave Hill Campus. In this regard, this will be the first of a series of economic impact studies being done on various health issues. Far too little is known of the social and economic impact of various diseases and we need this information so that we can make the appropriate investment and strategies to mitigate and reduce the complications of various diseases in our society with the first aim being to reduce human suffering, not just of those afflicted by the disease, but of their families and their loved ones. These economic impact studies will assist us in developing better strategies to reduce the complications of chronic disease such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity which plague our society and are all interlinked.

12.05 p.m.

In this regard the Ministry of Health will redouble its efforts in programmes that are designed to bring about a change in lifestyle, recognising that our lifestyle has changed due to the nature of our work change as we have moved from an agrarian society to an information age society. Therefore, we need new strategies to improve the dietary intake of individuals and to promote a regimen of routine exercise activity among all members of the society.

Priority will be placed on the upgrading and improving the physical plant at the Psychiatric Hospital and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, along with the strengthening of human resources and upgrading the health information systems. For the Medical Aid Scheme there will be an increase of \$1 million to \$2.5 million along with an additional \$1.5 million to purchase medical supplies for the Drug Service.

In this regard, there will be an improvement in the management systems of inventory control and disbursement of drugs and filling of prescriptions in the Drug Service to ensure that we maximise the efficiency and reduce wastage in that area. This programme is a significant programme and one that is extremely costly. Therefore, we need to ensure that it is effectively managed and that the individuals who manage this programme have the adequate tools to do so. They will be provided with those tools in this financial year.

The Psychiatric Hospital is in dire need of upgrading. Consultancy services will be invited to redesign a modern-day facility to replace the 19th century facility that we now have. The Psychiatric Hospital was built about 1885-1890. It was designed with the medical knowledge of the day in mind. For example, you will note that the wards of the

Psychiatric Hospital are spread fairly far apart. That was done to avoid the transmission of fever from one ward to another. Today, with the medical knowledge and the practices that we have, we recognise that a physical separation of patients to that extent is not necessary so we are looking to redesigning the whole aspect of the Psychiatric Hospital to make it easier for individuals to work in that hospital, to upgrade the facilities to make it less labour intensive and to bring it into the modern day thinking of today.

The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is being redefined by the implementation of aspects of the Haynes Report. A committee has been established to work at changing the legislation, its structure and the operating procedures of the QEH as well as looking at the physical facilities and the additions that are needed.

One must remember that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital design goes back as far as 1957. Since that time, medical science has had astronomical strides. The equipment being used for patient care, or diagnosis is unrecognisable today from what we had 50 years ago. It is a capital intensive area of activity. We have introduced neurosurgery, open heart surgery and we will expand on those areas to reduce the amount of money that we spend by sending people overseas for treatment.

The introduction of new diagnostic equipment is an expensive exercise. In this regard, we are going to encourage and develop private cooperation. For example, a Magnetic Resonance Imaging Machine costs \$1.5 to \$2 million and the cost of maintenance is significant. You can see that we cannot have five or six of these knocking around. We have to husband our resources and utilise the equipment we have judiciously so that we can maximise its use.

There will be a continuation of work on the preservation and enhancement of our environment. Note I underline "enhancement". In this regard, the financial programme provides \$25 million for the South Coast Sewerage Project, \$5 million for the Solid Waste Management and \$4.4 million for the West Coast Sewerage project which is envisioned to come on stream during this next decade. We will see a continuation of the South Coast Sewerage Project which is anticipated to be completed by the end of the year 2001.

The Sewerage Projects are extremely important to Barbados, and Barbados is probably the most advanced island in the Caribbean in regard to the development of sewerage projects. The experience of the Bridgetown Sewerage Project indicates that we have had significant improvement in the cleanliness of our inshore waters and the health of reefs in this area.

The South Coast Sewerage Project will be monitored on an ongoing basis to see how the project has affected our reefs and the formation of beaches and so on in our island. This is what sustainable development is all about. It is about planning. It is about managing our physical resources prudently and it is about investing in people.

The health of our nation is directly linked and associated with the productivity of our nation. In this regard, we need to strengthen the human resources and the technical capacity of individuals that deliver the health services in our country. We need to be more proactive and we need to put greater investment in the area of primary health care. We need to change the attitudes of people and we need to develop a sense of people looking after themselves rather than having to go to a doctor. This mindset change will be one of the key missions of the Ministry of Health this year and in the years to come.

In addition to that, we have to focus on the care of the elderly in an aging society. We cannot do so in isolation. It is not just the Ministry of Health that must look after this. We have to coordinate with the Ministry of Social Transformation. We have to coordinate with the Ministry of Housing. We have to coordinate with the Ministry of Finance so that we develop programmes that address our aging population through the various stages of aging to make sure that they have the maximum capacity for independence, that they are not reliant upon people to do for them, and that they are put into proper environments when their lifestyle changes so that they may move into senior citizen villages or assisted living residences with the appropriate equipment and technology to make them as independent as possible.
12.15 p.m.

In this regard, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Social Transformation have established a group to coordinate the development of the environment to look after the aging segment of our society. We need to institute programmes where user-friendly facilities are developed and this needs to be embodied in our building codes which, hopefully, will be published this year.

Many other areas relating to the elderly need to be addressed and not the least of them are the sensitising of the community at large to take a certain greater responsibility for their relatives and friends. It is a national shame to see the number of people who are being dumped at the Hospital and left alone by their friends and relatives. Just prior to Christmas, I was in the Accident and Emergency section and there were eight geriatric cases there because there was no place for them in the main hospital which was already full. I really think that it is time that we had a national awareness programme on how we look after the elderly as part of our own responsibility.

Each and every one of us, barring an accident, will get old but we do not want to lose our dignity and we do not want to lose our independence and we do not like to be moved from our environment. This is something that the Ministry of Health in conjunction with those Ministries that I just mentioned would be looking at to develop programmes to assist the elderly in our community.

In addition, the Ministry of Health has established a programme to work more closely with NGOs in our society and it has embarked on a programme of working with NGOs to strengthen those institutions and to help them become independent bodies that are not dependent upon handouts from Government, institutions that will be able to give Government independent advice upon the areas of expertise that they have. Through working with the NGOs, many of whom perform an exceptionally valuable service in our society, much better than Government can, we plan to strengthen the health care and the looking after of the needy in our society.

Mr. President, this Budget will go a long way towards the sound, sustainable development of our country. We are showing exceptional growth and we have gained the respect of the international financial community in a way that few developing countries have ever done. The Minister of Finance is to be congratulated on his superb management of the economy and on his political acumen where he has not just focussed on the economy as a financial gain, but has brought about a social transformation, has brought about an encompassing reach-out to the community and a development of our people so that they can go forward with confidence.

Just today in the Press the 'IDB Praises Barbados'. The Inter-American Development Bank is hailing Barbados' economic success story. The IADB recognises it, Standard and Poors recognises it, Moodys recognises it; but some here cannot see. We are too quick to react to straws in the wind. Not just here in this Chamber but beyond.

Words of praise were included in the IDB's Annual Report which was released today to coincide with the yearly general meeting of the Western hemisphere's premier financial institutions. The Bank and Government agreed in 1999 on a country strategy which acknowledges the significant economic progress made recently by Barbados on its mature governance system and its social progress as reflected in its ranking of 24th in the United Nations Development Programme.

This is no small achievement, Mr. President, and it is one that I think we need to guard jealously. It is an achievement that should not be damaged by particularly

irresponsible statements to the international media. We, as Barbadians might disagree amongst ourselves internally but we should not be going abroad to cast aspersions on the management of this country in a way that has no basis in fact.

12.25 p.m.

Mr. President, we have to be very careful about how we do and say certain things for it influences the confidence of the business community. We must recognise that members of the business community quite narrowly focus on their own specific areas of activity and that they see their own area as being the only one to look after. However, the Government of Barbados has to look after 260 000 Barbadians, from the disabled to the indigent to the ill to the aged; all of us the Government has to look after and we have to take that into account when we are making policy.

To those who would like to abandon certain sectors of the economy so that their sector can take supremacy and grow with fanfare and so forth, we must have a more balanced view about how we develop Barbados. We have to have an understanding of what it means to be Barbadians and how our country looks to us. We cannot just abandon agriculture and say that we are an information age country and that is the end of it. America the prime service country in the world, which has the smallest percentage of agricultural workers still produces more food than anybody else.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: What we have to do is to transform our various sectors and bring better management skills to bear, encourage investment and develop a system to improve the overall productivity of the country in every sphere of activity. Our people should have choices, they should be able to be in an environment where they can choose where they are going to work, whether they want to be a farmer, an industrialist, a retailer or a software developer. That is the environment of Barbados. It is a holistic society. It is not just an offshore centre and it cannot be seen just that way. In fact, the Government has instituted legislation, Mr. President, to encompass the offshore legislation into the local economy so that today Barbadians can own international business companies and operate them as such, so it is not reserved for foreign investors any longer but it is for all Barbadians.

We are creating, Mr. President, a global international business environment with the appropriate supporting infrastructures, the appropriate supporting human resources in a holistic way which no other country in the Caribbean has done.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: That is what these Estimates address. We address the future; we address the future in a long-term way and we address the future in a holistic sense.

Mr. President, this clearly shows the vision of this Government. This shows its managerial capacity and it shows our strategic capacity to develop programmes for the benefit of all Barbadians.

Mr. President, no society is perfect, nothing is always right. We recognise that we have problems in our society but we do not ignore them. We recognise that there is a problem with crime. We recognise the changing nature of crime and the internationalisation of crime in the same way that this has been internationalised.

In this regard this Government is investing and has invested more than any other Government to bring about change in our policing activities, change in the equipment that we use, change in the technology and change in the resources to be able to fight the issue of crime. In that regard, Mr. President, we recognise that there is much that society has to do. We recognise that crime cannot just be done by a lock up type solution. We cannot just address crime as a political matter but we have to address crime from changing attitudes in our society and recovering the lost ground. We have to start in the schools and in the home. All of us recognise that on both Sides of this Chamber. We all agree with it and we are going to do just that. We are going to put programmes in place which will start to reverse a very unsavoury trend in our society. I remember a time when gangs started to evolve in this community and the Government of the day said there were no gangs.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: I do not know who sweeps what under the carpet but we do not sweep anything under the carpet. Quite the opposite. We are lifting up the carpet and putting the vacuum cleaner to it. We are going to address the issue of crime.

Mr. President, one of the those issues is clearly the linkage between unemployment and criminal activity. That is a clear linkage and therefore, the Government's achievement in reducing unemployment to unbelievably low levels in this community. In fact, this economy is creating an engine of growth for the Eastern Caribbean in that regard and will go a long way towards creating the environment for a reduction in crime. We also have to recognise the scourge of international narcotics trafficking and its impact upon our community particularly amongst our youth. When I say amongst our youth, Mr. President, I mean our youth of eight, nine and twelve year olds – boys and girls who are being used as lookouts, boys and girls who are used as mules. I do

not know when this society is going to become shocked enough to really take responsibility. Every one of us in this society has to take responsibility and say "enough is enough".

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: We have to be able to correct youngsters on the street. We have to be able to impose discipline in the school. We have to assert the values to which we were accustomed a generation or two ago.

Mr. President, that is the direction that we have to go in. Sir, it is a social programme that is exceptionally important in the continued stable, healthy environment of this country. It is that that we will progress in. I am sure that all of us in this Chamber will join me in saying so. I am saying that if all of us in this Chamber would join me in saying so, our methodology might vary, but certainly our objectives are the same and it is clear that this Government is investing in programmes and has assessed the situation to address the level of criminality in our society.
12.35 p.m.

Finally, Mr. President, I might say something more about the Psychiatric Hospital and psychiatry generally in Barbados. We have, for far too long ignored the issue of mental illness in our society. We have blinkered ourselves from it, or we have been wilfully ignorant or just not aware, but as has been said time and time again in this Chamber, we are going through a period of rapid change. We are going through a period of restructuring. We are going through a period of changing economic environments and changing technological situations and this brings about pressures on us and all of us are subjected to these pressures and some of us can cope better than others.

But in the developed countries, the economic impact studies indicate that mental illness has the second greatest economic impact on all diseases, second only to arteriosclerosis and hypertension. And Barbados, without studying it cannot be that different, because we are all people and we are all going through the same processes.

In fact, we are probably going through that process under much more pressure than many people in industrial countries because our compression of the time span with which we are changing is much shorter. Therefore, it is important that we recognise the problems of mental illness and that we put appropriate measures in place to treat those in our society, in our workplace and in our schools who suffer from depression or any other form of mental illness. None of us is immune from it and we should recognise the fact that this is a national problem.

Consequently, it is not just enough to build a new structure at the Psychiatric Hospital but we have to develop skilled nursing staff, appropriate psychologists and doctors to treat the diseases of the mentally ill and to work with the community so that we can have a safe environment for the treatment of out-patient individuals in this area. Mr. President, this is something that is of great importance and something that the Ministry of Health will be working on in this year.

Finally, Mr. President, I would like to congratulate this Government on its outstanding economic management and the performance of this economy. I think that this budget continues the excellence that has been portrayed over the past few years. It sets a continuing trend of social and economic development and it brings Barbados to levels of prosperity that it has never seen before, but with a promise that it shall continue on even higher.

That, Mr. President, is the meaning of these Estimates and I beg that they now be read a second time.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.40 p.m. this afternoon.

The question that the Senate do now suspend until 1.40 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
12.45 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, it is convention that in the Estimates Debate that Senators would be privy to reports from the Central Bank of Barbados and the Economic Report of the Government. I still think it is absolutely necessary for that convention to be followed. We have been denied access to these two major reports over the last two years or more. Perhaps it has to do with the fact that the annual budget is now presented sometime in August/September rather than just immediately after the Estimates.

The important thing to note is that we are still analysing the Barbados economy and we should not have to wait as Senators until September/October to have in our possession the Economic Reports of the Central Bank and the Government. It is a major omission and I am just asking that perhaps next year, in spite of the fact that the Budget may

come some time later that we be so privy. Fortunately for the Leader of the Senate, he seems to have had and would have made contact with the contents of any economic report on Barbados for the year 1999.

As I speak though, we need to analyse the Estimates for the year 2000-2001 within the context of an economy that is boasting of all kinds of healthy economic indicators, but there are realities:

- (1) that the Barbados economy has lost its capacity to earn foreign exchange;
- (2) that the public sector has been the major provider of new jobs.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. The Honourable Senator states that the economy has lost its capacity to earn foreign exchange. What I clearly pointed out was that in this last quarter we had \$100 million surplus in foreign exchange and that foreign exchange earnings are at an all time high.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That is a point of information, not a point of order. Senator Mascoll, you may continue.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I will demonstrate that we have lost our capacity a little later.

The other point is that the growth has been led by the non-foreign exchange earning sectors and there has been an erosion of the Government revenue base over the last year and a half, so that while we may speak of unemployment, while we may speak of so-called growth, there are many realities confronting us in Barbados on the economic front and these realities need to be recognised.

In essence, the growth of the Barbados economy over the last two years which has been correctly described as on balanced growth, cannot be so described and then be also described as healthy because in a sense the use of the term "on balance growth" has to do with the fact that the growth has not occurred in those sectors of the economy in which we would wish to see growth occurring, and by that I mean that you expect both the foreign exchange earning and non-foreign exchange earning sectors to grow, but you would wish that such overall growth is led by the foreign exchange earning sectors. That has not been the case over the last four years or so in Barbados.

We come to the issue of a credit rating, and these Estimates certainly have to be looked at within the context of the ability of the Government to borrow. No one is denying that there is, according to international institutions, a healthy

credit rating. That has been the case of Barbados for many years. In fact, if I may, during the so-called austerity years, the early 90s and the 1991 period, Barbados was the No. 1 developing country in the world. I repeat. During the period of austerity, Barbados was the No. 1 developing country in the world and, in fact, had a higher ranking during that period than No. 24 which we now have. While one may try to use those barometers to demonstrate that we have been thrown above many countries, I repeat that during almost difficult times in recent years we were still able to boast of such. A credit rating has to do mainly with the current indicators, but the capacity to pay has to do with the future capacity of the economy to generate foreign exchange. It is in that context that we need to look at the Barbados economy.

There has been no major shift towards a service economy in Barbados. There is no evidence of that. In fact, those areas in which we should be doing well, in the area of tourism, we are not doing well. In the area of the offshore sector, our most recent example of that is BRT which was supposed to be a flagship entity, which was supposed to be the new way to go in the offshore sector, that is, producing computer software, and we are all aware of that, but that will be developed later as well.

In the other area of the offshore sector, we have not, according to the chief spokesman in this area, Mr. Peter Boos, made any substantial strides at all in terms of a new product. Mr. Peter Boos is the chief spokesman in the offshore sector and he has been so respected for a number of years, and no one can deny that. He has, in fact, indicated that we have not moved ahead in terms of renewing our products and making ourselves more attractive to the international world. In those four areas in our services, we cannot say there has been any quantum leap.

Certainly the closure and construction in the major hotel sectors you may point to as a reason, but that in itself cannot be used as a reason because we all know that Paradise has been out of existence for well over five years. We all know that Sandy Lane has been out of existence for almost two years, so that you cannot assess last year's performance on the basis of closure of these two major hotels.

The Hilton was recently removed but, again, there is no substantial evidence to demonstrate that our performance has improved – and, indeed, if we continue it that way, we are going to miss the boat. Barbados has not been competitive in the area of tourism now for quite a long time because of our cost structure. If we were, there is no reason why an organisation like Sandals would sit on an asset like Paradise for so many years, so let us look at the deeper root cause of our decline in tourism.

We were also told that the increases in the deposit rate and adjustments were supposed to slow the economy down because it was overheating. There was too much credit in the system and in the latter part of 1999 these measures were successful. Now, herein lies the difficulty. If the measures were successful in slowing the economy down, how can we explain that the economy was growing at less than two per cent for the first six months of 1999 and according to reports, it is expected to grow by well over three per cent in 1999?

Now, in terms of mathematics, that would mean that in the second half of the year the economy would have to grow by over four per cent so that when you add four and two together you get six, and divided by two gives you three. More importantly, since the third quarter of the year is the weakest quarter, it means that the growth would have to exceed four per cent.

I have grave difficulty in understanding how we can admit that the measures worked and that we had the complete removal of Caribbean Data Services (CDS) from our shores when we had the introduction, as I said, of monetary structures to ensure some retardation. We also had Government admitting to not carrying out its capital works programme to the fullest. We also had declines in tourism. We also had significant fall offs in cruise ship passengers and yet still we are to believe that the unemployment rate declined to 10 per cent in the second half of 1999.

Now, let me be honest, Mr. Deputy President. I am the proponent of a plan called the 5-4-3 plan. At the time of its introduction the unemployment rate was 22 per cent in Barbados and the conceptualisation of that plan was designed to reduce unemployment to 10 per cent over a 5 to 6-year period, and it was supposed to do it by way of the introduction of measures in stages of 1½ years from 22 minus 5 to 17, 17 minus 4 to 13, 13 minus 3 to 10; 5-4-3 plan. I should feel flattered that we have reached a stage where the employment plan has been achieved, almost as precisely as you could wish, but you know, Mr. Deputy President, since I do not believe the figures, I feel a certain sense of loss that the plan which I engineered has not proven to be correct because of the inadequacies of the policy in Government.

1.55 p.m.

The other factor that needs to be recognised is that the reduction in unemployment in Barbados was to be driven by the private sector of Barbados. That was the centrepiece of that plan, that we would have private sector lead growth and employment. More than half of the so-called jobs created in Barbados have been created in the public sector since 1994. That is not a desirable trend and that explains precisely why

the economy is experiencing turbulence as I speak. That is why there has been admission of turbulence. We have also had a situation in which we hear most of the reserves increasing by 100 per cent in the first quarter of the year 2000.

Mr. Deputy President, if you understand the Barbados economy, there is no need to boast about this at all because this is what you expect during the first quarter of the year with sugar, tourism and manufacturing. The first quarter of the year is the period when you accumulate reserves in the Barbados economy. That is an historical fact, so to come and to parade that we have had a resurgence in the foreign reserves build up in the year 2000 is to tell the layman that. What happened last year was that there was a significant decline in 1999, which no one wanted to admit to at the point when it happened, but we were subsequently told that we have had cash flow problems, we have had turbulence in the economy, and I will address those matters later as well.

Trinidad will turn out to be a saviour for Barbados. The last two foreign loans that we were able to borrow came from Trinidad and believe you me, the money that we intend to borrow will more than likely come from Trinidad this time as well, and especially because the increases in oil prices will certainly favour the Trinidad economy substantially, and I would expect an almost windfall of foreign exchange in the Trinidad market, so that in a very strange way, while we parade as the leading economy in the region, Trinidad, through all of the restructuring and the political will to do what is required to prepare the economy for the future, has now emerged and they have been fortunate enough to find an environment within the oil market that currently favours them.

We speak to the issue of the offshore sector. We speak to PRT. It only dawned on me recently that a country as poor as India now has perhaps the greatest opportunity in the last 50 years of its existence to emerge as a leading country in the world. While it is poor in financial resources, India is rich in human brain power. In fact, the growth that you are hearing about in the new economy led by the blue chips in the United States is being fuelled by the presence of Indians.

Thirty thousand Indians went to the Silicone Valley to work in the area of software development last year. This is creating this new global environment which is being led by technology and is creating all kinds of opportunities for the Indian society, which as I said has a substantial amount of brain power. I say all that to say that rather than focus on the issue of EduTech as a means of remodelling or repairing schools, we need to focus on the capacity of Barbados to perhaps become a provider of such resources in a future economy. It cannot be done the way that we are approaching it. That is another matter. I am simply here responding to a number of the issues raised before I delve quickly into the whole question of the Estimates in detail.

We have had all kinds of talk about the Barbados economy. We were told that the Ways and Means Account has gone back to zero. By law, at the end of the fiscal year, 31st March, the Ways and Means Account has to come back to zero. At the end of the fiscal year, the Ways and Means Account at the Central Bank has to return to zero. That is a fact that you can establish within the financial audit. You must understand what you can do. You can establish more than one pay master account, running alongside of the current pay master account. Again, you can have at the Inland Revenue, three different pay master accounts, but it has to come back to zero by the end of the fiscal year.

We were also told that cruise ship arrivals would be lower in the year 2000 than they were in 1999. We were told that there might be some increase in cruise ship arrivals in the year 2000. Now again, those of us who delve in that area, know that less than 10 per cent of all the passengers who come to Barbados get off the ship. It is a fact of life. There are less than 100 taxis at the port of entry, the seaport. There are less than 100 taxis which have to line up at the port of entry. There are less than 100 taxis which ply trade at the entry of the Bridgetown Port. There are BT buses which are now allowed to go inside and pick passengers up from pre-arranged situations, which is unfair, but I will address that a little later.

2.05 p.m.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, let me address the Estimates in detail since they were not really addressed in the first speech. I will now take you through the Estimates in some detail and go on to explain why there is such a gloomy future for the Barbados economy.

The first thing that has to be noted is that the Prime Minister is once again destroying the principle that he established in 1995 when he said that what will distinguish his Administration from the Sandiford Administration is that he would borrow in any given fiscal year only up to the limit of his foreign amortisation payments in that fiscal year. He said he would only borrow to the extent that he has to repay principal on foreign loans.

That tune was changed last year when I made a fuss about it and the limit was supposed to be \$105 million, and then we heard that there was a loan from Trinidad of \$150 million at the beginning of the fiscal year, and then there was denial of these rumours when there was a big dispute as to how big the loan would be. I was told, and the rest of the Chamber was told, that we would not be

borrowing \$150 million and there were all kinds of debates. Subsequently, we borrowed \$150 million out of Trinidad, breaking the limit that was established of \$105 million in foreign amortisation repayments for the fiscal year 1999-2000.

In these Estimates, this year the foreign amortisation payments are only \$45 million but the Government, indeed, this document, the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, allocated \$63 million in foreign loans from the private capital market.

That is not the issue. I would not nit-pick about \$44 million and \$63 million but I would have to question why less than two weeks after making this draft available the Government has now decided to borrow \$200 million. I would have to question that, because what could happen between the time that this draft was prepared and the \$63 million allocated to have caused Government to revise its figure to as much as \$200 million.

We are supposed to be sailing. There is supposed to be a little turbulence, admittedly. When we were criticising, we were told that everything was in place and then we were told that there has been a little turbulence and that every pilot experiences turbulence. Sometimes it hurts because it makes me feel as if you are wasting time in this process called politics when you try to raise issues in the interest of the public and in the interest of the country for there to be denial and all kinds of attacks, and then a month later you are being told that you were right. We had a cash flow problem that was admitted and we had turbulence in the economy in 1999. We were told that.

I need to understand what could have happened between the preparation of the Estimates when a mere \$63 million was provided for as opposed to \$200 million in foreign borrowing. I will explain why later. There will be many rainy days in Barbados.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The grass is growing but certain cows are eating the grass. From Six Roads to Mapp Hill, Millennium Heights, certain cows are eating the grass.

Before I get into the year 2000-2001. I wish first of all to have explanations for a figure that has been substantially revised in these Estimates. The Government projected for \$175 million in corporation taxes for the year 1999-2000 and it is ending up with \$223 million in corporation taxes. How could you project for \$175 million and end up with \$223 million in corporation taxes and nobody has even attempted to provide an explanation.

Mr. Deputy President, amidst all the employment creation, there is an expected decline in personal income tax in Barbados. We were told in these Chambers this morning that it has to do with a reverse tax credit. Are you saying to me that you identified the category of revenue in Government called personal income taxes from which you took \$6 million for the reverse tax credit? It does not work that way. You allocate \$6 million to the reverse tax credit as revenue but you take it out of personal income taxes and you are telling me that the so-called growth in employment has been attended by a reduction in personal income taxes in Barbados. Are you saying that amidst all your reduction of unemployment down to record levels, increased employment up to record levels there has been a decline in personal income tax take in Barbados and nobody is capable or able to explain it. Let me explain it. The reason why it will not be explained is because it would bring into question the employment data.

There is no rational explanation for such growth in employment and reduction in personal income tax take in Barbados. There have been no major adjustments to allowances. Are you, therefore, saying that the jobs created in Barbados have only been created among those earning \$90 per week who do not pay income taxes? Is this the explanation? That will explain why there has been no growth, but it will not explain why there has been a decline. To suggest that those employed are earning below the tax threshold will explain why there was no growth and it would not explain the decline because those persons who remain employed from before will have an increased tax liability over time. The increase in productivity bonus and the increase in wages would push the taxable income of Barbados up so that cannot explain a decline. That can explain why the growth has not been significant. The figures are flawed.

It goes further, Mr. Deputy President. In an economy that is boasting of growth, there has been a decline in value added tax which is an expenditure tax. How do you explain a decline in value added tax in this economy, unless the GDP data is incorrect, which it has to be? It does not make sense at all when the private sector is boasting of increased profit and when there are boasts of increased expenditure, when we have heard leaders in the private sector saying that VAT is responsible for consumption and you are telling me that your VAT take has declined.

2.15 p.m.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I always talk sense. I do not come to the Chamber unless I am prepared. I am a boy scout – prepared. I am saying that it has to be explained and has not been explained by the Central Bank. They were foolishly brought into a debate that they had no right in on the printing of money, because evidence has shown that

Senator Mascoll was absolutely correct on that issue as well. There is no reason why the Central Bank should feel any inclination or political pressure to enter a debate that they must lose.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: You cannot come into the ring unless you are prepared. I will now explain why there has been a decline in VAT revenue for the Central Bank and the Government.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I know you are listening because there is a lot of pretence that when I speak the ears are closed, Mr. Deputy President, but the reality is that when I speak they are opened wide in Barbados. First of all you must understand how that works. The VAT that we have introduced in Barbados is an invoice credit system where the VAT is placed on outputs and on inputs. You take the outputs and you minus the inputs and you get the difference and that is called the VAT revenue.

However, there is another way of analysing a Value Added Tax from an accounting standpoint where Value Added Tax is wages plus profit so you can have outputs minus inputs and get Value Added Tax or you can have wages plus profits. Now, there is a connection. On wages Government gets two sets of revenue. It gets the income tax up front and then it gets Value Added Tax down below. On profits it gets the corporation tax up front and then Value Added Tax down below. Let me explain. The so-called price gouging that the private sector was supposed to be involved in immediately after the introduction of VAT was again another example of a public relations exercise on the part of Government and it has now come back to be demonstrated.

Let me explain. When you introduce a Value Added Tax where you have existing taxes on the old stock and you impose a VAT, it is like double taxation for a while, so that to a large extent you cannot fault the private sector because they have been caught between two existing tax systems – an old system where they have already paid consumption tax, duty and all the other things and then a new system on which you have to impose a VAT. You cannot come and accuse them of price gouging in the way they were accused. That period represented a period of windfall for the private sector and you cannot blame them totally for it.

When the new system goes into action for a long enough period, the old tax system then goes out and VAT alone remains; but a businessman, having grown accustomed to charging a particular price for a commodity, is not going to put his price below that level in that post-VAT period.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The reason why is this. If there is a reduction in the base of the product you have to impose a higher percentage mark-up to recover your dollars because you do not pay wages and the electricity bill in percentages; you pay them in dollar terms. If there is a lower base, you have to impose a higher mark-up to recover your money so that you can pay your wages, your electricity, your transport, your interest and your overdraft.

Technically you are saying that in spite of the fact that I am reducing the taxes within a commodity, a businessman still has to recover X amount of dollars. For example, if you were recovering \$20 on top of \$100 and you reduce the base to \$90 he cannot charge the same mark-up because 20 over 100 is 20% but 20 over 90 is more than 20% so he has to charge a higher mark-up percentage wise to get back the 20% when the base falls from 100 to 90. It is as simple as that. You have, therefore, set in train a situation in which VAT created some opportunity for the business community and that is why it explains to a large extent why the corporation tax take has skyrocketed beyond expectation but it does not stop there.

The VAT base which, as I have said, comprises wages plus profit has shrunk in the last year. It has contracted and the reason is this. The wages component has been predominately boosted by Government. Since the public sector does not produce products which are sold, it means that the increase in the wages do not go towards a product on top of which a VAT is charged. Remember I said that there are two sides of it. You get income taxes from the wages and then you put the wages into the final price and VAT is then imposed. If you have employment strictly fuelled by the public sector which does not sell outputs, which does not sell shoes, cars and the other things, the wage component does not go into a base on top of which there will be a VAT so that will cause a contraction.

The other thing is this. The profits of the private sector will have to fall after the initial benefits from the introduction of VAT because as I have said, they now have the capacity to play with their prices but their cost continues to rise and, therefore, their profitability will contract about two or three years after the introduction of VAT. Even without having any data whatsoever from any private sector, I can tell you that there will be contraction in the profit level of businesses across Barbados because we have not understood and we do not fully understand how VAT really works in the Barbados community.

Why did I have to do that to waste my ten minutes and to provide Government with an explanation of these things? The thing about it is that it is simple. Your Value Added is your wages plus profit and if you have a contraction in both your profit levels and your wages because of lack of growth in wages, which do not constitute part of VAT, there will be a contraction.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Everything else depends on how well we are able to forecast revenue and expenditure in these Estimates. If we do a bad job, which we have done over the years, and we continue to do a bad job there will be further turbulence in the Barbados economy and there will be greater difficulties and there will be layoffs of which I will speak now.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: We have got rid of BAMC and the licences requirements and I will mention a simple example of one commodity – the onion sector. Those producers will find it extremely difficult to survive in Barbados beyond April 2000.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: These things must be taken seriously by all and sundry. At present it costs \$48 to buy a 50-pound bag of onions locally. You can now source a 50-pound bag of onions from Holland at US\$4.35. There is the imposition of a 30 per cent tax and a 1 per cent environmental levy. By the time it reaches here the cost is BDS\$13.00. By the time it reaches Barbados it will cost BDS\$13 to the distributor here. The difference between BDS\$48 and BDS\$13 is wide. It is difficult to use subsidies because the gap is too wide. It therefore means that immediately after April 4th the local onion producers will be under severe pressure to survive.
2.25 p.m.

It will happen in other areas as well. Roberts Manufacturing that produces soya bean and margarine will have to 'look for holes' after April 1st. Budweiser is coming to compete with Banks Beer.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: You had better believe that Budweiser is coming to compete. The beef industry...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: ...it will be a major shift in the way business is done in Barbados and this is why I have been severely critical of the Government for not educating the public of Barbados as to what the whole WTO thing really means. All the pretty talk about intellectual property, all the pretty talk about trips and all these other things, the Government of Barbados has a right to let the people of Barbados know what is happening after April 1st and more important after the year 2004. But you continue to pull wool over the eyes of the people. Do you remember

when there was discussion about the surtax and how the surtax period would be extended in the interest of the manufacturers to protect them?

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. Deputy President, I wish to record my objection to the terms...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member cannot record any objection at this time. If he is on a point of order, please make the point of order.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: The point of order, Sir, is that I take objections to the term when the Honourable Member said that the Government is pulling wool over the people's eyes. I say that is an insult. It is also derogatory and it is unparliamentary. It is a trick. It is a negative connotation.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Would the Honourable Member please continue?

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. I have used one example of onions to show the kind of pressure that onion producers will be brought under after April 1st, even if they decided to use a quota system initially, and then when you go beyond that quota system, they impose a surtax. I am saying that the surtax will have to be so high because the gap between a 50-pound bag of onions from Holland is \$13. When you pay tax and all your transport costs and everything else, the figure I quoted of US\$4.35 is CIF, and then you impose your taxes, it is still \$13, but to the local producer it is \$48 per 50-pound bag. So he has 'gone through the eddoes'.

At the opening of the Chefette Restaurant, we were told that no other fast food place is coming here. Do you remember the Prime Minister saying that? Now you have Royal Castle easing through the back door.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Royal Castle is coming here. You cannot stop them. Under the WTO arrangements, whatever you do for your best friend, you must do for your worst enemy. That is the real crux of the matter with the WTO arrangements. Even if you do not like a fellow, whatever you do for your best friend around the world, you have to do for your worst enemy because the Most Favoured Nation status would take place in every respect.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Of course, it is true. It is the premise. It is the tenet that WTO arrangements are built on.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Therefore, I am saying that to be told that you are borrowing \$200 million to protect the net international reserves, when we were told that they are at record levels...

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: ...for a rainy day, when the sun is shining so brightly.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: That is what I am saying. You have excess stocks and we were told that we were borrowing \$63 million, now less than two weeks later, it is \$200 million. You are borrowing from foreign sources for a rainy day. What has to happen in Barbados is that we need to prepare the economy to earn our way once again because we are now borrowing our way.

We withdrew \$150 million from the Central Bank last year in special deposits, then we carried up the Ways and Means Account to \$100 million.

Asides.

2.35 p.m.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I believe that the Ways and Means Account was broke around 23rd December, 1999. I do not have any evidence but I believe, based on my own analysis, that the Ways and Means Account which was supposed to be limited to \$160 million was broke around 23rd December, 1999. I do not have evidence, and we will never have evidence in these Chambers, because the end of month figure is published, not a 28th December date, the end of month, so we will never know on this Side. I am saying from the analysis, I function on the basis of analysis, and I have been correct and proven correct on many occasions on the Barbados economy. The Prime Minister has now come full around to my way of thinking.

The Prime Minister has now talked about turbulence; the Prime Minister has now talked about cash flow problems; the Prime Minister has agreed in principle, that he has been...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Believe it. Let me go on to talk about some other areas. Mr. Deputy President, when you check the Estimates, the repayment of the eight per cent was allocated under non-statutory

emoluments. That is not by accident. In the Ministry of Education and in the Ministry of Health there have been major declines in non-statutory emoluments, not because of any shifts.

Aside.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Please, there is too much argument coming from the speaker on his feet and those on the Other Side. I would ask Senator Mascoll to concentrate on what he is saying and stop listening to the Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I concentrate only too well. I love Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Well, we are not going to have that argument in here today, Sir.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I feed off the Asides. I am energised by Asides. Mr. Deputy President, if it were the case that it was mere shifting of non-statutory to statutory, we should have seen the increases reflected in statutory emoluments, but they are not reflected in statutory emoluments. It is a direct example of Government's cash flow problems. So Government does not intend to rehire when a person goes on leave. Government does not intend to bring on any temporary staff this fiscal year. It does not. At National Conservation Commission (NCC), National Housing Corporation (NHC), MPC, BWAir, the hospital, the Transport Board, they are all in trouble. Therefore what the Government did in the Estimates was to allocate, strangely enough, money that is going to the permanent staff under non-statutory. You can trick the layman, since it did not appear as though anything happened because you brought in the \$22 million and covered up the reduction in the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education. Nothing usually happens here but there has been a decision on the part of Government not to bring on temporary staff. It is a fact. It has been a policy decision and it explains why money that is going to permanent staff members has been allocated under non-statutory and not statutory. That is the first major thing that has to be dealt with. How do you explain that allocation? In any case, you had a whole campaign on "buy savings bonds". You had a number of people on the television espousing the virtues of buying savings bond. Now, you take the eight per cent cut and you divide it into three tranches, according to the IMF Report ...

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) Report of 1999 told the Government to repay the eight per cent in three tranches. The IMF Report, not Clyde Mascoll's, and they followed it. So you have \$22 million of which they have now taken out more than 30 per cent in taxes and people "steupsing" all about Barbados. They want to know how come the Government took out all of this money from them. In the first instance they had no right taking out money, because the Government does not know the tax liability of an

individual. The Government does not know the tax liability of the average civil servant in 1991-1992, because they never would have known the person's profile in relation to children, in relation to house repairs, in relation to mortgage, in relation to medicine, and therefore they had no right taking taxes out of the people's money; and then to give the people a little thing and tell them to put it in the form of bonds. The other thing is a bond is not an investment. A bond is a saving as is described. All you are doing is taking their money and giving it to Government to delay their payment. They are getting an interest which is only 2.5 per cent above the deposit rate anyhow. This is not anything major. The important thing is that by the time you get your principle amount five years down the road, inflation would already have bitten into it. So it does not make sense for you to take a small amount of \$500.00 and put in savings bonds. It is not shares that appreciate. If you put money in a mutual fund and bought a share for \$1.00 it would appreciate over a time and accumulate value. It does not have to be a bond. The benefit of the bond is the interest component. I am not surprised that 99.9 per cent of the civil servants decided on no bonds, because they are clever enough to understand it would not have been a sensible investment.

In any case, Mr. Deputy President, the Government does not even believe its own propaganda. I will explain that to you. In these Estimates, while we recently increased the limit from \$100 million to \$250 million, a very big jump – do you know, Mr. Deputy President, that it is not reflected in the financing of government's deficit? You know that Government has not allocated any more for the purchase of savings bonds than it did year before? There has been a decline. While we went through all kinds of legislation here to increase the limit from \$100 million to \$250 million, the Government itself reduced its allocation for financing bonds for the next fiscal period. That itself is very difficult to digest. Why would you have increased the limit to allow for more purchasing of savings bonds and yet in your projections you have no confidence that the people would take up your savings bonds? You see, it also explains why they had to borrow the \$200 million, because the local market cannot take the increase in the fiscal deficit to compete and crowd out the private sector, but you stick to \$63 million in here to confuse John Public and then you sneak and borrow \$200 million.

That is precisely what has happened here, so as we speak, just like the \$150 million, the Government has already negotiated the \$200 million. I have no doubt that it is coming from Trinidad. I have no evidence again but I am saying that all the big credit rating that the Government has, the Government has not been able, and for obvious reasons, to go to the true international market to borrow. The reason is this, while your credit rating may be good based on current indicators, it ...

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: This Government has established private companies to do a lot of business that would otherwise have been done by Government. It has established Hotels and Resorts Limited and the GEMS Project. Now, while the Government is saying that it only gave them \$10 million, the Government has guaranteed loans for the GEMS Project to the magnitude of \$77.7 million. 2.45 p.m.

There is contention in the Auditor General's Report at page 13 between the amount confirmed and what the stable balance is. Even that is creating problems; so you see GEMS is a very hazy project. Here it is that the Government has guaranteed loans to the magnitude of \$77.7 million for the GEMS Project, and on page 13 of the Auditor General's Report, there is confusion as to what the amount really is. Now I find that really ridiculous. I find it very hard to digest that there could be confusion in an audited statement as to whether the amount was really \$77.7 million versus \$62 million. There is real misery about Barbados. This is one of misery. While the Government is saying that \$10 million have been allocated to GEMS, guaranteeing these loans and bringing the total to almost \$100 million means that when the project fails, which it will, the pressure therefore is on the Government to deliver.

Now, it does not stop there. You have the Needham's Point Development Corporation, another private sector entity that Government is involved in. You have Barbados Conference Seminars. You have Barbados Terminals Ltd. and our goodly Senator here would know a lot about that. These are all private sector companies that Government's money is going into. These companies do not have to bring one statement of accounts through this Chamber or the Lower Chamber and this is the way that a lot of this activity is being conducted as I speak in Barbados. A lot is being done outside of central Government and without the Senators here or even members of the Lower House being able to have a say on what is happening with the money.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I am not interested in St. Joseph Hospital at all. I am interested in money like BNOC, the Barbados National Oil Company, \$35 million collected that should have gone into the Consolidated Fund and "da spen' um". BNOC "tek" \$35 million and spen' um" and cannot account for why and where it has gone.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order, I would just like to draw the Chamber's attention to the rules of the Chamber which say that the proceedings of this Chamber should be conducted in English.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I am very happy for that. Mr. Deputy President, when the licks get hot, they

would appeal to anything. Right now the licks are getting hot.

It does not stop there. They privatised UCAL. You know UCAL?

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The Transport Board's misery; and to think of it, I have not even got to the sectors nor to the individual entities yet in the Estimates.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Extra time? There will be pressure in here because I have not started yet. Right now I am dealing with just peripheral things. Let us not take these issues lightly. I am very worried about how Government is spending the people's money. I am worried that they have found a way now to get around all kinds of things by privatising and using private corporations to do so. We have not seen any financial statements from many statutory corporations here for the last five years.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. I have received today a report from the Barbados Industrial Development Corporation and the National Productivity Council, among others. It is therefore incorrect for the Honourable Member to make such a wild accusation against this Government. It is pernicious, Sir.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, there are several statutory bodies that have not submitted financial reports to either the Lower or Upper House. Now, since I am really here biting at the bait, let me go into some more detail.

Let me deal with the Airport. These Estimates tell me that we allocated \$25 million to the Airport for development in the fiscal year 1999-2000. You know that we spent \$50 million on the Airport in the last fiscal year? I have gone through the Airport on several occasions and I cannot see any evidence of \$50 million being spent at the Airport.

The initial allocation was \$25 million. We have spent \$50 million and no one here can see it with the naked eye, without a microscope, what has been done at the airport to justify \$50 million being spent. It says at page 90, Approved Estimates \$25 million Sub-programme 341 as spent and Revised, \$50.6 million. Now, that is a bundle of money. What is more is that they intend to privatise the operations of the airport. They also intend to spend \$164 million on the seaport over the next four years, and then to privatise it. It is an operation that is making profit. The Barbados Port Authority makes a profit every year and this is a Government that was against privatization. 2.55 p.m.

The Owen Arthur Administration was anti-privatisation and has now decided that it would spend the taxpayers' money to expand the airport and immediately after spending \$150 million to privatise the Airport. I find that difficult because I cannot see why we would invest so much. The European Investment Bank was supposed to provide finance, but not one cent did they provide in the last fiscal year.

There is need for an investigation of what is happening at the Airport because it cannot be the car park. There is no major renovation anywhere except for when you are coming out of the little terminal. Again, there is real difficulty.

This Government intends to destroy the livestock industry in Barbados, the agricultural sector as a whole, because there is a move to allow land to find its highest value in Barbados and to allow livestock agriculture to 'go through the eddoes'. It is an amazing thing. You are having a situation where rather than trying to save the livestock industry there is an attempt to ensure its death. If you can get involved in something like GEMS where you can guarantee loans up to \$80 million with something as meaningful as agriculture or livestock, there needs to be a change in policy because in the event of any little war or any such thing, we need to feed ourselves.

Agriculture must always be seen as a sector that you have to safeguard for whatever reason, and you cannot be throwing the kind of money that we are throwing behind the GEMS Project and yet find it difficult to support something like the abattoir in Barbados for health reasons, for the safeguard of the sector and for the overall benefit of the Barbados economy itself.

I do not understand that misallocation of thinking and consequently of resources. It suggests to me that there is a misallocation. It is very difficult to understand how a government that pretends to be in touch and in tune with all that is happening regionally and internationally has not been able in the last four years to begin to prepare the Barbadian society for a future that will not be rosy. When we have the international business sector which has not performed according to expectations, when we had a company called CDS that promised so much, employed 1 200 and went out of operations in Barbados in 1999 and, in spite of that, we were told that unemployment reached record levels. One company that employed over 1 000 people left our shores in 1999 and you are telling me that you are able to recover those jobs. Where? In which sector?

Then we had, as I said, PRT, which is supposed to be a flagship entity in the offshore sector because it is reaching for the higher end and last year there was a report that PRT(US) was expanding its operations, and by March PRT had downsized and reduced staff in Barbados. The then CEO

said this is only in response to an unfortunate international event, but by the fourth quarter of 1999 we intend to restore these employment levels and push them beyond where they were. Then in early March 2000 we were told that the administrative, human resources and marketing departments would go.

If PRT, the company that was supposed to set in train the computer software industry to carry us to another level, has been removed from the shores of Barbados, what are we to expect of the offshore sector in general; that there is a lot of hope? It cannot be the case. There is no major provision in the Estimates that gives that assurance either. So the Minister of International Business – very pretty talking and sweet tongued – has not delivered and continues not to deliver, and he was supposed to be the heir apparent. If he is the heir apparent and he is not performing, then another Minister must be in train. I thought he was the heir apparent in relation to his performance.

The Ministry of International Business has not been performing and has not performed well over the last couple of years, so our future in that sector is extremely dim and gloomy. Then we have the sugar industry. Who in this Chamber can be satisfied that there is a future for sugar? The average cost of producing sugar has skyrocketed over the last several years, which makes sugar even more unprofitable as a sector.

I understand all the other reasons for maintaining sugar. I understand the environment. I understand those reasons only too well, but I am saying that you have to make a decision as to whether you are going to retain the industry for its foreign exchange value and its environmental value and then proceed along those lines.

You cannot say that you do not intend to give one cent to the industry. There has to be a policy. Do we intend to have a sugar industry or not, because there are serious linkages between sugar and non-sugar agriculture, as we all know. In the event that you do not pursue the line of retaining sugar, then it brings into question the future of non-sugar agriculture as well. In fact, we all know that given what is happening in the international arena several products in non-sugar agriculture would also be under threat from the new trade liberalization environment in which we find ourselves.

Agriculture, tourism, the offshore sector, all seem to be under severe pressure and it has not seen the restructuring of the Barbados economy that was expected. This is precisely why we have not been earning our way. We have not been earning foreign exchange commensurate with our capacity to consume it.

If we think that we can continue to borrow and go back to the early days of seeing borrowing as a way of escape, then the next slide in Barbados will be one that we will be unable to arrest. It cannot happen that way either.

Let me look at a sectoral analysis. Tourism: There has been a structural change in our major markets in tourism. The United States market accounted for almost 35 per cent of our tourists less than 10 years ago. The UK market at that time accounted for 25 per cent of our market. The reverse is now true, where the UK market now accounts for the major proportion of visitors coming to Barbados. That figure appears to be simple but it has serious implications for the tourism sector. For one, unlike 10 years ago, a UK visitor is no longer spending two weeks. In terms of length of stay he is like a US visitor who spends on average one week. The UK visitor does not spend as much on average as a US visitor and therefore, while it may seem to be simply a shift of one tourist for the other, it has severe implications for our expenditure as well as our output and Value Added in the tourism sector. This explains why the Barbados Tourism Authority has recently admitted that there has been a reduction in expenditure in the tourism sector.

3.05 p.m.

It explains why, Mr. Deputy President, we were told this morning that in 1999 the tourism sector increased by 0.1 per cent. Zero percent, that is what that is. There was no increase in tourism output last year because 0.1 per cent is really 0 per cent. You cannot boast about that. When you do a more detailed analysis, the one hotel for which information is published – Almond Beach Resort – has shown a remarkable decline in profitability. I would not know of the rest because they hide under some company or some other name but Almond Beach Resort, which is an example of a very profitable all-inclusive property in Barbados, has recently shown significant decline in profitability. We have had, in recent times, the head of the BHTA saying that December 1999 and January 2000 were the worst months ever following on the comments of the Vice President, Senator Lynch, that tourism had reached its most gloomy period in the history of Barbados. You have a situation...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: There is no Senator Lynch that I know of.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I am sorry, the former Senator Lynch. He is now a Member of the House – Mr. Noel Lynch.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT ordered that certain remarks made by SENATOR MASCOLL be struck from the records.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The Vice President of the BHTA is on record as saying that it is a very gloomy tourism season while you have the Minister of Tourism suggesting that we are still on a record path. Again, what it does is that it uses information to confuse the public because the Minister uses information for cruise ship arrivals for January and February of this year which are higher than last year's to suggest that tourism is on the up.

While we may get in excess of half million cruise ship passengers in Barbados, they make very little contribution to the Barbados economy outside of a taxi tour or a little purchase in duty-free shops. With one or two exceptions, we are not a major duty-free shopping entity in the Caribbean. We may say so, but we are not. So that cruise ship arrivals cannot be used as a barometer in assessing the performance of our overall tourism industry because it is minor, in its contribution to value added as well to overall tourism expenditure in Barbados. It is minor, the tourists may spend millions in duty-free shopping but when you look at the overall tourism expenditure in Barbados, cruise ship passengers represent a minor part of that.

Therefore, overall, we have not been competitive as numbers suggest that payroll cost in Barbados represent 38 per cent of overall cost which, when compared to 34 per cent with the rest of the region, constitutes a higher cost.

We have not been competitive in tourism as well. We have also compounded the problems in tourism with the way in which we have treated the application of VAT. Prior to the introduction of VAT a tourist paid an accommodation rate of 5 per cent. After VAT, the tourist was charged 7.5 per cent which is a 50 per cent increase in the rate. In addition to that you now have VAT being imposed on food and beverages, and then all other ancillary services in Barbados are 'vatted', so that the overall cost of a package has gone up when, in actual fact, it is my understanding that the introduction of VAT was supposed to make the goose that laid the golden egg more competitive after VAT. It is not competitive after VAT and the evidence is there in abundance that we, in fact, have increased the overall cost of the tourism product rather than reduce the cost. In essence, we are in fact imposing additional cost in a sector that has already been accused of being out of line with the rest of the region. There is ample evidence so there is no need to discuss that any further.

Then you have the complaints about the social environment – about crime and the cleanliness of Barbados impacting negatively on the overall tourism product. The hopes in tourism are not bright either. The Sandy Lane property which has replaced a five star property has lower room capacity. With the new arrangement at Sandy Lane there will be less rooms but there is no guarantee. Since Sandy Lane was already a five star property, the achieved room rates will be substantially different from what they were before because the overall cost of operation at Sandy Lane will obviously go up after the new plant. So, are we guaranteed that there will be any substantial difference in terms of the net benefits of Sandy Lane to Barbados. There maybe as regards the image of the country but I am asking in relation to the overall profitability of the country, will Sandy Lane constitute a major thing except in taking up more land for golf?

We then have Paradise which remains out of operation and nobody can explain why Sandals refuses to come to Barbados. Then you have the Hilton Hotel. But the overall south coast project hotels are also complaining of the lack of profitability, and this is because the very special benefits that are given to those properties under the GEMS Project seem to be to the disadvantage of all the other properties outside of the GEMS Project.

3.15 p.m.

The GEMS Project is able to undersell its rooms and this has been the complaint across small hotels on the south coast, that there are special concessionary rates in terms of interest costs, that they are able to underprice the other hotels and, therefore, what you are seeing on the south coast is a reduction in the earning capacity of small properties and the achieved room rates of the small properties.

Then we have the strange situation in the tourism sector in which the Transport Board is now competing with coaches owned by BTIC. You also have a situation in which the Transport Board is now transporting people from the seaport to the airport.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: No. There has to be a problem with that because you should not have that sort of competition between Ministries. You have a case in which the Transport Board was recently able to get a contract for the Holders Season, because it was able to underprice the product versus its competitors.

Sir, there are major problems in tourism and we need to address them. The first thing that needs to be done is to look at the overall cost of business in tourism and a proper policy as it relates to the introduction or the application of VAT in the tourism sector. It is causing a problem and it is time that it is fully addressed by the Government.

You cannot compete with the rest of the region unless you control those things that you can control. The excuse about the millennium bug was not an excuse, because if you knew beforehand that the millennium bug would have been a problem, then you should have been cutting the cost of the hotel rooms. You should not have seen it as an opportunity to earn a windfall and push your prices up.

So, I have difficulty again in understanding the reasons given by the private sector as to why they increased their prices around the end of the year, when they knew only too well that in fact, there would have been difficulty getting to the Caribbean. So how do you explain those two situations where the travelling was to be affected? It means that you should have been using that as a cutback in demand and reducing your price, not pushing up your price.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: It is not hindsight. Again, you could not have presented Barbados as the most easterly of the Caribbean countries, and that was being done, that we are going to see the sun 30 seconds before St. Lucia. So there is need for a comprehensive look at the tourism sector.

Let us now look at the area of manufacturing. The area of manufacturing we know will be under a severe threat in the coming months and years:

- (1) The Common External Tariff: Tariffs are going to be reduced systematically over time to offer less protection to the manufacturing sector.
- (2) The removal of non-tariff barriers will constitute a problem for the manufacturing sector.
- (3) The introduction of a value added tax was to be for the benefit of goods coming from non-regional sources because all locally produced goods and CARICOM produced goods confronted a tax for the first time with the introduction of a Value Added Tax, so that goods coming out of North America became far more competitive within Barbados relative to the manufacturing sector of Barbados.

