

THE SENATE DEBATES

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

THE SENATE

Monday, March 19, 2001

The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings, on Monday, March 19, 2001, at 11.15 a.m.

PRESENT

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

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

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

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

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

Senator T. E. BARKER, B.A. (Hons.), M.A. (Econ.) (Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources)

Senator the Hon. Dame Patricia SYMMONDS, G.C.M., B.A. (Hons.), P.G.C.E., J.P.

Senator Miss J. C. ODLE, J.P.

Senator J. E. D. WILLIAMS, B.Sc., M.B.A., J.P.

Senator G. E. N. BROME

Senator Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE, Dip. Man. (Hons.), J.P.

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

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

Senator LeR. H. McCLEAN, B.Sc. (Hons.)

Senator Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.H. (Harvard), S.R.N.

Senator C. K. LAURIE, D.I.C.T.A. (S.T.), FBSTA

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

Senator the Rev. L. W. B. ROCK, M. Div.

Senator Mrs. V. E. NEWTON, S.C.M., B.A. (Spec. Hons.), M.A., LL.B. (Hons.) (U.W.I.), F.L.A. (Gt. Brit.) L.E.C.

Prayers were led by Rev. Father Errington Massiah.

Mr. PRESIDENT: The Senate is in Session.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE PRESIDENT

Mr. PRESIDENT: I wish to advise Honourable Senators that three days have been allocated for Sittings of the Senate this week – today, tomorrow and Thursday, March 22, 2001.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: I am commanded to lay the following documents before the Honourable the Senate:

1. The Chairman's Report of the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Limited for the year ended June 30, 2000.
2. Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Limited (Parent Company only) for the year ended June 30, 2000.
3. Reports of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the quarters ended September 30, 2000 and December 31, 2000.
4. Annual Report of the National Productivity Council for the Fiscal Year ended September 30, 1999.

5. The Barbados Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2001-2.
6. Schedule of Personnel Emoluments, 2001-2.
7. Value Added Tax Order, 2001.
8. Value Added Tax (Almond Resort Inc.) Order, 2001.
9. Annual Report of the Urban Development Commission for the Financial Year ending March 31, 1998.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

The question was put and agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I beg to move the First Reading of the Appropriation Bill, 2001 and the Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2001.

The question was put and agreed to.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 5 – SECOND READING OF THE APPROPRIATION BILL, 2001

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, in introducing the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and the Appropriation Bill, 2001-02 I would first move to a review of the financial year 2000-01. I might add before I do so, Mr. President, that these Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure are designed to continue a strategic thrust for Barbados' entry into the new economy. There is no doubt that the management of this economy has been a superlative one over the past six years. We have moved dramatically towards adjusting to the realities of the new economic environment and the new trading environment.

It is a great credit to the leadership of the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister who has navigated the turbulent waters of change in such a manner as to reduce unemployment and bring forth economic prosperity and a

measure of social stability in a way that many other countries of this world have not been able to achieve.

We have recognised that change has to be measured, planned and gradual. We recognise that sharp shocks to the economy can be avoided by properly planning the evolutionary change that is taking place in the world and planning how we will adjust here in Barbados. The success of the Barbadian economy cannot be overstated. Though we are a small developing country there are other countries in this world who have resisted that change and the most dramatic example of that today is probably Japan which has resisted the change in their financial markets, has continued with an element of protectionism, has sustained uneconomic activities within its country and is now faced with a most dramatic economic crisis.

We, in Barbados, have taken a different tack and we have adjusted continuously to bring ourselves in line with a more transparent, more regulated and more open market place. It is in that context that these Estimates are designed to propel Barbados further forward along the path of economic and social development and I must stress social development because it is not just about money and improving our GDP. It is about making sure that no Barbadian is left behind in this process. This is a stated policy of Government and one that must be clearly supported by all good thinking Barbadians and I am very happy to see that the Opposition approves of such a policy.

This is no mean achievement. We have had economic growth for most of this past decade and it would look as though this will continue despite the shocks that are reverberating around the world in other large economies. Of course, Mr. President, we cannot be totally clairvoyant and there are unexpected events to which we may have to respond as time progresses. However, given the anticipated inflow of investment in Barbados and the growth in the several various sectors of our economy, we can anticipate a continued economic growth in the next financial year and beyond.

We can also anticipate a further decline in the unemployment rate of this country. In fact, Mr. President, it is very interesting to note that more and more Barbadians are now looking for employment because they have the heart to do so. There is very definite hope in the economy and a buoyancy to which more and more Barbadians are responding.

Mr. President, I will turn to a review of the financial year 2000 to 2001. The original budgetary programme for fiscal year 2000-1 was designed to produce a deficit of 2.6 percent of nominal gross domestic product at a factor cost calculated on the international financial institutions basis.

The key macroeconomic variables from which the fiscal programme was based are calculated on a fiscal year basis as follows:

Growth in real GDP 2.7 percent and real GDP \$1 014 500. A GDP deflator of 1.1 percent growth and the nominal GDP of 5.4 percent and nominal GDP was estimated at \$4 336 000. Growth in retained imports of 3.5 percent with retained imports estimated at \$2 034 000.
11.25 a.m.

The fiscal programme for 2000-2001 approved by Parliament on March 23, 2000 showed current revenue of \$1 725 000 000 and current expenditure exclusive of amortization of \$1 513 000 000; and capital expenditure and lending of \$325.1 million to produce a deficit of \$113.1 million or 2.6 percent of nominal GDP which was estimated at \$4 366 000 000.

Amortization stood at \$204.7 million and when added to the fiscal deficit of \$113.1 million the sum of \$317.8 million dollars was required as financing. Domestic financing was estimated \$173 million and foreign financing as \$144.8 million.

The key macro for economic variables for 2000-2001 has been revised as follows:

Real GDP growth of 3.6 percent a better than expected performance. A GDP deflator of 2.4 percent and growth in retained importers of 5.7 percent. Current revenue is now projected to be \$1 725.5 million and current expenditure exclusive of amortization of \$215.7 million. Sir, \$1 448.6 million, capital expenditure \$294.3 million to produce a fiscal deficit of \$120.4 million or 2.7 percent of nominal GDP estimated at \$4 388.1 million. This fiscal deficit of \$120.4 million together with the amortization of \$215.7 million gives a total of an amount of \$336.1 million to be financed of which \$203 million is expected to be from domestic sources and \$133.1 million from foreign sources.

The original current revenue targets for the 2000-2001 fiscal year consisted of regular revenue of \$1 647.3 million and tax arrears of \$77.7 million from a total amount of \$169 million owed at February 27, 2000 to yield an overall amount of \$1 725 million. The unaudited fiscal data from the Accountant General for the period April 1, 2000 to January 31, 2001 showed that Government collected current revenue of \$1 358.9 million, an increase of \$115 million or 9.3 percent over current revenue for the same period in the fiscal year 1999-2000. It is predicted that \$114.6 million, \$249 000 will be collected for February 2001 and March, 2001 respectively, to yield revised current revenue of \$1 722.5 million. This will give an overall increase of \$96.5 million, 5.9 percent over the 1999-2000 fiscal year.

Taxes on incomes and profits are expected to increase by \$46.2 million or 9.0 percent, \$559.1 million in the 2000-2001 fiscal year. Sir, the main contributors to this increase are corporation tax which is anticipated to increase by \$4 million or 6.3 percent to \$235.5 million, and income tax which is also expected to increase by \$23 million or 8.4 percent to \$300 million. Taxes on goods and services are expected to increase by \$53.4 million or 7.3 percent to \$781.3 million. The major contributor being VAT which is expected to increase by \$47.4 million or 10.4 percent to \$505 million.

It is to be noted that at January 31, 2001, VAT realised \$412 million, that is, \$49.4 million or 13.6 percent more than for the same period of the previous financial year.

The increases in corporation tax, income taxes and VAT would have been triggered by the economic growth of 3.6 percent in the year 2000, along with a decrease of the unemployment rate from 10.4 percent in 1999 to 9.3 percent in 2000, a level which has never been achieved in Barbados in modern times. These two leading economic indicators would have impacted positively on the expansion of the business sector, leading to an increase in current revenue in these areas.

With regards to excise taxes, at the end of January 2001 BNTCL still owed the Government \$33.8 million in taxes. The arrears of revenue owing by BNTCL stood at \$35 million on February 27, which is indicative that the measures taken to reduce the arrears have had little impact to date. Taxes to property are expected to decline slightly by \$2.4 million or 2.4 percent to \$98.3 million. The major decline in the property transfer taxes is expected to be 9.7 million or 27.9 percent of \$25.1 million. This decline is being compensated by the increase in land tax which is anticipated to increase by \$5.8 million or 9.3 percent to \$68 million.

Taxes on international trade are projected to increase by \$11.3 million or 8.4 percent to \$145 million. At 31st January international trade realised \$144.4 million – that is \$12.6 million or 11.2 percent more than the same period in the previous financial year.

The revised current expenditure for 2000 – 2001 – the Unaudited Expenditure Report from the Auditor General for the period April 1, 2000 to January 31, 2001, indicates that Government incurred current expenditure of \$1 424.6 million inclusive of amortization of \$154.3 million, an increase of \$119.5 million or 9.1 percent over current expenditure for the same period in the fiscal year 1999 - 2000. It is predicted that the \$133.7 million and the \$204 million will be spent in February 2001 and March 2001 respectively, to give a revised current expenditure of \$1 764.3 million.

The public sector revised salaries and wages of 2 percent in 2000-2001, the repayment of the second tranche of the 8 percent reduction in personal emoluments and increments are expected to increase expenditure on wages and salaries of \$28.9 million or 5.1 percent to \$594.3 million in 2000-2001.

It is interesting to note that the Government's economic management has been such that we have been able to embark on the repayment of the 8 percent to public servants who have had their wages garnished by the previous Administration.

However, this is \$21.1 million less than what was approved for 2000-2001 and can be attributed to the provisions for established posts which have not yet been filled.

Statutory personal emoluments are expected to increase by \$50.6 million or 12.5 percent to \$454.4 million and other personal emoluments to decline by \$21.7 million or 13.4 percent to \$139.9 million. The major factor that would cause a reduction in other personal emoluments is the shift to established posts in the public sector, whereby we have established many of those people who have been working as casual labour for decades.
11.35 a.m.

This then puts them in a much better position and protects their employment and improves the rights and benefits that they have.

Expenditure on goods and services is still expected to be increased by \$24.3 million or 14.9 percent over 1999-2000 to \$187.7 million, the same amount approved for 2000-2001 in spite of the supplementaries of \$8 000 000 to purchase highly active anti-retroviral therapy drugs as well as anti-fungal and anti-bacterial drugs for the treatment of HIV/AIDS sufferers. Mr. President, I will return to that subject later in my presentation.

One and a half million dollars for the payment for publication of articles for Barbados in international magazines and newspapers; \$1.3 million for debt owed by the Barbados Water Authority; \$1 million a deposit towards the settlement of an international arbitration brought by SCOTTALS Limited against the Government of Barbados (CARCICOT) and \$0.7 million as commodity for the School Meals Programme.

Mr. President, I go back to the \$0.7 million for the commodity for the School Meals Programme and \$0.2 million or \$200 000 for the hosting of the World Bank sponsored symposium on HIV/AIDS being approved during the year.

Expenditure on current transfers is projected to increase by \$71.2 million or 17.3 percent to \$481.7 million over 1999-2000 and by \$51 000 000 more than was approved for 2000-2001. This additional amount is attributed mainly to provisions of \$9 000 000 for retiring benefits, \$3.4 million for a short fall by the Barbados Tourism Authorities (BTA), which was called upon to undertake a number of unbudgeted programmes during the year 2000; \$1.3 million to pay outstanding bills for the National Cultural Foundation (NCF); \$200 000 for hosting the Bajan Salute in honour of Sydney 2000 Athletes; \$400 000 for the payment of school uniform grants to parents of children entering secondary schools; \$200 000 to assist the Barbados Football Association (BFA) in its quest to qualify for the 2000-2002 World Cup; \$30 000 000 to meet the Governments' initiatives for the University of the West Indies.

Total debt repayments for 2000-2001 is expected to be \$35.8 million or 7.2 percent less than the previous year.

Total interest cost is projected to decline marginally by \$3 000 000 or 1.2 percent, to \$247.3 million.

Total amortization is also expected to decrease by \$32.8 million or 13.2 percent, to \$215.7 million.

Revised Capital Expenditure: The Capital Expenditure is projected to increase by \$26.9 million or 10 percent to \$294.3 million in 2000-2001. The total amount, however, is 30.8 less than what was approved for the year.

Capital Formation is expected to increase by \$15 million or 7.3 percent to \$219.7 million for 2000-2001. It is anticipated to be 28.6 percent below the amount approved for the year. However, notwithstanding the fact that supplementaries were approved during the year for Highway constructions and maintenance projects in the amount of \$12.5 million; infrastructural improvement for Bridgetown, \$1 000 000; engineering purposes in the amount of \$1.9 million; \$1 000 000 for works in the Scotland District; \$1.2 million for vehicles for the Prisons Department; \$3.6 million to fix air-conditioning systems at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Capital Transfers are expected to rise by \$3.8 million or 7.8 percent over 1999-2000, to \$2.3 million which would still be 7.6 per cent less than what was approved for the year.

Capital Lending is projected to increase by \$8.6 million or 191.1 percent to \$13.1 million, mainly because of the replenishment of the Housing Credit Fund of \$10 000 000.

Current Revenue of \$1 722 500 000 is expected, of which \$1 653 900 000 is tax revenue and \$68 600 000 is non-tax revenue and lending.

Total expenditure is projected to be \$1 843 000 000, of which \$1 548 700 000 is current expenditure exclusive of amortization, and \$294 300 000 is capital expenditure producing a fiscal deficit of \$120 500 000 or 2.7 percent of nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and other factor costs.

Revised Deficit Financing for the year 2000-2001: It is expected that revised financing of \$336 100 000 will be required from which \$203 000 000 will be from domestic sources and \$113 000 000 from foreign sources.

Fiscal Framework for the year 2001-2002 Financial Year has been formulated to obtain the following:

- (a) to set a fiscal deficit limit of 2.8 percent of nominal GDP and factor cost;
- (b) reduce the level of tax arrears outstanding by the major revenue agencies;
- (c) to repay the third and final tranche of the 8 percent personal emolument reduction estimated at \$23 000 000;
- (d) to meet the public sector's first year revision of wages and salaries which is now to be negotiated and to be agreed upon through a process of collective bargaining between the Government and the Trade Unions;
- (e) promote social and economic development that is sustainable.

It is on that last point, Mr. President, that I refer to the first part of my speech, where we are moving into an area of prolonged and sustained economic growth that has significant investment in the people of this country, which are our true natural resource.

The financial programme for 2001-2002 is targeted to generate a fiscal deficit of \$131 800 000, or 2.9 percent of nominal GDP or factor cost and the revision to the Bill should have been circulated to Honourable Members as approved by the House of Assembly, at the end of last week.

The Current Revenue is projected to increase by \$72 900 000 or 4.2 per cent over the revised 2000-2001 level at \$1 795 500 000, and the Estimates of the Current Revenue for 2001-2002 have been constructed under the following key economic assumptions.

- (a) Real GDP growth for the Fiscal Year was 2.3 percent.
- (b) Real GDP in the Fiscal Year is estimated at \$1 500 200 000.

- (c) GDP deflation of 3 per cent and a nominal GDP on a fiscal year basis of 5.2 percent.
- (d) Nominal GDP is estimated at \$4 617 300 000.
- (e) Growth on retained imports on a fiscal year basis is 4.1 percent.
- (f) Retained imports on a fiscal year basis is estimated at \$2 234 900 000.

The proposal is to set current revenue to be collected during the year 2001-2002 fiscal year at 38.9 percent of GDP estimated at \$4 617 300 000, to yield \$1 795 400 000. 11.45 a.m.

This follows the historical trend of current revenue and GDP which in 1997-1998 was 40.4 percent of GDP; 1996-1999, 39.8 percent of GDP; 1999-2000, 39.3 percent of GDP and it is estimated for 2001-2002 at 39.3 percent of GDP.

A fiscal target has been set to collect \$75 million in tax arrears and when added to the regular revenue of \$1 720.4 million, will yield an overall revenue of \$1 795.4 million.

Taxes on incomes and profits are projected to increase by \$24.8 million or 4 percent over the revised figures for the fiscal year 2000-2001, to yield \$583.9 million. Income taxes are expected to increase by \$16 million or 5.3 percent to \$316 million, and corporation taxes by \$8.5 million or 3.6 percent, to \$244 million.

Taxes on goods and services are projected to increase by \$30 million or 3.8 percent over the revised figures for the 2000-2001 fiscal year, to \$811.3 million. This tax category receives its impetus from the receipts of VAT and excise duties which are expected to contribute collectively \$712 million to the Treasury in the fiscal year.

It is expected that \$30.0 million will be collected in respect of excise tax arrears from BNOCL and \$5.0 million in respect of VAT arrears. The increases in taxes for corporation taxes, income taxes and VAT will be due to the continued economic growth estimated at 5.2 percent for the fiscal year 2001.

Taxes on property are expected to increase by \$7.1 million or 7.4 percent over the revised figure of the 2000-2001 fiscal year, to \$103 million. The Land Tax Department has set a target of \$25 million to be collected for arrears which is the same figure of the 2000-2001 fiscal year.

The Import Duties are expected to increase by \$6.5 million or 4.5 percent over the revised figure of

2000/2001 fiscal year to \$152.4 million. Special receipts are expected to decline by \$12.4 million or 2.2 percent over the revised figure of the 2000/2001 fiscal year to \$43.5 million.

Non-tax revenue is expected to increase by \$16.9 million or 25.4 percent over the revised figure of the 2000/2001 fiscal year to \$83.5 million.

In the coming year, the major new activities that will be targeted during 2001 to 2002 are the following:

Concrete roads. The Rural Development Commission and Urban Development Commission will spend \$7 million and \$5 million respectively, on the construction of tenantry roads.

Mr. President, this is a departure from the norm where we are now putting in place concrete roads that will last for more than one generation. Of course, this will need prudent planning and new construction methods to ensure that the utilities are properly planned and installed so that the road would not be disturbed. This means that there will be a greater discipline in the design and construction of roads, it will improve the drainage and also will improve the investment of the Barbadian tax dollar. In other words, the money will be used more wisely.

I personally have seen concrete roads in Antigua that were constructed during the Second World War and are in as good condition now as they were when they were put down. Now, I am not saying that our roads will last nearly 50 years, but that is the potential, if we do this right the first time.

Work will continue on the South Coast and West Coast Sewerage Projects at a cost of \$29.3 million. The South Coast Sewerage Project is now in its final stages and the work is proceeding apace with a vigour that it should have had at the beginning of the project. However, we have got over the hurdle by replacing one contractor with another, and it would appear that the second choice has been a very much more productive one for this country.

The dislocations have been significantly lessened and the rate of construction has been vastly improved. I expect that the South Coast loop, from St. Lawrence Gap to Needham's Point will be in operation from November/December this year and that final completion of this project which ends at Enterprise Beach – from Enterprise Beach down to St. Lawrence – would be in operation by June of 2002.

This Project is being accompanied by ongoing monitoring of the inshore waters, so we have already benchmarked the quality of water on the inshore waters along the South Coast and around Carlisle Bay. We will be monitoring the impact of this sewerage project as it improves

the quality of inshore water. It also reduces the cost to many operators who have to carry hundreds of truck loads of sewerage away from their sites at the current time.

This will improve the environment along the coastal region, improve the health of our beaches and improve the quality and the health of our reefs offshore. It will also decrease the pressure on the Bridgetown Sewerage Plant which at this time is taking well over its designated limit. This addition to the South Coast will relieve some of that burden.

This is in keeping with the Government's long-term plan to sewer the entire West Coast and ultimately the greater Bridgetown area. In addition to that, we are looking for additional sewage plants which are in some of the densely populated suburban areas that are close to our water catchment areas.

The investment that this Government is making in sewerage is probably greater than that of any other Caribbean country and this is a long ongoing process which will benefit us and successive generations. It will protect our industry. It will protect our tourism and it will protect the health of all Barbadians. This is an essential plan in what we call sustainable development.

The conversion of the management structure at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital from that to a Board, will be attendant on internal changes and I will come back to that, Mr. President.

The Mangrove landfill will be extended at a cost of an additional \$5 million. The job evaluation exercise in the public service will aim at introducing a classification system that is transparent, and one that fairly reflects the relative work of all posts in the public service.

11.55 a.m.

This is a longstanding promise that we are going to implement this year – actually it has started already. Work will commence on the first ever Barbadian crime survey, but we have to understand the issues relating to crime before we can treat it. We have to do the diagnostics before we do the treatment.

In the meantime, vigorous action is being taken to reduce the level of crime in this country. At this point I must also highlight that while everyone is focussing on the issue of violent crime there is still the issue of white collar crime. This can be as damaging to our economy as any other type of crime.

The recent Report of the expansive activities of international criminals indicates the new dimensions that we are faced with, the new technology that we are faced with

in the area of criminal activity and the new expertises that we have to develop and clearly have developed, in fighting crime. These include the development, upgrading, expansion and maintenance of facilities at the Airport, with the aim for its corporatisation during the financial year, the convergence of unsafe roads into lighted areas and this will be done by the Ministry of Public Works and Transport in conjunction with the Police, and the implementation of the second phase of the EduTech project in approximately 20 schools at a cost of \$45 million. Other Honourable Senators on this Side will speak more extensively on that issue later.

Just let me say that this is one of the critical areas of development of which Barbados can be justly proud. This is really a benchmark leadership initiative that we have taken in this regard. This is part of our transition into the new economy by creating a newly literate population that is digitally literate, that has a mind-set that is not limited by an island perspective, but one that is truly global and by people who understand networking and group work which is going to be the method of work in the future.

Commercialization and modernization of the Post Office will commence. The construction of the Caribbean Media Centre will commence. Selected community centres will be upgraded to provide internet services at a cost of \$1.9 million. This will bring the reality of the internet to the everyday man in the street. The Vauxhall Senior Citizens Village will be constructed.

In this regard, Mr. President, there is a meeting scheduled for the end of this week with the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Social Transformation and the Ministry of Housing and Lands to develop a comprehensive programme of care for the elderly in our society, and to launch a study programme with the many different issues that confront the elderly in our society by recognising that there cannot be any one solution.

There is a multiplicity of solutions that have to be applied to those who are in the twilight of their years, who have contributed to this country and who quite often are still contributing quite significantly. In fact, they are doing so much more often than some of the younger members of our society. We have to have a comprehensive overarching programme that will devise many different mechanisms that will meet the needs of the elderly in our society.

There is the provision of a grant to the Fair Trading Commission to facilitate its implementation at a cost of \$3.5 million to assist manufacturing businesses in becoming export ready and to improve the international competitiveness of those already involved in exporting at a cost of \$5 million.

There is the provision of \$10 million for the Housing Credit Fund and \$3.4 million is for the National Sports Council to provide sporting facilities.

The provision of \$25 million is for the Airport expansion project, and the provision of \$65 million is for the University of the West Indies. The provision of \$2 million is for rural vending facilities and the provision of an additional \$5.4 million is for the disciplined forces for the provision of law and order. These programmes indicate a well-rounded and holistic approach to our development and our continued economic expansion.

Mr. President, at this point in time I will now like to turn to the Ministry of Health. There are many challenges and opportunities presented to the Ministry of Health. It may come as a surprise to the Media that the Ministry of Health is much more than the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH). When we look at the issue of health, the Ministry of Health is responsible for sanitation for the island. It is responsible for the public health of the island. It is responsible for mental health. It is responsible for the polyclinic's immunization programmes and to date the construction of the new sewerage asphalt plants.

Let me just talk about mental health first because mental health is something that is often swept under the carpet and not really brought out into the open. There is a tremendous stigma attached to mental health. Remember, I am talking about mental health and not mental illness because what we are trying to achieve is good mental health in the way that we would like to have good physical health.

It is not commonly recognised but the economic burden on the society of mental health is second only to that of cardiovascular disease. In other words, mental health cost us more in lost revenue, in lost of production and in lost time than diabetes. Now, that is a staggering statement. In this regard, we recognise that the mental health programme has to be reconfigured and revitalized to deliver a mental health care programme to the society that is designed with the knowledge that we have today about mental health and its treatment. In this regard, we have already started an outreach programme in the communities. Let me just say that it is the health care professionals at the Psychiatric Hospital that are at the forefront of this. They are the professionals and they understand the issues. They understand the people they work with and they understand the environment. They have taken the initiative to move out into the community to start the outreach programme. The Government is allowing and fostering this programme and we are also doing an in-depth analysis with assistance from PAHO, Pan American Health Organization, and a consultant from one of the leading consultants of mental health care reform from the United Kingdom, who has been through the process of reform over the past ten or fifteen years, who understands the mistakes they have made, and who is now helping us to design our programme to avoid those pitfalls and mistakes. We now are developing a whole new strategy for the treatment of mental illness and the promotion of mental health in Barbados.

12.05 p.m.

Sir, just let me say that mental health starts with something like a mild depression. As many people who have had a cold, they may have had a mild depression. So none of us are immune and none of us can say that we do not know someone who has had mental problems or disturbances. We are all subject to it. We are human beings and I do not know why we approach this issue as though we are some sort of supernatural being and the rest of the people are human. Therefore, we should recognize our frailties and we should recognize that we have to treat these illnesses. We should de-stigmatize the issue surrounding mental health. We do ourselves a disservice when we poke fun at those who are less fortunate than ourselves for the time being, because we may well be in that position in the year to come or two years to come.

Therefore, we need to develop a caring society that understands the issue of mental health and supports treatment of those in the society who are in need of care and support.

Sir, all of this is being done with the view to building a new institution that will replace the nineteenth century institution that we now have, so that the physical facilities will support the new programmes. In other words, we are not just going to build a new hospital and hope that it fits into our programme. We are going to design our programme and then the hospital will fit into that programme. That is the direction in which we are moving. We will see a new mental health institution and programme and it will not be a programme that will be fully blown in one day. It will have to take a period of time for this programme to be implemented, but as the Chinese say, "The voyage starts with the first step", and we have started the first step in this regard.

Sir, this is the issue of mental health that the Estimates are meant to address. I will now move to the issue of HIV/AIDS Programme.

Sir, I have noted some unfortunate comments which have been made in the society about the attention that this problem is getting and the resources that are being allocated to this problem that may detract from somebody else's personal whims or fancies. But this HIV/AIDS problem is probably the most serious public health problem that this country has faced in a century. It threatens the economic survival of the country and it threatens social stability of the country. Barbados has devised a program which is unique. It is the first country in the world to have comprehensive testing, treatment, counseling and care for every citizen in this country. That programme resides in the office of the Prime Minister and it is being coordinated through several Ministries including the Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Transformation and the Ministry of Health.

Sir, while the Ministry of Health has a key and critical role in the treatment and care of those with HIV/AIDS, the other Ministries will have very key components in the areas of attitudinal change and education bringing about cultural change. Because the issue of lifestyle change is at the core of reducing HIV transmission. Now we are not doing this in a methodic way. We are doing this with the practicality of understanding the human conditions. We understand the reality of human beings as sexual beings and it is very critical that this programme be a caring one and once again de-stigmatize the HIV problem.

When HIV first burst upon the world scene, it was seen as a homosexual disease. Today, it is very much a heterosexual disease and, in fact, newly infected people are predominantly young women. It is a tragedy. This Government is moving to try to get people to practice safe sex. Let me just say here for the record that by using a latex condom you can reduce the chance of infection by a thousand to one.

We have already embarked on a very effective programme to reduce mother to child transmission by testing and treating pregnant women. We have reduced that transmission from 38 per cent to 5 per cent. Once again, one of the leading achievements in the world in reducing mother to child transmission has been in Barbados and we have proved that it can be done. This year our target is to move it to zero. It can be done.

Sir, the aggressive and proactive direction that Barbados has taken is this. Barbados has developed a programme which is unique in the annals of the World Bank and for the first time in the history of the World Bank they are considering financing anti-retroviral drugs for treatment under certain criteria which this country can meet. This is very important because we must understand that taking anti-retroviral drugs is not like taking aspirins. A very rigid regimen has to be followed. There can be no lapse in taking the medicine and there has to be continual testing to ensure that the medicine is having its desired effect.

This testing process is not inexpensive. First of all, the equipment used to do the testing runs to about U.S. \$300.00. Then the re-agents for each test usually runs from about U.S. \$90.00 to U.S. \$120.00, depending on the deal that you have from the manufacturer of the re-agent.

Sir, when we first addressed this problem, we knew that it would cost us U.S. \$9,000.00 per annum to treat an HIV positive individual. Because of the aggressive stance of Barbados and the universality of our programme which excluded no one, because of our negotiations and dialogue with the pharmaceutical companies, because of the assistance that we garnished from the World Bank and from UN/AIDS and the networking in developing the Barbados programme,

we have been given the equipment to do the testing. A percentage of the testing will be free and we have brought the cost of anti-retroviral drugs that had accrued to Barbados between U.S. \$700 to U.S. \$1000 per annum. That changes the dynamics quite considerably.

However, there is much to be done and there is a very complex management programme of ensuring that this programme would be put in place. As I speak, the laboratory facilities are being renovated at Lady Meade and the equipment has been shipped to us. We are putting in place expanded doctors' offices and we will be putting in place a networking programme to ensure that we will embark on this in a disciplined and comprehensive manner to ensure that every Barbadian who wants to be tested can be tested for nothing. Everyone who has a CD-4 count of 350 or less will be treated and there will be a comprehensive management of this programme.

Mr. President, now that is not the end of it because Barbados does not sit here all by itself, 4,000 miles from everybody else. We are part of a region and Barbados has exhibited leadership in this regard and has offered to do the testing for the Eastern Caribbean. It has offered to work with the Eastern Caribbean to develop their programmes and I am in concert with my fellow Health Ministers of the Eastern Caribbean engaged in developing a comprehensive regional programme supported by the World Bank once again, to develop a regional programme which will bring success in our fight against HIV/AIDS.

Mr. President, I would like to come back and talk a bit about the importance of doing this project, because it is not well understood out there that those who are dying from this disease are usually between the ages of 20 and 40 years. They are the most productive people in our society. We cannot afford to lose these people. No society can. We have seen the devastation in Africa. We have seen the collapse of societies in Africa because the civil servants are dying. Teachers are dying. Clergymen are dying and their families are dying. Orphans are being created. This is a monumental problem and it is nothing to be joking about. It is nothing to be laughing about and it is nothing funny about HIV/AIDS. Those who would make fun of it are insensitive and callous. They do not understand the necessity of their fellow man to avoid this disease.

As I said, Mr. President, this is probably the most pressing problem facing our nation in the area of health. It is to the credit of the Prime Minister who saw this from a developmental perspective and an economic perspective and who galvanized the Caribbean to understand that we have a problem which is monumental and we had to come to grips with even the catalyst brought about by the Caribbean encounter in September with the World Bank, UN/AID and others.

You will recall, Mr. President, that in the beginning of the year 2000, I called for a treatment programme for all Barbadians, because I recognized that treatment was an essential part of the prevention of transmission. It gives people the confidence to go and get tested because they know that they would have treatment to prolong their lives. We do not know how long we can prolong life with HIV because there are new developments coming on stream every year, but we do know that if we prolong life for three years, we may have a better answer three years from now. If we do not prolong the life, you are dead so there is no alternative. Also, through treatment it has been recognized that it reduces the transmission rate by 50 per cent. This is an essential part of our overall programme.

Sir, we have moved very rapidly on this and following the meeting in September, Dr. Jacobs and myself attended a meeting in Rio where we put out the draft of Barbados' programme. We then met at that time several pharmaceutical companies and the Brazilian pharmaceutical companies and early in January we then held a Health Ministers Meeting with the Eastern Caribbean Health Ministers and the World Bank and UN/AID to develop strategies for this programme.

Mr. President, right now the programme that we are embarking on is a unique one. Hopefully, this will benefit not just the people of Barbados but the people of the region and perhaps people throughout the developing world. If we make this programme work and if we are successful, we will point the way for developing an appropriate response to HIV/AIDS in this country.

Mr. President, I have talked about the issue of HIV/AIDS and mental health. I will now talk generally about public health where the investment in public health is a significant investment for our people. The other day I was thinking what is wealth and I compared the equivalent wealth of a nobleman in Tudor times in England and the common man in Barbados today. The nobleman could have died of small pox, diphtheria, polio, yellow fever, malaria. Believe it or not, in those days Europe was a malarial area. He would have died of septicemia, tetanus – a small cut. If you were wounded on the battlefield, you were a fatality. Today, we have polio vaccines, we have MMR vaccines, tuberculosis is practically unknown, and when we look at public health measures, the vaccines that we have today and the fact that we have got a very high percentage of Barbadians who have been vaccinated, this is a tribute to the work of the public health people of this country, not just now, but for generations.

12.25 p.m.

The importance of public health cannot be overstated. In fact, we should invest more. It is much better to stop someone from going to the hospital than treating them well when they get to the hospital. I am not saying that we should

not treat them well but it is much more beneficial to stop them from going to the hospital, therefore the continued investment in public health is very critical.

In that regard, Mr. President, we are putting in place new software programmes that will use Graphical Information Systems and Rainfall Data to predict the area of mosquito outbreaks, given certain rainfall patterns and certain time lines, so that we do not have to guess anymore where the mosquitoes may emerge. We can profile the whole country and we can anticipate where these areas may be, utilizing real time reports on rainfall and the software package and by addressing those areas as a matter of urgency.

Dengue fever is a significant problem in Barbados and the region. We now are at the critical stage where dengue fever with as many types that are prevalent in the region, all four, I might add, could bring about a significant or serious rash of hemorrhagic fever.

