
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 1999 – 2003

THE SENATE

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

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 millenium work for companies, making those companies millenium compliant.

10.10 a.m.

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SENATOR J.E.D. WILLIAMS: 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 down sizing at PRT? We also heard quite recently, I believe, it might have been in yesterday's or the day before's 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. 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.

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SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: 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.

10.30 a.m.

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Senator J. E. D. WILLIAMS: 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.

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 issue. 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.

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SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: 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 spectrum 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.

10.50 a.m.

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SENATOR J.E.D. WILLIAMS: 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.

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 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?

11.00 a.m.

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SENATOR C.K. LAURIE: 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. 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 farmgate 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 back yard 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 job. 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 1st, 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 an 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.

11.10 a.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR C.K. LAURIE: 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.

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 \$142 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.

11.20 a.m.

Tuesday, 28th March, 2000

Senator C.K. LAURIE: 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?

I would like to touch very briefly on education. The subvention to UWI, according to the Estimates is somewhere between \$40 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 any more 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.

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 'ham-cutter' 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."

11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C.L. BOLDEN: 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.

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.

11.40 a.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C.L. BOLDEN: 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.

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.”

He could tell us the frustration he is experiencing with his own colleagues to set his pension right.

11.50 a.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: 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, 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 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 etcetera.

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 fee, 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.

12:00 noon.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

HIS HONOUR SENATOR C.L. BOLDEN: 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.

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 Cooperative Society Act which regulates what is a cooperative and what happens in a cooperative. I am going to ask the Government to take a very serious look at the cooperative office - the Registrar of Cooperatives. 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 Cooperatives, 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 Cooperatives 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 cooperative, you get no response.

Now, I know a lot of people would like to shut down their cooperatives in the credit union. I say the salvation to the small man in this country is the cooperative 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 cooperative because you cannot go to court with a cooperative, unless you want to go on an expiry application, and nobody wants to bring an expiratory application to break up a cooperative.

I am advising the Government to take a very serious look at the Cooperative 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.

Monday, 28 March 2000

His Honour Senator C.L.BOLDEN, C.B.E: 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 import 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.

12.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR MISS J. C. ODLE: 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.

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 oftentimes 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, oftentimes 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 that is causing front these young people, young women in particular, to run and get support, oftentimes 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.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR MISS J. C. ODLE: 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.

12.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: 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.

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

ofttimes 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 any way 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 co-habiting 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.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

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 contract, 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 numbers 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.

Monday, 28 March 2000

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE: 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 confirm 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.

1.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR MISS J. C. ODLE: 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.

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 Womens' 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.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This sitting is now resumed.

SENATOR Ms. 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 Elizabeth 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.

1.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR Ms. C. A. THOMAS: 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.

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.A. 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.A. 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.A. THOMAS: I will give the nurses a little support.

Asides.

SENATOR MISS C.A. 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.

2.50 p.m.

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SENATOR MISS C. S. THOMAS: 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.

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.

Tuesday, 28 March 2000

Senator Ms. C. S. THOMAS: 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 wall 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.

3.10 p.m.

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SENATOR Ms. C.S. THOMAS: 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.

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 CXCs that you have. So the individual who may be skilled with his hands but is not in possession of CXCs 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.

3.20 p.m.

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SENATOR MISS C. A. THOMAS: 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 ...

Asides.

SENATOR MISS C. A. 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 Minister. 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 school 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.A. 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

calender 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.

3.30 p.m.

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SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: 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.

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 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 Account 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.

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Senator B. R. COLLYMORE: 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, under paying 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.

3.50 p.m.

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SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: 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.

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.

4.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR B.R. COLLYMORE: 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.

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 affect 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.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: 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. 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 light-weights 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.

4.20 p.m.

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SENATOR D.D. MARSHALL: 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.

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.

4.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

Senator Mr. D. D. MARSHALL: 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 school. 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 school up to perhaps 'O' Level or Advanced Level.

We have had some mention made by one of the Honourable Senators of the question of the Hilton Hotel. The position in relation 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. 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. 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. 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 online travel transactions should increase by about 45 per cent of total online 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 online 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.

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SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: 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.

4.50 p.m.

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SENATOR THE REV. L.W.B. ROCK: 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.

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. 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. PRESIDENT suspended the sitting accordingly.

5.00 p.m.

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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 contributions 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 reason, 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 Union 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 Union 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 programme 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 of Policy and Formulation, the programme statements says 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".

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SENATOR MRS. P.E. RICKINSON: The Ministry has no right to be supervising departments, Mr. President.

And again under General Management and Coordination of 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."

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 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.

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Senator Mrs P. E. RICKINSON: 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 the 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.

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SENATOR MRS. P.E. RICKINSON: 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 Subprogramme 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 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.

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SENATOR Mrs. P.E. RICKINSON: 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.

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-specialties 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, specialties, sub-specialties, 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 specialties or sub-specialties 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 specialties 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 Personnel 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.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: 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 re-examine. 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 theater 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 3000 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 Programmes 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.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR MISS C. Y. FORDE: Finally in that area the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme, better known as YES has over its four-year period has 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 Lady Meade.

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:

(4) 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.

(5) 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.

Tuesday, 28 March 2000

Senator Miss C. Y. FORDE: 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 at 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 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 Edutec 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 Edutec 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 Estimate 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.