Now the future does not look good therefore for the manufacturing sector. The Government has to be honest in its assessment of the implications of WTO arrangements and the new CARICOM environment to the local manufacturers. It cannot continue to make them believe that there is real hope in the manufacturing sector as will be constituted in the years ahead. We will certainly be fighting almost a lost cause in the manufacturing sector.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: There will be difficulty, especially in soft drinks where we are now seeing Solo, which is a Trinidadian product, almost wiping Ju-C and others out, and that will be a major threat. So let them know that up front.

We had the situation in which Coco Cola was uncertain only two months ago as to what would be done because it was not sure what the parent company was thinking in relation to whether it should remain an entity in Barbados or it should be seeking to close.

So manufacturing, especially at low end manufacturing, will almost be a thing of the past in Barbados and you cannot continue to give them the kind of hope in words that we were

giving over the last two to three years. There is a need for a policy directive as it relates to the manufacturing sector. There will be more layoffs, there will be more contraction in that sector and we have to prepare the people for that eventuality.

Recently, we were told by a leading businessman that VAT has been a major reason for consumption and while I did not hear the explanation, I could only tell you that things like electronic goods, stoves and appliances have become relatively cheaper in Barbados than other necessities, as a result of VAT directly. Therefore, there might have been some shift in the consumption of these commodities relative to others, which might have caused that leading businessman to make the connection between VAT and consumption.

The Estimates therefore, when you look at them systematically, do not address many of the social problems in Barbados. They are not addressing issues of crime.

I wish to speak to a major issue on the social side and that is housing. Now, again, less than two years ago the National Housing Corporation invited all and sundry to come to have a loan. You will remember that the limit was pushed from \$50 000 to \$100 000. We warned the National Housing Corporation that you cannot borrow money at that level and lend it at such a low level of interest because it would run out. We warned them about the \$30 million bond that was taken and the money was deposited on the commercial bank. We warned them about building houses in many different locations and that it was not cost effective to do so. We warned them about that housing estate that was supposed to have 1 000 houses under the previous Minister of Housing, Mr. George Payne, called 'something town' in Orange Hill, St. James where, whether they were 1 000, we have not seen 10 houses built yet. You have not seen in that particular project ...

3.25 p.m.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Thirty something houses out of a thousand. I did not know the amount. I was feeling. Thirty something, having promised a thousand is less than three per cent, and with all the resources that you have, you took all the money and destroyed it at the National Housing Corporation.

You have a situation in Barbados, Mr. Deputy President, in which houses at Apes Hill and across Barbados cannot be occupied because persons were promised a loan from NHC. The NHC ran out of funds and sent the individuals to the Barbados Mortgage Finance. The individuals were unable to meet the criteria for a loan, therefore they could not access the loan and even though they were given "keys", more or less in quotes, they were

unable to occupy the houses at Apes Hill and across Barbados simply because of misguided policy on the part of Government. So you have a situation where it is now going to require \$72 million to bail the NHC out of its difficulties, and you have the ridiculous situation in which the Headquarters for NHC has been under construction now for almost two years, whereas the Insurance Corporation of Barbados (ICB), which is just next door, has come and almost completed its building, which is larger, more spacious. But a contractor with no record was given the NHC building headquarters and has not been able to complete the exercise, compounded by the fact that the NHC, when it went to the commercial bank for a loan recently, was unable to get the loan, because of what is happening with that headquarters. I pass there every morning. The NHC headquarters are about two years behind time and the contractor never had a record of building anything bigger than a matchbox. He does not have a track record of building a wooden house and has been given such a project to complete when he obviously lacks the competence to do so. You are going to have severe cost overruns at the National Housing Corporation headquarters, severe wastage again because there is no way in which he should have been given the contract in the first place. Now the NHC doesn't have money at all and they are limping along hoping that the new Estimates come in to play very soon, so we have an abundance of wastage in the National Housing Corporation. It does not stop there. The wastage does not stop there. We have an allocation in these Estimates for the sewerage project.

We recall Cubiertos pulling out with \$30 million plus being spent under the last Minister of Health. The project has now been resuscitated and I am only hoping that we do not make the same mistakes that we made seven years ago, but the wastage continues. We have spent almost \$30 million on Greenland. You have a situation in which the Mangrove site is now being expanded once again. You know what is happening? The IDB has not committed funds to finish the Greenland project, so the Government has had to pull back on the Greenland project and the Minister of Health in presenting his Estimates this morning, made no real mention of the Greenland project. What explains that? Wastage again. I would like to know from the Minister of Health what are the plans for the Greenland project; what are the expectations in these Estimates for the Greenland project. Do we intend to occupy that site within the next year or two? No? Are we saying that the \$30 million already spent will go to waste? We do not know? Are we going to push further funds in building the roads? I see there is a lovely bridge now completed. Are we really intending to use the taxpayers' money for such wastage once again?

It is really an embarrassment to Government. The Greenland project is an embarrassment to the Government of Barbados because there was a lot of fanfare about that project. It is an environmental mistake and of course a monument of environmental madness.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: As I speak, Sherbourne is now the centrepiece of the Caribbean. It has been praised by the outgoing CEO. It has been praised by the Leader of Caribbean Tourism Organisation (CTO).

Sherbourne is now seen as really a major conference centre within the region and in fact, if I may, I think I should call for Sherbourne to be renamed after Erskine Sandiford. I mean that. Sherbourne should be renamed the Erskine Sandiford Conference Centre because he deserves that. He is a man who has had excellent ideas in the past. He has had the Barbados Community College condemned; he has had the Sherbourne condemned. His IMF programme, his structural adjustment programme was condemned. It is time that we recognise the contribution of Erskine Sandiford. I believe it. I believe it very strongly. We should name the Sherbourne Conference Centre after Lloyd Erskine Sandiford; but it doesn't stop there.

As I speak, Mr. Deputy President, the transport sector in Barbados remains in chaos. We were told that there would be new management at the Transport Board to guarantee greater efficiency and a turnaround. It is unbelievable that the Transport Board has requested \$24 million in subsidy in this fiscal period.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: They have been give \$18 million, but they had requested \$24 million. There is real need for a study of the transport sector, and a true study. It is time enough that we do that because there is nothing wrong with subsidising the Transport Board, but you have to ensure that there is greater accountability and efficiency in the transport sector. It is something that you must understand the need for, but you cannot just throw good money at bad money every year. There is need for a comprehensive review of the sector and need to put even better people in managerial positions in that sector and rather than coming to fly a kite and to feel out the public, you need to make other decisions. There are a lot more decisions that you have to make. I cannot make them for you.

Recently, we had a serious state of affairs at the BADMC. We had the firing of 20 workers, really in preparation for what is to come. The onion and marketing issues of which I spoke and the sugar monies being transferred to BSIL or from BSIL, we need to look at in a critical way. Now there is a levy that is paid on all sugar coming into Barbados. That is going to be transferred to a different institution sooner rather than later.

3.35 p.m.

The laying off of jobs at the BADMC had more to do with preparation for the lost licences in relation to the importation of things like chicken wings and onions, and we

are taking these things lightly. If we allow – which will happen – chicken wings to be imported into Barbados as we see fit, there will be severe competition for the chicken industry in Barbados. There is some degree of substitution between a whole chicken and chicken wings.

The other point is this. You will not be able to stop the importation sooner rather than later of whole chickens because the day of reckoning is only the year 2004. At that point in time you are going to see an industry which had made Barbados self-sufficient exposed severely to the whims and fancies of competition. Once again, we need to recognise that another industry is under threat and that the chicken industry will be under severe threat over the next four years or so.

It goes deeper than that because there are severe linkages between the feeding of the chicken and the chicken itself. The very sector that produces all kinds of feeds in Barbados will again be exposed to competition especially out of the region and beyond, and in Canada. The horizontal linkage between feed and the chicken industry will be threatened even more in the coming years. We are not preparing the people for the eventuality. In short, it may be in the interest of the private sector to import rather than to produce or manufacture feed in Barbados so that is another industry that will be threatened by the opening up of markets, not only in Barbados but across the region.

We know only too well that the Trinidadians, especially in the area of pork production, are waiting to effectively compete with us in Barbados and also beyond Barbados. There is no doubt at all, as I speak, that my position remains that the future of Barbados is not so rosy. The foreign exchange earning sectors, tourism, manufacturing, sugar and the offshore sectors are all under threat and we cannot continue to survive on the basis of borrowing.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: And the Honourable Member cannot continue longer than another two minutes.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: He does not need it. There is a situation, therefore, in which the very pillars of the economy are severely under threat. The future is about not being able to earn foreign exchange. The future is about losing jobs both in the private and public sectors. The future is about an eroding revenue base. The future is about a reduced quality of life for Barbadians. The future is about the inability of the average Barbadian to access such needed things as land, housing, proper health and educational services and the average Barbadian to be able to live safely within this country.

I speak with the knowledge and understanding that we are in for a very rough ride starting from the year 2000 and certainly as we reach the year 2004, we will be in for severe

difficulties which we may not be able to address in the same skillful way that we did in the early 1990s.

I thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Let me say to the House, Mr. Deputy President, that some of the figures I heard the Leader of Government Business quoting today seem to differ, in some instances, from the figures that I have extracted from the document. Now, I can understand that because this morning I received many amendments which I have not had an opportunity to study and to go back and amend. I do not know to what extent they are significant or not. I am just making that point because all the figures I would be quoting would be coming from this main document.

Sir, the Press Release from the Central Bank issued on January 28 this year indicated that the GDP was forecast to grow between two and three per cent during 2000, that consumer inflation is forecast to remain low as trade liberalisation deepens and e-commerce grows, and that the greatest challenge for 2000 is to moderate the growth of imports so as to avoid a drain on the foreign exchange reserves. That is the economic background as painted by the Central Bank of Barbados.

I want now, Sir, to turn to the document itself and just summarise what I consider to be the most salient points. I am dealing now with page 3 where the Current Revenue for the fiscal year 2000-2001 is estimated to be \$1 725 million, an increase of \$153.7 million or 9.8 per cent over the preceding year.

I submit, Sir, that this might be too optimistic with \$114.2 million or 74.5 per cent of that increase projected to come from additional tax revenue from goods and services and international trade. I will come back to this assumption later on in my presentation.

Still on page 3, the Total Expenditure is estimated to be \$2 041.3 million, an increase of 5.8 per cent over the Revised Estimate for the previous year. That is the Total Expenditure. That is broken down between current and capital. Current Expenditure is projected to be \$1 717.6 million which is just three per cent higher than the Revised Estimate for 1999-2000. The emphasis seems to be on controlling expenditure, which I commend. I hope there is equal emphasis on reducing fraud and waste and on receiving value for money.

3.45 p.m.

The capital expenditure is projected to be \$323.7 million which is some 24.4% higher than the revised estimates for 1999. I would like to know that the revised estimates for that year was \$68.3 million less than the approved estimates of \$318.6 million. As we know, in this area there is much room

for discretion and, depending on the revenue out-turn and the capital expenditure within the private sector, Government has a flexibility to adjust that figure.

The overall fiscal deficit on the Accountant General's basis is projected as \$3.3 million or 7.3% of the GDP at factor cost estimated at \$4 336 million or if converted to the international financial institutional basis an estimated deficit of \$11.6 million or 2.6% of GDP.

Sir, at that level I consider the deficit to be manageable but I really would not like to see it go any higher than that 2.6%. I would like to commend the Government because I think this is continuation of prudent, macro-economic management over the past seven years.

Next, Sir, I would like to turn to specific Heads under current expenditure. First, I want to deal with the Ministry of Health and I am turning now to page 52. As most of us probably know, the QEH has 597 beds and a staff of 1 768 persons. The estimated current expenditure for 2000-2001 is \$97.190 million, an increase of 7.9% over the revised estimates for the previous year.

I was very pleased to hear the Leader of Government Business comment on what the Ministry is doing about the QEH because I cannot comment on the medical or the nursing services, but I can comment on the physical condition. I have been there at least three times to visit family or friends in this year and the physical condition is deplorable. I consider it a national embarrassment. It is amazing what a little bit of soap and water and a mop and paint brush and paint could do. To go a little further, we need just the replacement of ceiling tiles and vinyl flooring tiles. So I am very pleased to hear what the Minister has to say about the attention that he is paying to that.

Arising out of the Report of the Advisory Commission of Enquiry into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I have to comment that from all reports and appearances bad management and an inadequate management structure seem to remain as the fundamental problem at that institution. I am wondering whether that assessment is correct.

Next I turn to the Sanitation Service Authority on page 50-51. The estimated current expenditure of \$23 660.6 million involves the collection and disposal of garbage and the control and maintenance of cemeteries. It also provides for the closure of Mangrove Landfill. I would like to note that the estimates are \$5 177.8 million less than the revised estimates of \$28 838.4 million for the previous year. So I must ask the question. What provision if any has been made for dealing with the dormant facilities at Greenland in St. Andrew or has that been overlooked altogether? I see nothing in the Estimates to suggest that that has been taken into account.

Next, Sir, I would like to move on to the rural network services, pages 164 and 165. The projected expenditure of \$57 910 million is an increase of 10.1 per cent over the revised estimates of the previous year. It provides for Phase 1 of our long overdue four-year highway rehabilitation programme. Given the very poor condition of many of the existing highways and roads, I do not think we would have any argument on that. It is plain for all to see and I am wondering whether the amount provided will be adequate.

Next I would like to turn to Education, Table 7 on page 4. The projected amount to be spent by functional classification for 2000-2001 is \$358 783 million which is some 14% more than the revised estimates for the previous year. I note that that figure includes \$78 530 million to be transferred to tertiary institutions including \$43 million to be transferred to the University of the West Indies, unchanged from the previous year.

My question is: Is the educational system at the primary, secondary and tertiary level focusing as much on building character and human values in the student as on developing their academic and technical capabilities? Sir, I think those two have to be kept in balance. To me, that is what education is all about?

I now turn to the Police Services on page 110-111. The estimated expenditure on police headquarters and management and the general police services amounts to \$63.4 million in 2000-2001, an increase of \$6.4 million or 11.1 per cent over the revised estimates of the previous year. However, out of that increase of \$6.4 million is an increase of \$5.4 million for the purchase of vehicles.

I think the Police Force is to be highly commended for its recent successes in its fight against illegal drugs, firearms and other forms of violent crime, but I wonder how much more effective it would be with additional appropriate resources. Could the Defence Force not be greatly reduced and the Police Force strengthened correspondingly so that there would be little or no effect on the public Treasury? I suggest that we look at a re-allocation of resources.

Next, Sir, the Transport Board, on page 172. To what extent will the Transport Board continue to be heavily subsidised by Government? That subsidy will increase, given the increase in the prices of gasoline since the beginning of this year. How much longer would public service vehicles better known as PSVs be facilitated to operate profitably through the favourable allocation of routes to them? Would they in many but not all cases be allowed to operate in an undisciplined manner on the roads and at the terminal? Sir, I think the public deserves better than what they are getting from the public service vehicles.

Next, I turn to the Broadcasting Authority on page 95. It says there:

"The Broadcasting Act Cap. 274B provides for the establishment of a Broadcasting Authority and for the proper management and control of broadcasting in Barbados."

The projected expenditure in 2000-2001 is relatively small, only \$30 000 and that remains unchanged from the previous year.

Sir, that amount bears no significant relationship to the question I am about to ask. What is the Authority doing about cleaning up the musical garbage that is polluting the airwaves daily? I have spoken on this matter here before. Will certain publicly and privately owned local radio stations be permitted to continue to contribute to the subversion of Barbadian culture? Will Barbadians allow their culture to be replaced by a foreign sub-culture of violence, lawlessness and the degradation of women which are reflected in the lyrics of many songs that are now imported mainly from Jamaica and the United States of America? That question needs answering.

Finally, Sir, I would like to turn to the Personnel Emoluments. I raise this question, Sir, more from the point of view of public information because I have heard too many comments, much of it from within the private sector, about senior persons in the public service getting paid big salaries and doing poorly and not performing. I think in fairness to the senior managers in the public service I need to make some comparisons.
3.55 p.m.

Sir, I am turning to Schedule of Personal Emoluments Appendix D – Part 2 – Pages 24 to 45. Payments to senior persons and managers in the public service are included naturally in the Estimates, yet it seems to me that they are low in comparison with senior managers and professionals in the private sector. I want to give some examples, Sir.

Salary Scale S1 – \$91,668. That applies to Permanent Secretary, Auditor General, Chief Parliamentary Officer, Chief Personnel Officer, Director of Finance and Economic Affairs.

Scale S2 – \$86 248. In that category, Sir, you have the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, the Comptroller of Customs, the Supervisor of Insurance and the Commissioner of Police.

Scale S3 – \$79 646. The Commissioner of Land Tax, the Chief Town Planner, the Director of Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Airport Manager, the Accountant General and the Chief Labour Officer.

Scale S4 – \$73 463. Here you have the Director of the VAT Office, the Chief Immigration Officer, the Director of Statistical Services and Principals of Secondary Schools.

Finally, Scale B3 – \$68 128 – the Superintendent of Prisons.

They are just by way of illustration, Mr. Deputy President, because I have been advised that qualified accountants with five to seven years' experience in accounting in the private sector – some of them might not yet be thirty years of age – can earn as much as a Permanent Secretary in the public sector. That remuneration is determined by market forces.

Sir, the point that I want to make is that senior managers in both the public and the private sectors need to be suitably rewarded for the heavy responsibility they bear and be held strictly accountable for their performance and the results they produce. Is there really any other alternative in this new age of globalisation and international competitiveness? I do not think there is, Sir.

I had commented earlier, Sir, on the revenue and whether in fact it would be realised and I had expressed some doubt. I want to do two things now. I want to turn to the Barbados Business Outlook Survey Result 2000 dated March 20, 2000, an Ernst and Young document. I will make it a document of the Senate. I am reading from page 3, the "Economic Outlook" and I quote:

"Approximately 57% of the respondents indicated a lack of confidence that the Barbados economy would improve over the next twelve months while about 36% expressed confidence. This represents a reversal from last year's results when nearly 70% of respondents expressed confidence in the economy. The current reasons for the lack of confidence was the performance of the tourism sector and the level of crime and drug use in the country."

On page 10 of that document they gave an assessment of the optimism level:

"The lack of meaningful progress on trade liberalisation, the rate of change in the performance and productivity of Government departments, interest rate policy and direction, level of foreign exchange reserves, under performance of the tourism sector, limited growth of the international business and financial services sector, growing levels of crime and drug abuse, difficulty in attracting foreign investment, Government track record and timeliness in executing projects and initiatives and the labour relations environment."

Sir, it ends by saying:

"The impact of technology was the major factor highlighted by a significant proportion of participants, 52% as having a positive effect on the Barbados economy followed by progress in the Caribbean single market, Government support for business and declining unemployment levels."

I have read that document, Sir, and I attended a meeting at Sherbourne Centre last week and it made me think that maybe I should try and do a risk assessment on the things that could impact negatively on the projected revenue for the year 2000/2001 and which could affect the revenue even further into the future.

This is not an exhaustive list, Sir. The list that needs to be considered, however, includes the WTO rulings on bananas which had been referred to earlier and foreign sales corporations.
4.05 p.m.

The WTO's rulings on the bananas, which had been referred to earlier and foreign sales corporations form a vital part of our offshore sector here, and they could be affected here in the row against Europe and the United States, and so far the WTO seems to be supporting the position taken by Europe.

This year is the year of the Olympics and the US Presidential election, and historically Americans do not travel very far in a year of a Presidential election.

We now have the high international price of oil. It has reached by \$30 a barrel, almost a 300% increase in less than a year.

Consequent on that we have the rising price of gasoline, and as seen on the American television stations Americans are saying that because of this they may have to reconsider whether they travel abroad this year. As you know Americans love their cars and it is a big component in their cost of living – the cost of maintaining a car. It is also translated into rising air fares. Already airlines have increased their air fare to compensate for the higher price of gasoline.

Another risk we have to consider is over-dependence on the UK tourist market. It is not good to have all your eggs in one basket and while it is a very valuable market, we do not want to be overly dependent on it.

Another risk would be the delay in Government introducing new and revised legislation that affects the productive sectors, and here I am referring particularly to the

offshore sector, legislation new or revised effecting mutual funds, key business and offshore banking. I use those three as examples.

The removal of import licences on April 1, 2000 which I think, is next week. Comment has been made on this and this could have negative effects especially on local manufacturers for processing.

There has been a slow down in the construction industry although it remains buoyant. I got that information from major contractors.

There is the continuing concern about the illegal trade in drugs and firearms. Every day we read in the newspapers, not so much about firearms as about drugs, especially marijuana washing ashore or being confiscated by police raids.

The perception of money laundering. I say this very carefully, Sir. I have no evidence whatsoever to support anything pertaining to money laundering, but whenever a country is receiving a large amount of foreign investment that perception can arise and we have to be very guarded, because I know the Government has made every effort to run a clean offshore sector in Barbados but it is something we have to maintain our guard on.

The declining standards in social behaviour. We all live in this country where there is a preference for feting, Sir, and I do not think that would be a contentious issue. I love a party too, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member has one more minute.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: There is a preference for feting over saving and investing. Sir, I love a party. I love a fete with family, friends, whoever, but we have a misplaced emphasis...

Asides.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: ...We are talking about new businesses, new entrepreneurs and that can only come from saving and investing. That does not come just from borrowing. Yet it seems that so much of our time and energy and our resources are going into feting, rather than saving and investing.

A poor attitude towards service. Sir, we are a service economy and we have to put a priority on service in both the public and the private sectors to... but I have had complaints from people in the offshore sectors – coming here making applications and being quite frustrated with the red tape and the difficulties they had in getting work permits or tax free funds or whatever it is.

We have to be nice to each other as Barbadians. We also have to be nice to visitors who are bringing business to this island. In that regard, Sir, I have to blame the managerial and supervisory persons in this country, both in the public and private sectors. We are too tolerant when it comes to incompetence and indifference. Maybe, it is a reflection of a small society that we live in together, be it related to family or friendship or school days, whatever it is. But when a job has to be done, those aspects have to be cast aside. There is too much tolerance for incompetence and indifference.

Another risk, Sir, is the degradation of the environment. Three or four Sundays ago, 60 tons of garbage were collected and I would suppose the countryside would not look any different now. This has become an attitude, a habit, and if we are proud of this our island home we should not have garbage and litter thrown all over the place. We may get accustomed to seeing it and we may say, it will do for other people, it will do for us. It should not do, and it is a risk.

In this age of globalization, we talk of international competitiveness. It is going to be difficult for us to be internationally competitive, Sir, because we have high energy costs. I am now thinking of Trinidad, by way of comparison. Ours is much higher. We have high telecommunication costs which affect tourism and the offshore sector, and we have high labour costs.

Asides.

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Of course, we have a fixed exchange rate.

Sir, I think one of the best things we ever did was to peg our exchange rate at two to one to the US dollar early in the 1990s. I supported it then. I support it now but having done that you have to pay special attention to the other variables. You cannot have a fixed exchange rate and not pay attention to your costs. I have identified three elements: energy, telecommunications and labour, and of course, productivity and profit sharing schemes. That is why fixed exchange rates become meaningless.

Finally, Sir, the tendency, I believe, for payroll increases to pay us productivity gains. You will recall that in 1993-1995 we had a freeze on prices and incomes within the protocol of the social partnership. That was replaced by general restraint and the principal still applies, but it seems to apply more in theory than in practice.

If we want to maintain that fixed exchange rate, which I support totally, one element of cost which we can control is the cost of labour.

Sir, I believe that the estimated revenue of \$1 725 million for the year 2000-2001 will be difficult to realise. I am not saying impossible. I think it is going to be

difficult, specially if 74.5% of the increase of which \$153.7 million is projected, as I said earlier, is to come from additional tax revenue of goods and services and international trade.

It will be difficult if the Ernst and Young Business Outlook Survey is accurate, and if many of the risks I have identified earlier are not managed effectively; which brings me now, Sir, to the management of risks. In no way do I see this as purely a government responsibility. This is a heavy responsibility and a challenge to leadership and civil society. I believe it will place a very heavy responsibility on the social partnership which will have a critical role to play, and it will require a very collaborative and dynamic effort from that partnership. I believe it can do more than it is doing at present.

4.15 p.m.

Most of the rest that I'll try to identify is already known to most or all of us. What is lacking so often is the will to act. We don't want to upset anybody, we don't want to offend anybody; let things continue on the way they are. Sir, we are not living in that era anymore. When we recognise a problem we have to deal with it. We have to be able to identify the risks that can be managed and deal with those risks promptly.

We also have to be aware of the risks that are outside of our control, which still have to be monitored because we don't know how they can develop and how they can impact on us negatively. I have been stressing recently and I'm stressing here again that the inextricable link between the overall condition of a society and sustainability of the performance of its related economy has to be more clearly understood by all sectors. We cannot look at an economy in isolation and a society in isolation. They are related. They are inextricably linked. I think the leader of Government did state that point very well this morning and I commend him for it.

I should also like to say that the disengaged and alienated elements of our society may contribute to many of the problems arising from some of the risks identified, but their participation and support are vital and cannot be excluded. The risks I am talking about, Sir, all of us have a part to play in their solutions, all.

In winding up, Sir, I express again my concern about the realization of the projected revenue in view of the business outlook survey and the risks I have tried to outline. I would like to implore Government to make a much greater effort to collect outstanding arrears due to the Inland Revenue Department, in Land Tax, the VAT office, the Water Authority, the National Insurance Scheme, the National Housing Corporation and other government

departments and agencies. I have every reason to believe that the aggregate amount of those arrears is in excess of \$100 million and I believe it would be closer to \$200 million.

More emphasis needs to be placed by government ministries, departments and agencies, on delivering quality service to the community and within the public service itself; as we say in the private sector, the external and the internal customers. It applies to government just as much. There is always room for reducing the cost of fraud and waste in any large organisation and government is certainly no exception. The resultant savings can be used in productive endeavours and in reducing taxation.

I submit that accountability within government would be greatly improved if Parliament receives an annual report on the performance and targets of each Ministry, agency and statutory corporation and on the achievement of those targets. I would like to see a system of pay within the public service where increases are more closely tied to the achievement of targets.

Sir, with those few comments and observations I support the Estimates 2000-2001, and I thank you.

SENATOR Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Sir, before I start my contribution which will be on Head 34, Sub-programme 300, under the Ministry of Education, I just want to say that I endorse most of the comments that Sir John Stanley Goddard just made in relation to the collection and disposal of garbage in Barbados and work attitude. I am sure most of us would agree with the conclusions which he made and would hope that in the future we see better attitudes in regards to these matters.

As I said earlier I would like to focus on Sub-programme 300 under Head 34 which deals with the National Library Service. This is an aspect of the Ministry's operations about which most of you, I am sure, know very little, and I am going to devote all of the time I have allotted to me on this Head.

First of all, let me introduce you to the National Library Service. It was known to many of us as the Barbados Public Library and was renamed the National Library Service in 1985, not by legislation, but in a press release from Government, and there has been no change in the legislation. In fact, many of you will be startled to hear that the current legislation governing the National Library Service is the Public Library Act of 1904, which is an anachronism and it refers to the Barbados Public Library as meaning the library at Coleridge Street, a branch at Speightstown and the Barbados Museum. All this has changed long since and the legislation remains on the statute books.

Section 4 of the Act addresses the property of the library and five trustees appointed by the Minister and gives the trustees the powers to make regulations for the good governance and preservation of the Public Library etc. In modern parlance this would be a Board of directors or Library Committee, but no trustees have been appointed for the Barbados Public Library or National Library Service. I keep using them inter-changeably, as it is now called, since in the 1960s. I conferred with Sir Carlisle Burton on the subject and he said that while he was librarian there, this is up to 1958, trustees had been appointed, and since he left some time in the mid-sixties this system of governance was discontinued. Yet I found it interesting to hear that the Director of the National Library Service wanted to exclude a reader from the library, who was making a nuisance of himself, and instead of assuming that she had the power to do so, she asked the Attorney General for an opinion and was told that she could not do it because the trustees would have to agree. As I said, there were no trustees.

We are at the beginning of the 21st Century. Do not believe that in the future the book will be disappearing as a medium of learning and entertainment. It will be supplemented and in some cases, its place will be taken by electronic sources, but in small and poor economies such as ours, the printed word will be still important. I wish to say that while I am calling for new National Library Service Legislation, I am not for a minute stating that the Government of Barbados should abandon the idea of a Board of Management for the National Library Service. For a service as important as this, with a budget of nearly \$5 million in these Estimates of 2000-2001, with a staff of 63, 17 of whom are qualified librarians, which had transactions of over 100 thousand loans in 1999 and which has a collection of about 300 thousand books, the librarians there are not even exactly clear on what number they collect. The policy making ought not to be in the hands of one person. A Board would be a much better decision.

4.25 p.m.

In fact, most countries nowadays have national library services operated by a Board which would take into account the needs of all users and would assist the management of the library in making policy decisions. Some of the issues which a Board of Management would usually take into account are committees. My library has a Library Committee assisting in the preparation of the annual budget, making recommendations on the category and employment of staff, establishing policies in relation to opening hours, category of users, maintenance of library facilities and book stops, penalties for breaching regulations, for selection and ordering and photocopying facilities.

Usually the Chief Librarian is the secretary to the Library Committee and will provide guidance in relation to professional management. A library committee could also be

very useful for fund raising because it is not possible for Government to provide all of the needs of a modern public library, especially when influential members of the private sector are members of the Committee.

It is a pity that the management of the National Library Service by a Board of Trustees was discontinued. I emphasise that one is badly needed. I further say that the new legislation, when it is prepared, is badly needed. In that legislation the concept of a board of trustees or management or library committee should be retained.

I mentioned earlier that the National Library Service has a staff of 63 of whom 17 are professional librarians. These professional librarians are people who have a first degree in some subject other than librarianship and then a library degree or who have a degree in librarianship only.

The service also has seven branches. Would you believe that only one branch library, that at Oistins, has a professional librarian stationed there? Of the other 16, five are in the Technical Services branch of the National Library Service at Culloden Farm and the other eleven are at Coleridge Street. The six branch libraries, other than Oistins, are all manned by library assistants. I ask why this is so, because with that number of librarians I would have thought that they were enough for each branch to be under the direction of a person who was trained to deliver library services.

I was informed that the librarians really do not like being deployed to the branch libraries. The reason for this is that the branch libraries are seen like wild west outposts, that when a trained librarian is sent to a branch he or she is not provided with any clerical assistance and has to be chief cook and bottle washer.

My response to this is that in such a situation a librarian who has imagination and commitment to the development of literacy in Barbados ought to be able to come up with programmes to encourage persons in the community in which the library is situated to visit. They could have story telling sessions and other activities aimed at certain sections of the population. They could encourage unemployed youth to join the library and improve their reading and writing skills. Some of our librarians who have chosen jobs in the public service need to be exposed to the activities of librarians in other countries who man libraries in isolated, rural or poor communities.

The second reason why I was informed that our librarians do not like to be posted to branch libraries is that the collection in these libraries are not catalogued and the librarian does not know what is in the collection except by browsing. My question is this. Why in this day and age is it

not possible for the Technical Services branch of the National Library Service to print an extra catalogue card for filing in the branch library where the book is being sent. It is not difficult. It is just the printing of an additional card and you can create a catalogue there so that both staff and users would know what to look for instead of having to browse through the shelves book by book.

If a library committee with one or two members as qualified librarians was in place, this sort of practice would not be allowed to flourish. When rules for the operation of branch libraries are being made these anomalies would be noted and stamped out.

While I am on the question of the staff of the National Library Service, I know that even though there are 17 qualified librarians which, I might add, make our National Library Service one of the best provided for in the region in terms of staffing, and having regard to our size, there is a need for some of these librarians to be trained in special areas.

For instance, children's librarians are librarians dealing with the provision of information on arts and crafts. I would further add that no money should be spent for further specialisation if the recipients of the training are not going to be insightful and imaginative in imparting their knowledge.

The next matter in connection with the staffing about which I would wish to speak is bound up with the role of the National Library Service as perceived by those who started it and those who provide funds for its operations. A couple of months ago I prepared a modest proposal for the improvement of library services in this Parliament and, at that time, I was quite shocked to find that the library assistant here, while a pleasant and helpful person was unable to catalogue the collection. She had done a library assistant's course some time ago but she has not had the benefit of working with professional librarians or any further training.

I then made further enquiries about the post of coordinator of Government libraries which is in the National Library Service. I asked a librarian who held this post some years ago for which he received more than other senior librarians. That librarian has been advising a number of libraries, including that at the National Insurance Department. That is how I came to know of this. I was doing some work for the National Insurance. I have been informed that in recent years the person holding the position of Coordinator of Government Libraries has not been proactive and does not go out to see what services are needed, but waits to be asked for assistance by Government departments, many of whom do not know of the post.

Parliament library and other Government libraries are in the same position and ought to have been receiving assistance from this officer and not for any additional pay

because additional pay is already provided for in the National Library Service budget. So it seems that that position ought to be looked at again to ensure that the person is doing the job for which he or she is being paid.

Book collection of the National Library Service. I mentioned earlier that some statistics were provided for me when I asked in relation to the holding but they were inconclusive. No one was sure how many items they needed, whether the collection was 600 000 or 300 000 or whatever. I got some figures recently which would suggest that it is more than 300 000.

Mr. President, a sum of \$587 113 is provided in the Estimates for library books and publications. I was informed that this is a reasonable figure and I would say that I do consider it to be a reasonable figure considering that a large proportion of the books purchased are sent to branches where it seems that they are not well used, except perhaps in Oistins and Speightstown. I was told that very few people use the library at Eagle Hall. Professional staff or no staff at all seem to want to go there and it is sitting in limbo.

With regard to building, the public library building at Coleridge Street is one which any Barbadian born and educated in this island during the past sixty or seventy years would remember as being now exactly as it was when he or she was a boy or girl. I went to the Reference section last year and for a minute I thought I was still in 1963 when I used it frequently. The situation was the same with persons perched on the ledges reading, and sitting on the steps leading to the Central Police Station. In the reference section itself, in the so-called new block, books were piled on top of each other and some antiquated cases which most libraries with space could afford to discard were still there. People were sitting so closely together that you were wondering how they were able to concentrate on what they were doing.

I felt quite sickened, quite frankly, because this was a situation I had only recently seen and deplored in the national library of the Republic of Tanzania and in Guyana, nearer home. I also remembered my own air-conditioning and comfortable surroundings just about two miles away. I also felt a bit ashamed because like many Barbadians I have become quite smug and have boasted of conditions in my country and here was the reality – a country spending \$400 million on EduTech and the public library in Bridgetown which was and still is known as a place where hundreds of students can go to study in relative peace and have to turn to as a reference has been allowed to remain in this condition.

Do they not deserve chairs which are in very good condition, space and adequate shelves? This is hardly possible in the reference section of the national library service as it is today. Why am I restricting myself to the reference section? The main building to which the Annex

and to which the reference is attached is 95 years old. While it should be preserved as part of our heritage those involved in the provision of education for our nation must realise that it can no longer adequately serve the needs of users. It is too small, the roof is constantly in need of repairs, it is hot, the layout is from another era, the circulation air is inadequate, the lighting is poor and I could go on.
4.35 p.m.

Because of the inadequacy of space the technical services branch of the national library services is at Culloeden Farm, another branch, the microfilm unit is at the Archives. I would see it as difficult for the Director to adequately supervise these services. The Administration and Technical Services Division of the National Library Services which is in Coleridge Street and the main lending and reference section should be in one place in a modern building in which the latest in information technology can be made use of.

I am a firm believer that Government cannot do everything. Perhaps an initiative such as the one about which I heard recently in which the National Insurance and private sector are providing funds for the long awaited new Supreme Court Complex is needed for the library services. Most of the clientele are school children and others who may not have their own transportation and for whom the library is conveniently located. Therefore, it would make sense to provide a modern building in the vicinity of the existing one and the existing structure could be repaired and used to house exhibits or something else.

I was informed that most of the funds provided in these Estimates for buildings is to be used for the refurbishment of the Six Cross Roads Branch and the branch at the Valley is next. That is good but a piecemeal approach is no longer good enough for the headquarters of the National Library Service and the issue should not be postponed much longer.

This brings me to the question of services, Mr. Deputy President. For some time now some library users have been deploring the fact that many newspapers, of which the public library has the only copy, are not available for use because they are too brittle to be used and are waiting to be microfilmed. Furthermore, there are other newspapers which are in good condition but constant use will render them virtually useless within a few years unless they too, are microfilmed. This is very bad for a country which is now placing so much emphasis on preservation of its heritage and culture. It is quite inconsistent really.

Let me hasten to add that successive Governments are not necessarily to blame for the situation in relation to microfilming. My reading of the situation is that much of the blame is to be placed on the shoulders of those who have been administering the National Library Service. Most of the equipment for the microfilm unit was purchased about

25 years ago. It has not been properly maintained and I am not sure whether tests were made to get proper parts when they were needed and so on. My impression is one of neglect. As I have said, one cannot necessarily blame the Government for what has happened. Financial support, however, is needed to get this microfilm unit functioning again.

I mention this because there are several organisations including CARIFORUM which are providing funds for microfilming historical materials in the region. Just on Friday, I think it was, I was at a meeting at which I was told that two international organisations are providing millions of dollars for cultural projects from Caribbean countries and institutions and I am hoping that in the absence of a board of directors, the Director of National Library Services will bestir herself and try to seek some of this funding.

I was very happy to see in the Estimates that even though there is no provision for refurbishing the microfilm unit that funds have been provided to purchase new microfilm reader printers. I think there are two or three at the National Library Service and they frequently malfunction and often the only other place that one can use the microfilm which the Public Library has is at the Faculty of the Law Library at the University or at the Archives Department and then they have to make arrangements to take the microfilm down because it is often not supposed to leave the library which can be very distressing for users, especially those who may have deadlines for doing research. I would caution that the National Library Services need to take better care than they have been doing of this sort of equipment because a microfilm reader costs \$18 000 to purchase and the parts are very expensive to replace. They should make sure that both staff and users know how to use the equipment properly.

Mr. Deputy President, I now come to computer access. The only library in the National Library Services with e-mail and Internet access for users is the recently opened Speightstown Branch Library. The facility is being provided in two kiosks which were provided by BET/BARTEL. The users purchase cards in \$10 and \$20 denominations. In other words, if you do not have the fund to purchase cards to use the service, you are out. I asked about BET and BARTEL's community spirit because it was my view that they could have provided the kiosk for free use for a few hours at a reduced cost or something like that.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Why not for the library too? In any event, there should be at least one computer in each branch library and no fewer than three at the headquarters which library staff may use to teach John Public and school children to use the Internet and access other stuff as well as Word Processing. I am of the view that a portion of the library's book budget could be set aside for

funding this service especially if you could come to some arrangement with BARTEL for a special price for access for a specified number of hours per week. If the funds for purchase of computers cannot be met from the library's budget I am wondering whether funds could not be provided from the EduTech 2000 budget.

I was rather surprised to discover that the National Library Service has not been involved in the planning of EduTech and has not been provided with any funding from it. The purpose of EduTech according to a leaflet I have here is to provide and I quote:

"Child centered approach to learning to a community of learners including teachers, parents, principals and all others involved with the schools."

Some of those others involved with the schools are librarians and other information providers and those who work at the National Library Services. These librarians facilitate student learning and should be given assistance to play an even greater part than they now do by being given better physical facilities, computers and software to support the schools programme and any training available under EduTech should be extended to the National Library Services.

Mr. Deputy President, I would also urge the Ministry of Education to give urgent attention to putting the necessary structures both physical and otherwise in place for ensuring that the National Library Service does not, like its current legislation, become an anachronism. One of those recommendations would be that urgent attention is given to looking at and restructuring the management of the service.

Thank you.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I beg that the Sitting be now suspended for fifteen minutes and resume at 5 o'clock.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
4.45 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I rise to support the Bill that is before us which is to allow Government to spend the sum of money stipulated in the coming financial year.

I want to say from the onset, Sir, that the preparation of these Estimates and the context thereof show that the Government is continuing in its path of fiscal moderation, the path of preparing this economy for the future, a path which recognises the fact that the world of today and tomorrow is going to be far different from the world of yesterday and that the demand from this country is going to be ever increased. In the past few years we have positioned our economy to take advantage of the changing world and the process is continuing with these Estimates.

The Estimates, Sir, would not contain grandiose plans, but rather they reflect the sober approach to managing an economy which is by its very nature, fragile. It highlights the fact, Sir, that we cannot afford to let go of the control of this economy. Any free for all will result in economic chaos.

I want to remind Members of the fact that the last time this economy was going so well was in 1989. I remember, Sir, the then Prime Minister in a speech at Free Hill, said that the economy was batting like Gary Sobers. That was his reference but the seeds of the difficulties of 1990 and 1991 were sown in the euphoria over the present economic prospect that had manifested itself in 1989.

Sir, I liken this economy to a person with chronic diabetes. With good management, with proper diet, he could live a productive life. Proper diet, exercise, medication and he will still have the diabetes, but he can live a comfortable life. The problem with a lot of people, Sir, is that when they are feeling good, when there are no difficulties, they tend to overdo things and very often they go into relapse.

This economy is performing well, but I want to caution Members that unless we keep on doing the things that made it successful, we will go back and will slip back into the dark days of the early 1990s. It was only yesterday that it happened. I can only vividly remember the signs were evident from 1989, we were in Opposition then, and remember the then Opposition Leader and the Opposition spokesman for Finance that time, warning Government in mid-1989, at a time when the economy was at its highest, that there were danger signs on the horizon and that corrective action must be taken otherwise all the gains that we had made would have been dissipated.

Sir, history would recall that our advice was totally ignored and the result is that 2 000 to 3 000 public servants lost their jobs. People's lives were destroyed by a savage 8 per cent cut. Destruction reigned all because the Government refused to take timely advice.

That is why, Sir, when Senator Mascoll speaks, I cannot believe everything he says, but at least I pay him the respect of researching to see whether or not he is making sense. Invariably he is not making sense but that is beside the

point. The point is that when he speaks, everything he says, I would not ignore at all. I will check my figures to see whether or not what he is saying has any justification.

Sir, a man may be a drunken man but if he tells you there is a well in the road, you would be a fool to ignore him totally.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: You will proceed with caution because he may be right. Sir, Senator Mascoll, my good friend, is like a weather forecaster, every morning saying that the rain will fall today. Sometime he is going to be right, you know. He has a standard forecast. The rain will fall today. He has to be right sometime or the other. Senator Mascoll feels that because he is saying that we are going to be doomed and that the economy is troubled that some day it will happen. We are not saying not, and he is going to point to himself and say "I predicted it". I forecasted the difficulties, but every day he is going to say that the rain is going to fall.

He will say nothing good about this economy because it is not in his interest to say that the economy is performing well, and we thank him for that because it makes us double check. The law of averages would suggest that one day he is going to be right but I say that he is applying the law of large numbers which in my interpretation says that if you do something for a long time, you should get it right some time.

But he is applying the law of large numbers in a way because he has been wrong on so many occasions and it is extraordinary that a person can be consistently wrong.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, the point is that this economy must be handled with care and one thing in the last five years that we can all testify to is that we have a Minister of Finance who is not prepared to gamble with this economy. That is the difference, Sir, between this Administration and the one that went before.

We are not prepared to take chances with this economy because we have all seen the horrendous results of ignoring economic fundamentals, of ignoring economic relationships. As I said before, and I may say it in this Chamber that you can back the law of economics as much as you can back the belief in the law of gravity, it still does not make you able to jump 10 feet in the air.

Sir, the point is that the economic management skill of this present Administration is brought to the fore every time that we have Estimates in here. Gone are the days when we had unfettered large deficits which ruined this economy.

Every year we have tried to keep the deficit within reasonable limits. No wonder, Sir, that only in today's newspaper we read that the IADB gave full marks to this country for the handling of the economy. That part was referred to by the Leader of Government Business who referred to the IADB report which hailed this country's economic success rate.

Everywhere we go in the world, we get credit for the way that we have taken this economy with all the self induced difficulties of the early 1990s, and now it is almost a model, and we have done it, Sir, as I have said before, by sticking to economic fundamentals.

What is the result of all this? The result is that unemployment, and this must be stressed, is now at record low levels. This is the first time since the first records came out in 1975 that we had single digit levels of unemployment. And that, Sir, is a tremendous achievement, that a small fragile economy can position itself so that it is not only providing jobs, and this is important, for its citizens, but people from other countries have come here and have taken advantage of the job opportunities that are in Barbados. Sir, that is an unenviable fact that people from other islands have come here and assisted Barbados in its building efforts.

Sir, unemployment is one area because we said in 1994, our slogan was that our first job was the reduction of the scourge of unemployment which had reached over 25 per cent a few years previously, and we were determined that all of our efforts must be channeled in the direction of providing jobs for our people. We have succeeded in large measure but the job is not yet completed. We still have a far way to go and that is why we have to make sure that we allow the economy to expand so that some more of our citizens can benefit from what is going on.

Sir, the point was made, albeit incorrectly by Senator Mascoll that half of the jobs that were created were provided by Government. That is blatantly untrue and I shall refer, Sir, as proof to the economic report that was laid in this Honourable Chamber last August and I want to quote the figures:

In 1994, 105 000 people were employed in Barbados and 21 900 were employed in Government services. Now a few workers increased by 1998 to 119 000 that is an increase of 14 000. But, yet in the Government services sector, employment increased from 21 900 to 24 500, an increase of 2.6 per cent and that, Sir, is a matter of record. That current report is a document of this Honourable Chamber. It shows that whereas 14 000 people more were employed from 1994-1998, of those only 2.6 thousand of that 14.1 thousand were employed in Government services. The record is there for all to see that there has been an increase. Anytime you increase employment in this country the Government sector

will consequentially increase. That is a fact but over 12 000 jobs have been provided by the private sector. That puts a lie to the talk about Government providing half of the jobs. It is not true and the figures are here. Figures do not lie. Maybe liars will figure but figures do not lie. Yes, there has been some expansion but the point remains that the Government has put things in place to allow the private sector to expand and to provide jobs for people.

5.15 p.m.

Do not forget that one of the first moves by the administration in 1994 was the removal of onerous taxes on the manufacturing sector, on the fisheries sector and on the agricultural sector. That was one of the very first acts of October 1994. I remember the Honourable Senator Mascoll in his first tranche so to speak, called on the efforts of the Government to give greater life to the manufacturing sector. The results are there that all the sectors have responded, and they were put in a position where they have been able to provide jobs for our people. The fall in unemployment did not come about by chance. It came about by the deliberate action of a Government which cared about the people, which cared about its responsibility to provide a better way for the people, and we are hoping that when the next unemployment figures come out in May that we will see an even further reduction in the level of unemployment.

Sir, the point was made that the Barbados economy has lost its ability to earn foreign exchange. That, again, is contrary to the evidence. If there is one thing that I pride myself in is my ability to teach people to think. I was teaching for all of my life and I taught my students at the University to rationalise and to think, do not just accept what is given, but use their analytical skills to bring to bear on an issue so that they themselves can have an informed opinion. It is obvious that I have failed with some students but I am convinced that I have tried. The point is that the latest information from the Central Bank's daily position shows that the foreign reserves are at record high levels. A year ago it was at \$551 million. These figures were quoted by the Leader of the Opposition when he gave an interview. He had the correct information but of course he would not want to put the correct information but the point is that a year ago the reserves were at \$551 million and last Thursday it was at \$743 million, an increase of over \$190 million in one year. The point is that this economy, in spite of Senator Mascoll saying it has lost its ability to earn foreign exchange, is producing foreign exchange at record levels. Where is the evidence? Where is the evidence? The foreign exchange position has been running at very good levels. I am told that the import cover, which gives an indication on how the reserves are doing, last year was \$12.7 million, eight weeks of imports. Now it is 17.15 weeks of imports. Normally you want about maybe 14 weeks or so of imports and you feel good. So we are way above what is recommended. Our reserves are going at a good level. Our unemployment is at a very good level. Inflation is measured by the retail price

index. We had about two per cent inflation last year, which is very manageable in spite of the fact that towards the end of the year we had increases in the energy prices. All of the macro-economic indicators point to the fact that the economy is well managed and is well positioned to want to take advantage of any good that there is in the world economy, and secondly, to withstand some of the shocks which may result from things outside of our control.

Sir, we hear talk about the Ernst & Young survey. I do not know about that survey so I am not going to comment on something that I do not know about. I can carry out a survey to prove what I want. I would have to find out how scientific the sample was. I am not going to comment on that. I would find it difficult for people to say that confidence level in our economy is much lower than it was last year. I would find that very difficult to say, but, Sir, we know that the businessman would never tell you that things are going good, because it is not in their interest to say how good things are going, but the fact remains that if you look at things like corporation tax – do you mean business people are having it so bad and still have record levels of corporation tax without an increase in tax rate. It does not add up. It does not compute. You are telling me things are so bad but at the same time you are getting record levels of corporation tax. Corporation tax is paid on profits, so if you are not making profits you do not pay corporation tax. I am told that last year people got record levels of bonuses and that sort of thing, so I do not understand how all of a sudden I am going to find a survey to show that the level of 'confidence' has dropped so dramatically. I do not understand it but strange things happen.

Sir, all around we see signs that the Government is moving ahead to ensure that the economic gains in the last five years are not frittered away. Senator Mascoll and his Party are saying how bad things are but still they still want the eight per cent back. They want us to pay it back in one tranche. They want us to reduce the tax on energy. The economy is performing so badly according to them, and at the same time they want us to be giving out largesse left, right and centre. You cannot have it both ways. If the economy is performing that badly, you should not be calling for the things you are calling for.

Sir, getting back to the issue of preparing the economy for difficult days ahead. I mentioned before that the Government removed tax on the industrial sector, the manufacturing sector and the agricultural sector, but in the last forecast the Government made the far-reaching act of reducing the taxes on energy products. We are not going on the defensive on these. Our record is there for all to see and we can bear the scrutiny of any independent observer. When the Mobil Refinery was closed in 1998 one of our first actions was to remove the tax on fuel oil. That is critical because fuel oil is the major fuel used by the Light and Power Company. Most of their generating plant uses fuel oil.

That tax on fuel oil was totally removed in 1998. So the result is that at the time there was a decline in the price of electricity and the fuel adjustment charge. I know this, you know. The fuel adjustment charge decreased at that point because the price was taken off a litre of gasoline. Not only that, at that point in time Government removed the tax on kerosene oil and the Government reduced the tax on gasoline and on diesel at that time in March of 1998. We did that in March 1998. The result was that gasoline came down by 10¢ a litre, diesel by about the same amount and the price of fuel oil was then just the price of the imported product. It would be the c.i.f. price plus about \$1.78 which the Terminal got for importing and storing the product.

5.25 p.m.

In 1998 we made a move on our energy prices. In 1999, last year, in the Budget of September, the Government went further and slashed the tax on gasoline by another 10¢ or so. The tax on diesel came down significantly, I think about 20¢ per litre. That is what happened last year September.

The Prime Minister announced an energy policy which, to me, made a lot of sense. The point was simply this. The tax on energy products, gasoline and diesel, because the other energy products carry no tax, was to be systematically reduced to about the same level as our competitors. Now, it could not be done at one fell swoop, as I said, because obviously you would have revenue implications. In a series of actions, the Prime Minister said he was going to reduce the taxes on gasoline and diesel to bring them in line with that of our main competitors and thereafter any movement in the price of the product which resulted from external sources, like OPEC and other sources, would have to be borne by the customer if it goes up and if it goes down the customer would obviously benefit from reduction in prices. That was the policy that was announced by the Prime Minister in his Budget of last year.

Remember what I said, Sir, there were two occasions where there was significant reduction in the tax on energy products. Last year September the tax was reduced, but what happened since September? The price of oil tripled from since about last year January. It was about \$10 a barrel last year January when we gave a reduction in price. It is now about \$30 or there about.

In spite of the fact that the price of crude doubled from 1998 when we set the price on Mobil until now, the price of gasoline is 5¢ per litre higher now than it was in 1998. That is a historical fact. It is 5¢ per litre higher now than it was when the price of oil was half of what it is now. They had a large increase on the price of crude but because of the fact that the Mobil was closed, and there were significant reductions in the taxes on gasoline, the price of gasoline is now only 5¢ per litre more than it was two years ago.

Listen to this, Sir. The price of diesel is less now than it was two years ago, despite the increase in crude price. The price of diesel now is about 5¢ less than it was two years ago so when we hear about people wanting to increase their cost because of diesel prices, they should remember that they are paying less now than they were paying two years ago.

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: You are paying more now than a year ago, so what? I am saying that we are paying less than we did two years ago because of the fact that the Government has adjusted the tax on these products. Which other input to the sectors showed a decline over the last three years? The Government through its enlightened policies, knowing the pervasive effect of energy price on the whole economy has put in place a sensible energy policy.

It is clear that if OPEC, when they meet today, manages to increase production and the price comes down, if or whenever it happens, you can be assured that the Government will do what is necessary to make sure that the consumer benefits from any reduction in price. The same way the consumer paid when the price went up, you can rest assured that when the price comes down, the consumer will also benefit. That is the policy that was enunciated by the Prime Minister in his Budget last September.

Having given up a large portion of taxes last year September without having serious revenue implications, you just cannot go and give up revenue like that because there are two sides to a story. If you give out the revenue, what are you going to do? You will have a larger deficit which has to be financed by some source. We do not want to increase taxation in this country, so we will have to bear with the 5¢ more in gasoline than it was two years ago until the situation improves.

The Prime Minister is on record as saying that he is going to be looking at the tax on energy products in a systematic way, and when the revenue permits he then will make the necessary adjustments.

We on this Side have nothing to be defensive about when it comes to energy policies because our policies have been clear and they have resulted in tremendous advantages to the people of this country. Not only that, but bear in mind we have taken important moves in the energy sector to increase production.