The technical staff at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital have undergone courses for the appropriate treatment and response to those who have dengue fever, and therefore I think we are well prepared for the treatment. However, before anyone is treated they must be diagnosed and we are expanding our diagnostic capacity as I speak.

The best treatment of all is prevention and therefore, by forecasting where the mosquito operates we will also be in a position to reduce the mosquito population. It is within our competence and our capacity to eliminate the *Aedes Aegypti*. It was once eliminated and it can be done so again. Therefore, we will be endeavouring to reduce the population and to eliminate this mosquito as much as possible.

Let me talk about the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito for a minute. The *Aedes Aegypti* is basically a household mosquito. It does not like living out in the wild because there are no people out there. It needs human blood to reproduce. In that regard, there is an ongoing public education programme to get people to take responsibility for their own homes and ensure that there are no mosquitoes in their homes. This means that you have to get rid of the flower pots or use a sponge or something like that. You have to get rid of standing water. You have to keep a clean area around your house. But more than that the mosquito likes to live in dark areas, closets, under the bed, behind your bookcase and, it is implicit that the general population help themselves.

Public Health authorities cannot do it all. In addition to that, I have noted that when we go spraying or fogging an area people are asked to open up their houses so that the fog can go through but the problem is that many people go and shut up their houses while the fogging machine passes and then long after it passes they open back up the houses and

therefore they are saving the mosquitoes in their houses from extinction. You would have to tell me what is the most uncomfortable phase of your life, a little bit of discomfort from spray in your sinuses or a week of dengue fever. To my mind, I would take the spray every time. People have it within their own capacity to clean their own houses, keep them tidy and eliminate mosquitoes from their houses. Public Health authorities will do all that they can to ensure that this is done, that is, in the area of dengue fever.

In the area of vaccines, we are once again going back on the MMR programme this year. Last year there was a 50 per cent achievement rate and we do feel very strongly that we can get to 95 per cent through an aggressive programme this year. It might be noted that in the area of polio vaccines 97 per cent of our school age children have been vaccinated. At this point of 97 per cent we are sure that we are a protected society. However, let me just say that we can never relax because recently there has been a reported resurgence of polio in Haiti and possibly the Dominican Republic. That is very close. We have managed to remove small pox from the face of the earth but polio still exists in certain areas and certainly in Haiti/Hispaniola which is much too close to these shores for us to be complacent on the matter.

Along with the programmes of distributing vaccines is a very good work that the public health authorities do in the education process. They do so at the primary and secondary schools where people absorb the knowledge and along with the public health programme they deliver a programme that is aimed at bringing about a consciousness of protecting the environment. That leads me to the Sanitation Service Authority.

Mr. President, the Sanitation Service Authority has improved its operations quite considerably over the past few years. We now have a fleet of modern vehicles that have been effective in picking up garbage on time and in keeping a certain amount of cleanliness about the place.
12.35 p.m.

However, in this coming financial year, we will be placing orders for a new set of vehicles without waiting for the vehicles that we have to breakdown. It is by this planned progression that we will be introducing new vehicles at a constant rate over the next decade.

We are determined too that the new vehicles will be purpose-built vehicles. These vehicles will not be like the ones that we have purchased in the past, which have generic chassis with bodies mounted on them. In other words, what we have been buying in the past are vehicles which have generic chassis. What we will be doing is purchasing purposeful vehicles that are designed as refuse collectors. The chassis will be designed for those jobs and will support

the vehicles. There will be all automatic transmissions so that the ease of operation and the breakdown of the vehicles will be reduced.

In addition, the compression factors that we would get would be doubled so that we would be able to get twice as much garbage in the same size truck. Therefore, the efficiency with which we pick up garbage would be much improved. This is achieved by higher compression ratios.

The Sanitation Authority is also going to embark on a national clean up programme over this year. It is also going to introduce a policing programme aimed at the more popular illegal dumping sites around the country. You would have seen recently that an individual was successfully prosecuted for illegal dumping. I think that a word of warning should be enough.

It is remarkable the extent or the trouble that people would go to, to throw refuse away in an illegal area. People would drive from their home, twice as far as they would drive to the dump and throw the refuse at Kingsland. They would drive to the dump and stop 200 yards short of the dump and throw garbage out on the other side of the road. I do not understand the mind set that does that. It will no longer be tolerated and a comprehensive programme of surveillance charging individuals is being put in place as I speak. So a word of warning to those who participate in this type of behaviour.

Mr. President, I feel that Barbadians have to be more conscious about the environment. Let us regard the adequate provision for household composting. There are provisions being made to reduce the amount of plastic that we use. Whenever I go to the supermarket, I use a reuseable bag. I have about six of them and I always keep my reusable bags in my car. When I go home, I unpack them and take the empty bag and put it back in the car. So whenever I go to the supermarket, I know that I have my reusable bag. It just takes a certain amount of mind-set to do this.

Sir, we are using 75 tonnes of plastic bags in this country a year.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Sir, you know how light a plastic bag is and that would tell you the number of plastic bags that we use.

Asides.

SENATOR the HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I have touched on the Sanitation Authority, the improvement of cleanliness in the country, the public health authority, I talked about the HIV programme and I talked

about the mental health programme that is so important to this country.

Now, Mr. President, I will turn to the Polyclinics that deliver a wide-ranging service to this country. During this year we are going to be developing programmes aimed at meeting the demands of the customer. In other words, providing the service while it is needed. In this regard, Mr. President, we have to reevaluate all of the services that we provide at the Polyclinics and recognise that they will be additional burdens being put on some of the Polyclinics. In addition to that, there has been a significant demographic change in Barbados, which means that some of the polyclinics are undersized for the services that they are delivering in the new and highly dense population surrounding them.

Sir, one of those that come to mind is the polyclinic at Six Roads, St. Philip which is heavily overburdened at the present time. It is also very clear that the polyclinics will play a vital role in delivering the expanding services of the mental health care programme as well as the HIV programme.

Sir, the closer you get to the community with these programmes, that is where the programme is going to be. Therefore, there will be delivery and collection points and we will have to upgrade their facilities. We will have to improve their communication, data capture facilities, and their record keeping facilities. In that regard, Mr. President, we are looking at document management systems that will improve the method of data capture, record keeping and retrieval.

Sir, as I speak, a consultant is developing assistance for the polyclinic pharmacies and for the drug service. Mr. President, having come to the drug service, I will now talk about a drug service that provides a wide range of medicines for the people of Barbados. This is probably one of the most efficient drug service programmes, in fact, it is noted as a global example of a drug service programme. However, we recognise that there is always room for improvement and we are putting information technology systems in place that will ensure that people do not take advantage of the system. Sir, those that do take advantage do not necessarily live in Barbados. We will make sure that this system becomes efficient and it maximises use so that the people of Barbados will benefit from it. This will also be one of the key components in distributing the anti-retroviral drug and the anti-fungal drugs used in our HIV programme.

12.45 p.m.

Finally, Mr. President, I am coming to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but before I come to that I will go the Geriatric Hospital and talk about the issue of Geriatric care in this country.

As you know, Mr. President, we are an aging society and this is a direct reflection of the success of our health care programmes. Clearly, we are doing something right in public health, we are doing right at the Polyclinics, we are doing something right with Sanitation and we are doing something right to improve the life span and the quality of life of all Barbadians and in so doing we are faced with the Geriatric issues of the day. These issues are not unique to Barbados, but certainly Barbados seems to have more centenarians than most other societies for the size of the population that we have.

The issue of an aging society needs a multifaceted response. It is no longer right that we should be having people placed at the Accident and Emergency section of the hospital and then their families disappear off the face of the earth. Quite often these people have Alzheimer's disease and it is difficult to find out who they are and they have to go into a kind of detention place. This is unfortunate. It certainly is not the hallmark of a caring society.

However, we need to upgrade the facilities that we have at our Geriatric Hospitals and to expand the opportunity to the private sector to invest in assisted-living care residences, so that we could place people in a multiplicity of different institutions that range from an individual cottage in a group of cottages, to a building with minimal care, to a building with much greater care. Everyone will have their own special condition and we should not lump all the aged into one group.

Some of us reach the age of 90 with a clarity of mind and a clarity of thoughts that few 16 years old have. Others of us arrive there with full blown Alzheimer's and between those two extremes you have any range of variables. Therefore, we are putting in place a comprehensive and diverse programme of senior citizens' villages, homes, geriatric hospitals and private residences, or private homes, for the care of the elderly.

I would say, Mr. President, that in this regard the private sector has not responded very well, but then again I will come back to that issue about private sector response as I get closer to the end of this recitation.

Finally, I do come to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The hospital is not a perfect place and we can always find fault with the hospital, but the reality is that the hospital has been steadily improving over a period of time. There has been significant investment made in it that has seen an upgrade of equipment and, this year, it is anticipated that there will be a further upgrade of equipment which will be of significant proportions.

The problem when viewing the hospital is that we see it every day, day in and day out, year in and year out and we

do not see the changes, we just become used to the odd problem that arises. It is as though we sat down in a yard and planted a tree and watched it grow. We will not see it growing, but you will wake one day and realize that the tree has doubled your height. So, it is the same thing with the hospital. The hospital has gone through a series of renovations, upgrades and improvements – and I will talk about the physical facilities of the hospital. Wards have been upgraded, the operating theatres have been improved and by the end of this year, for the first time in the history of the hospital, it will have twelve fully operating theatres. But that will create another problem for us because we would not have the staff to man all twelve operating theatres and that is the reality.

Therefore, we have to recognize the issue of staffing at the hospital, the issue of the number of nurses that we have available, the number of orderlies that are available and I specify 'available' and not 'employed' because there is a significant level of absenteeism at the hospital which comes about by a multiplicity of factors. We have already changed the nursing conditions of the nurses, to some extent, by paying a flexibility allowance to the nurses which makes provision for paying them for extended duty days and extra shifts that they may have to take. This is in recognition of a temporary stop-gap measure.

In addition to that we recognize that the whole quality and standard of the profession of nursing needs to be upgraded. We understand that we need to produce more nurses in this country and, to that end, the Ministry of Health is developing a paper to be sent to the Ministry of Education asking that we move to a position where we are graduating 120 nurses per year. We estimate that our natural attrition is about 60 but we recognize that we need to go beyond that attrition rate to expand the numbers that we have.

We also recognize the global reality that there will always be foreign recruitment of Barbadian nurses and therefore we want to provide the opportunity for those who might want to go abroad and work overseas for a period of time, and then we will welcome them back with their enhanced experience when they find out that the quality of life where they went is not as good as the quality of life where they came from.

We also recognize that we are in an entirely different environment and therefore we are putting in place a system of training which will meet our demands and exceed it and also provide for inward flow of new ideas, concepts and new perspectives.
12.55 p.m.

As you know, this year will see the establishment of a Board of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (the hospital) which will change the management style and operating procedures.

It will allow management to be much more flexible, much more responsive and much more in a mode that would meet customer demands. We will be going through a training process to improve the interrelationship between the patient and the staff, at all levels.

I have recently had a complaint where the surgeons, doctors, physiotherapists, nurses and orderlies were all praised but it came time for one hostile individual to check out of the hospital and all that good service and care went to naught because of that individual who made a very unfavourable impression.

We have all experienced it in our society. We have experienced it in the private sector, for example, when we will go into a shop and try to buy something and run into two sales assistants who are talking to one another and they look at you as though you are disturbing them. We need to improve that culture of service and our ability to treat people like fellow human beings so these training programmes will start.

The new management structure will improve the operations at the hospital. It is very clearly understood that the efficiency and the delivery of services are constrained by the structure within which they are delivered. Therefore, we are going to improve that structure and we are going to ensure that the resources at the hospital are put there for the delivery of services to the patient and not for the good of anyone else.

There is going to be an upgrade of the catering facilities. This upgrade will benefit not only the Queen Elizabeth Hospital but it will benefit the Psychiatric Hospital and the Geriatric Hospital. So there is new and innovative thought coming to many different aspects of the hospital's operations.

In addition to this, there will be the establishment of a Patients Charter of Rights. The operations of the hospital will become much more transparent and customer-oriented. We are also putting a programme in place which will analyse the future needs of the hospital.

Mr. President, we plan to go through a reconstruction of the building itself. Sir, that reconstruction will start with the construction of a new wing. That new wing will allow us to move many of the non-critical areas of operation into the new wing. This will make space within the hospital so that we can close it down, section by section.

If you understand how the infrastructure of the hospital operates – you have to close a vertical section of the hospital so that when you go in to renovate that vertical section, you will do all of the plumbing, sewerage, electrical and the medical gases at the same time. Sir, the entire infrastructure has to be redone and reworked.

Mr. President, new building codes will be observed, so that we would be able to strengthen the capacity of the hospital to operate more efficiently and in a more sanitary condition. Any institution, no matter how good are the physical facilities, is only as good as the people that work in it. Therefore, we are going to put particular emphasis on human resources development within the institution. I mentioned before that we were looking for an expansion of the number of nurses being graduated.

Additionally, we are looking to improve the level of training for the nurses so that they will be moving to a level where they will be getting Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Nursing Science.

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: It is recognised that nursing is a very serious profession. It needs management skills as well as technical skills.

The administration and management of an operating theatre is very serious business. The administration and management of a ward is a critical function. Therefore, we need people with the requisite skills and capabilities to be able to deliver the best services in the hospital.

We also need to train our orderlies to be able to operate more efficiently and effectively. We need to train our sanitation people to better clean the spaces that they have to clean. We have to train the younger doctors in the areas of patient care. There is management right through the programme and this is an important aspect of improving the quality of service at the hospital.

Mr. President, let me just say that while we are talking about improving the hospital, I am in no way saying that the hospital gives unsatisfactory service. There are many people who are dedicated within that institution and many people who give superior medical care.

Sir, there are many people who have benefitted from the hospital. Time and again, I heard from people who have come from the United Kingdom that they received better care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital than they could ever get at home.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: If we focus on the ills only and do not recognise the good things about the hospital, we could only demoralise the staff at the hospital and destroy the institution. I am not about destroying the institution but I am about improving it and building it up. I recognise the many fine qualities we have at the hospital and I intend to build on those qualities. I also recognise that

in every institution there can be shortcomings but the shortcomings are only an opportunity to do better.

Mr. President, you will recall the fuss and furor over the dialysis issue at the hospital. Today, the Dialysis Unit is operating at maximum efficiency and it is delivering a better service than has ever been delivered before. In working through the whole system, we discovered that the upfront complaints were not necessarily the true state of things and we had to go right back through the whole working system of the hospital to make sure that the Dialysis Unit works properly.

1.05 p.m.

Part of the problem with the hospital is that it has been part of the Civil Service or part of the Government institution operating as a department of the Ministry of Health. This puts a constraint on the management to be able to respond quickly and effectively to any infrastructural breakdowns that they may have. This new framework will allow them to respond quickly and efficiently to that.

In addition to this programme, a special package is being put together to upgrade the equipment in the hospital, to create a new cardiac wing and to purchase approximately \$22 million worth of equipment for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This will upgrade practically every surgical unit, every ward and every treatment centre. But, as I have said, Mr. President, that investment has to be met with an investment in people as well. So what we are doing is providing the staff of the hospital with the tools to do the job.

This is the biggest single investment of equipment ever made in the hospital. It goes from the laboratories, to the radiology section, to the medical sections, to the wards, to the operating theatres and the Accident and Emergency Department. Mr. President, that outlines pretty much the programme of the Ministry of Health.

I would like at this point to pay tribute to those many men and women who work day in and day out, 365 days a year, for their fellow Barbadians in delivering a health care programme that is second to none in the Caribbean. Mr. President, with this investment and with these new programmes in place I think that we will develop an even more superior health care programme. This is an essential part of our economic development.

Health, like education, is an investment in our people. In this new information age and economic environment, the most critical natural resource is our people, so we are protecting our educational investment by delivering good health care policies and these Estimates are designed to deliver such a service to Barbadians.

Mr. President, I now move to the approved Estimates 2001-2002 to draw attention to the Honourable the Senate that there was a move in the amount of \$2 047 153 under various line ministries. The amended figures as a result of the move in are as follows:

Estimated revenue is \$1 795 457 613. Estimated total expenditure is \$2 198 373 472. The estimated excess of total expenditure over current revenue would be \$402 915 859.

Mr. President, I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance for bringing us this excellent budget of Estimates proposals. I think that this will work or provide the means for Barbados to continue its unrivalled economic expansion. It is doing so in a holistic manner. It is not unduly weighted one way or the other. It calls for a holistic and comprehensive development of our country. It follows a strategic path that will take us well into the next decade and I suspect that we would become the developed country that we intend to become in a very short period of time if we continue in this direction.

Mr. President, I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 2.20 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 2.20 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to. Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
1.15 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is in session.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, this is an opportunity to look very seriously at the state of play in Barbados and, today, I am proposing to approach the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure from the point of view of the original positions taken by the Prime Minister of Barbados when he would have been Opposition Leader, and to contrast and compare those situations within the context of what is contained within the Estimates for the year 2001-2.

It was interesting to hear the Leader of Government Business suggest that the Prime Minister has been able to guide the country through the turbulent waters of change. That is interesting, because I am not clear in my mind that he, in fact, has made any changes to the state of play in Barbados, and I am going to draw on speeches of the past

and compare the positions taken then with what we are witnessing in the Barbados economy today.

I am going to quote from the 1994 Budgetary Reply of the Prime Minister to put into context the framework, not only for the year 2001, but for the future of Barbados and the economy within the context of a regional and worldwide economic order. As I said, it is surprising to hear that the Prime Minister talked about change, and I am quoting from page 4768 of the House of Assembly debates for January 25 to June 7, 1994.

"Government has committed Barbados, Mr. Speaker, to a process of trade reform with which the Barbados Labour Party does not fundamentally agree. We do not agree, Mr. Speaker, that we should have trade reform as elaborated by Government in advance of anti-dumping legislation brought to this House to make sure that this economy is not flooded by cheap subsidized imports from the rest of the world."

I have noted that the Prime Minister, then as Opposition Leader, said that he does not agree and neither does the Barbados Labour Party with trade reform for this country. What we have witnessed over the last couple of years is complete adherence.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy President, if I understood the quotation correctly, the Prime Minister said that he did not agree with bringing trade reform before bringing appropriate anti-dumping legislation. It does not mean that he did not agree with trade reform but in the context of doing so before anti-dumping legislation.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, there has been no reform of anti-dumping legislation in Barbados and we have proceeded with trade reform *ad nauseam* for the last four years. We have introduced bound rates. We have adopted WTO arrangements. We are currently trying to understand OECD measures and implications for the offshore sector and, all in all, we have simply adopted the measures of trade reform as outlined by the international organisations so that this speech today is intended to look at the Estimates within the framework of the thinking of the Prime Minister of Barbados. In fact, I can label it the M.P. versus the P.M. or Owen versus Arthur. That is what I propose to do.

Trade reform has proceeded at a pace unprecedented when it was acknowledged at that time that the Barbados Labour Party administration did not and still does not agree with trade reform. I am surprised by that, but why should I be? It goes further than that, the whole question of an incomes policy was also treated in similar vein.

Mr. Deputy President, I wish to quote again to set the framework for an understanding of the current Estimates for the year 2001-2002. I quote at page 4768 again.

"The first was that we could not accept an across the board freeze of incomes and wages in this economy. We felt, Sir, that there had to be a threshold below which some level of wage increases would have to be allowed. We also felt, Mr. Speaker, that you could not have a wages policy nor an incomes policy without an active prices policy and we also felt that what was done in other countries of the world where an enlightened approach was brought to bear in the execution of an incomes policy should also have been done in Barbados, namely that an incomes policy for Barbados should have had within it an element of tax reform whereby year by year increased tax allowances would have been allowed to make sure that, even though people's incomes were frozen in gross terms, a take-home pay could have been increased as a result of the provision of increased tax allowances."

We have not seen any attempt to increase the take-home pay of Barbadians. What we have seen is a political attempt to re-introduce the interest allowance for mortgages. What we have seen is an amalgamated allowance that brings in the kitchen sink where you can get house repairs for \$3 500 per year. On that score, as I understand it from this speech, the Opposition Leader and now Prime Minister of the day also disagrees with an incomes policy.

I have set the framework, Sir, to understand the context of the Estimates. It goes further. At page 4769, I quote:

"The cost of energy in Barbados is much too high and it militates against economic growth by making the cost of production in this country too high and too uncompetitive."

There is nothing in the Estimates that seeks to address this area of concern. In fact, we have heard only recently of a number of manufacturing entities in Barbados leaving our shores and, when asked why they all said that the cost of production in Barbados is much too high and it has become uncompetitive, and therefore they have had to get out of manufacturing. There have been no major attempts at all to address this issue of excess cost.

The measure of 1994, Mr. Deputy President, was a mere reduction on imports from five per cent to two and a half per cent and it only translated into a \$5 million savings for a manufacturing sector that earned as much as a billion dollars per year. Mr. Deputy President, you would understand that if in fact it is only required to take \$5 million to resuscitate the manufacturing sector which is in excess of a billion dollars industry then there must be difficulty in

understanding the economics of that so that that measure was cosmetic. That measure is as cosmetic as the recent measure to reduce the interest rates on saving deposits.

Let me explain that measure that was introduced in the recent Estimates. As we speak, the level of savings deposits in Barbados is now \$1.9 billion. If we took one per cent of that it translates to \$19 million. If you take half of that which is half a percentage point, it is a mere \$9.5 million and, what the Government is seeking to do, is take away \$9.5 million from the depositors and give it to the commercial banks with the expectation that the commercial banks may pass on any benefit in a form of reduced interest rates and credit. That is heroic because that measure is simply going to translate into increased profit for the commercial bank but will not redound to any benefit to the depositor.

2.30 p.m.

This measure to reduce the interest on savings deposits from 4.5% to 4% is another cosmetic measure designed purely for public relation purposes and not really to effectively give expression to any meaningful reduction to the cost of doing business in Barbados.

It is unfortunate because only two years ago, the Prime Minister increased the savings rate and, when questioned, said what he was seeking to do was to encourage Barbadians to save more. Now, he is reducing the savings rate with the expectation that he is going to lower the cost of borrowing to the business community. Sir, that will not happen and what will happen as a result of the measure is that it will translate into a reduction of interest for depositors to the tune of almost \$10 million which, therefore, means that commercial bank profits will increase by the same amount and that is unfortunate.

Mr. Deputy President, I now turn to the specifics of the Estimates. In order to put the Estimates in context I need to quote from the then Opposition Leader in the 1994 Budgetary Reply. We have to respect this framework to understand the Estimates of the year 2001/2002. You cannot simply appeal to the figures for an appreciation of where we are going as a country.

Mr. Deputy President, before I make the quotation, it is necessary for me to explain this concept. There is a concept in economics called 'tax neutrality' which is employed whenever a country is attempting to change its tax system. In order to compare the old tax system with the new tax system there must be a reference point, that is the only basis for comparing the two tax regimes, the old with the new. In Barbados' tax history, we have suffered over the years from a narrow base and very high rates.

If we go back to our primary school days, we will know that the area of a rectangle is the base times the height. In

terms of revenue collection, it is the base of the revenue, times the rate of the revenue that gives total revenue.

Tax neutrality means when we are changing the tax, say, to introduce VAT, we are going to be increasing the base of the tax system for the inclusion of services, not just goods, and we are going to reduce the rate but the base times the rate will produce the same level of revenue. The notion that the two tax systems are comparable if the revenue collected is equal is called 'tax neutrality'.

Mr. Deputy President, I went through all that because I need now to embark on my journey of explanation. Sir, I quote from the then Opposition Leader now Prime Minister of Barbados at page 4767 of the Hansard record:

"Now, we feel, Mr. Speaker, that tax reform in Barbados must be guided by something broader than that for this country is overtaxed to begin with. If our tax reform is guided only by the principle of tax neutrality, that it changes the composition of taxes so that at the end of the day the new taxes give rise to the same amount of revenue as the old taxes if you accept, as we accept, and the Government accepts, Sir, that the country is already overtaxed, tax neutrality as a principle only means that the Government is giving the people of the country the very simple choice as between being beaten by a bull pistol as distinct from being beaten by a dog whopper.

It is a simple choice, either you get beaten by a bull pistol or you get beaten by a dog whopper, that is all it means."

Mr. Deputy President, at the time these words were said in 1994, the tax take out of every dollar in Barbados was a mere \$0.28. As I speak to you in this Chamber today, Sir, the tax take out of every dollar is \$0.40. If the Prime Minister appreciated at that time that Barbados was overtaxed, I am wondering what he now thinks about it. We are no longer being beaten by a bull pistol or a dog hunter. We are being beaten by a cat o' nine tails.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The Prime Minister of Barbados said when he was Opposition Leader that we were overtaxed when the tax take was \$0.28 and now it is over \$0.40. I wonder what is really happening to the Barbados economy?

Sir, I asked for your patience in understanding that I need to set the framework to appreciate the Estimates of this year, and I am now setting that framework. Mr. Deputy President, I am showing you that one can say something in Opposition and do something completely different when in

Government. This is the evidence being provided here on the whole question of over-taxation, on the question of an incomes policy, on the question of trade reform, these are all issues that the Prime Minister disagreed with in 1994. He disagreed with trade reform and said that the Barbados Labour Party was fundamentally against it. He disagreed with an incomes policy. He agreed that Barbados was overtaxed then but is now silent on the question of over-taxation. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is difficult to discuss.

Sir, it does not stop there. I am still setting the framework. The Prime Minister is on record as saying that the economy should be driven by the private sector and that it should be foreign exchange led. The Prime Minister is on record as saying that he has an employment strategy which encourages the expansion of existing businesses and the creation of new businesses and that his Government will not be caught in a passage of increasing employment in the public sector simply as a means of meeting the objective of Job No. 1.

In that speech in 1994, the then Opposition Leader quoted extensively from a paper presented by the Deputy Governor at the time, Dr. Delisle Worrell, called 'Out of the Doldrums' and that address dealt with the information services industry and spoke about the several opportunities that would become available to Barbados.

Again, if I may be permitted, I will quote at page 4771 of the Hansard records:

"Information service is a rapidly expanding field with wonderful opportunities for a country like Barbados which has modern telecommunications and an educated labour force but we are so small, a minute fraction of the international business would make a serious dent in the unemployment."

Sir, I am going to deal extensively with the question of employment over my two-hour speech since I have time, patience and everything on my side today.

Let me look at the Estimates within that framework and address some of the specifics of the Estimates. I now turn to page 5 of the Estimates. I am going to be deliberate in my delivery and state here boldly that the Government has refused to repay some of its foreign debt over the last fiscal year. I know that is a bold statement but until it is disputed, it will have to remain bold because I am about to prove my point, Mr. Deputy President.

I ask you to turn to page 5 of the Estimates, Table 8 – Estimates of Total Expenditure by Economic Classification. I am going to be very deliberate in this because I do not want to send any unnecessary message, or a message of panic. I am being deliberate on page 5 of the Estimates. Mr. Deputy

President, before I get there, I am going to let you know that one of the easiest things to forecast for a Government is the amount of money that it has to repay in foreign interest and foreign amortisation because every loan that you borrow you have a schedule of its repayment, you have a breakdown of the amortisation and the interest so you cannot say that you cannot make a good forecast of your future commitments.

If you check page 5, therefore, and look under Approved Estimates which would have been the Estimates debated last year, subsequently approved by Government sometime thereafter, under Debt Service and under Interest Component of the Debt Service is a foreign component of that interest.

Sir, if you look for Debt Service, look under Interest, look for Foreign and you will find that the approved Estimates which is the second column from the right-hand side carries a figure of \$77.886 million under the column Approved Estimates 2000/2001 for the foreign interest component of the Debt Service.

When you look at the revised column for the Estimates 2000/2001 that figure has been revised from \$77.9 million to a mere \$12.2 million. Now, that is an enormous difference.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. The Honourable Member fails to tell this Honourable Chamber that a revised figure was circulated to all Members and the figure is no longer \$12 million. It is an amendment to the Estimates of \$84 million.
2.45 p.m.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, this is unbelievable. This is how this Chamber is treated. I have received these Estimates for a long time and all of a sudden, I am going to hear about revised, revisited and all kinds of things in these Estimates.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, I am saying that component that the approved Estimates would have been \$77.9 million and that the revised Estimates was a mere drop of \$2 million. That is why I said initially that I do not want to send or appear to be sending any scare tactics to anyone to benefit anything.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I am not apologising. It is not a question of being wrong.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Order, please. Order.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, this is consistently done to this Chamber when you seek to find out or investigate any component of the Estimates that appears obviously wrong, you are then told that it has been revised and revisited. I am saying that this is not the first case.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Two Honourable Members are on their feet. Honourable Member, on what did you rise?

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order. Sir, I got it on Friday last week. Is the Honourable Member saying that he did not get it? Sir, he is imputing improper motives on this Honourable Chamber. What he is saying is that information that is relevant to his debate was withheld from him. If that is so, Mr. Deputy President, that is a terrible indictment on the Clerks of this Parliament.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, I do not want to get hot in this debate.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: By the way, I am not an Acting President, I am the Deputy President.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: It is the same difference.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Who cares about what?

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I am not going down that road, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I am suggesting that this cannot continue to happen in this Honourable Chamber. Every year whenever you come to analyse information in here you are being given one set of data and then we in this Honourable Chamber are treated as if it is just a secondary thing. It has already been debated in the Lower House, so does it really matter whether or not we have the adequate information to date? I have never received and have not received any amendment to this table laid in the Estimates. I have not received anything and that is why I said from the start that I find it unbelievable that you could have an approved Estimate of that magnitude and then you have the revised Estimates that is \$65 million less. Sir, then it is compounded by the debt service under amortization for the foreign component which moved from \$44 million to a mere \$10.9 million, just three rows below

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: The Honourable Member should come off this point. He is wrong and he is misleading

this Honourable Chamber. The figure is \$44 million not \$10 million. He should check his facts before he comes and makes these statements, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, I am going to make a request for the time here because it is an intervention. I will not permit that kind of intervention when I am speaking.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member must recognise that Members are entitled to make interventions if in their belief something is wrong. It is for the Chair to rule whether or not that intervention is correct in the light of the Standing Orders.

The Honourable Member may continue.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, I am saying that I have not received an amendment to Table 8 and, even if an error was made under the foreign interest component, there is also a major error being made under amortization which is from \$44 million to \$10.9 million, and that is a major error. It makes it very difficult to understand how that kind of error could be consistently made.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: If those figures are correct or even if they have been adjusted, then it brings into question the foreign reserve of the country. If you are going to allocate \$121 million for foreign debt services and you are saying that you are only paying out \$22 million, then there would be a further \$99 million to be paid out. So, I am saying that the magnitude of the error has serious implications, not only for the Estimates but also for the foreign exchange reserve stock.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy President. If information is available to this Honourable House, it is the duty of every Member of this Honourable House to use the most relevant information. If they have not received their information that is a serious breach of this Honourable House.

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: I had it since last week Friday. It was sent to me along with the other information for this meeting. Therefore, it is wrong for the Honourable Member to keep referring to data which he knows is wrong.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Member cannot sit in his chair and shout across the table.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, there is some data I have in my hand and it gives all the correct information. I got this since last week Friday and I am sure that other Honourable Members of this Honourable Chamber have it.

If the Honourable Member does not have it, he cannot come here and make these statements, which are obviously false, and accuse the Government of all sorts of things when the figures are blatantly incorrect.

I suggest that he gets a copy of these.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Clerk, will you come here please?

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. Deputy President, I would like to suspend this Sitting of this Honourable Senate for a period of five minutes to determine the accuracy of those statements that were made.

SUSPENSION

The question that the Senate be suspended until 3.00 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to. Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
2.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Senate is now in session. We had taken the break to carry out investigations into certain allegations made by Senator Mascoll, that he was not in receipt of certain papers which were supposed to be in his hand for this debate.

I have asked the Clerk to check the record of Parliament and it shows that on 14th March Senate papers for 21 Senators were served and received on 15th March. Those documents included Errata No. 1 to the Draft Estimate which is the document in contention today and, that those documents, Senator Mascoll's papers, were delivered to his wife's office as is customary, since last week Thursday. Therefore, Senator Mascoll will now cease trying to blame the staff of Parliament because his allegation does not technically go against the Government, allegations that are against the staff of Parliament for not serving papers which he should have had. The record shows that those papers were delivered, as is customary, to his wife's office last Thursday, 15th March. So, can we now proceed without any more arguments over these papers?

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, if that is the case it makes the ...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Mascoll, it is not a question of 'if', that is the case, Senator Mascoll.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: But you cannot tell me what to say Mr. Deputy President.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I know I cannot tell you what to say, but as far as this Chamber is concerned, as far as I am concerned, that is the case.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Right. If that is the case then I accept that there could have been... there were errors that had been made that were corrected and therefore it makes the analysis that I am making appear to be different from what it should be, but that is a different thing, that does not stop the gravity of my concerns...

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: No, I do not have to apologize in this instance. What I will do now is to continue my attack and what I am going to do here, Mr. Deputy President, is to look at the whole question of the Estimates within the context of job creation in Barbados, which has to be of major concern.

Again, I am going to do that within the context of the thinking of the present Prime Minister, who would have suggested, as far back as 1994, that any Government of Barbados is capable of creating two thousand new jobs per year in the informatics sector over a five-year period, which therefore means that in five years you would be able to create at least ten thousand new jobs in the informatics sector. And that is not my view it is the view expressed by the then Leader of the Opposition in his 1994 Budgetary reply in the House of Assembly. But the evidence is there to show that in fact, rather than creating new jobs in the informatics sector, that we have lost jobs and the job creation level has moved from three thousand jobs to less than twelve hundred jobs in that sector and the major industry that would have to be removed from the shores of Barbados would be Caribbean Data Services (CDS) which employed as much as twelve hundred people. Then PRT downsized and we also suffered major job losses in that sector.