6.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR MISS C. Y. FORDE: 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.

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.

Tuesday, March 28, 2000

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: 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 Cat's 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.

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SENATOR Miss. C. Y. FORDE: 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.

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, Alexanders, 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. Andrews 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 evening 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 Teachersg 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 land ship. 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.

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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.

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

BOLDEN, HIS HONOUR SENATOR C. L.

C.L.BOLDEN, Senator

COLLYMORE, Senator B. R.

FORDE, Senator MISS C. Y.

GODDARD, Senator the Hon. P.C.

LAURIE, Senator C.K.

MARSHALL, Senator D.D.

ODLE, Senator MISS J. C.

RICKINSON, Senator Mrs. P. E.

ROCK, Senator THE REV. L.W.B.

THOMAS, Senator MISS C.A.

WILLIAMS, Senator J. E. D.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

Q1. Masthead. The session is not stated in the source, so no session line is printed.

Q2. Dates in the text. The source gives ‘Monday, 28 March 2000’ (28 March 2000 was a Tuesday). The weekday and date do not agree; printed as in the source.

Q3. Opening. The source opens at ‘RESUMPTION’ with the debate on the Estimates already under way and gives no Order heading or title for the Bill before the Senate (Senator Miss J. C. Odle refers to ‘this Bill before us’). Printed as in the source.

Q4. Senator Thomas-Mascoll’s speech. The speech labels for one Senator vary between ‘SENATOR Ms. C. S. THOMAS’, ‘SENATOR Ms. C. A. THOMAS’, ‘SENATOR MISS C. A. THOMAS’ and ‘SENATOR MISS C. S. THOMAS’; other Senators refer to her as Senator Thomas-Mascoll and Senator Mascoll. Printed as in the source.

Q5. Senator C. L. Bolden’s speech, Head 17. Senator Bolden said he wished ‘to move at this time a reduction of \$1’ under Head 17 (Ombudsman), but no question on the reduction is recorded in this Sitting. Printed as in the source.

Q6. Take-slip about 4.10 p.m.. The date line ‘Tuesday, March 28, 2000.’ after the take-slip appears in the source as a paragraph of the debate. Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate resumed on Tuesday, 28th March, 2000, with Mr. President in the Chair, to continue the debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for 2000–2001. Senator J. E. D. Williams said the Estimates showed a Government repositioning the economy, defended the Government’s handling of the company PRT after the millennium compliance work, and spoke on the disabled and on telephone rates, accepting that falling international revenue had supported domestic rates and that measured rates were being discussed. Senator C. K. Laurie argued that agriculture’s share of GDP, reported at less than four per cent, was understated: the Ministry put output at \$131

million, but on a survey figure of \$8.80 he estimated that Barbados imported \$408 million of food and produced \$644 million at retail prices, so that only 38% of food eaten was imported.

His Honour Senator C. L. Bolden took up Senator Laurie’s points on the civil service, and then turned to Head 17, the Ombudsman, saying he wished to move a reduction of \$1 to show dissatisfaction with the officer. He read sections of Cap. 8A and complained that the Ombudsman’s statements on the radio about lawyers, particularly over returning nationals from the United Kingdom, went beyond his role. He also spoke on tour companies operating in the Port. Senator Miss J. C. Odle supported the Estimates, speaking on discipline in the home and on foreign waiting staff in west coast restaurants despite the programme at the Hospitality Institute. The sitting was suspended until 2.30 p.m. on the motion of the Leader of Government Business, Senator the Hon. P. C. Goddard.

After the suspension, Senator Ms. C. S. Thomas said the Estimates were ‘business as usual’ for the social sectors. She spoke of the training of maintenance staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the low morale of nurses who were leaving principally for the United Kingdom, the effects of the co-educational system and the lack of male teachers, and the non-payment of school fees. Senator B. R. Collymore said the problems of the public service went back to the constitutional change of 1974, and pointed to the withdrawal of three hotel plants, the Paradise, Sandy Lane and the Hilton, saying that 100 Mexicans were then occupying parts of the Paradise.

Senator D. D. Marshall, speaking on tourism, said it was to Barbados’ credit that nurses trained there found work abroad, and projected tourism earnings of about \$1.4 billion in 2000; during his speech Mr. Deputy President took the Chair. Senator the Rev. L. W. B. Rock welcomed the planned implementation of the Haynes Report, and spoke on the misuse of horns, adjournments at the Magistrates’ Courts and maintenance at the Transport Board. After a further suspension, Senator Mrs. P. E. Rickinson quoted from the Barbados Labour Party Manifesto 1999. She questioned the \$872,500 in grants to non-profit health agencies, the roughly \$80 million for General Management and Coordination of Services, the PDIU, and the \$909 000 for refurbishing district hospitals and polyclinics, which she said was not enough.

Senator Miss C. Y. Forde replied to Senator Thomas-Mascoll, saying that the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme had assisted some 260 people over four years and that of almost 75 starter houses at Apes Hill, costing about

\$45 000, at least 50 were occupied; she gave the Estimates her '120 per cent support'. Before putting the motion to suspend, Mr. President reminded Senators that the reading

of speeches is forbidden by the Standing Orders. On the motion of Senator Goddard the Sitting was suspended until Wednesday, 29th March, 2000 at 11.00 a.m.