I heard Senator Mascoll talking about privatisation. This country was saved, as a result of the election of 1994 from the giving away of the two companies in the energy sector. The then Democratic Labour Party Government had put in place plans to sell off both BNOC and NPC. I am told the figure they were going to get was something like

\$12 million which was something like the give away they had with Heywoods, not to Barbadians but to foreigners. When I hear Senator Mascoll talking about the Port and the Airport, he should check the record. This Government is not in the habit of giving away precious assets of this country as the last Government was wont to do in their moments of madness. Our energy policy will continue. We are hoping that the OPEC countries will allow us some relief.

Sir, I want to talk a little bit about the Ways and Means. Now, this Government has been consistent in its opposition to using the Ways and Means to finance Government deficits. We saw the totally disastrous effect that had in 1989/90 when the Government managed in their wisdom to run up huge deficits and financed them by use of the Ways and Means. We said we are not going to use the Ways and Means as a source of financing Government's operations. It does not mean, and I want to make this point very clearly, that we will never use the Ways and Means, because the Ways and Means is a legitimate tool to be used by Government especially in times when revenue and expenditure are not meshing at the same point in time. In other words, when they are not synchronising.

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: It is a legitimate tool and it must be seen in that way where in the short term Government would use this facility for a short time in order to overcome some difficulty. Sir, only a fool would expect that this economy will not at some time or another run into some kind of cash flow problems. Everybody knows that at some time or another clearly something will happen that will cause you to want to use the legitimate facility.

Sir, we must remember that very early in this Administration one of the first things we did was to come to this Honourable Chamber with a Bill which reduced the limit of the Ways and Means from 17½ per cent of revenue to 10 per cent of revenue. The last Government increased the limit from the 10 per cent which it was for a long time and, having broken it, they carried it to 17½ per cent, and they even broke that too. That is a fact. The records are there.
5.35 p.m.

We said that that would ruin the economy, as it did. So we are putting in place measures to bring it down to 10 per cent of estimated revenue. It was in 1995 that that piece of legislation came to this Honourable Chamber. We recognised fully the dangers that would result if we did not pay special attention to the proper management of the Ways and Means and we said that we would not use it for financing Government deficits.

Did we use it in the last financial year? The answer is no. If you look at page 2 of the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure, Table 3, it shows that there was a finance to the Government of \$357.3 million which was the size of the

deficit taking into account amortisation. This is the Accountant General's definition of the amortisation and all the extra accounting. \$357.3 million was the figure that was put there for financing requirements. That is the difference between Government revenue and Government expenditure.

We said that we are not going to use the Ways and Means in order to finance that. The record is there. It shows that we had borrowed financing of \$174.6 million and domestic financing of \$182.7 million. Of the domestic financing, \$53 million were Treasury Notes, \$8.4 million were savings bonds and \$21 million were in the form of debentures. Nowhere among the domestic financing did we see something called Ways and Means.

The Ways and Means helped us out of a period where revenue was not matching expenditure, and it worked well. We used it and as soon as was possible we brought the Ways and Means back down to respectable levels. Right now it has been zero for the last week or two. So we have not used the Ways and Means to finance Government operations.

We said we would not do it and we did not do it. What happened is that when we borrowed the \$150 million last year April, it did not go straight into Government's coffers. It went into a special account at the Central Bank and it stayed there. We had said that later in the year we would borrow \$105 million from foreign non-project sources.

Aside.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, please address the Chair.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, I apologise for that slip.

We said \$105 million and that was in black and white. At the same time, Sir, do not forget that we knew that we had to take into account two factors: a salary increase was coming, and we had committed ourselves to the repayment of the eight per cent. We knew that probably the \$105 million did not account for those two items. It ended up that we had to borrow not \$105 million but \$130 million. The record will show that the non-project loans were \$130 million. In short, some of the \$150 million that were borrowed is still in the special accounts at the Central Bank. They are sterilised and they are there that if Government runs into the same problem they can use it again. It is our money but we have decided that we do not want to get into the money supply so we are keeping it there for a rainy day and using the foreign exchange equivalent of it.

It takes a sensible Government to prepare for a rainy day. When the Honourable Senator Mascoll was advising the DLP, he did not prepare for a rainy day, but you can be sure that rain will come sometime. Unless you prepare for a rainy day, you will get caught. We said we were going to borrow

\$105 million but we knew that there were a couple of other things that we could not yet quantify because the unions had not yet settled with Government the level of wage increases. Sir, that is why we got \$130 million in non-project loans from foreign sources. It is no mystery. It never was, except in the imagination of people who just want to find things to accuse the Government about. I am clear on this. There was no printing of money in the last financial year.

The legitimate use of the Ways and Means does not always equate to printing money. I am surprised that people who should know better jumped on the bandwagon and joined Senator Mascoll in his enthusiastic folly.

Sir, the height of the reserve levels and the way in which it is going also puts paid to the criticism that we are borrowing our way to trouble and not earning our way. That criticism that we are borrowing our way and not earning our way, again, I am trained to analyse. If we are borrowing our way, it means that our foreign debt should be at unsustainably high levels, that there should be some great increase in our foreign debt. If that claim is correct, it means that there must be a consequential increase in our foreign indebtedness. But what does the record say?

Again I am going to quote from the Economic and Financial Statistics because I believe that the figure will speak for itself. What is Barbados' foreign debt now as compared to what it was a year or two ago? At the end of December, the figures are not yet published, but I am told that at the end of December, 1999 our foreign debt was \$764.6 million. What was it at the end of December, 1998? \$674 million. So we had an increase of about \$80 million. What was it in December 1997? – \$700 million. We know that \$150 million were from the borrowing we made last April. That is not the whole story. In 1989 and 1990 when the Honourable Senator was advising the Government, what was the level of our foreign indebtedness? It is here in black and white.

In 1990, it was \$859 million. That is a fact. In 1991, \$834 million. So our foreign debt now is less than what it was when Senator Mascoll and his Party were in Government. Still we hear that we are borrowing and not earning our way.

We have record levels of foreign reserves and our indebtedness to the rest of the world is less than it was ten years ago. If that is borrowing our way rather than earning our way then I do not know. The evidence does not support such a baseless charge. The Honourable Senator owes this Chamber the courtesy of being factual in his presentations. When he comes in here and makes a statement I should not have to check but when he talks about borrowing our way I had to go and see what is the level of our indebtedness now

as compared to a year or two ago or even ten years ago. The evidence does not support such a charge. Sir, with regards to the foreign debt situation, we have done well. Sir, what is the evidence showing? In 1990 our central Government foreign debt was 28 per cent of GDP. In 1990, 28 per cent of our GDP was foreign debt. What was it in 1998? It was 12 per cent. The economy has grown significantly from 1990 but our foreign debt has shrunk comparatively speaking. Whereas it was 28 per cent of GDP in 1990, it was 12 per cent of GDP in 1998. More important and this is crucial, in 1990 and 1991, 15 per cent of our exports of goods and services to honour our debt obligations, amortisation as well as interest, it took 15 per cent of exports to do that in 1990 and 1991, it took six per cent in 1998. Still we hear that we are borrowing and that we are not earning our way. All the implications are showing that when it comes to the question of foreign debt that we have managed well both in terms of proportion of debt to GDP as well as how much it has taken of our foreign exchange earnings to repay debt. We have done well on both of these counts but still we can hear the charge that we are borrowing our way and not earning our way. Where is the evidence? The evidence is clear that on all these counts we have been good stewards. There is clear evidence which cannot be refuted because it is there in black and white as we like to say.

5.45 p.m.

Sir, the question of Government savings bonds. Some misinformation was put out there which I would like to correct. The point was made that in the coming year we have projected that we will be getting more savings bonds. Sir, mention was made of the \$250 million but what Members should realise is that there is a statutory limit as to how much savings bonds can be out there on the market. We were in a situation where the limit was not high enough and we wanted to increase the limit which we did last month by legislation. Sir, the point is that we gave an upper limit, we never said that we would come and bring \$250 million in savings bonds on this matter because we know that there is not that amount of money out there in the first place. What we did not want was that every time you wanted to put out savings bonds that you have to come with more legislation so we brought a piece of legislation to carry it to a sufficiently high level so that we would not have to come down here every five minutes for a change in the limit. We never said that we were going to put \$250 million in savings bonds on the market. That would be bare foolishness. This year we are committing ourselves to put \$40 million and that is found on page 8 of the Estimates, Table 10.

It is clear that Honourable Members who spoke did not read this page because we said that we were going to put \$40 million in savings bonds on the market during the fiscal year starting next week or so. We took a decision that this is what the market can bear and we do not want to crowd out the private sector as happened in the past. We do not want to

soak up all the available credit that is in the system because savings bonds are so attractive that people would then take money from other accounts and buy savings bonds so we do not want to have too many of them in the market at one time because it would not have a beneficial effect on the economy so we said that we would put \$40 million in savings bonds on the market during the coming year because we feel that is what the economy can handle during the year.

Sir, it is not a lack of confidence by people to subscribe because we feel that if we put more out there people would just shift money from one source to another and it may cause some sort of distortion in the capital markets. It is not a lack of confidence, it is just that we have to look at both sides of the coin. Government must not be out there doing things which are injurious to the private sector. We hope that during the year the citizens will take advantage of the bonds that Government will put out there. As I have said before, it is secured by statute and there is a nice interest, 2½ % above the savings rate, no risk and so on.

Sir, in the few minutes that remain I want to talk a little bit about the Ministry which I have the pleasure to be in, the Ministry of Environment. Sir, we recognise that this country depends a lot on tourism and people always compliment us for keeping a beautiful country. Our beaches are among the best in the world despite the fact that we can always find fault.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: We always try our best to maintain them. The point is, Sir, that we need to be constantly working at it in order to keep what we have in good condition and to improve the quality of what we have. We cannot relax, we have to make sure that we are constantly doing things. That is why we are being proactive in this regard. Our coastal management unit called the Coastal Zone Management Unit is well regarded in this way and very often our people are called upon to go and assist other countries. Our Director is very much in demand in assisting other countries in their coastal management problems. It is something that we are proud of. We have some very interesting projects that hopefully will come in a year or two including plans for the Crane Beach which I know, when I was younger, was one of the best excursion spots on the whole island.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Crane Beach was my favorite place but in recent years because of erosion and so on it is not what it used to be. We have plans in the next year or two to work on that beach to bring it back up and re-nourish the beach and so on because there are techniques available for re-nourishing beaches and so on. We also have to have a management plan for the Hastings area.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: We have not done any extensive work on the west coast in the past but we will be constantly ensuring that our beaches are kept in proper condition. Not only that; the Government is also committed to ensuring that beaches remain public and that access to the beaches is maintained and preserved for the benefit of all the citizens. That is something that Government has committed itself to publicly. Not only are we going to make sure that the beaches are kept in good condition but we are going to make sure that they are available to all our citizens and all our visitors. Both our citizens and our visitors must have good access to our lovely beaches.

Sir, you will notice that there is a new programme. On page 83 we have what is called the Gully Eco-management Programme where we recognise that our gullies have some tremendous features and that we should be preserving them for lots of reasons. Apart from the fact that they are beautiful, they serve a useful purpose in water recharge. They also serve an important function in flood and storm water mitigation. We have to make sure that our gullies are kept in pristine condition to enable them to carry out the function that they have been carrying out for thousands of years – keeping the rain water away from sensitive areas and so on. That is why you see on many occasions that this Ministry has other private sector people engaged in activities which are designed to clean and to enhance the state of our gullies. I want to publicly call on our citizens to recognise, Sir, that gullies are important for our very well-being. There is something I do not understand...
5.55 p.m.

We have a very good waste collection system in Barbados. We complain about it, but it is fairly good and do not let us make any bones about it; we have a fairly decent solid waste disposal system. We have a situation where we have a special facility for dumping car bodies and old refrigerators and so on. I say, Sir, that there is no reason for the citizens of Barbados to be using the gullies for illegal dumping.

There are feasible alternatives, and when a man can drive from St. Philip to Jack-in-the-Box, why can't he go another mile or two, to Bagatelle and carry the old refrigerator body to the quarry at Bagatelle. It is just another mile or two. There are proper alternatives, and we have no right to be using our important gully system for this sort of activity.

Sir, we will have a whole programme which deals with the management of our gully system. It will include things like public relations and education so that our citizens then will know that not only are our gullies beautiful, but they

serve an economic purpose, and we hope that they will be less inclined to do things which are injurious to the gully system. They have some lovely plants in them that we should be providing for our grand-children especially at a time, Sir, when eco-tourism is becoming a very important part of our tourism product. I invite the Members in here to take a walk in the gullies. You feel so different when you are down there.

Sir, I speak with feeling because I was born very close to those areas and I spent a lot of my boyhood days up and down through gullies; so I have a natural affinity to them. The point is that they are very beautiful and they are very important that is why this Government has put \$491 000 in the Estimates. This is only the start but we are going to bring out a whole management plan.

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: It is on page 83. We, meaning Government, are going to prepare a "comprehensive" – as is said in the note to it, and I quote:

"The purpose of this Subprogramme is:

- (1) To prepare a comprehensive integrated management strategy and programme for the national gully system which recognise the following key issues:
 - (i) Preservation and enhancement of biodiversity resources.
 - (ii) Maintenance of storm water flow patterns, including the protection of critical groundwater catchment areas and abstraction zones.
 - (iii) Identification of sustainable socio-economic uses of selected gully systems.
- (2) The development and implementation of an appropriate public awareness and education programme which is complementary to (a) above."

Sir, this \$491 000 is but the start, but we hope that by the time we come in here next year, we will have the comprehensive plan in place so that we can see elements of it being put in place so that we can preserve what is a very attractive part of this country of ours. So this is a very worthwhile project and one which I feel will get the support of the people of this country, especially when we get our public awareness programme in place for them to fully understand the features of our gully systems.

Sir, we are spending more money on the Beautify 2000 project which we hope to get. We believe that we must make a concerted effort to ensure that the beauty of this island is preserved. We are making sure that all our roundabouts and

road ways are properly landscaped. The St. Thomas roundabout and the one at Six Roads are two that we have worked on so far. We are now working on the Pine East West road where we are now starting the landscaping.

Our plan is to make sure that our highways and our important areas are well manicured. We are putting in proper plants to add to the beauty. All of us here agree that a thing of beauty is a joy for ever and we want to make this country as beautiful as it can be. That is why we have almost \$3 million on the Beautify 2000 project, and I think that it will be money well spent because it will add to our attractiveness not only for our visitors but for our people. When I am driving about, I want to see beauty. These are two important projects that the Ministry of the environment will be embarking on in a big way in the coming year. Of course, we will make sure that Harrison's Cave is kept going and we have plans for improving not only the financial viability of it, but improving the ambience.

In that regard, Sir, I want to mention...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have one minute to mention what you are going to.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, on page 80, you will see that we have a renewable energy centre. We have \$100 000 earmarked for setting up of a centre for renewable energy, and I want to state that Harrison's Cave now is being powered by electricity from the sun. Photovoltaic is now powering Harrison's Cave. That will do our bit to enhance the environment. I must admit that it has been working.

The point is that we are proud of the fact that we are one of the few countries in the world which is putting our money in a centre for renewable energy where we did not want to use the wind, the sun and the sea in order to produce electricity for people so that we lessen the effects of the noxious fumes from the fuel oil and diesel and so on.

Sir, with those few words, I want to commend these Estimates to this Honourable Chamber and ask that they support it with the enthusiasm that it deserves.

Thank you very much, Sir.

SENATOR HON. Miss O. P. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, I do support these Estimates with enthusiasm and I wish to say too that they reveal judicious – by judicious I emphasize sensitive and far-sighted management but I wish to speak particularly about sports and the National Sports Council.

The programmes for 2000-2001 are particularly interesting and I wish to look especially at the plan to execute a national sports policy. I shall, from time to time, Sir, do the draft and I am quite prepared to make it a document of the House. Programmes will include

construction of pavilions, one at Black Bess, St. Peter, the other at Drax Hall. In fact, those are already being done, and at Warrens, Inch Marlow and Indian Ground pavilions will also be constructed. Hard courts are being completed at Grantley Adams, Lodge Hill, Sion Hill and Husbands. Bayville will be resurfaced and so will a hard court at Inch Marlow. The Whim in St. Peter should be completed in a few weeks with Padmore at St. Philip and St. Martin to begin soon. Work at the sporting complex at Thickets in St. Philip should also start. Playing fields in Ellerton, Haynesville, Wotton, Bayville and Sion Hill will also have lighting installed and the Council will also assist national associations with plans for hosting regional and international competitions, namely, hockey, judo, darts, basketball and volleyball. But very significant, Sir, is the hope of the National Sports Council to finalise the National Sports Policy.

Mr. President, it has been long established that Sports has not been a high priority for the public and private sector areas and understandably so since the citizens' health, education, jobs and of course, it follows then, industry, commerce and technology must take place in a developing country. The background of the policy draft states that sports in Barbados has traditionally been undertaken by voluntary associations and I would add, private organisations and schools, and the Government's role in the development of sports is confined to those carried out by the Ministry of Sports and the National Sports Council. It adds too, in the preamble that sports serve to promote, and I must emphasise that, healthy competition, goodwill, tolerance, discipline, understanding and the development of physical and moral qualities. It also provides conducive platform for integrating the various ethnic groups into a united nation as well as enhancing national prestige.

6.05 p.m.

Specifically, and I wish to stress this, sports has enormous beneficial effects upon the individual, society and the nation. Our nation, I think, is at the point where having achieved so many advances in education and other areas, we can look at sports in a different way. Because of the pattern in Barbados people's involvement in sports has changed, either they do nothing or they go to the gym or they walk early in the morning, but do enough people participate in sports? The rationale behind the national sports involvement in games is that because of the known health, social and economic benefits which can be derived from participating in sports, it can be deemed as important as any other activity or field of endeavour to the total development of the individual and the society. Regular involvement in sports and physical activity is fundamental to good health and wellness at all stages of life. At the end, sports can also play a major role in the economy and offers potential for economic development.

This, Mr. President, is the view of policy makers and those heavily involved in sports, but the question has to be asked, is this the feeling of the general public? My opinion is that in order for it to be successful, it must be embraced by the whole population. Sports can only be an industry, and a thriving sector if that is the general perspective. Therefore there must not only be a sports policy, but an awareness programme to sensitise people to what structure will be put in place and what mechanism used to support the policy. In other words, the people executing this policy must share their vision with the public in order to make it viable. People generally will have to accept, understand and believe that it can be income generating and provide career opportunities.

The draft goes on to talk about the strategies for obtaining the objectives. These are significant. Government will establish a secretariat within the Council to facilitate the work of the association. This is something that sporting organisations have been asking for a long time and it will go a long way to assist these organisations.

Then, Government will ensure that each primary and secondary school has at least one qualified Physical Education teacher. I have spoken about this before in this Honourable Chamber and I am pleased to see that this will be done, but again I think that there should not be an emphasis on one sport. The National Sports Council has the obligation to see that teachers do not focus on one particular sport. In addition, the National Sports Council needs to educate, advise and assist various sports organisations about their rights, broadcasts, and other media activities, copyrights, intellectual property to help in developing the sport, broadening the interest of the public and therefore helping with income earning. Furthermore, the Sports Council, can assist the organisations in forming, making business plans and helping with approaches to sponsors and seeing how they can form partnership with the needy.

Then, there is the question of funding. Where that is concerned, I think that more critical and detailed studies can be done about the national lottery, which many organisations feel would be beneficial. This I think too is crucial to performance. All employers, including the government and the private sector, must make provisions for national athletes to train for and participate in international competitions without any loss of earning, status or benefits. The provision must also be extended to administrators and officials on national duty. This, I think, would have to be done by legislation to see that it is enforced and that there are no ramifications. But Sir, this whole national policy must be a precursor to a specialist school for athletes. It will involve shift in thinking. In the beginning there may be only a limited number of sports that can be concentrated on where the quality and standards are high, but if we want to look at sports a little differently from how we have been regarding it and realising its possibilities for career opportunities, national prestige and so many other benefits, we will have to give it far more attention.

I am very pleased to see that there will be this sports policy. I congratulate the Ministry of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform and the National Sports Council on this important step, this visionary step, this necessary step. Then, not surprisingly, I wish to say a few words about education.

6.15 p.m.

First of all, I wish to assure Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard that more than ever before in the secondary schools – I know this from talking with former colleagues – they are concerned about ethics. I have said here in this Chamber something which I feel very strongly that education is not only a matter for intellect but for our character.

In the new thrust in curriculum reform, and I know Senator Forde will bear me out in this, deliberate consideration has been given to ethical and moral issues, and in the primary and secondary schools there are new modules dealing with critical thinking and conflict resolution. I hope that will go in some way to reassure the Honourable Senator that Government is aware of the need for greater emphasis on moral and spiritual development.

I have spoken before about EduTech, so I will only reiterate that I think that EduTech is an excellent project and one of the most important projects undertaken by this Government. It is vital if we are to continue to compete intellectually and globally, especially in areas where we are offering services.

Sir, I wish as far as I am able, to dispel certain myths that co-education is of recent vintage and that it has been a failure. I was fortunate enough to be Deputy Chairman of the National Commission on the Status of Women which was set up by a Barbados Labour Party Government in 1976 soon after it regained the Government. One of the areas we looked into was education. In fact, I did a great deal of research for it.

It is commonplace now that girl subjects were confined to the arts and the boys' schools were far better equipped. Expenditure on those boys' schools was much greater. From 1972 to 1977 of the Exhibitions and Scholarships that were won, 39 were won by the boys and three by the girls in natural sciences. That tells a tale.

In the older grammar schools, as they were so called, fortunately we all recognise today that they are all secondary schools, all playing a great role, the boys outnumbered the girls. There were more school places for them and in the examinations the boys sat more subjects than the girls.

Now, I also had what I considered the good fortune to be Principal of a school when coeducation was started at that school in 1979. Since the 1940's, we have had coeducation

in Government Secondary Schools starting with the Alleyne in 1947. Almost all the private schools of the 1950's were coeducational. They have produced many successful and brilliant men. I am stressing the men because I want to show that the boys can do as well as the girls, although they have also produced outstanding women, some of them sitting in this very Chamber.

Coeducation is healthy. It can work. It has worked and it is working. More of the coeducation schools are doing well than are not doing well but, Mr. President, some teachers need to change their methods because some males no longer see education as a vehicle to self-development and social advancement. These teachers need to devise a curriculum that caters not only for those who would pursue traditional careers but those who would be self-employers and entrepreneurs. It must also encourage, to a greater extent, their creativity and their inventive skills. Nowadays there are so many interactive games that boys need to have more activity in the classrooms.

We must also ensure that in planning the English syllabus books are chosen that boys would like. That is something we learnt early that girls would read boys' books, so to speak, but boys were not so interested in girls' books. When it comes to poetry, which is so essential, you will find that boys are not going to be interested in love sonics, but teachers can choose some which are vigorous and aggressive such as (dunsonics) and his conceits will also appeal to boys as well as girls.

It takes a great deal of work on the part of the teacher, but teachers have always had mixed ability classes and some subjects have always been the norm. Our concerns are more complex than biological development.

One has not only to look at methodology and if you do not look at that the boys become bored and you lose them; but the destruction theory should not be dwelt on too much, because girls too can be distracted. If the school system is based on a docile premise, then boredom will result. I stress that methodology must change drastically.

An important question has to be asked. Have the males in our society been sufficiently socialised to respect the development and academic success of their female counterparts? I think socialisation is very important. It is not only the teachers who need to be aware of the biological and psychological differences between boys and girls, and the differences in the areas of intellect, performance and social behaviour, but the children themselves, the boys and girls, need to be aware of these differences. Children should be helped to understand each other's needs in relation to gender differences and value each other's strengths, to develop mutual respect and to present themselves as dignified, confident individuals.

A well-known American psychologist is of the view that segregation at the high school level is artificial. I support that view. There are instances where segregation in the adolescent stage may be good for one or two students who cannot easily adapt, that as soon as their problems have been solved they should go back into the mainstream because it is most crucial for boys and girls to learn to live together, to play together, to work together and respect each other. What better place than to start in the school especially nowadays when in the school of microcosm and macrocosm where so much rests with teachers, so much is expected with the breakdown of the home, so much is expected of teachers and where children have to learn to live together, so that socialisation is most important.

Therefore, it is in these two areas that I feel that money allocated is being extremely well spent. I again wish to say that I support the Bill. Thank you, Mr. President.
6.25 p.m.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, I want to say from the outset that it is a privilege to speak in this debate. This is all about a book of Numbers which, if read, tells a beautiful story all on its own. My contribution this evening would be more qualitative to deal with what is in this book.

The goodly Senator Sir John Stanley Goddard referred to the Ernst and Young survey that was done. I was at that meeting the morning it was discussed and the survey did say that 57 percent indicated a lack of confidence in the economy but what the survey also went on to say is that 47 percent of these same companies anticipated an increase in profitability for their companies even if the range was only between five per cent and 20 per cent.

I am still trying to understand that because it escapes my limited understanding. I am trying to figure it out. I hope that what that is telling me is that they do not intend to take things lying down, which is a good sign. It gives me the hope that a large representation of the companies in Barbados are willing to do what is required to increase their profitability as expected by the Government and shown by the corporation tax under revenue in these Estimates.

I am sure, Sir, that Government, too, is and will be doing all it can to help. I hear cries for deductions in direct taxation and I believe that that is coming soon. I do not want to be prophetic in my pronouncement but I believe that is coming. I hope that these deductions will be incentive based rather than a rate adjustment or expense deduction. I say that because I believe that we need to curb our consumer spending capability in this island, especially with the cost of goods being lowered with the removal of the surtax at the beginning of April which has been referred to more than

once for the day. I know that the times ahead will employ all of the country's senses to the fullest extent. I know that the times ahead are going to be very complex, but I believe that in spite of all the complexity, a majority of my fellow Barbadians would prefer this present Government to be steering this ship than any other.

Sir, we are not a Government afraid to let the people of this country know what to expect. The Prime Minister of this country has been saying this to the business sector since 1994 when I was a member of the Barbados Manufacturers' Association and worked in manufacturing. I know that some of the sectors will suffer more than others, but I also believe that some will have great opportunities. I hold to the fact that if you are in a business and you cannot compete you ought to get out. You do not belong there. I believe that you should close it and move on.

I know that Barbadians are people who are very afraid of failing. They are ashamed to let people see them fail. Barbadians, in my opinion, are not great risk takers and we do not try to materialise a lot of our dreams. I am not saying that to advocate pandemonium in the business sector or in the economy of the island, but if you take a look at Americans — they might be a bad example but we can use them as an example — they would have a business, give it their best shot and if it fails they close that and move on to something else. They do not put their tail between their legs and go into non-existence. They go and try their hands at something else.

I find that Barbadians give up so easily and do not go to something else. They either do not do anything at all or they run and look to work for someone else. We had a good example here in Barbados of the barbecued pigtails. You had one person starting it and then you had a flood of people barbecuing pigtails. If it is a lack of creativity in our people I do not know.

Barbadians need to look around for opportunities and let failure stop being a word in their books. This Government has put many agencies in place to assist small and medium businesses in this island and I believe that as a people we need to work on our attitude. I believe that the attitude of the people of this country is a lot that is stopping them from getting ahead.

The other point I want to make regarding the lack of confidence in the society is that if a glass has a volume of liquid in it, all depending on how you look at the glass, is this glass half full or is this glass half empty? It all depends on how you look at the glass.

Under the area of taxes of goods and services it is interesting to note, and I really want to touch on this, that over \$18 million is collected under the hat of gambling in this country. We can understand that when a country is

collecting that much revenue you really do not expect it easily to give up on this activity. I might be what is termed a Christian but I am not a Christian with blinkers. Christians in this country might condemn gambling and gamblers, but I do not think a lot of them realise that some of the standard of living which they enjoy in this country is covered by money that is collected from gambling. They can only see one aspect of it and do not see it right through.

What I want to say this evening is that I know that we will always have gamblers with us. There are even some that do not gamble and say Lord, Lord, and I know they will not even see the Kingdom of Heaven because that is stated in the Bible.

What I want to speak on is the money that is collected from all of these lotteries, not by Government, but the lottery agencies themselves, which play these games and collect these monies.

I want to commend Olympio for the contribution that they are making to sports and other charitable agencies in this country even though I believe that that is just a tip of the iceberg. I do not really think that they give a whole lot of money to these agencies in these events. We had a game here not long ago, Sir, called the Mega 6, I believe they might still have it but it is called the Mega 6. Sir, I can tell you that Mega 6 game had odds of 1 million to 14 million for people who can work out probabilities. We do not even have one million people in Barbados and that is the reason why that game had to change because nobody was winning it for a long time. The odds were much too high. Sir, what I really want to get to is that I do not gamble.
6.35 p.m.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: I do not have to gamble because my God supplies my needs so I do not gamble and I do not take chances. If we are going to have lotteries, Sir, I would like to suggest to the Government to think of having a national lottery, to take the lottery out of the hands of persons who are profiting so much from the people of this country and run a national lottery. No one likes the fiasco that I heard about when I was a young girl. I am speaking about a properly run national lottery so that the money can now go to help the same people of this country probably the same ones who take the money when Friday comes, before they take it home to their families, go to the lottery machines. That, Sir, is what I have to say under gambling. It is a proposition that I would like to put to my Government.

Sir, the items under revenue in my mind speak of a Government that expects increased activity in most areas of the economy for this financial year. I can see no reason why

it should not happen. Sir, it is one thing to warn people but, in my opinion, it is another thing to drive fear in the hearts of people just to create confusion which, in my opinion, I think some people of this country are doing. This Government warns people of anything that is going to happen. We warn them in a sensible manner. I have to say that thank God this Government is, as the young people would say, level.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: This Government is level. We are not perfect but, in my opinion, this Government is level. I think that every sector of this Government has to pull its weight.

Sir, I have nothing against lawyers. I love them and most of them I know are my friends but I would like some of the successful private sector businessmen to try their hands at running a Government Ministry like Senator Goddard here. From the outside looking in everybody thinks it is easy. They think that they have all the answers but it is something else when you actually have to live in the house, so to speak. My father always used to say to me as a young girl, come visit and come live with are two completely different things and I know, Sir, since I have had to manage more than one, that it is difficult managing a company that is not as extensive as a Ministry. Maybe some of them would be able to manage some of these Ministries; maybe some them would be able to bring in revenue to the Ministry like Senator Goddard has found a way to increase his revenue by \$4 million. Maybe then they will be able to bring revenue to the Government and find business ways of raising money for Government.

Mr. President, I want to make one small point under the Ministry of Home Affairs and it is under the collection of fees for marriage licences, I noticed that it has been reduced, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: Sir, I notice small things. Sir, I hope that this reduction is because we have less visitors coming to our island to get married or, Sir, that the licence fees to locals will be reduced. I now understand why we have so many common-law marriages. Even to apply for the licence is costly for some of these poor people.

I move on now, Sir, to the expenditure side of these Estimates. Sir, I want to make my first stop on the Cabinet Office. I have a fellow Senator who, today, in his contribution spoke about the salaries of the public sector personnel. Sir, I am going to go a little bit further than that and maybe it will tie in to helping members of the private sector run for office, which I alluded to earlier. It is very very seldom that I do not agree with the Prime Minister but I am

an individual and I have my own mind and I want to say, Sir, that I believe that our Members of Cabinet and our Parliamentary Secretaries need to be better paid. I am going to explain why I say this, Sir. I want to see if I can give some help to my Parliamentary colleagues who are Government Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries today in trying to change the mind of the Prime Minister.

Sir, it is true that they are servants of the people but to me they are more than that. Sir, I think that we carry around a thought as people that money is bad and that if a thing is judged good you must value it less in terms of money. For example, we use the terminology that the best things in life are free so society at large, Sir, in my opinion, thinks this way. For example, Sir, school teachers make a pittance and our beauticians make a fortune.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Sir, on a point of order. I believe it is unreasonable for the Senator to impute that a sector which ranges from one to almost three thousand all make these abundances that she speaks of. I think she is misleading this Chamber and I think she should recall those words.

Mr. PRESIDENT: No point of order. Please proceed Senator Alleyne.
6.45 p.m.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: Thank you, Sir.

I know when I go to the beautician how much I pay and I can calculate.

Our church leaders have to beg for money while we pay hundreds of dollars for entertainment. Our Ministers of Government in my opinion, Sir, make little compared to the CEOs of private companies. Just think about it, everything on which we place a high intrinsic value, we think must come cheap. Persons who chose the highest callings, we think should get the lowest pay and I think we need to change our thinking.

Our Ministers, Sir, are expected to perform 24 hours a day, literally seven days a week, effectively and efficiently manage a Ministry, be always well-dressed and looking presentable both in transportation and accommodation, continue to look after their families, put money aside in case they get sick. Do you really tell me, Sir, that they do not deserve more? I think so.

I really believe that they deserve more and I think, Sir, that we need to take some of that Corporation tax that we are getting from the business sector and pay our Ministers and our Parliamentary Secretaries a little better.

I move now, Sir, to commerce, consumer affairs and business development, a Ministry in which I think this country will rest heavily in this new world order. We have the Fair Trading Commission which was laid in Parliament I believe it was last week, or week before and I think that this will not only impose propriety within the island, but it is also to extract integrity from those beyond our shores.

Sometimes, Sir, I wonder why people's first reaction to change is always such fear and I wonder, Sir, now is the WTO really all about the overpowerment by those who are better at making it than others or it is really to:

1. Bring countries up to a greater level of operation and opportunity and
2. To ensure that consumers get the best.

I believe that free trade agreement, though complex, I believe, Sir, that it will be most beneficial to countries. I think that this opening up the market, Sir, has caused Governments of countries to move away from their everyday way of running countries and to realise that it is their right to protect the interest of their people by putting legislation in place such as we have done here in this country in the Fair Trading Commission. I would like to commend the Ministry and the Government on this piece of legislation. It is a very important and good piece of legislation.

I know, Sir, that we also need to further put other regulatory framework pieces of legislation in place prior to the opening up of the markets. I believe, and I am only speaking from a layman's point of view, that we need to put legislation that would say to the world, if you are coming to my country, this is what I expect of you. And I believe that we can put that sort of legislation in place.

I believe, Sir, that we must control our own destiny and I do not believe that throwing our hands in the air will help. I also know, or I am sure this Government knows that there are certain areas of inputs that we need to look into. We know that we need to look at reducing our indirect taxation in some areas but through it all, the important thing, as far as I am concerned, is that we know and I will now give you another thing that I got as I grew up. My mother always used to say to me that the hardest thing is to know and when you know, you work to suit and I believe that that is what this Government is doing. We know what is coming and we are working to suit that.

I now want to speak, Sir, on the social reform. I know you know I have to touch on this Ministry. As far as I am concerned this is a Ministry of the heart and I sincerely want

to again commend this Government and this Ministry on such a revolutionary move. The Barbados Labour Party as far as I am concerned has always tried to make life better for all the people of this country and the evolution of a country, Sir, is measured by how well it treats its least among themselves. And this Government thinks so highly of this that it has created its own Ministry to deal with its people.

It is a Ministry, Sir, which is providing for the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual needs of its people. It is not about robbing them of their dignity, Sir. It is about showing them how to exercise their individual creativity and single-minded ingenuity to bring them to the realisation that they can provide for themselves.

This Ministry, Sir, as far as I am concerned is all about enlarging people. We cannot make everyone equal, but we can give everyone the assurance of basic survival with dignity which in my opinion is the right of all human beings whether they contribute or not. Survival with dignity, Sir, is one of the basic rights of life and this Government's chief aim and goal is for the survival of all in this society. It is about the providing of a good life for all its people through this Ministry and this is why I believe that this Government has no need for secrecy. It has no need for quick dealings and under the table manoeuvring.

This is a Government in my opinion which is open to scrutiny to all. This Government in my opinion, Sir, is not about lying or shading or verbal or mental manipulation or any twisting of the truth. In my opinion this is a Government that wants to build a society that can trust a Government and I think that the Government is starting to do this with itself.

I would sincerely like to thank the Ministry of Social Transformation for all the work that it has done for me, the people of the constituency of St. John. They have put in street lights. It has added water toilets. It has given people loans to have work...

Aside.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: ...in St. John and I would like to thank the Ministry of Social Transformation and along with thanking this Ministry, Sir, I would like to wish it all of God's blessings, Sir.
6.55 p.m.

Under the Head of Agriculture I have two points I would like to make. Not long ago I was distressed at hearing two pieces of news. The first piece of news I heard was that we do not have enough land in Barbados to increase our sugar cane production. I am speaking as a layman. I really do not know the ins and outs about agriculture other than when

I suck sugar cane it is sweet. That is all I know, but I can tell you when I go to St. John I can see vast areas of land lying idle. I understand that some of this land was sold under special conditions. The conditions obviously did not come about, Sir, and these lands are now lying idle, so I do not understand how you can say on the one hand that you don't have enough land for agriculture when I can see acres and acres of land lying idle in St. John. It is just telling me either that the owners of these lands do not have the interest of Barbados at heart, or if that is not the reason, I would like to know the reasons why these lands are lying idle, because it cannot only contribute to the economy of Barbados, it can also help some of the people of St. John to find employment.

The second point is that I also heard another gentleman with the piece of news that nobody is interested in picking cotton. Sir, I would really like to introduce that Government to the office of the Attorney General who is in charge of the prison. We have over 700 men and about 45 women in there doing nothing. Why can't they go and pick cotton?

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: They started? Oh good, great, because I could not understand how you can say you do not have people to pick cotton, because in my opinion if you cannot do the time, do not do the crime, so whatever you are asked to do when you are doing the time should be done. I also feel that these men that we have in prison ... I went up there up to last week. Thank God I just visit, I do not go to stay. I do not have family either. I go to minister to groups. They are up there, they are just hanging about. I believe that you can not only use them to pick cotton but you can also use them to probably help load cane. You might not be able to trust them with the collins to cut canes, but I do not see why they cannot help load cane. There are other things that they can help with in this society.

It was also interesting to read under this Ministry that it was the objective of rural development to increase the output of agricultural products in rural areas. I can tell you, Sir, that we have many rural youth who are unemployed. They have not been able to be captured in the construction boom and I really believe that the Ministry of Agriculture in its going around setting up projects, can capture a lot of these women in the downstream activities of agriculture. I am sure that there is something they can find to do that would help to provide for themselves and their children. I know, Sir, that praedial larceny and stray dogs and all of these things are sometimes a deterrent to agriculture, and perhaps we just need to look at all of these things in this Ministry. I think, Sir, too that we need to once again clean up our market places and make them pleasant to shopping, even as pleasant as going in to the supermarket, even though you may not have the air conditioning; but we need to begin to take pride in what we are doing in order to achieve what we need to in this country.

I now move to education. It is my considered opinion that education is the most important Ministry in any Government and the reason I say that is because the Ministry holds the future of the country in its hands. It deals with our young people. Today I am not going to speak about education *per se*, Sir. I more want to speak to the revenue collection and the collection of fees at our secondary schools in this island. I know, Sir, – I do not need to be reminded by my fellow colleagues in here – that it is not presently the policy of this Government to introduce the payment of school fees, but I am still going to apply my thoughts on this matter.

Sir, I believe that the quality of life financially of Barbadians, especially the middle-class Barbadians of this country has far improved over what existed when free education was introduced. You can look around at the heights and the terraces. You have houses that only have three persons living in them, the mother, the father and the child, and when they are in the front, they have to shut up the front because they cannot hear what is going on. The houses are humongous. You also have to look, Sir, at the type of motor cars on our roads today. I believe that we now have a very small percentage of truly disadvantaged people in our society today. These are even some who claim that they do not have money. There are some who come to the school to claim that they do not even have money to pay for the children's school books, but you should see the amount of gold that they are dripping in and the brand name clothes and the fancy shoes, and you should see the car they turn up in. You can even see, Sir, some that live in the National Housing Corporation houses and pay a small rent, but go inside and look at the appliances in their house; look at the car that is parked outside the door. So I really believe, Sir, that when free education was introduced there were many needy and struggling families in this society. As a matter of fact, I thought those were the very ones who struggled to educate this middle class we have today and I believe that free education was a blessing to many; but I believe it has served its purpose and many Barbadians were thankful for it but today, Sir, I know that many Barbadian families can afford to pay for their children at secondary schools.

Aside.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: I am not saying that all can. I say many. Many can afford to pay for their children at secondary schools.

I am not touching schools, and I am not touching tertiary education. I am talking about secondary schools. I am also telling you further the reason I think we should start collecting school fees at secondary schools. We have a class of child today in secondary school who has no appreciation for anything, no value whatsoever for anything. I am not

saying all are that way, Sir, and I am not saying it is only at the newer secondary schools, but at the older secondary schools too. We have children who destroy everything that they can touch. I am a Chairman of a secondary school. I am speaking from experience, from what I know. They destroy desks. They destroy the chairs. They pull the electrical fittings out of the walls. They mash up the doors, they smash the windows and the fences. The amount of money that is spent in repairing and replacing these things is large and so, Sir, that is why I strongly believe that maybe Government can look at trying to help subsidise this large budget, the second largest expenditure in Government, by trying to look at introducing school fees again in secondary schools.

Sir, I just want to touch a little bit on energy. I know Senator Barker spoke at length on energy this evening. I want to talk a little bit about the company I manage which is the Barbados National Terminal. I want to speak to the matter which has been mentioned both in the Lower House and the Upper House about the \$35 million which has not been paid in excise tax by the Barbados National Terminal. 7.05 p.m.

I want to say from the outset that that \$35 million is in the pocket of the consumers of this country who put gasoline in their motorcars. I do not have it in a bank account. I do not have it put away or resting anywhere. I have not refused to pay the Comptroller of Customs. I have met with the Prime Minister. We have spoken about the matter at length and we have decided that it will be paid in monthly instalments.

What has happened, Sir, as Senator Barker has stated, is that between February 1998 and March, this month, it is only this month that the price has increased again. Despite the high price for the cost of the product to come into this island and also for the reduction which we had in taxation, the consumers of gasoline and diesel in this country are only paying 5¢ more a litre. Sir, I can tell you that the cost of the product rose way over 5¢ a litre.

What has happened, Sir, is that it was never the expectation, I do not even think it was the expectation worldwide, that the cost of oil would have increased to the extent to which it increased. I really do not think that was anticipated. When I went to the Government for an increase in the price, and we anticipated a certain amount, by the time it went through the bureaucracy of Government, which everybody in here well knows about, by the time it went from one Ministry to the other Ministry, to Cabinet and from Cabinet back to another Ministry and back to me, the price had knocked out completely what we had asked for so, therefore, during the whole of last year the Terminal was selling the product to the wholesalers lower than what it was costing us to buy it. Therefore, I had to take what was allotted to me to operate the Terminal to subsidize the cost of the product to the wholesalers.

Therefore, then as the Manager, I had to make a decision. I had to make sure that this country received its product. I had to ensure that the Light & Power Co. got its fuel oil so that we could have electricity. I had to make sure that gasoline was at the gasoline station. I had to make sure that diesel was available at the gasoline stations and as well to the manufacturers of this country.

When the product came to Barbados, I made sure that I paid for the product if not I could not get it. I made sure I took the money and paid to get it off the ship and I paid to get it out to the public. Therefore, the one person I had to lean on was the Comptroller of Customs and I did that to the best of my judgment. Now that the price is coming down, I am sure that in two to three months I should be able to pay the Comptroller of Customs the \$20 million which I now owe them.

This company, the Barbados National Terminal, was not any company that was set up in a whole lot of secrecy. This company started with \$1 000. The company does not have an overdraft at the bank, Sir, because we did not see the need for an overdraft.

I am trying to operate this company to the best of my knowledge, Sir. I am not looking to be dishonest to any other agency within this island. That is what has caused the company to be indebted to the Comptroller of Customs in the amount of money it is indebted to. So, Sir, I have tried in my small way, as I have stated at the beginning, to qualify a bit of what I have seen in this document as well as to put some of my personal inputs into my contribution this evening.

I wholeheartedly support these Estimates which have been laid in these Chambers. I sincerely wish this Government of Barbados continued success in its tenure for the many more years to come. Thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended until 10.00 o'clock tomorrow morning.

I would like to inform Senators that we must be here promptly at 10.00 a.m. We have two minutes to convene the meeting or else the meeting will have to be adjourned. It is a suspension. The meeting is not being adjourned.

Arrangements have also been made for dinner to be served this evening.

The question that the sitting be suspended until 10.00 o'clock on Tuesday, March 28, 2000 was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the sitting accordingly.
7.10 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This sitting is resumed.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, it is for me an occasion where I take tremendous comfort when going through these Estimates that, indeed, Government recognises clearly that a set of estimates must not just be numbers to which people speak in esoteric terms but it must address the needs of our people.

This set of Estimates, to my mind, speaks to the fact that the Government continues to understand how it has to reposition Barbados, how it has to transform our economy as it continues on that path which it set itself since 1994. It also, of course, speaks to the wisdom and the foresight of this administration in recognising that things are changing nationally and internationally and there are a lot of external changes that are impacting on Barbados, and that we have a responsibility as a country as well as the Government has a responsibility to reposition Barbados to be able to meet those challenges.

One must ask, however, in all fairness, what has been Government's performance, particularly over the last year. Despite all we would have heard yesterday from Senator Mascoll in his phrase of 'turbulence', that was the reality. There was indeed turbulence during 1999 but when you have difficulty, the thing that sets one manager apart from another is how he or she responds to challenges. That was the essence of what we experienced last year.

Yes, there were challenges. There was turbulence. There were many difficulties that the Government faced; but it was the way the Government went about responding to those difficulties and challenges, to my mind, that it should be incumbent on all of us to give credit to the Government for the job it did, particularly during those difficult months of 1999.

We, of course, during that period, were still able to maintain and sustain growth in the economy, and this can only be attributed to sound management and the way the country was managed, and to Government taking the kind of corrective actions that were necessary in order for us to continue on the path of growth.

Senator Mascoll yesterday sought to level a number of charges reflecting on Government's performance in the year 1999. He accused Government of not being able to earn foreign exchange during that period. Senator Barker, in his rather eloquent presentation, was able to explain clearly and provide the facts to Senator Mascoll which one assumes he did not have when he first came into the Chamber.

One cannot accuse a Government of the country of being unable to earn foreign exchange in a fashion that would satisfy Senator Mascoll when, as Senator Barker explained, a year ago at the end of March, 1999 our foreign reserves stood at \$551 million. On March 23rd this year, 2000, they stood at \$743.88 million. I know that the nature of politics being as it is, it sometimes either encourages us not to or might even preclude us from giving credit where credit is due. I, however, believe that rather than misrepresent a situation we should sometimes say nothing. I believe that that kind of performance in a year when there was tremendous difficulty and where Government had to be very careful and very prudent and we have been able to earn that level of foreign exchange nonetheless redounds to the credit of Government.

I also want to underscore the point that in that period we maintained a relatively low level of inflation, and I believe that that in part has to do with the level of maturity that was shown and observed with our social partnership. I am certain that Senator Sir John would be happy to hear me say that. I believe that that had a lot to do with our stability in this country and we ought to congratulate all the social partners for the hard work they have been doing because it continues to bear fruit. We have maintained tremendous stability in this country and the unions and the private sector and Government all should be congratulated for the role they have played.

Most of us, almost all of us, have spoken to Government's being able to reduce unemployment to the lowest level for many years. At one point in time I wondered whether I would have been alive to see unemployment figures under 10 per cent, in single digits. That has been the case and again it speaks to the fact that our Prime Minister, when he took over the leadership of the country focused on the right things. He said the number one job was jobs and I believe that he has reached the stage now where he can begin to look at, strengthen and reposition other parts of the economy, but we have to continue to reduce unemployment further and more importantly, sustain the level of employment that we have as well.

Sometimes it is difficult for us as a people to give credit to ourselves. That is the reality of life. But there are people who look at other people's contributions and comment on them one way or another. We cannot overlook the comments made by reputable international institutions that have praised this Government for the way it has run its affairs.

On the one hand, you have the IADB commenting positively, but those institutions apart... I was extremely pleased yesterday that our own Senator Sir John congratulated the Government for the prudent way it has run

the affairs of this country. In other words, we do not need the IADB to tell us. We have people like Sir John who has sound judgment, is of sound mind and certainly not sound asleep to be able to comment and give credit where it is due.

Senator Mascoll spoke also about the difficulties that companies like PRT and CDS have experienced. In the case of PRT, I believe it is well known that a lot of the work that they have been doing, particularly in the new year period leading up to the end of 1999, had to do with millennium work for companies, making those companies millennium compliant. For PRT, it was a niche area, not its real core business but it was a niche area at the time and hence, coming on to that period where the millennium would have become an issue if companies had not become compliant, of course, they would have had to ramp up and so on. Do you think that it is surprising that it is just by chance that as soon as we passed that millennium hurdle you saw the downsizing at PRT? We also heard quite recently, I believe, it might have been in yesterday's or the day before newspaper where PRT are saying: we are here to stay. Obviously, PRT will go back and reposition itself because it will obviously be dependent on its core business but there will be other niches that will come about where they will be able to ramp up again. When you speak to these things one has to be complete, fair and honest.

10.10 a.m.

Some years ago we witnessed the demise of Intel. Intel was a company that was employing more people at one point in time than PRT ever did and we saw that from a strategic point of view, Intel had to make a decision and it was just unfortunate, to my mind, that at the time that Intel was making that rather critical decision, we had a former Prime Minister who helped them to make the decision. If Senator Mascoll does not know, Mr. President, they had an operation in Barbados, one in Phoenix, Arizona, one in Manila and also one in San Juan, Puerto Rico and technology was improving, as Senator Bolden would know, and they had to make a decision about whether the Barbados' operation would have been upgraded, to the extent that they could close down another facility as opposed to the Barbados facility. That was a business decision. However, as I have said, they probably were nudged into taking the final decision that the Barbados operation should close. I, as a Barbadian, was extremely sad to see Intel closed because Intel utilized the highest technical skills of our people.

I too was very pleased to see a company like PRT could come to Barbados and use those technical skills of our people. I do not think that we should seek to gloat over the fact that a company might be going through some difficulty, but you have to understand that any company will try to reposition itself to be able to operate in the most efficient manner that it can.

However, there is good news, Mr. President, because as you would be well aware, technology is changing, new services are coming on board every day and the fusion of computers and telecommunication and things like process engineering are all making new and different services possible for Barbados.

I am pleased, Mr. President, to report to this Chamber that presently in Barbados we have three relatively new companies which are referred to as call centres and, to my mind, it is going to be one of the fastest growing areas in the area of the utilisation of computers and telecommunication technology. Those three companies are employing at present in excess of 200 persons. There is also another company that has made a decision to come here between July and August. On the one hand, yes, we would have seen the nature of the work that Intel was doing, became such that it was not cost effective in some areas for them to continue to operate in Barbados. Also one must remember that the nature of the work that CDS was doing was one where the development of technology was also impacting on it, hence, you would find that CDS would have had to down size and begin to look for new niches and new areas. As I have said, again, the call centres now are a reality. I believe that once we continue to have that public sector/private sector partnership we will be able to continue to develop things like call centres in Barbados because, of course, Mr. President, needless to say, when it comes to things like telecommunications and so on, those operations require an accommodation in terms of cost to be able to make them possible. The mere fact that they are coming here should signal to all of us and explain to all of us that those aspects are no longer a problem and those operators recognise that we have on top of that, the very critical component of highly skilled and motivated people because, Mr. President, one of the critical aspects of the call centres operation is that you require highly skilled and competent persons, hence Barbadians.

You will probably find that in some of the call centres in Barbados you will have in-bound call centres and out-bound call centres. In the case of the in-bound call centres they will be dealing with things like technical assistance and customer service and as you know, in the United States and elsewhere these days customer service is a very critical component, not only there, but let me say, here as well. Hence, call centres play a pivotal role in providing the kind of customer service that companies would want in selling their products and services. Things like the fulfilment of purchases, information requests, complaints, billing information, all these things would be facilitated via call centres and these are referred to as the in-bound call centres.

In the case of out bound call centres, they will in essence, be facilitating telemarketing type operations and will be involved in market research, surveys, providing statistical data for companies and so on as well. That is a new area that we are developing and we need to ensure that when more individuals come to Barbados and set up those

kinds of operations that we have trained people ready to take up the jobs that will be available at the time. My biggest fear would be that we do not have people ready in the numbers that would be required because, Mr. President, some of these call centres employ hundreds of individuals hence, great possibilities for Barbados.

Another point that Senator Mascoll spoke to, has to do with him saying that Government is sending the wrong signal or for that matter that there may be something structural, wrong with the economy hence the reason for the Government seeking at this stage to borrow US\$100 million. Mr. President, if there is one thing you will never be able to accuse this Government of is not being proactive. I believe that we have vivid in our mind still the clear example of what can happen to you if you just sit on your laurels and do nothing. As they say: *Rome burns, while Nero fiddles*. You will never, Mr. President, be able to accuse this Government of that.

Senator Mascoll admitted in here yesterday that come April 1st we have to remove restrictions from a number of things like agricultural products, manufacturing and so on. What he did not say to you is this: those countries that addressed the whole question of WTO and the removal of licences and restrictions, those countries that did not make the effort to deal with the likely impact of foreign exchange all paid a heavy heavy price – all of them.
10.20 a.m.

I believe it would be irresponsible of this administration, recognising what is coming down the pipe line from April 1, to have sat down and said, “we are going to wait and see.” If you know by removing those restrictions, or that those critical areas are going to put pressure on your imports, what do you do? Do you wait until you have a problem then to deal with it?

I want to commend the Prime Minister, Mr. President, for being pro-active enough to recognise that what we have to do is go now...

Asides.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, can you image Senator Mascoll? Let us assume for one second that the Prime Minister took the complete opposite position, recognise that there might be a run on foreign exchange after a period of time, then goes and seeks funding through a loan after it happened? I could image Senator Mascoll saying, “here was a country at the time with a good credit rating, with all the international financials commenting favourably on it, not going then, but going after.” You cannot have it both ways. I do not expect him, of course, to make that point but I will make it, hence the reason for the Government going now. It's very favourable credit rating allows the country to be able to attract loans at more favourable rates of interest.