So we are no where close to the potential of the sector to create ten thousand new jobs as was stated by the then Leader of the Opposition. That, therefore, allows me to look more critically at the whole issue of job creation in Barbados in the post-1994 period and therefore to understand the context of the Estimates.

In the tourism sector alone we have lost hundreds of jobs with the closure of the Paradise Hotel, the Barbados Hilton Hotel. We have seen the downsizing at Almond Beach Resorts and Sandy Lane which now has only 112 rooms in the new Sandy Lane Hotel. The St. James Beach Hotel, only last year, asked workers to accept voluntary severance. The Colony Club, Tamarind Cove

Hotel, The Asta Hotel, Crystal Cove Hotel – all have reduced the level of workers in those operations and this is in preparation for the new global environment. That is the competitiveness, but we have therefore lost hundred of jobs in the hotel sector and there is no evidence at all, across the length and breadth of Barbados, that any new jobs are being created.

In fact, there are now less hotel rooms in Barbados than we had ten years ago. We have also seen the closure of the Ju-C Factory in manufacturing. We have seen the closure of Bim Factory, Insopack, Super Chick, St. Lucy, we are seeing the pending closure of Atlantic Manufacturing, St. Lucy and that is just a small representation of the kinds of closures that we are seeing in the manufacturing sector over the last six years or so.

There have been several other areas in manufacturing where there have been lay-offs and people severed and we have not seen, not with the naked eye, any increase in plant operations across the length and breadth of Barbados, in the area of manufacturing.

We have seen closures and pending closures in clothing. We have seen a Ministry organizing Independence games and giving contracts to a Trinidad company, for the making of T-shirts for their last Independence. The Government Ministry had T-shirts that were bought in Trinidad at a time when they were saying that we should not be promoting the location of manufacturing entities outside of Barbados and the Government itself purchased all its T-shirts for the last Independence Celebrations from Trinidad.

We have seen down-sizing at Julie'N Supermarket, Budg-Buy Supermarket, The Royal Bank of Canada, Barclays Bank PLC, Bank of Nova Scotia. We have seen pending down-sizing at BARTEL, BET, BDB. Now, would I ever believe that there has been a decline in the unemployment rate in Barbados of the magnitude that is being suggested? It is unbelievable. There have been hundreds of job losses in tourism, hundreds of job losses in manufacturing, hundreds of job losses in informatics, hundreds of job losses in telecommunication.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy President. The Honourable Senator is stating that there were job losses in the tourism sector and is drawing inference to specific companies that have had lay-offs. That does not mean that there has not been overall job expansion in that sector.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: No point of order.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: That is another attempt to slow me down. Another attempt to force me to press brakes, but I am not yet finished. This will be a hot afternoon in the Senate, notwithstanding the air conditioning units.

It does not stop there. I am on record as saying over the last six years that the public sector of Barbados has been responsible for about five to six thousand new jobs and this is contrary to the Prime Minister's strategy of a private sector led, foreign exchange led economy, that the public sector has been the engine of the economy. And that is a direct result to my analysis of what funds became available to Government in the post-VAT era, when in excess of \$300 000 000 would have been derived from the implementation of VAT beyond expectations. And that has to be understood because while I understand that people confine the analysis of VAT to VAT only, the analysis of VAT has to take into consideration what has happened to the Excise Taxes in Barbados. But we have had job creation – and there has been an attempt to deny it – but we have had job creation in the Government sector in Barbados and that job creation has been, in fact, a major one.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order Mr. Deputy President, the Honourable Member is misleading this Chamber. He is saying that there has been in excess of five or six thousand jobs in the public sector. This is contrary to information published by the relevant authorities. If Senator Mascoll has other sources, he has a right to tell this Honourable Chamber, but for the benefit of some of us, the amount of workers in the Civil Service is no more today than it was in 1994. It is about two thousand more than it was in 1994 and the point we must make is that today we have record levels of employment and therefore, it is to be accepted that that would have turned from the public sector. But to say that the public sector has increased by five thousand is contrary to the facts, and it is an attempt to mislead this Chamber. If Senator Mascoll has information, let him give his source of information, but he must not try to mislead this Honourable Chamber. Let him quote the figures...

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, thank you.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: In September, 1994, the job level was about twenty thousand...

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, that is not true. According to the report in 1994 it was 22.6 thousand, according to the published information. If he has other information, let him say where it is coming from – but he is wrong.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Send it here let me see it.

Aside.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Now, gentlemen, gentleman. Just a minute. This Debate must be conducted in an orderly manner and I do not want points of order being developed into short speeches, otherwise we will never get through with any Member's speech.

Senator Mascoll, would you please continue?

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, I take note of the fact that Senator Barker has in his possession the annual statistical data from the Central Bank which he has attempted to hide from this Chamber...

Aside.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Mascoll, please, please. Senator Mascoll, the document does not belong to the Chamber or it was not presented to this Chamber. It is not a question of hiding it. If Senator Barker made reference to a document which is in the public's domain he is not hiding it from the Chamber. Do continue please.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, the unemployment levels in Barbados in the Government sector has increased by over four or five thousand jobs from 1994 to now, that is the point...

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: This is going to be a hot debate today. As at the second quarter of 1994, Mr. Deputy President, the DLP was in power then, the job level in the Government sector was 20.6 thousand. As I speak to you now that figure is almost 26 thousand. The highest level that it reached was 25.6 thousand, which is almost 26 thousand people. So I am saying...

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order, the Honourable Member knows that you never compare unless it is quarter to quarter, everybody knows this and that is standard ECIOI stuff. Why is the Honourable Member seeking to consistently mislead this Chamber? He has a duty to present his information in the acceptable manner.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, as at June, 1994 the employment level in the public service was 20.6 thousand. As at June 1999 the employment level was 25.7 thousand, that is almost five thousand new jobs in the public service. It does not matter, there is no real seasonal component to be employed in the public service. In fact, the employment level reached as high as 27.4 thousand in the third quarter of 1999, so therefore, I am saying to you that if you want to compare quarter to quarter it should not matter and there should not be any major variation in employment in the public service.

Anyhow, the question is this, since the DLP Administration, has there been an increase of over five thousand jobs in the public service?

3.20 p.m.

There is no seasonal component in the employ of the public service, really. There is no real seasonal component, in fact, employment levels in the public service reach as high as \$27.4 thousand in the third quarter of 1999. I am saying to you therefore that if you want to compare quarter to quarter, it does not matter and there should not be any major variation in employment in the public service on a quarterly basis. Anyhow, the issue is that since the Democratic Labour Party administration, there has been an increase of over five thousand jobs in the public sector.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: According to the official statistics of the Government, there has been an increase of over five thousand new jobs in the public service. That point has to be made and that point is correct according to the data. It is here and it is correct. It is here for all to see.

Now, Mr. Deputy President, a question was put in the Lower House as regards the amount of new posts created in the public service. There is information out there which shows that in fact since 1994, according to the official information from the Minister of Finance and Prime Minister, that during the period September 6, 1994 to September 30, 2000, that two thousand six hundred and thirty-seven posts were created in the civil service.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: The Honourable Senator knows full well that he cannot debate matters in here which do not concern here. If that is a published document, deal with the document.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Which does not what, Sir?

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: How are you going to recreate what happens in the Lower House?

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: This is a published document which is simply saying that since 1994, there have been two thousand six hundred and thirty-seven temporary posts created in the public service.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: This information has been made available to John Public and cannot be made available to Senators? It has been circulated widely across Barbados that there has been two thousand six hundred and thirty-seven new posts created in the civil service, according to this information.

Therefore, the point is, Mr. Deputy President, that the information provided on the employment statistics in Barbados is incorrect. If this official document is stating that employment creation in the public service is well over five thousand jobs and the information provided by the Prime Minister of Barbados says that there were two thousand six hundred and thirty-seven jobs created in the public service, it makes a mockery of the employment data provided by the Statistical Department.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I am saying that there is misinformation being provided to Barbadians on the employment data in Barbados.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. The Honourable Senator is casting aspersions on the character of the Statistical Department and I feel, Sir, that we have a duty on this Side to defend the honour of those hard-working public servants. Sir, as far as I know, they have not changed the methodology for creating unemployment figures.

I think it is wrong because these figures are not put out by the Barbados Labour Party, these figures are put out by the Statistical Department. I do not see why they should be brought into what is basically a political situation by casting aspersions on the characters of those public servants. I think it is extremely wrong to cast those types of aspersions on those public servants.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Senator Barker.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, the point is being made to demonstrate that one has to be uncomfortable with the so-called level of unemployment in Barbados. I am uncomfortable with it and most people are uncomfortable with it because it does not demonstrate what is happening in the economy.

I understand the Government sector is wider than the central Government, but I am saying that if you could only have created, according to official data, two thousand six hundred and thirty-seven new jobs in the civil service, are you expecting me to believe that the additional three thousand were created at Statutory Boards? Are you expecting me to believe that, and I hope that no one intends to come and defend the Government on this matter?

This cannot be true that the employment data is suggesting that almost six thousand jobs have been created in the public service, but when you ask for the official documents to be presented and the Prime Minister presents adequate information which I have no reason to doubt, that

it does not square at all with the information coming from the official financial statistical department?

And, you are saying that the difference might have been created in the Statutory Boards. That cannot be the case. I am speaking to the Estimates and what I am seeing is that these Estimates in no way match what is happening in the Barbados economy. They do not tell a thing about what is happening in the Barbados economy.

Sir, may I be rude enough to ask how much time I have left in my debate because I am not sure. I am asking how much time I have left because I would love to have ten hours.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Senator, you have one hour left.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, let me now suggest what should happen as far as over taxation is concerned.

There is no reason why the average Barbadian worker, as suggested by the then Opposition Leader, who now happens to be Prime Minister, should not be entitled to a reduction in income taxes. The Prime Minister admitted that there was over taxation in 1999. The Prime Minister admitted that there was over taxation when the tax takes out of every dollar was a meager \$0.28 cents.

Aside.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: In 1994...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: It is now the case that taxation is now \$0.40 cents out of every dollar and as a result of that, I am suggesting that there should be a reduction in income taxes across the board in Barbados for every single across-the-board worker.

There should be a reduction in the VAT, particularly on food and on hotel accommodation. That is my view that there needs to be a reduction on taxation.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. I am just enquiring as to whether the Honourable Member is giving this Chamber a commitment that his party will introduce that in the next Manifesto.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: No point of order.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, there is no doubt that what is being said by the business community is correct. Barbadians are over taxed, businesses

are over-taxed and you have heard, not me, but several business people accusing this country of excessively high taxation. Sir, it is a fact which has to be addressed, if Barbados is supposed to become more competitive.

Mr. Deputy President, when I look at the sectors, tourism, as I speak to you is in a hurry.
3.30 p.m.

Tourism is in a hurry because it is being run by a Minister who has admitted that he is a Minister in a hurry. The Minister of Tourism is the one who said that he is glad that they have finally taken the pain out of tourism. The Minister of Tourism is the one who said that he does not agree with evaluating the performance of tourism on the basis of arrivals. The Minister of Tourism is now at the centre of the need to restructure the Barbados Tourism Authority.

I am simply suggesting in this instance that tourism is in shambles as I speak. We are pretending that we are performing well in tourism when in actuality we are not doing well in tourism. There are several reasons why that is so. The major reason is that we have shifted our main source of tourist arrivals from the United States of America market to the United Kingdom market. Whereas before the United States of America in the early 1980s and 1990s accounted for one-third of the visitors to Barbados, they now account for less than 25 per cent. It is the United Kingdom that now accounts for almost 40 per cent of our tourist arrivals and that is a major cause for concern. That is so because the revenue from the average United Kingdom visitor is less than the average United States of America visitor.

This, therefore, means that what we have been seeing in Barbados is an increase in arrivals but we have not been seeing an increase in revenue. The evidence is very much available. Over the last four years, the average expenditure of a visitor to Barbados has declined by 15 per cent in nominal terms. When you account for inflation, the expenditure has declined by 21 per cent so that the average spending of the tourist has declined.

It does not require me to analyse statistics. We are all Barbadians and we all know that visitors do not spend as much as they used to. We all know that visitors habits have changed. They catch buses. They ride bicycles. They go into lunch rooms and eat just like you and me. A visitor is no longer a rich individual who is looking to spend the world when he comes to Barbados. That is known. So we have major problems.

We have a major problem with the whole question of the kinds of visitors we are currently attracting to Barbados

because they are not spending and contributing to the economy as in former years. All the evidence is there available in the documents of the Central Bank of Barbados. So average spending is down but that is not my position only.

In fact, what is happening in the Barbados Tourism Authority is quite interesting because what we are really seeing is the amalgamation of private sector trained individuals who are basically proposing to take the marketing of tourism out of the hands of the public sector and put it in the hands of the private sector.

I now quote from the then Executive Vice President of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Authority, Mr. Noel Lynch, at a speech delivered on December 17, 1999 – that is not too far away – only 15 months ago – where he said:

“I hate to be a prophet of doom and gloom or the bearer of bad news but things are not at all rosy in this industry and I personally fear that we are in for the roughest ride we have ever had.”

He went on to say quite a few things in this speech which was delivered then. He even talked about the creation of a public/private sector marketing company. Remember that he was the Executive Vice President of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Authority at the time. He is now the Minister of Tourism who has been instrumental in making a number of posts redundant, in shifting a number of people and in asking people to accept voluntary ...

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: On a point of order. I just wish for the benefit of this Chamber that the document which the Honourable Senator has quoted from would become a document of this Chamber so that other Senators could refer to it or to see exactly what he is quoting from. As far as I am aware I do not know what public document it may be or if it has indeed been lodged with this Chamber.

On the point of redundancy in the tourism sector by the Minister, I am asking him to be more specific because I am not aware of the Minister having made anybody redundant since he took up office.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: On a point of order.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: There cannot be a point of order on a point of order. What I would advise Senator Mascoll to do is to tell us the document he is reading from so that we can make a decision.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Would you please, for the benefit of Hansard, tell us the document you are reading from.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I am reading from a speech which was delivered by the then Executive Vice President of the Barbados Hotel and Tourism Authority.

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Please, you have to tell us the date and time.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I have already stated that. It is December 17, 1999.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, it goes further. I am now quoting from Minutes of the Barbados Tourism Authority. Do you want the time and date too? It is December 16, 2000. It is from a meeting at which the Barbados Tourism Authority is supposed to change...

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of elucidation. The Honourable Senator is reading from the Minutes of a corporation. Is it parliamentary to quote from a document when it is not a public document? I am not sure, so I am just seeking your guidance on this point.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I would rule that the Honourable Senator will have to make the document a document of the Senate so that it may be made available to all Honourable Senators who would want to look at it. Please continue.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I anticipated this kind of interruption because my speech has taken a different path. 3.40 p.m.

I am now going to introduce the Minutes and they can become documents of the Senate. As I said, it was the Board of Directors Meeting of the BTA on December 19, 2000. This is a proposal to create a Barbados tourism company, a joint private/public sector organisation, and there were all kinds of proposals to remove all kinds of people in the BTA and replace them by foreign workers.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. It seems to me that in light of his most recent disclosure, the Honourable Member needs to correct the misleading statement which he earlier made that it was a Minister who had taken the initiative to do the same thing. It cannot be one and the same. He said earlier that a Minister had taken initiatives to replace persons, to lay off persons, to transfer persons, and now he is quoting from the Minutes of the Board of Directors of the Barbados Tourism Authority.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: No point of order. I think that Members on this Side should use their opportunity, when they are speaking, to defend, explain or comment on whatever the Honourable Member said. I am going to restrict the number of interventions being made. Thank you.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, what is being proposed at the Barbados Tourism Authority is a company to replace the Barbados Tourism Authority and there have been several posts that have been made redundant. This organisation is supposed to be established by April 1st of this year, but it has a number of interesting things in it. It is supposed to be funded almost fully by Government. Right now the budget given to BTA is \$45.3 million. In the first year, the BHTA is expected to make a contribution of \$4 million. The Tourism Development Corporation is expected to make a contribution of \$1 million, so that out of a \$50 million budget the people of Barbados are going to make a contribution of \$45 million.

What is interesting also about this is that this entity is proposing to take tourism policy away from the Minister of Tourism. This entity would become the main engine of formulating policy in tourism in Barbados. That is amazing but it gets a little deeper than that. The contribution of \$4 million to be paid by the BHTA really would come in the form of a proposal to Government. The cash contribution would be based on a proposed one to two dollars per night room levy for hotels with an alternative mechanism established for the villa sector.

So here it is that the BHTA is proposing to contribute \$4 million but what is happening is that it is asking Government to impose a levy of between one to two dollars per night on a hotel room. Remarkable again! Do you understand what is happening? It is supposed to be a going public/private sector entity where Government is contributing \$45 million out of \$50 million, and the \$4 million to be contributed by the BHTA would come in the form of a levy. It means therefore that Government is contributing all of the funding to this new organisation called the Barbados Tourism Company, but private sector individuals would be directors of this new entity. I find this most amazing because this is precisely the route that took down an administration.

You have a situation here now in which this Government, having put a Board in place, is now seeking to take away policy from Government and establish a separate company that would formulate tourism policy in Barbados. Do you know what is uncomfortable about that? The proposal to establish the Barbados Tourism Company came in the form of a report, a consultancy done by the current chairman of the BTA in 1997 where he recommended the establishment of the Barbados Tourism Company.

In 1997 the now Minister of Tourism would have been the executive vice president of the BHTA. So these are two private sector groomed individuals who now happen to be in charge of a public sector entity which they are hoping to change into a joint private-public sector corporation to market Barbados. As we speak, when you look at the composition, they are partners in profit. When you look at the composition of Almond Beach, a hotel, and what is happening there and the personnel who dominate and direct the affairs there is almost a mirror image when you look at who are in charge of the arms of the BTA.

You have a situation in which an attempt to undermine the marketing process in Barbados that failed in the early nineties has now surfaced again. What has happened is that you have individuals who apparently are clothed in public sector garments with a private sector mission to take over once again the marketing of Barbados' tourism product. It was a failed attempt that reached so far that it caused the demise of an administration in the early nineties, but now the attempt is veiled in such a way that the real players appear to be public sector players but they are private sector individuals, fully groomed.

Tourism, as we speak, is under severe pressure in Barbados. The average taximan is being denied rights to ply his trade. We have seen excess delivery of taxis to individuals. We have seen an abundance of BT buses which go directly into the Harbour and take out the cruise ship passengers, denying the average small man the right and the opportunity to ply his trade.

It gets deeper. The so-called GEMS Project that was supposed to be a saviour for small hoteliers and was designed to do precisely that after the individual projects would have failed under the Barbados Development Bank, they came together with the expectation that they could better manage the affairs of small properties in the interest of those individuals and then bring those properties to such a state that they could have been sold back to the individuals after some point in time. Now, what we are seeing is an attempt to sell those properties to foreign investors.

If tourism is doing so well, Mr. Deputy President, and if we were seeking to enfranchise the small man in Barbados who owns hotels, why is it that the GEMS Project should now be sold to foreign investors? I thought that that project was supposed to be a flagship project that could demonstrate that the Government in collaboration with small business people could so design a model to get them out of difficulty and also to provide a long-term interest for them so that they can have a horizon that extends beyond two or three years.

The GEMS Project was supposed to be a sustainable small hotel project designed to set an example that would allow small people to participate in the economic affairs of

Barbados; but that is not happening. The Government has guaranteed loans to the magnitude of \$90 million to the GEMS Project. They have taken \$10 million for the Public Enterprise Investment Fund and given the GEMS Project so that when you sum it all up \$100 million would have been put into that project and the players in that project, the shareholders, have not been allowed even after four years to see whether or not the project would be a success, or whether they can truly benefit from something called the GEMS.
3.50 p.m.

We were given all kinds of run-around in this Chamber a couple of months ago, in a debate on the same GEMS. We were told that everything is working smoothly, that there is all kinds of profitability because the levels are up to the hilt, that the yield on the investment was remarkable and that individuals should be allowed to participate in the process.

Mr. Deputy President, we know better because we were also told that there were major opportunities available for small people to participate in the shareholding of the Barbados National Bank. We were told that they could participate in the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, but what we were not told was that those investments are not what they appear to be. Therefore, it explains why the amounts put on the market were under-subscribed because when you investigate the balance sheets of both the Barbados National Bank and the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, you come to the reality that the Barbados National Bank's profit is only artificial and not real. Sir, the same thing happens with the GEMS.

Where are we going in Barbados? Whom are we providing for? Every initiative that appears to be available to the small man is being sold. Every initiative that appears to be available to the small man is being made available to other people rather than to the small man. The economic growth and the extended period of growth that we are hearing about is only talk, because it has not really come down to the average individual in Barbados. It has not benefited the average person. The average public sector worker in here cannot boast of being any better off than he or she was six or seven years ago, because the Prices and Incomes Protocol has served to be a lid on their capacity to have a reasonable increase in salary, while prices continue to skyrocket. No public sector worker can say that he or she can have access to a reasonable piece of land and house, and yet we talk about productivity gains.

This Government has facilitated the purchase of land by making adjustments to property transfer taxes, by making adjustments to land taxes to accommodate foreign investors. This Government has so designed its property transfer tax that it is now in the interest of a foreign seller and buyer of land and property in Barbados. Sir, what we are seeing is economics gone mad, economics that appear to be in the

interest of the average small person not being in his or her interest.

Sir, let me look at the expenditure side of the Estimates. We should talk about the wastage in Government since 1994 and understand what has happened to the public sector of Barbados. We have wasted \$30 million at Greenland. This discussion about IADB that has recently surfaced is not a simple question of being more developed or that your per capita income has now excluded you. The absolute mismanagement of Greenland has been a major sore point for those in charge of IADB, because Greenland is an IADB funded project and the fact that we have taken the funds and mismanaged them so badly is, in fact, what is giving rise to the concerns of the IADB for Barbados. It is not a simple question of per capita income. The South Coast Sewerage Project, where we wasted a further \$10 million to \$15 million, is another reason why IADB has cause for concern in the way Barbados is managing its funds which it borrows.

Sir, it does not stop there....

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. He mentions Greenland in relation to IADB, but Greenland was not funded by IADB. The South Coast Project was funded by the IADB but the Greenland Project was not funded by the IADB.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, almost every project that is funded by an international organisation, the Government, whether it be the Barbados Government, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago or Guyana, puts the money in first.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Are you saying that this project has been funded by the IADB.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Yes, Sir, that is what I am saying.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Barker is saying that it is not so, that you are misleading the Honourable Chamber.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, I do not care about Senator Barker.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Member you have to care about this Chamber, and you cannot make false points. If an Honourable Member says that you are misleading the Chamber with false information, you should correct that information, please.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, the Greenland project is funded by the IADB, full stop.

Sir, the VAT offices that are being built at Warrens are another waste of funds. Would you believe that the National Housing Corporation raised \$50 million in bonds a few years ago to build low income houses? It was then decided, rather than building low-income houses to build offices at Warrens, then take the rents, accumulate them over time, and eventually build low income houses for Barbadians. We have wasted another \$10 million to \$15 million on building offices at Warrens. There is more wastage at the National Housing Corporation on Country Road, a building that was under construction for almost four years and not one window can be seen.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. Deputy President, on a point of order. I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member, but he is misleading the Chamber when he asserts that the complex at Warrens is being built by IADB for National Housing Corporation. There is a consortium of financiers, including Barbados Mutual and National Insurance Department *et cetera*, who are providing the funds.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, again the point is that the money is being wasted. I do not have to worry about if it is National Housing Corporation's money, because they do not have money. It is the Government's project because National Housing Corporation is an entity. It is only a department within Government.

Sir, there is \$10 million for the South Coast Sewerage Project, \$10 million for the VAT office, \$30 million at Greenland, money all over the place.

Mr. Deputy President, this Government has wasted almost \$100 million since 1994, and do you know the civil servants cannot get a proper increase in salary because of the Prices and Incomes Protocol? Do you know that the civil servants have been promised so-called productivity gains and not one measure has been provided in the public service as relates to productivity measurement? Sir, it makes a mockery of productivity allowances when you cannot measure productivity. You might as well go back to the old system of giving everybody an increment. Yet, you are telling the public servants that they have to justify an increase based on productivity gains, and there is a productivity office which cannot measure productivity.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: The policemen are being fooled. When I check the Estimates I do not see any major changes in the allocations for policemen, as it relates to wages and salaries. When I check the Estimates I do not see any major changes for nurses. The Government does not pretend to provide any major benefit to public sector workers, and public sector workers are the ones who are suffering.

Let me explain why they are suffering. It is because this so-called boom is concentrated in the hands of a few cows. Sir, there is a boom but only certain cows are eating the grass that is growing. I have not seen one black cow eating the grass around Barbados. Only white cows are getting the opportunity to eat grass. All the pastures of the black cows are barren. There is not one ounce of grass on the pasture.

Mr. Deputy President, let me look at the public sector worker who is earning beyond \$2000 a month. A public sector worker earning beyond \$2000 finds himself in a position where he has to pay taxes on \$500. Every time he spends money he has to pay 15 percent in VAT. He hardly has anything to save and he is never in a position where he can really look to acquire land and property. What the Government did recently in reducing the savings rate further compounds the problem because we were told two years ago that the reason for increasing the savings rate was to allow Barbadians to save more. Now, the Government has reduced the savings rate so, therefore, public sector workers are even worse off because they can no longer put a deposit on a commercial bank with the expectation of getting 4.5 percent because it has been reduced to 4 percent by this administration.

How come all of a sudden it does not make any difference whether or not a public sector or private sector worker saves, when only two years ago we were told that we had to save because we were consuming too much, that we wanted to provide the average Barbadian with an opportunity to become enfranchised?

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: There is no encouragement to save because the Government has reduced the savings rate so we have a situation where, initially, we were being encouraged to save but now the interest rate has been lowered, but in whose interest?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there has been a boom in Barbados but for whom? Who has experienced all the benefit of the boom? The people on the west coast and south coast have experienced the boom, but has the average Barbadian enjoyed any of the benefits of the so-called boom? Sir, I now turn attention to the manufacturing sector. It is unfortunate that I have been limited in this debate to two hours. It is highly unfortunate because I have not yet pushed my second gear yet.

4.05 p.m.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Sir, the number of things that I have to deal with in this debate I cannot even begin to talk about.

The Manufacturing sector of Barbados is under severe threat from many sources. There is over taxation; there is threat of globalisation and liberalisation; there is the high cost of production and overall manufacturers in Barbados are experiencing severe conditions where every other week we are being told that hundreds of people are on the breadline.

It is a fact and the most recent casualties have been concentrated in the North of the island. We cannot continue to boast that there is a bright future for Barbados when all of the examples are there. There was a recent speech delivered by the Executive Director at Sandy Lane Hotel who outlined in detail all of the problems that the business community is experiencing in Barbados. It was not Senator Clyde Mascoll, it was a respected heavyweight in the business community who talked about over taxation; who talked about high crime; who talked about the health system; who talked about people not wanting to work and who talked about the levels of productivity. It was an eye-opener because the Director at Sandy Lane Hotel, Mr. Richard Williams, in his speech fully detailed the circumstances under which businessmen are operating in Barbados.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: It was two weeks ago, before the opening of the hotel when he made those remarks.

Sir, you have other executives, people in charge of businesses in Barbados, saying that Barbados is too high cost. The reason given by the man in charge of Atlanta is that Barbados was no longer competitive. There was a recent article over the weekend by Charles Harding on the manufacturing sector in the *Advocate*. Unfortunately, the *Advocate* got it wrong because when you turned to Page 19 expecting that the article would be continued, it started from the beginning and you never got the full substance of what he was saying. He was basically suggesting that Barbados is no longer competitive in the manufacturing sector. Sir, that is true.

Sir, it does not make sense trying to lie. We are no longer competitive in the traditional areas of manufacturing in Barbados. These Estimates in no way provide for that. Clothing, garments, foods, furniture and chemicals are the traditional areas of manufacturing. We have been losing a lot of our furniture companies every other month. We have a situation where the major so-called manufacturer of furniture imports and simply assembles. Sir, Workbench Furniture imports its parts and assembles. It does not manufacture furniture. It assembles the furniture and according to the colour that you wish. Workbench Furniture is not a major manufacturer of furniture. It is simply an assembly plant.

We have lost three or four major furniture companies in Barbados over the last year. You can ask Courts or

Cave Shepherd? By the way, Mr. Deputy President, is it known to Barbadians that Cave Shepherd has been sold to a foreign concern? Sir, Cave Shepherd has sold its interest to a foreign concern.

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: I do not understand the Estimates, Mr. Deputy President. What purpose are these Estimates serving if they do not address the current problems in the Barbados economy? If Government does not intend to facilitate the private sector, what purpose are these figures in this document serving when there are so many problems around Barbados?

Sir, Housing: this Government has failed miserably in the provision of housing over the last six years. The Government is in a position where it looks now for every nook and cranny to put a house. Do you understand how inefficient that is, Mr. Deputy President? Sir, you are now looking for every acre or half acre of land to put a house on and the costs associated with doing that is horrendous.

Sir, what we need in Barbados are large projects where you can get economies of scale. If you are going to be building two or three houses in a corner so as to influence the outcome of an election...

Asides.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: If you are going to be doing that, what really are you doing? When you look around constituencies and there is a little space available, the Government goes in and builds three or four houses. Sir, these houses are then occupied by four families that, obviously, have to be Barbados Labour Party supporters to get the houses in the first place, so you can understand the political dynamics.

No non Barbados Labour Party supporter would be entitled to a house unless it is a fire victim.

Asides.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, on a point of order. That pre-supposes improper motives of the Government. The Government is the Government of all the people of Barbados. Therefore, it looks after the needs of all the people in Barbados, not based on any Party affiliation, Mr. President.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, let me, therefore, pull this discussion together by reflecting on the framework that I outlined at the start. Let me just bring it back to the initial framework that I outlined.

Sir, one, there is over taxation in Barbados. I do not have to prove it. I have just quoted extensively the Prime Minister of Barbados where he said that the choice would be between a bull pistle and a dog hunter. It does not take much to know that. The business community is saying it; the manufacturers are saying it; the hoteliers are saying it; the agriculturists are saying it; the bankers are saying it and the people of Barbados are saying that taxation in Barbados is much too high. It is a fact and there is no need to dispute that.

Free trade: What we are experiencing in Barbados is an environment which is going towards trade liberalisation and globalisation. In 1994, the then Opposition Leader said that free trade is not something that the BLP fundamentally agreed with. How do you reach that position in 1994 and then six years later you are so accommodating to the World Trade Organization arrangements, to the notion of free trade and globalization? And I have quoted the Prime Minister on that. But I do not see any real attempt in this Estimates debate to deal with those issues. What has happened in recent times is that we borrowed \$200 000 000 in April 1999 to assist with the coping of the effects of trade liberalization and globalization.

4.15 p.m

That is what was said in the resolution of the loan that came for \$200 000 000 in 1999, and I have not seen any evidence on the part of the Government in terms of distributing any of those funds to assist with the effects of globalization. I have not seen any package designed to help the manufacturers. I have not seen any package designed to help tourism or the international business sector. Where are the funds? We recently borrowed \$150 000 000 more, to do what? To prop up the Foreign Reserves in Barbados? But this Government, under the Leadership of the Prime Minister, has admitted that it is not in tune with the tenets of free trade but has now slavishly adopted them.

This Government, as I said earlier, is against an Income and Protocol, as stated by the then Opposition Leader, but has found it fit over the last six years to sign onto three different Protocols, and yet we have not seen any benefits going to the average worker in Barbados.

So who has benefitted from the boom? Is it the Private Sector? It certainly has been the Government in the form of taxation, but it certainly is not the average individual in Barbados. And the group that is particularly affected by this period is the public sector workers of Barbados and more importantly, the public sector workers who earn between \$2,000 to \$4,000 per month. It is that group that is affected — that low middle-income group because they are not in a position to access any of the real assets of Barbados that we all aspire to own.

Then we have a situation in which when this Government came to power it would do something to

increase manufacturing by reducing costs, particularly energy costs. That has not been done, and what we have seen is an increase in fuel costs, an increase in interest rates, an increase in taxation and an overall increase in the cost of production to the business community.

This Government is also the one which said that it is proposing to build an employment strategy around the creation of an international business sector. The present Opposition Leader on the Other Side was the Minister of the International Business Sector. He was demoted to higher office, he now holds the Ministry of Health. So, for lack of performance in the Ministry of International Business Sector he has been, in fact, promoted to a much larger Ministry, at the time the Ministry of International Business only had a budget of about \$5 000 000. He is now the presiding officer. In fact, he is the Minister of a Ministry with hundreds of millions of dollars, but there is no evidence that the international business community has developed.

In fact, on the contrary, there has been a substantial dip – and do not tell me anything about registered International Business Communities (IBC's), I do not want to hear about it. IBC's and off-shore banks are really the domain of the rich who make real estate available for these companies, but they do not employ anybody for one – very few people and they are not major in their contributions to foreign exchange. They are over-rated, overstated to the economy, they are certainly not a major focus for this administration. And do not continue to blame the OECD. The OECD is doing foolishness, but the demise of the International Business Sector with Caribbean Data Services (CDS), the PRT's and their move, preceded the OECD measures.

So, it is hard to really zero in on what really was the strategy of this Administration as it relates to the future of Barbados. Tourism is in shambles, manufacturing – no more, sugar is debatable. When the DLP said that you should be closing Bulkeley Sugar Factory the political argument is that you cannot close Bulkeley's because it lies in the center of a BLP constituency...

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy President. I do not recall any argument on maintaining Bulkeley's being opened based on the fact that it resided in the center of a BLP constituency. In fact, if you look at the landscape, all of the sugar factories in Barbados virtually lie in the center of BLP's constituencies, and the reality is that if we had closed one of the sugar factories at that point in time, we would not have met our projected targets.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Mr. Deputy President, the representative for the constituency of St. George South

strenuously argued at the time for the retention of Bulkeley on political grounds, because all the evidence suggested that Bulkeley should have been closed. It is now the case that the same individual understands the need to have one factory but it must be located in St. George. At the time of the debate the only reason that was given for the retention of Bulkeley was that it was the bread and basket of St. George South, but five years after there is now an appreciation that the economic situation in the sugar industry cannot be sustained on the present structure. So you see how politics has once again interfered in the delivery of proper management of the economy? We now seem to be pliable to that understanding that the Bulkeley situation was a situation that should have been dealt with long ago, so even the sugar industry is in shambles.

The off-shore sector – what is there about the Barbados economy, as I speak, that enhances its capacity to earn foreign exchange? What is there that suggests that we have a guaranteed future? What is there in the Estimates that will suggest that we have a particular strategy and emphasis? We are simply running on borrowed time and money.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: You are simply running out of time, so you have just two minutes to conclude your arguments.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. It is sad that every time that I am biting at the bit I have to put my knees on the horse and slow it down.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: That shows that you are managing your horse badly, because you were told you had one hour more and it is fast approaching that time.

SENATOR C. A. MASCOLL: That shows, Mr. Deputy President, that I have the capacity to ride. I never managed that badly.

On that score, Mr. Deputy President, it has been my pleasure to deliver on the Estimates debate and I look forward to the responses from the Other Side.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you.

SENATOR THE HON. Dame PATRICIA SYMMONDS: Thank you, Mr. Deputy President. The Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs deserves the highest praise for these Estimates. He is a measured visionary and is practical in his approach to financial planning and he has again, ensured that the proposed expenditure has been fairly and appropriately allocated.

Where the OECD is concerned, he has boldly grasped the mantle and has provided through the Community Development Division, the opportunity and the vision for

people at community level – and that is important – to become computer literate.

Education, as is customary, has been allocated a high proportion of the Budget, and I wish to look at a number of areas, the first being education.

With regard to Education, I wish to congratulate the Minister of Education. She has worked hard, she continues to work very hard and she has a clear knowledge of where she is going and presents a very clear picture.

Mr. Deputy President, I have more than once in this Honourable Chamber, expressed my support for the EduTech Project which has enormous potential for broadening our children's ideas and views of the world. It is a powerful tool which will aid in student-centered education.

In the area of curriculum reform, I am delighted that the Ministry is retaining those traditional methodologies which have proved to be productive and successful in classroom teaching. Hence, I welcome her saying that the Ministry of Education will be returning to basics through the inclusion of such things as dictation and the reading of books like AESOP FABLES – books which I have always contended and feel too, when I was in the classroom, that no child should leave school without having being exposed to AESOP FABLES.

I understand, Mr. Deputy President, that children are reading again. I am glad to hear this for one needs to be literate in order to be computer literate. For example, the 'help menu' is there, but one has to be able to read and follow instructions. Further, books – and as all Honourable Senators know – stimulate the imagination. But it will be a matter not only of reading, but what is being read. As John Ruskin has so quickly put it "All books are divisible into two classes, the books of the hour and the books of all times."

To choose classics and good books that will elevate and entertain children will need guidance and therefore it is incumbent on teachers to recommend good books and those books that have accompanying CD's and audio-tapes.

Mr. Deputy President, the secondary schools have well set up libraries, but a number of primary schools, albeit trying to develop libraries, still have only book corners. I am aware, however, that the aim is to have not only books, but other sources of information such as computers and CD-ROMs.

Recently, the St. Stephens' School opened a library – I know that Senator Miss C. Y. Forde attended and was very much in praises of it – and that school is to be congratulated on the recent opening of a library.

I am hoping, however, that whenever it is viable that every primary school in this island will have a librarian.

Most importantly, the Ministry's plan is to take suitable information from the general Internet and make that information available to the students. In other words, put up a wall to block out certain sites which would have offensive or harmful information for children. I would like to stress that that is the responsibility of parents and guardians as well, to monitor what their children are seeing on the computer or the Internet.

I have also observed and I am very happy about this, that the teaching of literature up to level 5 will be compulsory. It is a core curriculum subject and most desirable for several reasons.

Mr. Deputy President, when English Literature was first offered at British Universities in the 1890's – it sounds long ago but it is still very relevant today for us and in the Caribbean – the two reasons why it was done throughout the region was to promote the national literary culture and to keep moral values and overcome narrow prejudices, and it is still applicable to Barbados and the Caribbean as well.

There has always been a strong tendency to see literature as a civilizing and ethical influence. It can promote such qualities as tolerance, compassion, understanding and appreciation of ethics and aesthetics, a love for the richness, variety and beauty of our language. It can help to enrich one's vocabulary and mastery of standard English. Literature can also help to develop the individual by exposing the student to varied experiences.

Happily, in the reformed curriculum there will also be an emphasis on oracy in the primary and secondary schools, so that one can leave school being able to communicate with facility and to switch with ease from one register to another as the situation demands.

In returning to the question of basics, I should like to urge what will be a most beneficial step and one which stood my generation and many others after in good stead, that is the return, specifically, to the teaching of parsing and analysis. It will help in the mastery of grammar immeasurably. For instance, it will help students and adults to know what a preposition is and that it takes an object, it governs a noun or pronoun, the difference between an adjective and an adverb and moreover, it will help with sentence structure which I find to be the general weakness.

Now, I should like to offer a few words of caution about acceleration or what is called here 'flexible transfer'. This question of acceleration can be a very good measure for the gifted and the gifted must be given attention, just as slow learners are given much attention, but there may be, in some

instances, as has been proven in some other countries, where acceleration in the long run has not been the best thing for a student. Therefore I think that parents and teachers must very carefully consider at what age the individual should enter secondary school and at what pace he/she should go. The child must be ready, not only academically but also emotionally.

Now, I wish to turn to Social Transformation, specifically to the Bureau of Gender Affairs, but before doing so, again I applaud the decision to provide – I think it is \$1 000 000 for community technology programmes in which the Ministry of Social Transformation will be involved, and which I consider to be an admirable innovation.

The Ministry of Social Transformation is focusing on self-empowerment where feasible and community oriented activities which will help to compliment the development of the individual, and also starting training programmes and employment-generating activities which will lead to greater self-esteem.

The sum of \$74 896 173 has been provided for the Ministry to carry out its social programme, which is aimed primarily at the poor, the disadvantaged and the disabled. This allocation will help to release them from the poverty trap. It will assist the most vulnerable groups: children, the poor, the elderly and it will support and facilitate a wider range of gender issues.

4.35 p.m.

The Bureau of Gender Affairs, as it will now be called, presents a challenge. It will need persistence, it will need 'stickability' and its establishment recognises the need to pay attention, not only to women's concerns but to men's concerns as well. At the same time, I am sure that it will see that women's rights are not eroded and that they are not subsumed under other concerns.

I think too, that it will encourage partnership between the two genders and it should address issues that challenge dual functions for the good of the country, the community and the family. And it ought, if properly directed to show the similarity of difficulties and gender experiences, such things as having to look after children and looking at education opportunities.

I think too, it will improve employment practices, the different ways in which men and women operate and how women are perceived in the workplace. Then there ought to be dialogue between the two genders about such problems as sexual harassment. I understand that legislation is coming about that and a draft has been received by the social partners.

Very important assumptions about gender are being turned on their heads. Although women are still expected to

be nurturing, to be the care givers, to be tender, soft-spoken and be feminine, there is now an assertiveness, a competence and an ability to lead. Gender roles, in other words are in a state of change, albeit slowly.

Men and women have been socialised differently and men and women are being socialised differently again and those responsible for the Boards and Councils should be able to perceive this and be sensitive to the difference and additional characteristics. Therefore, this is a welcome challenge and again proof of a Government's farsightedness.

Sir, now I turn to Sport. The National Sports Council, it is interesting to note, will receive \$3.4 million to provide sporting facilities and it is the largest of its kind and this is in addition to normal expenditure. The record of the National Sports Council in the construction of pavilions and the lighting of hard courts and playing fields, is very impressive.

Between the year 2001 and 2002 there are plans to construct new pavilions at Harrow, Briar Hall, Hoytes Village and Valley. In addition, new courts will be constructed in Christ Church, St. Philip, St. George and St. Peter. Hard courts are going to be resurfaced at Valerie, Folkestone and, existing playing fields will be upgraded. There will also be lighting of playing fields at Speightstown and Bayville. There will be construction of sporting facilities at the National Stadium for judo, boxing and gymnastics.

The National Sports Council will also continue to organise programmes and seminars. Training programs for PE (physical education) teachers, officials from community clubs and coaches. They will continue to work closely with the Barbados Tourism Authority in order to encourage sports tourism, of which they recognise the value.

Sir, coaching was conducted in the year 2000-2001 in fifteen disciplines: Athletics, badminton, basketball, body building, boxing, chess, cricket, cycling, football, hockey, netball, road tennis, swimming, table tennis and volleyball. I observe that there is still no lawn tennis coach, and I think it is regrettable.

I understand too that there is a need for more cricket coaches, especially now that there seems to be a revival of interest in cricket, possibly because we seem to be rising again and doing well again in cricket – but recently there has been more interest in cricket. There are forty-four full-time and part-time coaches, conducting nine hundred and sixty-five coaching hours. The council continues its training programmes for members of staff at all levels.

Now both the National Sports Council and the Community Development Division are doing a fine job and they complement each other. They are however, I think, still too many people in this island who do not understand or

know enough about sport and do not appreciate its value. In this regard, I think there needs to be a public awareness programme or one that is more consistent, not only when we are doing very well at cricket, not only when we do well at the Olympics but generally.

Sir, I wish to say something now about the environment. It has been said that in a very real sense, we do not inherit the earth, we borrowed it from our children, and we do not inherit this earth from our forefathers but we borrowed it from our children. Of course, this statement clearly points to the need to protect the earth and its resources for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations.

In recognition of this, the Government is in the process of spending a large sum, over a ten-year period, in projects which are designed to preserve and protect our environment. Such projects include marine protection projects, mapping the north and east coasts to determine the marine resources and the threats to its preservation and also ways of preserving the reefs and coastlines. When it comes to reefs and general marine protection, the reef system surrounding Barbados, as I think we all know, is of extreme importance. 4.45 p.m.

It protects our coastline from the worst effects of wave action and also provides a habitat for many species of marine flora and fauna. This is not only important for bio-diversity. The fishing industry is, of course, both a source of protein for many households and hotels and provides a livelihood for several hundred men and women.

The development of photovoltaic energy supply is another important responsibility of the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources. Given Barbados' round system and high fuel cost, the Government has decided that we must try to exploit energy from the sun as a replacement for fossil fuel. Hence, a project is ongoing to power the lighting at Harrison's Cave entirely by solar energy.

Other experiments, and this source and application of photovoltaic energy, are also ongoing. These are led by Professor, the Honourable Oliver Headley, who heads the relevant department at the University of the West Indies. He has built solar batteries, solar ovens, solar airconditioners, solar ice makers and other equipment.

One of the objectives of the Ministry of the Environment, Energy and Natural Resources is the establishment of a programme of environmental education for schools, to ensure that school children are sensitized to environmental issues. It is always so important to see that young people are being sensitized to these things. It is not

always easy to change the attitudes of adults but it is always vital that programmes like this and education be carried to the schools.

Significantly, I am pleased to say that 12 schools are involved in the photovoltaic programme. In May, 2000, the following secondary schools attended a workshop on photovoltaic energy and have since then received solar stills which operate using photovoltaic technology. The schools are: Alexandra Secondary School, Coleridge and Parry School, the Combermere School, the Deighton Griffith Secondary School, Ellerslie Secondary School, the Foundation School, Harrison's College, Louis Lynch Secondary School, Queen's College, the Seventh Day Adventist School, the St. Michael School – I hope no one detects any change of pride in my voice – and the St. Lucy Secondary School.

The aim of this project ultimately is to equip all secondary schools with solar stills. Besides the schools, the Ministry will focus on increasing public awareness on environmental themes through magazines, brochures, posters and the development of the sustainable development environmental video series. The aim of this is to educate the public to the importance of environmental protection and by so doing to try to effect attitudinal change.

It is also proposed that in this year there will be eight clean up campaigns to highlight the effects of illegal dumping. The problem of litter, I believe, is linked with national pride and patriotism. I think that one can only persevere and not have these sorts of *ad hoc* awareness programmes but rather be persistent and consistent because it is still a problem that needs to be addressed.

Environmental lectures at schools will be organized and awareness campaigns will be launched in communities. There is the summer camp which is approaching its fourth year of operation, which is very popular with the children. There is also the beautifying of Barbados where there are plans to beautify the roundabouts and the highways leading to these roundabouts and several anti-littering and pro-environment competitions have been held in both the primary and secondary schools.

In connection with the environment, I would like to say something briefly about noise pollution, which I do not think people pay enough attention to. Even in homes where children play the television or stereo so loudly – I am sure that Senator Rickinson would support me on this – it will affect their hearing if it has not already. I have heard doctors saying that children of this generation will be hard of hearing precisely because of this noise pollution. This is a problem of which both individuals and businesses are guilty.

There is the problem of loud music from home and car stereos, from ZR vans and the frequent fetes in residential areas without any consideration not only for older

people and senior citizens but even for infants and people who find it difficult to sleep. Even for sheer enjoyment sometimes they are so loud you cannot even hear your own television set. Then there is the leaving out of kites with loud buzzes for several days. Sometimes it is so irritating that you find it difficult to sleep.

Before there can be a solution, before there can even be talk about legislation, it will have to be determined what noise levels are fair and acceptable in communities, be they residential or industrial, and then the equipment for measuring these levels by objective and not subjective standards, should be given to the Environmental Engineering Division.

Mr. Deputy President, it is in these areas which I particularly wanted to make my contribution. Again, I want to congratulate the Minister of Finance for an excellent presentation and allocation of expenditure.

I wholeheartedly support this Bill. I am much obliged to you, Mr. Deputy President. Thank you very much.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended for 20 minutes and reconvene at 5.20 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 5.20 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to. Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
4.55 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I rise to make my contribution to the Appropriation Bill, 2001. I do have several concerns but today primarily I will focus on the health care system with special emphasis on health care policy. I am encouraged that it is reported that the Prime Minister plans to acquire equipment needed for the Hospital in one package. I am also encouraged that the Leader of Government Business confirmed that they were in the process of acquiring such equipment. It was also reported that the Prime Minister said the time has come when substantial money has to be spent on the expansion of the QEH. However, Mr. President, what has not been reported is the Government's health care policy and, therefore, I think that I can make the assumption that the Government is prepared to spend millions of dollars on equipment and expansion of the health care industry, without a comprehensive health care policy of *ad hoc* programmes. That is my view.

This approach to health care is a bottomless pit capable of sucking in unlimited resources without parallel returns, which simultaneously causes the consumers and users of the health care system to be critical of the system itself and, in turn, causes the Government to say how much money they are putting into the health care system. In my humble opinion, it is not how much money that we put into the system but it is how that money is utilized as to whether or not you will get the returns that are necessary.

Regrettably, it is my view that the programme and subprogrammes that call for \$195 million in the Appropriation Bill and are allocated in their Estimates is a mix that does not lend itself to adequate health care delivery to the people of Barbados. Today, I would like to give my vision of what I feel should be a health care policy. I would like to do this so that I can try to reverse the yearly trend that I am witnessing which has been supported by promises and promises and more promises, and we have had several promises today about the health care system.

Let us look at an example of the mix that I am talking about. Under Program 360 Primary Health Care, this comprises twelve subprogrammes: mainly Maternal and Child Health Care (Polyclinics), HIV/AIDS Control and Prevention, Dental Health Service, Nutrition, Environmental Health (Polyclinics), Environmental Sanitation, Environmental Engineering, South Coast Sewerage Project, Animal Control, Vector Control, Sanitation Service Authority and Solid Waste Project. This mix is neither fish nor fowl and does not lend itself to formulating the kind of health care policy to support people oriented services.

For example, the polyclinics should be designed to serve the people, but they should not be used to house units like environmental sanitation, food sampling, food quality control, the supervision of the *Aedes Aegypti* control. In other words, it should be people oriented so that everybody has an idea when they go to the polyclinic what they are going there for. Therefore you would be able to formulate the policy in keeping with the services offered. I can go on and give other examples but time will not permit that.

I would like to draw attention to subprogramme 375 – the Queen Elizabeth Hospital where, at this stage where \$100 million to \$200 million are allocated in the Estimates. Ninety seven million dollars were allocated last year. We are aware that there is a \$2 billion expansionary budget, but today we are debating just over \$1 billion. When one hears about a \$2 million tonic cure for the Hospital, from my perspective it appears to me that this is not any new money. There is no tonic there. It is a promise. I do understand and I heard the Leader of the House talk about the plans for the QEH, and I understand that the Government is prepared to raise millions of dollars for the tonic to give the Hospital the uplift, but if you are still talking about a tonic and the new

money is not there, it comes through to me that there is for the QEH \$102 million and the majority of that is for wages and salaries. It is not enough funds to implement the Haynes Commission.

It is my opinion that the recommendations of the Haynes Commission could be used as a benchmark, not only for the QEH, but for the formulation of a health care policy throughout the health care system. What we will need to do is to develop programmes in keeping with the health care service policy and have them funded so that we will be debating the actual money that we will be spending on this programme and not debating promises year after year.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member, but I think she is not giving an accurate picture of the situation regarding the Government, the QEH, and the Haynes Commission Report. From the very outset the Government made it clear that it would implement certain aspects of the Report, the ones that could be done on a short-term basis, and they have already been done. There have been improvements in personnel, in security and lighting *et cetera*. These are short-term measures. The longer measures will come with the setting up of the Board which will then institute a new policy. Otherwise, we would be putting new milk into old skins, or whatever the analogy is. So I do not think it is fair to say that.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, there is not one red cent in the Estimates to set up the Board or to carry the QEH forward. It is absolutely not there! There is no point saying that I am trying to mislead anyone. There are no funds there and there are many things that could be done to carry the QEH forward and turn it around that have not been done.

Mr. President, if indeed we are going to implement the Haynes recommendation, we need a proper program with specific funding over a period of time to reverse the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that reflects the medicine prescribed by the Haynes Report. We need funding for a changed management. We do not need to be debating funding for management in crisis which, in my opinion, I am doing today.

We cannot afford to have an acute hospital system that does not respond to the needs of the people in Barbados. I am saying this because for several years I have come in here and debated and said that the health care system has passed the point of diminishing returns and increasing costs, and it needs to be restructured in a major way.

I have been saying this year after year and we have been hearing promises. Today I have come to this August Chamber and I am going to put forward what I call a vision for the health care system and for health care policies.

Mr. President, the outline that I am going to put forward could become the basis of a formulation for a health care policy that drives the Barbados health care system. The system which I am going to speak about today is benchmarked with four foundation elements: a medicare service; a public health programme; an environmental programme and an island wide ambulance service.

I would like to emphasise that the mixture of these elements will formulate the basis of a people oriented health service system that is not encumbered with some of the mixes that I explained – like the sewerage project and sanitation.

Let me look at the medicare service. The medicare service which I envision, Mr. President, will be a model to provide medical care to the people of Barbados, and includes medical care provided at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, at the Psychiatric Hospital, at the Geriatric Hospital, the District Hospitals, Polyclinics and wherever medical care is provided for the people.
5.35 p.m.

Today, we heard about the upgrading of most of these facilities. We need to do research in order to ascertain whether or not we need a children's hospital or a diabetic hospital *et cetera*. We also need to experiment with expanding the role of the polyclinics with visiting nurses and doctors *et cetera*, in the provision of community care for persons who cannot visit the hospital. In other words, the polyclinics will be branded as a health care product for people, and the Queen Elizabeth Hospital will be able to play its role as an acute secondary and tertiary institution on a twenty-four-hour basis.

The expansion of the polyclinics is very important because we have heard the Leader of Government Business talking about some of his plans for the polyclinics, which also include work on HIV/AIDS which, I agree with him, is an epidemic that could wreck our economy if it is not attended to sooner or later.

These medical services would also include the Barbados Drug Service programme to provide drugs to persons.

The second foundation element is the public health programme. My health vision is about people, prevention and control. I am not asking for new things, I am taking what we have and putting them into different categories, which would be more manageable. The public health programme will deal with the control of communicable and other diseases. It will be primarily educational, promotional, and will be implemented by public health inspectors and nurses. This programme could work in collaboration with health agencies, professional organisations and non-

governmental organisations, in promoting and maintaining healthy lifestyles. In this respect most subventions or partnerships are required to help people accept the responsibility for their own health, the community health and family health.

There is a group of people who get subventions but there are not enough and if we are going to carry health forward we are going to have to use the non-governmental organisations and give them larger subventions to assist in developing the health care services for people of the country.

Sir, the third part is the health care policy and the environmental programme which will play an important role in the health care of the people. There are pollutants in the atmosphere that cause allergic reactions, respiratory problems and diseases, and the victims of these environmental diseases require a programme for prevention, maintenance and treatment of their ailments. This can be done by nurses and specially trained technicians.

Therefore, it is important to note the environmental programme will be directly related to the health services and not to be confused with the South Coast Sewerage Project, the Solid Waste Management, Sanitation Service Authority nor the Vector Control and Animal programme. Those programmes should be transferred to the Ministry of Environment, and they can work in collaboration with the Ministry of Health.

Fourthly, I would like to see the island's ambulance service organised in zones with a fleet of ambulances equipped with monitors and communication channels for contact and access with medical personnel who will be assigned to the ambulance. This service should operate in collaboration with the Fire Service and police department, which already have essential telecommunications and technological infrastructures.

Of course, one will have to negotiate with the various unions concerned about the setting up of such a service but that is a very important part of the people's health care service that is required.

I would like to see this health care system identified with a health care card. Everyone should be given a health care card to be presented when they go for health care. It will help us to monitor what is happening in health care, because we have some people who go to more than one doctor and because it is free of cost they skip from polyclinic to polyclinic and end up having more than one set of medicine. If they have a health card they cannot do this, because it will be computerised and you can follow exactly what people are doing, and look at their health status. In effect, it will help us to check on the use and abuse of the health care system and the cost of health care services.

Mr. President, the operating of such a health care system will provide a safety net for our people, so that they cannot fall through the cracks. It will also help to reduce the cost of health care since health care has been escalating each year. We have to change the situation and set it up in such a way so that it is responsive to the needs of the people.

Sir, in 1990 a study was done that showed that the daily bed cost of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is \$250, that was more than ten years ago and I am sure that it is much more than that now. If we have health care systems that are people oriented set up, you will be able to have nurses going into the community and it will not cost \$250 a day. In this respect we can pay someone to stay at home with our people.

It has been mentioned today that the elderly are being dumped at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Mr. President sometimes these families have no choice because they have to go to work, and there is nobody at home to leave with the elderly, who can be destructive at times. Since we do not have the health care systems set up to accommodate them, the only alternative is to take them to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, leave them there and suffer their conscience day after day that there was no alternative but to do that. We have to come to terms with the fact that we no longer have the extended family and we, therefore, have to set up systems in order to take care of our aging population.

Mr. President, I would like to say a few words on another matter. With regard to finance, Head 1 – the Restoration of the Public Service Emoluments on page 35. I would like to say that the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB) and the trade unions are very grateful that the eight percent has been restored and the last tranche is to be paid, and we are glad to put that matter to rest and close that chapter. Sir, Head 34 regarding the National Productivity Council. Sir, that came into being with the protocol. It is the view that it needs to be expanded and do more work than it is presently doing. It needs to try to change attitudes in the work place, to increase productivity and to reduce wastage. I am not sure how it is going to do this, but I think that it should be able to provide consultancy to people in the work place in order to help measure productivity since all agencies are not members of the Employers Confederation.

5.45 p.m.

Sir, I turn to page 118, Ministry of Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform, Subprogramme 626, which says that there is a consultant to draft labour laws. Senator Symmonds mentioned about the Sexual Harassment Bill and that a draft was received by the social partners and I am glad to hear about that. I would like to see it distributed to the trade union to start tripartite discussions very early, and I am particularly interested in this Sexual Harassment Bill because some of the females, who are heads of households, are asked to give sexual favours in order to keep their jobs.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I do not know about the males, but if males have to give sexual favours, I think that the Sexual Harassment Bill should also cover males. I can only speak from experience about the information that I am getting regarding some of the females, and we need to put a stop to this.

Sir, when I asked some of the other trade unions about it, they said that in the olden days in the crop season they used to have a lot of that, and they used to transfer them, but they did not realise that it was in the public service as well. Sir, it is in the public service. These people need their jobs and they are afraid to say anything. We need to see this Sexual Harassment Bill making a move forward to protect both our women and men who are sexually harassed. We need to be able to operate in a climate of freedom so that we can produce to our maximum and, if you are sexually harassed, you cannot do that.

There are two other Bills that we would like to see discussed, including the Occupational Health and Safety Bill. We keep hearing and talking about occupational illnesses *et cetera*, but we need to have some legislation on occupational health and safety. Whenever there is an accident or crisis people talk about it, then it dies down. We meet it every day in health, especially with the nurses who are working in high risk areas at the Psychiatric Hospital, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the Geriatric Hospital, when the people tend to get a little confused.

The Employment Rights Bill: Sir, we would like to see some movement on the Employment Rights Bill. We heard people talking a lot about that, and we hope that we can see the consultant who is employed to help draft the labour laws, making an effort to bring that Bill to Parliament.

Mr. President, on the matter of labour I would just like to say that there has been a question of overdue payment to workers, and the demonstrations which were held. I would like to say that we need to explain carefully our labour laws and how local and foreign businesses relate to trade unions in this country, Sir, they need to respect the worker. If a worker works for a sum of money, that worker should be paid. He should not be sent home without any money, and you should not have to go demonstrating in order to get your money. We need to do something about that.

Sir, on the question of pay, it is not only businesses. We have recently read about the prison officers not being paid. However, I am glad to see today that they would be receiving their salaries. Sir, these are things that we need to avoid. They are substitutes at the Geriatric Hospital who have not been paid for two and three months at a time. These employees get their electricity and telephone turned off and

sometimes they cannot send their children to school. Sir, these people have worked and have not been paid for the work that they have done. I would like to see the Government speed up the system which would reflect that persons have been employed and their salaries should be available at the end of four weeks and do not have to wait three or four months to receive their salaries.

Sir, late payment has a multiplying effect and it affects everyone. It affects the worker, children, family, and you cannot give of your best. Sir, if it is necessary to train the paying clerks, so be it. I think that we should make an attempt to train them or give them more staff if it is a matter of staff preparing the pay cheques in order to make them more efficient.

Mr. President, I would like to say a few words about the shortage of personnel in the police, nurse and fire service and their ability to carry out their tasks and responsibilities. I know that the Leader of Government Business said, in glowing terms, what they were trying to do regarding the nurses, but it has to go further than paying for overtime. Sir, only certain categories of nurses have been paid overtime. The Heads of the outlying institutions who are in charge of wards, like the St. Lucy District Hospital and the St. Philip District Hospital, sometimes have to do double shifts, but they are not being paid this bonus. Sir, only the staff nurses and the nursing assistants qualify for this bonus. They have forgotten that we have other people in the health care system who are doing double shifts, because some employees do not turn up for work and there is a man-power shortage in the health care system. Sir, I would like to see the same benefits extended to the substitutes.

Mr. President, I know that there is a lot of absenteeism and it was said by the Leader of Government Business. One has to think through why there should be absenteeism. If you have to manage a ward of 30 patients all night, it is impossible sometimes for you to get out of your bed to get to work the next morning or night. Sir, these employees are tired and people have social responsibilities as well. If you are overworked and burnt out, the reason for these employees being absent is that they just cannot make it. Sir, they have children and husbands to attend to; they have to attend to the house *et cetera* and they are just exhausted and cannot make it to work. Some of their families tell me that when their wives come home they just go and lie down and sleep until the next morning.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Sir, that is what happens when there is a shortage of personnel. Your body can take only so much.

I am very glad about the job analysis and reclassification and I hope that it will finish soon so that we

can know exactly how many people we need in order to do a good job and to allocate them accordingly.

Education: Sir, under Head 78, I would like to say a few words about specialist schools. I notice that the Ministry of Education has been given the largest allocation of \$239 million. However, the subvention to the Learning Centre is inadequate. It is being managed on a shoe string budget and they are unable to employ qualified teachers. I was asked to request an increased subvention for the Learning Centre, so that they can employ qualified teachers that are comparable with others.

5.55 p.m.

The Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic (SJPP) and the Government Training Board which are responsible for training artisans, need to expand their programmes, if we are going to meet the needs of the building society and we would not have to import so much labour.

Mr. President, I would like to talk about agriculture and the formulation of a land use policy. I have spoken about land taxation on several occasions. Today, I am focusing mainly on policy issues. I would like to call for a land use policy which should come out of public discussion in collaboration with agencies involved in land use.

I would like to see the Government come up with its own land use policy. I would like to see it discussed because the various people involved in land use have different interests. For example, agents who are interested in selling land would like to see the quickest turnover at the highest amount of money. Whereas, Barbadians who would like to buy land, would like to buy it at the lowest amount possible.

In addition, I have been told that there has been good agricultural land which has been put into building. I would like us to think carefully regarding the use of our land and at least keep some land to grow the minimum amount of food: vegetables, yams, sweet potatoes, *et cetera*, so that if we are cut off, we will be able to feed ourselves until we can get the amount of food that we need. I feel that if necessary, the Government should acquire the land and employ people or give it to people to work so that we maintain a minimum amount of food stuff to feed our population.

We keep hearing about mad cow disease. Why can't we have all of our own cattle and keep away from these sorts of diseases? We are hearing about foot and mouth disease now. Why can't we have our black belly sheep and supply our people with the food stuff that they need instead of having to rely on imported meat that has been in the cold storage for six months, sometimes one or two years that does not have any substance? I feel that if the Government has to subsidise

it, I do not know how they are going to do it in this new world order but, if they employ people to manage the land so that we can have the crops, maybe that is one way of doing it, that would be a hidden subsidy but we need to look at that very carefully.

On the question of land, when we talk about land we also have to talk about our properties, like the Paradise Beach Club which is lying idle. In my opinion, I think the Government should take it over. It is so vital a plant to little Barbados that we cannot afford to have such a property just laying idle for so many years.

Mr. President, there is land at Batts Rock and the Government could take that over and start building on it and developing it and selling it. Batts Rock is one of the best beaches in Barbados and if we are into tourism and into renting of villas, *et cetera*, the Government will not lose money.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order please.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I would like to just say a few words about the road works and the drainage. The Leader of Government Business spoke to it, and I notice that we are doing a lot of road work but we are not putting in the drainage everywhere and I do not understand why. We are seeing some deep gullies and then they seem to fill them up and there are no drains.

Sir, on the West Coast they are starting from the roundabout by Paradise and going up, and they had some deep trenches and they filled them in with marl, instead of developing drains. And sometimes where they do develop the drains, they do not clean them and they become overflowed and blocked like down by Batts Rock where that happened.

I know that the Government was supposed to have set up a Department of Drainage in one of the Ministries but it seems like it is not functioning. The way it used to function is that they had a cadre of people who used to spend the whole year going around cleaning one gully after the other and by the end of the year they would have finished the last gully and then they would start the rotation all over again. It seems as though that Department of Drainage needs to be expanded because what happens is that they do not have the manpower to clean the drains and, suddenly wherever the drains overflow, one tends to get flooding.

Mr. President, it is very unlike me but I am afraid that I have made my contribution to the Estimates debate and I

sincerely hope that it will be taken in the spirit in which it was given.

I thank you.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. President, I wish to refer to a number of areas. I know that over the last three or four years, education has been touched on in many ways and therefore, I would just want to make mention of some of the ongoing programmes that the Ministry of Education intends to pursue in this year, and to speak of their relevance to the whole development of the social landscape of Barbados.

Senator Rickinson in her presentation spoke of the two institutions namely: the Challenor School and the Learning Centre and from my understanding of what is registered here, those two institutions will be given a subvention of \$775 000.

Those institutions, Mr. President, are privately owned but the Government gives these subventions to assist in helping them to defray costs and to go towards scholarships for those students whose parents cannot afford it. In essence, they are bursaries that are offered to those individuals. Indeed, the school feeding programme services those schools on a daily basis, which is among a number of other incentives that are offered to those two institutions.
6.05 p.m.

I just want to indicate that it is important if more money can be made available to them and I would support that a lot. I think that some of the private schools need to look further at preparing proper records to substantiate their spending and indeed to make their formal recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture, so that we can be aware of their other needs.

Indeed, our officers in the Ministry of Education, Youth Affairs and Culture service those institutions and they always report information which we consider to be necessary for the further development of those institutions. They are serving very useful purposes in this society and I want to give them my wholehearted support. None of us knows when we will have relatives, children or any other individuals associated with us who may suffer physical or mental challenges of development. Therefore, I think it is important that we should all give our support to those institutions.

Mr. President, we tried, over the last four years, to ensure that testing of our students be done at the primary level because we have found that over the years many of our students have suffered from certain defects, particularly hearing, sight and speech. Indeed, many parents are not able to detect it very readily, and so that programme continues to reach into the schools so that those who are found with these

defects would be given the necessary assistance from the polyclinics and indeed the private institutions that would help them to overcome such difficulties. Services are available for testing the eyes, and parents are given opportunities to be able to access the glasses, the hearing aids and the other equipment that are necessary to make them function effectively within the classroom and indeed within the home environment where they live.

Mr. President, we have heard a lot about the EduTech 2000 Programme, but it startles me at times when I hear people speak about EduTech. The EduTech programme as we know is done in a way to assist our teachers and our students in accessing information as well as to use other methodologies to assist with the learning within the classroom. EduTech is used as an educational tool.