What is more sensible than to do that, rather than to assume that there is some sinister motive on the part of Government? The Government is demonstrating prudence. The administration understands what it has to do and I believe in a quiet moment of reflection, Senator Mascoll will also agree.

Mr. President, I have to move on. The next area I really want to look at is that of social transformation. I believe that as a people, we all have to develop together. The Prime Minister has said time and time again, on every occasion that he has had the opportunity to do so, that no one will be left behind.

In the Estimates you will see, Mr. President, provision being made for some \$69.6 million going to the Ministry of Social Transformation, obviously, to enable it to continue the process and programme of eradication of poverty. What is very gratifying is that in this coming year, you are going to find a new set of initiatives that are going to be pursued by the Ministry in order to make the lives of our people more comfortable.

The Ministry is also focussing on human resource development, and I can speak, Mr. President, to the Barbados Vocational Training Board, and I will come to that a little later, but the Ministry of Social Transformation along with the Barbados Vocational Training Board will be working on a special project where we are going to be upgrading the community centres and transforming community centres into resource centres.

I said, Mr. President, that we cannot leave anyone behind. We believe that in the new technological environment we are going to face and relatively soon, is where everybody must have at least the minimum capacity to be able to deal with the technology at some lower level and of course there will be other persons, like your humble servant, Sir, who can deal with it at a higher level. But Government has a responsibility to ensure now that we take that kind of training into the communities. Hence, as I said, both the Training Board and the Ministry of Social Transformation will be working together to assist in making this possible in terms of having these facilities transformed into resource centres.

The Ministry of Social Transformation is also developing a policy framework that will guide its operations, and that will be coming on stream shortly. But more importantly, Mr. President, it has already established good working relationships with the NGOs, the non-governmental organisations in Barbados and the CDOs, the community-based organisations in particular in a way that allows that Ministry to be able to target those people who need that kind of assistance in a better way.

Because remember, it is the community-based organisations that better understand what assistance is needed and hence it made sense for the Ministry of Social Transformation to begin to network and to embrace fully the NGOs and the CDOs into its way of operating. And quite frankly already it has had a very positive effect on the provision of services as well. The Ministry is also working assiduously to assist a lot of the CDOs and NGOs in having proper accommodation and already the Ministry is facilitating and housing them temporarily but permanent accommodation for these NGOs is being considered. The Ministry is also developing a policy on aging. This is very much in keeping with Government's commitment during the Montreal meeting of the International Federation on Aging. The infrastructure for caring for the aged and the elderly in Barbados is not very well developed at the moment.
10.30 a.m.

I believe it is well known that we are becoming an aging society and to correct the difficulties that exist at present will require tremendous resources, but at least the Ministry itself is looking in a very positive way at the whole question as to how we deal with aging in Barbados.

I do not want to deal with the whole question of gender issues because I believe that you probably will find some other persons on this Side will speak to it, except just simply to say that the Ministry of Social Transformation has decided to replace the Bureau of Women's Affairs with a Gender Bureau. We all recognise that there are issues that are not just women's issues but there are issues that affect men and women hence it makes sense to be talking about a Gender Bureau and not a Women's Bureau. That is not to say that women's issues do not take an important place because I believe that they do.

On the question of the disabled, again the Ministry continues to focus on that too. Again, I have to be honest to this Honourable Chamber. The way we have treated the disabled over the years has been less than satisfactory. It really has been. On this occasion the Estimates do reflect new and increased allocations to private and voluntary groups which are better able to support the Ministry in bringing quicker services to those in need of assistance. Of course, the two main critical areas still remain housing and transportation.

I alluded to the fact that they are going to be turning the community centres into resource centres and some \$340 000 are included in the Budget for the Vocational Training Board to assist with that project. We believe that when you move towards ensuring that community centres now become resource centres with proper facilities and so on, and that the appropriate resources are given, you will find that the centres will be transformed in a way that there would be even a further reduction in unemployment,

because one of the things that the Ministry will be placing great emphasis on is the whole question of providing new skills to people. You will find that there would be an increase in micro-entrepreneurial activity, particularly among low income groups. It will also provide an opportunity for us to begin to kindle the real creative talents of people within our communities. Senator Mascoll will be happy to hear me say that one of the positive aspects and outcomes will also be the reduction in crime and violence and so on within our communities.

All in all, you will find that out of the exercise there will be greater cohesion within the communities themselves. There are also plans to merge the Poverty Alleviation Bureau with the Community Development Department for the two of them to be able to fuse their investigative capacity in terms of targeting and getting greater information about communities.

There are a number of other issues. I just want, before I leave the Ministry of Social Transformation, to say that one of the initiatives that the Ministry is embarking upon is that of establishing halls of fame, walks of fame and walls of fame. With these three approaches to identifying and recognising the contribution of people at the community level, to my mind, it will go a long way in really saying thanks to those people in our communities who have done so much over the years and whose contributions continue to go unnoticed. I really want to personally congratulate the Ministry for moving in that direction. I think it is something of which we will all feel very proud.

In the remaining minutes due to me, I have to split them between two very important areas: the Training Board, and I would like to deal briefly with telecommunications if I can.

With respect to the Barbados Vocational Training Board for which I have some responsibility as Chairman, let me say that I continue to be pleased with the way Government has responded to the Barbados Vocational Training Board over the years. When I took over the Board, the amount of money allocated by Government, for example in 1996, was \$3.35 million. Today Government is committing \$7.199 million in capital and recurrent. That has happened without fanfare but it speaks to the fact that Government is committed to human resource development in this country. We believe that every single person who wants to have a skill should be allowed to have that skill. We believe so and Government has not only said it as words, it has translated it into dollars. You are talking, Mr. President, of an increase from \$3.35 million to \$7.199 million in that period between 1995-1996 and these Estimates to which we all speak.

Between 1995-1996, the Training Board in total trained some 537 persons in the Skills Training Programme and the

Apprenticeship Programme which were the two basic Programmes that we pursued before we went into things like the evening programme to which I will speak. However, in the coming financial year, it is our expectation that we will be training some 1,972 persons. I have been able to see it move from 537 to the stage where we are talking about 1,972 persons being trained in one year. I am talking about bus fare and lunch money. In that period of time we also increased the stipend from \$50 to \$75.

One of the points I would like to highlight is the fact that when I assumed the chairmanship of the Board, I felt that one of the things that we should do up front was to look at the whole question of the quality of the trainee at the end of that period of training and to come up with mechanisms and ways to impart that training in a way that would make him or her a more efficient person at the end of the day.
10.40 a.m.

At that point in time what they had basically was, you built something, you knocked it down. However, my feeling is that if you are going to ask people to go out and function on construction sites within the building industry, what you need to do is to create a real live environment for them so to do, hence, of course, the fact that we embarked on the building of homes and so on.

We have completed a house at Eden Lodge. We are at the stage where we are close to the completion of a second. The important thing about that is that it allowed trainees to understand what is involved as a total fit in the construction industry. No longer being trained in silos, hence, of course, you probably would have heard, Mr. President, that even before some of the trainees had passed through the Training Board, people were there waiting for them because they can go and point to things that they built.

Mr. President, we are not only speaking about the houses at Eden Lodge. I do not have time to go through these, but even the Erdiston Annex was done through the Barbados Vocational Training Board, wonderful work for anyone to see.

At present we also have ongoing the refurbishment of our building in Culloden Road and that is being done with the assistance of the trainees as well. The point is, of course, that wherever possible, we are trying to make sure that there are live projects that are used to develop and train our young people.

Mr. President, the one other aspect of the Training Board I would like to speak toward has to do with the fact that I believe we can no longer see the provision of training through the Skills Training Programme being done in run-down facilities and in the back of some building or whatever. I think those days are long gone.

I am glad to see that over the last year or two we were able, with the assistance of Government, to improve and upgrade a number of those facilities, St. Luke's and so on. There are a number of them that have been upgraded.

I also believe that just as we have a multi-purpose complex at the C. Lomer Alleyne Centre in Christ Church, we need to have two others in Barbados. Let me say that a lot of developmental work has already been done on the construction of a second such facility in St. George. I really do hope that becomes a reality shortly, or as soon as Government is able to assist.

St. George is well positioned, arterially, to support a lot of other contiguous parishes and so on. I believe what we can do as well is to be able to offer a wider variety of training courses at one site. We have identified the land. As I said, I am hoping that will become a reality shortly.

Mr. President, I know I only have just a few minutes but I really want to speak of an area that I have had more than passing knowledge of. It is an area that I have been involved in for over three decades. It is the area of telecommunications. Government, as you know, is seeking to reform the telecommunications sector and this, quite naturally, will have to be consistent with the coming together, for example, of the national and international entities. We have heard a lot about the ongoing discussions and the merger of CW/BET and CW/Bartel.

Government's intention is to ensure that whatever policy we adopt at the end of the day, it certainly satisfies the consumer in this particular dynamic and critical sector. The role that telecommunications have played over the years is one that sometimes we take for granted, but it certainly is inextricably interwoven with the development of our country, hence the reason why Government is paying the attention and taking the time necessary to ensure that it gets this one correct.

There are a number of things, of course, that Government will have to take into account as it moves forward because we have heard about things like the impact of the reduction in things like the accounting rates, and it is a reality because at the beginning of this year, again, the international carriers have further reduced their accounting rates in a really significant way as well.

The introduction of competition within the local cellular operations is another issue. Government commitment through the WTO and its impact on the telecom industry and the opening up of our market to competition remains the key and the critical challenges. Flowing from that, for example, when we talk about competition in cellular, there are issues

like spectro management that become of critical importance, and how we utilise our radio spectrum in which there will be a heavy demand for the utilisation of that spectrum; but it is limited. You will find that it is an area where tremendous attention must be given if we are to make the whole thing meaningful.

There are things like numbering plans, number of portabilities and so on because you will know, Mr. President, these are the days when you have one phone, a cellular phone or whatever, and you have the ability now to carry it wherever you go in the world hence the concept of portability without having to change your number. That has implications. That calls for administration. It calls for guidelines and so on because with respect to portability, when there is full competition you can move that number from carrier to carrier, but there are costs and administration involved in that as well.

The question of rate re-balancing and the structuring of the subsidies, that is something that we speak to from time to time. I have to be honest with this Chamber. It is a real problem. There is no doubt about it that international revenue continues to subsidise and support the local domestic rates. That is the reality. At the end of the day, we have to ensure that we provide a service that is cost effective and one that will support business activity as well.
10.50 a.m.

Everybody, particularly the business community, is saying that they need cheaper rates but, at the same time, as a people in Barbados we are saying that we do not want to pay anything more for domestic calls. We know, for example, that there is much discussion on the whole question of going towards a system of measured rates. People are saying that we are a society accustomed to using the phone as long as we want. Let me say, Mr. President, all of that is true, but think of it. You pick up a phone to dial someone and you hear, 'I am sorry. All circuits are busy'. Or you do not get a dial tone. Hence, Mr. President, in order for you when you pick up your phone to be able to get instant connectivity, it means that the network has to continue to be upgraded as you go along, depending on usage and, obviously, the carriers make sure they offer the best possible grade of service. Whenever you upgrade your network, in order to support someone who may be talking for 3 or 5 hours. It is now the only utility that you do not pay in terms of measured rates. The jury, of course, is out as to how we move forward but, remember, the point is that if you want a reduction on the international side which continues to support the national, then there would have to be some form of give and take, or one would have to set the local rates at a level that allows the company to be able to operate profitably and at the same time continue to improve and upgrade its network. That is the reality of it.

There are, of course, other issues like the deregulation of customer premises equipment where you can go out and buy your own PBX or your own telephone or whatever. Those are things that I would not be able to go into but those are key and critical areas for discussion and agreement.

I spoke of the fact that there is the whole question of number portability and global roaming, and I just want to underscore that we need an independent regulatory body to deal with that. Before I close, let me say that there is one other issue that again will require consideration and that is the development of an Internet policy. Let me explain to the Honourable Chamber.

You would have a carrier or provider already with a network and someone else will come along and say they want to provide a service that will be facilitated and accommodated on an existing network. Therefore, what they want is inter-connectivity. However, quite frankly, there are a lot of issues which I believe I will get the opportunity to speak to in here and explain to Honourable Members a lot of what is involved but, to my mind, as we move towards competition and opening up to other providers these are some of the issues that we must address.

Mr. President, time does not permit, but I am obliged and I want to say that I do fully support these Estimates. Thank you.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, I would like to talk a bit about agriculture. The importance of agriculture is clearly shown in these Estimates by allocation of less than four per cent of the total Budget. Why is this so? The place of agriculture in the gross domestic product of Barbados is reported by the Central Bank at less than four per cent. That is no big deal, so why should we bother about it? This is true.

I went to the Central Bank and I asked what is the basis for this calculation and they said, "Oh, we get our figures from the Statistical Department." So I went over to the Statistical Department and they said, "We get our figures from the Ministry of Agriculture." The Ministry of Agriculture shows the output of agriculture in Barbados as \$131 million. Can this be correct?

We know that the poultry industry says, and I have not heard anybody challenge it, that it produces between \$80 million and \$90 million worth of gross revenue per year, the sugar industry another \$60 million. Then we have lamb, beef, milk, vegetables and fruits; all of these things have to be added on to get the total production.

It is clear, just even looking at that, that that figure is a bit strange. But let us take that figure and examine it by seeing how much local food, per head, per day there is. So

you divide by the population and you divide by the number of days in the year. You do not have to be an economist to do that. Even a stupid farmer can. You come up with \$1.35 per head per day. Do we all think that the average Barbadian – forget about the tourists eating local food – is eating only \$1.35 per day? If we take this to say production has to be consumption less imports, if what we are eating is not imported it has to be produced locally. What we need to do in order to get production is to arrive at some figure for consumption.

According to the Ministry's figures, the \$131 million added to imports at retail prices gives us \$539 million total consumption. We then talked with the tourist industry, both the Caribbean Tourism Association and the local one, and to several chefs of hotels, and we generally came up with a figure of BDS\$50 per day as a tourist consumption average. There are four million tourist days approximately and that gives you an approximate figure of \$200 million consumed by tourists. So if you take \$539 million as total consumption, take away the tourist consumption of \$200 million and you get \$339 million by locals. In other words the average total food consumed by locals is \$3.50 per head per day.

What can you buy for \$3.50? Not even a pizza. So we are talking about all days, three meals for \$3.50. Come on! Does this not ring an alarm bell in the Ministry to say this figure cannot be right? System Caribbean carried out a survey doing some work for the agricultural sector plan funded by Government and they looked at this figure because they had heard that I had raised this before. They came up from their survey with \$8.80; not \$3.50 but \$8.80. Again, this does not ring any bells. If you look at the System's survey and use \$8.80 we then come up with a total consumption of over \$1 billion in food. We take away the imports and then come up with production of \$644 million at retail prices. Let us then reduce that to farm gate allowing for a 60% mark up between farm gate and you the consumer. 11.00 a.m.

If you are aware of this kind of thing, this is actually a horrendous thing that the distributive trade makes more off food produce in Barbados than the farmer does. We come up with \$400 million at farm gate as against \$133 million. If that is so, then we get the situation where the gross domestic product is close to that in the tourist industry.

I have heard Government Senators get up in here and say: why are you worrying about land when most of the food we eat is imported? That is not true. It now looks as if we import \$408 million and we produce \$644 million at retail prices so only 38% of the food we eat is actually imported. Therefore, let us give agriculture a little bit more attention if these figures are so.

I have been saying this for three years and I cannot get anybody to tell me they are wrong. I said it yesterday at an FAO meeting with the Ministry of Agriculture and they got up and said, well, you know, our system of statistics may not be exactly right, we only deal with the large farmers. If you take large farmers with more than five hundred hectares of land, that consists of 9.6% of all farms. Less than 1% of the farms is being sampled by the Ministry of Agriculture. This is crazy. No scientist anywhere would base the whole business of an industry on sampling less than 1% of the farmers. In other words, what we are saying is that food production is actually three times the level. The foreign exchange that is avoided is in the range of \$400 million because of this production that nobody seems to know about. Are we not concerned about that? Are we not concerned that when agriculture disappears that we have to look for \$400 million in foreign exchange.

When we talk about 99% of those small farmers, we are not even talking about the backyard farmer. We are not talking about what goes on behind those palings in all the rural villages. Even here in the city you will be amazed to go in the backyards of places right here in Church Village and around and you will see a system of agriculture, of food production that is going on in a highly diversified system where people are making maximum use of every square inch in that little backyard to produce their own food. Do we not count that as food production? We only talk about less than 1% of the large farmers. The whole of the Ministry output is aimed at those people. They say we have not got the staff or the facilities to deal with this other 98%.

Our whole attitude to agriculture, our whole shift should be to look at the small farmer and enhance his production but whereas it is true that some are very efficient, some are not so through lack of knowledge and through lack of extension services to them. If we just invest a couple of hundred thousand dollars in a television programme by giving some of the best examples of this and show people in Barbados how they can produce their own food, all we need is a 10% improvement in that and \$20 million worth of food more would be produced; \$20 million less in food would be imported. What would this TV programme cost? I have talked to CBC and they said it would cost \$200 000. The investment for that kind of return is fantastic. I really hope that I can get somebody to pay some attention to this.

What are the advantages also of backyard farming? This is food security at the household level – food security and financial security. How many people here have gone to school, or had to pay for a funeral, or pay for somebody who is sick or sometimes the bread winner in the house is ill and they sell a pig or sheep from their backyard to tide them over? Food security and financial security is so important. Food security at the national level is not only for times of war. Back in 1940 we passed a law where 12½% of the

arable acreage had to be planted in food crops and in fact we actually had a glut of ground provisions and so on in this island. We were nearly self-sufficient on food. We imported a little milk and a little corned beef or something. That is national security. Really, I do not think it is something that we need to be too worried about but the household security is the one we need to pay attention to.

These operators are part-time people, they are not farmers. You cannot classify them as farmers and hence, the Ministry of Agriculture does not want to touch them. They do this in the early morning and late evening when they return from their substantive jobs. There are mainly women and children who are involved in this thing. They used organic methods of production. They do not buy fertilisers, they do not buy pesticides, therefore, they produce a product that is far more healthy for their families and the neighbours to whom they sell. The manual labour provides them with exercise and relaxation at the end of the day.

I was talking to a guy in Mount Hall the other day and he has a shop in Bridgetown. He said, "Senator I do not breathe until I get back home". He said, "I have to go to Bridgetown to earn a living but when I get back home I take a deep breath and I feel like I am living." He has a small farm there and is doing really well.

The organic waste produced in the household can be converted into pig food and/or into compost and re-used in vegetable production. Therefore, that no longer goes to the dump. If we could take all of that organic waste in all these households and reprocess it, we would have a lot less problems in the dump because these are the kinds of waste that are bad for a solid waste dump. As I have said before, this would really save us a significant amount of foreign exchange.

I want to talk a little bit about this World Trade Organisation. In spite of the implementation of tariffs to replace licences, which come into effect on April 1, there will be several sectors within agriculture and industry that will not be able to compete with the subsidised exports from the developed countries. I spoke to the Prime Minister and he agreed that we must be able to determine the level of subsidy and we then have, in addition, under the WTO, the use of countervailing duties to level the playing field. I went to a seminar of the World Trade Organisation the other day hosted by the Ministry of Agriculture and the Minister said clearly that we do not have the manpower, we do not have the technical expertise or the financial capability of doing this, of going out there and digging to find these subsidies. The Agriculture Protocol was designed by these people. For instance, according to that Protocol if you have high subsidies in a developed country, you have ten years to get rid of it. In undeveloped countries you have twenty years to get rid of it. Before they wrote the Protocol they put huge

subsidies on so they get twenty years to come from up here down here. We started down here. We have 10 years but we are at zero from which to do anything. We did not plan. We did not understand what was going on. We are now suddenly told, "well, you cannot put on a subsidy now. You are at zero. You stay at zero." And that is it.

11.10 a.m.

I am saying, if you do not design it, do not sign it. These people have set about to design things for them, not for us. I said to a certain gentleman of a certain developed country the other day, "How do you see Barbados in 15 years' time?" He replied, "Totally dependent on tourism." When asked, "Do you see us as a bored country of servants?" "Oh happy servants," he said. How I did not hit him, I do not know.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: They want you to be happy, but you are happy just being the place in life that they have set out to put you in.

We have to go to these places. We have to send people. We have to use our foreign embassies to try and dig. For instance, in that agricultural protocol document it says, if there is an area in a country that is slightly below the level of agricultural earnings or of some other earnings, they can apply to the Government for subsidy. There are so many loop holes in this thing that they can manipulate the area to satisfy legally under the document, because we signed that. We agreed to that. They can do this and the subsidies are there.

However, if we cannot find out what the subsidies are we can apply the countervailing duty to try and level the playing field a little bit and we have to do this. We have to be very active in doing this.

I would like to talk a little bit about the cotton industry. When we consider that we get about \$5 a pound for cotton which ends up costing \$300 in a garment, it does not take much common sense to know that we should be doing something about this. Somewhere in there we ought to be able to make a buck. If we grow, reap and process the cotton locally, this could become a real source of foreign exchange in this niche market, because this is one of the few agricultural products that we have a niche for because it is unique to these islands.

It is not good enough to keep putting off the question of who owns the right to West Indian sea island cotton's name. This has been hanging around now for about 10 years. We are not arguing about it. There are court cases going on and all of this mess. Let us abandon that thing. Forget it. I do not think that we are ever going to win, at least, that is the opinion I am getting from the legal side of things.

The world knows the West Indies now as the Caribbean. Why don't we go for Caribbean Sea Island Cotton? Let them keep West Indies Sea Island Cotton. I do not think this would be a significant problem, but let us go forward. Do not let us use this as an excuse not to produce cotton or not to process cotton.

Cotton is an ideal rotation crop to do with vegetables and so on. It can also be raised by small farmers and we also have to look at possibilities of the utilisation of by-products of cotton. I was in Belleplaine over the weekend and I met a very interesting young couple who is making hand made paper. The guy said to me, "can I get cotton stalks?" Right now he is using hibiscus and sea side mahoe which are all the same family. I said, "can you get cotton stalks?" I mean we dump them. We burn them. We really want to get rid of them and here is a case where he could use some of these things to process into a high quality hand made paper which sells for 500 times the price of an ordinary sheet of paper.

I think it is a myth that the labour to hand pick cotton is not available, and I congratulate the authorities in the Government who have sanctioned the use of prisoners for this sort of thing, because it is an ideal thing. They do not have to use cutlasses and anything like that and I think it is a great step forward.

I understand the cotton pickers can earn up to \$400 a week and there are a number of women who, after working in town for eight hours, will pick cotton after hours until it gets dark to supplement their incomes. They do it willingly and happily, because picking cotton in the hot sun is not the answer.

We should investigate the possibility of flood lighting cotton fields and since the cotton will stand out in the field, then we could pick cotton at night and then I can go and pick cotton.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I think that is something that we should look at.

I would like to touch briefly on energy and I am sorry the energetic Senator is not in his seat. Senator Barker talked about the comparative cost of energy now as against sometime ago and said that the cost of energy now is not much different to what it was a few years back. That is not the point. What is the cost of energy in Barbados in comparison with our competitors in the other islands and in the Caribbean area? I went on the Internet this morning and I down loaded some information from the Organisation of Latin America and the Caribbean on energy. These are the early 1999 figures; since then there may have been some changes because there was a significant increase. But let us compare what our costs were with other places.

Gasoline in Barbados costs US\$2.52 per gallon. In Guyana it is cheaper. How could Guyana sell gasoline cheaper than Barbados? We actually produce some oil here. They do not produce any oil. They are a country which uses GUYANA\$169 to US\$1. Yet, their price of gasoline is US\$1.01 per gallon as against \$2.52 or two and a half times the price of gasoline in Barbados.

In Trinidad, one would expect them to be cheaper. They are \$1.42 and that only went up very recently. That used to be approximately \$.80 and then they slapped on some taxes on gasoline and raised it up to \$1.43.

In Venezuela, the price of gasoline is US\$.51 per US gallon compared with \$2.52 in Barbados. These are people that we have to compete with. They are going to be growing stuff in Venezuela and shipping it into Barbados. Now the doors are opened. How are we competing?

Diesel is a basic thing used on the markets. Barbados' is US\$2.25, Guyana is \$.91, Jamaica is \$1.24, Trinidad is \$.77, Venezuela is \$.31. Even Haiti is \$1.25 against \$2.25 in Barbados.

Sir, the worst of all is electricity. Our cost of electricity, other than Grenada is the highest in this whole hemisphere, not just in the Caribbean – in the whole hemisphere. Of all the Latin American countries and so on, Grenada is a little bit higher than us, but we are the next highest and we compare at US\$15.3 cents per kilowatt hour. Guyana is 6.65, Jamaica is 12.75, Trinidad is 2.75, Venezuela is 1.03 cents US per kilowatt hour and we are fifteen times the price in electricity. And what is the difference? They have to be taxed. The only thing is that these things have to be manipulated and I cannot believe that Haiti and Guyana have any better negotiating place in the world market than Barbados.

I think that we need to have a look at the energy policy of the Government. I remember when we were talking about the introduction of the VAT and I was in a meeting with the consultants, they picked on energy cost as being something that we should add to. They said we needed to increase, and I begged and said that we were way out of line and why are we going to increase the taxes on energy. I am hoping, and I call on the Government to please relook at their energy policy if they want us to stay competitive. All the time we are not competitive, we have to get efficient. How can you get efficient when a Venezuelan pays \$1.03 for electricity that we pay \$15.00 for?
11.20 a.m.

I would like to touch very briefly on education. The subvention to UWI, according to the Estimates is somewhere between \$40 million and \$50 million. This year

it is \$43 million, last year it was \$55 million. This, of course, is higher than we give to all of agriculture. We give more money to UWI than we give to the Ministry of Agriculture. Should we really offer free education at tertiary level without any strings attached? I think we have to look at the job market. What is the job market for graduates of the University? Where do we want to place our emphasis? I think there should be some kind of sliding scale if we say we need computer scientists. Sometimes they would get it free. If you want to be a lawyer, for instance, you should only get about 50%. We do not need anymore of those people. I think that some kind of structuring should be done.

In closing, Mr. President, I would just like to end by referring to the Estimates Head 18 in the Auditor General's Report. Certain senators have commented about the lack of discipline in the society and have called for a change in the direction we are going, and I think there are very few of us who would not have some serious concern. But discipline must start with the Government. I want to know what is Government's response to the blatant breaking of the financial rules in regard to the submission of required information, and it being done in a timely manner as pointed out in the Auditor General's Report. This is being done by Ministries and also Government's Statutory Boards. The abuse of the tendering system in some cases is highlighted by the Auditor General.

We have reports that are laid in this House virtually every time that we sit. I have never seen any attempt by us to debate any of these reports. We do not bother to look at them. We say to these statutory boards or to any Government funding organisation you have to lay a report and an audited financial statement in Parliament, or to any Government funding organisation. You have to lay a report and an audited financial statement in Parliament. I have seen virtually every Act creating these things. They come, they lay them, they go to a lot of expense. They produce some very pretty, glossy looking reports. How many of us actually read these reports? Then we never discuss them I think that I would like to suggest that we set aside some time in the Senate that we do nothing else but read these reports and debate some of the things that are in them. These people must expect something from us for producing this report. This Auditor General's report has things in there that really horrified me. I looked at it last night for the first time and I nearly had a sleepless night because there are things in there that I just could not believe was going on in Barbados. It is there in black and white. It is printed there for everybody to see. What are we going to do about it? We cannot just take this report as read. We have to say something. We have to say this cannot continue to go on. What is going to happen to those people to whom the Auditor General has said "This is wrong"? Surely, we must do something about it. Thank you.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, I want to take this opportunity to make my contribution to the annual Estimates and I want to raise several issues which I believe are disturbing. I want to answer some of the allegations which are made particularly against the Government. I would very much like to speak to the question last raised by Senator Laurie, and I believe, and I do hope that this will form the basis of some reorganisation of Government employees.

Senator Laurie has raised an issue which has bothered me from the time I was a Minister in 1976. When I came to Parliament in the early 1970's, I remember hearing the late Rt. Excellent Errol Barrow saying that the civil service was an army of occupation, and most people were annoyed with him for making the statement. Now Senator Laurie has raised the issue of the Auditor General's Report and it brings back to mind a situation which I encountered as a Cabinet Minister back in 1977. I have said in here on more than one occasion it is time the general public understands how the Government of the country is run and administered.

People constant blame ministers for not doing things, but they do not know that Ministers have no control over the civil service. I want that to be publicly known. Mr. President, some time during the 1970's when the Barbados Labour Party was in office and we were looking at polyclinics, there was the Minister of Health and an architect who were looking at some documents. The Minister of Health turned to a maid and told her 'we are going to be here late tonight so you had better get something to eat'. She asked the maid to get a 'hamcutter' and a drink. The maid said, "who you talking to? Not me". When it came to Cabinet the then Prime Minister told the Minister, 'You get all the facts and bring them back here? She was told by the Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Prime Minister, Ministers have no control over the staff. Ministers have no control over the staff. I heard in Parliament last week a Member of the Other Place, lamenting the fact that questions remain on the Order Paper for four years without being answered, but I want the public to know that a Minister gives instructions to his Permanent Secretary to prepare the answer to a document. That is all he can do.

With reference to what Senator Laurie has just raised, the problems in the Auditor General's Report deal with the staff in the Ministry who have to produce it and submit it to the Auditor General's Office. Do not say the Minister is responsible. The Minister can only talk. I can say this now for the first time. I was a Minister of Government and I have had fights and fights with civil servants and I used to tell them 'if you do not do what I want, tomorrow morning you and I will be before the Public Service Commission; but I have an office in Pinfold Street.' You cannot get it done if they do not want to do it. I will reveal something here now, Mr. President. We talk about the Public Sector Reform.

There are a number of people who were recently recruited in Government and one lady said to me, "Mr. Bolden, you are talking about sector reform but I went to a training class today and a Permanent Secretary who lectured to us told us "Do not mind the politicians talking about public sector reform. We run it and we will run it how we want to run it." If you doubt me, I can give you the names of four or five ministries. Go out there and call them now and tell me if the telephone will not ring for thirty or forty times before you get anybody to answer. If you complain, what do you get?" I have had a telephone operator who told me she went to a Ministry, she put through a call at 3.30 p.m. and she was called by the Permanent Secretary and told, "the next time you put through a call to anybody in here after quarter past three, you are not working here any more." Let them say this is not true. I will invite every Senator in here – I will give you the names of the Ministries that you can call; and do not call between 8.30 and 9.00 o'clock either. You are wasting time. You cannot get through and do not call after 3.30 p.m. Then you would blame the Minister and say the Minister is not running a proper Ministry when the way it is set up does not allow the Minister to have any control over the civil servants in his Ministry.

11.30 a.m.

Now, I want to keep dealing with the question of agriculture and what Senator Laurie has raised. I agree with Senator Laurie on the question of the amount which is being allocated for agriculture. April 1 will bring home to Barbados and most of the other countries in the Caribbean that we have to take a different look at agriculture and we must try to produce as much as possible. I have always been of the opinion that we should produce what we can produce well and produce as much of it as possible. There are exotic crops which are in high demand in the developed countries but which basically cannot be grown here because of climatic conditions.

I am particularly worried, and I have raised this in here before, about the institution called CARDI. I am particularly worried about the system we have in our University as well. There is part of the contract of CARDI/UWI that you must produce Papers and these Papers must be published. Unfortunately, everybody reads that to mean that you must get a Paper published, and the last time I raised this in here somebody from the university sent me a lot of documents showing what they have done. The research that is done in CARDI and the University pertains primarily to things that are applicable to publications in North America and the United Kingdom.

Aside.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Do not tell me that is not true. You tell me the one ...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, please address the Chair.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Sir, my apologies. Let me tell you why Senator Mascoll says it is not true, Sir.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Mascoll is not on his feet.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Sorry. I heard an aside down that side. I do apologise.

Every farmer in the Caribbean spends hundreds of dollars buying weedicides. There is a famous one called "Roundup" that they tell you will kill everything. Every farmer from householder back to the large farmer buys Roundup every week. Why is it that this is supposed to kill everything from the root up when you apply it and three weeks later the rain comes down and the same grass comes back up again? You ask CARDI or the University whether they have ever carried out any research to tell us what weedicides are applicable to our environment and the ones we should spend our money on. Every weedicide we have is imported from North America or somewhere else. We apply it in gallons with little or no effect.

I can tell you about it because I was privileged to have been given a tour by the United States Government and one of the places I requested to see was the place where these chemicals were made. They sent me to a farm and I was told there that all these chemicals are designed to work according to the soil condition, the humidity and the temperature. Ask anyone of those people here whether those experiments have ever been carried out in Barbados? We do not understand what is happening.

When I was a little boy growing up going to Combermere School, a firm came from Europe and leased or borrowed Codrington. They carried out all kinds of experiments at Codrington with horticultural grass. At the end of the day they went back to Europe and produced the very crops they experimented on in the Caribbean because they knew the humidity, the temperatures, everything that was needed to produce those crops as a Caribbean product. We have never insisted that the taxpayers' money in the Caribbean that is poured into CARDI be used for Caribbean purposes.

I have another example to tell you about. I was Minister of Agriculture in 1976-81. A Paper came to me that we must import 200 young calves. I wrote on the Paper: "We have just sold our dairy in Greenland. Why should we be importing calves?" The Paper came back saying: "These calves are wanted to supply existing dairies in Barbados." I wrote back: "Give me the names of the dairies and the times they want these calves so we can import them at the appropriate age." The Paper never came back.

One night I was in a nightclub and I heard a gentleman say: "Mr. Minister, you wrecked the project I had for my staff." It was the then Director of CARDI. His story was, "how can his people write a Paper on growing calves in tropical countries if I wrecked the Paper." It was not for a dairy in Barbados. It was for one of his people to write a Paper to send to Canada on growing young calves in tropical countries. That is what is expected of us and that is what we provide CARDI with. Let those at the University who sent me the last Papers now send me other Papers to prove that I am wrong again. That is what is happening.

I agree with Senator Laurie. We have to ask ourselves: "Are we going to feed ourselves or are we going to continue to import because we refuse to put money into agriculture, because we refuse to recognise what Caribbean farmers are doing?" That is what I agree with Senator Laurie about. He knows when he is wrong in my view I am going to attack him, but when he is right I am going to agree with him.

I am going to say he is wrong in the fuel costs now. He criticised the Government on the fuel cost. Senator Laurie should recognise that the standard of living in Barbados demands a higher expenditure by Government than the standard of living in the countries that he has told us today have lower fuel costs than Barbados. Tell me when Guyana, Venezuela or St. Vincent will have the industries with the provisions which we make for our people in Barbados?

Look at the wages. Guyanese come to Barbados and I know of a situation where there is a group of Guyanese who worked in Barbados who said: "Pay us U.S. \$25 a day to put in our pockets." They are masons, carpenters, everything. The average worker in Barbados, the mason for instance is now getting between \$90 and \$120 a day.

Look at the health services we provide free of cost? Look at the polyclinics. How many people walk into polyclinics and are treated daily. Those services are not available in the countries that the member talked about. The services provided for Barbadians are all paid by Government out of the taxes we collect, so we cannot have it both ways.

Aside.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I know we cannot complain in Barbados because we are way ahead of all the others.

Aside.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Somebody said to look at street lighting. All of these are costs which must come from Government. Government

must recover taxes at all times. Mr. President, that is enough for me on agriculture. I want to move to a very serious subject. I want to look at Head 17. Head 17 deals with the Ombudsman and it says on the page next to page 16 – Investigation of Complaints against Government Departments. I want to repeat that. It says the job of the Ombudsman and the money voted is for investigation of complaints against Government departments.
11.40 a.m.

I want to move at this time a reduction of \$1 in the Estimates provided under this Head. That deduction is to show my dissatisfaction with the officer of that Department. I have given the President notice that I intend to call names in this debate.

I want to look at Volume I, Cap. 8A of the Laws of Barbados. That is the Act under which the Ombudsman operates. It says, and I am only going to read the sections which I believe are important:

“2. (1) There shall be an Ombudsman for Barbados who shall, in accordance with this Act, investigate and report upon allegations of improper, unreasonable or inadequate administrative conduct.”

That is what this Act says in relation to the Ombudsman.

“2. (4) The Ombudsman shall not be a member of the Senate or of the House of Assembly and shall not hold any other office of emoluments or engage in any other occupation for reward.”

Section 5. – the powers of investigation.

“5. (1) The purpose of an investigation by the Ombudsman shall be to ascertain whether injustice has been caused by improper, unreasonable or inadequate administrative conduct on the part of a government ministry, department or other authority subject to this Act.

5. (2) The Ombudsman may investigate any course of conduct or anything done or omitted by any person in the exercise of administrative functions respecting any business of the Government, including the administration of any statutory board or department of the Government responsibility for which has been assigned to the Prime Minister or any other Minister pursuant to section 72 of the Constitution, not being functions concerned with a matter specified in the Second Schedule.”

Section 7. (1) is very important:

“Subject to subsection (2) the Ombudsman shall not investigate any case where, in his opinion, the complainant would at any time have had a remedy or

right of appeal in a court of law, tribunal or similar body established by the Constitution or by or under any enactment or by or on behalf of Her Majesty.”

Sir, the current position is that the Ombudsman has been publishing reports which are outside his domain and, in my view, is creating a sinister disturbance in this community and I am going to refer to his own report.

This is the annual Report of the Ombudsman of Barbados for the year 1998, and he seems to have a bee in his bonnet against lawyers. There are a lot of lawyers who cannot get in the law courts, so they like to try and attack those of us who go in the law courts.

Sir, if we look at this Report, it is amazing that his report says on page 12 that there are outstanding on December 31st 1998, 138 complaints. Instead of looking at these complaints against the Government, he is marching the beach attacking landowners and attacking the lawyers.

I have said before, Government has no right to appoint a past civil servant, a Permanent Secretary, to the post of Ombudsman because he will never investigate his former colleagues. There is something called a Permanent Secretary Union in Government that all the Permanent Secretaries belong to. So you cannot take out one of them and ask them for support and this Report supports what I have said.

When you look at this Report, rather than the Ombudsman investigating what he should investigate, he makes excuses for those departments that he finds things wrong in. If you look at section 34 he goes into the question of paternityship, maintenance between fathers and children. The law does not allow him to do it. The law says there is a place for that in the law courts. But he takes it up.

Sir, even though civil servants who cannot get their pensions, rather than going and finding out why, he makes excuses for them and says they should know from the time they start to work what their pensions are and they should apply early. He does not understand what his job is.

Section 28:

“Complaints against the National Insurance Office almost invariably arise out of what complainants consider to be unreasonable delays in the payment of benefits and pensions. Delays in the payment of the initial pension came about frequently because...”

Listen to this excuse now.

“new pensioners, especially those who have worked abroad, underestimate the time which it may take to determine whether they qualify for the pension.”

Sir, it is strange that the Ombudsman put this in here. I have had within the last two months a former Permanent Secretary who worked in Government for a number of years and who has worked abroad say to me, "I now see why you all behave so against civil servants, because I retired nearly ten months ago and I cannot get my pension straightened out yet."
11.50 a.m.

He could tell us the frustration he is experiencing with his own colleagues to set his pension right. Instead of the Ombudsman dealing with that he makes an excuse.

"It would be advisable for the pensioner to initiate the discussion with the National Insurance Office at least one year before reaching the pensionable age".

Even when you start the discussion, when you retire you still cannot get your pension because, I am still fighting with them up to now for mine.

Now, we look at Section 29. Two types of complaints against the Town Planning Department call for special mention. Lateness in determining application and from the complainant's standpoint, delay in having nuisances reduced or eliminated including offensive odours or noises and illegal structures. I am of the view that the delay in enforcing the law about the removal of nuisances and buildings often makes breaking the law an attractive economic proposition. There is clearly a case here either for enforcing the law more promptly or for amending the law to facilitate expeditious execution.

I will get down to Section 39 now. In this context, I wish only to cite the list of principal complainants which the Ombudsman for legal services in the United Kingdom gave me during my study tour to the United Kingdom and which justifies the existence of an Ombudsman for legal services in a country which makes far greater provision for consumer protection than Barbados.

Sir, the Ombudsman published in the newspapers a long list of complaints against lawyers and this is what he publishes in this book now: delays, failure to inform, failure to reply to phone calls, lost and misplacement of deeds and other documents, failure to produce clients deeds or documents on demand, inadequate explanations, failure to inform on cost and size of the eventual bill.

I am going to say something now that a lot of people would not like.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: No, I am going to say it because we have to put this society right one way or the other. We have to be a true society.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: One of the biggest problems lawyers have in this country are those returning nationals from the United Kingdom.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I will repeat it, one the biggest problems lawyers have in this country are those returning nationals from the United Kingdom because most of them left here thirty or forty years ago and they come back believing that Barbados is at the same stage it was when they left. This is what the Ombudsman does not understand. He talks about delays and I say that if he knew his job he would not write a document like this because even today when you send a conveyance to the Land Registry, it takes months before you get it back. You know what they come in here and say: "if I were back in Great Britain, my solicitor would have done so and so, I would have done this and I would have done that."

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Then he says: "failure to inform" but they come in your office knowing more than you know and you cannot tell them what the law of Barbados is. They say: "if I were back in England my solicitor would have done so and so...."

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Failure to reply to phone calls. Do you think that it is fundamental that at 5.45 in the morning the phone rings and they want to keep you on the phone for one hour telling you what you must do; you are trying to tell them what is the law in Barbados and they do not want to hear you but keep telling you what the law is in England.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: And they do not pay. Most of them do not have any money.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, I will tell you something. Most of them who come home, when they live and work in England for all their lives, the maximum they get as retirement benefits is

the maximum they get as retirement benefits is Pounds Sterling 65 000 and in Barbados today Pounds Sterling 65 000 is no money to buy a house because all of them come back here wanting to buy 10 000 square feet of land and build a five bedrooms upstairs and downstairs house and have two motor cars *et cetera*.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: We have to put it straight. You can say that I said it because I am standing by every word that I say in here today. I want it to go into *Hansard* that on this day Senator Lindsay Bolden said it and I am standing by it.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: We have to straighten it out. Another thing – this Government has been very co-operative and has been a Government with a human face. They set up a department, FURN, to bring them back and they have done more for them than they have done for the people who stayed in Barbados and build this country.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: They have allowed them to bring in two motor cars. They allow them everything duty free so they believe that this is a handout society to them and especially them.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: It is time that somebody puts it straight. Let them understand that Barbados has progressed when they were away and that they cannot come back to Barbados and dictate to people how they want it to be. They even had the gumption to apply for a place at Oistins to set up their own community. They do not want to re-integrate into the society. It is about time somebody puts them straight. When they talk about failure to inform on cost and the size of the eventual bill, Mr. President, when lawyers in Barbados charge fees, it is called Statutory Instrument 1997, No. 55, the Legal Profession Act, Cap. 307(a) Legal Profession, Attorneys-at-Law, Remuneration for Non-contentious Business Rules, 1997. If they are dissatisfied with any fees charged, they can apply to the Registrar who can set the fees. The Ombudsman must stop this foolishness of giving people outside the impression that lawyers are ripping them off. Nobody knows the volume of non-paid work that lawyers do in this society. Nobody knows that. Even under the Legal Aid Scheme they have fixed you to a cost as to what you do. You go in court day after day and appear for people and at the end of the day

you wait two years to get your money which is little or nothing, yet we have the same expenditure as any business in Bridgetown.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: You get up and go to a doctor and you put money in your pocket but you come to a lawyer and they tell you: I do not have any money this morning. It is about time that we get this straight. We must get this straight.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: I am tired of this foolishness. Every morning the Ombudsman is on the radio. We have another gentleman trained in law called Lawyer on Call who gets on the radio and gives the impression that lawyers out there are robbing them and when the Bar Association spoke to him you know what he said: well, you know I left down there a long time so these things might have changed since I left.

Asides.

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: It is about time that we get it straight. Lawyers are the same professionals as the architects, the doctors, the land surveyors or anybody else. We pay the same rent, we pay the same utilities bills, we pay staff the same salaries as anybody else and it is time that this foolishness stops. I have suggested to the Bar Association that we join together and bring an action in court against the Ombudsman and people like that who try to defy lawyers in this community but when in the middle of the night they call you and say that their son or daughter is at the police station, who else gets up out of their bed at 11 o'clock or twelve o'clock at night and runs to the police station? Who is in the court yard on Saturday morning at eight o'clock or nine o'clock?

Mr. President, the next point I want to deal with is co-operatives. Senator Mascoll in his opening remarks, in trying to bring this Government into disrepute, said that there are less than one hundred taxis which ply their trade at the entrance of the Port. Here again, we have a statement without investigation. For the information of Senator Mascoll, I have been deeply involved with the taxis at the Port for the last two to three years. There are 150 registered taxis with the Bridgetown Taxi Co-operative and there are 50 independent taxis which ply outside the Port every day which makes it two hundred.

Now, he talks about BT buses. You see, we have to know what is happening in this society and that is why I say that we want an honest society. When the Bridgetown port was built, they created a system whereby the Port allowed a

certain amount of vehicles into the Port to take passengers from the cruise ship out of the Port. But what has happened over the years is that entrepreneurs have formed tour companies, *et cetera*, they have gone abroad, or they have their agents on the ships, *et cetera* and they have people who come strictly to them.

12.00 noon

What is happening today is that you have tour companies who go into the Port and take out passengers. They have now created a new entity inside the Port. Last week I was there attending a meeting and there was a dispute raging between passengers who came off the ships with tickets for tours and those who did not have tours.

The result is that the taxi drivers outside the Port are now scrambling for the crumbs that fall off the table. They are scrambling among themselves for the few passengers who come off the ships to be divided between 200 taxis. There is a problem where the taxi drivers now even refuse to take the short drop, that is the trip from the Port up to Bridgetown which is \$4, as against a tour. There are all sorts of confusion in the Port now. There are people who have changed their taxis to ZM vehicles that carry 12 or 14 passengers and they get 10 passengers and say, "I am not moving until I get four more." Because the tour operators have now decided how many people should be in a taxi, and if there are four in a taxi and you have 12, they pay you three taxi loads per ZM vehicle.

We have had meetings with the Port Authority. We have had meetings with the co-op and at the moment, I can say the Port Authority is now having meetings with everybody to see if they can rationalise how the fares are taken from the Port. So Senator Mascoll must not say it is the Government that has caused an injustice to the taxi drivers. We have the same thing at the airport. I am involved with almost 24 taxi cases at the airport over the same problem. The tour companies have quietly monopolised the industry to the extent that the private taxis outside are only getting, as I say, the crumbs which fall from the table. I have said before that we have to look at some adjustment that will satisfy both arms of the business.

I will say it again. I believe we have to take a different look at tourism. I personally believe so. I believe that the all-inclusive hotels are not doing justice to Barbados. Every time I speak to visitors to this country, they are now complaining that we are becoming like Hawaii or one of those places. You go into an all-inclusive hotel, you only see or do what they want you to do and see. They are not getting the opportunity to see this country. So when the hotel people say that people are not returning, they are not returning because they have not been exposed to what Barbados has to offer. So they come here once and they are looking for another destination.

If I remember correctly, years ago there were certain hotels in St. James that boasted of repeat visitors every year because of what they were offered from the beginning. There are people who know the taxi drivers outside. They know the person at the little shop down the road and ask if so and so is still at the shop. But today the all-inclusive hotels have got everything bound up from Monday to Friday.

Do you know why I say so? I can say so with pleasure. Last year I arranged a wedding in this country for a girl from the United States and she brought 32 friends who came to the wedding and they were put in an all-inclusive hotel. At the end of the visit, they were very decent, they said, "Do you know something? We really have not seen Barbados. We do not know what cooking in Barbados is like."

Two years ago we had a meeting of the International Gas Association in Barbados and the President said to me, "Where can I get a Barbadian breakfast? I was here three days and walked all around and cannot get a Barbadian breakfast because the hotel I am in serve me bacon and eggs and sausages that I can get anywhere in the United States." When I ask them for Bajan food, they say, "We do not cook it in here." Sir, we have to ask ourselves, "Are we really doing what is necessary in this place?"

Sir, I deal with the same question of the 150 co-op cars at the Port. Mr. President, we have a Co-operative Society Act which regulates what is a co-operative and what happens in a co-operative. I am going to ask the Government to take a very serious look at the cooperative office – the Registrar of Co-operatives. I think it is time that the Government deals with that office.

For the years I have been practising law, and when you make a complaint to the Registrar of Co-operatives, you get no response whatsoever. I raise this in dealing with the same issue of the Port. Last year we had a meeting at the Port dealing with the number of taxis and how the jobs are allocated, and a summons went out to the Registrar of Co-operatives to attend the meeting. Up to now we have not had a reply. He turned up at the meeting late, but when you go to complain of what happens in the co-operative, you get no response.

Now, I know a lot of people would like to shut down their co-operatives in the credit union. I say the salvation to the small man in this country is the co-operative and the credit union. Therefore we must have a co-op that is very active. It must satisfy the complaints of the members of the co-operative because you cannot go to court with a co-operative, unless you want to go on an expiry application, and nobody wants to bring an expiratory application to break up a co-operative.

I am advising the Government to take a very serious look at the Co-operative Department and make sure that complaints are dealt with expeditiously.

I now turn to the question of transport. Mr. President, I have made certain recommendations on the question of transport and I do believe that we have to look at transport in a far different light today, than we did 20 years ago. There is a contention which I accept, that part of transport is a social entity, but I believe we will have to create a formula where we separate the social part from the commercial part.

We talk about a ZR culture and I hear all kinds of stories about banning children from the ZR bus and all kinds of things. I would say that from 1981, I have been in court nearly everyday dealing with transport issues. We must understand something. We have to look back at the beginning of the mini bus and the ZR business in Barbados. 12.10 p.m.

It is a business. We must not forget that. It is a business and there is stiff competition in business. I recall it was under the late Tom Adams that we licensed the first vehicle as a private transport system after the original system collapsed. I think we have to look at the history of transport. The late Erma Rock I believe was the last person who ran private vehicles in Barbados, the Rocklyn Bus Company. Those buses were taken over to become the core of the Transport Board. They were taken over because bus fares could not match expenditure. I think the allocation for the Transport Board in this year's Estimates will show that you cannot have a social and a commercial entity running side by side unless Government is prepared to subsidise the transport system heavily.

I have suggested that both the minibuses and the ZR vans etc. receive the same subsidy from Government as the Transport Board, because you cannot have an unfair system where the Transport Board is now tendering and competing with the very taxis at the port for moving passengers. If you are going to do that you have to look at the cost of running a taxi and have equivalent fares. You cannot set fares for a trip from the airport to Bridgetown, a trip from the airport to St. James and the Transport Board which is subsidised by the taxpayers now undercutting the ZRs, the BM buses and the ZM buses and carrying passengers at a cheaper rate. It cannot be fair. The taxpayers are therefore subsidising the visitors to this country. I have always said that tourism is in my view, one of those entities from which we in this country should try to get as much as possible off the tourists, but you cannot have the Transport Board competing with the private taxis when the Transport Board is subsidised by the taxpayers and you are asking these private individuals to pay taxes to run their vehicles on the road. There must be a differential. If we want to keep peace within the community we must do it.

We talk about the ZR culture. As I said, it is a very difficult and competitive game out there, and unless government brings very stringent rules to the transport system we are not going to correct it. We have to look at why these things are happening. If a man is driving a ZR van and he wants to keep his vehicle filled to capacity with passengers or overload it, he must do something to encourage passengers to stay on his vehicle, and that is what it is. That is what it is. We have to look and see what is causing the culture, and I believe the answer lies in several areas.

I tried when I was Minister of Transport and Works to institute a scheduling system for public service vehicles in this country and the civil servants told me it could not work. Nobody in Barbados can tell me when a bus will leave the bus stand and when it will get to St. Peter, or when it will leave the bus stand and what time it should be at Roebuck Street.

You watch a late bus at night that is supposed to leave the bus stand at 12.00. We have had instances where they have passed you halfway in the country six minutes after they left Bridgetown. We had instances where the buses from Speightstown came down St. James, Vauxhall Road, turned up Holders Hill and came back out by St. Stephen's Church and left everybody there. There is no inspector to tell him if he is right or wrong. It is when the passengers complain. You must have a formalised system to deal with scheduling of buses. You must have inspectors all along the road to check for the time they pass a particular spot. You must have a fare that is commensurate with the expenditure of running the vehicle and therefore you will stop the overcrowding. You will stop the overloading and if you do that, you counter that with the necessary penal clauses that those who break the law will pay a serious penalty. You must do that. Again, you cannot have the very people who are regulating the transport system owning transport vehicles in the same system at the same time unless they are going to apply the law equally. That is what I say, so Government will have to take a look at that and see how they are going to regulate that.

Now I want to turn my attention to the Probate section of the Registry. The Government and successive Governments have been telling people how to organise their businesses. When the Ombudsman speaks about delays etc., the Probate Registry has now expanded beyond bounds. Information given to me is that they get an average of 25 documents a week as opposed to what they used to get, say, 5 per month, and they need to have the staff to handle that. Now, that is one thing that I think the Government should look at.

One thing before I leave. I want to leave this word of caution, that among the beaches which the Ombudsman has

highlighted, there are several which hold permission from the Town and Country Planning, and I think that the goodly gentleman should research that and offer an apology to those persons whose names and pictures appeared.