We know that the chalk and talk served us well as children growing up, but indeed we had opportunities within our homes that supplemented the experiences that we had. Many of us were living in communities where little garden beds were planted so children had an opportunity to dig into the soil and to observe the development of plants. Many others would have been living at shops and would, therefore, have had the opportunity to weigh and to prepare items for customers. Many others lived in the agricultural belt and, therefore, had opportunity to work with the sugar canes and the animals to help enrich their creative abilities. Unfortunately, many of our children are now glued to the television sets and other forms of technology that we know are extremely useful, but which need to be monitored by parents and adults within the homes with the students.

The EduTech Programme is far-reaching. I see it as a necessity in the light that when we visit the gas stations, the gas attendants are pressing buttons and we are receiving our petrol. There are mechanics who have to go now and be retrained in order to look into certain vehicles, in order for the vehicles to be repaired. They have to have the training in technology. Indeed, in the hospital with the various forms of equipment, individuals have to have some form of training and literacy level in order to be able to use those pieces of equipment effectively.

Mr. President, in the various shops and supermarkets you will just pick up an item and it is scanned through the system so that you will know what the price is and the cashier will know how many more items of a particular kind are left in the supermarket. Why should we in a society that is developing not be able to have access to these facilities within our schools where our children are now showing up their creativity? Many of the homes have computers and, therefore, the EduTech programme will have to facilitate the needs not only of those who may have the computers in their homes but indeed those who do not have and so I support that programme.

We have reached into many of the schools and the civil works have been completed. Some of the hardware has been presented to the primary schools and, by the end of this financial year, the Phase I secondary schools will be facilitated with the equipment.

Mr. President, the parent volunteer support programme which was implemented in 1996 is a programme where parents have been drafted into the classroom to assist teachers in meeting the day to day needs of those children at the nursery level. You will appreciate that in the past a parent in a classroom in Barbados was something unheard of. Indeed, whenever parents visited the schools compound and remained, teachers at times felt that the parents came to be nosy and to know who got a little tact and who was criticized and so on.

The whole change in the educational system today clearly indicates that there is definitely a place for parents within the school setting, because any parent who is empowered to assist a child within the home environment helps to enhance the whole role of the school in the community. We are talking about community connections and community development. We cannot have advancement within the schools' compound *per se* to the detriment of parents, guardians and others who may be seen on the outside.

The Parent Volunteer Support Programme has over the past four years been working very effectively within our various primary and nursery schools, particularly in those that have facilities, but the numbers were not enough. For example, there are schools where the population has dropped to a stage where some schools only had 150 students, but there was a capacity within that school to accommodate 300 children. Those schools have been taking in children from three years up to five years, and the parent volunteer is working with the teacher, not to carry out the role of the teacher, but to assist the teacher in the preparation for lessons, in supervising the children in the presence of the teacher, and helping to prepare the art equipment and the materials for mending, sorting and so on.

I must report to you, Mr. President, and to Honourable Senators, that the programme is working exceptionally well. It has spread to 53 schools up until the ending of this year and, we are hoping to add another 12 to 15 parents within the classroom because we hope that by the year 2002, all of our 80 primary schools will have parent volunteer assistance.

You would appreciate, Mr. President, that there is a small stipend of \$100 that is offered to them on a weekly basis. There are parents who are going, not because they want to get the stipend, but because they have an interest in knowing what is happening in the schools, and how to assist their own children, and therefore the parents are taking advantage of it. Some schools have two and indeed some

have three parent volunteers who have come out to learn and to empower themselves to help their children.

We are all talking every day about breaches in the system. We are talking about parents who are abdicating their responsibilities. This programme is allowing parents to come in and to participate, and we are encouraging them when they leave the classroom to go into the communities, whether it be in the church or in the community centre, and share their skills. So we are training persons to become trainers.

The good news too of the whole Parent Volunteer Support Programme is that there are two of them who came in having an enthusiasm and wanting to be a part of the school system and today they, having upgraded their skills in certificates, are now in the schools teaching, because they have got the required minimum of four certificates, and they are now able to transfer some of the skills from the Parent Volunteer Programme into the actual classroom where they are working. I want to commend Government for the injection of funds in that particular aspect of the Estimates to go towards the Parent Volunteer Programme, and I trust that Honourable Members will lend their support to that exercise. 6.15 p.m.

We know that the School Meals Department has been servicing this society for many years and, indeed, I see the theme for the School Meals Department as feeding the nation's children. We are very fortunate in Barbados where we have never heard of any outbreak in salmonella poisoning or any other form of food poisoning in the School Meals Department. I think that we should commend highly the manager and the staff of the School Meals Department for the excellent work that they have been doing over the past two to three decades.

What I am extremely concerned about, and I am sure other Honourable Members and, indeed, Barbadians are concerned about, is that the food that is prepared on a daily basis is not always adequately used by our students. A lot of this, Mr. President, has to do with Barbadian taste. We have taught our children that the fast foods seem to be the best and, therefore, we have not, as adults in this society, given them opportunities where they can access natural foods – yams, potatoes, dumplings, plantains, things of that nature that would help to nourish their bodies. Instead, many of the individuals in communities set up their own little shops outside of the school gates, where children are encouraged to buy all of the foods that we can think of that have preservatives, that sometimes lead to asthma attacks and to other forms of illnesses and allergies that impact on children's health.

Mr. President, we all know that if children can buy a bottled drink – I am not going to call the names of any of

the companies, but members will know what I mean – the aerated drinks, and they are all large drinks and then they can buy as many of the foods in packages as possible before they get to school, sometimes even spending the school meals money, and when those children at break time use the snacks it is very difficult for them to eat the food at lunchtime and therefore there is a lot of spoilage. The spoilage is not from the end of the School Meals Division in preparing it, but spoilage where when it gets to the schools the children are not using it adequately.

I would like for a strong message to be sent to all parents to encourage children to eat the meals, particularly the vegetables and the meat. The food is very tasty, Mr. President, and I speak from a background of knowledge because I ate school meals for 25 years and I paid for them. Therefore I know of the taste, the presentation and the quality practices that the school meals servers and the assistants use in order to prepare. As I said earlier, that helps to substantiate the reason why we have never had an outbreak in School Meals that has impacted on our school population.

I think it is incumbent upon parents and guardians and indeed others to talk to children and other parents about good nutrition. If we can get our children to start eating natural foods and develop an appreciation and taste for them, I am of the view that it would help to ease that problem of spoilage in the schools.

Mr. President, I want in passing to make mention of the curriculum reform, and to say that I support every effort for things that are being done in school and methodologies that are being used for change. Indeed, we know that chalk and talk does not fully work. There is a place for chalk and talk in the school system and there is a place for learning within the school but, because of the technology that children have access to at home and at other facilities, it is important that we move ourselves from chalk and talk and try to make teaching and presentation of lessons as attractive and as interesting as possible to tap the attention of our children and help them with growth and development. Parents have been able to access the curriculum reform document so that they know what a child is expected to be doing at a particular stage within the school. A parent who is aware of that can assist at home in helping the child to develop concepts and to use language that is acceptable, that will help with their writing and the various things that they do that would help to show their growth and development.

Curriculum reform is on stream. The training is happening within the schools, and the teachers are happy for the change. Of course, we all know that the teacher appraisal is at the final stage, and I would have a tremendous difficulty in understanding how the institutions will run without individuals being made aware as to what things they are

doing well and praise them for what things they are doing well and give them assistance in upgrading the things that they are expected to do.

Indeed, all over the world, there are appraisal systems and the individuals have to meet certain criteria in order to be able to know how they are assessed, where they fell down, where they need to be updated and where they have been exceptionally good. I see this happening in every department in Barbados, and teachers are willing and happy to be involved because they see it as a fair way of knowing what is going on with them and their professional development.

Mr. President, with those comments on education, I would want to move on to another area. The Leader of Government Business earlier spoke about the health system and I want to lend my kudos to the management and staff of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, having spent four days there late last year.

Yes, we will have difficulties as we will in any other institution where all of the nurses and doctors and other personnel may not necessarily have the training and personality to make one feel happy, and the Honourable Senator made mention of someone who made a visit to the Hospital and one individual at the end of the entire stay made a little foul up. I support the members of staff and the hard work and dedication that they have been bringing to the fore, and I encourage that those who may have misgivings or shortcomings would be given the necessary guidance and training to help them to be able to make patients and others using the facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital satisfied that the organisation is meeting the needs of Barbadians.

Mr. President, I want to extend congratulations to one worker whom I met at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital last Monday, not by name but indeed I was extremely impressed because we hear all of these negative stories, we see them on television and read of them in the Press. There was this one janitor who when she came to the Accident and Emergency on Monday morning, the 11th of this month when I went there with a young child. This lady was extremely meticulous and you could see how businesslike she was in the way she asked, "Would everybody please move over to the door and allow me please to clean? The person on night duty should have done this." She worked assiduously in ensuring that that Accident and Emergency Department was as clean as a whistle. Those are the kinds of people that we need to commend. I said to her, "I am extremely pleased with the way you are performing." I think it is important to let people know when they do something good, and to praise them.

Mr. President, I want to touch on the quality service that is offered at the polyclinics. We have some very professional nurses and other personnel in those departments. Indeed, the extension of the opening hours at

the polyclinics has helped to take some of the burden off the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and Barbadians are accessing those facilities to ensure that their health is in peak condition.

With regard to the district hospitals, they are offering yeoman service. I am now very closely associated with the district hospital in the constituency where I live, and I recognise the dedication and commitment. Senator Rickinson spoke of the long hours that nurses and other personnel work and that is a fact. Those officers need to be commended. The only other suggestion I would like to make is that members of the families of the residents of the district hospitals need to play a better role in reaching out and moving into the district hospitals to help to feed their relatives and to do things for them along the line of spiritual development – the singing and the praising and the assisting. I think that that too will help those individuals within the district hospitals to be able to rehabilitate to some extent. I think that is extremely important.

I know that the mental institution was mentioned and while the Honourable Senator made mention of the Psychiatric Hospital in itself, I know that the membership there is expanding because we have a lot of individuals who are addicted to either alcohol or marijuana or cocaine or indeed as was mentioned, many of them have snapped as a result of worrying about some particular matter.
6.25 p.m.

Mr. President, I want to put in an extra plug for Ward C4. I had not known about Ward C4 until about two years ago. I think that the officers on that ward are doing extremely good work. A lot of emphasis is placed on individuals who may be addicted to some substance particularly alcohol, and I would want for the Ministry of Health to provide some more resources for this. It is okay to speak about drug addictions but certain diseases know no boundaries, they are not concerned about class, colour or status. Anybody can become an alcoholic or have a communicable disease. Therefore, Ward C4 needs some extra funding to keep it going.

It is unfortunate that most of the patients on Ward C4 are female who, because of their personality, will talk; but many of our males in this society are alcoholics who do not have the inclination to get help, and their male partners invite them for a drink when they have problems. This particular ward is not catering adequately for men because men are not going forward. It is a fantastic environment to be in to see patients being rehabilitated and working together.

Mr. President, it was a new experience for me, and I felt proud to know that training and counseling of that nature is taking place within the institution of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Mr. President, I want to turn to the Sanitation Service Authority. I was mentioning the hospital and last week I felt hurt when I was there to see the amount of garbage that Barbadians dropped on the floor, the urine that was there and all the other things that should not be in the Accident and Emergency Department. Sir, this permeates this entire society, where many Barbadians throw their garbage on the streets.

Mr. President, I know this may sound emotional but I will mention it. I still have a tremendous problem with a large number of coconut shells at the bottom of Government House. Do not tell me about a black man or poor man trying to make a dollar, because I see more than 1 000 coconut shells each day, and if a coconut cost \$1.25, then we know the amount of money that is being turned over.

Mr. President, I saw a few weeks ago some Sanitation Service Authority skips put alongside the road but I am not seeing them anymore. I would like to encourage the Ministry of Health to resite the coconut vendors. Do not stop them from making a sale because they are meeting the needs of a number of Barbadians who want to get coconut water instead of a soft drink, which makes sense if they are looking at healthy lifestyles, but to be met with that unsightly spectacle near Government House bothers me still.

We need to pull those individuals in and discuss with them the possibility of resiting them and putting them in a place where they can still be accessed but not at the foot of Government House, particularly next to a pedestrian crossing. Sir, it needs to be addressed. We do not have to wait until somebody gets injured or killed before we deal with it.

Mr. President, I saw this very morning some young men and women, I get the impression they are new recruits at the Sanitation Service Authority, who are doing excellent work. I saw them along the street by Harrison College, at Sion Hill in St. James and in other environments and these young people are not concerned about the stigma of the work they are doing because they want so much to make Barbados clean that they are putting all their energies and enthusiasm into keeping Barbados clean.

Mr. President, we need to commend them. We have stigmatized certain jobs in this country but, at the end of the day, we need to be gainfully employed and whatever work people are doing they need to have a sense of pride about that job. I saw that in quite a few of the young people who are working at the Sanitation Authority making Barbados clean and, at the end of their week, they have a salary which they have worked for honestly. Sir, I support the funding that is being offered to the Sanitation Authority for the work set out for this financial year.

Indeed, Mr. President, many of us travel to a number of other places and the streets in those countries are clean. I do not think they have any better service for the collection of their refuse than Barbados. It is that the sanitation truck will pass now, and then people come and put their garbage out. Why can we not operate in a system where we keep our garbage inside and put it out on the morning of collection? It worked well before and I am sure it can work well for us again.

Mr. President, the AIDS/HIV programme – \$9 569 448. This includes an educational programme, research studies and surveys, incentive awards, disease control, a prevention programme and so on. I support that particular programme, Mr. President. I need not go into depth since other Honourable Members made mention of the programme other than to say that AIDS is every Barbadian's problem.

I have been reading a document from Nigeria in Africa and I recognise that most of the senior staff in schools have all been wiped out. I know that many people in those countries believe in polygamy and practice it and that helps to contribute to the whole cycle. It is important when we boast of a very literate society that we ensure that aspects of lifestyles, consequences and choices are included, so that our people understand that if you do A, then expect that B will happen. It is very important that we reach our young people to make them aware of how drugs really impact on them; hence the community programmes, the purchase of condoms for distribution, testing kits and so on for our people.

Mr. President, I made mention of the School Meals department already. I just want, in speaking to the Head of the Nutrition Service to the tune of \$825 406, to reiterate the call for our children to eat healthier. Too many of our children are eating incorrectly and many of them suffer from obesity and are sluggish. There are children eight years old with the size of a twelve-year old and they can hardly walk. We need to ensure that our children are fed with the correct nutrition.

Mr. President, Environmental Health – \$9 883 434. Mr. President, it has to do with the control of the *Aedes Aegypti* mosquito, rodents and so on. I wish to publicly thank the officers from the Environmental Unit for their professional performance three weeks ago in the confusion with rat infestation.

Mr. President, they are professionals and their judgement should be accepted because they have the training, and I do not have it. Mr. President, you will be surprised to know that I live in a house that is only three years old, and a mouse almost caused me to lose my life last week. I left the door opened and the mouse came in and there was no way I could get him out. Mr. President, what could I

do but to go and purchase mouse traps and set them down to catch the mice. I did not have to call the Vector Control Unit or make everybody in Barbados afraid to walk the streets or go to the bathroom. I think that those gentlemen and ladies are professionals and they came out with the St. Ambrose Primary School incident and helped to put systems in place for cleaning up facilities. It was not the St. Ambrose School, Mr. President, but it was the recreational hall on the adjoining facilities of the Ministry of Health. The officers did an exceptionally good job and I want to thank them for their assistance.

I want to suggest that the Vector Control Unit be more decentralised as I am aware individuals have to walk to Jemmotts Lane to be able to access the rat bait. We know that this is the crop season and that rats, mice and other rodents will be running 'helter skelter' because of the lack of food and, therefore, more people will have to put down bait despite where they live. Therefore, I would like to call on Government to ensure that there are outlets in Bridgetown, Speightstown and other shopping areas where individuals can access rat bait to help eradicate some of the problems that they are experiencing.

6.40 p.m.

Mr. President, the medical scheme also has my support where hundreds, indeed, perhaps thousands of Barbadians are able to access the funding for illnesses in most instances where they have to travel overseas in order to get the necessary treatment for their ailments. That money, Mr. President, is highly supported.

Sir, with regards to the Children's Development Centre that provides early diagnosis and assessment and treatment for children who have been identified as having physical or mental deficiencies at an early age, that is a laudable exercise. Mr. President, it is okay for some of us to talk, but the experience of having a child that is mentally or physically challenged, or indeed a relative, calls for a lot of attention, dedication, funding, commitment and all the other things that go with it in order to meet the demands. The Children's Development Centre deserves that \$1 264 629 that is being allocated for the research and the services that would be offered to those individuals who may be physically or mentally challenged.

Mr. President, I now want to turn to the social transformation sector where the Welfare Department pays a subsidy to the Transport Board annually, particularly, for the traveling public, the senior citizens and persons who suffer from disabilities who go to and fro. Sir, that amount is \$1 400 000, Sir, for the poverty alleviation programme for the Welfare Department such as cash grants. I heard someone speak earlier about \$300 for persons but I do not know of that, Mr. President. All I would like to say with respect to that, is that the former Mayor of New York took

'Welfare to Work'. I think that we need to devise some strategies so that some more of our people who sit and rely on welfare would be given an opportunity to do some community work in order to receive the money that they get.

Mr. President, we know that there are many Barbadians who cannot work because they have received some form of injury or they are suffering from high blood pressure or a multiplicity of reasons why they are unable to work. However, on the other hand we know that they are many Barbadians who can work and refuse to work because of the welfare grants. I think that it is unfortunate that some of our people are planning on looking at it that way and I would support any venture where these individuals who receive the money, but can do better, would have to do some kind of service in order to get the funding.

Mr. President, we know that they are some senior citizens whose utility bills have to be paid; many of them have to have food vouchers; some of them are below the poverty line and their rents have to be paid for them; some of them have lost their teeth and they have to have dentures; some have to have prostheses because their limbs have been removed; many of them have to have wheel chairs, clothing and emergency relief from fire, floods and educational assistance. I think that \$15 934 840 is going to be well spent. That is an increase over last year's by approximately \$500 000.

Sir, the National Disability Unit has an increase of about \$600 000. We know that in order to facilitate them into the main stream, then the Government and the private agencies need to start building ramps, toilet facilities, or making the adjustments and putting them in place, offer them training courses so that they can get involved in the job market, in service seminars, workshops for staff and other persons with disabilities and so on. Sir, a consultation has to take place, and legislation for the disability programme development. Mr. President, I laud that as well.

Sir, the disabled among us need to be recognised. I know many of them who have the mental capacity. It is only the physical capacity that is inhibiting them from gaining employment, and I wish that other Government and private sector agencies would reach out to the disabled within our communities and give them the kind of employment that we know they can cope with. They do not want to be pampered or to be felt sorry for. They want to work to get money. Sir, it is extremely interesting, Mr. President, that most of the disabled who can work want to work honestly to gain the money while they are many others who are physically and mentally capable but do not want work but want wealth. It is a very interesting situation, Mr. President.

I want to turn my attention to the National Council on Substance Abuse and to commend that institution for the

School 2000 Prevention Programme. Sir, the target was for 92 public and private schools. The organisation reached into the communities catering to the needs of persons at the community level, giving them the training, so that they can take it into the community groups, churches and other institutions, against drugs.

Mr. President, at this juncture in our history, we have been spending millions in health, more millions in education, further millions in health and welfare, millions and millions into policing and prisons, and it startles me that every time that I walk through Bridgetown I see another two or three characters. Fewer women are in the team. Indeed, I do not know what juggles their minds, but it seems as though they leave from all over Barbados and head to Bridgetown. I do not know if it is because you can beg and get money more readily, or they can find a leftover snack box somewhere. I do not know what it is that causes them to gravitate towards the City, but it is a measure of concern for all of us.

Sir, when I saw 'Ninja Man' cuff at a pregnant woman a few weeks ago, I froze because if that cuff had made contact with her, she would have been in a coffin today. I think that it is unfortunate that so many of our young people tend to go the route of drug ingestion, which leads to drug addiction, without looking at other examples around them. You see so and so, he or she was on drugs, try to avoid going that route. Perhaps, Senator Rickinson has training in nursing and she may have a better understanding than I do. I am only a lay-person.

Sir, it bothers me when so many of our young people on whom we are spending so much money, to whom we are trying to give social, emotional, spiritual and moral training, still seem to fall by the wayside and are going the route of drugs. Sir, the National Council of Substance Abuse is reaching into the communities and schools, trying to be able to reach them in a proactive manner and I think that is commendable.

Sir, why wait until our children or young people have started up and then go at it, when we know that it is already in their system? I like that approach of going into the schools and training the children. Indeed, the DARE Programme is involved. Police officers come into the various institutions and give lectures, demonstrations and video presentations. All of that helps with the educational thrust. I encourage further education of our people in order to help to save them from that scourge called drugs.

Sir, the treatment and rehabilitation at the Verdun House, Teen Challenge, the Drug Rehabilitation Unit at the Psychiatric Hospital have all been involved in the training from the National Council on Substance Abuse. Indeed, Mr. President, the National Council on Substance Abuse Committee has established a prison drug rehabilitation

programme at the Glendairy Prison, affording the necessary drug education and therapeutic sessions to drug offenders, so as to avoid recidivising and assist inmates' reentry into the mainstream of the society.

6.50 p.m.

Mr. President, I want to touch on the Attorney-General's Ministry and to look at the forensic services. I had the privilege, Sir, of reviewing the Discovery Channel which I view as often as I can and I saw some things that made me marvel – what can happen as a result of the use of these forensic services.

Indeed, I would love to see the day come in Barbados, Mr. President, when our Police Officers and other personnel working in those departments, receive the kinds of training and ballistic equipment that will be able to help them to detect what the perpetrators use in harming others and so on.

Sir, the \$10 103 169 allocated to that department is to do with the construction of the Forensic Services Centre. I know that many of our young Barbadians have gone off for training. Some have indeed returned, but they need the facilities in order to affect that training and to put it in really tangible terms.

The purchase of the DNA equipment, laboratory equipment, computer systems, scientific refrigerators, scientific freezers and office equipment are all necessary to help the Forensic Pathologists and others to be able to effectively use their skills and talents in order to help to combat some of the problems that we are experiencing.

I would love for the day to come, Mr. President, when every person who has been murdered in Barbados that the Police, the Forensic Pathologists and others would be able to identify the individual or individuals who may have been a part of the crime. Whether they have to use a hair from their heads or a scratch under their fingernails or whatever, I would love to see that day come, Mr. President.

Community Legal Services – this, Sir, has to do with a system of free legal services to persons of insufficient means. We know that there are many people who, through no fault of their own, have to have legal counsel. The Community Legal Services in 1999-2000 processed seven hundred and twenty-three Legal Aid Certificates. They were issued at that time and an amount of \$456 739 was paid to Attorneys-at-Law for representation of clients who had been granted the Legal Certificates.

In 2000-2001 there were eight hundred and seventeen Legal Aid Certificates issued to the tune of \$674 163. In 2001-2002 we are expecting that it will exceed one thousand to the tune of \$1 487 278, of which \$1 million is allocated for the payment of Attorneys' fees.

The Police – the training of the Police is paramount, Mr. President, where the Police would be given opportunities to further develop investigative techniques in marine navigation, accident investigation and prevention management.

I support the Zero Tolerance Policy of the Police when it comes to crime and violence. Indeed, Mr. President, for firearm offences in the year 1999, there were two hundred and five. In the year 2000, there were five hundred and five, an increase of three hundred or 146 per cent. Therefore, the Police needs to get the necessary training and equipment. Equipment not only in the form of vans and buses and so on, but indeed equipment to help them to effectively carry out their jobs.

We know, Mr. President, that when a bullet leaves a gun, it can go anywhere. A gun in the hands of some individuals who do not have the necessary training, can prove disastrous to many individuals who may be on the side looking on, when that bullet hits a galvanise sheet or something and ricochets. Therefore, I want to support the training of the Police Officers in being able to effectively carry out their duties in this particular area.

Mr. President, the training of Police Officers as well, is in the area of domestic disputes and domestic violence. I know, Sir, that in the past some Police Officers saw it, and I suppose that is also a cultural thing, "if the man likes ya, he beat ya." Therefore, when a complaint would have been made by a female, that female might have been told, "Well, go and make up. Do whatever it is you have to do in the house to make up for this slap or lash around your head with piece of 2" x 3"."

Mr. President, those days are long gone. Indeed, there are males now who are calling at the Police Station because they too are into the domestic violence cycle. The women are sometimes taking advantage of the men. I do not think that that should be the case in any society.

I would not want to suggest, Sir, that individuals be sent back home into an environment where there is going to be some threat to life or limb – some kind of danger, not only to the two adults perhaps that are involved, but indeed the trauma that the children within the home environment have to experience – but rather that all Police Officers, from the top to the bottom, from the bottom to the top, be offered training in mediation, conflict resolution, counselling and things of that nature that will help to temper individuals, who are angry or jealous or whatever the case may be, in the situation.

I support, very much, Mr. President, the Government's initiative to refurbish and equip a facility for battered women so that they, and the children can be removed from the

threatening environment to a safer place where children will be able to access counselling, at least a comfortable place to sleep, knowing that the threat will not be there for a while.

For the community policing, Mr. President, I cannot help but personally say, "sincere thanks" to Police Officers. It is not as a former candidate said that they would put the Police Station in Cane Garden near to my house because they want me protected. I am a very law abiding citizen, Mr. President, and therefore there would be no need for the police station to be anywhere near my house.

At present, it is at Holders Hill and I know all the Police Officers because I happen to be a very well-disciplined person who support the Police. I call and tell them what I think they need to know to ensure that other individuals in this society are safe. Therefore, I want to commend the Police for the community policing where they give their wholehearted support to neighbourhood watches. They give lectures on crime prevention. They encourage business watch programmes. Indeed, there are some sections in the Police Stations where they work on sports and community programmes within the schools and communities to help give young people an opportunity to rub shoulders with a role model, because that is what policemen played before. Some of them indeed are still playing that particular role so I support that measure.

With regards to road traffic control, though, Mr. President, I have a tremendous difficulty and in the limited amount of time I have, all I have to say is that I think that laws in Barbados must be enforced. I always travel with a heavy heart, Sir, because I know that motorists, pedestrians and others have now become so intolerant. The Road rage is in existence and sometimes it even affects me. I get so angry with some of the foolishness they do and it is not only the public service vehicles, they are the biggest offenders but the taxi drivers, the cyclists, motorcyclists and bicyclists...

Mr. President, they do not stop at major stops anymore. Bicycles are being sold in Bridgetown, I understand, or wherever bicycles can be accessed as a bicycle: no brakes, no bell, no light. So the individual who buys a bicycle would now have to pull out more money to buy a light, to buy brakes to buy whatever. I have a difficulty with that, Mr. President.
7.00 p.m.

I think it is wise for business houses to sell a whole bicycle. If business persons know that the additional accessories for the bicycle will cost \$500 well then they should put the cost of the bicycle at \$1 500 so that people who want to buy a bicycle will know what the target amount is that they will need to have in order to get the bicycle. I think it is unfortunate that bicycles are sold to the public in pieces and not as a whole bicycle, with everything on it to make it safe on the road.

Mr. President, I think it is about time that the Licensing Authority should be working in close association with the Police at the Court to ensure, for example, those who know that their licences have been confiscated for a period of time and are still driving around, those who are on the road with number plates that are not in existence or that belong to somebody else or those who have not paid their road tax or secured insurance for vehicles, so that when those types of cases are tried and completed that the department would be able to implement whatever form of punishment that should be given to those individuals who continue to breach the law and to do their own thing under the circumstances.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Forde you have two minutes in which to conclude your presentation.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: I just want to wrap up then by looking at housing. I heard Senator Mascoll speak about the problems in housing, but this Government has done a fantastic job over the last six years in meeting the housing needs of Barbadians. I know there were persons from White Hill who had to be re-sited to Farmers and others at Walkers in St. Andrew. We know that the Airport expansion project at Fairy Valley and Lead Vale will call for the re-siting or relocation of many Barbadians.

Mr. President, the Government has a focus. The services that are being offered to Barbadians are second to none. We know that all Barbadians want good roads. We know that all Barbadians want good health services. We know that all Barbadians want a good transportation system and we know that all Barbadians want safe housing.

Mr. President, I heard Senator Mascoll intimating that in 1994, \$0.28 was being spent on every \$1 and in this year, 2001, it is now \$0.40 on every \$1. Mr. President, Barbadians do not have a tremendous problem when it comes to paying taxes, if they can get back the services in the long run. The Government has to take taxes from me to pay somebody else or to offer services to somebody else in some other community.

The community efforts that the Government is pursuing have blessed my heart when it comes to the people in Cats Castle and Church Village. A refurbishment package is being offered to the people in those areas in order to upgrade the facilities and to put in the amenities and roads so that the people can have access to their houses not only by car but indeed by ambulances and fire service trucks.

I want to support the Government's exercise in putting forward these Estimates. I trust that the Government, under the Barbados Labour Party, would continue to reach out and touch the lives of Barbadians and change them for the better because the motto of the Barbados Labour Party says, "A Better Life for our People" and I want to support every exercise.

I thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, before moving the suspension of this Sitting, I wish to point out a couple of things to Honourable Senators. For those who are interested, dinner is available downstairs. Most of all, we will start tomorrow promptly at 10.00 a.m. There will be no prayers so we must be on time. Therefore, I am urging all Honourable Senators that they are not to come at 10.00 a.m. because we want to start promptly at 10.00 a.m.

Against that background, Sir, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 10.00 a.m. tomorrow.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 10.00 a.m. on Tuesday, March 20, 2001, was put to the Senate and agreed to. Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
7.08 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Senate is resumed.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, in my contribution to these Estimates for 2001/2002, I will speak on three specific Heads, Head 21 under the Ministry of Industry and International Business, Head 19, and Head 25 under Agriculture with specific reference to the sugar industry in particular.

Mr. President, Barbados has to reposition itself if it is to meet the challenges of the new information age. It is good to see that over the years the Government has begun to address the significant components that will make that possible. As a matter of fact, when the Government began its conceptualisation of EduTech 2000, at that time, even the Opposition could not understand its importance and significance, but when other people came to our shores and began to evaluate what it meant for us as we moved forward as a nation in this new environment, people began to say that the Government itself had been significantly proactive.

Mr. President, as recent as a few weeks ago, the Transaction Electronic Bill came before this Honourable Chamber and that too, was part of the equation because what it basically did was to ensure that transaction electronic activities were placed on the same playing field as the traditional mode in which we did things by way of paper and document.

Sir, there is a very important and critical component of all that and it has to do with restructuring our telecommunications industry in Barbados to ensure that we are able to become competitive in the telecommunications sector and be able to address the global changes that are taking place.

The reform of that sector will allow both the public and business sector to benefit from new and emerging technology. It will also allow us to be able to move, in terms of our prices, to what is now referred to as "cost oriented prices".

Mr. President, of course, reform will require us to have a completely different regulatory environment and there must also be a certain measure of institutional strengthening if we are to be able to find ourselves in a position to support these new technologies that will be coming down stream.

Telecommunications, therefore, I am suggesting is *sine qua non*, indispensable with our own economic competitiveness whether in business, in the area of culture, politics or whatever. Telecommunications play a very critical role and more and more in the emerging environment, it is going to be, to my mind, the key driver.

Liberalisation in telecommunications is something that is also being driven, not just by ourselves, but being driven in particular by the WTO. May I say to this Honourable Chamber that even in pricing, the concept of cost oriented prices is very much driven by the WTO, to which, of course, Barbados is a signatory. The WTO is saying to us that those markets which were previously closed should be opened up to competition and that in itself should allow for wider choice to consumers.

Competition, if it is correctly introduced, should see a result in lower prices, a wider and better range of services and higher quality products. Competition in this sector will also put significant pressure on existing and future operators to ensure that wherever possible costs are cut and that the operators seek to develop new innovative ways and techniques to ensure greater customer satisfaction. More and more today, whether it is the business community or the residential sector, more is being asked in terms of the quality of service.

Mr. President, to that end, the Government has been in discussion with Cable & Wireless over the months to arrive at a position where Cable & Wireless would terminate its licence which expires in 2011 and, indeed, to get Cable & Wireless to draw up that expiration, we would have heard the Prime Minister in his last Budget presentation make reference to the transition to full liberalisation, which saw the opportunity for cellular operators to get involved in providing the service. Effective 2001, new operators can

provide the service in terms of the national network and, from January 2002, there will be competition on the international side of the service.

Mr. President, if I may comment in terms of how Cable & Wireless has always seen it and more so in recent times, Cable & Wireless' position was that the transition to liberalisation and full competition should be one that is phased rather than the approach taken by some, which, of course, did not work more often than not where people jumped full into competition with all the attendant difficulties.

Indeed, what it was saying is that it was expecting an orderly transition to competition but, more importantly, the need to have a strong regulatory environment within which all the operators would be subjected to ensuring that things run smoothly within the new environment.

The other position of the company was that there should be a move towards cost-oriented prices where we would see the gradual shift from subsidisation of the domestic sector and move to full cost pricing both in the domestic and the international markets.

The strategy, therefore, as Government sees it towards the reform of telecommunications, centres around the development and improvement of our network. If we are able to be in a position to provide the kind of services we want, it is necessary that our network in Barbados and in the region is one that is resilient and robust.

I am pleased to say to you that Cable & Wireless has agreed to upgrade its regional network and Pounds Sterling 6.5 million have been approved to improve the network in the region.

One other significant part of the strategy has to do with the promotion and the protection of competition by developing an effective interconnection policy and arrangement. I will speak a little bit about the interconnection arrangement. The third component has to do with us developing a comprehensive numbering plan and that will become more and more of a priority when there are more players in the market.
10.10 a.m.

Mr. President, of equal importance is the fact that we need now more than ever to have proper spectrum management. Our spectrum management is where the money will rest. In the case of some countries in the region already, they have been auctioning the licences in terms of utilisation of the spectrum but we have to be particularly judicious in the way we deal with spectrum management and there must also be a careful and judicious granting of licences.

Sir, I mentioned about the concept of cost-based prices in the way of pricing our services that have direct

relationship to the cost of providing those services. What we also need to do is ensure that our pricing is phased in with the period of guiding ourselves towards liberalisation. What we are basically saying is that by December 2002, which is when we should have moved to full competition in the telecom marketing sector in Barbados, at that point in time we should and ought to have phased in the question of cost-based pricing on a phased basis.

Government has to ensure that as it redevelops and restructures the telecom sector in Barbados, it has to make sure that it institutes policies that will protect competition in the sector. This is very important. It has to ensure that new entrants coming into the telecom sector are not disadvantaged.

Government recognises, Mr. President, that already there is an infrastructure here in Barbados built and operated by an incumbent. In order to facilitate, in the short term, new players coming into the telecom industry, there must be an arrangement which allows other new operators to interconnect with, indeed, Cable and Wireless' network at an agreed arrangement between the new entrant and the operator.

Also, it must ensure that where agreement cannot be reached between the incumbent or incumbents when we have other new incumbents and new entrants, that the regulator is able to resolve any issues and any impasses that may arise during negotiations. Interconnection, therefore, will be agreed between the entrant and the operator on a commercial basis. Interconnection agreements must and will be non-discriminatory and will be provided on an equal basis for both those that are already involved and new entrants coming in.

Another critical aspect of it, Mr. President, has to do with the fact that in terms of the way you deal with interconnection and the charges that are made to new entrants, that services must be unbundled. I know that Senator Goddard who has been following this industry for a long time, appreciates the point where a new entrant is coming into the telecom market and he only wants to provide a particular service, the existing operator must offer him only those services he wants, but not in a bundled manner that might prevent or preclude him from being able to offer a service and to be viable.

On the question of Spectrum Management, I really would urge that the Ministry itself puts its funds into the telecom unit to allow it to be able to operate effectively. A highly and effective working telecom unit is particularly critical in the management of our spectrum as we move forward. Right now we only have one operator, but as soon as you move towards full competition, and there are other players out there, management of our spectrum and the fact

that we need to have that strong body to oversee the operators as they utilise that spectrum is going to become more and more critical.

Therefore, the allocation of the spectrum for new operators, people wanting to come and, for example, offer things like cellular service, the licensing of the spectrum must be carried out in an objective manner. It must be timely, it must be transparent and non-discriminatory. It is important that those elements be there.

It is interesting to see that in terms of how we allocate the spectrum and the kind of pricing we attach to it that Government intends to engage the services of consultants to allow it to determine whether or not we will do like some other countries and put it out to auctions, or whether, indeed, we will come up with what is referred to as administrative pricing.

Mr. President, I want to look at one other sector that sits on top of telecommunications and that is the informatics sector. That sector, of course, has been going through difficulty over the last three to four years. The part of the sector that is most affected is the lower end of the informatics sector, that is, the data entry and data processing sector. We would have observed the closure or the scaling down of companies like CDS which to my mind, is more towards the lower end of the sector but, at the same time, we have seen the scaling down of companies like PRT who are at the high end of the informatics sector. Some people have left and others have chosen to reposition, retool and reorganise. Sir, to my mind, those latter actions have resulted in us still being able to have in the sector in the region of 1 200 to 1 300 people at present.

The local data entry end of the data processing sector, which is the lower end of the segment, is under pressure significantly because of the low-cost domiciles like Santo Domingo, China, India and Mexico, but all is not lost. Within the informatics industry, the move now is away from the low end of the sector and more towards the high end. There is even potential within the medium segment in areas such as call centres. I will speak a little bit about those because call centre operational facilities offer tremendous opportunity for high numbers of persons employed in one company.

Sir, case in point, quite recently in Grenada with the facilitation of Cable and Wireless, one call centre has just employed 700 workers at that facility doing call centre work which is really providing the sophisticated form of customer services for businesses. We too, in Barbados have been able to attract call centres and I believe that we have a tremendous advantage. I alluded earlier to places like Mexico, Santo Domingo, India, China and so on, but these US companies

are now offering customer service where it is now an interactive kind of service where an operator has to interact with the marketplace. You can understand the strategic significance to Barbados, being an English speaking country and that is why you will find that a lot of those call centres are coming to the Caribbean.

10.20 a.m.

Of course, quite naturally, we have to be cost effective, we have to raise our level of productivity if we are to be in a position to compete because already there are certain components in the equation that are high. And yes, I can see Senator Goddard looking in my direction. We have to look at the cost of telecommunication because that is a critical and important component, but let me say through you, to him, Sir, quite recently I attended a facility in Jamaica that provides call centre services mainly to the US and North American companies and what registered with me is this, and we in Barbados have to understand this. It was not such the cost of an E1 connection because that particular company, because of the volume and the capacity, required them to have an E1 connection. What was interesting is that that E1 connection was more expensive out of Jamaica than out of Barbados, but yet the company was saying if they locate their facility in Barbados, they would not be as profitable as if they were in Jamaica simply because the largest component of the equation was not the telecommunication component, but it was labour cost, because a computer operator in Jamaica was being paid, as he told me, between Jamaican \$60 and \$80 per hour.

Now, Senator Goddard knows and understands the arithmetic of what I am talking about. I am talking about less than US \$2.00 per hour and if you are employing, as he is employing today, 200 people and paying them less than US \$2.00 per hour, this tells you that if you move that operation to Barbados, then we have higher levels of productivity. Indeed, we cannot compete with him on the same playing field. So, yes, I agree that the cost of telecommunications must continue to go down.

I also want to say that Barbados has always benefitted by the co-operation of Cable & Wireless in this area, because the prices that are offered for connectivity and for lease lines and so on, have always been subsidized to support the informatics industry in Barbados. But, yes, I too would agree that indeed, we have to ensure that the price of telecommunications goes down to be able to support, whether it be informatics or any kind of the new services we will find in the new e-enabled environment.

In terms of the outlook of the communication sector may I say, Mr. President, that I think that Barbados will continue to be under pressure at the lower end of the sector. I think we have to move, as I said, through the whole gamma of offering a service in call centres, but we also have to look

at the high end which are things like software development, programming, website development and so on. May I say that one of the things that I was specifically looking for in the Estimates was money allocated towards developing our human resources today to ensure that we end up with the numbers required in the marketplace.

I was surprised to read that some of the operators who were leaving Barbados were saying that there is a shortage of highly-skilled people at the high end: the software programmers, people involved in development and such – but all is not lost because this is something that Government understands quite well and already between the University of the West Indies and Barbados Community College, some arrangements are already being put in place for us to address that significantly in the short term.

The Barbados Investment Development Corporation (BIDC) is also, itself, attempting to address any apparent shortages in skills at the upper end and the University of the West Indies, through the Information Technology Training Centre will quickly develop and approve skills base in this particular area.

I mentioned the Barbados Community College and the Carnegie Mellon University will seek to fast-track the development of software engineers for Barbados.

The number of companies in Barbados offering services in this industry at present stands around 45, that was up to the end of December, of which in terms of those foreign owned, there were ten dealing with software development, 9 still involved in data-entry and data-processing, 2 in other forms of informatics-type services. However, one of the good things is that there are also local people involved as well. In terms of the local enterprises there were 13 information service providers doing computer training, E-business and providing internet solutions.

Mention was made yesterday about the fact that we presently have just over twelve hundred persons in the sector and this has been a reduction since 1998 where we had some 1,937 persons employed.

I already mentioned that the US companies themselves are a little concerned about the shortage of software engineers and one person has indeed admitted that that was one of the reasons that influenced his company to locate elsewhere. This is something that we have to address, but it is not surprising that that is the case because a lot of those persons who were involved in software development are now involved in things such as web development, web posting and providing some of the internet solutions that you see out there. So we have a challenge to ensure that that particular area is addressed as quickly as we can.

Of course, I am pleased to see that some half-million dollars have been available to support the establishment of the Information Technology Training Centre (ITTC) and this is an interim measure of the establishment to the Institute of International Services and Information Technology. The ITTC is presently located at one of the BIDC facilities at the Harbour and it will be starting shortly with some 20 persons offering training to such persons as programmers, software engineering, medical transcription and so on. The BCC and BIMAP will also use the facility at the Harbour to offer other related courses in this particular area.

The aim of the facility, of course, is not only to satisfy any short-term needs we may have but also to ensure that there is a sufficient pool of resources that would attract investors to our shores, and to ensure that people do not leave on the basis that they are uncomfortable with the kind of skill base that exists in Barbados to propel their companies forward. Therefore, the sustained development of the informatics industry requires a good telecommunication infrastructure, supported by competitive rates, particularly as Barbados moves through that transitional phase from the lower end of the informatics sector to offering higher value added services.

Cable & Wireless has promised, and is indeed upgrading its network, to ensure that the network in this country is one that is resilient and robust. We in Barbados have to move to a network that is IT, and data, with things like automatic teller machines. We must be able to ensure that things like frame-relay is supported throughout the region and we must be able to enhance the international and business connectivity of Barbados. That is already there, but I am saying that it will happen more as the marketplace is opening up as we have greater competition, because with greater competition you will find that there will be greater and wider ranges of services provided to the public.

We recognize, of course, that Cable and Wireless has already taken the decision to reposition itself and to deal with competition.

I want to take this opportunity to underscore a point that had been made before and that is with the merger of the four companies, that in itself, could only have contributed, in terms of job losses, to a minimal number in the region of less than 50.

I want to make this point about what has been the experience of those people in the industry and those people looking at the industry. I want to refer you all to the experience of a Professor Kramer who, a few years ago, looked at all of those monopoly telecommunication companies that had to move into an era of liberalisation and full competition, and one of the things that characterized that move was the fact that in every instance, the previous monopoly operators were operating within excess of

30 per cent in terms of their workforce and every single one had reduced it to a minimum of 20 per cent.
10.30 a.m.

I want to quote the British Telecom as an example. In the UK, British Telecom was the single provider up until 1984 which employed just over 235 000 workers at that time. Instantly, as the monopoly situation came into being where in 1984 Cable and Wireless was also granted a licence, through – I think it was called Mercury – that between 1984 and 1994-1995, British Telecom reduced numbers from just about 235 000 to 110 000.

Now, I referred to Professor Kramer's study which said 30 per cent but, Mr. President, you can do the mathematics and realise that is more than 30 per cent. Hence, what is obviously happening in Barbados is one where a company recognises that it has to go out there and compete with new operators who are going to come in with new bells and whistles. They will also offer new services and other products in a more cost effective way and therefore it has to do only the right thing and reposition itself as any shareholder would expect it to do.

Mr. President, I was very disturbed this morning to see on the Internet – like my good friend Minister Goddard and I use the Internet quite often – a headline on the telegraph which says, "Cable and Wireless backers are ready to storm the barricades." Sir, that tells us that the shareholders of Cable and Wireless are saying that whereas a year ago their shares were worth close to £15 yesterday the shares of Cable and Wireless were now worth £4.54 and the shareholders were calling for – my language now, Mr. President – the heads of those persons who are charged with the hard responsibility of managing telecommunications in this very, very difficult environment. In essence, that tells about the challenges.

I want to say to this Honourable Chamber that what we are experiencing, is being experienced elsewhere. Because, despite the fact that in Barbados we are talking about 250 people, only last week there was an article on the Internet which said that Cable and Wireless is making 4 000 people redundant of which 2 700 are within Cable and Wireless globally.

In order to survive, companies in telecommunications will have to restructure and they are indeed challenged to do so. Only a few years ago, Mr. President, we saw the case where AT&T made 10 000 managers redundant, which is the first thing that Senator Mascoll said, and that is, that all companies will have to restructure and reposition.

Mr. President, I am saying, as I close on Head 21, Telecommunications and International Business that, to my

mind, telecom will be the driver of the new Barbados and it is good. I have to congratulate the Government. I have to congratulate people like Senator Goddard, who at one point in time had the responsibility for the telecommunications sector and to say that the Government understands the issues and is moving in the right direction to restructure and reform the industry in order to make sure that we are able to take advantage of the new realities.

I want to deal quickly with the agricultural sector under Head 25 and more particularly, the sugar industry. As you know, Mr. President, sugar has indeed been the backbone of the national economy. At one point in time, it accounted for more than 50 per cent of our agriculture output. However, in recent times, agriculture has been going through a very, very difficult period.

Today, of course, the receipts we get from agriculture are less than 2 per cent of our GDP. The receipts we got from the export of sugar in 1999 were some \$57.2 million, and last year we received some \$54.1 million. The point to be made here is that with these figures we can see that, at present, the receipts from sugar are not able to pay even one month's wages in the public sector. So you can understand, Mr. President, where we are, but to my mind, we must allow the industry to continue, and we must do things to support its continuance, at least in the short to medium term.

We remain in Barbados a high cost producing destination. There is no doubt about it. The average cost of production in Barbados in 1994 was \$1 345. In the year 2000, it was some \$1 366 and it continues to climb. As a matter of fact, in 1995 it was as high as \$1 896. Of course, the industry has played a significant role in terms of GDP.

In terms of employment, there are some people in the industry whom I think it would be fair and honest to say that we would find it extremely difficult to retrain them into something significantly different and therefore training would be an issue. From an employment point of view, we have to ensure that the industry continues, but it has to restructure, and if we can continue to get that foreign exchange component, I think we need to do that. To my mind, Mr. President, we are talking about only \$54 million in receipts last year but it was \$54 million in foreign exchange.

Senator Mascoll will tell us to go and look for funding of \$54 million in any one year but that is difficult. We are not talking about \$54 million once off, we are talking about that for as long as we can get it, provided that the preferential arrangements that are in place will continue. I see Senator Laurie smiling when I talk about preferential arrangements continuing.

Of course, sugar cane is still considered to be the most suitable crop in Barbados. From an ecological point of view, it protects and provides against soil erosion and degradation.

10.40 a.m.

One of the things that created some concern is the number of acres that continue to go out of production and indeed have gone out of production. In 1990, the industry was utilising some 32 000 acres of land. By 1995 that had dropped to just over 18 000 acres. Output in 1990 was 69 300 tonnes. It went to 38 000 tonnes in 1995. Those things did not really happen by accident.

The reduction in the acreage planted in sugar which declined from 50 000 in the '60s to some 21 000 in 1998 has been attributed to a number of reasons. Some of these include cultivation practices, decline in the yields, and unfortunately to say, bad crop rotation, and of course, declining sugar prices.

We know that Governments have had to step in and support production in terms of price support so the Government's indebtedness to the industry continues. Between 1993 and 1998 an average of \$13 million was injected into the industry to support sugar production. What we are saying is that Government has supported the industry over those years by some \$75 million. I believe it is also true to say that if that were not the case, there is no way we might be producing sugar today, at least for export.

One of the things we need to do is to decide the markets we want to produce sugar for. Presently, we try to meet the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries quota. We also have the Special Protocol Sugar Arrangement in the United States of America where if we are able to produce more than what we need to supply the ACP countries, we can use the SPSA route, and then if we are able to satisfy that, and anything is left, we can then seek to supply local demand.

I think we really have to look at where we are to see how we are going to move forward in the future. Talk, of course, has also been made in terms of our plants and the need for us to look at whether or not we should have one sugar factory, two sugar factories or three factories but I am not hearing any comments about maintaining three sugar factories at all. There seems to be a charge towards one factory.

I want to register my own personal concern with having one factory. I was an engineer for many years and I will say to you, Mr. President, that I have always been a firm believer in resilience and redundancy. I know we can have catastrophic failures when we least expect it. Therefore, to my mind, for us to move steadfastly along to have just one

factory and something happens untoward I believe that it could, as I have said, be catastrophic. So my view is that we should at least have two factories in operation, but I think one of them should indeed be a newly constructed factory.

In constructing that factory, I believe there is an opportunity that it could indeed be a co-generation factory where we can also see the Barbados Light and Power Company Limited utilising that facility for electricity generation for part of the year and at other times when it is needed to produce good sugar that can be the case.

What this is telling us is that as a small country we cannot have resources lying idle for part of any time when in truth and in fact better uses can be put to them. When you look at the sugar factory, and this is something that has been from time immemorial, you have a factory but you only use it once a year, which is during the cane harvesting season. What we are saying is, let us extend our horizon and think in terms of constructing a facility that can do the job but which can also be used outside of the cane harvesting season.

Mr. President, in terms of sharing of resources it must not only, to my mind, be a question of sharing technical resources. We also have to share our human resources in the industry as well. Again, Barbados is small enough where managerial expertise can be used across boundaries because you might find in one particular area, or in one particular factory, that you have good skills and that kind of understanding and managerial skills could be of benefit then to other farms. I think we need to pool the resources in the way they manage the industry itself in order to get maximum efficiencies.

In terms of us getting to the desired level of acreage allocated for production, and may I say that if we were to attempt to satisfy both the ACP, the SPSA and local demand, we would have to be producing in the region of 75 000 tonnes a year. For that to happen, we would have to bring back into production in excess of 9 000 acres of arable land that presently remain idle. This is a sad indictment, quite frankly, Mr. President, on some of the owners.

I really believe there should be some way that land could be made available to the Land for the Landless Programme. I cannot see how Barbados could be so small, the Government is attempting to have a Land for the Landless Programme, and we could have over 9 000 acres of land lying idle.

Asides.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: This is not Zimbabwe at all. So I do not want anybody to accuse me of coming up with the same kind of thinking at all, I do not want that. All I am saying is that we cannot have 9 444 acres of land in Barbados lying idle when there are people out

there who would want to take it and use it with the assistance of Government to support things like irrigation and so on. I really believe, Mr. President, that we have to think in terms of feeding ourselves and if, indeed, it can be achieved by that as a mechanism, I think we ought to consider it.

I spoke about the indebtedness which, as I said, by 1998 Government had spent \$72 million in assisting and restructuring the industry. However, I am happy to say that in 1999 the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development commissioned a multi-disciplinary task force comprising members drawn from both the public sector and the private sector to review the operations of the industry and provide a report on the rehabilitation and the long-term survival of the industry itself.

10.50 a.m.

That task force was tasked with the responsibility of identifying the critical problems that impacted the sector; the opportunities which could present themselves if indeed we begin to look at new ways and new areas to identify programmes and policies to try to solve the problems which presently exist and, as I said, to make recommendations for the Ministry to consider.

The projections, of course, indicate that between 2001 and 2003, 20 500 acres would be available for sugar production but if we are to get to the 75 000 tonnes of sugar to which I previously alluded, at least 26 300 acres of sugar cane must be harvested every year so that there is a big gap between the land that is available presently and what would be required if we are to get to a stage where we are able to plant and produce enough sugar to satisfy the various requirements.

I believe we therefore must ensure at least one thing happens and, that is, that no further arable land goes out of production. I think it is a *sine qua non*. Landowners must be encouraged to keep the land under production. Government over the years has ensured that it did its part and, also, that incentive programmes like the cane replanting incentive scheme be continued to support the effort. That, in itself, of course, has seen some land that was lying idle being brought back into production, and Senator Laurie knows exactly what I am talking about.

In terms of field operations, it accounts for some excess of 60 per cent of total cost and therefore if you are analysing issues and want to address them, you have to go to the major source and that is one of the areas that, to my mind, must be targeted.

One has to look also at the whole question of reducing the labour component through investment in mechanization. It is absolutely necessary that the industry move from being

a labour intensive industry to one that is more capital intensive.

Things like the cost of fertilizers and other agro-chemical products which form part of the inputs of production continue to contribute towards the cost of production. Buying them in bulk is one way to drive down the overall cost of field operations. I think the sugar growers will be required to have some clear idea of the future of sugar as well as the level of support that would generate a sense of confidence in terms of long-term cultivation.

I know that Senator Laurie makes the point, and I make it myself, that it is apparent therefore that unless there is some form of continued price support, the independent producers will simply go out of business. That, to my mind, will further exacerbate the problem we have.

In terms of factory operations, we need to look at whether we have one or two factories, and my vote comes down in favour of having two factories rather than one. The co-generation plant of which I spoke will reduce the operating costs and will result in a reduction of the capital costs, the normal amount of money they put into the existing plant. It will also result in a reduction of maintenance costs which presently are extremely high, and it could also see the elimination of boilers and lots of the other moving parts that you will find with the present type of facility, and it will also see a reduction in staff costs.

I believe that with these kinds of things, some of which I spoke and in other areas, we can see the sector at least sustaining itself and I use the word "sustain" loosely because it is "sustain with assistance and support" but, indeed, in the short to medium term, we could still have a future and I do support any effort that Government may have to develop and further support the sugar industry.

I am not quite sure how much more time I have but I want to look...

Mr. PRESIDENT: You have five minutes, Senator.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to look quickly at Head 19 which deals with the Ministry of Finance. The Barbados economy over the last eight years has seen successive growth each year. We have just experienced our eighth year and that is a tremendous credit to the Minister of Finance, the Government and the people of Barbados. No government does it alone. What it calls for is leadership, and what we know that we have is excellent leadership.

Mr. President, I will say that if I were coming before this Chamber to say to you that this is the eighth year of decline, I would not have been the first person saying it. It would have been said yesterday. I do not expect an

Opposition to come and make that kind of pronouncement, be that charitable, but I can say what is wrong, Mr. President, is that despite all the facts that were before us, we could have had a situation yesterday when Senator Mascoll came, and to my mind and I say this quite honestly from the depths of my heart, it was the worst presentation in this Honourable Chamber. I have not heard everybody, but I have heard him and it was the worst. That is the honest truth. I do not know if it is because he played forward too early, got caught by Senator Barker at first slip, and he was only seeking thereafter to play second innings.

Mr. President, let me just quickly go on. We had over the years moderate inflation, again the hallmark of good management. GDP increased by 3.7 per cent – good management. The net international reserves at the end of December stood at \$964.1 million.

Some will argue that in part it was due to international borrowing. That is true, but it increased by over \$300 million in one year. So if you left out what you borrowed and what you paid back you will see that the other sectors were working extremely well. There was growth by eight per cent in tourism when in truth and in fact there was a 1.5 per cent decline in 1999.

The arrivals from the USA rebounded and we recorded an eight per cent increase reversing the annual average of 1.5 per cent decline, and the long-stay visitors grew about 5.9 per cent mainly led by the UK which accounted for some 41 per cent of all long-stay visitors. Cruise ship passengers also grew by 23 per cent during the year 2000 in contrast to a fall of 14 per cent previously.
11.00 a.m.

The agricultural sector on the whole performed moderately in 2000 with the sugar sector performing above average and that in part is the reason why I believe we should continue to support the sector. This sector was able to enhance our GDP performance, and sugar output rose by 9.7 per cent.

The manufacturing sector was exposed to regional and international competition as a result of the changes in the tariff regime. There is no government that would have done more over the years to support manufacturing than this present Administration. The reason why the sector is undergoing difficulty is because you can no longer shield anybody in this new age because everybody has to survive.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, your innings have come to an end.

SENATOR J. E. D. WILLIAMS: Mr. President, it has never been an easy occasion for me to speak on the Estimates. I believe the Government did an excellent job and ought to be congratulated.

Sir, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, I want first to look at the macro economic situation because it disturbs me slightly. I am a farmer, not an economist, but I notice that only 14 per cent of the budget is devoted to those Ministries that are actually dealing with the productive sector of the economy. In other words, 86 per cent of the Government's budget is being spent on roads, health, education and so on.

Sir, it worries me because in 1991 we saw a similar type of situation where less and less support went to the productive sector. I remember the then Chairman of the Foreign Exchange Committee, which was a committee put in place to fix the problem, saying to Ministers of Government that they should sit and listen to the productive sector. This was the Democratic Labour Party and they admitted that Government tends not to listen to the productive sector as it should. With agriculture getting less than 3.5 per cent of the budget, it indicates to me the sort of problems we are likely to face in agriculture in terms of incentives. I hope that Government will look at more support for the productive sector.

Sir, we were presented in here with the Auditor General's Report. I do not know how many people had a chance to read it but it was an indictment of many of our public sector Ministries and the Civil Service and nobody has done anything about it. It bothers me that there has been no explanation to Parliament why there were these infelicities.

The VAT Department is now the major tax collection agency and it is pandemonium to get a parking space the last day on which you can pay VAT. All that is needed is a simple deposit box where the payment can be dropped to make life easier. It is about three to six months before you can get back your refund from VAT but this is a major problem, particularly for small businesses and I hope we can do something about improving that. The cost of doing business in Barbados is pushed up by this problem of having to wait three to six months.

Sir, at the National Insurance Department there is the same problem and a simple deposit box would solve the problem where you can drop your payment. You do not want people to go through a lot of rigmarole in order to pay money. The commercial companies have put in these deposit boxes and I think that the National Insurance Department should also do that.

Sir, the Statistical Department. Government cannot plan without good statistics and people are not questioning the Statistical Department reports. The statistics are wrong. They are not wrong by 10 per cent but by 300 per cent. How

can you plan anything to do with food in Barbados when you are dealing with statistics that are out by 300 per cent.

I have brought it to the attention of the Statistical Department who said they get their figures from the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Agriculture says they get their figures from the large farms and they pay no attention to anything that is produced other than through the abattoir. They use gross statistics and they do not attempt to find out what is going on out there. Sir, we should put some more money into the Statistical Department because if you are basing your plans on bad figures you will have a bad plan.

Sir, the Department of Town and Country Planning is a major constraint to the development of Barbados. There is practically no one who tells you that he can get something from that Department in a reasonable time. They are nearly as bad as the legal profession. We have this problem of getting them to understand that there is urgency when it comes to the private sector. If we need to beef up the Town & Country Planning we should do it.

We should have in the Town & Country Planning people who can deal with health. It is ridiculous that every application has to be sent to the Ministry of Health and when you go to the Ministry of Health, they tell you that it is somewhere else. There should be people in Town & Country Planning who are capable of saying what the requirements are to build the house. A person from the Ministry of Health should not have to visit every site. This is very old-fashioned and inefficient way of operating. I am sure Barbadians would feel that Government is spending money wisely by doing something with this Department.

Mr. President, this movement towards having standards particularly in terms of food is excellent. Unfortunately, standards seem only to apply to locally produced products. I have seen imported products come here and I have taken them to the National Standards Institute and they said the product was bad and that the product would never pass our standards, yet this product had been imported, passed through the Port and passed through the Ministry of Health. We actually took some of this chicken to a chicken plant, called the inspector and asked him what he would do with this chicken. He took out a bottle of diesel and poured it all over the chicken, but this chicken was passed and was being sold to consumers in Barbados.

Sir, I think the time has come when we must see a proper consumer association in Barbados because consumers are being ripped off in this country left, right and centre and it is time that some organisation like BARP do something about it. We need an organisation like that, which people will trust and believe because they are not doing it for political or business reasons. We need to have a balanced and strong consumer department. I would like to see more support from Government for the formation of this.

Sir, the Barbados Investment and Development Corporation (BIDC). We need to congratulate the Minister and his Department for doing an excellent job. I have had experience with them helping farmers. They are a great help to these small farmers and are worthy of congratulations.

I see we are going to spend \$2 928 255 in community development. It really amazes me how you can estimate down to the last dollar but that is besides the point, Sir. I think that in community development we must go back and try to encourage people to produce food in their backyards. Sir, there is a tremendous amount of food being produced out there. We estimate that as much food as the total food production quoted by Government's statistics is produced in the backyards in the rural communities. Traditionally Barbadians had in their backyards security for their families. They had livestock and crops growing in their backyards. Sir, this needs active help from Government.

11.10 a.m.

Sir, I went to talk to the Ministry of Social Transformation and I got very excited when the Minister appointed a guy to liaise with me to see if we could develop a programme to do with backyard farming. We wanted to go to CBC and then go and visit backyards that are really producing crops and use some of these ideas by showing everybody in Barbados how, with a very small size of land about the size of this table, you could actually produce most of your food. This is something that is worthwhile doing but we did not get anywhere with the idea and I have not heard anything else about it.

Sir, I want to deal with agriculture. I notice that the grant to the Barbados Agricultural Society is \$1 200 a year. This is legal. It was there since 1845 and it is still at \$1 200 a year. I asked someone from the Central Bank to give me what they think in 2001 it would be and they said \$68 000 a year.

Sir, the 4H gets \$100 000, BAS gets \$1 200 and Fisheries Organisations get \$75 000. Something is not correct. What we really need is an organisation of the small farmers to try to keep them in production because it is a very essential part of food production.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, I see we have long gotten around to doing this agricultural census. It was due in 1999 and the previous one was in 1989. It is supposed to be done every 10 years. Sir, it took three years from the time the census was carried out to the time it was published and that is in spite of the fact it was put on a computer.

I am hoping that in this day and age when the people go around to take the census information, they will be going

around equipped with a laptop and they will be able to come in and download it. Hopefully, within a few months of completing the actual legwork of the census, we can have a report because there is no point in having the census if they are going to be years late.

Sir, we do not seem to be getting anywhere with cotton. The Ministry of Agriculture put out a task force on cotton but I have not seen the report. The BSTA, of which I happened to be President, had a think-tank on cotton and we spent a day and then submitted a document. We were told by the Chairman of the task force that the document was very useful but we still have not gotten anywhere.

Sir, I know my friend Senator Barker is a very keen pusher of cotton but we have not gotten anywhere. When you think that we are getting about \$3 a pound for cotton, and a pound of cotton can transform into a shirt – a sea island cotton shirt sells for \$300. Surely we can do something about that.

We also expressed considerable concern about the loss of genetic material. We think that the cotton planted today is not the true Sea Island Cotton that we had some time ago. We can get contamination because cotton is primarily crossed by wind. We need now to go back into the countryside and look for samples of long staple cotton.

Sir, page 70 under the livestock improvement sector – this is now the largest sector in agriculture. Though the largest user of land is the sugar industry, when it comes to productivity the poultry industry is nearly twice the size of the sugar industry in gross products. Livestock is now the major sector in agriculture and it is the sector that has some potential to expand. We produce about 25 per cent of the lamb we consume and probably about 5 per cent of the beef. Those two sectors can and should be expanded but they are going to need some help and protection.

The Veterinary Laboratory is an essential part of the livestock industry and it is one area which has the fullest support of the farmers. They are doing an excellent job. Their work has significantly improved animal health in Barbados and their response time is very good. Sir, they have a fax machine and farmers can fax in information and get the reports the next day. I wish all other Government departments were run like that.

We have an amount of \$625 000 allocated for quarantine. As far as I know that is plant quarantine. It is very sad that we do not have an animal quarantine here in Barbados. Livestock farmers have been saying for a long time that they would like one, not only livestock farmers but also people who would like to import pets.

We have as part of our tourism the villa operation where people would like to bring their dogs, cats or some

other animals in from the United States but there is no quarantine facility. They have to send the animal to England for six months and then bring it here to Barbados. It is very costly and it would probably cost you more than three times the value of the dog. Sir, we really need to have an animal quarantine facility set up somewhere in Barbados.

Sir, the question on sugar is not one factory or two factories. What are we going to sell? Right now it costs between \$1 366, depending on what document you are looking at, to produce a tonne of sugar. We are getting approximately \$900 a tonne depending on the value of the Euro versus our dollar and that is something over which we have absolutely no control.

I went to a lecture by a Professor Joslyn of the University of the West Indies last week 'The future of Sugar' and he was fairly pessimistic about that price. I asked him if he could estimate what the price of our sugar would be on the European market for the next five years, and his reply was that if he had known that, he would not be here lecturing. He would be laying at the beach enjoying his huge wealth, because it is very difficult to forecast with all the factors impacting on the price of which we have a quota guarantee or no price guarantee.

11.20 a.m.

It appears that the price will continue to fall and the gap between the cost of production and revenue is going to widen. Therefore, it means that the taxpayers have to put up more money to subsidize this sugar, so that if we decide that granulated sugar – why granulated sugar lands in Barbados at \$600 per ton? The most profitable thing that you can do in the sugar industry is to take that white granulated sugar and mix it with molasses and sell it back to the country as brown sugar, because it is only costing \$600 to start with. Where is the future? Apparently there is no future for raw sugar production.

On the other hand, very clearly, I think we should keep all our good agricultural land for sugar cane and if we are not going to make raw sugar, what are we going to do? We will continue to make some sugar for local production, we will continue to export some, but not in bulk, it has to be packaged and branded. The Professor said that it needs to be attractive in order to be sold – "Barbados Sunshine Crystals", or something like that, that would sell in the niche market and that people in Europe will be prepared to pay that extra to get a good product which is branded and one they can associate with.

Barbados has a great name. Why are we not using it? Branding of products is the way forward, not shipping things in bulk. The same way with rum; to ship spirits to somebody and let them put some other contaminants in it and sell it as rum is not the future. The future is to go with branded

products and the French Islands are showing that very, very clearly.

So, if we are not going to produce raw sugar what are we going to do with the sugar cane? We have then to find other uses. There are uses for the fibre and the conventional sugar cane that goes to the mills right now is about 12 to 14 per cent fibre. There are sugar canes at Groves Breeding Station that have over 30 per cent fibre. So if we wanted to produce cane for fibre we would not use the conventional cane. This is the one advantage we have. We have a sugar cane breeding station and they have a fantastic array of genetic materials they can manipulate to give us the type of cane we need to produce different things.

For instance if sugar cane is ground and it was high in protein, it would give a lot of problems to clarify the juice. Now, if you want to feed sugar cane to animals and it was high in protein that is a plus. We need now to select varieties of sugar cane for livestock feed that would have a protein content.

Looking at land use for livestock, it takes an average of one acre to sustain one cow. With sugar cane you can get ten cows for one acre of land, so sugar cane is one of the best grasses in the world in terms of converting solar energy into useable energy for livestock production. This is what we need to do. We need to do these feasibility studies urgently. We need to be able to say we are going to be able to produce sugar cane for all these various reasons.