Mr. President, I would have liked to carry on for a little longer time, but that is my contribution. I thank you.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President in rising to give my support to this Bill before us, I want to do so against a background of consideration which really speaks to our society as a whole, and a society where I believe all members must feel a part of, that there are things going on that are of interest to them and that they can be a part of. This year's Estimates speak in every division, because that is what it is to do, look at all of the areas relative to the growing development in the country and its financial ability. Mr. President, all this comes to nought if as Barbadians we sit back and take these Estimates for granted. The Press carries them for what they are worth, with elements of them that may or may not be controversial or developmental as they see fit, but if Barbados as a whole sit back and let all goes back as if it really is of no importance to them, we are on a slope going no place. In this whole context, of course, Sir, many feel that could happen as long as they are getting their just desserts. We really need to look at ourselves as individuals and as a society and realize that we are ultimately responsible for whatever goes on around us. We can appropriate as many funds as we want but if we do not examine ourselves, keep our eyes shut, pretend that all is well and look the other way, we are guilty, Sir, of omission, of failing to contribute to the society as a whole. We each have a role to play and must do our part in this regard.

Many people believe that this is a role politicians, parliamentarians, legislators, etc. and that they are the only ones to live by those rules. Every single one of us must be conscious. We must have a disciplined approach in our very own personal and domestic arrangements from the cradle to the grave if we wish to have a society where harmony will prevail, equity, respect for law, good interpersonal relations, not forgetting from whence we came and focussing on what our hopes and dreams are for the future if we, indeed, must be sustainable.

12.20 p.m.

With this in mind, I want to look at a few areas focussing on a couple of the Heads in these Estimates. I want to first look at the Ministry of Home Affairs under Head 28. This Ministry has, as stated in the Preamble here, responsibility for Immigration, Disaster Preparedness and Relief, the Fire Service, Communications Media, CBC, Government Information Service and the Penal Institutions.

I want to look first at the corrective and rehabilitative services, not because I think they are the most important or the least important but we have to start somewhere. I think as I look at Barbados, the whole question of corrective rehabilitation cannot go without some attention.

I would want to start with the Government Industrial Schools. This programme provides for the safe custody of young persons who have run afoul of the law and through the court system have been placed in penal institutions with a vision to aiding in their rehabilitation by way of counselling, education programmes albeit they are basic, Maths and English in particular, vocational skills and some social activities.

With this in mind, it is expected and hoped that when they leave these institutions they can be more rounded and able to fit in and contribute to society within their own limitations and be sociably acceptable. There are many who will have different views on what is right and what is wrong with respect to society.

Again, Sir, this is with a hope that there would be less recidivism, and in the hope that by a certain age they would not be going back to Dodds or to Summervale. There are no facts to support this. I may say that from those who have been living in Summervale or Dodds, the figures do not suggest that many of them ultimately end up in Glendairy Prison.

Mr. President, I have had an ongoing relationship now with the Industrial Schools for some time. I take the Industrial Schools personally because I feel, I have a responsibility and a need to look closely at items relative to the Industrial Schools.

One of the disappointments I must recognise is that there seems to be an increase among the girls whereas there is a decrease in the number of boys attending. One of the things that causes the girls to be up there is something that I have spoken to in this Chamber already, and it is that thing called "wandering." I have had to deal with young ladies who have been caught wandering by the police, and oft-times it is because the home environment is so devastating that they have to run away from home. They take solace and support wheresoever they will and, unfortunately, oft-times are taken advantage of. Suddenly they get wise to the ways of the world rather quickly, but then when caught out, they are placed in Summervale for this thing called "wandering." That wants examining, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: When we come down heavily on this we have to ask ourselves what it is in the home front that is causing these young people, young women in particular, to run and get support, oft-times in less savoury conditions.

Young men, on the other hand, hang out on the block. They are not arrested for wandering. They go some place, I suppose, at night and in the evenings. They might smoke their spliffs and so on, on the road. I will withdraw the word "spliffs" if it is not acceptable. They may use illegal substances while on the road. Somehow they only make it to Dodds usually when serious bodily harm and that sort of thing is committed, but the girls go up simply for wandering. Therefore a higher percentage of girls go up to the Industrial Schools than boys.

The vote at this subprogramme 243 totals \$2 706 855. This includes a figure for maintenance of the property. While these Estimates do not specifically speak to repairs at Summervale, it does at Item 611 – provide for capital maintenance at Dodds. It does not speak to Summervale at all. I am reliably informed that there is going to be major refurbishment at Summervale beginning almost immediately.

Now, I do not know how many of my colleagues in here have been up to Summervale but you will certainly notice that there is, in my view, very little hope for any rehabilitation because the place is danky, damp and breaking down, *et cetera*.

This administration, recognising that in equipping young persons who are incarcerated in penal institutions they need to broaden their outlook and lift their esteem, has taken it as an initiative to begin immediately with refurbishments in this building. I am informed that a substantial part of the building is going to be knocked down and there will be improvements to classroom facilities, the dormitory, the kitchen and to the reception area. The work is expected to span approximately six months. I hope it will not be longer than six months.

A number of the girls have been released back to their homes, but I will speak to that in large measure in a few minutes, and the remaining 12 to 15 will be moved over to the Dodds facility.

I think more people might know more about Dodds, especially since it has been in the newspapers recently. I think we know it is a larger facility and has itself had some refurbishment in last year's Estimates.

The accommodation that was originally the residence of the Principal in days gone by is being prepared to receive the girls for this temporary measure. Fencing has been created to separate the boys from the girls but I am really not aware of fencing around the whole property. I am not sure as to the effectiveness really of the fencing that will separate the boys from the girls, so that is something that we will have to observe. Only time will tell. Not that I have any problem

with the boys and the girls getting together, Sir, but where you are remanded for crimes, whether it is at the Government Industrial School or Prison, there are certain things you are prohibited from doing or should be prohibited from doing. We have to see how effective this temporary measure will be with respect to keeping the boys separate from the girls.
12.30 p.m.

A natural curriculum may run for three to four weeks, a month, a year or whatever, assuming that we have well rounded individuals who are well disciplined, who will come to class when they are supposed to, who will have all the tools that they need. This circumstance is slightly different but the important factor is to have individuals who may wish to offer themselves on a volunteer basis, and I highly recommend it, Sir, provided there is adequate screening to ensure there is stability and that they have the right personality to deal with it.

Let us make no mistake, young people who are incarcerated are not there because they are good boys and girls. They are not all bad. I said already because of the wandering element that they may find themselves there and they may not be necessarily bad children. Again, I recommend that communities at large volunteer their services. You do not get paid for everything. You have to think about giving back something. Many of us have far more than we could ever use, including time, Mr. President. A lot of people have time that they do not want to spend willingly sitting down in front of the TV. So you will find yourself while you are teaching your discipline or your vocation that you spend a lot of time dealing with morals and values besides education. I am hearing an aside that it is the hidden curriculum.

There is at this time a proposal with the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, at the discussion stage, to see what are the vocational studies the students may undergo, and whether there may be some certification so that on leaving they have 'a piece of paper'. We all know that these days people look largely at the 'piece of paper', the B.A. and the M.A., the Dip. Ed. *et cetera*.

While they are important, they go for nought if you cannot produce the work. There are a lot of theorists out there, Mr. President, and no disrespect to those who have those degrees, and you really have to ask the question, can they produce the work? There will always be the call for high salaries, but if you cannot produce and you only have theory and you have not had on-the-ground, hands-on experience, you are wasting time.

In further developing the whole question of discipline and concentration, one of Barbados' and, as a matter of fact, the world's chess champions, Mr. 'Suki' King, has been

engaged for a six-month period to assist the students in chess and in draughts. When you think about it, he can be used because he has brought himself up and has become internationally known for his discipline. To me, chess and draughts are real disciplines, because pushing along these things you really have to concentrate and it is a very good discipline and mind expanding, and I think that it is a very important move.

I commend Mr. King for making himself available and the Minister, in particular, for ensuring that we bring in different individuals from within the society at all levels to make this contribution to the upliftment of these young people.

At Dodds, the boys continue to represent Barbados in strong measure in boxing. Very recently, in Jamaica, they had significant success and while I laud their success I am a little concerned because I see boxing, while it is a sport, as very much a contact sport, and I just wonder if this might not necessarily be. I, myself, am not a boxing fan and I really do not like blows of any sort, giving or taking. At the same time, it is a disciplined sport in some regards if you look on it on the positive side and not worry so much about the contact element of it.

The question of fitness as a whole needs to be taken into consideration at both Dodds and at Summervale in collaboration, of course, with a dietary programme. The students need to be as healthy as they can be.

I must look briefly, Sir, at the question of staffing. Forgive me if I dwell on this because, as I said, these are the areas that concern me and I believe that we must consider them if we wish to be effective in terms of rehabilitation of youngsters in these institutions. Since the publicity of Dodds recently, the ratio of staff per pupil came out quite strongly and received some criticism. I believe that there needs to be a serious look, especially now that we have fewer students on the girls' side to make sure that the ratio is a proper balance. I am all for giving people jobs, but I really do not believe that any institution should be overly top heavy with staff, and so I think that consideration should be given to that.

The persons who work at these institutions are teachers and I am not so sure that we are not asking them to undertake more than they bargained for with the question of handling deviant children *en masse*. As I said earlier, you are there to teach a discipline but you have to be able to balance the two things. I believe that any individual going to teach in these institutions must have some preparation for the student body that they are hoping to impact. I believe it would be of tremendous assistance if they had a psychologist full time attached to the Government Industrial School. I know that

there is a social worker but I would like to see a psychologist attached full time. Between the two institutions they can be kept somewhat busy.

As we look at the whole question of counselling, when the young people first come into the institution, you do not have a clue as to what the background is in broad measure. This needs to be explored if we are to be able to create a meaningful programme for their continuous development and the ongoing monitoring not only while they are there but when they leave.

I spoke already about the question of volunteerism and I believe that this will give the students an opportunity to interact with other responsible adults. This could also lead possibly to mentoring once the youngster leaves the institution. They would see that there is a contact with somebody out there. I think it must be very sad if we consider what came to public awareness sometime ago when there was a young man whose plight was carried in one of the public informationals.

The young man had a job and lost that job because he had nowhere to live and, therefore, no place to carry out his sanitary preparations before going to work on a daily basis. He was formerly a resident of one of the children's homes. I know that the Child Care Board has given some consideration and even looked some years ago at having – I do not want to call it a half-way house because that sounds as though it has a stigma attached to it – a residential type of facility, not a prison, but a place where individuals who are leaving the penal institution, who are too old to continue to reside at the will of the Government in the Child Care home, can go.

I already spoke to the environment from which they may have come as not being conducive to well-rounded adults. I do not believe that we can call on Government for everything, but I know that there are individuals who stand ready today to put forward resources to create places like this.

I am hearing an aside that the Soroptomists are doing it, but that is only one. Mr. President, there are many young people, and though I am not suggesting that we have a hostel with 100 rooms, we want a facility where the young people can reside and contribute to their care, no matter how small. They must be employed in some legal manner and I want to stress "legal manner" because they cannot just have money, but they must be employed. Again, the programmes that are numerous across the landscape can lead to this.

They must participate. I am all for discipline and chores. Young people must do chores. As long as you are living at home, no matter if you are 30 or 40 there are chores

that are your responsibility. You must contribute in this regard as well as in the upkeep of the residence by chores. Those who live on their own have to cook their meals. I do not think they should reside in this condition for ever and ever, Amen. I believe that they must move on after a reasonable period of time, of course, to negotiate and give them an opportunity to get on their feet and because we must bear in mind that it is a place for those who are coming out from a different circumstance and that space will be needed. 12.40 p.m.

In all of this, Sir, between the Prisons, which I will speak to in a few moments, the Government Industrial Schools and the children who reside in the children's homes, there must be continuous follow up and monitoring. I do not believe that we can just let the young people go back into the society and then disappear because oft-times they need that helping hand and that outreach. To this extent there needs to be a more integrated aftercare programme.

Sir, I want to look now at Glendiary Prisons. In recent conversation with a counsellor for the Prisons – she has already gone public in making this request and I would want to support it – she believes we should consider supervised visitation for those incarcerated at Glendiary Prisons where there are children involved. Her concern was more for the women in the Prisons but I believe too that there are men in prison who are good fathers and they must have some access to their children. Of course, this would be supervised visitation within the environs of the prison.

I have heard or it was reported somewhere, that there was a call for the acquisition of the land surrounding the prison for a number of reasons, the top most of which would be security. Of course, I agree with this fully. The residents should be relocated in as comfortable an arrangement as they currently enjoy although I believe they will be even more comfortable than where they are now because that area is quite cramped and it cannot be comfortable knowing that there is a prison on your front door.

It is within the confines of the prisons that I can see this visitation arrangement taking place. I do believe that it would be good for the children because I believe that when a child and a parent are separated for too long a period of time, it is not necessarily a good thing. It may also lead to rehabilitation for the individual who is incarcerated to do well. Of course, I would suggest that not every and all persons who are incarcerated should have access, because, let us not forget that we have people in Glendiary Prisons who are child molesters. I have spoken to that already in this Chamber recently. Do not forget the rapists. I am not suggesting for one moment that those who are in for violent crimes should have this access. It must be tied to behaviour whilst you are incarcerated.

I believe that that is perhaps something that could be considered within the confines of what I would like to see among the prison population. I am not suggesting that we enlarge the prison in anyway but let us face it, there is always going to be a need for prisons in the world although I know there is one place in the world where, I have learnt this in church, somewhere in one of the Latin American countries where there is nobody in prison because they have reached a stage in spiritual development where the whole population performs well and nobody is locked up. I must put my hands on that document, Sir, and make it a document of the House because it really was an eye-opener when I learnt of that. I am sure that the learned Members on the other Side might take some interest in that as well.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: It is heaven on earth, Sir. Sir, I would want to look again at the Immigration Department under Head 28, Ministry of Home Affairs. The control of Immigration and the efficient regulatory services, I believe, is one of the by-lines of this particular Ministry. It is my understanding that there is a good level of improvement in the Immigration Department. I am hearing fewer complaints about the speed with which persons receive passports and that is a plus.

I recall the last time I had to go for a passport, I was pulling out my hair and I was not a happy camper but I am happy to report that there seems to be much improvement in this particular division and I note again in the Estimates that figures have been identified to assist in the development of personnel.

There are Green and White Papers being prepared that will focus on streamlining the departments and examining and reforming processes and systems with a view to improving the overall efficiency and making the department more customer friendly. I think that is one of the areas that was of major concern, that you go in there and feel that you are *persona non grata* almost.

It is anticipated that the enforcement section of the department will be strengthened to assist in reducing illegal immigration and crime.

In speaking about immigration in particular, Sir, I am aware, and I am sure that other Members here would be aware too, that for some time now there are individuals who are abusing the system to access citizenship in Barbados. Some would call them marriages of convenience where foreign women in particular have been attaching themselves to Barbadian men, getting married and then ditching the men. I believe that there are monies attached to this arrangement.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: I have no doubt that it happens to Bajan women as well but let us not forget that as the Constitution now stands, the law is automatic for women who marry Barbadian men and so, it is greater benefit for foreign women attaching to Barbadian men at this time because if a Barbadian woman marries a man who is non-Barbadian there is some delay period. There has been a strong lobby made to the Constitution Review Commission, which we have not yet debated in this Chamber, for equity in this regard. I would have to say that while I agree in the equity absolutely, if it is going to be abused in the manner that it is being abused today, the waiting period must come into play.

I believe that there is provision before the Constitution in that regard too to ensure that when individuals 'tie the knot', whether it is before the Magistrate or the priest, they are actually cohabiting and the marriage is really a marriage and not a sham arrangement. I have no difficulty with equality because the Members on this Side like to give me a lot of stick when I talk about equality and ask: What more do women want? We want, Sir, to ensure that we have just as equal an opportunity in all areas of development of this society as our brothers in this country.

Mr. President, if this abuse is not policed we are going to have serious difficulty with our demographics. Barbados is still a small island, it is not growing and there is no potential for growth. As a matter of fact, we may even be losing a little land on certain coastal areas in Barbados and we really and truly need to keep our lands for ourselves. While we may embrace foreign business and so on, people are here for a time, they serve, they earn and then they go. What is of concern, Sir, is that most of these women who have attached themselves to these Barbadian men who have been jilted after, should be wise enough to check with the system before they marry outside....
12.50 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, I am having a little difficulty hearing and I am just appealing to other Senators to be quiet.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: They are taking up jobs, Sir, which can be accomplished by Barbadians. We only need to take the opportunity to have a dinner in one of the restaurants or in most of the restaurants on the west coast and you will see what I am speaking about. There are waiters with accents that are not Barbadian, which is okay, but in a restaurant with nearly six 'wait staff' and you cannot see or hear really one voice that sounds like yours in terms of intonation, not necessarily dialect, it makes you ask the question, where are the Barbadian waiters and waitresses?

We have a very viable programme at the Hospitality Institute. I can well understand executive chefs perhaps having to come from abroad in some measure, but not all the 'wait staff'. I have difficulty with that, Mr. President. It does not seem to be as bad on the south coast, however. That is something that needs to be looked into very closely. I am even aware of an individual such as I spoke about before, who is now a Barbadian citizen by virtue of having married a Barbadian who runs a very lucrative vegetable mobile dispatch, again, along the west coast. I am sure that is a job that can be done by a Barbadian.

Sir, when we know of these activities, I do not think we should turn a blind eye, and we must report it to the relevant persons. I am not ashamed to say that some years ago in the sector where I earn my living, there were two individuals who came to Barbados to do a training programme – a three-day period in a salon and six weeks later they were still here but in a different salon on the west coast. That did not suit me, so I had to make it my business, Sir, because when you begin to tamper with my livelihood – and while I am all for competition, competition from within is great – but I am not going to sit back on the side lines and let people come from outside and take up space and employment where Barbadians are very able and capable of producing excellent quality of work. So I believe that we must report this type of activity when it comes to hand.

Not one of us in this Chamber, Mr. President, could talk about going to the United States without the requisite documentation and taking up employment. As a matter of fact, even when you go on a holiday visa sometimes, you have to expose all kinds of whatever, even to get the Visa but that is another subject for another time. I do not even think I am going to go in there today. I am not going particularly to the Embassy further down the street from us here.

In speaking here to immigration officers, they have one or two concerns that there is a sense that those who work in the immigration and points of entry in Barbados, have greater opportunity for recognition. I think it is a known fact that the Minister of Tourism Awards is an annual event which seeks to give credit where it is due to those in the hospitality sector, who have gone beyond the call of duty. I am one of those who believe that you are supposed to go beyond the call of duty in every sector, not just push the pen between 8.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. or 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. or whatever the shift may be, but to really go in there and give it your best, particularly those in the hospitality sector.

In immigration, they are the first points of contact for the sector which I think we all recognise. I am sure one of the Senators on this Side will speak to it in greater detail,

and it has been mentioned already briefly by one other Senator. The first point of contact to our economy, present and future, is the tourist. We recognise that first impressions are lasting impressions.

I do not know about other Members, but when I go into a store or into a country, if I do not feel I am treated in a certain manner, I have no desire to return and I think, as small and developing as we are – because we are still always going to be developing and we are always going to be small, I stated that already – we have to make positive impacts. The immigration officers who work at the points of entry are doing just that and receive recognition for it.

There are some of their colleagues who work equally as hard albeit not on the first point of contact, but without whom the division would not nearly be as effective, but they have little opportunity for this recognition.

In looking at the Public Sector Reform there may be some consideration that needs to be given to that to ensure that they too still continue to develop and produce to ensure that they still feel a part of and there is less possibility of any underlying jealousy. Needless to say, of course, I am not going to suggest for a moment that you put any and everybody to be at your first point of contact, because we all recognise that not everybody is good at dealing with people. So personalities have to come into question when you are going to position people at these very important points. But the whole question of equity, once again, must come into play in this particular division.

Still, under Head 28, I want to look at the Government Information Service. This division is allocated in excess of \$1 million and the Government Information Service is being prepared for the transformation into a public relations and information agency. A policy is being developed where a special committee established since 1999, by the Minister is, to review the original document and bring it up to date.

Work is also progressing very well on the Public Information Radio and TV channel. Initial reports are very encouraging that such a channel can become a reality in this financial year. This was stated in a Barbados Labour Party Manifesto. At the time, I believe part of the consideration was that we would not torture the entire public with parliamentary debate. We need to have a dedicated channel for this. That is one of the activities that will come on this channel and I believe that it should, because I think the public should be aware of what we do in both these Chambers, albeit sometimes it can be rather long and drawn out.

Aside.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: No. You would not have to go and reach for a Gazette and have a read, because

we recognise that people do a lot less reading now than they do of watching television. And this would be certainly one mechanism to ensure that the work of the legislators is open to the public and, therefore, perhaps it might even encourage all of us in both Chambers to ensure that the material that we deliver is appealing, factual and presented in a manner that will encourage the viewers to want to be a part of this learning process.

Not only will the parliamentary procedures be carried, Sir, but there is also an opportunity through this to look at a number of issues which can educate people at home, especially, and the statistics will bear out that whilst unemployment has dropped, wonderfully, tremendously – and I wish to commend – the Government on the initiative that has brought it to this stage – the greater number of unemployed persons is still women who will require these additional mechanisms if they are sitting down at home doing nothing.

I will never forget in the 1994 elections when I was a candidate and I happened to go and visit around what I call “silly soap time” when soap operas were playing, there was I, I think it was early afternoon, about 2:00 p.m. – I do not watch TV at that time of the day, Sir, so I could not really give you an accurate time, but the after lunch period – surely I was looking for votes, as persons who are candidates are expected to do. I do not believe you can just go and beg for the vote. You have to be involved, interested and intimate in the people’s lives. I was searching here, seeing that this young person was unemployed with two children running around the house, to see if we could look at mechanisms to improving their lot in life at that given point in time, and trying to find out what her capabilities and skills were. The young lady was glued to the TV. Maybe, I was not saying anything but I had to say to her, “Do not mind those people on the TV, they are making their money already, so do not be drawn in by them”.

Surely a little light TV is all right for some entertainment from time to time, but I see, in terms of creating this channel, the opportunity for further education. Of course we would want to have programmes structured in such a way, utilising as many real life experiences of people in Barbados, for argument sake, like the Senator two down from me here, who would have an experience in terms of what it is to come and build a small business and motivate young people through a very every day ordinary experience. I believe that is one of the mechanisms that should be considered for this ‘dead’ time.

There is also going to be opportunity for those of us who are not so schooled in cricket to know more about our West Indian cricketers and we have been able, again through the Minister with the responsibility for Home Affairs, to get footage from the BBC, since November 1999, and that too can be shared.

I am not ashamed to say, Mr. President, I wish I had paid more attention to cricket when I was a lot younger, but being a girl, I was inside and I only came outside to play when I could get the bat. I was neither fielding nor bowling and so I really did not learn much about cricket then, but certainly as you get older, you appreciate the wealth of opportunity that comes through the integration of sports. Senator Symmonds spoke in large measure to that already.

So here is an opportunity for our cricketing heroes to be exposed to the persons in Barbados who may have some time on hand, during those 'dead' times of the day. Although, Sir, I firmly believe that there are not going to be too many in the near future who may have that kind of time on hand and I do not know if Senator Mascoll will agree with me, but I believe that if we can move from 24 per cent to 9 per cent, in another few years, we can be looking for great things to come.

The Minister personally intervened in 1999, with an overseas Film and Television Centre in London and secured Government Information Service productions from 1951-1976 and it is proposed to televise these films of old Barbados during this financial year in order to better inform and educate Barbadians on the history of Barbados. I spoke to the importance of us knowing and understanding the history of our country, because Barbados is our rock, Sir, and nobody can send us away from here. I believe that we are supposed to stay here and go away to learn and come back and give to this place because when you run into trouble, afoul of the law outside or when the weather gets to you, where do you want to come – back home where the heart is and where the navel string is buried. We have a responsibility to know more about Barbados if we really want to be patriotic.

Sir, until such time as this public broadcast service becomes a reality, it would be useful to have more varied times for the work that the Government Information Service does now so that people watch the television at different times, and the message that the Government Information Service develops which should be wide and varied, not only the 'Giggard and Boo' programme, speaks to a number of issues going on, but the actual work of the respective Ministry needs to be more ventilated.

I believe that there is a Government Information Service attached to each Ministry and I still feel that not sufficient about the work of respective Ministries is exposed, usually only at such times as this, during the Estimates period, or the public do not listen because they do not want to listen to that TV: there are too many speeches and some people tend to get tired of the regurgitation. But, Sir, I would like the Government Information Service to do the PR in regard to the respective Ministries, because there are lots of

things that go on in Ministries. I must say I am not launching a criticism of the Barbados Labour Party but I believe that we must consider what our weaknesses might be.

One of our weaknesses is that we fail to 'big up' ourselves. Mr. President, when we do things that are commendable, it is a secret. We must talk about these things. That is one thing I believe, where the Opposition has led over the Barbados Labour Party as a Government and they have been able, Sir, to take credit in some regard for things that were the initiative of the Barbados Labour Party. 1.00 p.m.

I believe that in recognising this we must do better than that in this regard. When I say the GIS, I am not talking for the Barbados Labour Party, but the Government of the day, whoever happens to be the administration because credit must go where it is due.

Sir, I would want now to look at the Ministry of Consumer Affairs. Sir, I do not have much that I want to speak to under this, but I really feel it is most important that we recognise this Sub-programme 463 has almost \$2 million in its portfolio. I speak specifically with regards to the BNSI. A lot of funds are earmarked for this. Their task is to encourage education, training in connection with standardisation and related activities, quality management, environmental management, dissemination of information, activities related to certification of products, commodities, which conform to national standards. I am not aware of what all the standards are, but I know, Sir, that after April 1, which is next week, I must remember because that is a special day for me, being born on that day. As the world opens up there are a lot of protections. This is something that we must be very conscious of. Consciousness comes because our products must be of quality. I am not suggesting that they are not, but I recognise that quality comes in presentation, shelf life, and the list goes on and on when you talk about quality and control.

At this point I am not aware that there are any major audits being done in this sector with respect to certification of products manufactured in Barbados. I know we are very concerned about what comes in and BNSI does a good job in making sure that we get quality product, although I still know there are a lot of old products that come in to Barbados. Sometimes on the shelves there are products that are past the advised user date. It is a lot of work and I am very happy that provision is made here. Other institutions will strengthen them to equip the needed functions. The whole question of certification is because in this domain if your product does not have that stamp so to speak, you cannot hope to get into certain markets. Unless you have that stamp of approval your products are going to stay right there.

Sir, I am aware that next year there is going to be a quality seminar which will look at tying airlines, food producers, farmers, manufacturers and the same BNSI. The Government will be invited to this, the University of the West Indies. Presently there is a professor here who will be spearheading the committee to look at the agenda for that conference and who will look at sharing the experience with other professors in Holland, Switzerland and Nestlé, which is very well known. This Quality Seminar will have an impact on what we import and what we export. If it is not done we and maybe in next year's Estimates we will want more support for the manufacturers, and the farmers want things done, and I see that as an opportunity for sharing information.

If there are other domains that we can copy then that can auger well for our development in terms of effectiveness and competence in this wide world trading and so on. I think that many people are still not even aware of the impact that this free trade is going to have. The Government is doing its part but I think it is important that at this juncture organisations make every effort in whatever mechanism to inform individuals who would want to know more, and even if they do not want to know more, you have to tell them anyway because you cannot wait until the horse is out of the stable and say: "But I did not know", just like ignorance of the law is no excuse.

1.10 p.m.

Sir, I would want now, to look at Social Transformation. The Senator that spoke earlier from this Side spoke in large measure on Social Transformation. I want to speak specifically to the area of the Bureau of Gender Affairs which is not mentioned by name in this Estimates document but the document does speak still to Women's Affairs, and an amount has been identified in this regard.

Now, the Barbados Labour Party's Manifesto speaks to this whole question of gender affairs. This too has come up because at the Beijing Camp Forum in China in 1995 Barbados was one of the Governments which had agreed to adopt certain measures to improve conditions of all of the people in Barbados, the men and the women, the families as a whole. It is in this vein that I believe the whole question of the Gender Affairs Bureau was established.

The new Bureau, according to the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party at page 9 is to:

"Change the traditional single focus of the old Women's Bureau to wider gender issues to ensure that problems facing certain sections of the male population are systematically resolved.

Facilitate and encourage research in gender issues."

Mr. President, while the Estimates document does not speak to this Bureau, I believe that the Bureau of Women's Affairs, as it is still named, will continue to carry out the work as far as possible with the limited staff they have to date.

Sir, the Bureau has always been understaffed. I have to say that they suffer from a lack of visionary leadership and I believe it is in that regard that not sufficient publicity and work were done under this Bureau. For me as a woman, in times of trying to find information sometimes even to speak to in these debates when they were of a nature to deal with gender, I could not get the information from there.

One of the causes is that in the establishment of the Bureau, I am aware that there is a document that would have come out of the Town Hall Meetings and a committee had been formed also. I believe there is a document that is doing the bureaucratic route at this time in terms of creating the number of positions that will be required to fill the required roles of research, assisting the NGOs and Government agencies working on gender issues, even down to the question of resources to pay these individuals. I know that is doing the bureaucratic route, Sir. I really hope it does not take forever and ever. Meanwhile, the existing Bureau, I am sure, as far as possible, will continue to do its work.

The research personnel is crucial because without research we cannot meaningfully make statements or make informed decisions about a people as a whole. The whole question of the collation and desegregation of data by sex, age, types of work conducted, is crucial.

The issue of domestic violence, Sir, which is not separated at the court level and currently is listed as battery or bodily harm, you cannot get a figure for the actual numbers. The Police are able to share some figures but they do not have it segregated as I think it should be and would be as meaningful as it could be. Therefore, to date, Sir, there is still little data on issues confronting women in particular and therefore it would be safe to say, confronting men also.

There are a lot of statements being made in Barbados today, emotive statements, in my view, even with respect to the question of the impact of co-education. They do not have any figures to support that in large measure. It is emotive. I know the call has come for that, and I know the Senator who is dealing with education will speak to that in greater detail, but if we do not have data, how are we going to make meaningful change or contribution?

Sir, I am aware that the Minister is committed, and that was spoken to already, to embracing the NGO community and providing assistance to help with their effectiveness.

There is already a record of some works, the Salvation Army and the Hostel for fire victims. The Business and Professional Women's Club Shelter for Battered Women receive support from the administration of the day. The Soroptomists have received assistance by way of a grant for homes for the elderly.

If we are to have proper and progressive relations between men and women in Barbados, all data must be collected and collected in a meaningful way, even the question of the numbers of old people, men versus women and so on.

I must say, Sir, that while the Ministry of Social Transformation is a new Ministry, it would have been useful to have had a little bit more of a preamble in the Estimates document to give us a wide scope.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have two minutes left.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: I know that under this Ministry, as spoken to already, there is a lot of very important work. In due course, no doubt, there will be even greater information available so that Barbadians as a whole will have an idea of exactly how large and great the impact of the Ministry of Social Transformation will be.

As I move to the close, Mr. President, I will raise concern, and in that concern I am wearing strictly and totally my woman's hat at this point as the First Vice President of the National Organisation of Women, the organisation which is responsible for the advocacy and which, in itself since the days of the Commission on the National Status of Women had significant impact to make in terms of continued developments for women. I am a little concerned that five years after Beijing, there is at this stage as we move to the Beijing Plus Five Meetings, no clear identification.

I am not satisfied in my mind that we have sufficient resources in place, not only in Barbados but as a region, to look into what has been done in that last five years and to report on it to ensure that we are keeping on stream and with agreements we had that we would implement and work towards the improvement of the genders.

It is unreal to expect the agencies which represent Barbados abroad to have sufficient time or personnel without the actual information coming from home. I believe in this regard our Bureau has been stretched to the maximum and not able to provide information in that regard. That is a concern for me and I believe as we continue into this new millennium that the whole question of gender equity must still be in the forefront of our minds, and as we recognise that there may be some imbalance between the genders, that

on the one hand it seems that there is some marginalisation of men, as called, and the other, some slow productivity of boys we must not forget our women's contribution to date, Sir.

With those few words, Sir, I support this Bill. Thank you, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I rise to move the suspension of this sitting for one hour and return at 2.30 p.m.

The question that the sitting be suspended until 2.30 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
1.20 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This sitting is now resumed.

SENATOR Miss. C. S. THOMAS: Mr. President, I rise to make my contribution to the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the year 2000-2001. An examination of the allocations to the social sectors of the society under these Estimates do not reveal any serious attempt by Government to tackle the several major social issues affecting the society. The Estimates, in short, appear to be merely business as usual as far as the social sectors are concerned.

I was pleased yesterday to hear the Leader of Government Business, Senator Philip Goddard, state that the development of our people must not be measured in terms of economic growth only, but also in terms of our social progress in the delivery of the services of health, education, housing and other social programmes. We, Sir, on this Side, are in total agreement with this but his fusion of economic prosperity with social development or transformation as this Government likes to refer to it is not reflected in the Estimates.

We hear much about social transformation in Barbados but if we are to achieve true social transformation in this country it must take place through the vehicles of increased opportunities to work, of increased opportunities to acquire education and skills by the provision of ready access to quality health services, by the provision of housing, particularly low income housing, by the provision of services for our most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the society. Among these are the disabled, the elderly, and I would include another category that is not normally lumped under this Head, and that is young single mothers in

Barbados at the lower end of the socio-economic scale; by the provision also of security for our people by way of measures to curb crime and violence in the society. Those at the lower end of the socio-economic ladder are in special need of these social services and they would not have the financial resources to provide for many of these without the assistance of the Government.

Sir, while these may constitute an ideal framework to social transformation in Barbados the reality is that despite the claims of this Government of economic prosperity and of sustained growth for the last 6 or 7 years of which we heard much yesterday in this Chamber and claims of unprecedented low levels of unemployment in this country, opportunities for work in good paying jobs are not readily available, particularly for young women at the lower end of the social ladder.

In Barbados, there continues to be a worrying trend of high unemployment levels among young single mothers some of whom despair at their plight and have little expectation or confidence that the system will provide for them and for their children in the foreseeable future. The educational system has admitted to producing as much as 70 per cent school leavers without certification. The system continues to focus on the narrow remaining 30 per cent leaving little confidence in the system by many of our children.

The provision of quality health service in Barbados has diminished over the last five years under this Barbados Labour Party Government.

Quality nursing care is under threat by an exodus of nurses in search of better opportunities. The situation at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was recently highlighted by the Commission of Enquiry into the QEH, better known as the Haynes Commission. The average Barbadian also no longer has access to low income housing because of an inadequate housing policy by this Government.

This Government has presided over dramatic increases in the price of land and property over the last 5 years. Its land policies seem to favour and encourage foreign ownership rather than local ownership of property. We have had a recent example in which the Prime Minister of Barbados waived the property transfer tax formerly charged to foreign nationals who purchase property in Barbados while at the same time doubling the property transfer tax paid by the local Barbadian when he is selling his property. These exorbitant increases very often fuelled by the same foreign ownership are steadily making it impossible for the average Barbadian, particularly the low income Barbadian, to own his or her own home.

There is still much to be done by way of advancing the plight of the disabled. Perhaps there is a need to address

disability legislation so as to ensure and guarantee certain rights and privileges to this vulnerable group.

In similar vein, there is much that remains to be addressed on behalf of the elderly. Our security in Barbados is under serious threat. In the current environment of crime and violence, many Barbadians no longer feel safe in their homes, and if the situation is not addressed this will also threaten our tourist dollars and undermine the so-called economic gains of the past few years.

I turn specifically now to the area of health under Head 23 of the Estimates. The current Minister of Health acknowledged in this Chamber yesterday that he is aware of the many serious problems being faced at our primary health care institution, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He made reference to the Haynes Report and he stated that Government has set up, or will be setting up, a committee to work at formulating legislation to facilitate the implementation of some of the recommendations of the Commission, particularly the proposed change in its operating structure, and I assume by this that the Minister was referring to the proposed establishment of a Statutory Board of Management for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

While we are pleased, Sir, that the Government finally recognises the need to address the administrative problems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, there are still several problems which can be addressed immediately. Certainly, with the claims in this Chamber yesterday of buoyant unprecedented revenue levels in the country and with the claims on behalf of Senator Barker that notwithstanding the fact that the economy has chronic diabetes that they are still able to manage it well and keep it above water, and particularly, in light of the fact that the Prime Minister is on record as saying he is prepared to spend whatever funds are necessary to provide the country with an effective health care system, these problems which I am about to highlight are problems which the Minister should be able to address in the very near future.

I am sure that the Minister is aware that there continues to be inadequate maintenance of essential equipment at the Queen Elisabeth Hospital. Dialysis machines are already in short supply at the hospital. We have a situation currently prevailing at the hospital where three of the ten dialysis machines are not operational and two of the remaining seven are malfunctioning. The net effect of this, Sir, which I do not have to spell out for the Chamber, is that these patients whose very survival is dependent on the ready availability and access to these machines are placed in jeopardy. In some cases, Sir, patients who are normally allocated five hours on the machine have had to reduce those hours to four. Those who are normally allocated four hours have had to be content with three and hope, by the grace of God, that that is sufficient to keep their kidneys functioning as they should.

Surgical equipment, equipment in the radiology department and, in fact, equipment throughout the hospital as a whole is in short supply and inadequately maintained.

I am puzzled as to why Government would be prepared to invest substantial sums of money in capital equipment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and not be prepared to institute a proper and efficient maintenance programme to ensure that this equipment continues to function properly. Sir, maintenance personnel at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital need to be properly trained. They need to be trained in specialist areas so that they can do routine spot checks on these machines so that you do not have a situation where an essential item of equipment is lost to the doctors because of inadequate maintenance. I am told that when the maintenance personnel are called in that sometimes equipment is with the engineers for two or three months before they are returned to the ward. Sir, such a system would go a long way towards reducing costs at the hospital as well.

1.30 p.m.

It is known that certain items of essential equipment with a life span of about ten years have become obsolete in two or three years because of inadequate maintenance. I believe it is only common sense, Sir, we will all agree, that that falls under no other heading but wastage and negligence and that loss falls clearly on the backs of taxpayers who then have to find the funds for Government to replace the equipment.

Another problem which I must draw to the attention of the Minister, although I know that he is already aware, is the problem of the defective air-conditioning system at the hospital. This problem was drawn to the attention of Government several years ago.

Government was advised that the system needed to be changed as it would always give problems because of the manner in which it was set up but my information is that the advice was ignored and that nothing was done to rectify the problem with the air-conditioning system. As a result, we now have a situation at the hospital, Sir, where the Ophthalmology Department and the Pediatrics Outpatient Department have been recently closed and relocated because of respiratory illnesses contracted by staff as a result of inadequate maintenance of that air-conditioning system. I am told that the problem is fungus that is growing in the system and the air-conditioning unit has also caused problems in the Obstetrics and Gynaecology Department but that department was not so fortunate to be relocated because there is no way to relocate them to, so they are now forced to work in the heat with the aid of a fan. These are pregnant women, Sir, that we are speaking about. I do not need to go into detail about the

discomfort which these women will face on going to the hospital because I am sure that we are all in here well aware.

Sir, I will give you an example of how ridiculous the maintenance programme at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is and this again affects pregnant women. The delivery beds at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, I understand, are on wheels so that it is easy to move them around, and those wheels must lock into position so that...

Asides.

SENATOR Miss C. S. THOMAS: Well, I do not need to go into that either because you do not want to have a pregnant woman sailing down one of the corridors or from one end of the room to the other because Government will then have another problem on their hands with some serious compensation for the pregnant woman. Sir, I am told that not one of the wheels is in good working order and that none of them can lock into position. The little thing that I just spoke about where the bed rolls away is not uncommon at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and we have to thank God that we have some males around there to assist in making sure that these women do not get injured.

Sir, there is also a problem of which I am sure the Minister is also aware and that is the perennial problem of absence of basic supplies such as linens, beddings, swabs and what have you. I do not know if the problem is inadequate planning. I do not know whether the problem is availability of funds but whatever the problem is, it is unacceptable that those basic items are not available for use. We brag in the Caribbean that we have the leading hospital.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss C. S. THOMAS: If we continue at this rate we will not have it any longer even if we still do. Sir, I do not need to belabour this point because we all know that these are essential things that our doctors need as tools and that the persons who will be most affected by the absence of these services and by the equipment are those persons at the lower end of the socio-economic ladder. Some of us can take a quick trip to Trinidad, some can take a quick trip to Jamaica, some can fly off to the U.S.A. to get proper medical treatment but the poor people in this country have to use the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I am asking the Minister to look into these matters and to look into them quickly.

Sir, I mentioned earlier the problem with the nurses. I am not going to spend too much time on the nurses because an hour will be devoted to the nurses a little later on in this Chamber.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss C. S. THOMAS: I will give the nurses a little support.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss C. S. THOMAS: Not a little support. I will give them a lot of support because they deserve a lot of support. I understand that the problem with the shortage of nurses at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is now acute. I understand that the nurses who are still on the job are very low in morale. They are frustrated. They need an urgent improvement in their working conditions and they are just looking for the first opening to leave us and go off to the UK principally and wherever they can get better conditions of service.
2.50 p.m.

Because of the shortage, Sir, they are forced to work in extremely difficult conditions and I am told that finding a substitute, if a nurse is ill, is a very big problem and causes serious administrative problems for the running of the Ward, particularly at night. I am told that the absence of adequate nursing staff – and I am speaking about numbers here now and not quality – is causing a disruption to the operation of the surgical theatres at the hospital, because there are just not enough nurses to man the theatres. As a result, you may have a theatre that is available for operations but it just sits there because there are no nurses to man the theatre.

The result of that is, Sir, that very often the victims again are poor people. The people who cannot pay for private surgery and who are coming through the hospital to have surgery performed through the State are short-listed week after week, and wait for months before they can see the operating theatre to get whatever their particular problem might be, mended.

Sir, that is not good enough because if this Government is talking about social transformation, we all agree that health has to be a priority and provision for proper health services for the poor must be a priority of our Government.

There is a shortage of nurses. I am told that sometimes at night there is one nurse manning a ward, between the hours of 9.00 p.m. to 7.00 a.m. Sometimes this single nurse is dealing with as many as 25 to 30 patients on a ward and this creates an unsafe environment both for the patients and for the nurses.

If you get a situation where a particular patient requires more than normal attention on a particular night, that nurse has to be absorbed in the care of that particular patient and the others are forced to just sit there and wait until morning when someone comes in to relieve that nurse.
3.00 p.m.

The potential danger in that practice is not only to the patient. There is also a potential danger to the nurses. I will give you an example. I know of a case of a young nurse in her thirties who was placed in this same position where she was on duty during the night on a ward in which there were principally elderly patients, and a patient climbed to the top of the rail and she was alerted by another patient on the ward to come and help this patient. She ran, and as instinctively as any of us would do, tried to catch her before she fell. She did catch her but the problem is that she was not strong enough to raise the patient back into the bed and she was forced to stay in that position until a patient could go and call for help. The result of that scenario is that at thirty something years old she is now disabled. Her back was damaged. She cannot work. She was boarded and forced to retire early, with consequential financial problems. She had a mortgage like anyone else. She had children like anyone else and in one act of goodwill and care in the performance of her duties her life has essentially been ruined at such an early age and she is at present, I am sorry to say, still fighting for some compensation for her injury, some two and a half plus years after the accident has occurred. So you would understand why the nurses don't feel motivated to stay at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, because if you can be injured in this manner and then the administration is so lacking in sympathy and compassion, why would you want to stay?

The other problem which is being experienced by the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the Minister highlighted yesterday in his presentation, and this is the problem of abandonment of the elderly by their relatives at the hospital. No reasonable person can blame the Government for this. The Government is responsible for the abandonment, and I agree with the Senator that the primary way in which we must deal with that problem is to find a way to influence families to care for their own. That is the best approach to that problem, but in the absence of this Government still has a responsibility to these people. I have been told that the presence of these elderly persons on the ward is creating a problem of scarce beds for patients who need acute care.

I understand the problem is being experienced principally in the medical wards where, on four of these wards, you can find a heavy contingent of the elderly, and to a lesser extent some of the surgical wards. If we average that the stay for the average person in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is three to four days and an elderly person is kept at the hospital for two to three months, then by my estimation we are denying between 15 to 20 people who need acute care, the use of the beds at the hospital. The situation now is considered as acute and Government has to devise some means of dealing with these problems. I am in full support of proper care for the elderly and I know that another senator will probably make a lengthy presentation on behalf of the elderly a little later as well. However, there is no discounting the contribution which the elderly have made to this society.

I am of the view, as are all the other Senators, that we must take every measure possible to make sure that they are comfortable in the evening of their days.

I agree with the proposal for a national awareness programme because I believe that if Government does have to provide the physical facility in which these persons are to be housed, then their families must also be encouraged to continue to interact with them because the State cannot provide the emotional sustenance that those persons need.

With this I am making a proposal or a suggestion to the Government. We are told that the existing facilities are full and that there is a great demand for space at the present facilities for the elderly in Barbados. We have a building in the North of this island called the St. Joseph Hospital that has been sitting doing nothing for the past few years and I am saying to the Government that if there is no intention on their part to convert this institution into a second hospital, then I am suggesting that this facility is ideally located and its environment in terms of its landscape is ideally suited for the care of the elderly, and I am suggesting that a residential facility together with a facility which provides or specialises in the treatment of diseases principally affecting the elderly be established at the St. Joseph Hospital to cater to the needs of the elderly including recreational facilities for persons who are not residents of the institution. I said, Sir, that this suggestion is based on the premise that the building will not be used by the Government as a second hospital.

The Democratic Labour Party still supports the establishment of a second hospital in this island because we believe that health care should be decentralised and that persons who live in the country areas should have ready access to primary health care. We believe also, Sir, in a similar vein that the public should be educated to make more use of the polyclinics as primary health care facilities, to alleviate some of the congestion currently being experienced in the Accident and Emergency Department of the hospital.

Still on health, Sir, I wish to turn now to the solid waste management project and to pose a few questions to the Government. I turn first to the Greenland facility. I want to ask first, Sir, how much has been spent on the Greenland facility to date. The Minister should get his pen and start noting. Has the IDB released resources allocated to the project? When will the facility become operational? What contingency plans are in place to deal with land slippage on the roads leading to Greenland? What is the truth in relation to the leaks and the landfill pond? How many persons have been trained and at what levels? When will the contract to manage the Greenland landfill be put out to public tender? In short, what is the cause of the long delay? Those are but a few questions on the Greenland landfill which I hope the Minister will address before the close of the Estimates debate.

I turn now to the South Coast Sewerage Project, Sir, and I wish to pose a few questions also to the Minister on this project. Is there a new target date for completion? Are there additional costs incurred consequential upon the change in contractors? Who is to bear these additional costs? How many persons are being trained to manage the facility? At what levels are the recruits being trained? Can the Government give the assurance to South Coast residents that offensive odours will not be emanating from the plant, thereby disrupting the enjoyment of their homes and businesses and their state of health? If the latter should occur and there should be adverse development, will there be an acceptance by Government of ready compensation to those persons who are injured and whose health is affected? Will there be ready compensation by the Government for the injury? On this occasion the Government will not be able to pay handouts of \$500 as compensation.

3.10 p.m.

I also wish to pose a few questions to the Minister under the Head of the Environmental Sanitation Unit. Does the Government provide workers of the Sanitation Authority with protective respiratory equipment? If the answer is "yes", are these workers educated as to the value of the use of this equipment? Why has the Sanitation Authority not insisted that these workers use equipment on the job as part of their conditions of service to make sure that their health is protected? How often are workers on Sanitation Authority trucks, sewerage and land fill sites required to undergo thorough medical checks?

Finally, on health, I have to say that Senator Philip Goddard and I seldom see eye to eye, but again we seem to have common ground on the area of mental health. I will not spend too long on this, but I just wish to say that I am pleased to hear that the Government is also focussing on mental health care in Barbados, and I am pleased to hear that some attention will be given to the rehabilitation and renovation of the facility in Black Rock. It needs to be brought into the 21st century and I hope that when Government is addressing its attention to psychiatric care in Barbados that the focus will also be placed on increased counselling for mental health patients.

I believe, and I speak subject to correction on this, that at present in Barbados the focus on mental health care tends to be more by way of chemical injections where the person is treated with the latest medication for whatever problem they are suffering but I am told that there is very little time allocated, perhaps because of resources, to actually having one on one counselling services for these patients with qualified psychiatrists and psychologists. I am hoping that Government will place some emphasis on this because it seems that in Barbados with the current environment where there is so much social deviance being demonstrated, our

population will be in increasing need of counselling facilities. I would like to see a facility established so that persons who need medical attention at the psychiatric level are not stigmatised. At present, persons are hesitant, even when they are in dire need of care, to go to the Psychiatric Hospital because of the stigma that attaches to them if they are in there for even one day. I am hoping that Government will pay some attention to that aspect of the matter not only to the rehabilitation of the facility itself.

With that, Sir, I turn to education. The Government speaks constantly about educational reform by way of the EduTech programme. To date, no one outside of high-ranking officials at the Ministry of Education is in a position to speak in any depth on the EduTech programme. I do not have too much time to delve into that at the moment and there is little that I know about the issue, so I am asking that more information be given in the public domain about EduTech. I understand that there are reports of delays in the completion of the repairs to the physical plants at certain schools. I am told that particularly St. Leonard's School, Christ Church Boys and Westbury Schools are currently experiencing a great deal of disruption, and I am simply asking that Government move with speed to try to push along the repairs of the schools at a faster rate so that there is minimal disruption to the teaching of these students.

Sir, we believe that there is a need in Barbados to examine the educational system given the recent trend among our youth. There are too many of our children leaving school without certification. There is continual weak performance of students at CXC. There are too many children particularly in the newer secondary schools with low self-esteem and confidence and low expectations who leave school without being adequately equipped for the job market.

I believe that if we accept that our abilities and academic potential are not all equal then the system must take into consideration these inequalities and we therefore need to focus on the provision of a basic foundation for all in literacy and in numeracy. Increased attention should be paid to diversifying the subjects offered at the newer secondary schools so that students have the option to pursue a traditional academic line or to pursue a more technical or business oriented vocation.

There is a need for wider opportunities for professional achievement and certification in technical and vocational education to meet the changing needs of the labour market. This task cannot be left solely to the Polytechnic which can no longer accommodate the great demand for such areas of study. The Polytechnic has become too academic in its orientation to the extent that entry is no longer about technical competence but about the number of CXC's that you have. So the individual who may be skilled with his hands but is not in possession of CXC's still cannot be accommodated at that institution.

I believe that the system of co-education needs to be revisited. Again, I am very seldom in agreement with Dr. Richie Haynes but he made a few comments recently on the co-educational system in the country, and I believe that they are comments that we should pay some attention to.

Apart from the issue of distraction which speaks for itself, girls tend to develop earlier than boys and tend to be more disciplined and as a result tend to demonstrate academic excellence at an earlier stage leaving boys to feel marginalised at an early stage in their development. In the area of sports, there may be under-development in that there may not be enough boys in the classroom to field two opposing football or cricket teams and thus they are not sufficiently exposed to competitiveness in sports in sufficient degree that they can develop their potential to the fullest. The orientation of boys generally tend to be different from girls and the special needs and attention of boys could be more adequately focussed as a group if the teachers and counsellors are dealing with boys alone rather than a classroom integrated with girls.

The reality is that our boys are not performing as well as our girls and this is an observation that can be made from the primary schools right through to tertiary institutions such as the University of the West Indies. Perhaps a study needs to be done to ascertain the impact of the co-ed system and the lack of male teachers in the classrooms who can serve as role models to our boys in the system. I cannot support the call yesterday by Senator Alleyne for secondary school students to pay their own school fees. This is a measure that was introduced by the Democratic Labour Party Government as one of its social measures to ensure that every child has ready access ...
3.20 p.m.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss C. S. THOMAS: I am talking about the non-payment of school fees. Sir, the measure of non-payment of school fees, in case it is not understood is what I am speaking about, is a measure that was introduced by the Democratic Labour Party Government as one of its social measures to ensure that every child has ready access to secondary school education and is not deprived because of his or her economic circumstances, the benefits which the educational system has to offer.

We are absolutely opposed to any reversal of this measure. If the children are destroying furniture and equipment, then you have to look at the supervision of those children in the schools and if you can identify the culprits then they can be dealt with at the level of discipline. I believe that it is shameful that you can make a call such as this and at the same time make out a case for increasing the salaries

of Government Ministers. What is the justification for this when you are asking civil servants to take repayment of their eight percent in three tranches so as not to burden the economy? When you are asking the police who risk life and limb on a daily basis to hold strain and not to be asked to be treated as a special case and that they must wait until Government is revising wages and salaries for the entire civil service but this Government can come into this debate yesterday and ask for fees in secondary schools to be abolished.

Sir, there is also the issue of social deviance in schools. I had made a call in the Estimates of last year for guidance counsellors to be placed at the primary schools to tackle the psychological problems experienced by the children from early because we are told that those problems do not start in the secondary school but are very often brought from primary schools to secondary schools. I understand that there are counsellors in the secondary schools but we are asking that these be placed also in the primary schools. I am told that at present the practice is for many of the guidance counsellors in secondary schools to be used as substitute teachers and that this happens quite frequently. If that is the case, we are asking that this practice be stopped because it defeats the very purpose for which the guidance counsellors are in the schools.

Sir, I move now quickly to the Office of the Attorney General.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, two minutes of your allotment remains.

SENATOR Miss C. S. THOMAS: Thank you, Sir. Unfortunately I will have to leave the Attorney General for another occasion but in the two minutes allotted to me, Sir, I just wish to state briefly that Senator Williams stated earlier that the Prime Minister of Barbados stated that no one will be left behind.

Well, we know that they intend that the Democratic Labour Party be left behind but apart from the DEMS, the nurses are being left behind and are leaving in their numbers to the UK and other destinations because of inadequate conditions of service. The police are being left behind and despite their cries for improvement in their terms and conditions of service they are not being heard by the Government. The sanitation workers are being left behind, their terms and conditions of service are in need of revision and young single mothers are also being left behind who leave school ill-equipped and cannot find employment to support their children despite the claims of Government of unprecedented high levels of employment in this country.

Sir, with this, I repeat the premise on which I started that the Estimates of this current year do not adequately address the social problems in this country.