We can produce sugar cane for rum. Right now, rum is produced from sugar cane in other countries that have been selected for sucrose production. We have cane at Groves that is unsuitable for working in the sugar industry because its sucrose is not high. It has a very high glucose level. Now, glucose is better attacked by yeast to produce alcohol, but not with sucrose. So we need to select canes that are rum canes and we should have a certain area of canes planted for rum production in Barbados. We should also have a certain sugar factory to squeeze the juice and to make rum from that juice.

Presently, we are one of the few countries in the world where you have autonomous distilleries that are not attached to the sugar factories and are fuelled by oil. We should be doing the initial distillation and fermentation at the sugar factory, then send the crude alcohol to the distilleries for refining and producing all the various products they need. These are the kinds of areas that must be looked at.

Of course, I need to speak about the black belly sheep. The tradition of production in Barbados has been to small farmers, mainly women and children who produce a small amount of lamb which takes about 18 months to feed on grass alone and therefore these facilities are not ideal and by the time it gets to market it is no longer lamb, it is mutton and, therefore, it attracts a much lower price.

What the Black Belly Sheep Association, which is owned by the small farmers are trying to do, is to provide a market for this wean lamb where we take the wean lamb from the farmer and put it through a process thereby producing a full grown lamb for slaughter at eight months of age, while also producing the best lamb meat in the world. We have the best flavour and if we get it at eight months, it is just as tender as lamb from anywhere else in the world. It is low in fat and that is the very key to our production of meat and we are looking both at the hotel and restaurant markets.

Again, we need to brand the product. We want to make sure that the consumer is not getting mutton. He is buying eight months-old lamb and it is guaranteed. So we need to brand that product and get it out into the tourist and export markets. I think there is a niche out there for that type of gourmet lamb.

On page 77, there are some incentives to farmers in the sum of \$1 100 000 but if you look at what was given away last year it was only \$235 267. That is of very major concern to farmers because in theory, that money is there. The Prime Minister, in his Budget gave various incentives to which we are very grateful and which is very necessary, but when it comes down to the bureaucracy of getting that money into the farmers' pockets it is so difficult, because in theory when you make the application it takes months. When you talk to these farmers they say, "O well, you know, there is some guy there who got some incentives and he should not have gotten it." I said to them, "come, tell me the name of the man who got an incentive who should not have got it and I, personally will go to the Director of Public Prosecution and lobby to have this man put in jail because I do not see why legitimate farmers should suffer from such incentives."

Presently we are trying to get a vehicle for the company and we qualify under every condition for such a vehicle, but the whole thing is held up in hiatus because somebody reported to someone in Government that someone has a vehicle who should not have gotten one, but at the moment we are renting one which makes it very expensive. These are the kinds of frustrations that farmers have when it comes to this incentive programme.

At page 78, The Meteorology Department comes under the Ministry of Agriculture, yet it operates 99 per cent for the purpose of the airline flights coming in and out of Grantley Adams International Airport. We need to have accurate weather forecasts, particularly in the short and medium term. Is it going to rain next week? You cannot get that information out of the Grantley Adams International Airport at all. They have a radar up there but they actually pass the information from the radar through a computing system which takes out all the information that would be interesting to agriculture and only leaves that to the people who are

controlling the airline flights, so we really need to get that Department producing, including forecasts for the farmers on a regular basis.

We cannot do that. I mean when you have agriculture with sugar, sugar is relatively insensitive to changes in climates, rainfalls, and there is also the dry periods. The sugar cane is a great crop for Barbados because you can abuse it and still it will live, but this is not so when we get into exotic vegetables which is the future that we are going to.

The Rural Development Commission – I think people living in the rural areas really thought that this was something that was going to immediately impact on our lives and so far, all it has done – and it has done a very good job at infrastructural improvements and that, to some extent will relieve some of the problems for rural people, but I think there were expecting more intervention in terms of helping them to become income earners – development of craft groups, development of small farming groups, helping with the marketing, which is a major problem for the small farmer, particularly the vegetable farmer and I feel the Rural Development Commission should shift a little of its emphasis away from the infrastructural improvements into areas where they can do training and marketing.

11.30 a.m.

Mr. President, I will now move on to the Environment. First of all, I would like to congratulate the Government for moving Environment from the several little Ministries and putting it under one Ministry. Sir, we have seen a real improvement and I think the Ministry of the Environment is doing a very good job. They have made big strides in helping but there is still a long way to go.

Illegal dumping is still a major problem and nobody is getting locked up for it. Do not tell me that so much illegal dumping is going on and nobody knows who is doing it. It is crazy. Somebody told me that they were in a potato field one night and a truck drove up. He thought it was someone coming to steal potatoes and he ran to the truck only to find out that somebody had borrowed the Sanitation Authority's truck and was dumping garbage in the cart road. Sir, we have to make much greater efforts to stop this illegal dumping.

Sir, the National Conservation Commission – again, I am not too critical of the Government but in this particular case, I think they are doing a really excellent job. I have had occasion to go to Codrington a few times and the last time I went there, after I got attended to, I asked to see the Manager and I said, "I want to tell you something about your staff". He said, "Oh my God, again?" I said, "No, No, No. I want to tell you that this is the best service I have ever gotten from a Government department." Sir, it really was ideal and they need to be encouraged.

I see there is some money voted for a botanical garden at Codrington and I really believe that we should not go that way. What is badly needed in this island is an arboretum where we can grow trees, both local and imported. We already have one botanical garden at the National Trust's Andromeda Gardens and I think to have a second botanical garden would be counter productive but an arboretum would be a big help.

The Barbados National Trust, as you know, is not in a very good financial position and we have recently asked the National Conservation Commission to help us at Welchman Hall. The Minister of the Environment said that he will look at it for me and I am looking forward to him doing that.

Sir, regarding the Coastal Zone Management – one of the problems of the coastal zone is water contaminating the inshore which runs off from the gullies and so on. We have proved conclusively at Green Hill by accident that they quarried out the main gully system that drains most of St. Thomas and St. Joseph. They made a huge hole in the ground and when we get heavy rain there, it fills up and it does not flow into Bridgetown. You will remember that every rainy season, we used to have floods in Bridgetown but we do not get it again because of this quarry.

This can be duplicated in many other quarries and I have been to all of the major contractors who said that if we give them the material that comes out, they will dig the hole for free. Now, we are supposed to do one at Plumtree Gully which is beside Plumtree Quarry. There is a piece of the gully wall that is left and we need to dig a hole from the gully into the quarry and thereby divert water to Plumtree gully from going down into the Hometown area.

Sir, the Government went to Sailor Gully and instead of digging that gully floor deeper, they built a dam. I do not like the idea of this dam because if that dam should ever give way in a flood, we are going to have real problems down stream. It would have been very simple – and it can still be done – for them to get a bulldozer and dig out a part of the bottom of Sailor Gully and that will hold back all the water they have and not put any chance on a dam giving way.

This can also be done in the Whim Gully which is a real problem for Speightstown. I hope the Parliamentary Representative for that area will look at this because there is a quarry alongside the Whim Gully that is abandoned. It would need deepening and again that can be done at no cost. It is a win-win situation. We could divert the water from the Whim into that gully and prevent the flooding in Speightstown.

Energy – I see that we have a sum of \$1.3 million put aside for a Renewable Energy Centre and I hope somebody on the Government Side will tell us exactly what that is because I have never heard of it, maybe it is my fault.

Anyhow, I think it is a great move forward because we have been talking about renewable energy. And yesterday, Senator Dame Patricia Symmonds was mentioning how we have put solar cells in the schools and of course, we recently put in photovoltaic for refrigeration at Skeete's Bay where they have a very lovely set-up.

I visited it last week where I went down a beautiful road, came onto a nice parking lot, a state-of-the-art solar refrigeration unit and a very nice place for doing the fish. Then, like if they ran out of money, the jetty barely gets out into the surf. One boat owner there told me, "well, maybe three days of the year, I could come alongside his jetty" but the rest of the time...

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: ...I was standing on the jetty and I was getting wet from the surf pounding in. That needs to go out at least just as far to get beyond the surf and even then, they really need to go out onto the reef and put some kind of a barricade there to try and break some of the sea because that is on the east coast.

At Consett Bay they have a very good jetty that is protected naturally by the reef, and there is a channel coming in, but not at Skeete's Bay. I do not know what happened. They apparently spent most of the money on the onshore stuff and we need to go further out. I think that was money funded by the Europeans and I hope we can go back and get another grant to take it further out. Right now, all that is happening is that the guys are fishing off the ends and they are very happy about that but the guys with the boats are not very happy there at all.

In terms of this solar energy and wind energy, I think that wind energy probably has the better economics at the present moment but we need to have incentives for people to do that. I do not know what has happened but in the not so distant past, you had to pay duty on a windmill. If you brought in a windmill to generate electricity, you paid duty. Most countries would give you an incentive if you were to put in a windmill – if you are going to buy a windmill, the Government will pay a part of the cost for the erection of the windmill.

In many countries the Government, will also insist that the Light and Power Company pay you full value for the current that you put into the grid. They have resisted that here. When the sugar factories were coal generating...

Aside.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: ...Co-generation sounds like if it is something new. Co-generation is not new, ten years ago we were co-generating and putting electricity in the

grid. What do you get paid for it? Ten cents or eleven cents a kilowatt hour when the consumer was paying 32 cents.

That should never have been allowed. The Government should have stepped in and said it was nonsense and it cannot be done. For example, in many countries like Mauritius, sugar factories are putting in a considerable amount of current and they negotiated. Eventually, the Government came in and passed a law saying: "You shall receive this service and shall pay full value for it." We need something like that to make the Barbados Light and Power Company give full value for the electricity produced by these systems.

We need to have more incentives to do more in energy conservation. I remember we had a programme here, under Prime Minister Tom Adams, where he introduced a series of measures. For example, he said that nobody could borrow money from the Government's bank, the Barbados Development Bank, unless they had an energy audit. 11.40 a.m.

I was involved in some of those energy audits which other departments set up with their engineers who carried out energy audits for Government and the private sector. We did one for a bank and showed them that they could save something like \$36 000 a year just by simply switching off the air-conditioners when they were going home at night because they air-conditioned that Bank all day long with no one working in it. There are many ways in Barbados to save energy but we have to give some kind of incentives to people to do this conservation because this is in our national interest. We have to stop wasting electricity. We have too much in here right now.

There are other types of alternative energies. Professor, the Honourable Oliver Headley had done some work on motion temperature and the use of wave energy. These are all areas where we need to further explore. We have some potential in certain parts of the island, particularly on the East Coast, for converting wave energy into useful energy but we need to have the necessary incentives in place. I know there was a place off Sam Lord's Castle where the seabed goes down very deep and very sudden and the water down at the bottom on the sand is cold. It is about 5° centigrade. It was thought that we can pump that into the hotel and pass it through a Lect-exchanger coil, blow air over it and provide airconditioning for the whole hotel.

These are the kinds of things we can do but they require a fairly capital intensive investment. Therefore, we need to have some programme in place to encourage people to do those kinds of things.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I am indeed honoured to have my first opportunity to speak to the Estimates as presented by the Government of this country.

However, I must say that to simply discuss the numbers with respect to the Estimates will become rather irrelevant if we only think in terms of what is projected to be spent in order to satisfy the requirements of the Appropriation Bill.

I believe we need to be able to put the Estimates in the context of the overall development of the country, not only in the short term, but what is envisioned from the people's concern for Barbados in the 21st Century and beyond. I recall some time ago that the Prime Minister, soon after attaining that office, made the point that supplementaries will be a thing of the past because the Estimates were supposed to be put forward with such a degree of accuracy that the idea of having supplementaries would be unnecessary.

What we have seen, however, is a departure from that stated position and we still get the continued process of large supplementaries being brought to the House simply because of the almost impossibility to accurately forecast what Government will spend in certain areas. In this regard, I would like to think of the Estimates in the context of the overall development of this country.

Mr. President, we have heard many comments coming from several quarters in this country about the impact of policies which are instituted outside of Barbados and what we can do, or what we do not do, or even what we are allowed to do. It seems to me that we have become the proverbial sitting ducks when it comes to the policies of international agencies. We simply are here to do the dictates of these institutions because we signed all kinds of treaties and, therefore, seem to be locked into only accepting the strictures which may be imposed by the various international agencies.

Most recently, we have seen the difficulties caused by our arrangements through the World Trade Organisation. We have now got the situation with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and more recently we have heard the Prime Minister mentioning the point of the graduation of Barbados thus reducing our ability to access grants and loans at concessionary terms whereas countries who are many times larger and with much bigger economies are able to do so.

Now, if we are going to find ourselves in this kind of situation, I would think that we should dedicate some of our energies to instituting proactive measures rather than having to respond to the dictates from outside of Barbados. I really do not like the situation that exists where we seem to accept that we can do nothing. This is a worrisome situation because, as a small vulnerable economy, we certainly must take a closer look at what we can do to protect ourselves from the vagaries of the international markets and the impact from the various policies that are taken outside.

We have a situation also where we shudder every time the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) holds a meeting because we do not know what is going to happen.

Recently, I have been hearing of the slow-down in the economy of the United States of America. I know that very soon that we will hear when the slow-down of the economy of Barbados become evident, because there is reason to believe that it has already started to slow down, that it is as a result of what is happening in the United States of America economy. So we find ourselves being tossed hither, thither and yon because of what is happening outside. We seem to be unable to do anything to resist the impact of these policies.

Recently, we have been hearing a debate raging in this country between a supermarket owner and poultry producers over an issue like importation of chicken wings and turkey wings which the people who are producing them outside of Barbados would quite willingly dump or dispose of because when they have reached that part of the product, basically it is of very little economic value to them, but here it is that we as a country are embroiled in a major debate about buying something which other people would gladly dispose of free of cost.

Now, what are we as a people doing? This is a serious indictment on us as a people if we are going to be arguing over a product like that when we in Barbados have been able to produce more than an adequate amount of poultry products for the Barbadian market. In fact, Barbados should have been exporting poultry products to the rest of the Caribbean long ago.

11.50 a.m.

I recall a few years ago when it was almost impossible to get eggs in Guyana and when you did get one, sometimes you could not tell the difference between the yolk and the white because of the low quality of feed that was being fed to the chickens there. We make no attempt whatsoever to get into that market. We have all of the OECS which is a ready market also but we are in a situation where it is more economical to import chicken and turkey wings from the USA rather than to patronize the poultry industry in Barbados. That is a very serious situation.

Recently the Minister of Education made the bold statement, which we have been hearing in this country long ago, that people should buy local. In fact, she went on to say that even if it is a little more expensive than the imported product, that you should still buy local in order to support the local industry. I have no difficulty whatsoever with that.

While that is being said, what is happening at the Government level? The School Meals Department is using chicken that is imported because it is cheaper. A major

market for the poultry producers in Barbados is being utilised by an importer of foreign imports. As Senator Laurie said earlier, some of that chicken, when tested, has been deemed unfit for human consumption. That point was made before...

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: On a point of order. The chicken that was used at the School Meals last year, the tender was offered to the Small Business Association and they facilitated their needs very well. Thank you.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, we are not talking about who supplies the chicken to the School Meals Department. We are talking about where the chicken came from.

SENATOR Miss C. Y. FORDE: Mr. President, I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member but the chicken that was collected through the Small Business Association was as a result of many small poultry farmers in Barbados coming together and compiling the chicken that was presented to facilitate the orders that were made by the School Meals Department. It was not imported chicken.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I am saying categorically that that statement is untrue.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You cannot accuse an Honourable Member of speaking an untruth. You can say the information is incorrect but you cannot directly refer to an Honourable Senator in those terms. It is unparliamentary.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: What I will say is that the Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate, because Hanschell Inniss has been the major supplier of chicken to the School Meals Department right now. One will recall that the farmers of this country made a fuss about it and they were able to enter into an accommodation with the supplier of the chicken to the School Meals Department so that they could sell some chicken to the School Meals Department through the person who got the tender.

Furthermore, Sir, as a result of that arrangement, I would like the Honourable Senator who holds a senior position in the Ministry of Education to say whether or not the present supplier is receiving more than what it had tendered for per kilogram for chicken.

Mr. President, I use that simply as an example to show that sometimes we seem not to understand what direction we should go in because when we look at the Estimates and we see what has been allocated for agriculture, and Senator Laurie made reference to it already, when we see that the reduction of any allocation to the BADMC, an organisation which should be at the forefront of promoting agricultural development in this country, furthermore an organisation

which at one point was the major instrument by which farmers could export produce from Barbados, the export scheme through the BADMC has been killed. The facility, I believe, is closed and several people have been sent home from that organisation.

It is okay to tell farmers they should produce, but how can the farmers of Barbados produce in a climate where they do not know if there is going to be a market for their produce? Secondly, when they have to produce at extremely high costs, because of the water they have to use for irrigation, many of them do not have access to the irrigation facilities that are provided through the BADMC and so have to use water from the BWA besides the cost of production in addition to the cost of fertilizers and the cost of farm implements.

I can say that in a budget presentation made by Sir Lloyd Erskine Sandiford, I remember personally pointing out to him the need to reduce the tax on farm implements, and it was done. When I went into the stores what I realised was that even though the tax had been removed there was no reduction in the cost of the implements. The people who imported the tools simply kept the price the same and made better profits. That is the kind of thing we have in Barbados.

If you look at the cost of farm implements and the cost of fertilizer and all the inputs for agriculture, farmers have to meet extremely high costs to produce. Then they cannot find ready markets and they cannot produce in the volume for export because there is no facility for export. Then you have a situation where one farmer only recently pointed out that he sold sweet peppers to a supermarket at \$4 a pound only to go into the supermarket and see them being sold at \$16 a kilo.

The supermarkets can exploit the consumers while at the same time paying the farmers next to nothing for their produce, so that farmers in Barbados are facing extremely harsh conditions and they need the support of Government agencies like the BADMC. They need the support of an institution like the BAS to give these institutions technical support. I think Government is certainly doing a disservice to the agricultural sector.

We have a situation with Fisheries. We have seen in the 1999-2000 Estimates there was \$2 million allocated to fisheries development and then we had \$1.4 million for 2000-2001 and a similar amount, a small reduction of \$3 118 in these Estimates. This certainly does not indicate an increase in support to the fisheries sector in this country.

Apart from any financial input to a Government agency, where fisheries is concerned we also have the situation that the fisherfolk in Barbados are facing myriad problems. We have seen only recently over the weekend that fishermen are saying that they find it more economical to go

to Grenada and purchase ice rather than wait to get ice from the fisheries complex in Barbados. They do so at a significant cost, but they find it more economical to do that knowing that they will be able to get ice rather than wait for three or four days in Barbados for ice they cannot get.

12.00 noon

How can we help a fishing industry if fishermen cannot get ice in Barbados? Sir, there is a lack of a fisheries agreement with Trinidad. This was a major problem at the start of 1994 and it was always felt that it was because of the inactivity and incompetence of the past Government that you could not get an agreement with Trinidad and Tobago. It is now 2001 and we still do not have an agreement with Trinidad and Tobago. We have an Ambassador for CARICOM and I do not know the last day I heard activity coming from that particular Ambassador.

Mr. PRESIDENT: It is out of order to refer to the conduct of any public officer unless previous notice is given to the Presiding Officer.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I withdraw those comments. The point I want to make, Mr. President, is that the fishermen and the people of Barbados are not being adequately served. They are not getting the kind of service that is required if we are to make any proper inroads in terms of the development of our fisheries because the fishermen of Barbados rely to a large extent on fishing in Trinidadian waters. While our fishermen cannot fish in Trinidadian waters, I have heard stories of Trinidadian fishing boats coming into Oistins for diesel and other supplies. They can come into Barbados as they like, in the same way that all the Trinidadian named products can find a market in Barbados. I recall a few years ago BICO sending a shipment of ice cream to Trinidad and they allowed it to stay on the docks and refused to clear it.

Mr. President, for years Barbadians have not been able to have free access to the Trinidadian market. Barbadians cannot go to Trinidad and work freely but Trinidadians can get whatever they like into Barbados. The avenue is also there for them to come into Barbados and buy up Barbadian companies.

Mr. President, I am not saying that we should not have relations with our CARICOM partners where we can have open trade but it must be both ways. I am saying that while our Prime Minister is developing a reputation for being the champion of small countries in his fight with the OECD and other institutions, he seems unable to develop the kind of relationship with his CARICOM partners that Barbados can enjoy the kinds of benefits that our CARICOM partners enjoy in Barbados. This is something that needs to be addressed quickly so that the Barbadian manufacturer can get his goods into Trinidad the same way the Trinidadian manufacturer can get his into Barbados.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, on a point of order. I think the Honourable Senator is not correct in stating that position regarding the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister, recently at an inter-session meeting at Sam Lord's Castle, pointed out that the current *status quo* cannot be maintained and that Barbados has to have a reciprocal arrangement with Trinidad. He has gone on record more than once saying that the situation is in a state of debate and discussion with the Government of Trinidad and Tobago. It is uncharitable, untrue and unfair to try to indicate that the Prime Minister is indifferent to the plight of the Barbadian manufacturer or fishermen.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I never said that the Prime Minister is indifferent to anything. All that the Honourable Senator said is true. The Prime Minister has been speaking before 1994, but this is 2001 and still nothing has happened. It does not matter what has been said. The reality of the situation is that Barbadian fishermen still cannot fish in Trinidadian waters. This is the reality of the situation regardless of what has been said or what positions have been taken by the Prime Minister of Barbados, this is still the case today.

Mr. President, I believe we should take a realistic look at what is happening to our producers, manufacturers, fishermen and other people and all this talk about a booming economy, we should take a closer look at what is hampering in this country sector by sector and see exactly who is prospering in the boom and who is not.

Mr. President, also under Agriculture there is a Head dealing with Land for the Landless. Again, this is a laudable sounding expression. Those landless farmers who are utilising other people's property to graze their animals, I am sure when they heard about this scheme over a year or two ago, they had great expectations. Many young persons who would like to engage in farming also had great expectations but we see only \$500 000 allocated in the Estimates for land for the landless farmers. Sir, \$500 000 cannot even buy a good house spot on the west coast.

There are no mechanisms in place to provide land for the landless farmers of this country. Also, some of the land identified, farmers will tell you that it is not the best kind of land suited for their purpose in hilly St. Andrew and the Scotland district. People who had better resources did not find it economical to utilise that land and it certainly would be difficult for small farmers to do so.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, on a point of order. It is inaccurate to say that the infrastructure has not been put in place for land for the landless. The Honourable Member may not know that it is the intention of Government to let an established operator in

the private sector manage much of the land for the landless as they have demonstrated competence in that area.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, that does not give me any comfort because all we might see again is one large entity having control over the whole situation and the small farmers still being left out to sea.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, on a point of order. This entity is a trust that is providing a charitable operation to support the farming community in Barbados. It is not a profit making centre, it is a charitable trust that is developing this area to support the farming community in Barbados. It is not a monopoly that will be ruthlessly running small farmers.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I can only respond to what is known by the public. Sir, I am saying that the Government has not to this day spelt out any clear policy for that programme called "Land for the Landless". Sir, if there has been one then point me to it.

Mr. President, we have been hearing the debate about the future of sugar in Barbados. Sir, we continue in this country to reinvent the wheel. This debate about the future of sugar was raised in Barbados since 1760 and the same issues that we are hearing about now were being raised then. They were talking about new technology, workforce, market and the price they will be receiving for sugar. So, how far have we come, Mr. President? The future of sugar in Barbados still depends on the price that you are going to get for sugar in Europe. After 300 years that is still the situation with respect to sugar in Barbados.

12.10 p.m.

Sir, as Senator Laurie said, there are several other things we can do with respect to sugar. In fact, those persons who know anything about the sugar cane plant would tell you that the sucrose that we produce from it should really be the by-product. There is so much more that you can get out of the sugar cane plant.

Mr. President, over 15 years ago, tests were done in making a hardboard from the bagasse and some was sent to Canada.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I am not speaking about any crop test project. I am talking about the samples that were made in Canada from the bagasse produced here. If you go into the Ministry of Agriculture, I believe they still have the samples, with the different grades of the wood that can be made from bagasse.

Mr. President, one of the difficulties we have in Barbados is that there are too many people who hold

responsible positions who do not understand the basic things. So, rather than trying to learn and understand what is going on in the world around us, they bury their heads in the sand and believe that we are at the centre of the world and that anything that is happening we should be a part of. There are a lot of things that we need to know, and a lot of things that we can know if we take the time to do so and if we allow those persons who have done the necessary research, if we give them the opportunity, we can see a lot of advancement taking place in this country. Sir, on this same debate on sugar is a perfect example.

I have heard all the comments being made whether there should be a single factory or not. I do not recall the Association that involves the sugar technologists, nor I do not recall anybody talking to them to find out what is their view. We have heard businessmen, we have heard Government officers but you have not heard any of the technical people who understand what is happening in this area. I believe that you should talk to those people and try to get an understanding of what we should be doing with respect to sugar.

Sir, I would like to see some greater emphasis being put on food crop production and the facilities being made to farmers to produce at a lower cost and farmers knowing that they have a market for their produce. In this regard I would like to see an increase in the research and development that is done where food crop production is concerned.

Sir, I would like to see the development of a proper fishing industry. Someone once said that the methods that are used in fishing are the same ones that were used in the days of Jesus when you threw out your nets and wished for the best.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: We have not gone very far in terms of the development of a proper fishing industry.

Mr. President, the Japanese can come down to our part of the world, fish off our coast and catch tuna and all kinds of fish and we can hardly get past Grenada. In fact, if a boat drifts into our neighbouring waters our fishermen may end up in prison and you are going to tell me, Sir, that we have advanced with respect to fishing.

Sir, there also needs to be the establishment of proper forward and backward linkages between agriculture and other sectors. I am sure that Senator Barker would know a little about forward and backward linkages in the little economics that he did.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: On a point of order. I have not spoken in this debate. I do not understand the Honourable Member quoting me. I have not yet spoken in this debate.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I agree with you Senator. It may be that your asides were loud enough for him to hear.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, I have heard the Minister of Tourism, recently, making reference to the fact that there is a need for greater linkage between tourism and agriculture. A lot of food is consumed in the tourism industry. Unfortunately, not enough of it is locally produced food. While at this point I am very reluctant to mention the names of people in any form of praise as an Opposition politician in this country, very often those persons will come in for a little stick. You will hear things like, you hear who praised them. The Opposition praised them so they must be supporting them. That is a tendency that takes place in this country.

Sir, however, there is a lady called Marion Hart who is providing an excellent service to this country. In fact, I think she is almost a national treasure. She has been able to do things with locally produced crops which, if we make use of her talents, I am sure that this country – many of the people who are producing pepper sauce and the hotels that are using local foods, rely on her expertise. Right now the BADMC has a beef patty, which is probably the only thing they make money from, that they sell to the School Meals Department and a few supermarkets. It is one of the best qualities, I understand, which she also produces.

Sir, she has been recognised by the OAS and has gone outside of Barbados to train other people. She received training and has been training other people in things like the utilisation of the sweet potato and she has been making breadfruit flour and a lot of other things. I think that Ms. Hart is a lady that Barbadians need to know more about. She is an excellent person with respect to the utilisation of Barbadian crops. Sir, she is totally underutilised in the position she is in right now.

Mr. President, I think that there is a company that is producing local fertiliser. I do not know from what state it is done or how much of it is value added but if we can get the kind of research that is required going into this country and we can have linkages not only with the persons who are going to utilise our agricultural produce and also linkages with people that can produce the inputs for agriculture, then agriculture will go a long way in this country, Sir.

Mr. President, the Government of Barbados, in my view, needs to take a more proactive approach with many of the issues if we are not going to be seen as merely sitting

there and absorbing the pressure that might be coming from outside of Barbados.

Mr. President, we had a situation in here yesterday where Senator Mascoll raised the point about Greenland and it was said at that time, Sir, that he was misleading the Senate because he had said that Greenland was an IADB project. It is unfortunate that anyone would use a technicality to refute a point which in actual fact is accurate, because the technicality is that these projects require Government to spend the money up front and then Government will be reimbursed by the funding agency. So to hear people using the fact that so far the Government has funded it, yes, Government has funded it, but it has been funded with the understanding that the international agency will refund the Government.

12.20 p.m.

At the moment this is one of the projects that is causing some concern on the part of the international agency because we have seen a colossal waste of money at Greenland. It is unbelievable, Sir, that you can spend in excess of \$20,000,000 on a project and then come and tell the people of Barbados that you have to spend another \$3,000,000 on it before it has been used for one day.

What kind of conditions was that project executed under that the company that executed that project could have done a job that required remedying and get away scotch-free, before it is even used? If that project had not been funded by international agencies, Mr. President, the Barbados Government would not have been required to allow international tenders because we have local tenders here. But the fact that the Government had to allow for international tenders is clear evidence that the project was in fact funded, or is funded under an agreement with an international lending agency.

I do not understand why there is this hurrah in saying that Senator Mascoll was incorrect when he was saying that it was an IADB project. It is. And if you go down there, Sir, you will see the sign which says that it is. The sign is still down there if the bush has not overgrown it, but if you walk with a collins and cut away the bush you will see the sign.

But the Greenland Project, along with the offices in Warrens and the National Housing Corporation at Country Road, are all examples of wastage which is taking place in this country and reasons why international agencies are now expressing concerns about the manner in which the Barbados Government is spending money.

The EduTech Programme, Sir, is also one that raises other concerns, because we have been hearing that programme is going through all kinds of transformation from

the day that it was started. It started out as EduTech 2000 and by the year 2000 there would have been thousands of computers in schools in Barbados...

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: On a point of order. I think the Honourable Senator has an obligation to this Chamber to indicate the source of his information to his allegations that international agencies are expressing concerns about the way that Government is spending in financing these projects.

Mr. PRESIDENT: As I understand it, the Honourable Senator has no such formal obligation. Please proceed.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Thank you, Mr. President. EduTech started as EduTech 2000, we were told that by that year there would have been computers in all schools...

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: On point of order, EduTech 2000, Mr. President, was always intended to be a programme that would be completed by year 2005 and the Honourable Senator should recognize that there will be changes in this programme as technology changes. He is fully aware that technology changes every year or every 18 months and that for the project to be effective there must be variables built into it to make it effective over a period of time.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Your point of order therefore is the Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate. That is your point of order?

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, in that case then, perhaps the project should have been called "EduTech 2005".

Mr. President, I am grateful for the intervention from the Honourable Senator...

Mr. PRESIDENT: The point of order, Senator?

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: The point of order from the Honourable Senator because he has made a very important point, that technology changes very rapidly. Then why, Sir, should the Government of Barbados or the Ministry of Education have computers in storage waiting to be used in EduTech when it is very possible that by the time they come out of storage they would be obsolete. If technology is changing so rapidly, why buy computers so long in advance?

So, Mr. President, the Ministry of Education is absorbing more than 10 per cent of the projected expenditure of the Government over the next year. That is a lot of money for any one Ministry, therefore, Mr. President, I will expect that this money will be properly utilized ...

Aside.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: And, Mr. President, I can assure you that today I came in here with the intention that I will not hear anything other than what you say.

So, you have more than 10 per cent of the budget allocated for Education and we see, however, that what is happening in Education gives reason for great concern and I go back to the same EduTech Project.

What is the level of training that is going to be provided for the people who are supposed to implement the EduTech Project? What we have observed over the years, Mr. President, is that Head teachers with only three years of service left before retiring have been trained for the EduTech Project. The result has been that those persons have since retired before they can make any input into the EduTech Project, so you now have to train some persons again. So are you properly utilizing the money for training?

There are teachers, Mr. President, who have been trained two or three years ago for the project to commence at their schools with the understanding that it would soon be utilized and nothing has been done yet at the schools.

In fact, that training programme was broken last year around April and those persons were told that it would continue in the summer. Then that was put back and they were told that the programme would start after school finishes in September. Then that was shelved, and to this day they have not yet resumed the training for the EduTech Programme.

So, I am saying that the Ministry of Education seems to be in total chaos. Every other week you are hearing about new focus, every other week you will be hearing that there is a new emphasis on something else – and the teachers are totally confused. They are being asked to implement several projects simultaneously and the result is that there is total chaos within the Education system.

We heard, Mr. President, last year that some 3 000 students were unable to gain places at the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College. One would have thought then, that something would have been done in order to ensure that at least, there were more places available to students who, having completed their CXC's and wanting to further their education, we would have at least have heard of a plan, because, obviously it would have been difficult to ensure that you have these additional places, but at least you could have heard that there was a plan to ease the situation. We have heard absolutely nothing.

In fact, I have heard persons involved in the Ministry speaking of this as if it was something to be proud of. They

were proud to say that there were 3 000 more students than they had places for. That is nothing to be proud of. That is something that should be quickly addressed in order to help the students to be able to advance their education, because if you do not allow these young people the opportunity to continue, what we will be doing is putting another set of young persons on the block, raising their frustration, and having a new criminal element to deal with, because you will be frustrating bright, young people and not providing them with opportunities.

Then there is St. Leonard's Boys' School. How many times have we heard statements coming from the Ministry of Education that the second phase at St. Leonard's Boys' School is going to start? How many times have we heard them say the St. Leonard's School will become some state-of-the-art school?

It is interesting, Mr. President, that you have two schools in this country that are single-sex. There is St. Leonard's Boys' and Springer Memorial Girls'. We have a situation where there is debate with respect to the pros and cons for single-sex schools or co-education. One would think then that you would use the fact that you have these two schools that can be used as control in doing some kind of scientific assessment as to what are the pros and cons with respect to the single-sex schools and co-education, but instead of seeing some semblance of an attempt to do such an analysis, what we are finding is that both of these schools are experiencing problems which, in my view, they should not be experiencing, and the Ministry of Education needs to take a closer look at what is happening in both of these schools because I consider both schools to be special schools.