Thank you, Sir.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. President, I believe that the occasion of a debate like this is perhaps the most unique opportunity for Members of this Chamber to review, scrutinise and do an overview of Government's general operations and activities. Firstly, the financial and economic side of it but then other aspect like society services. It is the only opportunity in the Parliamentary calendar that is afforded to Members of this House. One Member, during his presentation, I think it was Senator Laurie, said that we do not have an opportunity to discuss reports and financial statements of agencies such as statutory boards and that is true. I think if there is one thing that we should demand as a people in terms of the Constitution Review is transparent governance and greater accountability in the operation of Government activities. No republic, none of these emotional and psychological things will add one *'tick or riddle'* to this question of good governance.

I believe that the opportunity will come for us to debate these matters. What the Estimates have been able to identify is a need for a very critical examination of Government's past and proposed activities. I think that it is an important occasion for us to identify and to scrutinise projects which are being either proposed or are ongoing. I think that the major sectors of the economy should come in for a very much closer examination. In terms of that sort of concept, I think having sat here for a day and a half, the principal spokespersons on both Sides of the divide have sought to address the subject in that context. There have been occasions of ego massaging and notwithstanding the cross talk, I do not think it has been a bad debate in that context.

3.30 p.m.

But a thorough examination of the Estimates will show that the demands and expectations of our people are now so high in the context of a population that is with a labour force that is reasonably well paid. It is a price structure that is the highest in the Caribbean that no Government of Barbados can adequately meet the high levels of expectations and standards that we have become accustomed to.

It is for this reason that so much emphasis should be paid to the control of wastefulness in our system. A substantial portion of Government's expenditure fall under the category of transfers and most of this is transferred to statutory boards, if you were to leave out \$45 million that is going to the University and the \$94 million that have been put in for pensions, over \$200 million of the current expenditure and \$45 million of the \$53 million allocated for capital expenditure as transfers will be going to a number of statutory boards.

I think that Boards such as the IDC, the Sanitation Services Authority, Transport Board, in small measure, and the like, some 10 or 12 of them, are going to be the recipients of this sum of money and it is here that my fear of accountability arises.

Sir, \$200 million in current expenditure and \$43 million in capital expenditure for statutory boards is a substantial sum of money in our context. Now, let me address what I consider to be one of the most frightening aspects of our lack of accountability.

I read where a Ministry of Government a few days ago announced in the House of Assembly that the Transport Board over the past three financial years, had accumulative deficit operations of \$40 million. I do not know if the Minister was aware of what he was saying in the context of his criticism of his predecessors. But, that is a very serious matter given that in 1994 the Transport Board's deficit of operations was \$1 million.

I speak about the Transport Board with some knowledge. I believe I have said in this Chamber before that I had been associated with it from its inception in 1955, again, as Permanent Secretary and Accounting Officer in the Ministry of Transport and Works between 1982 and 1986 and more recently 1991-1994, as Chairman of the Transport Board.

The Transport Board will always be a problem but no Government of Barbados can get rid of it and that is a statement of feeling and a statement of fact. We have been talking about education, we have been talking about health, all necessary to social services, but if there is no public transportation, there can be no health, there can be no education, there can be no work, there can be nothing. Therefore, the matter of public transport and roads have as high a priority in the order of things as any of the other social services and a very immediate priority.

I remember that at one stage the Transport Board's workers were expecting a revision of pay and some back pay of \$2.3 million and there were delays in the system in getting this money ready. It came to my attention as Permanent Secretary that the staff were planning on a Friday at 2:00 p.m. to go on a strike. Just think what that would have done. A Friday, with all the children in the system on the road, the workers going home for the weekend, and they were going on a strike. I had a very agreeable Minister and we devised a plan, which we could do in those days. We cannot do it now because there is nothing called a Transport levy. We devised a plan of borrowing from the Transport levy, since the Minister had the sole authority to determine how expenditure was to be done on the recommendation of the Board, and we put into action this borrowing of \$2.3 million, getting it to the Transport Board at 1.00 p.m. The strike was to be at 2.00 p.m.

Sir, we averted a serious problem, but I got a stinker of a letter from the Ministry of Finance, the Director of Finance and Planning and I said to take me before the Accounts Committee. The point I am making is that decisions have to be made sometimes. I heard great criticism in the public service. I have been out of it for nine years and therefore I am not in a good position to defend it at this stage.

Aside.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: I will say one thing, Sir, and it is this, that the chickens have come home to roost. The criticism is that I am hearing of the public service and am not shocked at them. The public service has undergone in the last 26 years the most serious change that has ever taken place in the Barbados Government. That Constitutional change in 1974 has now left us with many of the problems that we are hearing. Somebody attacked Permanent Secretaries. I do not have to defend them. I was one for 20 years but let me say that until 1974 there was a definition of the term Permanent Secretary in the Constitution.
3.40 p.m.

It says that he is that public officer who is subject to the general directive of the Minister. He is responsible for the administration of the Ministry and departments within that Ministry. The Constitutional change of 1974 says that task of being responsible for the administration would now go to the Minister. Let me say the system of recruiting of a large portion of the public service completely changed with that amendment and a lot of people who are in charge now are products of that recruitment system. Do not be surprised that you have some of these problems. We who were in before the constitutional change were able because of our own background knowledge and everything else, to continue largely as we were going before. I think the Ministers respected us in many respects for that, but respect has to be gained because of the knowledge and the quality of those who want that respect. I believe that the Ministers, for a long time, continued in large measure, as if there had not been that constitutional change.

I recall being summoned by a Minister and asked that I should do something which involved money, which I considered to be imprudent. I know that all the penalty I could get for that was a transfer for not doing what he said. Therefore, I wrote the Minister a nice letter explaining why I didn't think we should proceed in that way and that under the appropriate regulation I considered it to be imprudent expenditure. Needless to say, I was transferred within two months but that did not affect my relationship with Ministers. The point I want to make is that I could stand up to the Minister because of experiences before. Few of the people who have succeeded to this can stand up, do not mind they have higher education; few of them can stand up to Ministers and guide, not stand up in the sense to oppose, but guide

Ministers as some of us in the old days were able to do. I therefore want it to be clearly understood that I do not deny that there must be serious problems going on in the public service, but I believe, as I said earlier, that is a result of the chickens coming home to roost.

Now, my defence of the public service is limited to that. I think the opportunity will come when we will debate the whole question of the constitution, if we do, to go and scope at length on this whole question of accountability and good governance. Why is the Transport Board in this state. If the country has got to find \$40 million to make good the deficit with the Transport Board, at the same time underwriting the capital expenditure for new buses by way of a guaranteed loan for the Transport Board where two installments of new buses had been injected in the complement within the last four or five years, all supplied together 95 buses are here already in the island and 15 more are to come that is not exactly good management. You do not bring all of your buses in at the same time because within a year all are subject to relicensing. You have to withdraw them within a given time to have them licensed. It would have been better to bring the numbers in tranches, rather than rush all of them in like that. I think that history will show that whenever the Transport Board got new buses, the expenditure went up, it did not come down. I would like to warn you that because you now got 95 new buses and another 15 are to come, that does not make the service any better. If the transportation service is a social as well as a commercial activity, then pay the Transport Board adequately for the social service that it is rendering.

A great portion of the passengers carried by the Transport Board are school children and other persons in the community who do not pay fares. Some of those people travel on the bus twice, four times a day, up and down Barbados. I know an old lady who tells me she goes to St. Philip, St. Peter, St. Lucy, twice a week. She doesn't have to pay fares. Can we afford that? Can we go on with that sort of situation? Somebody needs to regulate what has to be done at the Transport Board in the area of the social service that the Board renders.

On the other hand, when the Board puts in its claims for refunds there is never enough money to pay them. If you have a situation where a Board on 6th September, 1994 was budgeted to have a deficit of \$1 million on current operations and you now find that it is \$40 million in the red, something must have happened in between there to cause that. Do not let us beat around the bush.

After the great financial and economic difficulties that the country experienced, the Transport Board's staff was reduced from 1600 to less than 700. You cannot have the same management structure for 700 as you had for 1600. The

staff was cut to its barest at management level but in comes a new administration and within a year you have the Chief of Security, the Chief Financial Officer, the Chief this, the Chief the other, at fantastic salaries. That creates the sort of situation that makes this question of increased deficits possible. Other staff at all levels were put in at the Transport Board.

How do you account for this sort of activity, besides that a Minister of Transport says this is the case, that we have this substantial deficit? The Board does not submit reports to Parliament, but even if it submits them nobody debates these things. Our system of governance, needs to be completely reformed, to set up a committee system where every subject of government falls under a committee. Those committees are properly serviced and Ministers as well as public officers must be summoned before these committees and made to give account of their stewardship, underpaying of penalty. I think this is an important thing. If we do not do this, this system of wastage will continue forever and ever, amen.

The Transport Board is only one of those Boards. We have now had 80 Boards established over the last 30 years. We have moved from 30 in 1966 to 80. All governments of Barbados established new board, the newest ones were the Urban Development Commission and the Rural Development Commission. In addition to boards, we have gone for special companies. We have the Needham's Point Development Company, and here again a Minister a few days ago is reported to have announced that a new arrangement will be entered into for the management and ownership of the Hilton Hotel with Hilton International. I would have thought, in the normal course of business, if you knocked down a hotel to rebuild it, that you would have established these agreements before you did that. I would have thought that it would be in order since 1997 when negotiations were going on with the Hilton International, and I had assumed that by then we had settled all these matters like who would finance the reconstruction of the Hilton. How can we as a people feel happy when we are shocked from time to time by announcements which make us wonder whether serious business is being taken seriously in these matters by these newer institutions that we have.

3.50 p.m.

The Hilton Hotel was located in perhaps the best site in Barbados for such an institution. That Needham's Point peninsular, I call it, and all the area around it, is perhaps the most valuable land there is in Barbados. If it is the most valuable land and it belongs to the people of Barbados, I would hope that it never goes out of the possession of the people of Barbados. It is not unusual in Trinidad and other countries where major development projects take place and the land is leased.

We know that the Empire Theatre was leased by Government in 1905 or something like that. Why cannot we have an arrangement where the Hilton International or whoever is going to have that valuable land up there that belongs to the people of Barbados have it leased to them, and even though Government might use it as equity in the new organisation, I think it is important to protect the inheritance of the people of Barbados.

Now, I do not know that this has happened. I do not think many of us know what has happened. I am saying what we want is transparency in these matters and that is part of good governance. Transparency and accountability are the soul of good governance.

Now, as I said, Ministers have made these pronouncements and therefore they must be taken seriously if Ministers make them, but these are questions the people should be asking. What is the arrangement for this new Hilton that we are talking about?

Here was a hotel, constructed 34 years ago that was found to be not suitable. I have seen hotels, hospitals and those things 100 years or more old and they were simply adjusted and changed to suit the times, but we have knocked it down at a time when we have not yet finalised the arrangements for building it back.

Aside.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: I do not want to get into that sort of argument.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, try not to be distracted by asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: One of our problems here has been, and we have heard it from several speakers, the fact that three very important hotel plants have been withdrawn over the past number of years. First it was the Paradise, then Sandy Lane and now it is the Hilton. This affects our tourism. The one that really hurts is Paradise. I understand that today, this very now, 100 Mexicans are occupying parts of Paradise because they are involved in the tiling and other works for the new Sandy Lane. If it can be occupied six years after it ceases to go into operation, should not something have been done somewhere? I am not blaming the Government here. I am only saying that we have that wasted space down there that is now being occupied by workers who have been brought in to work on the new Sandy Lane. This is what I mean when I talk about wastage and accountability.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: When I look through the Estimates, one of the things that I cannot reconcile – and I hope I get an explanation – is I am not sure how expenditures are allocated to recurrent as against capital. Now, in my days as a working civil servant we had a particular definition of capital expenditure. We saw it as money allocated for special projects, money allocated for construction in special areas and there was a certain temporariness about capital allocations. Every year you got them. Sooner or later if expenditure must go on in a particular activity it moves to recurrent. We also took the line that recurrent expenditure as far as possible should be chargeable on taxation and capital expenditure largely on borrowings.

I see a move across in one case here from the opposite way, recurrent to capital, not substantial, only half a million dollars. I see that institutions that looked to me to have some permanence like Urban Development and Rural Development are kept on capital. I see that Poverty Alleviation has been entirely transferred to capital. I would be glad for some explanation why this sort of arrangement applies. There must be a reason. I hope it is not a reason that has only an accounting connotation, because then we will draw all sorts of conclusions. That is a feature of the Estimates which I find to be growing and different. Organisations that have some permanence in our society, where part of their expenditure has to be recurrent, have the whole sum of money placed under capital.

Now, why is the sum of money allocated for statutory pensions in these Estimates so much less than statutory pensions last year? There must be a good reason. I thought we were having an aging population. In the normal course of events this would mean that there should be an increase, and when I look at the history of the allocation, it has had an annual increase except that the statutory, on this occasion, is the one you cannot change. The law says you must get a pension on a basis. I have not heard that there has been any great demise of the 7 000 pensioners, nor any cut-down in the number who are retired, so that is something which has dropped from \$81 million down to \$69 million when in the actual revised Estimates for the current year there has been an increase from \$94.6 million to \$98 million. These are explanations I believe that somebody could give easily but then we do not want a situation where we are misunderstanding how these things are arrived at.

4.00 p.m.

Government agreed in 1998 and the Prime Minister announced in the 1998 Budget that there would be a transfer of non-contributory old age pension paid under the National

Insurance Scheme to the Consolidated Fund and that it would take effect in respect of persons who became eligible from a future date.

I see an allocation made for it that seems less than it was because the numbers of old age pensioners, the non-contributory, have largely remained static. The expectations that we all had that there would be a reduction over time and a greater transfer to contributory pensions has not been achieved simply because people are living longer and therefore those who had not contributed to the scheme like those who contributed are living longer and therefore the numbers have not dropped.

I want to find out what is the rationale to the figure that has been given in the Estimates which seems to be less, from \$4.6 million last time to \$3.7 million this year. Why are these figures in a situation where the dynamics of the demographic situation is such that we are rather increasing. How come now that the allocation is less than it used to be? I do not wish to belabour the point of accountability, but I need to say that we must institute measures of ensuring that public officers and Ministers, Statutory Boards and CEOs comply with the requirement of the law. In each case there must be a financial statement of accounts and a report of operations laid before Parliament three or six months before the end of the financial year. You have to ensure that that happens, and you can only make it happen if you institute, in my view, in the Constitution some provision that would make it compulsory under pain of penalty, and that there is a committee system of Parliament which allows each one of those reports to be scrutinised by a committee and that the persons who are involved in preparing them – the Minister has to bring them to Parliament, the CEOs of the Boards and the Permanent Secretaries have to do them in the Ministries – be summoned and themselves be investigated by the committee.

If we do not do this, there is nothing under the present arrangement to penalise any public officer if he fails to do as the Auditor General so pointed out, to do the things that should be done. If you want to fine him under the Financial Administration and Audit Act that is one of the most difficult things in the world to happen. He can say he is the Accounting Officer but his Sub-accounting Officer was responsible for keeping the accounts and he did not do a good job.

I believe that this matter of accountability and this matter of transparency must be seriously placed at the highest level of the reform agenda both in terms of the Constitution and in our public sector reform. I have made my recommendations and suggestions on both of these matters to the Constitutional Review Committee and to the Public Sector Reform. I went before the Constitutional Review Committee. I see this as the greatest stumbling block to progress and there is this substantial waste that is going on. If you read this Report you will see the number of people

who have issued things without the necessary back up for it, the whole question of people receiving increases in pay that nobody else authorised. That sort of thing. I am not involving Ministers, but if Ministers come into a system and do not know any better and nobody knows how to put them right, then we will have this chaos forever and ever.

I have had the good or bad fortune of having worked with three changes of administration and therefore I think I speak of what I know. You sit down with your Minister and be honest with him. Look at the financial rules, all the governing legislation and the systems that you have and if the Minister goes wrong in spite of that he, too, will pay the penalty.

Let me give one anecdote. I remember I had a Minister who was a master at parish pumping. He did a grand job in his constituency. One day in a one to one I said, "Minister, you know, people have done this before and lost. I think it would be better at this stage if you were to do projects elsewhere." He said, "You ever won an election yet?"

What I am trying to say is that I could talk to him and I talked to him. In the upcoming elections, he of course, lost miserably. He had done 151 roads in Barbados and over 50 were in his constituency. We had 225 street lights. All that was given by the Light and Power Company and he had 60 in his constituency. What I am trying to say is that Ministers will fall on their own weight if they do not do the right thing. But at the same time, the civil servants have a right to guide them early in their administration and at the same time you have to get on with your Minister. You cannot work with a Minister and not get on with him. You have to get on with your Minister. You have to point out to him sometimes that he is going wrong.

I was lucky to serve with certain people who are now members of this House but we have been good friends for many years and I understand the temperament of a man who has to face an election in five years and the necessity to get runs on the tins. I can understand that. I hope that in spite of what might be seen as a criticism of certain aspects of the Estimates that it will be seen in the light of constructive criticism. Thank you very much.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. President, after a day and more than a half of debate it is clear that this House enjoys, I must not say superior but I can certainly say a superb level of debate on the Estimates and on all other matters.
4.10 p.m.

Mr. President, I rise to speak in support of the Annual Estimates for the year 2000/2001. Before I get into the substantive area that I propose to cover, namely the area of tourism and related matters, I would want to perhaps rebut a point that was made by Senator Mascoll, the wife of the

other Senator Mascoll. We have heard a lot about nurses and I know we are going to hear about nurses again but I think it is a tremendous credit to the Government....

Mr. PRESIDENT left the Chair and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT took the Chair.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Please continue.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: I think it is of tremendous credit to the Government and people of Barbados, Mr. Deputy President, that the many nurses who have found it so easy to immigrate to other lands and to obtain work have clearly been trained and educated by the system in Barbados. So that while on the one hand we may feel that we are losing expert personnel, at the same time, we have to give ourselves credit where that credit is clearly due.

Mr. Deputy President, it is well documented that tourism is the world's largest and fastest growing industry. The World Tourism Organisation projects that the international tourist arrivals worldwide would grow by an annual average of about 3.6% would rise from 612 million arrivals in 1997 to reach the fairly outstanding figure of 937 million in another ten years or so. It is arguable that the Caribbean is perhaps the most tourism dependent region in the world and the Caribbean Tourism Organisation reports that the Caribbean received just about 3% of world tourism and of this, you might be surprised to know that Barbados only accounts for 2.5% of total Caribbean tourism. We in Barbados must therefore, look at our tourism from a broader perspective and see where and how we fit within the larger picture.

Statistics for Caribbean tourism and Barbados tourism show that the entire region is a very small player in the context of the world tourism market. However, the region has, over the years, developed a brand to the extent that when one says Caribbean it conjures up an image of luxury and relaxation and it is still a 'must see' destination for a significant number of the world's tourists. That brand also carries with it an image of high quality tourism and Barbados has clearly been an exemplar in this regard.

For many many years we have been hearing about the super luxury item called Sandy Lane Hotel. It should therefore come as no surprise to the Honourable Senators in this House that in recent times Barbados has won several major international awards as a salute to our quest for excellence. The Bridgetown Port has won awards on five occasions for outstanding performance, the most recent being in 1998 when it won an award from the Caribbean Shipping Agency for the most improved efficiency. You will be pleased to know that contenders included Puerto Rico and Panama. These are clearly not lightweights when we come to talk about international shipping.

In 1999 we won the Caribbean Hotel Association Award as the leading destination for tourism promotion in the region. You will also be pleased to know that Grantley Adams International Airport has just been voted as the best international airport of the year in the Caribbean. These are all vital cogs in the wheel of our tourism product and our successes in these areas do suggest that the Government and people of Barbados have been performing far better than is indicated in the Ernst and Young Report. People who have been critical of how the sector has been performing must recognise that tourism success presents a challenge for small island destinations like Barbados wherever in the world they may be located.

We are faced, Honourable Senators, with the task of maintaining competitiveness in the global market place characterised by new destinations and new products as well as increased competition from within the same countries from whence our tourists come. This is particularly so in the case of the United States where you will notice every day on television there are strong advertising campaigns telling Americans to stay home for their holidays because we love Texas. I am sure that you would have all seen the gold advertisements for North Carolina and in many cases the budget of historic towns in the US eclipses the entire budget of the Barbados Tourism Authority when it comes to marketing. We do not even need to mention famous destination within the US like Disney and Las Vegas. We also face the issue of how we balance our tourism development with sustaining the industry's base, our natural cultural heritage and social attributes and the quality of life which Barbadians enjoy.

During the 60s and 70s, Barbados experienced an extended period of growth in the industry and in those days we had little concern for what our competitors were doing. However, as we hit the 80s it was clear that it could not be business as usual and there was significant increase in competition from our Caribbean neighbours.

Barbados in those early days was able to turn to the US market and we enjoyed success in that market for a time. However, with the bankruptcy of airlines like Eastern and Pan Am in the late 80s our tourists arrivals from the US were severely impacted. Those two airlines were major carriers of traffic out of the US market and with their demise our US business rapidly declined from a peak of 175 000 long stay arrivals in 1987 to 119 000 long stay arrivals in 1991. That market has remain more or less flat in the region of 110 000 long stay arrivals for the past seven years. Our UK market, as we all know, has been the strong market in the decade of the 90s. In fact, our UK arrivals have continued to perform beyond expectations and indications are, that this strong growth will continue well into the future. You might be interested to know that in the year 1999, between the period January to August, there was an 11% increase in arrivals from the UK market.

We also often forget that the Caribbean is a major source of tourists for us in Barbados and the Caribbean market has been registering continuous growth. We are, in fact, forecasting, Mr. Deputy President, that we will receive approximately 91 000 arrivals from within the Caribbean region during the year 2000. In fact, between January to October, 1999 as compared with that same period in 1998, we registered an 11% growth.

Our other sources developed, over the last twenty years, have tended to be opportunistic. The European and South American business has been developed primarily with chartered airlines and tour operators whom we know have little long term commitment to Barbados as a destination. Furthermore, while we speak glibly of developing the European and other markets, Barbados has not really developed a strategy to meet the long term needs of visitors who speak foreign languages. I would commend to all the example of Aruba which has a very strong school based system of teaching Dutch, Spanish and English to all students from the earliest ages so that they are able to fit very effectively into their tourism sector, catering to all tourists who do not speak the native language.

Mr. Deputy President, there have been many trends which have affected the tourism industry in recent years. As I have said earlier, the industry is a global industry and it is becoming more and more important to the national economies of the world. This has resulted therefore, in the developed and developing countries in the world launching aggressive growth strategies to develop their own tourism incentives thus creating strong domestic competition for us. Developed and developing countries have also entered the market place with lower cost products and they have formed partnerships with large tour operators who can capitalise on high volume and low cost Barbados business. This has created stiff competition for us and in the Caribbean region and we only have to think of places like the Dominican Republic and Cuba where there have been effective partnerships between airlines, charter operators and tour operators who invest in the tourism plant and can offer low cost.

The impact of this kind of competition for Cuba and the Dominican Republic has been especially felt in our German market. The global nature of this business has also fostered the formation of global alliances among airlines and hotel management companies. In recent years we have seen the emergence of vertically integrated companies being formed to cater to and to own every aspect of the tourism industry. We now have companies which not only own airlines but also have tour operators as subsidiaries, travel agencies, hotels as well as tourist attractions and this creates, as I have said before, massive economies of scales which allow them to reduce cost and operate high volume, low cost business with tremendous profit. Despite the many challenges however, studies show that Barbados enjoyed and

continues to enjoy a superb reputation as a tourist destination and they show that our strengths lie in our good infrastructure: our beaches, our wide range of quality accommodation and our excellent niche activities and friendly people.

4.20 p.m.

Over the years Barbados has emerged as a premier Caribbean destination and the tourism sector has, in large measure, provided the fuel for economic growth since the 1970s. We are optimistic that this will continue as we project that tourism will earn in the region of \$1.4 billion for us in the year 2000.

We have to remember, however, that when we speak about tourism that we are not talking about developing a tourism product for visitors alone, but also for Barbadians. When we speak about our tourism product, we speak about the totality of the island of Barbados. We therefore recognise that it is important to promote the sector and its importance in the economy but in any event as a Barbadian, we also recognise that investment in a top quality tourism product is an investment in Barbados for Barbadians and that is one of the hallmarks of this Barbados Labour Party administration.

When we recognise that there is bound to be construction, when we recognise that construction is bound to cause discomfort in many areas such as in the case of the South Coast Sewerage Project, the refurbishment of the Harrison's Cave and so on, we have to recognise that Barbadians too have a right to clean air, a good water supply and so on. So we have to accept that when we spend a lot of effort and energy developing Barbados that we are developing it for every Barbadian first.

I would like to stress here that tourism is not only important because it earns foreign exchange, it is also important because it provides the opportunity for Barbadians to receive world class service to and from fellow Barbadian nationals.

Mr. Deputy President, whether we want to believe it or not, Barbados continues to be perceived as an expensive destination and I believe it is important that I spend a little time on this. It is the position of this Government that there is absolutely nothing wrong with being perceived as an expensive destination so long as it is a destination that provides superior quality service.

It is a fact that this has been one of the things that has caused us to be so attractive to the UK markets. Because when the wealthy tourists in fact when any tourist comes to

Barbados, they can enjoy the Holders Opera Season, they can enjoy first class restaurants, restaurants that...

Asides.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: I have certainly been to many Caribbean destinations and I can tell you that amenities in restaurants found in Barbados are second to none. So we have to acknowledge that tourists may be asked to pay a higher price for some of our tourism products, but so long as we recognise also that the tourists are receiving value for money and so long as we ensure that they are receiving value for money, then we can benefit significantly from those niche markets.

Sir, part of the strategy has been to tackle these niche markets with sustained effort. We have to recognise that the golf niche represents an important aspect for development in our tourism product. The golf market is premium type business and can provide good quality jobs, improve the economic use of land and generally expect above average expenditure per customer.

The development of new championship holes at Sandy Lane, the Barbados Golf Club in Durants and Apes Hill, will position Barbados hopefully, as the Golf capital of the Caribbean in the next few years. Golf is one of the fastest growing sports in the world with the average player being a person in the upper income level.

It is therefore important that we accept our position and that we recognise that we will not be in a position to compete effectively with low-cost destinations like Cuba and the Dominican Republic. Consider for example, the position in relation to the Dominican Republic and Cuba where the tour operators, because they own hotels in those areas and because they own aircrafts are able to offer to the average European tourist a far cheaper holiday in those destinations than we could in Barbados.

But as I have said before, if you have ever taken the opportunity to visit the Dominican Republic, you will find that the infrastructure is no where nearly as good as Barbados' and the quality of holiday, I would submit, is certainly not up to our standards.

There are other niche markets for which we feel we can attract tourists. For example, the meetings and incentive business, Senator Odle had the opportunity and the privilege of presiding over our premier conference site in Barbados and my understanding is that that Sherbourne Conference Centre is these days almost full all the time, no doubt due to the expert management of the Organisation and having nothing to do with the resonator behind this construction some years ago.

To give you a brief overview of the market, I believe I have already mentioned this, but based on the available data, Barbados recorded 424 810 long stay visitor arrivals for the period January to October of last year. This figure represents an increase of 1.8 per cent over the corresponding in the year before. I would want to share with you some information which has been put out by the Caribbean Tourism Organisation which will demonstrate that the Jamaica market over that same period experienced 1.8 per cent growth. The market in the Dominican Republic, a far larger market than ours, recorded 1.7 per cent growth. Bermuda which has a budget for advertising which far exceeds the budget for Barbados, actually experienced a 4 per cent decline in their tourism arrivals.

These things have to be foremost in our minds when we look at the tourism sector. There are no easy answers. There are no answers that will jump out at us as we wake from our beds one morning. We have to recognise that the tourism industry is far more complex now than it has been at any time in the past.

The Government of Barbados recognises that the best way of ensuring our tourism product is to make sure that all partners in the country play an equal role. It is therefore with this in mind that in 1999, Government embarked on a programme of community tourism. The whole idea here is that we will involve every aspect of the community in our tourism product. I would like to support a call which was made recently for the introduction of tourism as a subject on the curriculum in our schools. It is beyond me how with such an important aspect of our economy we seem not to recognise that our attitude towards tourism is going to be covered in a large measure by our education facet. Therefore, we have to put tourism studies in our schools up to perhaps 'O' Level or Advanced Level.

4.30 p.m.

We have had some mention made by one of the Honourable Senators of the question of the Hilton Hotel. The position in relation to the Hilton Hotel has not yet been decided. The matter, I understand is presently before the Government. However, it is absolutely clear that one of the important things for Barbados would be to attract international brand name hotels to Barbados. The relaunch of Sandy Lane Hotel will be helpful in this regard because Sandy Lane has enjoyed an excellent reputation over the years.

The important thing we need to remember about having a brand name hotel is not just that by having it you will have a brand that is going to be recognised by people. The critical factor is that we are able to piggyback on the huge advertising budget of the international chains, so that when the Hilton Hotel reopens in Barbados, we will not just get the benefit of having a Hilton named in Barbados but we will also have the benefit of having the Barbados Hilton property

advertised throughout the world and through the Hilton network. Any person who is a member of the Hilton's frequent visitor clubs will have information bombarding them on a weekly basis about the Barbados Hilton. The same thing happens with other international chains. I happen to be a member of the Clairmont Club and some time ago the first time I became aware that Clairmont had taken over a hotel in Barbados was through their mailing. The point is that the corresponding exposure that we will get through the advertising from these chains will also prove to be beneficial.

I feel it is important again to take an opportunity in this Honourable House to mention the issue of crime and harassment. The scourge of crime and harassment threatens our quality way of life in Barbados, for all Barbadians and by extension it also threatens our tourism industry. While it is recognised that the problem is an international one that is deeper and larger than tourism, and while we recognise that identifying and addressing the root of the problem is the only way to achieve a long-term solution, the Ministry of Tourism in association with the Barbados Hotel Association, the Attorney General's Office and the Barbados Police Force have been trying to implement some mitigative measures while at the same time exploring long-term solutions. I would want to say here that the Caribbean Tourism Organisation has recently commissioned a study by the former Commissioner of Police, Orville Durant, to look at the impact of crime and harassment on the tourism product across the Caribbean. You will find that many of the things that we are experiencing in Barbados are also being experienced elsewhere. The measures which are being proposed in Barbados will include the increase of police patrols in tourist areas, especially in the South East areas of St. Lawrence Gap, Maxwell, Oistins, and a site has been identified in St. Lawrence Gap where a police station is to be built.

Mr. Deputy President, we cannot forget that the Barbados Labour Party Government has had a strong history of commitment to the tourism sector. The Hotel Aids Act which was enacted in 1967 has only been amended twice in its history and on each occasion it was amended by a Barbados Labour Party Government, firstly in 1981 and then in 1983. The idea behind those amendments in the 1980's was to try to secure continuing investment in our tourism plant. The Barbados Labour Party administration of today, consistent with its approach in the early 1980's, is again seeking to ensure the long-term survival of our tourist sector by again ensuring that investment continues.

It is with this in mind that the Government has announced new initiatives and incentives which will be designed, when they are completely put in place, to promote continued investment in the tourism sector. One of the major failings of the old Hotel Aids Act is that it only related to

hotels so that other organisations which had an integral role to play in the tourism sector, such as restaurants and tourist attractions, did not benefit from these incentives. The new incentives which are going to be brought into play will include incentives for restaurants and so on so as to ensure that these organisations, the entities are able to upgrade their plant and to provide a better than average product for our tourists. These efforts are being bolstered by the Special Development Areas Act which all Members of the House would know provide incentives as well in certain key areas as the Carlisle Bay area, the Speightstown area, I believe an area in St. Andrew and I think there might be other areas. The point is that the Government is not only relying on the Hotel Aids Act and new incentives brought in. It is also using other measures, and I am pleased to say, Mr. Deputy President, that the Special Development Aids Act has been receiving a tremendous amount of attention by our investors to the point where numerous investors are successfully going to be carrying our projects in these areas and receiving tremendous incentives from Government. So, again the Barbados Labour Party Government is ensuring that our tourism plant remains refreshed.

I would want to mention briefly the question of the Port Expansion Programme. It is vital, Mr. Deputy President, that in this day and age we ensure that our infrastructure remains tooled and cutting edged to accommodate the new developments. The growth of mega ships in today's cruise world means that in order to be sure that we remain an attractive cruise destination the Port has to upgrade itself as well. It is with this in mind that the Port Expansion Project is being embarked upon.

With this increased capacity comes the excellent prospect of something which is called 'home porting' whereby cruise liners would be able to use Barbados as a base for their departures and arrivals. The possible impact of this is tremendous. Statistics show that if we are able to successfully attract cruise liners to Barbados as a home port, we can expect to receive approximately 2,000 additional tourist arrivals per day. Research also shows that these tourist arrivals who travel to places for 'home porting' to depart from their cruises, traditionally spend 2 - 3 bed nights in the destination. With the port expansion we will be able to see a tremendous increase in tourist arrivals. For those of you who think that cruise tourism does not do a lot to benefit Barbados, I believe we can see this is a clear case where the tourists are expected to spend a significant amount of time in Barbados.

Another matter which I feel is important to mention is the importance of technology to this market. In today's world, we have discovered that many people are now making their travel arrangements entirely on-line. In fact, it is estimated that on-line travel transactions should increase by about 45 per cent of total on-line sales by the year 2002.

We know that many North Americans are now making serious decisions about whether or not to travel, where they should travel to, entirely based on on-line research and not based on speaking to travel agents at all. It is therefore clear that we have to spend a significant amount of time examining how we can find e-commerce solutions to marketing our travel and tourism. More and more many of the properties in Barbados have been going on-line and this is to be commended. Many hotels in Barbados now have websites and this is allowing people to investigate the kind of property that they are booking and also to even make their bookings on-line. It is an approach that has been prompted by many Governments in the region, including the Barbados Government, and also by regional tourism organisations such as the CTO as a means to boost their tourist arrivals.

4.40 p.m.

We are therefore in an environment, Mr. Deputy President, where the average tourist will no longer be relying on travel professionals to make his decisions for him. He will be relying on his own research. We will therefore have to position ourselves properly to take the benefit of this research.

Mr. Deputy President, in closing, the Barbados Labour Party Government we believe that we can see strong growth in the tourism sector. We believe we have to diversify and ensure that emphasis is not placed unduly on one particular market. We have been making tremendous efforts in the U.S. market but we do have to remember that the U.S. market is different. It is a market that has many peculiar considerations and we have to market and target the U.S. market very carefully.

There is a very tremendous science involved in marketing and a tremendous amount of marketing research which goes into how the Government and how the Barbados Tourism Authority conduct their marketing campaign.

The future of tourism in Barbados looks bright. As I said, based on the arrivals January to October last year, we were looking at 1.8 per cent growth. Again I would like to remind Honourable Members that Jamaica scored, I believe, 1.7 per cent growth over that period and Bermuda showed a four per cent decline.

We believe that with our continued efforts in marketing the Barbados product as a high-end high quality destination, we will continue to reap the success that we have so tirelessly fought for. We also believe that the people of Barbados stand behind the Government in our tourism efforts.

Therefore, with those few remarks, Mr. Deputy President, I commend the year 2000-2001 Estimates to the Members of this Honourable House for their sanction.

SENATOR THE REV. L. W. B. ROCK: Mr. Deputy President; I must first of all apologise to the Chamber for having to leave before the end of the debate. I am expected in a few minutes to be elsewhere to chair a meeting. It means, therefore, that I must contract what I want to say. Nevertheless, I welcome this opportunity to make a few comments which I hope will be received in the spirit in which I deliver them.

The Leader of Government Business in his presentation shared with us the information that shortly if not already in progress, plans are being made to implement some, if not all, of the recommendations in the Haynes Report. I am sure that we all welcome this and that the urgency of the situation and the dire necessity of that particular service should prompt very quick action.

I want to encourage the Minister to give attention very quickly to the Accident and Emergency Department. What I say is not hearsay or what I have heard from others, but it is my own experience in having to go to that department with someone suffering from a heart condition and having to wait for hours before any attention was given. I do not blame the staff because obviously they were under severe pressure. What that situation indicated was an inadequacy of staff to deal with the situation.

On those occasions I was also aware, Sir, that people suffering severely, some experiencing great pain who could not afford to go elsewhere and pay for attention had to remain there in order to find some measure of relief. I therefore urge that prompt attention be given to try to improve the conditions in the Accident and Emergency Department.

I want to underscore all that has been said by Senator Thomas-Mascoll about the importance of maintenance. I am sure that all of us would agree that if the conditions in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are to be improved, then attention must be given to maintenance of the plant, maintenance of the equipment.

As the Minister of Health said, the Hospital, in order to make it a modern facility offering the best service we want it to offer, needs also to have some of the most modern equipment. We need to train people to maintain that equipment and if those persons are unable to maintain it because of the high level of technology needed, we must have in place a plan which will facilitate quick service of that equipment so that persons who need that treatment will not have to be sent abroad to receive it.

In the presentation also of the Leader of the House he made mention, I think, of the necessity of having competent management of this institution. That is important. I certainly

would support the effort made to bring the highest quality of personnel to manage this institution if it is to be efficiently and effectively managed.

I trust also, Sir, that when such a team is put in place, that those persons would be given the freedom to fulfill their responsibilities and to exercise their authority with no interference from any persons who could in anyway influence for ill the effective performance of their duties.

There is another matter related to the hospital which I would draw to your attention, Sir, and to ask that some consideration be given. I know it is not easy but it comes out of complaints which I have received from persons with whom I have visited, and I go to the hospital very frequently, and I refer to the noise level in the hospital. When the hospital was first located on Martindale's Road, the volume of traffic that now traverses Martindale's Road certainly was much less than it is now.

I wish, Sir, that possibly the area could be declared a silent zone.

Aside.

SENATOR THE REV. L. W. B. ROCK: It is? Well, it is not observed because it seems that in Barbados a horn is a toy. A horn is used to greet people and it certainly is not used for the purpose for which a horn is intended. Maybe some education and possibly the redirection of some of the traffic in that area would help because I know that the noise prevents people from sleeping and resting who need that particular rest, so I would ask you, Sir, to give some attention to that.

Very briefly, I want to express some concern about the antiquated way in which some aspects of the judicial system, particularly in terms of the magistracy, seem to operate. In the year 2000, it is disgraceful that a police officer stands on the step, and to use our word, "bowls" out the name of persons to summon them to the court and has to "bowl" out the names of witnesses to summon them to the court. I feel that in the construction of the new court whenever that takes place that possibly some attention would be given to this. It is not just persons who have to attend the Magistrate's Court. I have experienced this going to the Court that there are occasions when persons turn up at the courts only to discover that the case is adjourned. This happens repeatedly. Persons who are daily paid workers lose a day's pay on each occasion and also the lawyers I am told. I was discussing this with a lawyer and I think it is very unfair that people lose a day's pay; they have to come to court but if perchance they fail to turn up a day, they have to pay. I wish that some attention would be given to this.

4.50 p.m.

I turn my attention to the Transport Board of which mention has been made and, again, to underscore the importance of the maintenance of the plant, and to say that I believe that what you contribute towards improving that particular situation is a high level programme of sensitising and making the masses of people aware that the buses that are owned by the Transport Board are owned by the Government, that they are our buses and our money pays for them, and so try to raise the level of responsibility and care for them. In this way, I feel that legislation, if it is not there already, should be put in place to deal severely with any persons found damaging the buses.

I feel that education, sensitising people, making them feel that they own the buses is important. I wonder why for instance, as I saw in the papers, ordinary bus users were not invited, at least some of them, to go on the tour when the new buses were launched a few days ago. I believe that sometimes gestures like these go a long way in making people feel that they are important and that they matter.

I want also to raise an issue which I am sure affects all of us. It has to do with the movement of traffic or the lack of movement of vehicles on our roads. I am sure that all of us have had the experience of having to wait a very long time because of the slow movement of traffic on the roads. I have not heard what is Government's policy with regard to the increase of the vehicular traffic on our roads, but certainly it demands urgent attention. I do not think that more roads is the answer. I feel that consideration needs to be given to the controlling of the importation and even limiting the number of cars owned by families. This is a hard decision but I believe it is something that needs to be considered.

I understand, for instance, that in Bermuda, families are limited to the ownership of two cars, and even though it may be an unpopular decision, it seems to me that since we cannot increase the size of our island that attention must be given to this immediately, otherwise we may find that rather than travelling on our roads that we would be parking on them.

The last contribution that I want to make I approach with some trepidation, but I make it out of conviction and because I love this country. I have lived in Jamaica. I have lived in Trinidad. I have lived in Grenada. I have lived in St. Lucia. I have lived in the United States of America and in England and I cherish the experience and the contribution which living in these countries have made to my own personal development. I love Barbados and I believe that Barbados is the best country in the world.

It is out of that love that I share this particular concern with my colleagues. We have a democratic system of Government of which we are justly proud. We have a democratic system of Government which has benefited us

and which has brought us to the place where we are presently. We have a democratic system of Government which we need to preserve and I believe that the preservation of this democratic system of Government requires respect for those who are chosen to be leaders in the community. I believe that the preservation of our system requires credibility, that the people believe and trust those who have been elected and those who have been appointed in Government.

It is therefore, Sir, with some concern that I raise this issue of those who offer themselves for service to our country, those who espouse the philosophy of a Party, those who proclaim and claim to subscribe to what they believe and who sometimes, even in times of election, feel so strongly or claim to feel so strongly about their association that sometimes they become even abusive to those who do not share their views. When such persons therefore leave one Party and go to another and then another, I believe they contribute towards the cynicism and the lack of confidence which our people are to have in leaders who claim to want to serve and to offer themselves in service.

It is important. At least I believe that what people say as leaders of the country, what they claim to be, that they truly are. In other words, I would put it this way. Loyalty seems to be something which we treat very lightly. I believe that our democratic system is threatened when we contribute towards the cynicism and the lack of confidence in those who offer to lead the country. I know there are those who would say that we are free to make choices. That is true, but it seems to me that freedom also means being responsible. Freedom in this particular sphere demands even greater responsibility, and I trust that my concern as I have shared it will not fall on deaf ears. I refer not to any one individual but to a trend which has been developing in our country and which I fear will undermine this democracy which we cherish.

I thank you, Sir, for listening to my contribution and I hope that it will be taken seriously. Thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 5.50 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting be suspended until 5.50 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to, and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly. 5.00 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed. Senator Rickinson.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. President, I rise to give my contribution to this debate. I start off with a quotation from the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto 1999 which I hope to make the theme of my presentation. It says that no country can ever truly develop unless it finds the means of engrossing everyone in the task of nation building whatever their class, creed, colour or political persuasion. I firmly believe that the best talents in Barbados must be brought together and harnessed in support of nation building if we are successfully to meet the many challenges locally, regionally and internationally which we must face very soon and on which our future's security rests.

I firmly believe that Barbados' future rests on the fullest participatory democracy that we can engender among all sectors, classes and creeds in this society and that without this, economic and social progress will not be lasting.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I take this very seriously, I accept it, it is good and I also quote another part of the Democratic Labour Party Manifesto that pledges to foster closer relations with NGOs and promote their involvement in health education and health care delivery. I acknowledge what the Leader of Government Business said about the plans for health care delivery but we have heard about the plans very often and we need to make these plans work. I hope that I can make some contribution towards this end.

On page 43, Head 350 under Grants to Non-Profit Agencies of \$872,500 that provides subventions to the Barbados Red Cross Society, the Barbados Cancer Society, the St. John's Council, the Barbados Association of Medical Practitioners, Barbados Registered Nurses Association, the Barbados Road Safety Association and the Barbados Family Planning Association.

Mr. President, the majority of these can be classified traditionally as NGOs in which the Government has been working over the years in partnership to develop health in Barbados. These are traditional ones and it is my view that one needs to review the various agencies yearly and see what other agencies could be added to the list that they have regarding the promotion of individual, family and community health in Barbados. I therefore feel that \$872 000 is not really enough because what we need to do – and as has been said by the Leader of Government Business – is to shift the service a bit. He did not say this but I am saying that we need to shift it mainly from curing people at increasing cost, to one which promotes better health and prevent illness. In other words, we need to try to shift our system which is oriented toward hospital care, treating people when they get

sick and giving clinical care, seeing patients going to clinic day in and day out to assist them and to prevent people as much as possible from going to the hospital and keeping healthy.

Mr. President, I am saying this because I had an organisation which applied for a subvention on two occasions and has been turned down. I feel that if Government is interested in working with organisations that they have to offer to help in various areas. I think they should give these organisations encouragement. It is not enough to say there is no money so you cannot get a subvention when you need the assistance from the various non-governmental organisations in order to develop health.

For example, the National Union of Public Workers' subvention alone was increased from \$40 000 to \$100 000, that is by \$60 000 late last year in the Supplementary Estimates 1999/2000. On one hand, one organisation is going to be given a massive increase and on the other hand another organisation is being turned down. I think it will go a long way for Government to review such actions and include the various organisations that are interested in helping in the area of health development.

In this connection, Mr. President, I read recently about a statement of mandatory fees to be collected from workers and paid to some selective trade unions. This is not Government, it is a suggestion. It is not saying that these mandatory fees are going to be collected and paid to all trade unions but even if that was so, I feel that we have a democracy and in a democracy people should be given a choice. I do not feel that if people are working for money that you are going to mandatory deduct their money and give it to trade unions that you feel they should join. The Constitution allows for people to join by freedom of association and by choice. There is a reason why people would not join certain trade unions. Some for religious reasons, some because of bad experiences and some because they are not interested in the philosophy of that trade union, they are interested in the philosophy of another. We have to be careful to keep democracy alive and do not trample on the rights of individuals by deducting mandatory fees from their pay packets to pay to any form of union whatsoever.

Mr. President, I do recognise that there is a Congress of Trade Union and Staff Associations that is part of the Social Partners. My union has applied over a year ago to join this and we are still awaiting a reply. In other words, it is not automatic for all trade unions to join the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations. It is a club that lets in who it feels like letting in...

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Yes, the public needs to know that. It is a club in which two-thirds of the unions there have to agree to let you in for you to be able to join and the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations is an organisation that Government negotiates with on behalf of the workers. If Government is going to expand the social partnership they have to look in terms of including some of the other trade unions who can make contributions *etcetera*.

I would just like to mention this. They have not said anything to me but I note that the Cancer Support Services, not the Barbados Cancer Society – they are two different organisations – is not given a subvention, and the Cancer Support Services is the organisation that has been doing the most for people with cancer in Barbados. At the village level, at the individual level and at the family level the Cancer Support Services has been doing a lot. They have been getting quite a lot of money from the British High Commission and other agencies and from persons whom they have worked with who have generously given them funds but I think the work that they have done is worthy of a subvention because Government cannot do all the primary care and health education itself. It has to enter into partnerships with the non-governmental organisations and give them a small subvention and partially finance some of the projects and programmes that they are doing.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: There are others but I do not have the time to go into the other subscriptions.

Mr. President, I would like to speak a bit about the civil service, about transparency and accountability and about how the civil service is structured. I feel personally that one has to restructure the civil service in order to get transparency and accountability. It is too bureaucratic, it is too centralised and it has massive structural defects that promote inefficiency and increased cost.

It is my view, Mr. President, that highly skilled and educated persons are not really empowered to act and to do what they know to do within the civil service. In some areas they can but throughout the civil service this is not so. Therefore, they are not able to develop modern management practices and innovations to respond, particularly in the health sector or to the patient's needs. In other words, what I am saying, Mr. President, is that quite a lot of money has been voted to health but, in my view, I feel that the health care industry has long reached the point of diminishing returns, at increasing cost and has to be restructured. If not, you are not going to get your money's worth from the various millions that have been allocated to the health care industry. For example, about \$280 million. This is a lot of money, Mr. President, and we need to get the maximum benefit.

For example, on page 44 under Direction and Policy Formulation, the programme statements say and I quote:

"This programme provides for the supervision of departments and statutory boards under the control of the Ministry of Health to ensure the implementation of approved policies and projects and the exercise of budgetary control over funds voted by Parliament".

The Ministry has no right to be supervising departments, Mr. President. And again under General Management and Coordination Services, it is about \$80 million and the Subprogramme statement states:

"The functions embraced by this Subprogramme include administration, supervision and execution of approved policies and programmes and the exercise of budgetary controls of funds voted by Parliament for use in the Ministry."

5.30 p.m.

This is at ministerial level. This is the bureaucracy that I am talking about and the centralisation. This centralised operational responsibility is expensive and it has to be shifted, Mr. President. The role of the Ministry should be one of policy making. The operational responsibility in my view should be at the institutional level like at the QEH, should be at the Psychiatric Hospital and the Geriatric Hospital.

The Ministry has no right supervising the day-to-day operations of these bodies because it is inefficient and outmoded. This is what the officers are doing and it is written in the Estimates and one cannot criticise them because this is what is happening. For example, someone would telephone from the Ministry of Health to the Psychiatric Hospital, tell them to bring someone off night duty to go to the Geriatric and take control, without that person having any experience in gerontology and no training whatsoever.

This is the administration and supervision that the Ministry of Health is doing and which is documented here. This is done despite the fact, Mr. President, that there is a nurse trained in gerontology at the Geriatric Hospital and this person should be the person who should be taken to go and run any of the District Hospitals when people go on holiday, but it is not done. This person is kept as a staff nurse because he worked overseas for a long time, so then he must come and work from the bottom of the system up. And this is what happens when the Ministry of Health supervises the departments.

Another example, is the spanking new infirmary ward at the Psychiatric Hospital which the Ministry of Health has supervised. I visited it, Mr. President. It is a beautiful ward.

The Government spent a lot of money renovating it. It has a very beautiful, huge kitchen with a stove and several cupboards, but there is no cooking there. At the Psychiatric Hospital you cannot allow the patients to be handling and lighting the stove and cooking on the wards. The cooking is done in a centralised kitchen. Yet this ward has been renovated with a huge kitchen with lots of kitchen cupboards and no cupboards for medicine. There are no medicine cupboards and there is a kitchen that is not used. They do not keep plates on the wards. They do not keep cups. They do not keep glasses on the ward, but it has a huge kitchen, larger than any in a home, that cannot be used.

On the other hand, it has a beautiful nurses' station, a huge one, but you cannot see the patients from the nursing station. There are thick walls in front of the nursing station and this is in spite of the fact that I had written letters to them and asked them that they should involve the nurses, giving hands-on care working in the area through workshops and seminars to let them see the plan before renovating it. I wrote about three letters. They ignored the nurses. They would not even listen to the nurses. The outcome, it is a waste of taxpayers' money.

The patients have to sit outside. When they sleep, they have to walk around and go and look. They cannot stay at the nursing station and do anything and this is as a result of administration supervision and execution of policies from on high from the Ministry of Health. Wouldn't it have been better if the money was allocated to the Psychiatric Hospital and the persons there, sit down, look at the plans and decide exactly what is needed in a ward in order to give care to the patients? This is the sort of outmoded bureaucratic structure that you have to change if you are going to reduce cost in the health care industry.

I am saying this about the Psychiatric, but Mr. President, the same mistakes were made at the QEH when the QEH was built. I am not talking about this Government. I sincerely hope you take these comments in the light that I am giving generally. The same mistakes were made at the Geriatric Hospital when the Geriatric Hospital was refurbished. They did not listen to the nurses who have to work in the area and consequently after they spent so much money renovating the areas, they have to go back and start to make it so that it is functional.

It is neither nurse-friendly, nor patient-friendly, that ward at the Psychiatric Hospital, and I do not know how they are going to change that. They will have to spend a lot of money and knock out those walls and take out those kitchen cupboards because there is no dressing room, no treatment room, no utility room, just a small space for a television, but a nice big kitchen and a big nurses' station.

The point I am trying to get through is that you need to restructure what is happening. The Ministry of Health should be involved in policy. I cannot say it enough and allocate the money to various institutions so that they are responsible for the money that is spent and account for how the money is spent.

Another area that I would like to talk about is the General Management and Formulation Services (P.D.I.U.) – Subprogramme 360 – \$955 709. This is commonly called the Project Unit and the performance has been unsatisfactory as I have just told you because it is the P.D.I.U., the Project Unit in the Ministry of Health that came up with the wastage of all of that money, and we have been subjected to the spectacle of St. Joseph.

It is the same Project Unit guarding the St. Joseph Hospital with all of that wastage. And I think, having gone through that inquiry and listened to what happened at the St. Joseph Hospital, I do not think we should keep repeating the same thing over and over again. I think we need to change the operational aspect of health and allow them to be done by the various departments themselves.

To do this, I think you will need to downsize the P.D.I.U. and if possible, employ people who know what they are doing. This is the Unit that is responsible for statistics and research and the last Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer that has been produced was in 1998. 5.40 p.m.

It was for 1994 – 1996. This is unsatisfactory and it is not a proper report. We need proper statistics and comments on the statistics. It is the same size for four years as it is usually for about one year. So you see that one needs to take note of this PDIU and find jobs for most of the people and transfer them to other areas so that one does not have all of that money to spend and not get satisfactory work done.

Mr. President, another heading I would like to address is Sub-programme 361 – Technical Management Services. Just over \$3 million. This section 623 provides for the refurbishing of district hospitals and polyclinics for \$909 000. That is not enough, Mr. President. The geriatric hospital alone would take that. It has leaking roofs; it has windows that are falling off; it needs a coat of paint and it needs quite a bit of the wood replacing. There is one building there at the geriatric hospital that has been condemned, which needs to be bulldozed, and have another one built. Consequently, because it is closed it has led to a shortage of beds. It has a large crack and cannot be used, so I sincerely hope that you will be able to look into this aspect of the district hospitals and the polyclinics.

Another Head is the primary health care services that Leader of Government Business, Senator Goddard spoke about and acknowledged that we do need new strategies

regarding primary health care. Primary health care is the health care that is given, the first contact within the system of health. It is usually given at the polyclinic and the community, for example. That tends to be called primary health care, or we may call the accident and emergency primary health care also, although the QEH may be called secondary and tertiary. Primary health care usually involves maternal and child health care in the polyclinic, and a sum of \$15.5 million has been allocated to this. This Sub-programme is concerned with preventive health care on the basis of outpatient treatment. Mr. President, that is exactly what is happening. But unfortunately it has to be shifted.

Primary health care consists mainly in education of the public. I know the Leader of Government Business talked about the introduction of awareness but it is much more than the introduction of awareness; it is the face-to-face health education to the people, and the exchange between the health worker and the people. Those health workers need to be out of those polyclinics and in to the community. It is not difficult. Already the island is divided up in sections according to the public health inspector. Just mark out and carve out an area and give each qualified public health nurse an area in which she would be responsible for the health of all of those children and people living in that area, the man, woman, child, family, *et cetera*. When you go in to that area and you see something that needs to be done, you refer it to the other agencies. I know you are not going to do this, but it would be better handled under Social Transformation. If the polyclinics were linked in some way to the Ministry of Social Transformation and Community Development, they would understand where they should be going.

What I see Minister Hamilton Lashley doing, even though he has been criticised, is getting out there in the community, seeing what is needed, educating the people and referring what is needed to the other agencies. That is primary health care and it works very well. Even England has primary health care. I had a friend staying with me and she was telling me how she has this area of which she is in charge, and therefore she does flexitime. If the mothers are at work and she cannot see them, she will go in the evening or early in the morning and see the children. She would make sure that the mothers get the advice that they need.

Mr. President, it is scandalous to believe that the parents of three and four-year olds want their children to go to Dodds because they cannot control them, especially when we have the resources here. Barbados has invested a lot of money training public health nurses. They go to Jamaica year after year and are trained to tell the mother how to bring up their children from the time of conception. They are trained to guide the mothers on what to eat, what to drink, how to dress the children, what to do about speaking, *et cetera*, that is what nursing is about.

Unfortunately, nurses do not come out and tell people what they are trained to do and everybody is taking away their role. That is what public health nurses should have been doing. They should have been working with those mothers from the time the mother got pregnant, and after she delivers at the hospital, the hospital should contact the nurse in the area saying So and So is being discharged, you should visit her every day for 14 days after she leaves the hospital. That is what primary health care is about. Teach the mother how to bring up that child. These children are out of hand at age four because the mothers do not know what to do with them and they allow them to get out of hand. If they do not know they need help because they are crying out for help and therefore we need to help them because they are only going to get worse. They are not going to get better. We will soon hear the teachers in the primary schools saying the children in the primary school are ungovernable. We will soon start hearing that, when in fact, one of the beauties of Barbados is to see those children neatly dressed going to the primary school, listening to what they are told.

Any visitor that I have in Barbados I try to take them and show them our primary school system to see how those children are brought up and taught. We cannot afford to lose that. We have to keep it. You need those nurses out there in the community, and any of them that tell you the sun is too hot, *et cetera*, they need to find another job. We need to get serious. They must write reports every month and be accountable for what they do. It does not take any lot of money; just carve out the area and say this is your area, this is your responsibility. You do not have to bring somebody from America or England to tell you to do that. If you see somebody's house needs repairing, contact the Ministry of Social Transformation. If you see mosquitoes etc., you tell them about it but you contact the public health inspectorate. That is what we need in primary health care and that is what we have to do. If you see that they need home help for the elderly, you contact the Ministry of Social Transformation. Apparently they have some young gentlemen who go and help to clean up the outside as well. You contact them and that is what they do. That is the sort of area that we have to get into in order to develop the society. These nurses are trained to look after children until they reach university.

Sir, those public health nurses are very highly trained. They should be in the schools, they should follow the children, take up their behavioural problems. They should be in primary schools. I do not think it was well taken when Senator Thomas-Mascoll asked for guidance counsellors in the primary schools, but I think you can kill two birds with one stone by putting a nurse in these schools in order to give them the test. These nurses are taught to examine the children from head to toe to see what is wrong with them.
5.50 p.m.

When I was going to Alexandra School, the nurses from the polyclinic used to examine us. I do not know if this

is still happening. We had no problems. They used to come and examine us, Nurse Mayers and all of them. That is how I went into nursing because I admired those nurses examining us from head to toe, giving us our inoculations. We did not have all these millions to devote to health care yet the services were there. This is the direction that I am advising you to go in. You do not need any lot of money. You just need to restructure and reorganise the system and make it work for you. That is what we need to do and it can work for us. It works elsewhere.

Mr. President, I would like to turn to Sub-programme 363 – HIV/AIDS Control and Prevention, \$1.3 million. The programme involves the control and prevention of HIV/AIDS and provision is made under 212 for \$180 000 for health education programmes. The middle-class people will read about health. This is what I have discovered, but you are going to find that the people who really need to take care of themselves are not really interested in reading so, therefore, you must have what is known as face-to-face education with the people.

Now, it is widely known that the only provision we have against AIDS is health education, and health education not only over the radio and TV or in the newspaper. Unfortunately, we do not have a reading public. People read what they want to read. They will read love stories.

As far as I am concerned, Mr. President, we need so much health education in Barbados, not only about HIV and AIDS that I feel that this Unit should be converted into a Health Education Unit for the whole country of Barbados and be made responsible for national health programmes and developing materials for all conditions.

I welcome the Economic Impact Study on HIV and AIDS on the Economy, but we do not need to wait for that Economic Impact Study which will need to convince the Ministry of Finance that they should give more money to help education, but we can start it before one gets that Economic Impact Study done.

I now go to Subprogramme 366 Environmental Health (Polyclinics), \$9.6 million. The functions of this subprogramme include:

- (1) Carrying out the provisions of the Health Service Act relating to the enforcement of regulations on environmental sanitation, food sampling and food quality control;
- (2) The prevention and control of infectious diseases and for the provision of quarantine services; and
- (3) Supervision for the Aedes Egypti Control Programme.

Mr. President, we all know about Dengue Fever. Someone in nearly every family has been unfortunately exposed to Dengue Fever. We know how sick it makes you and we know that there are different forms of Dengue Fever, for instance, the hemorrhagic one in Barbados.

Years ago, Mr. President, nearly all the public health inspectorate resources used to be concentrated on the control of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito. That cannot be done now because we have gone into manufacturing and have large supermarkets so therefore you had to train the inspectors to get involved in meats and foods *et cetera* and the various manufacturing industries. Because of that, you find that enough emphasis is not placed on the public health inspector or the assistant going from home to home and educating persons.

All of us remember that when the public health inspector was coming you would run and make sure that there was no water around, that things were covered and everything was in perfect condition. We do not have enough public health inspectors to go around to do that. We have some public health assistants.

What do we do? You are going to have to help use the nurses. Put them in the community and tell them to teach the people about the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito and dengue fever. They were taught about it in school, You are going to have to improvise about these things because we do not have the resources to go around like before, therefore, incorporate in the health education of those nurses that you are going to put out there in the community and give them a team of nursing assistants and nursing aides to work with them because Dengue Fever is serious.

If there is one thing that is going to ruin our tourist industry it is dengue fever. If a few tourists get dengue fever and it gets out that there is a lot of dengue fever in Barbados and the one that kills, the tourists are not going to come here because it is a very debilitating disease. We need to have increased health education in the area of environmental health.

We also need to have increased health education for the nutrition services and environmental sanitation. We have just had the experience of other agencies assisting with environmental sanitation and picking up the garbage *et cetera*.

When I was Health Education Officer, I advised against campaigns because the next three weeks the place was just as dirty as it was before. What do you have to do? You have to get serious. We have to educate the public and then if they are not willing to be educated, unfortunately, you

have to fine them. In some countries there is a fine of \$15 for spitting, \$15 for littering *et cetera*. When you go to such countries you make sure you do not spit or litter and if you start fining one or two people for littering, you will be sure that Barbadians will not litter anymore. There is no point walking behind Barbadians and cleaning up beaches and gullies and the next couple of months they litter them all over again. Educate them face-to-face and fine them. 6.00 p.m.

Hospital Services at page 361. I spoke of the appalling state of some of the hospital buildings that require urgent attention, and I am suggesting that we establish a health renovation thrust to enable the worst departments to be improved immediately so that the money can be allocated to the various hospitals to improve those environments. I am not going to go into details because of time.

Sub-programme 375: Queen Elizabeth Hospital – \$97 million. I do not think that we would ever get enough money to pour into the QEH to make it what it should be like, so we will have to look at restructuring. Again, diminishing returns and increasing costs are expected from this hospital because it is inefficient and the whole edifice of the hospital service exists for the doctors more than for the patients it is intended to serve. Unfortunately, that is how the QEH has been set up.

I am going to read part of my Minority Report for the record. I was a member of the Haynes Commission.

“The reason for my dissenting from the Commission’s limiting the re-organization of nursing departments on the basis of criteria pertaining to functional considerations and skill requirements to as far as financially possible, is that this reorganization should be a priority over any increase in consultants or sub-specialities where no such financial limitation has been placed ...”

That is consultants for the doctors. They did not place limitations on the doctors but they want to place them on the nurses.

“... if quality patient care is to be the primal and single-most important consideration that informs management decisions throughout the Hospital.

Any new system that continues to promote the medical model...”

Most of our health care system is run by a medical model. It is not run by a social model where anybody can emerge leader at any point in time. For example, if the place is dirty, the maid is the leader of the team. If the patient needs a bed

made, the nurse is the leader of the team etc. Here, in Barbados, the doctor is always the leader of the team. This is the medical model.

"Any new system that continues to promote the medical model and place more emphasis on providing high-tech medicine, specialities, sub-specialities, and consultants, than on providing nursing departments adequately managed with appropriately trained nursing personnel to meet current health needs efficiently and effectively, will sooner or later be found a failure"

This is what I predict will happen.

"Doctors cannot be substituted for nurses, or supervise nurses effectively and efficiently, and where medicine is highly developed and nursing is not, the health status of the people will not reflect the advanced stage of medicine.

The evidence indicates that the medical staff have developed some specialities or sub-specialities without consultations with Nursing Administration."

In other words, what happens is that they go and develop whatever they want to develop and then go to the Nurses' Office and say they want nurses after they have hired consultants and developed their specialities which is not good enough. Unfortunately, the nursing management is afraid to say no. I do not know why. I think it is a syndrome within the public service that is lacking.

"The result is: a lack of training of nurses to function in the specialist area; transferring nurses to staff the new areas and a deterioration of patient care due to shortages in the areas from which they have been transferred; and complaints from consultants and doctors themselves about shortages of nurses in all speciality and sub-speciality areas, including the inability to open some operating theatres."

In other words, the doctors have gone along and specialised and the nurses have not specialised and there is a grave shortage.

"There have been far too many promises for, proposals submitted and studies on reviews on nursing, including The Speech From The Throne, the most recent Rationalization Study and the Task Force on Nursing Report. The time is long overdue for immediate action if patient care is to be improved and a collapse in nursing services is to be avoided."

I think that tells a true picture of what is presently happening at the QEH. They have gone ahead and set up neurosurgery since the Commission but they do not have

nurses trained in those areas, which means that they had to pick nurses from other areas to deplete the other areas in order to staff their new departments that they set up. I do not know how they can get away with it all of this time. Something needs to be done about that.

The future outlook of the QEH, despite the setting up of the Committee, is bleak because we seem to have business as usual. For example, you will see at Appendix B of the Personal Emoluments – Operating Theatre Manager. In a recent advertisement they requested a registered nurse and a registered mental nurse. Now what has mental nurse training to do with managing nine operating theatres? They advertised for the qualifications of a registered nurse and a registered mental nurse with a degree in hospital administration nursing, the nursing administration or related discipline and not less than three years' experience as a sister or a registered nurse and a registered mental nurse with a certificate in management and not less than five years' experience at the level of a sister.

Mr. President, this is nonsense. This should be withdrawn immediately. Since 1960 I did a whole year's management course for operating theatres full time. That was 40 years ago. We are in the year 2000. Could you believe that anybody... I do not know who advised them to send out such an ad. I was employed here as a sister, one of the few people from England, because I had that management course. It is available and it is a one-year, full-time management course to manage operating theatres. I did that at Bristol Royal Hospital. They are advertising for a registered nurse and a mental nurse. Mental nurse training has nothing to do with managing an operating theatre. You need a proper manager.

Mr. President, I do not understand what is happening because it is totally unacceptable. Even if this advertisement was placed, do you not think that the persons in the nursing field should be able to advise the Government that this is not what is needed at the present. It is at the level of a senior assistant. That is exactly what is happening. There are senior assistants managing the theatres and it is totally unsatisfactory at the moment because some of them do not even know what to do in the theatres. They have not been trained in the area of operating techniques.

It means that those consultants and doctors are going to carry that theatre manager round in circles with business as usual. You need somebody who is trained and knows what she is doing to get those nine operating theatres working properly to know what to order and to know what to say to those consultants.

6.10 p.m.

As I have said, it is a doctor's hospital and it will remain a doctor's hospital unless you put people who can look eyeball to eyeball at those doctors and tell them what the position is and manage the ward properly and manage the operating theatre properly.

We are in the year 2000 and I sincerely hope that that will be re-examined. To make matters worse we have people in this island who have been trained in operating theatre techniques but who have not done mental health nursing because why are you going to do mental health nursing if you are going to work in the operating theatre when people are all asleep and you are managing it.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: It has nothing to do with managing a theatre. There are nurses in this country who could be chosen to do this job but they cannot apply because they have not done mental health nursing which has nothing to do with the job of theatre management. You do not need a Solomon to know that.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: You do not have to be a nurse to understand that. This is what I am saying about the bureaucracy. This is what I am talking about, the operational management from Service Commission that is doing these things have not got a clue what they are doing.

Mr. President, at the hospital, in some areas, as I have said, the doctors are highly specialised and they have developed some areas of our hospital that are comparable to any developed country. You can get the treatment here, we appreciate it and we are very glad. However, for example, with babies, when they are five months or six months old, what is needed is a laser for Pediatrics. When they are so young, they will go blind if they do not have a laser to do laser surgery so that they can see. That is something that is urgently needed at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It will be cheaper to buy the laser because it is \$88 000 than to let those children go blind at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. That is an area that needs to be looked into.

Regarding the abandonment of people at the hospital. It is bad, Mr. President, but sometimes it cannot be helped. I suggest that just as we give parents a stipend to assist in teaching, which I support because they go out and help the schools, I think that we need to look at giving one family member a stipend. At least they can stay home and help take care of the elderly because in these days the cost of living is high and people must go out to work.

Another thing I think we can do is to have a large day care centre where, when you are going to work you can take the elderly, leave the elderly there, pick them up on your way

home and also some night care centres where they can sleep if you want to go out. I feel that we should be able to do that. That will go a long way because really and truly some of them do not want to dump their elderly at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but sometimes they cannot do any better.

Another area I would like to talk about quickly is the operation of the school at the Psychiatric Hospital, that is supposed to be transferred to the Barbados Community College.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: OK if it is transferred I will not say anything about it.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have two more minutes.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, I think we have to be careful not to mislead people about the programmes for drug addicts. For drug addicts there must be something called detoxification and the only place that it can be done and is done is at the Psychiatric Hospital. Do not tell them that they are not to go to the Psychiatric Hospital. They are detoxified at the Psychiatric Hospital and then they are sent elsewhere to get the rehabilitation. You need to come clean and tell them the truth until you can build a detoxification unit outside of the hospital.

Sir, I am sorry that I do not have more time but I hope that my suggestions are taken within the spirit that they have been given.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Forde.

SENATOR Miss. C. Y. FORDE: Mr. President, thank you very much. I too want to laud the efforts of this Government in presenting these Estimates and I want to lend my support to the various programmes. Mr. President, I heard Senator Thomas-Mascoll make mention of the Estimates and she said words to the effect that they did not, in her understanding, seem to tackle some of the social sectors of this society. She went on to make mention of increased opportunity for work for people, education, low income housing, young single mothers and the necessary training and so on.

Mr. President, I want to remind the Honourable Senator that this Labour Party Government, having come to the fore in the 1976 Elections, the first order of the day was to ensure that the 14-year olds that were put out of school were returned to school. That was the very first drastic measure that was taken to ensure that the future of Barbados would have been looked after.

On assuming office again in 1994, with the Barbados Community College which we all know places a lot of emphasis on academic training, this Barbados Labour Party Government again made a bold step to indicate that particularly for the Hospitality Unit that is a part of Barbados Community College, no person interested in becoming a maid in the hotel industry or a Chef or waiter or anyone in that area should have to come in with two or more certificates because we recognise that every person in Barbados does not have that inclination to be academic. They have been working in the system before or they have a desire and no certificates were required for persons to become a part of the institution. The same happened with the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. I would like to say that today the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic, when we took up the administration in 1994, was accommodating an average of 1 400 students. This year, the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic has reached the 3 000 mark because it has expanded and made creative programmes to accommodate the needs of Barbadians. The Ministry of Labour and other private organisations put forward the needs of the worker in the year 2000 and the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic has jumped and dealt with that issue by opening up programmes such as small engine repair, catering and landscaping among many others. Mr. President, if that is not looking after the needs of poor people and others in this society, I do not know what it is.

The Vocational Training Board was mentioned by Senator Williams so I am not going to touch that because that speaks for itself. That is not the only thing, Sir. The Youth Affairs Department that carries 100 students per year is now catering to 250 young people and with the expansion this year, we are looking at an additional hundred. These young people get opportunities to build their confidence and self-esteem and to develop good discipline which is very necessary in all spheres of life. They are given an awareness of the community and how to look after themselves in the community as well as to appreciate the environment. They also get training in academic and vocational skills.

There is also the Youth Development Programme that has trained over 3 000 young people in all community districts with the support of the Community Development Department. The young people say: we want to do sports; we do not want you to come and tell us what you want us to do. They say: give us an opportunity and they identified sports, cultural activities, vocational skills and so on. Those young people got actively involved and the Youth Development Programme is expanding.

The development of 32 projects within the community: the management of over an average of 30 summer camps every year – that is another role that the Youth Development is playing. It is a part of working with the community to cater to the needs of the individuals that were mentioned earlier.
6.20 p.m.

Finally in that area the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme, better known as YES has over its four-year period accommodated the needs of some 260 individuals in the form of grants and in the form of technical assistance. They have been given assistance through the Mentorship Programme where persons who were in businesses already have adopted them and are giving side by side training which is necessary.

It is like a child with an adult and that adult giving the necessary training to that child to prepare it for the future. Finally, in reference to what Senator Thomas-Mascoll mentioned covering the Ministry of Health and taking the load of the QEH. I agree that that needs to happen more in order that the more serious problems will be the ones to be diverted to the QEH.

I would like to make all Honourable Members aware that the two Polyclinics that are opened until about 8:00 at night to accommodate the needs of those persons, so that if children come home from school and fall in the neighbourhood or so, they can get the necessary treatment. They are opened until 1.00 p.m. on Saturdays – the one at Black Rock and the one at Ladymeade.

I just wanted to approach those two perspectives in the area of those issues that were raised by Senator Mascoll, but I think all in all she has done an excellent job as the Leader of the Opposition in this Honourable Chamber.

Mr. President, as a young child, I had a special admiration for the Barbados Labour Party because of the empathy, concern and care that it had for the people of Barbados. As a result of that, Sir, I decided I wanted to be part of that institution because I would want to be able to look after the needs of all Barbadians, hence my involvement at this level today.

Mr. President, this document and all the others will be documents of this House, and therefore I would like to refer to the 1971 Manifesto to show the thread of consistency that has existed in the Barbados Labour Party.

In the Manifesto of 1971 at Page 3, it states that “the broad economic policy of the Barbados Labour Party would strengthen the base of the economy of Barbados, to provide greater participation by the people in ownership of the national effect to provide greater employment opportunities and a minimal standard of living and to improve productivity in various sectors”.

Mr. President, when one examines the pledges of the Barbados Labour Party through the years, they are of the same threads. It works toward the social upliftment of the

people and empowers Barbadians to be a part of the whole development of the country. I chose to emphasise four of the objectives in the Manifesto of 1986 which we will all remember. Page 3 of this Manifesto indicates:

- (1) To provide strategic assistance and encouragement in areas of economic activity which contributes significantly to the creation of jobs and the generation of income and foreign exchange.
- (2) To accelerate and broaden our national training programmes to meet the demands of changing requirements in the industry and the commerce.
- (3) To promote the vigorous development of our small business and artisan class of producer and to create special tax regimes to initiate and sustain enterprises.
- (4) To fully realise Barbados' potential to become one of the main service Centres in the Caribbean and Latin America.

Mr. President, I have to refer to these because I want Honourable Members to be aware of the consistency for those who have short memories, because a lot of Barbadians have short memories. We tend to forget where we have come from and we find it convenient to speak when we want to, but when the opportunity arises for us to speak, we hold back because we belong to X or Y Organisation and we speak with forked tongues. I cannot speak with a forked tongue. When a Government does good, I praise it. When a Government makes mistakes, I remind that Government of the mistakes and I think that is the way we need to go.

Therefore the December 1991 Manifesto Upwards and Onward says it will bring the small man into the mainstream of economic life of our country:

- (A) Will broaden the base of ownership and create new opportunities for small entrepreneurs.
- (B) Pursuing policy which protects the consumer and safeguards the interest of depositors in the financial institution.
- (C) Ensuring that our economy expands that all Barbadians share the benefits of the expansion, that there is no devaluation of our dollar, our price increases are moderate and that we can pay our way in the world.

We have achieved that goal, Mr. President, ensuring that we retain national control of our economic affairs and that in the final analysis, the use of the economic resources

of Barbados is directed towards the upliftment of the standard of living of Barbadian people.

Subsequent to these pledges, Mr. President, the 1994 Manifesto spoke in even clearer tones when it used the theme: Job number one is jobs. The same thread ran through both the 1994 and the 1999 documents which clearly outline the vision of the Barbados Labour Party.

Mr. President, these documents I have here indicate that the Barbados Labour Party sees the Manifesto with the pledges that they outlined to the staff as a social contract.

Mr. President, I supported this great party of almost 63 years and I helped with the honouring of these various pledges because we work in support of our Motto for this Barbados Labour Party – "A better life for the people." Our track record speaks for itself.

This little island has made tremendous strides over the years as a result of its financial and social policies. Because of the prudent management of the Barbados Labour Party, local as well as overseas investors have developed confidence in the economy. The Government has been so progressive with its policies and programmes that never once have you heard anybody in this Barbados Labour Party saying, "what shall we cut?" "Help me to know my friends from my enemies, because I would know how to take care of my enemies". "Provide the youth with bus fare and lunch money in order to ease the unemployment problem". "There are no gangs".

All of that we heard in this Barbados, and a lot of it has caused a lot of stagnation and put a lot of the same young people who are unemployed out there on the block today, has hampered a lot of our young people who should have had proper education between 1991 and 1994. This resulted from the policies of the Democratic Labour Party in the structural adjustment.

Mr. President, this caring Administration under the Right Honourable Owen Arthur has made Barbados the envy of the Caribbean. I shuddered between 1991 and early 1994 when the rest of the Caribbean made Barbados the laughing stock. They would not even handle our currency. The Democratic Labour Party's management style created havoc in this country's economy and it permeated the entire society. No wonder we are reaping the whirlwind today.

Mr. President, the investors' confidence dwindled. There were mass layoffs. There were threats of the rise in rents, water bills, bus fares; 3 000 people went home. Our salaries were cut by 8 per cent. Today, Mr. President, we have to say, Thank God, the Barbados Labour Party came to their rescue and there is confidence in this economy,

unemployment has dropped in the case of men to an approximate percentage of 6.7 and where women are concerned to about 13.5 per cent.
6.30 p.m.

When we came in as an administration the situation was sad. I want to say Mr. President, that it was a result of those programmes that I considered it to be squandermania. There were projects such as the Sherbourne Centre, that this Government closed up its behind, the St. John Polyclinic, the Cane Garden/Venezuelan Project, the St. Joseph Hospital issue, the shifting of Lord Nelson. Thousands, millions of dollars, I should say, were thrown all over the place in projects that were started and not finished. The Opposition talked a lot about crime and violence and I supported the call. I attended the March last October and was very proud to do so because I have already said out there as well as in this Honourable Chamber that crime and violence is everybody's business just as diabetes or Aids or mental illness or heart disease and all the other things that will impact on any human being despite whatever class or whatever status in society that individual belongs to. I supported it 100% but where were the gurus in the Democratic Labour Party in the early 1990's, and why were they silent when the news of the dope in the diplomatic bag was raised, and to this day we know not what has been the outcome. That was an early start to drugs in Barbados and it was seen happening at the highest level. The young people lost confidence too, Mr. President. I have a difficulty because I will speak when I have to and I am going to speak the truth. I think people must be more honest when they get up to talk.

Mr. President, I wish to laud the efforts of the Honourable Attorney General and the staff of the Police Force and the Defence Force as well that are working together in the fight against crime and violence. While still on the Defence Force, I support the comments that were raised in the newspaper and in other forms of the media, just over a week ago. I felt that the article should have been on the first page because a lot of Barbadians are not aware that camouflage gear is illegal, so we see young people in school uniforms with the scarfs, with the bandanna or a watch strap or a camouflage jacket, even camouflage dresses, I have seen people working and I know that ignorance of the law is no excuse. That was said clearly by the magistrate, and Barbadians must not be walking about wearing the camouflage gear of the Defence Force, especially now in a time when we know that people in the society are impersonating the police and the Defence Force officers. Two people were robbed in a well-known street about two weeks ago because they were impersonating these officers. Hence they have the gear of the Defence Force, they want to wear it and we do not want any distractions at all in that area. We want the Police Force to work in close association with the Defence Force to bring about a semblance of peace and

quiet in this country. So Government has put millions of dollars to train officers in the Attorney General's Office. The Police will be receiving equipment and vehicles and so on to help them to be effective in their jobs.

It is interesting again, Mr. President, when I heard Senator Clyde Mascoll talk about a number of issues that I felt needed to be explained better in order for us to really make a better link, but we know that police stations, schools, roads and other government institutions fell into the ground during the period between 1986 and 1994. That was a result of ignoring. Senator Clyde Mascoll's point yesterday was that the EduTech Project seems to be a way of doing the civil works to repair schools, but from 1994 until the present this Government has been repairing primary schools across the island. Some years we looked at 10 of them. Some years we did thirteen. We repaired the roofs, we repaired the toilet facilities which are very necessary, so it is not true, as was said by him, that the EducTech Project is an excuse for the Government to repair a few schools. It is not the case, Mr. President.

With regards to the police stations, at Sub-programme 256, there is \$1 660 000.00 to repair and maintain police stations, community posts, and so on. There is also an amount of \$60 000 for an incinerator for the burning of illegal drugs and I support this 100 per cent because Barbadians must see police as being transparent, as being accountable and professional, and I am happy an effort is being made for the proper disposal of the drugs that are confiscated from individuals across the length and breadth of the country.

With regard to fire service, \$2.736 million is being put towards the Arch Hall Fire Station that has already started construction, and for further expansion in the area of the Fire Station there has been a recruitment of some 54 personnel to get the whole department of the Fire Service functioning effectively. As we are aware, Mr. President, every year, sometimes every month there are serious accidents on our roads, the jaws of life have to be present to be able to deal with the situation and to help to save lives; so the Fire Service has an extended amount of tasks to perform and therefore money has been provided for them to be able to upgrade facilities and secure the necessary equipment to have the particular department functioning to its maximum.

I will not touch Summervale since it was mentioned earlier, but I also want to look at Government's plan to decentralise the services, hence the public centre complex to be constructed at Horse Hill in St. Joseph. The design has already been started and when it is completed will be dealt with at the PPC and the complex should house a police station, a court, a post office, a library, community facilities and a medical centre. I want to lend my support to that because people in St. Joseph have to travel either to Warrens

Polyclinic, which is dangerous if you are looking at the bus route. Other than that they have to head all the way down to Bridgetown and I am sure that facility will cater to the needs of some persons from St. John, St. Andrew and even St. Thomas, as the case may be.

I also want to laud the efforts of that Department when it comes to looking at CERO and CEDERA. Barbadians seems to think that you only prepare yourself for disasters when it is the hurricane season. We know of situations where the rain poured in St. Thomas, not a drizzle of rain fell in Holetown, but Holetown was flooded as a result of the bad drainage in the country. I am happy that that Department has had an increase from \$706 185.00 in the Estimates last year to \$942 501.00. The plan is to reactivate six district emergency offices, establish a National Emergency Supplies Warehouse and provide lectures for the local community. We always talk about education. That is also in the plan of CERO so that the 60 lectures can be formulated and used to sensitise the populace on disaster preparedness. There is a proactive approach in the case of fire and oil spills, if there is a plane crash, God forbid, if there is bad flooding or hurricanes and other forms of natural and man-made disasters. This effort also is to develop a quick response mechanism with a strong community and volunteer support system. An amount of \$95 000 is in the amount this year for the purchase of a four-wheel vehicle so that when it is flooding and so on that vehicle can get to various points to transfer the various personnel from the Department.

For the CEDERA Headquarters an amount of \$27 250.00 is included. There is nothing more embarrassing and more upsetting than for the department to have equipment and materials stored there and the facility is leaking. That too becomes all flooded out. So that is a provision to ensure that the facility is up and running.

With regards to the prison, still in the Attorney General's area, there is the plan at Sub-programme 252 on page 96 for the main work of the structure of the female section of the prison to be done. Substantial repairs are also planned for the perimeter wall and for the receipt of additional vehicles as part of Government's special package for the protective service. I too lend my support to the idea of putting the prisoners to help to work towards their maintenance. I am sure that whatever monies they raise on the small farm, whatever is necessary to feed them will remain but the rest, I would support, should be sold and whatever funds are collected be given to them so that they can help with the children and the other members of their family. I support the idea of their picking the cotton, working in construction as well as planting and feeding themselves. 6.40 p.m.

To properly effect the implementation of the Penal System Reform Act, there needs to be additional Probation Officers, I think five more of them would be recruited to

supervise the new community services system. Two of the leading officers in the Probation Department have already received their training in England, I am sure they will be able to acquire the necessary skills to do further in-house training with the other officers in order to bring them up to scratch so they can effectively carry out their duties.

Mr. President, I also am happy to learn of the inclusion in these Estimates of the Forensic Sciences Centre which will be constructed in this new financial year. This will be part funded by the European Commission to the tune of some US\$3.5 million. This is necessary, Sir. A cadre of personnel has been trained. I know that there are some officers who are out of the island. They have been facilitated by the various agencies to help them to prepare themselves for this kind of implementation.

I know that the Forensic Sciences Centre will be necessary since we need to have individuals with the cutting edge training that would help them to identify areas to do with ballistics, post mortems, DNAs, narcotics and so on. I want to commend the officers in the Attorney General's office.

Mr. President, I now turn to Social Transformation. I attend Church services all over the country; I go with community groups. I travel on roads from St. Thomas to St. James every morning and back to St. Michael passing through many different communities and I see with my naked eye the improvement in various communities as a result of the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission.

People call and extend their thanks, if they ask for you to identify them to get assistance. People call in on the radio and speak about the services. I want to laud the efforts of this Government in examining the rationalisation of pulling these various agencies together, the National Assistance Board, Community Development, the Child Care Board, the Probation Department and so on. We need as a progressive country to let these Ministries work in close association with each other so that they can dovetail, because there has been too much duplication over the years.

The Honourable Minister in his wisdom has really done a fantastic job over the last year in the delivery of quality services to all Barbadians of all walks of life, particularly the dispossessed, the homeless, the poor and the working class.

The Rural and Urban Development Commissions have done their part. In particular, I like the programme they have instituted in working with the tenantry roads. There are people in Barbados who when they want to go Church and

the rain has fallen, they wear two pairs of shoes; the pair they wear in the muddy tracks that have been in existence from the time of the Democratic Labour Party – I am not so sure which Minister it is that would have prepared 50 roads in his constituency but, certainly, I have seen it since the 1980's where many people in rural districts and in other urban communities have no roads leading to their houses but other roads that were good got nylon roads on top of what they had that were good already.

When people come out to Church, Mr. President, with their two different pairs of shoes, they pushed the ones they came through the mud with in a paper bag and hid them in a cane ground or push them under somebody's cellar and then put on their nice shoes to come out. The Rural and Urban Development Commissions have ensured that the people in the rural districts, especially where the Rural Commission is concerned, get good roads to walk on to because they are taxpayers too. That programme will continue during the year 2000-2001.

The other aspect I want to make mention of has to do with street lighting. I heard some comments one day in here coming from another Honourable Senator when people talked about wanting street lights. You will appreciate, Mr. President, that if the road, street, gap or alley or whatever one wants to call it is dark and lonesome, people who want to go to Church at night, who want to attend their PTA meetings, want to be able to see because of the level of crime that is developing in some communities and the fear that grips them when they have to get off the bus or when a person says: "My car is not going through that little track." Therefore, individuals are asking for street lights because if you have a street light you are better able to see way up the street and you feel safer as a Barbadian who has paid taxes, so that service is also being offered to the people of Barbados.

When I pass through the street behind the YMCA and I see the houses in that general Greenfields area that have been refurbished, it blesses my heart, Mr. President. Once upon a time, during the time of the Democratic Labour Party and you came down the Harbour Road it was called Rotten Town. The Member of Parliament at that time did not even have the kindness in his heart to see that the houses on the Harbour road were uplifted. It happened after 1976 when the Barbados Labour Party came in as the regime to carry the affairs of this country. The Harbour Road now is a gem.

Mr. President, I think now before I forget I should remind the Honourable Chamber of the Barbados Labour Party's effort again. People say we do not like poor people, that we have an inclination to rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous, and the large conglomerates. I have a difficulty with that, Mr. President. I know better than that. That is why I had the admiration for this party.

The Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act that has empowered, not my mother and father, but other poor people that I knew who never had an opportunity after renting a Government spot or a spot from a plantation for 25 and 30 years, to get one. House spots were handed down through generations. The Barbados Labour Party empowered people at 10¢ per square foot. That is not all, Mr. President.

While that has happened, facilities were made available for Barbadians to invest. Many of them did not want to have 100 per cent mortgage but they were involved in their little sou-sou, or we call it a meeting, or they grew their own vegetables, or their own little patch of canes that helped them to start to build the house from the back and come forward. Today when you see them, Mr. President, some of them cost more than \$250 000. That is the kind of initiative and the kind of thrift that I would want to see Barbadians develop. You do not always have to go into those financial or lending institutions to borrow money to do what you have to do. I always hear "Rome was not built in a day" and I admire those individuals who use the opportunity, having acquired their spots through the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act, to build from the back and come forward. Today some of us cannot even look at their houses. They are so elaborate and I am happy for them.

To go further, Mr. President, this Government has started to look at the policy and I am sure the documentation will be coming to this Honourable Chamber. The Act had its flaws, and the Democratic Labour Party, when they came in as an administration in 1986, had all kinds of negative criticisms about it.

I am aware, Mr. President, that the landlord has a right. Any landlord who has property and had told somebody: "I can give you this little spot to put your house on but do not get too fussy and too relaxed on it because I want it for my children that are overseas or whatever," has rights and his rights should be respected. There must be situations made available to them so that they do not lose the opportunities for investment *et cetera*.

This caring Government under the astute leadership of the Honourable Owen Arthur, has put the policy in place for individuals within the tenancies, particularly those in the urban communities who could not take advantage of the 10¢ per square foot, to access the spots they are living on at \$2.50 per square foot and any additional cost per square foot the Government will take it up in a subvention. Mr. President, that is what I consider to be a caring Government.
6.50 p.m.

I think that we need to continue to be more progressive as a Government by keeping our ears to the ground in looking after the needs of the people.

With regard to the Urban Development Commission the redevelopment of Cats Castle is indeed an effort to be lauded. There will be temporary dislocation as it is in most situations but the indication is that there is temporary accommodation being prepared for persons in the Mason Hall Street area. When that is finished those people will have a new way, a better life as a result of the injection of the funds of this particular Government as well as the care and concern that is being offered to help people to continue to grow and develop. I like the idea of bringing along people. I did not get that kind of inspiration when the Democratic Labour Party was in power and despite what anybody says I saw a lot of victimization as well around me. I do not think that any Government should pursue the route of victimising people. I think that we need to give people opportunities that they can uplift themselves. This effort in these Estimates is one way of looking at it. I must say before I move from the Cats Castle venture that it is a project that will be implemented between different stages.

Mr. President, still under social transformation the multi-purpose facility at Haggatt Hall is also another clear indication of Government's policy to deliver recreational services to help with the development programme within communities. Indeed, I love the concept. It is forward thinking since it incorporates components for recreation and training of locals within the communities where they live and it is also in association with the other social agencies.

The Youth Affairs Department is involved with youth commissioners, community development, the non-governmental organisations and so on. Activities such as youth personal development and skills for life they will be doing. They are called gateway activities. There will be changes in sports and academics, in crafts and the performing of visual arts. There will be business development because young people come up with bright ideas and therefore they need that kind of training and that kind of guidance. Information technology will also be another advantage.

I have a particular difficulty and that is why I am glad that this is happening to change that old concept of community centres and pavilions. I have always raised the issue of community centres and pavilions being open at eight-thirty in the morning and they close at four. Between 8.30 in the morning and 4 p.m. people are at work and children are at school. When they are out of school and want to use the facilities they are all closed down because the personnel who were in charge would have already gone home.

This resource centre approach, I am sure, will help to eliminate that kind of misguided concept that would have been in existence before. I would also like to add that in the future an idea that I think would be very effective in the

same community resource centre approach would be to start looking at setting up laundermats at the community centre site where individuals can bring along their clothing, bring along their children because there are playing areas there, and do some education. The nurse can come and talk with the locals. The old ladies can come and mingle with the children and with others and help to build relationships as well as expand their education, and do all the other social activities that will help to inspire them and keep their minds turning over. So this would be a good idea for future planning where the Ministry of Social Transformation is concerned. We consider these activities, Mr. President, as empowerment of the people.

In the area of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, I shall be very brief because I want to spend my next fifteen minutes with education. I have recognised and I know that the ZR route taxis have been getting some stick and a lot of it is deserving. Many of them seem not to understand that they cannot continue to break the law and that the roads are for all Barbadians, pedestrians, motorists and otherwise to use.

I heard an Honourable Member make mention this morning of competition from Transport Board buses. I am of the view that there are some communities that are over-serviced. Too many public service vehicles are servicing those communities. I know for sure and I will say in this Honourable Chamber today that the Hothersal Turning community running from Lears and coming to Bridgetown is under serviced in that there are no less than 10 private vehicles that are servicing that route on a daily basis and they do everything that is negative that the ZR does. They stop at pedestrian crossings so that you cannot overtake them. The smoke is blowing out of them to blow you away. Everything wrong that the others do, they do.

If there is an over-abundance of vehicles on some routes, put them in the Hothersal Turning area and the other areas to service the individuals who need to get to work and get to school and to hospital, wherever. I think that is more important. I would more encourage that and I would never encourage the idea of piracy that is happening. If those pirates get involved in accidents the occupants of the vehicles may not get the necessary compensation.

Mr. President, another area is to do with bad signage. I do not know who is responsible for supervising those who put up the signs on the poles, but sometimes you see words that are so incorrectly spelt. The apostrophe might be in the wrong place. I feel that if we are a people who have boasted for generations that we have had a sound education, then there has to be persons who will supervise what is put there. To make matters worse, most of those large green billboards that indicate to the Airport or Welchman Hall Gully or to Holetown have fallen to the ground.

There is another big problem I have with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. I have seen the amount that is allocated to that Ministry, and I trust that the Honourable Minister and his team of workers there will pay some attention to it. On a lot of the roads that are leading to the Highway 2A or the ABC Highway the signs that say "Keep Left" have been defaced or taken off on purpose, I do not know. Many people are still making the right turn, even though people lose their lives or they get broken limbs. Barbadians like to have a short cut. I do not know why. I would like to recommend to that Ministry that we need those signs because it is the most beautiful parish in this wonderful country; even though we have no sea, we have well cultured people and well disciplined people and we have places of interest: the Island Outdoor Tours, the Welchman Hall Gully, Harrison's Cave and, of course, the Vault Road. Since 1660, that vault has been there, it is a good landmark in Barbados.

Aside.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. President, I will not pay attention to the asides because that Honourable Member spent his three hours and did not in any way tickle a chord in my psyche, therefore I will not be side-tracked. The point I am making, Mr. President, is that I would really like some attention to be paid to that. For example, it is like at the Lowlands junction where the signs are there but people still make a right turn or the signs are missing and they make a right turn. There was one by the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and a lot of people would come and make a right turn to endanger the lives of others. I would like those signs to be replaced if they are missing and I would like to see an upgrade of the streets so that the locals can be well guided as well as those visitors who help to inject funding into our economy.

7.00 p.m.

Mr. President, I now want to touch some of the areas in education. I want to remind Senator Mascoll that it is not always good to speculate. The facts are there, crystal clear for everyone to see when it comes to the EduTech programme. The Educational Sector Enhancement Programme, well known as EduTech 2000 has been over the last year refurbishing and repairing the primary and secondary schools for that first year's programme.

At this point in time, Mr. President, I would just like to speak to three areas of the EduTech programme and it is a lot to do with training because you cannot introduce something new unless those who have to do the delivery of the programme are properly trained and prepared to transfer the knowledge and skills. Therefore, under the technical assistance component of the programme training in the following areas was undertaken over the last year. Teacher training information technology mastery, a repeat pedagogic course level one for Ministry and Erdiston staff and selective

teachers. I heard Senator Thomas-Mascoll mention today that the civil works are happening but the people who matter do not know, only those at the top. It was not said in that language but I clearly understood that is what she was referring to and I want to address this so that I can allay her fears that the training has been ongoing for a whole year. The Ministry's staff, meaning the Senior Education Officers and selective teachers from those schools are not involved in the pilot scheme. There is a management course for education officers and Erdiston tutors. Again, there are study tours for principals from demonstration schools. Many of them have been overseas to observe and be a part of the programmes that are in existence in the USA, United Kingdom and Canada so that they can pick up the skills and bring them back and share them with the locals within the schools.

Phase One includes 13 schools – Christ Church Boys, Cuthbert Moore, Deacons Primary, School for Deaf and Blind, Sharon Primary, South District Primary, St. Mary's Primary, Westbury Primary and at the secondary level, Combermere, Alexandra, Ellerslie and St. James Secondary. At the South District Primary School, when that effort was being made, the facility was more than one hundred years old. It was a church building before and that idea had to be scrapped. It would have been more costly to refurbish it than to build a new school and when we recognised the difficulties of the old building at St. David's Primary, we got into discussion with the various agencies and as a result there is a plan that is being examined for an amalgamated school to accommodate the St. David's Primary and South District.

The second phase that is being worked on now for the summer of this year, Mr. President, in these Estimates are Princess Margaret, Alleyne School, St. Lucy Secondary, Queens College and at the primary level, St. Albans Primary, St. Andrew's Primary, St. Bernard's Primary, St. Lukes, St. Matthews Primary, Erdiston, Grazettes, Mount Tabor and the St. Judes Primary. These schools, Mr. President, are the ones that are being examined for the Phase 2 of the EduTech programme.

I want to turn my attention as well, Mr. President, to the parent volunteer support programme that started in 1996. It is a very interesting and necessary programme from the point of view that for many years parents in Barbados were left out of the school system. You only dropped your child at the school and you left it in the care of the teacher. You picked it up on evenings or sometimes it came home with another child and the only other time that a parent got the opportunity to attend the school was if there was difficulty with the child or if there was a PTA meeting. We recognised that many parents needed training to help them in attaining their parental skills and, therefore, the birth of the Parent Volunteer Support Programme in 1996.

At present we are at 52 schools and we have the intention of expanding to another 12 schools. The idea is that by the year 2002 we will have 100% coverage of nursery and primary schools. A team of stakeholders assist with the project. The National Council of Parent-Teacher Association works with the team and it also supervises the payment of the stipend, the \$100 per week that is offered to the parents.

We are of the opinion that parents should be empowered and if parents get a closer involvement in the school they can work along with teachers, they will see the training at Erdiston and they will then be able not only to empower themselves but they can empower other parents as well as they acquire skills to deal with their own children within their homes. The Early Childhood Association and Erdiston College among other stakeholders are a part of that programme.

Mr. President, we are also at a very advanced stage with the curriculum reform in the Ministry. This exercise forms a major part of the reform programme and runs parallel with EduTech so we are not doing anything in a vacuum. The curriculum is a continuous process and this reform is taking place at both primary and secondary schools in order to meet the changing demands of the society. The syllabuses are being prepared and they reflect the provision of learning environment which would provide opportunities for students to construct much of their learning to develop skills, concepts and strategies which will help them to extract meaning from the information presented.

We are looking at areas of life skills. Many of our children do not develop life skills in the same way that we did when we were growing up. There are many reasons for that. We have introduced citizenry. We have started to look at conflict resolution. There is a component with the tuk band with Mr. Wayne Willock (Poonka) and Mr. Jeffrey Wilkinson with the stilt-walking and with the landship. That is also taking place within the school because we feel that our children should have a better understanding as to where they have come from and the cultural exposure and the heritage education is necessary.

We started conversational Spanish in the schools and this year we are reaching into an additional twenty schools. There is also a book grant in these Estimates of \$500 per school for the purchase of reading books. You will appreciate that if we are going into EduTech we do not only need reading books but we need whatever paraphernalia should go with the computers. There are still many children who need to have those reading books because some parents just cannot afford them. Some parents do not make it their business to get the books but the school still has that

responsibility of looking after the needs of the children, the pastoral care still has to be there and therefore, that book grant is included in this year's Estimates.

We in the Ministry are also concerned with the late arrival of many children at school, of the loitering that takes place in the bus stand, of the truancy that also takes place and dialogue started about three months ago with the various stakeholders in the public and private sectors. We are committed to the establishment of an efficient and effective school transportation system. Plans are still being worked out but I am sure that as time goes by Honourable Members will be made fully aware and we trust that we will get some support from the rest of Barbados because everybody's child should be everybody's else interest. I like that African saying that says it takes a whole village to raise one child. We need to make sure that our children are safe when they leave for school and when they come from school to go to their various homes. There are plans on stream, Mr. President, for the hydroponics plants for agriculture at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic. There is completion of the upgrading of the automotive and welding division. 7.10 p.m.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator you have four minutes.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Thank you, Sir, and there is completion of the upgrading of the Auto-mechanic and Welding division.

Mr. President, I will wrap up and since I have four minutes I will take two to touch on housing because Honourable Members, especially Senator Clyde Mascoll talked about going into Deanes Town. Very briefly I should touch that to say that there is a summary of the houses that have been completed to date by this Barbados Labour Party Administration.

Houses completed, 145, houses in progress, 82, houses to be started 58; total number of houses 285. I wonder if the Honourable Member remembers that in his time when there were \$26 million in the Housing Credit Fund, I think they built nine houses.

Asides.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. President, all of Barbados can see the beauty that goes towards the working class people in the form of London Bourne Towers. Talk about Flat Rock where there are units that Barbadians can live a quality standard of life. Talk about the houses in Apes Hill of which Senator Mascoll said yesterday, they are not occupied by people because the money is out of their reach.

I go out there every morning. The community is now developing because the houses did not have electricity attached to them, but of the almost 75 houses, I am sure that no less than 50 of them are occupied. I understand that the cost is about \$45 000, that is house and land – starter houses, and the clients who are given access to those houses are individuals who are working as janitors, domestics, general workers and so on. The provision is made through the Barbados Mortgage Finance, and the National Housing Corporation itself is affording people those opportunities to be able to have home ownership.

Barbadians do not all like living in housing units. They like to own a piece of the rock. This Barbados Labour Party Government with its caring policies has put that system in place where Barbadians can own a house in this new millennium.

Mr. President, I cherish the opportunity to serve in this Honourable Chamber as a Senator on behalf of the Government side. I know of hardships as most of us or all of us do, and I am sure that people in Barbados have consciences. They will not sink this Honourable Chamber with the eloquence of some of us. However, they are happy to know what this Barbados Labour Party administration with its forward-looking policies and plans and programmes has for the development of every Barbadian to bring along, to give a hand down and lift up and bring forward. Because of that whole outreach and whole outlook, Barbados in the year 2000 is a better place for all of us to live.

I lend my 120 per cent support to these Estimates and I encourage Honourable Members to read the Estimates with care and to ensure that they understand and make the queries. That is why I admire Senator Thomas-Mascoll for making her queries. She had a misunderstanding as to what the contents are. I am happy, Sir, to be able to serve with her as Leader of the Opposition in this Honourable Chamber.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I beg that this Sitting be suspended until 11.00 a.m. tomorrow.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Before putting the motion, I wish just to make a brief observation on the matter of the reading of speeches and I would like to remind Honourable Members that the reading of speeches is specifically forbidden by our Standing Orders. I hope I have said enough.

The question that this Sitting be now suspended until Wednesday, 29th March, 2000 at 11.00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
7.20 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR G. E. N. BROME: Mr. President, I rise in support of the measures before the House today. I endorse this Bill. Mr. President, the question is are we any better off today than we were one year ago?

Asides.

SENATOR G. E. N. BROME: The question is obvious. As I have been going around the country, the progress I have been seeing, not only by the foreigners but also by the locals, I am overwhelmed. One year ago, when these proposals were brought there were questions about the future and what they hold for us. I think I am satisfied that we have done reasonably well. I am not going to say that I have an analytical ability to understand or to make forecast about anything but from my limited understanding, I know for the future of this country I must also make my contribution. Without making my contribution and to sit back and wait on Government to do everything for me, I know that I will be destined to fail.

I am happy that some Barbadians have listened to the directions and advice of the Prime Minister, Government bodies and other people concerned but at the same time I still believe that a greater effort must be made by the general public. We are aware of the fact that the persons who are at present involved in the construction area that they spend most of their money from day to day, from week to week. This trend can be disastrous. I do believe that people who have short-term jobs should be advised how to save.

At present there is a great majority employed. These people by the middle of the following week, they have to borrow in order to survive. Today, we should not be about survival, we should be about security. A greater percentage of the locals should be advised how to invest, how to save, when to buy bonds and when to invest in real estate. It is a fact that Barbadians tend to be pretty independent but this trend has been disappearing over the last few years. We should suggest to the younger people the importance of working, organising themselves and putting something down for the rainy days. Not all rainy days are bad anyway but the greatest threat is flood in respect to rain. There will be a day coming that we will want some of what we would have earned in a real crisis and there is nothing there. There is no National Insurance we have been subscribing to, there is no retirement benefits, there is nothing.

We should encourage our young people to save. The message will not be got across via the newspapers or the radio. Why? To print those things in the newspaper they will

not sell or no one will listen to the radio to such advice; television – no one will pay attention to it. A new approach to education must come about. Our people, the media and so on will focus their attention on what will sell and that is the negative.

At present, the Government is on course, it is strategic and it is progressive so there will be nothing to really criticise and people buy sensational news because it is interesting. What we are doing in Barbados today is making it livable and comfortable so there is no need for uneasiness.

I am very happy to be a Barbadian and I will be happy to hear more intelligent people speaking constructively. Very often lots of things have been said against Barbadians by Barbadians in Barbados and by the media and people forget that domestic affairs can also have an effect on international affairs. If these domestic interferences go outside of Barbados it limits those who care. Over the last three years labour relations in Barbados have been quite stable. Political activities have also been quite stable. I guess there are people out there who are against stability and instead of being in a position to make a contribution for improvement they will create areas of uneasiness. Again, the Government must be driven not by the negatives that have been said neither should they always comment on what has been said. The Government, as long as it is doing what is right, just has to move on and continue to take advice, continue to listen and continue to fulfill the needs of the people. You are well aware of the fact that introduction of social transformation has been a plus for all Barbadians. Social transformation, if you look at it from a holistic point of view, you will discover that it encompasses quite a few Ministries.

The Ministry of Social Transformation must be respected and admired not only by all Barbadians or people in the region but also internationally. I think that the Prime Minister in his wisdom has seen it necessary to create this Ministry. There are people out there in our communities who, over the years, did not expect that they would have lived so long, they did not expect that they would have come to the stage or point that they are today and they are without certain basic needs. We as Barbadians, living in a civilised community should not sit back and laugh or criticise our people that are without. We work from day-to-day to help make a contribution to those most in need.
11.15 a.m.

I am grateful to the Government for all they have done for those needed people in Barbados and I will encourage them to put a little more emphasis on a few areas. I believe that the last thing after life is a decent burial. I would like to recommend that the Ministry of Social Transformation have some active role in recommending that our cemeteries be

upgraded and that adequate space is provided. At the rate that people are dying we must make provision for the dead.

I have made arrangements with my undertaker not to die until the cemeteries are upgraded.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Have those instructions been in writing?

SENATOR G. E. N. BROME: I honestly will suggest that the relevant people will hear and attempt to address it. Cemeteries in Barbados can be termed as most deplorable.

My father died over 20 years ago and I do not have a clue where he is laid, and this is an insult. We people of prominence should at least have some place decent for burial and we should be able to identify where our families have been laid.

Sir, we have had some international funerals around here recently, people of international status and I think very often we had to rush to clean up the cemeteries. We had to make all the necessary preparations to avoid embarrassment and disgrace. I would like someone to make some effort in the very near future where my home is in St. Peter and St. Lucy. I guess if I should die I would be buried there but I would hope they have some land space available and would hope they would pay some sort of attention to our acquiring some land there before houses are placed there. I am also sure that most of the people in Barbados would be hopeful and happy to have a decent burial.

In respect to roads, I believe we have one of the best networks in the Caribbean. The only thing is that the roads are laid out mostly like a football field, circular, which makes it kind of difficult sometimes to understand but at no point in Barbados are you lost. There are almost no dead ends. They go through the hills and through the valleys but for most of these roads that go through the hills and valleys, the maintenance rate must be expensive because when the water comes from a very high point down to the barbergreen, it digs it up.

I would suggest, and I hope the time has come, that we should build stronger roads from concrete and they should have designated areas which are not all filled with cables and so on. I hope they will put some emphasis on building some of our newer roads and repairing some of the older ones especially in the hills and valleys with concrete.

I think also, that Barbados is built on coral stone and if we were to build or to cut even one underground tunnel one of these days, I think it will help us in time to come.

A lot of what we are trying to do now, perhaps if it was thought of or approached in 1960s or 1970s, development would not be a hindrance then as it is now, but people have built their homes all over the place which has restricted and limited development. Not that the houses cannot be removed, but it has a cost and that must always be taken into consideration.

I also would like to see the day come when our valleys which are filled with waterfalls and springs are developed. I was in St. Andrew by Bawdens Spring on Saturday and I was so impressed with the pure looking water. I tasted it seeing that it was spring water.

Asides.

SENATOR G. E. N. BROME: I had to do it because it was the first of its kind I had seen in Barbados. I was impressed. Our Government can pay attention to those things in some of those rural communities. It can be a tourist attraction. Some of this water can be used for irrigation, and I am sure that, around in those areas people are still using tap water, and you have water running there. A lady said she is over 60 years and from the time she was a little girl, she saw the water running there. There are many times when a lot of our reservoirs run dry or mostly dry and there is water running there all the time.

I would hope our Government attempts to do something about them. There are many in St. Thomas, St. Andrew, St. Joseph that I know of, and St. John. I am anxious to see the day come when our people make the best uses of all available water.

I come now to natural disasters. I do not think that we are sufficiently enough prepared for natural disasters and I am not impressed with the money that has been allocated to natural disasters. We have not had a hurricane here for many years, but because we have not had a hurricane does not mean we should be complacent. There are many young people who are anxiously awaiting the occurrence of a hurricane just to see what it is like. They just wait in anticipation; they hope it will come. Our people must be more educated to the dangers and they must be prepared to do something for themselves or for their communities.

11.25 a.m.

I believe that the Government should allocate a certain amount of funds to most of the community groups because this little incentive will create interest; not that people are being paid, but a little incentive will create interest because they will be given a little donation for their effort. Already in Barbados we have had one-day collection of garbage. But what do we term as garbage? Is it only plastic bags? Are we not aware that galvanize, loose wild flying galvanize can be

more hazardous than plastic bags? I would be happy if we were to put one day aside and get Barbadians to help before the hurricane comes. We have about two to three months to play with to patch up some of the elderly people's palings or make home extension or outdoor extension. We must be scared if our home is adequately prepared but that other person's is not, so you are in trouble. We must pay attention to these things. I think I made mention of this already and someone said we cannot go and touch people's palings; but it is important that we try to address it. It is important and it is one of the most threatening things in respect to a hurricane.

The other thing is a certain type of tree beside some homes. That can be dangerous. Some of the trees are brittle and some of them can snap at any time and cause disaster, not only for homes, but also for the utility lines. When they come down, you do not know what other effects it might have. So we should not only wait until May or June to start trimming, but a policy in respect to trees should come about, not only the preservation of mahogany trees or the preservation of trees on a whole, but at the same time, certain trees should not be planted too close to the road because if you have to make any improvement or development, you have problems in removing them. I believe a general policy on trees should be introduced.

With respect to agriculture, I think agriculture also affects me. I love it. It is one of my greatest hobbies. It gives me strength and energy. When I am having stress problems I go and take my fork and my hoe and work it off. I also get a sweat. If our agriculture should be destroyed I think it would mean death to Barbados. We must go all out to save agriculture. We must put systems in place, and put some emphasis on irrigation. We must sink some dams and some ponds and so on to collect water. Right now we use a large percentage of tap water for growing vegetables and for wetting the lawns at hotels and that sort of thing. A new system has been introduced at the hotels now where they collect rain water on the ground, but there were still some people at the older hotels who were not equipped then and the Government allowed them to still use whether it drips or whether it is sprinkled water and they wet endlessly. I feel so bad to see our tap water, which is scarce in other countries and even sometimes certain parts of Barbados, people are wetting with drinking water. I would suggest that a little more emphasis be placed on water tanks and almost, not only farmers, but almost every house should have a water tank. As I travel through a place like St. Lucy, which is virtually flat, hot and so on, I believe I see about four tangible water tanks. St. Lucy is still one of the leading agricultural areas in Barbados. I would like someone to pay greater attention not only in retaining St. Lucy as an agricultural area, but to put systems in place to accommodate agriculture; and water is one of the greatest necessities.

A few days ago, I heard of the state of the Barbados Public Library. Serious attention must be paid to the Library. We have a building right there in the Lower Green Bus Stand which is besides Courts (Barbados) Limited, and I see trees growing through that building. It is in the heart of Bridgetown. I would like to see Government do something about that. It is a great building and has historical value and over the last six or seven years I have heard no mention of it. To let that building remain there for another two years, they will push it down and that would be very unfortunate.
11.35 a.m.

I would hope that they do something there like a community activity in the lines of getting young children in there mainly for brainstorming, for creating new avenues for business and experimenting. They can do a host of things. We have to get young people and school leavers from the first year. If that was allocated to those people, that would be something else.

It is accessible for all. Parking space can be made available and I would like to see young people in control of that building. I would like to work towards that because young people must be the ones to create new avenues of work instead of focusing their attention on short-term projects. Short-term projects are destined to fail because there is not enough planning put into it nor enough support.

I think that that should be a sustainable project. Young people with a good director can extract what they have. Young people are not given the opportunity to explore possibilities at an early age. Most of what people are teaching they do not want to hear because they pick it up from the TV. I believe that if you give people the opportunity to exercise their young minds and to extract something when they come up with an experiment, they can present it to Government to be analysed.

I believe our Government should be more influenced and guided by young minds. If you were to ignore what they are saying today, it will be disastrous for us in the future. We very seldom listen or pay attention to what the young people are saying. Young people are termed as misguided, thoughtless and ignorant, but all the provision we are making is on their behalf. Yet they do not have a voice. I guess we should consider ourselves responsible for losing a generation or two because we have done nothing to correct measures. We thought it was all right and now we are paying the penalty because you will see that we have to support those fellows and most of them are ending up in the mental hospital which is absorbing a lot of money.

I would suggest that we do something to help those young people develop their minds as early as possible by giving them the chance to explore all possibilities and especially with respect to business.

I guess formal education would have failed, even in America, because I do not think it is all the formality that counts today but the ability to generate, and most of those people who have succeeded in generating activity were people whom one would have thought were hopeless because they did not have a formal education.

People without a formal education also have a mind and I want our people to go out and find the people and bring them back into society. The approach by police might not be the proper one right now. I believe our Senators, our politicians, our Justices of The Peace have an important role to play and I hope that we recruit new interesting Justices of The Peace so that they can make a social contribution.

Right now our Justices of The Peace serve the purpose of signing documents. To sign a document says nothing. They have a contribution to make. I do not believe that they are given any sort of remuneration but I hope the day will come that they will be put to work and given a stipend so that they can fulfil an active role in society.

I would like to make a recommendation in respect to young people. I suggested a while ago that in communities where people still are kind of unspoilt that greater emphasis should be placed on social development to be able to extract what they have and give them an opportunity to explore new possibilities. They also need recreational facilities. I believe that in a place like St. Lucy with the landscape and the environment, something like a camp facility should be created for the people of the area and for the people of Barbados generally and be an attraction to tourists. I firmly believe that and I know it will work because I do not believe that tourism, in the direction it has gone and is going will pay real dividends. I do believe that the so-called Mr. Nobody has a contribution to make. There is a sort of tourist that will be attracted to Barbados for the sake of camping, affordable living conditions and just to enjoy the nature of Barbados. Barbados has a lot to offer in respect of tourism but the people at the top that make the money, I do not believe they understand what the tourists need.
11.45 a.m.

Everyone is focusing all their attention on massive beautiful hotels. I do not believe that is what people are looking for. They need reasonable accommodation but a lot of these people want to go around to the rum shops and get around with the locals. It is when you make contact with the locals that you have a desire to return. There is no one who comes to a hotel that wants to buy the hotel. Nobody is coming from England to buy a hotel or a room. They want to enjoy the locals. The more interaction people have with visitors the better it spells for Barbados. This is why Cuba will succeed and this is why the Dominican Republic will succeed over Barbados. Our approach to packaging tourism is wrong. I have always felt so, I believe so and I have also travelled and I have seen the level of hospitality in Cuba and

the Dominican Republic and one will say that this is because the infrastructure is not as good as ours because they are poverty-stricken but I do not believe development should destroy hospitality. We should not be allowed to destroy what we have developed.

It is also important that a foreign language be introduced as we are a tourist-oriented country. Tourism began here in 1960 and no real provision, no real approach to tourism has been made, in my opinion; no more than apart from building hotels. It is not enough to say that hotels were built for the tourists and that hotels are not built for Barbadians and that the percentage of Barbadians that go to hotels can be numbered. Hotels should be made attractive enough, not necessarily physically but the prices should also be accommodating. I want to see and I would hope the day will come that there is a more positive approach. At our airport there is one language and all is in English. If you have Spanish, French or German persons at the airport someone has to be there to translate for them. They are expanding the airport and they have not thought of putting in multilingual facilities. The multi lingual facility must be accommodated if we are really a tourist destination. I want to see that come about at our airport. I have never been to the Deep Water Harbour so I do not know what is there, perhaps they have, but all those people who come to our shores are not all from America, they are not all from England. We are not attracting enough multilingual people. We have got to do something. We have got to equip our people with the ability. If we want to start it and we cannot do it now, let us hire people from outside to do it. Cubans will continue to do well because the Cuban product is new, it is interesting and people are not concerned about how the natives dress. They are only concerned about whether they are nice, that is all and the tourists are well taken care of. It is encouraging. I would like our people to put more emphasis on the necessary things in Barbados.

I thank you so much, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to make my contribution to the Senate and to Barbados.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Thank you Senator Brome. Senator Murray.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, on reflection I have come to realise that this would be the sixth Estimates debate in which I would be participating since I have the honour and privilege to be a Member of this Chamber. The Estimates debate, as I am sure my fellow Senators will agree, is generally regarded as one of the highlights of the activities in which we indulge in this Chamber and an event to which we look forward to most eagerly because it is usually very spicy, energising and controversial.

Sir, I must say that when I consider what has gone on in these Chambers over the last three days, I have concluded that this has to be the most sedate, non-contentious Estimates debate that I have ever experienced. The criticism was very muted and generalised. It did not have the spunk and the bitingness of previous debates. Not necessarily that it is a bad thing but even the two Opposition Senators have tried desperately and largely unsuccessfully to find anything much with which to find fault – not even to lock horns within this debate.

If I might respect a tradition and deal with ladies first. Senator Thomas-Mascoll's contribution – I would like to describe it, Sir, – I am not being uncharitable but I would like to describe it as a Poonka contribution. There was skipping, hopping and jumping. It was here, it there, there was little tuk here and a little tuk there and whatnot but it did not have any real meat to it. I will be returning to her contribution in a little while. As to Senator Clyde Mascoll, he was trying so hard to mount an attack that he had to revert to mentioning his 5-4-3 plan. That was the first time since the Elections campaign of 1994 that I have heard Senator Mascoll referred to his 5-4-3 plan since 1994.

Sir, that helps to give you the kind of atmosphere, the kind of engine that has been fueling this whole debate. We Sir, on this Side have been well prepared for it and I would therefore like now to look at some of the matters that have been raised by various Senators in their contributions.
11.55 p.m.

Senator Mascoll in one of his points tried to establish that a reduction in the non-statutory applications to the various departments reflected the Government's cash flow problem and was a reflection of a policy decision not to hire substitutes during times when people were on sick leave or vacations, *et cetera*, but Sir, that is not true at all.

The fact is that the reduction in that allocation has come about because of the conversion of the casual employee, the temporary employees and the appointed employees to the categories of public officers. Therefore that is a straightforward explanation and I am glad to be able to erase any kind of confusion that might have been in his mind about that.

Now, Senator Mascoll has already dealt very decisively and very authoritatively in disproving and refuting. Senator Mascoll claimed that the public sector has been the main provider of jobs over the last few years as we have achieved the magnificent objective of reducing employment to single digit figures to 9.8% at last count, by the latest report.

Sir, what is so interesting and significant about the reduction of unemployment to this level, which while not satisfactory is certainly encouraging, is the fact that it did not come about through any crash programmes, but it has been a steady, systematic approach. We did not have any crash programmes as the Democratic Labour Party was at one time very infamous for, but instead we have produced jobs that are productive and sustainable and that have contributed to the overall development of Barbados.

Sir, it is quite interesting that we no longer in Barbados hear any talk about the 30 000 jobs that the Government was supposed to have promised the country, because people are satisfied that we have made a valiant and successful attempt at seeking to tackle the unemployment problem.

All in all, Sir, when you consider that Senator Mascoll was wrong about the reduction in the non-statutory allocations, he was wrong about the unemployment and several other things, but I just thought I would take this opportunity to remind Senator Mascoll that in a democracy, Sir, we are all entitled to our opinions but we are not entitled to our own facts.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Facts could only be facts and facts therefore cannot be manipulated or manufactured to suit anyone's opinion. Facts remain incontrovertible once they are facts. Therefore, the facts from all sources, non-political or political, whether they be national institutions or regional institutions, whether they be international lending agencies, whether they be agencies which allocate credit ratings, the overall conclusion, Sir, is that the Barbados economy is doing well, is looking good and we are on a sound footing.

We are not complacent about it but the fact is that we are encouraged and we are seeing the fruits of our labour. As a matter of fact, only three days ago when this debate started, we had the privilege, Sir, of having been given the news of Barbados being praised by the IADB for its treatment. It says,

"IADB praises Barbados. The Inter-American Development Bank is hailing Barbados' economic success story."

Sir, that is a further endorsement and justification of the route along which we are travelling. The applauding of the programmes has come from far and wide and while we appreciate them, Sir, we do not, like I said, intend to be complacent, but intend to be energised by such encouraging assessments which give us fortitude to press on with a mammoth task ahead of us.

As I finish off with Senator Mascoll, I must also point out, Sir that it is interesting when I reflect on the predictions and prognostications of disaster after disaster upon disaster and the doom and gloom that Senator Mascoll has predicted for this Government and for this economy, not one has materialised. Not a single one.

As a matter of fact, it is so sad that this is but one year in which he did not predict any further economic disaster on Barbados. He is now like the boy on the burning deck having cried once and when he meets many competitors he having cried for so long, he himself no longer takes his predictions seriously. Sir, that is the best ceremony that could be given of his thing.

Sir, the Independent Senators made some very useful contributions and I want to thank them very much for their observations, more so than their criticisms because I think their observations, the spirit and tone in which they were given reflected a general satisfaction in the way things were going, but they were just giving some diatribes and pointing out some areas in which we needed to pay attention in order to keep us on our toes.

We, Sir, are appreciative of that and I hope that as I deal with some of their concerns, I can erase them and show them that we are serious about providing them with a good and sound Government.

Sir, Sir John Goddard in his contribution made a number of very interesting points. One point which I would like to deal with is when he said that senior managers in the public sector need to be suitably rewarded and be held accountable for their actions and for their deeds, *et cetera*. That we must agree with. They must be suitably rewarded but at the same time, we in Government appreciate that everybody must be suitably rewarded, stretching from the most senior to the most junior.

Sir, as a matter of fact, studies on that area have shown that the gap between – and I am sure Senator Collymore would agree with me – the top management in the public sector and the middle management, even the lower rank in Barbados, is the closest in the Caribbean. In other words, there is a wider distribution and more even spread of wages across the public sector in Barbados than elsewhere in the Caribbean. While I appreciate Senator Goddard's observation, I would like to point out that that is the nature of the Barbadian society. It is a much more equitable society and that is the way we see it as going.

Therefore in making that observation, I would also like at this time to thank the public servants for their contributions over the last several years in office for putting in the kind of hard work, making the kinds of sacrifices, demonstrating the kinds of commitments that would have

made all the gains that we in Barbados would have enjoyed over the last year, particularly generally the last five or six years, possible.

The Barbados public service still remains an outstanding service. It still remains an institution that offers very attractive, rewarding, exciting and challenging opportunities for Barbadians. I think that we can still be proud of them and that they still have a very long contribution to make by making Barbados' success even more outstanding in the years to come.

Senator Goddard also made reference to the question of investor confidence in Barbados and despite the findings of the survey for which, as Senator Barker observed, there is no basis indicating how scientific it was, but it was just a survey, though not every survey is reflective of the true state of affairs, we still know, Sir, from all other indicators that investor confidence in Barbados is very high and that Barbados' image in the Caribbean and wider afield is no longer laughed at. It is no longer embarrassing to say that you are a Barbadian. You no longer have to go to Puerto Rico and be embarrassed that they are not going to take your Barbados dollars anymore. The Barbados economy is strong. The dollar is sound and our image again has been restored. Thanks to the work of the Government and thanks particularly to the outstanding work of the Prime Minister.

Senator Laurie, Sir, spent some time dealing with the Auditor General's report for 1999 and I understand his concerns. He asks what is Government's policy regarding the blatant abuse of the rules and procedures contained in that report and he said he spent sleepless nights because of the contents of that report. The report does not offer comfort to anybody but I would not like the impression to go abroad that the Government of Barbados is ignoring or indifferent to the strictures in that report. I know that Senator Laurie is an avid reader of the records of the Hansard that covers this Chamber, that while he may be spending sleepless nights on these things, and understandably so, there are lots of us in Barbados who still have sleepless nights about what is going on at the Barbados Agricultural Society and therefore we know that there are still some questions to be answered in that regard.
12.05 p.m.

Sir, specifically back to the Auditor General's Report, the point is that when the Auditor General presents a report it is really the role of the Public Accounts Committee to investigate those reports and follow up on the strictures of the report. Whenever the report comes out the Prime Minister makes it plain to his Ministers and public servants and the Permanent Secretaries that they have to take it very seriously and take whatever steps are necessary to correct the deficiencies in the report.

I remember there was some mention in the report about a special audit on the Government Printery but since that a lot of steps have been taken to bring the Government up to scratch on a lot of the things that were complained about. The accounting system has been improved, the question of billing etc., has been improved. Accounts receivable have been much more up-to-date etc., so we take it seriously. I know that in this instance the Director of Finance has written to all Ministries and all departments drawing their attention to the situation as contained in the report and giving them deadlines for representing responses and to taking action to correct the issues about which the Auditor General has complained in that report. So, Sir, that takes care of Senator Laurie's strictures in that regard.

Senator Collymore also made some very interesting comments. I also like to listen to him very carefully because of the wealth of experience and expertise he brings particularly as it obtains to the public service. He made an interesting observation that really says a lot for Barbados. Without speaking about the public sector in general, he made the observation that the demands and expectations of our people are now so high that he doubts that any single government can achieve them all at one time. I think that really represents a very interesting perspective of Barbadians' attitude today. It also indicates that the expectations are high because persons once again have confidence in the country, they have hope, they can dream, they have ambition and therefore they think that their ambitions are once again achievable and therefore they can have high expectations.

Senator Collymore also spoke about the question of the Urban Development Commission and he wondered why the allocation was put under the capital section, but when I made some enquiries, I was told that Urban has always been given a lump sum, given the nature of its job and the lump sum money is controlled by the Board, and the programme which spends that money also has to come to Cabinet for approval, but the lump sum is given to it because of the nature of the job. In other words, if they decide that they have to repair an old lady's house, they have to have a generous sum of money which they are accountable for, to be able to respond to the urgencies of the situation in that regard. It has been that way from the very beginning, but there is a system. There is a mechanism in place. There are checks and balances on that procedure and therefore his understandable concern about it being taken advantage of – It is not so easily done because as I said there are checks and balances in place. As I said, this has been the system which has been put in place for the Urban Development Commission, given what it has to do.

Senator Laurie also made a very good observation about stressing the importance of the maintenance of government plans and buildings. We appreciate that. As a matter of fact, anybody looking at the Frank Walcott

Building knows that is a policy which has been implemented there with great success. We at Government Headquarters have learnt from that. We have now hired a maintenance co-ordinator who now has the job of looking after the maintenance of that building and the surrounding building. Anybody who has been to Government Headquarters recently will attest to the fact that that in itself has improved the appearance of the building tremendously. We no longer have to wait on Public Works to send a plumber or somebody to fix a window; there is a team there that can do it on the spot. Therefore, the building is not allowed to run down and incur significant expense when all it would have taken was a few dollars to set it rolling.

Sir, I would like to spend some time looking at the Government's position as regard some of the Ministries under the Prime Minister's Office and under his purview. Under the Prime Minister's Office, Sir, I would like to pay attention to the whole question of Independence and to observe that the amount for Independence celebrations allocated in the Estimates is \$275,000.00, which represents an increase of \$75,000.00. Out of that sum also comes the money for the community independence celebrations and the Community Independence Secretariat because of having developed a strong working relationship with the private sector; and also having begun to inculcate among the Parish Independent Committees a sense of self-help and generation of their own funds, we have been able to arrive at increased sponsorship from the private sector and support from the community through the Parish Independence Committee. As a matter of fact, some of our major events have been sponsored. The Lighting Ceremony is sponsored by Life of Barbados, the launching ceremony by Texaco, the committee Mini-Parks Competition by Barclays Bank, *et cetera*. We have been able to control expenditure by attracting support from the private sector and at the same time holding training courses where we encourage the parish independent committees and give them the skills to be able to generate their own fundraising, so that they do not depend on central government for handouts; but while given a token support, they themselves are generating their own funds and having a sense of independence and connection with the community.

In the Estimates there is a sum of \$50 211.00 which is this year allocated to the churches. I would like to say in that regard, Sir, that ever since the ecclesiastical affairs was put under the Prime Minister's Office, we have been working hard at seeking to find some solution to some outstanding problems that have existed between the Government and the various denominations. There has been a committee set up which is chaired by the Permanent Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office, and which has representation from the Ministry of Finance, Education, Housing and Lands and the Environment. They are looking at the whole question of government's desire to compensate these denominations for the use of church buildings and lands.

Government is very serious about settling that debt. Government feels that the church is a very important institution in Barbados that makes a tremendous contribution to the spiritual and also material well-being and the general wholesomeness of the Barbadian society, and we feel we have an obligation to seek to compensate those churches for, like I said, the church buildings and the lands which the Government and by extension the society has had the benefit of over the years. This committee is meeting on an on-going basis. The last meeting, I think, was some time last month. They now have to come back with some further details to work out costing, pricing and valuations etc. We are determined that this whole issue be resolved as soon as possible in order to fulfill the Prime Minister's decision that this is debt which Barbados must pay to its religious institutions.

Therefore, Sir, I am very pleased to be able to report that considerable progress is being made in that regard and we look forward, Sir, to this issue being wrapped up as soon as possible.

Sir, there's also the question of government security. As you know, government has provided security through its security guard service. At the same time there is a private security guard service that is overseen by the Prime Minister's Office. You will recall, Sir, that where the private investigators and security guard service is concerned, the Auditor General in his 1988 Report also had some things to say about the deficiencies in how that area was operating. 12.15 p.m.

I am pleased to say that Government has again taken the strictures of the Auditor General very seriously in that regard. We have taken steps to plug the major openings that existed in that service where the Private Investigators and Security Guards' Advisory Board have suffered from a lack of staff which would do the follow-up work.

We have just appointed an Investigation's Officer who has already taken up duty and is working and achieving success, whose job is to actively ensure that the security guards are licensed, that their licenses are renewed, that the agencies themselves are licensed, and that they themselves hire licensed security guards. What was happening was that because of the lack of staff and because of a lack of follow-through, Government was losing considerable revenue in this area. This Investigating Officer is following through on that. He is going out to the agencies and not just waiting.

The tradition has been that at a time of the year an advertisement would be published in the Press and be carried on the radio and TV saying that these licences are supposed to be renewed by a particular time and therefore

we would have to depend on the initiative of these persons or institutions to respond. Now we are going out actively and are obtaining good cooperation. We are also enhancing the coffers of the Government in that regard.

The Government Security Guard Service also is being looked at considerably. Government Security Guards provide services at 82 different locations across Barbados. There is a committee which I chair which is looking very seriously at seeking to enhance the whole operation of this service, enhance the image and enhance the professionalism, especially through training. As a matter of fact, this committee has started to work. We have been looking at the whole question of training, recruitment, promotion, discipline and things of that nature.

There is a training course which should begin on Monday that will start the trend of having ongoing training for both the senior security guards who are the supervisors as well as the rank and file of the Security Guards' Service. This is going to be an ongoing exercise. We intend that in a year or so all the 300 guards, I think, who are in the Service will be exposed to training. Then we intend to retrain them in order to provide them with information and skills to cope with the changing needs and circumstances in Barbados as regards their job.

There was a query raised as to the wages of the private security guard. That is an area in which the Private Security Guards' Advisory Board is looking at the question of the legislation. There are also some amendments that will have to be made to the legislation that cover both the private security guards and the Government security guards. There have been some drafts produced and they are being looked at so we can take some decisive steps to bring these services up to scratch because of the important role they perform in Barbadian national life.

The question also of the Barbados Defence Force is a matter I would like to deal with. The Defence Force is celebrating its 21st Anniversary this year. It has a wide range of attractive activities to mark this very momentous occasion. The Barbados Defence Force, as we all recognise and acknowledge, has over the last 21 years provided us with a very outstanding service. It is service of which we are proud and which all Barbadians appreciate, but we have found to our regret that after 21 years the Defence Force still does not have a pension scheme. We think it is unfair and unjust.

Again, we have taken steps to deal with this. A committee has been set up to look at this matter. It has membership from the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of the Civil Service, the Ministry of Finance, the Supervisor of Insurance and the Director of National Insurance etc. They will be working with the Barbados Defence Force to try to rectify this situation.

A submission will be made very shortly to the Defence Board. Because it was a new exercise, we have had to gather information from a number of different sources to try to arrive at the best possible team for our men and women of the Barbados Defence Force. A submission will very shortly go before the Defence Board so we can give some realisation and hopefully give a 21st Anniversary gift to the Barbados Defence Force in a way which is long overdue.

Along with that, Sir, a sister agency, so to speak, to the Defence Force is the question of the Barbados Cadet Corps which is this year celebrating its 196th anniversary. That also provides a very useful service. I think there are now some 20 cadet companies. There are 580 cadets in the Corps. By the end of March there will be another 210 added which would bring it to almost 800 cadets. This number will include some 30 sea cadets who train once a week with the Barbados Coast Guard in order to build those young ones and provide some succession planning for the Cadet Corps.

The Estimates, Sir, also provide some money for the Cadet Corps to have a permanent camp site at Paragon. This had been mooted for some time but work has actually started, I am pleased to say, and this camp site will not only be devoted to the cadets but it will be open to all the youth groups of various types in Barbados who will be able to go to Paragon, which is a very picturesque, windswept site on that part of Barbados. It will provide excellent facilities not the luxurious facilities but good facilities which will be the nature of encamping that will allow them to carry out their various programmes and exercises in a safe and secure surrounding.

We think this will, apart from contributing to the development of various skills and attributes within the young people of Barbados, also make a very strong connection between the Cadet Corps, the Defence Force and the society, so that there is no dichotomy or suspicion between the civil society and the military arms of our society.

We are very optimistic about that and look forward to it very eagerly. We are hopeful that it will be ready by the summertime and, therefore, some of the groups who hold their summer camps will be able to enjoy that.

The Estimates, Sir, also provide some \$2 million for the relocation of the Coast Guard. As you know, Sir, the Coast Guard which is presently located at Fort Willoughby at the Pierhead will be removed to reclaimed lands to the north-west of the Flour Mill at Spring Garden, an area occupying some 15 837.39 square metres. The site was selected particularly because of its close proximity to the Bridgetown Port and easy access to the sea. It will also facilitate the Coast Guard in carrying out its duties in the Port and in monitoring traffic, *et cetera*.

The present site at Fort Willoughby was considered unsuitable especially after the damage which it suffered by the storm surges in 1999, surges which caused wave action, flooding and infrastructural damage to the building. It was felt that it would be better in the long run to provide it with a more suitable location. It is this suitable location we are looking at on which work we hope will be started this financial year to solve that problem. At this stage the preliminary concept drawings have given us an estimated cost of some \$22.5 million.

I am pleased to advise that we are expecting a \$5 million grant from the private sector through the means of Barbados Shipping and Trading to make this possible. We think that is a very useful contribution to an institution upon which we will all depend for various means of protection. We look forward to and appreciate this support.

In relocating the Coast Guard to that site, I would like to assure the public that given its location on the sea, an environmental impact assessment study will be done to make sure that whatever facilities are put in there do not do any damage or injury to the environment and to the overall well-being of Barbados, physically, *et cetera*. We intend to take especial care to ensure that it inures to the benefit of Barbados in every possible way.

Sir, I would also like to pay some attention to the question of the Ministry of the Civil Service and deal with some of the issues they have been engaged in as well as speak on some of the plans for the future.

One of the things that has been occupying the attention of the Ministry of the Civil Service at the moment is the question of the new Qualifications Order. The last time there was a qualification order was in 1974 and that was amended in 1976. We recognise that since then new jobs have been created, old jobs have changed and the demands and requirements for jobs have undergone tremendous change.

We think that a new approach has to be given to the question of qualifications for jobs and we are taking a general view of this Order to incorporate all the amendments and changes that would have taken place in Barbados in 1976 when it was a totally different world almost. This new draft qualifications order has been approved by Cabinet and is now being worked on by the Chief Parliamentary Counsel, and we are hoping that this will be able to reflect the skills and the qualifications that exist in the society as well as prepare people for the skills that we need in the future.
12.25 p.m.

The Barbados Public Service will be even more equipped to provide the services that are required of Barbados. In the past year or so we are pleased to have played a major role in the restoration of the eight per cent

pay cut to the civil servants. That story is well told and I do not need to go over it here again, but I would like to make one observation and to express my opinion that a great disservice has been done to the public service of Barbados by persons for whatever reason who should know better, people who are in leadership positions who tried to dissuade them from seeking to invest their money in securities.

There is this myth that has been perpetrated that you have to have a lot of money to start to invest. That is not true. The point is that if we are going to be serious about building an investment country in Barbados people have to be given whatever opportunities. If they have disposable income they can afford, not that you are taking away from providing your necessities, but if it is money that you can afford to invest you have to start doing so, and this was an excellent area in which a lot of persons could have started.

I think it was very wrong of the leadership of the Barbados Union of Teachers to have taken the stance that they did. It makes me feel that given the political connections that exist between the leadership of that union and the Democratic Labour Party that it is seeking to continue the idea that certain people in Barbados should live hand to mouth, so to speak, and with hands always in their pockets and not plan and build for the future.

Sir, it is the same attitude that the Democratic Labour Party had when at Christmas they would give workers a Christmas advance, and we know that after Christmas January and February are hard months, so that when you give a person an advance and you take it out in the next two or three months it works hardship on a lot of people. We, in the Barbados Labour Party, have always felt that that was the wrong attitude, that people had to be taught thrift, even taught savings. That is why we gave a policy to encourage the growth and development of the credit unions and that when people saved at the credit unions or borrowed money from the credit union, they had to be saving while they repaid and what is gained in interest comes back to you in the form of benefits and dividends. That is the culture that we have sought to encourage and this was in keeping with that saving.

I very much regret, Sir, that that retrogressive step, that backward attitude had to be exhibited to dissuade persons from doing so. I hope that is the last we see of that antiquated primitive way of looking at persons and their livelihood and that we never see a repeat of it again.

I would like to touch on the question of the regrading and the classification exercise that is afoot in the public service. This is fairly well known and I would like to report that progress is being made and a consultancy service is being acquired with the assistance of the Inter-American Development Bank and calling upon the very experienced

persons who will seek more to provide this quantitative basis to the evaluating of jobs in the future than has been done in the past. This reclassification and regrading exercise will obtain not only in the general civil service but also apply to statutory boards. The first step will be what is known as a diagnostic survey which will be the forerunner to the wider study. That is well underway.

On another matter, Sir, the Government proposes to have a Public Service Act which will look at such areas as conditions of service, management of financial administration, the handling of disciplinary measures, the functions of the various Commissions. There is a Committee which has been set up to come up with a policy framework and it is well at work and should be submitting a report to Cabinet very soon with proposals in that regard. So considerable work has been done in that area.

Sir, by and large one of the greatest areas of satisfaction over the last year must have been the success that we have had in implementing Government's decision to convert the post of casual and public employees to public officers. That is really one of the outstanding achievements of this Government and I would like to thank the Ministry of the Civil Service and the trade unions for the supportive role they played and the great deal of cooperation they exhibited in bringing it to finality to the point where we have so far established some 4 346 posts, and we expect some 241 more of these posts will also come into being very soon. So far some actual letters of appointment have gone out to some 3 381 public officers. They are going to receive a letter of appointment appointing them to the new status of public officer which means that they will no longer be regarded as second-class employees. They are now guaranteed year-round employment, security of tenure, easier access to credit, because when persons saw 'casual employee' on job letters or letters of documentation they felt that they were in an unstable situation and they could not service any debt incurred.

Their retirement benefits will also be greatly enhanced and in many cases their benefits will almost double. In addition, persons can now retire at 60 and get a Government pension for five years until the National Insurance benefits kick in at 65. In the past, the so-called casual worker who retired had to go for five years without a pension until their National Insurance came into effect.

Sir, we are very pleased with that and it is hoped that by the end of April, all the letters would have gone out to all the affected new public officers and that will be a chapter closed, but a chapter of which we could be exceedingly proud.

Sir, the Personnel Administration Division has also been hard at work in doing a number of serious initiative jobs. They are pushing ahead with the computerisation of

that department. They are involved in putting together the whole question of a new performance and development appraisal system which would provide a more scientific and more professional basis for evaluating public officers.

As you know, Sir, one of the greatest bugbears among public officers has been the question of the old confidential report which many times did not reflect a true indication of a person's performance over the years but was done sometimes on the whims and fancies that reflected a supervisor's opinion of an officer at a particular time rather than an overall period of time.

This system, as I said, is going to change all of that so that persons in many areas of the public sector have a system where you can be graded not once a year but periodically. You have set targets and goals. You are called in and counselled and these things are pointed out to you and you are given a chance to rectify the situation and then you are evaluated over a year's time and not just at one particular time. We think this will go a long way to enhancing the morale of the public officers and to feel that they are getting a fair share in the public service, that they are treated with equanimity and even handedness across the system.
12.35 p.m.

Sir, the Personnel Administration Department, as I have said, is developing this programme and it is hoped that this will start on a trial basis in a number of departments from next month so that we can try to iron out the kinks as much as possible because we know there will be some teething problems but we will, hopefully be able to set the record straight and correct the defects before it is implemented on a service wide basis to benefit the civil service.

One of the issues I would like to deal with, while it comes under the Head of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, it really involves the Ministry of the Civil Service. It is Head 37 and it deals with the sum of \$2.5 million under Structures for the Ministry of Public Works and Transport. I am dealing with this, Sir, because this sum will involve the whole question of the whole future of the National Insurance Building. Sir, we are tired – we have been embarrassed and we are tired and we have been discomforted by the repeated walkouts and complaints that have emanated, justifiably so, from the employees and other occupants of that building over the last several years.

We in Government have been able to take some short-term remedial steps and to make things a bit more comfortable for the workers but we never thought that was the end of it. We are not putting a Band Aid over what was obviously a major festering sore but we felt that radical work had to be done if the workers and the public who do business

in that building, if they are to be treated in a proper manner, if they are to enjoy good surroundings and good facilities, which they deserved, and which their money paid for through taxes.

In this regard, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport will, out of that sum of \$2.5 million, begin a systematic refurbishment of that building starting from the top floor which is the fifth floor. The Ministry of Labour has moved out of the building and it is now vacant and what we will do there, as has been done in the case of the Treasury Building, we will start on the top floor, enhance, refurbish and improve that floor, move a department to that floor and then go to the next floor and do it systematically for the entire building so that persons can be assured of good air-conditionings, good lifts, good telephone services and good floors *et cetera* in the future.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: They are doing it in a systematic basis because there is not enough room, for example, to shut down the whole building and move everybody out. We could not find the space, for example, to service those persons and that building will be done step by step and should start within the first month or two of the financial year. I have spoken to the Chief Technical Officer and he has given me the assurance that workers can expect to see some actual, physical, systematic improvement of that building within a couple of months.

Sir, we are therefore very happy to be able to keep yet another pledge which we have made to the public servants by enhancing their situation and by giving them facilities which they richly deserve and which we are sure will lead to greater comfort and greater personal physical comfort and motivate them to even higher levels of productivity. I would also like to thank the workers of that building who have had the patience of Job over the years to put up with the very trying conditions which never affected their productivity and their performance. For example, that building is occupied by the Electoral and Boundaries Commission and the condition in that building has never affected the performance of their workers in getting Barbados ready for a general election and our general elections have proceeded smoothly, thanks, as I have said, to the sacrifice and the contribution of these workers. Therefore we commend them and thank them and assure them that better days are definitely coming for them.

Sir, I would also like to deal with a couple of other matters under the Prime Minister's Office to assure persons for example, that the Committee on National Reconciliation has done some good and useful work and the Estimates also provide money for them to continue their very valuable work up to the end of July this year or so. The sum of \$125 000

has been provided for that Committee. It has had some meetings already around Barbados. It has had some five town hall meetings. It has some fifty written submissions and so far it has divided itself into two subcommittees, one to deal with social and cultural matters and the other to deal with political and economic matters. It has also commissioned some research on youth activities and youth surveys through the Division of Youth Affairs with a symposium being planned for next month April 2000 to further the work of that committee. We look forward to that committee completing its work because we are sure it will have some interesting things to tell to Barbados which will hopefully bring a more cohesive, integrated and tolerant society, a society which will be better for all of us and which we can more enjoy.

Sir, I also want to talk about the question of the Fair Trading Commission. One of the most important steps by this Government has been the question of setting up of a Fair Trading Commission. We think that this is going to change forever the life of Barbadians. Both the life of Barbadians, their outlook to business, their lifestyle and their quality of life because certain protection will be given to them which they had not had before. Sir, we think that this something that we look forward to see coming to fruition in the time ahead.

The Ministry of Social Transformation is another important institution which has done very good work for Barbados in the time of its existence and I commend the Ministry for its work. It has been a revolutionary step, it has had to break new ground and it has tried to change an attitude toward the whole question of poverty, the whole question of need, the whole question of persons who are disadvantaged in Barbados' society.

Sir, it is quite interesting that this year we have not heard any complaints or strictures about the Urban Development Commission or the Rural Development Commission. We remember over the past how these institutions were lambasted, how they were criticised very harshly and being categorised and called port barrel departments *et cetera*. Now we have lived to see the day when they have become accepted and acceptable with the effect that some of their harshest critics are now some of the people who are seeking most to have constituents in their areas of responsibility benefit from the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission.
12.45 p.m.

Therefore, I would like to assure those involved in the Ministry of Social Transformation that this phase too will pass and that this is a necessary embryonic stage where they will have to be subjected to the failings of persons who are

seeking basically to make sure that this Government does not get the credit for a very useful institution in tackling the whole question of poverty, the whole question of need and also teaching people how to be better citizens and how to be more useful and productive by teaching them skills to make sure that they are not always at the handout stage.

The same way that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was criticised, the same way that the Deep Water Harbour was criticised, the same way the ABC Highway was criticised, they have come to be regarded now as fundamental aspects of Barbadian life without which we could not do, I predict that the very same thing will happen to the Ministry of Social Transformation and I look forward to seeing that come about in a very short time. Therefore, I would like to commend them for their work. They have done a herculean job in a very short time. I am sure that the Barbadian public is being grateful for it.

Sir, this debate has taken place in the context of a society which is doing better, which feels better about itself, to the point where sometimes, Sir, I wonder if we do not seek to wonder how easily people tend to forget. Only nine short years ago, Sir, we were living in a totally different world and we must not allow the success and the progress that we have made since those days to forget the dark, dire, damp days of 1991 and onward, if only to make sure that history does not repeat itself. But at the same time, Sir, we cannot be unmindful of the fact that this Barbados Labour Party Government has been the instrument that has transformed that whole era of depression, and pessimism to one of optimism as reflected in Senator Collymore's wise observation of the rising level of expectations that have been created in Barbados. I think in North America these days are referred to, given the buoyancy and the long-term health of the US economy, as the wealth effect.

There is wealth around, the wealth is being generated, the wealth is being spread and people are feeling good about themselves. They are feeling good about their country, they are investing, they want to build houses, they want to buy land, they want to buy cars *et cetera* and this reflects the attitude of the Barbados Labour Party.

We do not go for glitzy, glamorous slogans like, "crime and violence" and "families first". We go for slogans that are well thought out and have philosophy behind them, like "we put Barbados first", "the great combination", "we going with Owen". "Job Number one is Jobs", "the politics of inclusion". Those are the things, Sir, that we go for, because we have programmes that match programmes that give substance to this and achieve our goals and give meaning to what we say.

The fact is that Barbados is enjoying perhaps the longest period of economic growth and development and sustained wealth generation probably since the

17th Century when Barbados was described as the brightest jewel in the Crown of England.

Fortunately, Sir, we are doing it now for ourselves and by ourselves and not for England. We are doing it for our own Crown. I am glad to say that the prosperity is being generated and being spread throughout Barbados. There is a lot more personal initiative being demonstrated. Businesses are springing up. Lots of young people are getting involved in businesses. We have a private sector which is responding to the climate positively. The Government is playing its part in engineering the situation. The Government is also playing its part in providing agencies like the very same Ministry of Social Transformation, the Urban Development Commission, the Rural Development Commission, to eradicate poverty to make sure that this prosperity is spread throughout the system and throughout the length and breadth of Barbados and as has been said, that no one is left behind.

Sir, therefore it gives me great pleasure to support these measures and to say that the Barbados Labour Party has done a good job through the wise and astute leadership of the Prime Minister who is highly regarded for such skills not only in Barbados and the Caribbean but further afield.

Right now I think the Prime Minister is at Tuffs University giving a presentation. He was invited to speak on the question of small states because he has been able virtually single-handedly to put the question of small states on the international agenda. He has chaired a Commonwealth Task Force on this measure and now the international lending agencies and the major economies have decided to take on board the whole question of recognition of the special needs, peculiarities and vulnerabilities of the small states as a result of the initiative of the Prime Minister and the support of this Government and the people of Barbados.

As I wind up, Sir, I would like just to say that the way I feel about these Estimates and the way I feel about this economy and the performance of this Government, is that it makes me remember a passage in the Bible which I read. I do not remember exactly which part of the Bible it came from, but I am sure of this part of it – I am sure Senator Barker will help me and if Senator Rock was here he would also assist me – the part that says, "I would rather be a door keeper in the house of the Lord than to dwell in the tents of the ungodly."

I therefore am very proud to be part of this productive, successful Government. I would rather be a door keeper in that respect, than to dwell in the tents of the ungodly of the non-productive ones who at one time had sought to destroy Barbados.

I thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, as I rise to wind up this debate, I must say that I feel as though I am batting on an exceptionally good wicket, despite some of those on the Other Side who flashed at balls on the offside and who swiped and swiped.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: There were some very valuable contributions throughout the course of this debate and it was particularly interesting to see how many Senators addressed the issues of the Ministry of Health. I was very appreciative of the comments that were made and not unaware of the contributions that were being made of the Ministry of Health.

Senator Thomas-Mascoll clearly understood that we both had a common perspective on the social programmes and particularly the health programmes for Barbados and the objectives. There were several issues that she raised which I would like to respond to, such as the air-conditioning at the Accident and Emergency which is receiving the attention of the Ministry and which will occasion a major replacement of that system, not just the units themselves, but the entire ducting.

It has been determined that that ducting has to be changed because the material that was used in the original ducting was the incorrect material which facilitated the growth of fungus, and though it could be steam cleaned, it would then reappear over a period of time. We have to move from one type of material to another which will ensure a continued proper maintenance of that system. This will be completed in a very short period of time.

12.55 p.m.

With regard to the issue of nurses, we are under continual pressure and are keenly aware of the lack or the inadequate number of nurses on duty at any one time. We are currently processing fifty applications for nurses to join the staff, not only of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but of the other institutions that come under the Ministry of Health. In addition, we have agreed with the Community College to double the students of the nursing school in the next school year, and we will have to further redouble our efforts to expand the School of Nursing in Barbados.

The noise level on Martindales Road was raised and I have approached the Minister of Transport to redirect the minibus and ZR traffic from around Martindales Road, because they are the major offenders. They use their horns like the stage coaches used to use the coach horns in the past. They use them as communication between one another and between people and for people standing on the side of the road. They totally disregard the silent zone along Martindales

Road. In addition, when the hospital was in place, the traffic was very much different. We recognise that the heavy duty traffic such as the oil trucks, the container trucks and so on add significantly to the noise on that road and we are going to be addressing that problem as well.

The issue of NGOs was raised and as I pointed out, the Ministry of Health was working with NGOs to make them more independent. NGOs, by their definition, are non-governmental organisations and should strengthen their capacity to raise funds from non-governmental sources, and they should strengthen their relationship with the commercial community and the citizenry at large who contribute to their success. Quite frankly, the better the NGO performs, the more likely they are to gain funds. Where the NGO provides specific and quantifiable services for government, the government is more than willing to compensate the NGOs for that service and we have done so in many instances, but I think that the NGOs need to strengthen their capacity in fundraising among the general community in Barbados.

Senators Newton and Brome raised the issue of the library service and I myself am an avid reader and book purchaser. I love books and I believe that the library service needs to be strengthened. I think that we do need to have adequate human resources that are well trained, who understand how to catalogue and take care of books and so on and so forth. I think that the nature of the library has changed. I would wish that in discussing the issue of newspapers we could have discussed the issue of the fact that the libraries need to have Internet connections, that they need to have multiple Internet locations where people can come in and browse the newspapers as I do every morning.

This morning I read the *New York Times*, the *London Times*, the *Financial Times*, the *Sydney Herald* and the *Washington Post* – a quick scan of those newspapers to get the general flavour of the news of the day. What is useful about those websites is that each of them has an archive. You can search the newspaper of the date that you want in each one of those sites. This is an invaluable research tool that could be resident in the library. Encyclopaedia Britannica is available on the Internet. You can search the entire Encyclopaedia Britannica and its links to other publications on the Internet and therefore the critical tool for the research capabilities of libraries in the future is going to be the Internet. It is not going to be, it is. So I would urge that the library service concentrates on providing adequate Internet connections for people to go to free of charge.

Finally, I come to Senator Mascoll and his contribution. The economy is healthier than it has ever been. Senator Mascoll's prognostication about bursting the 'Ways and Means' and about our inability to earn foreign exchange just a few short months ago, have come to nought.

I will complement him for shifting gears and staying away from short-term forecasts, leading to a forecast of 2004. That puts it far enough away to where he cannot run into trouble.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. President, on a point of order, in last year's Estimates debate I made a number of predictions, contrary to what the Leader of the Senate is saying that my analysis of the economy is flawed and that is always my forecast. I am here to say that in fact if you would recall, I predicted the increase in interest rates in the Estimates debate of 1999. On the issue of printing of money which the Leader has alluded to ...

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order please.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Not a speech, a clarification. Page 8 of the Auditor General's Report in fact does in a very strange way support all that I have been saying on the printing of money. This I will address in the public domain.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Goddard.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, on the issue of the printing of money, we used the 'Ways and Means' briefly and legally within the limits of what was set by law. I might point out that in other accounts we had money of deposit which were in excess of what we used in the 'Ways and Means' and therefore we are really on balance. We were always in a positive position with the Central Bank and therefore Mr. President, I would really have to say that the whole issue of printing of money was something that probably was taken on board by those who really did not understand what was happening and may have contributed somewhat to the confidence factor that was reported in other publications, but Senator Mascoll's shift to a long-term forecasting is moving to a relative position of safety.

However, given the projection this Government has for the medium term, continued growth at about three per cent, continued capital inflows that are on the books and the continued decrease in unemployment in this country, I think when we arrive at the period of 2004, one will find the strongest economy that Barbados has ever seen.
1.05 p.m.

Some discussion was made about the international business and its lack of performance, but let me just say that the International Business Company formation and the Foreign Sales Company formation in 1999 were greater than in any year prior to 1995. There was continual growth despite the international climate that was being developed by the OECD.

Business formation is but one test of growth. The existing companies that have been formed in Barbados have

been growing and some of the insurance companies have doubled and trebled their business in Barbados, so there is significant and continual growth in what has been called the offshore sector, or what I would refer to now as the financial services sector of Barbados as it is being integrated more and more into our business activity in Barbados.

Barbados has to be proactive and steadfast in its development as a low tax, clean, international domicile for the conduct of global business by both Barbadians and foreigners. We have led the debate with the OECD countries. We have pointed out that Barbados is not the tax haven they have conjured up in their minds and we have differentiated ourselves from those locations of secrecy and those that have a bit of a cowboy image.

Barbados is about serious, ethical, clean business. All of our regulations, legislation and the practice of our conduct are aimed in that direction. Unlike the Bahamas, we are steadfast in the development of ethical, international business.

Some comment was made about PRT but you have to see the whole plethora of businesses like PRT that are being conducted in Barbados. Some of them have 90 per cent of the individuals who are writing the software as Barbadians or Caribbean nationals, so we are seeing a tremendous growth in this area in a global context. We are also seeing, like Senator Williams said, the growth of the call-service business so there is a growth in this area which will have significant demand for continued growth in employment.

Finally, Senator Mascoll made the comment that only 10 per cent of the cruise ship passengers get off in Barbados. Well, it has been a long time since I worked in Bridgetown but I did not think that my observations then were that different from today when the perception that I had then was that the majority of our business being done in town was with cruise ship passengers.

I checked over the last few hours and the leading cruise ship agents tell me that their estimate of passengers that disembark in Barbados is between 85 and 90 per cent so clearly Senator Mascoll got the wrong 10 per cent figures. The contribution that these individuals make to the tourism business in Barbados is significant and their spending is high.

In addition to that, it is estimated that 20 per cent of cruise ship passengers that come to the Caribbean return to the Caribbean for a long-term stay. The cruise ship passengers afford an excellent opportunity for the hoteliers of Barbados to do their marketing exercises amongst them and to capture them as return visitors.

Senator Mascoll said he did not know where the \$50 million was that was being spent on the airport. He could not see it with the naked eye. Well, you have to get outside of the Arrivals Hall to be able to see it or outside the waiting area at the Arrivals Hall. You have to get on the other side. You have to travel. You have to be able to see the new taxiways, the new runway surfacing, the new lighting facilities, the new equipment that is being installed, the new parking aprons which are expanding to accommodate more aircraft that are coming to Barbados. These are the things you have to be able to see. You just cannot wait for people that are coming off the aircraft to observe where the money is being spent. You actually have to go and travel.

Of course, there is also a brand new parking area that has been well expanded. There is new work being done over at the old Terminal so there is quite a bit of work being done. There is quite a bit of expansion taking place at the airport to improve the facilities to be able to take the expanded traffic which will come when we have more hotel rooms as well.

We are now at the point where you could not have gotten another person into a hotel during the months of February or March. I knew of one hotel that had a bit of difficulty and was looking to relocate some of their guests and could not find an empty hotel room anywhere in Barbados. They called me at 10.00 o'clock a Friday evening. This is the truth of what was happening in Barbados.

Mr. President, I think much has been said about the economy and about the projections of the economy. I would like to congratulate the Minister of Finance. I would like to congratulate my colleagues who sit in Cabinet and make policy for the benefit of all Barbadians.

I would like to commend these Estimates to the Honourable the Senate, estimates that will redound to the benefit of Barbados, set the policies in place for continued, strong economic growth, continued reduction in unemployment and the enhancement of the social fabric of Barbados.

Mr. President, I beg that this Bill be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, the Bill was read a third time, passed, certified as a Money Bill and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2000.
1.15 p.m.

ORDER NO. 2 – RESOLUTION TO APPROVE
THE BORROWING OF \$6 772 937 FROM
ANGLOCO LIMITED AND \$12 093 316
FROM NSG EXPORTS LIMITED

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, this Resolution seeks approval for the loan agreements with ANGLOCO Limited and NSG Exports Limited, supplier credit in the amount of \$6 772 937.00 and \$12 093 316.00. The purpose is financing and securing vehicles and equipment for the Barbados Fire Service and for the purchase of vehicles and equipment for the Barbados Defence Force, the Royal Barbados Police Force, the Prison Service and the School Meals Department by means of supplier credit.

I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 3 – SECOND READING OF THE
MONEY LAUNDERING (PREVENTION
AND CONTROL) (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 2000

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, in moving that the Money Laundering Act be read a second time this provision is to change the Minister responsible for the Money Laundering (Prevention and Control) Act, 1998 from the Ministry of Finance to the Attorney General's Office. This means that the Minister responsible for administering this Act will now be the Attorney General.

I now 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. P. C. GODDARD, the Senate resolved itself into Committee on the Bill, HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Senate is in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 were called and passed.

On the motion of SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, the 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. P.C. GODDARD, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Money Laundering (Prevention and Control) (Amendment) Act, 2000.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

SENATOR Sir JOHN STANLEY GODDARD: Mr. President, I would like to give notice of the following Question:

Will the Minister state what remedial measures, if any, Government has implemented or proposes to implement to deal with the unsatisfactory situation in Government accounting details of the 1999 Report of the Auditor General which has highlighted:

1. many shortcomings in various aspects of compliance with the Financial Rules based on Cap. 5;

2. Serious weaknesses in internal accounting controls; and
3. Deficiencies in the application of accounting knowledge in several Ministries.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, in moving the Adjournment, I would like first to thank the staff for the long hours they have put in, in covering this debate and I would also like to thank the Press for their coverage of the debates to date and for the hours that they have put in covering the debates of the Senate.

I beg to move that the Senate be adjourned *sine die*.

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

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