12.30 p.m.

Mr. President, one of the few points made by Senator Forde yesterday was with respect to the Forensic Lab and it was an interesting point that she made. She said she would hope that every murder that is committed in Barbados could be solved with the coming into being of this new Forensic Lab.

Mr. President, what I would like to say is that what some of us would like to see, rather than being able to solve the murders, that there are much fewer murders. We can only see this if there is greater effort made with respect to the reduction of the level of crime and violence in this country. Like I said, that is a strange point that she should choose to make but nonetheless, one understands the context in which it was made and the person making it.

With respect to the Ministry of Health, Sir, we heard Senator Rickinson giving her views on what she saw and her vision for the Ministry of Health. I would not at all attempt to compete with Senator Rickinson on speaking about health,

but what I would like to say is that there are too many areas in the Ministry of Health – I think that one has the second largest budget in the Estimates – which are causing serious concern for the people of this country and I would like, Sir, to take a slight departure from the view that the Minister of Health is totally responsible for anything that is going wrong in the Ministry of Health.

The reason why I would like to take that departure, Sir, is that it was not the Minister of Health who fired the whole top management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because the management was the problem. The management was seen as the problem in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and the whole top management was removed but, yet, we still have the same problems. Therefore, we cannot blame the current Minister of Health for that problem. We have to blame the person who removed the top management or who misdiagnosed the problem...

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: ...or whether it was misdiagnosed, if it was not misdiagnosed, the wrong medicine was prescribed so we still have to blame the person who took that decision.

It is seen in Barbados right now, Sir, that all roads seem to lead to one man in Government. He seems to be the great Messiah who solves every problem in every Ministry. Therefore, that man will have to take the responsibility, that man being the Prime Minister of this country. He would have to take the responsibility of what is happening in the Hospital, what is happening at Greenland, and what is happening at Mangrove Pond.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order, Mr. President. Anything that happens in the Ministry of Health falls under my responsibility and I alone stand to carry the responsibility for anything that happens in the Ministry of Health.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I will treat that as a point of elucidation.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Thank you, Mr. President. I admire the Minister of Health's loyalty and his commitment to his responsibility. Like I said, Sir, I would not seek to blame a man for something he was not responsible for at the time and he certainly was not the Minister of Health when the top management of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was dismissed.

Sir, in a chess game we have different pieces with different values and sometimes we can sacrifice one piece in order to protect another so we understand the kind of situation we are faced with.

Mr. President, the fact remains that there are significant problems in the Ministry of Health. It is not only a case of dealing at the micro level with the machinery that is broken down at the Hospital. I have heard recently of a case where an E.C.G. machine in the Accident and Emergency Unit could not function because they did not have the paper for it.

You have a lot of these little niggling problems in the Ministry but I think there is an overall problem in terms of policy. There seems to be no clear policy coming from the Government with respect to the management of health services in this country.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, you have five minutes left.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Thank you, Sir.

Sir, we need to examine the suggestions made by some persons in the past that perhaps the Ministry of Health is too large and there are certain entities that should be removed from that Ministry to make it more manageable.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: But as Barbadians, we must be concerned when there is an apparent decline in the kinds of health services the people of this country can enjoy and when we know that we are accustomed to having excellent health services in this country.

Quickly, Sir, let me deal with this Ministry of Social Transformation. What we have seen, Mr. President, is that many entities which were doing an excellent job in Barbados over the years have now been grouped together under the Ministry of Social Transformation. I do not know whether this was the original intention or not but what I notice, Sir, is that you have about \$9.5 million being allocated for poverty alleviation.

I would like, Mr. President, someone to spell out exactly what this programme of poverty alleviation is supposed to be because while you have \$9.5 million allocated for poverty alleviation, you have \$2.9 million for community development, \$8.5 million for the National Assistance Board and \$17 million for the Urban Development Commission.

I would believe that all of these entities are in some way involved with providing services for the persons who would fall into the category that should be dealt with under poverty alleviation. Sir, I would like to know exactly what is the specific programme for poverty alleviation. I would hate to think that this Ministry is designed to offer certain services towards a specific end that probably comes once every five years or close to that.
12.40 p.m.

Mr. President, I think that \$1.7 million has been allocated to the National Disabilities Unit but apart from the money that is allocated to it, I would like to see greater emphasis being placed on it with respect to educating Barbadians how we treat the disabled in our society. We know there are several persons who become disabled late in their lives and these are the ones who have the greatest difficulty, especially a person who, for example, becomes paralysed in the prime of his or her life and has to change his or her whole lifestyle. I would like to know what has happened to that bus that was donated by one of the service organisations for the use of the disabled that apparently is somewhere in this island rusting out right now.

Finally, Mr. President, I would suggest that we must, as quickly as possible, have some form of legislation in place to deal with persons who park in areas which are clearly marked for disabled persons because we seem totally insensitive to their needs. I have seen a situation at the University where there was a student there who was in a wheelchair and they were ramps in place for that student to use but somebody went and parked their car right in front of that ramp. I think this is totally insensitive on the part of Barbadians and perhaps there is a need for some form of legislation which could deal drastically with persons who show that kind of insensitivity.

I thank you very much, Sir.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be suspended until 1.50 p.m. today.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 1.50 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to. Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
12.45 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: I rise to support this Bill which will provide for the grant of sums of money out of the Consolidated Fund and the appropriation of the same for the service of Barbados for the year ending March 31, 2002.

I want to put emphasis on the word "service" because these Estimates are there for the service of this country, not for any aggrandisement for a purpose, but to serve the needs of the people of this country. Therefore, the Estimates must be analysed in that context whether or not they do meet the objectives which are set in the Objects and Reasons to this present piece of legislation. I want to contend that whatever method or objective measure we use; we have to give this year's Estimates more than a passing grade.

I think we have to go higher up the scale and if honours were to be given out for this year's Estimates, the Minister of Finance and his team would certainly get first class honours because these are first class Estimates in that they meet the needs of this country while at the same time satisfying economic criteria.

One can process Estimates with all of the most fanciful things but at the macro-level one could be ruining the economy. Sir, it happened already on many occasions. We saw the wasteful expenditure of 1990 which gave rise to the crisis of 1991. We saw it coming. We warned the Government but the then Democratic Labour Party Government, true to form, ignored all the warnings that were given. Sir, I think that both of the Opposition Senators were leading lights – if I may call them such, Sir – in that Administration. Sir, they might be sworn to say that they were ignored but, nevertheless, the record would show that Senator McClean was one of the chief advisors to the Prime Minister around that time.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Yes. It must be said that Senator McClean was the Personal Assistant to the Prime Minister and judging from his contribution here today we can now see why the crisis of 1991 happened.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, the Opposition had a lot to say about the Estimates so before I get into the nuts and bolts, so to speak, I want to look at the macro setting and put the Estimates in that sort of light before coming to the micro aspect of it.

Sir, one thing that is clear is this Government has absolutely no intention of running unmanageable deficits. It is a fool that does not learn from history, especially when history is so recent. Certainly, we on this Side are not foolish. We saw the effects of large deficits of the late 1980's. We saw the resulting chaos. We saw the ruin that came upon this country as a result of large deficits. Therefore, we have ensured in the seven Estimates that we have produced from 1995 until now that we have never fallen into a trap of running unmanageable deficits.

Sir, it is like any household. There are things I would love for my household but I cannot afford them therefore, I will not go out there and put myself into unsustainable debts. The time may well come when I may be able to afford them but at present there are things that I cannot afford and a country must run along those lines.

There are a lot of things the country needs so the question of affordability must always be foremost in the

minds of any well thinking Minister of Finance. What affordability simply means is, can the country afford such expenditure and what would be the result of such expenditure on the long term future of the country. As we very well know, large deficits are a thing of the past. We simply cannot afford that sort of mismanagement that was so evident in the last Democratic Labour Party Administration. Sir, again, I do not know if it is accidental but both Honourable Senators were leading lights in that Administration.

Sir, let us now look at a few misconceptions that appeared in the Press which we heard yesterday. Some of it is unbelievably incorrect. I want to focus on the question of employment. Sir, this Government, as part of its macro-policy, has decided that an assault on unemployment has to be the first order of the day.

1.55 p.m.

In 1994, we went through this country from Half Moon Fort in St. Lucy to East Point in St. Philip and we told this country that our first item of priority was to ensure that every boy and girl in this country has access to a job. That, is our goal. We knew that it could not be done overnight. We never promised that it would be overnight but we felt that this economy had the capacity to generate a job for all of its citizens and we were prepared to have our credibility rest upon whether or not we can fulfil this claim of creating employment for our people.

Sir, at that time in 1994, almost a quarter of the workforce were without jobs and they were without hopes of getting a job. There were approximately 30 000 out of work at that time. I can understand why the Opposition is uncomfortable with these figures but the point is that the latest information is showing that over 20 000 jobs were created in this country since we took office in 1994. Sir, in the face of that information the Opposition seeks to say that the jobs were created in the public sector.

Certain remarks made by Senator T. E. BARKER were ordered expunged from the record by Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, nothing could be further from the truth.

Sir, last year every Honourable Member was presented with a book called "The Barbados Economic and Social Report, 1999." I hope the Opposition got theirs because they have a habit of not getting documents. The point is that in this document the level of unemployment in the public sector was given prominence, so to speak.

Sir, page 35 tells the story. There is a column called "Government Services" and this table shows Employment by Major Industrial Divisions from 1982 to 1999.

This shows that in 1992, 22 300 persons were employed in Government services in this country. In 1999, this document shows that the figure was 26 300. Sir, I was able to get the more recent figure for the year 2000 and it shows that in the Government sector 24 500 people were employed. That is not all. In 1991, before the self-induced crisis hit, 24 600 were employed in the Government sector. Therefore, Sir, there were more people employed in the Government sector in 1991 than in the year 2000 and I must say that the 1991 figure was not in this book but in a previous book, but they are all documents of this Honourable Chamber.

What we have is that there are less people employed in the Government sector today than they were in 1991 but the important factor is that in 1991 you had 107 000 people employed. Now in the year 2000 you have 125 900 employed so that we see that over 18 000 people more were working and the amount of workers in the Government sector did not increase over that period. That cannot be refuted because they are a matter of record, and history was never my strong subject so I will not be a "twistorian".

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Would the Honourable Member for the benefit of the Chair define a "twistorian"?

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, a "twistorian" is a person who twists history.

The point I want to make is that the facts are here and for anyone in the face of this information to make the bold assertion that all the jobs were created in the public sector is totally misrepresenting the facts. The point is that when in 1991, 23 per cent of all persons working in Barbados were employed by the State, last year the figure dropped to its lowest level for a long time and 19.5 per cent of the persons employed were employed by the State, a decline by over three percentage points.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator McClean, I do not think that it is fair for you to be constantly shouting Asides across the Chamber and you must respect this Honourable Chamber. Honourable Members are entitled to speak without being interrupted unless you want to address the Chair.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Thank you, Sir. But I can understand his discomfort but the point is here that Government has not expanded the public sector. It is employing the same amount of people now as it employed almost ten years ago. To say then that Government is taking up the bulk of the unemployment is totally untrue. The proportion of people working for the State has declined over the period.

Sir, look at the contrast to the Opposition. They were on record as presiding over the worst destruction of mass

labour in this country when 3 000 persons were sent home and the figure that year, because from 1990 you only get a figure of 24 600, and that was over 3 600 in the Government sector in two years. In two years, they reduced the figure by 3 600 and the result was that the level of service in this country declined.

Also we had the disgraceful situation where two people working for the State, living in the same house, both of them were sent home. The Government did not even have the social conscience to ensure that at least there was one breadwinner in the house but, on many occasions, both workers in the same household were unceremoniously sent home and with reduced severance, at the same time that Government sought to reduce the amount of severance pay. When I hear them talk about unemployment, I feel they ought to hang their heads in shame.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Even if we had done that, what is wrong with Government using its resources to jump start the economy? There is nothing at all wrong for Government to use its economic might to cause reduction in unemployment. We are being accused for reducing unemployment. That is what it amounts to. It is a crime now to reduce unemployment so they are taking figures and twisting figures, putting wrong interpretation on the figures just to make us look good because that is all I can say. We are using, if the claim is true, the resources of the State to provide help for the people whom we serve.

There were no crash programmes because we do not believe in crash programmes. We believe in sustainable employment. That is the difference between us and them. What the Honourable Senator Mascoll did was to look for the lowest figure and the highest ever figure and subtracted the two and said that is the amount of job creation that we had, which runs totally counter to any semblance of good statistical manipulation.

2.05 p.m.

Sir, I will not bear responsibility for Senator Mascoll's inaccuracies with regards to statistics. His errors are his own and I had no hand in that.

Sir, I know he was taught well. I know that he understands something called "sampling errors" so why is he using such a disgraceful method, using the highest and lowest to measure job creation when everybody knows that is not the way because you never compare Quarter 2 with Quarter 4. It is never done and you learn this as soon as you go to a statistics class. There is also something called "seasonality" or "season of variation."

Sir, having put to rest that untruth, we can go on to another assertion, the assertion that the level of taxation has

increased since we came into office. Again, that cannot stand the scrutiny of empirical investigation.

Sir, it is one thing to come in here with all kinds of wild figures but all of us in here feel that what we say should be verifiable so that people can go to sources and determine whether or not the particular statement is true.

I heard the Honourable Senator say that in 1994 the State was taking 28 per cent of GDP in tax. Obviously, I never take things for granted. I did my checking and found that GDP in that year was \$297 million and the current taxation revenue was \$935 million. Sir, when I calculated that it was 33 per cent of GDP. I cannot understand where this 28 per cent comes from. That had to be a figment of somebody's imagination.

Sir, when I check further in 1999 it was 35.6 per cent. I heard 28 per cent and I heard 40 per cent and both of these figures are wrong. It has increased from 33.4 per cent to 35.4 per cent.

Sir, we must not only look at Government revenues like that, but we must look on it in relation to the services the State is providing. That is the key because the State can take 25 per cent and do well with it, or the State can take 50 per cent and waste it.

Sir, we can be assured that this Government has spent this money wisely and they have spent this money on the people.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Look at the transformation that is taking place within this country. There are lots of communities in this island of ours that never had roads. One thing I am impressed with the Government about is they have carried services to the people all across the country. There was such a big need that we have not yet satisfied the needs of the people but the expansion of the road network services in this country is tremendous and almost unbelievable. As you look around the country in every nook and cranny where Barbadians live a lot of them are now having access to proper paved roads.

This year the process is going to be accelerated because we are embarking on a new concrete road programme in addition to an already impressive asphalt road programme. We are carrying services to the people of this country. Sir, I can stand with my head high.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Yes, I stand tall. I stand ten feet tall because there were people who were neglected for years.

Sir, for years we were begging for a road in front my father's house in Mahaica, Green Hill. For years we were imploring Government because my father and mother had to walk through a little road, but now I can drive up to the house in total comfort. I know what I am talking about because it has touched me personally. If you are saying that we increased the tax take by two percentage points, I say yes, but it is money well spent because it is spent on the people.

Look at our Poverty Alleviation Programme. Sir, you know how many old people in this country worked hard, are now in their 80's and we see stories in the Press about the terrible conditions under which they live. The Ministry of Social Transformation expanded the work that the former Ministry of Community Development was doing and brought relief to hundreds of our old people. They have some lovely little houses and outdoor toilets are becoming a thing of the past. They can spend the rest of their years now with a little bit of luxury. Sir, we believe that if you are giving somebody something you should give them something proper.

Sir, all around this island of Barbados in every parish our old people are living a better life and that is more important than any figure because the Estimates must touch real people. Things about GDP and all of that mean nothing if the man in the street is not benefiting. Sir, it is not trickling down. We believe in carrying services to the people. They must be targeted as the ones who must benefit from any improvements.

Sir, we can say, as a matter of pride, that with the GDP growth in this country the man at the bottom has benefited and that is why we are proud to be part of the administration.

Sir, Government expenditure went up by two points but not by the amount we were erroneously told here yesterday. I have demonstrated that money has been spent on the people and that is the important point.

Sir, while we are talking about tax revenue we knew when VAT came in that the tax take of Government went from 32 per cent to 37 per cent. When we brought the VAT we did not know exactly what we were bringing and we always felt that it was best to be cautious. If the rate proved to be too much we would bring down the rate rather than go the other way and find yourself with a massive shortfall in revenue. After we brought in the VAT in 1997, we made adjustments so the ratio of revenue to GDP declined. We recognise that maybe we underestimated the tax so every year the Ministry of Finance sought to put in place measures to shield the poorest of this community from any adverse effect of VAT.
2.15 p.m.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, that is why within nine months that came off.

Sir, when I heard Senator Mascoll talked yesterday about the removal of VAT on food, I wondered what he was talking about. The only VAT on food is on frog legs and caviar. If a person wants to buy luxury items they would pay the VAT.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Sir, between 1997 and 1998 the Government introduced a revolutionary concept called "Reversed Tax Credit". For the benefit of the Honourable Chamber let me explain how it works. The lowest paid worker does not pay Income Tax. The only way you pay Income Tax is if you worked for \$13 000, at the time, which is approximately \$250 per week. So anyone who works for that amount or less did not pay Income Tax. We recognised, Sir, that when these people received their money, they spent it on items which could have attracted VAT on clothing, electricity and so on. The Government sought to shield the poorest workers by introducing a reverse tax credit where they are given \$500 a year which would repay, basically, for any VAT they paid on their services.

The point is that the average worker in Barbados spends almost half of his income on food. That is a fact. The lower paid worker spends about half of their disposable income on food and food carries virtually no tax. So half of his expenditure is not "vatable". Things like house rents and mortgages do not attract VAT. Sir, the \$500 could pay for \$3 333 of "vatable" expenditure. Sir, we estimate that for a person working for \$13 000 a year he will not spend that amount of money on items which attract VAT.

Therefore, we believe that the \$500 would more than repay him for any VAT he would have made on his purchases. We have effectively removed the low income workers, not only from Income Tax but also from the VAT and that is a fact you cannot dispute.

Sir, we have allowed them \$3 300 of expenditure and if you are going to buy \$3 000 in toothpaste a year, I have my doubts about that.

Asides.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Therefore, Sir, the Reverse Tax Credit was a novel way of repaying the lowly paid workers for any VAT they have paid. We are shielding the lowest paid worker from the effect of taxation, both Income Tax as well as Value Added Tax. Sir, we have made his life a little better. Sir, we have used Government's revenues in order to effect social change in this country and that must always be an important consideration.

Sir, while I am on the macroeconomy, I want to commend the Minister of Finance for his timely measure in reducing interest rates in Barbados. Yesterday I heard a most

strange comment that the reduction of interest rates by half per cent will be a disincentive to save.

Sir, that coming from a well-known economist had me a little disappointed because we know very well that the amount of saving a person does is not so sensitive to interest to make changes. The change in interest rates may cause a man to change his decision from a bank account to shares. He might say that the interest rate at the bank is so low that he wants to invest in Government Bonds or Mutual Funds. The decision whether to change or to consume is not affected by the small changes in interest rates. Sir, the decision to save or to consume is not going to be seriously affected by a half per cent change in interest rates.

Sir, what the change in interest rates will do is that to ensure that the borrowing will be a little bit lower and that is a crucial factor. If you lower the interest rate on savings, there is a consequential decline on mortgages and loans. It happens all the time. You can look at the time series so to speak for the variables to find out interest on savings and lending move in tandem, so to speak. Sir, changing the interest rates on savings, you can effect a change in the interest rate on loans which are more important for the businessman because he would be able to access credit at a lower rate.

So think of an ordinary householder, a half per cent in interest will cost him \$50 a year on \$10 000 savings which is a lot. Sir, look at the mortgage rates, a mortgage of \$100 000, which is not a large amount in this day and age, every half per cent change in the interest will save the house owner \$500 per year. This half per cent change, when it is translated to mortgage rates, will bring about a significant advantage to the homeowners. We can also think of business people with even larger loans what the half per cent drop in loan rates can mean to those businesses.

This argument that the half per cent decline will cause people not to save is foolishness, in my view. It does not take into account that at the other end, to the businessman, that half per cent will mean so much to him when you amortize a \$100 000 loan over the period of time.
2.25 p.m.

Sir, the interest rate policy of this Government can stand the scrutiny, because it will be a boost to business activities on this island and therefore, I do not understand why it is that the Honourable Senator finds it so difficult to appreciate the commonsense in the reduction of interest rates, which as I said before, will mean a lot to the country.

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: At the macro-level, what we have is that the Estimates and the actions of the Government will bring about a sustained increase in economic activity in this country.

Sir, do not forget that we must not take the Estimates in isolation because in every Budget this Government has brought since 1995, there were substantial measures to prepare the business sector of this country for the new dispensation, so to speak. If you check every Budget there were measures for every sector to enable them to meet the challenges that we knew were going to present themselves – the challenges of the changes in the World Trade Organization and the challenges of globalization.

And Sir, sad to say, we have business persons in this country who do not read and who do not know what is available to them. A lot of them do not know what tax concessions were given, when these concessions were given, *et cetera*, and therefore you hear them asking for certain things and saying that the Government would not do them, when in truth and fact, the measures have already been put in place and have been explained, but people sought to ignore them.

Let us look at Agriculture. When we came to Government in 1994, one of our first actions was to reduce the heavy taxes the DLP Administration had imposed, which had been advised by Senator Mascoll. We removed all the old taxation on all the imports to the agricultural and manufacturing sector. All of these imports no longer attracted tax.

I know that if Senator Mascoll was in here he would have been criticizing that action. He is saying that it would not bring about any benefits, but in my view, Sir, it set the tone for what has happened since because, early in our Administration, we signalled to the business community that we intended to put measures in place to assist the growth of businesses in this country which would help to find themselves in a position to meet the challenges.

We had concessions for the hotel sector, the agricultural sector, the manufacturing sector, all this to enable them to be effective in their packaging and designing. It might be a question of what more can we do? But the challenge being levied that we were not preparing the business sector for the new dispensation is totally false. What happened is that they have not taken that advantage of the many number of things we have put in place. Some of them feel that Government is there as a milking cow so that when they want something they go to Government without recognizing that they too, have to take the business in their own hands and do the things that are necessary. Government has demonstrated that it will help.

Let us look at energy costs. We recognize that energy costs were, in some ways, a deterrent to some businesses and we had reduced the taxes on diesel to 30 cents and gasoline to 20 cents per litre, at a cost to the Treasury, but we

recognized that if we want to remain competitive we have to reduce the cost of doing business in this country. So, systematically, we have dismantled the high tax regime that had been put in place by the Other Side.

In 1998, we found there was a tax on crude oil which was used mainly in the production of electricity and we removed that tax entirely. There is no Excise Tax since 1998 because we recognize that, yes, the Government can extract its pound of flesh, but at the same time what is the effect that it is going to have on the economy? And we were more concerned about having the economy expanded than fulling up the Government's coffers.

There was no tax on crude oil, on kerosene, or on diesel that is used in the production of electricity, and in both the agricultural and manufacturing sector, we said no tax on those imports. And not only that, the VAT which was on a number of goods relating to the manufacturing and production sectors is an Income Tax and hence, is refundable.

So in all we have used fiscal measures to ensure that our productive sectors have the opportunity to flourish, but we are in a world where this happens to small countries and the fact remains that the market in Barbados is very small and in most cases, we cannot get the economies of scale which would enable us to produce goods as cheaply as some other countries and that is a fact we have to live with. Our answer to that then is probably to do research and go into other areas which are less labour-intensive and for which we can use more capital and more technology. We would have to use our collective wisdom in finding areas.

For example, I noticed that Barbados never thinks of going into the mass market for textiles. Our labour costs are too high and the fact is that we feel those workers are still being underpaid but compared to what is obtained in the international community, our labour rate is too high to go into, but it does not mean that we cannot go into other areas of textile.

I think Senator Laurie made this point to say that we might have an advantage in those areas with things like Batik and sailor cotton, but with cotton we are hampered by the CARSICOT issue. That issue, although ten years or more, is still blighting the cotton industry and we went to Parliament a while ago for approximately \$1 000 000 as an installment in trying to solve the wretched CARSICOT issue. But even there, when we are looking for new markets, we are hampered by the inefficiencies of the past Administration.

Sir, we will have to make sure that we save the brand but the taxpayers would have to foot a bill and God knows how the bill got to where it was in the first place – but that is another story. I am making the point that we have to look

for a niche market because our market is too small for us to get into mass production. For example, we have very limited Barbados mahogany, but it is the best mahogany in the world. Trees have to be cut down every now and then, so probably we may have to consider a lot of value added for these items. All these are things...

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Yes, we always had a culture of good cabinet makers and I will know, Sir, because I am proud to be the son of one. But the point I want to make is we have to look at these areas, therefore we cannot get into the mass furniture business. It is not going to be to our advantage, but there are areas which we can look at and that is why the Government has consistently put money for the manufacturing sector to get engaged in these sorts of activities. I am sure that if the manufacturers come up with a project, the Government will be too willing to assist them in such a venture, but I am afraid, Sir, that they have been so devastated psychologically by the events of the 1990s that they are afraid to reach out, so to speak.
2.35 p.m.

Sir, it is up to the business sectors to take advantage of the Government's initiatives and prepare themselves to make some fine pieces in this country. It is time for our people to open shops in the other islands and instead of quarrelling about people coming here, we should take the initiative and go and sell our goods in other countries.

We say that we want protection but the days of protection are over and we must remember that. Protection is a thing of the past, and we have to come to grips with reality and be aggressive and say, "There is a place in this world for me. Let me go and claim what is rightfully mine." The Government has shown that it will lead the way.

We notice, Sir, that all of the traditional areas are under attack. Wherever it seems that this country has an advantage, the big countries want to take away this advantage but we will survive because we have a Government that is committed to the advancement of the people of this country.

Sir, in the time remaining to me, I want to focus on the environment. I know, Sir, that the Government has put money in the Estimates, both last year and this year, for a renewable energy centre in Barbados. We are well placed because we have done remarkably in the field of renewable energy.

It took a former Barbados Labour Party Administration in the early 1980s to put measures in place which resulted in over 30 000 solar water heaters gracing the homes of this country. That is because the Government of that day took the bold move to give fiscal incentives for people like you and I to purchase water heaters.

Sir, people have done well from industries that are set up as a result of that bold undertaking. It is now a standard thing and, as a result, industries have developed and we intend to carry the process further, but I just want to caution us that these alternative forms of energy can be a bit more expensive than the traditional form. So we still need to have a lot of research done and that is why the Senate is set up in the first place so that we can have more research done. Sir, we have Senators from all over the world coming down here and engaging in meaningful research so that these measures can become even more readily available and can compete with traditional forms of producing energy.

Sir, it is not well known but most of Harrison's Cave is powered by electricity from the sun – solar electricity or what is called, "photovoltaic". That project is also going on at the Combermere School and some other schools, as Senator Forde mentioned.

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Combermere is always the leader in these projects. The point is that we are demonstrating that even although we are a small country, we are not afraid to take bold steps and we are not afraid to invest money in order to ensure that we are in the forefront.

Now, those who are so misinformed that they might say it is a Micky Mouse project, will not realise that Barbados has a tremendous name when it comes to the field of renewable energy. When people from our island go to conferences, our experience in this area is sought after, and people respect this country for the moves it has made.

I am sure, Sir, that when the late Tom Adams made the move in the early 1980s that the Opposition would have decried that revolutionary move, as they are doing now. They would have decried it because they always decry what they cannot appreciate and that is why we always hear them complain about everything under the sun. The point is that this Government, like the past Barbados Labour Party, is not afraid to take bold steps to push this country forward.

These Estimates represent faith in our people who will benefit because these Estimates tell a story about efficiency. They tell a story about progressiveness. They tell a story about being proactive, not reactive. They tell a story about initiatives and a Government having faith in the people it seeks to serve. So people can see that the Government...

Aside.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: ...people can go to sleep comfortably in the thought that with this Government leading, we can ride out any economic storm that can pass this way. We can rest comfortably because these Estimates show that while we are not running large deficits, we are still ensuring that benefits go to the people.

Sir, it is important that benefits are coming to the people. This Government is about people and I read in the Objects of the Bill that these Estimates have been granted for the service of Barbados. We can see in every avenue that "service" is the key word. For example, there is money for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, money for roads – concrete and other roads, money for education to make sure that our boys and girls are well educated and money for the indigent.

Money was also provided for the revolutionary action of putting the Internet in community centres because we do not feel that the people who cannot afford to purchase a computer must be left out, so we are carrying services to the people and that alone shows that the Government is thinking about its role in society which is to develop the minds of the people.

Sir, that is service and that is why I can support this Bill because this is service for Barbados, not monuments of stupidity like Sherbourne and others, or the art that we do not know what it is for, or for unfinished polyclinics for which no sensible plan has been done. This is about people and carrying the Internet so that the boys in Grazettes and Eden Lodge can go and expand their knowledge and minds. We are carrying services to the people.

Sir, we have \$1.9 million in the programme this year but we can be assured that this is an ongoing programme where more and more community centres will be brought in every year. In about three years' time, we will have these resource centres all over Barbados and, if properly used, they will change the landscape of this country. Sir, each one matters under this Government and we are committed to uplifting the lives of the people in this country.

Sir, with those few words I commend this Bill to this Honourable Chamber. They can shut their eyes and say, "Aye" because they know very well that these Estimates represent faith in the people. They represent a social contract between the Government and governors and they represent another step in building the Barbados we so crave, one based on equity, fairness and opportunity for all of its citizens.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy President.

SENATOR Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to make my contribution on the Appropriation Bill of 2001 and it will not be as colourful as the previous contribution.
2.45 p.m.

Firstly, its housing policy, its road rehabilitation programme, its assistance to small businesses under the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development, its assistance through myriad projects and initiatives which are being carried out by the Rural Development Commission and, yes, its health policy.

I do not intend to dwell on the housing policy or the road rehabilitation programme because what is happening in those areas are fairly obvious if you move through the country. However, I will look at the assistance being given to small businesses under the Ministry of Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development.

This Ministry has been allocated \$11 million in the Estimates. Some of you colleagues will remember in early 1999 when the Small Business Development Bill came before us, that some of us were worried about whether Government would provide assistance to small businesses to help them incorporate because one of the requirements of the Bill was that to become an approved small business, a small business had to have achieved a certain level of business, had to incorporate and had to have its accounts audited and so on.

In preparing myself for this debate I was happy to find under the Act that technical assistance is being provided by the relevant Ministry up to \$1 700 per small business for incorporation. Other assistance is being provided through the Small Business and New Enterprise Centre and because of the reluctance of several commercial houses to lend money to small businesses for their development, some financing of loans is also available through the Rural Development Commission, the Urban Development Commission and the Barbados Agency for Micro Enterprise Development Limited.

In 2000, these agencies provided loans to over 400 small businesses totalling some \$2 million. Mr. Deputy President, the small businesses which have benefited from these various funds have been myriad. They range from hairdressing salons, computer programming companies, boutiques, small farms and restaurants. One concern of mine now, however, is that the Small Business Development Act, and I believe that this is a concern I had expressed back in 1999, still leaves some small businesses out of the pail, that is, the coconut vendors and those who we would know as informal traders such as market vendors and so on.

One initiative will at least provide them, if not necessarily provide them with assistance, it would at least allow Government to know who they are and what they are doing. The standards under which they operate in are a census which I gather the Small Business Unit in the Ministry is planning to undertake. My hope still is that at some point in the future it will be possible for Government to find a way of assisting some of those smaller businesses.

I suppose the problem would be in finding the correct mechanism to ensure that if they are given loans, all or most of them are repaid. I am still hoping that at some point they will benefit from technical assistance in the way they are approved if not necessarily in the same way but in some form as the approved small businesses are benefiting.

I turn now to the Rural Development Commission. I am one of those persons who, for the past few years when the question has been in the air, have advocated that there is no need to return to local Government in the form in which we knew it previously. I am happy to say that the Rural Development Commission has proved itself capable of taking on some of the functions which are normally associated with local Government, that is, they have been installing streetlights in rural areas, engaging in house repairs partly with funding, I am told, from the Poverty Alleviation Fund and improving tenantry roads.

In 2000, tenantry roads have been improved in St. Thomas, St. George, St. Michael, Christ Church, St. Peter, St. Philip and St. John. It has been improving minor roads and foot paths, constructing water-borne bathroom facilities, constructing and upgrading rural markets or at least planning for them and installing water and electricity in the homes of people who are too poor to do it for themselves.

Mr. Deputy President, I am told that the creation of additional jobs in rural areas through the programme of the Rural Enterprise Fund is being planned and that the Commission has done a considerable amount of work and is planning to increase and extend vegetable production. There is a plan for resuscitating pottery making in the Scotland District and there are also plans for assisting in the establishment of orchards and livestock production as well.

I think the work of the Rural Development Commission must be publicized so that all Barbadians are aware of the benefits which it can bring to rural communities and my hope is that it will not operate in a partisan way so that all Barbadians of all political creeds and those who have none can benefit from its programme.

Mr. Deputy President, I now come to the Ministry of Health. The allocation for this Ministry is almost \$196 million in 2001. During the past several years, most attention has been focussed on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Ministry of Health has taken a severe battering over the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. There have been calls for a new hospital, extension of the present one, integration of the St. Joseph Hospital into the system and of course, there have been the usual calls for the resignation of the Minister every time the Press focuses on a problem at the Hospital.

Mr. Deputy President, while it is true that we should not be complacent, we should always be striving for improvements. I am of the view that we must also count our blessings because this allows us to make a balanced assessment of where we have come from and where we are going.

The Ministry of Health administers the Queen Elizabeth Hospital which has 597 beds and a staff of 1 768 persons; eight polyclinics; a mental hospital and a half-way

house to rehabilitate persons with psychiatric problems; five district hospitals; two institutions for the care of persons with disabilities; a drug service; a hostel for homeless persons with AIDS; an environmental sanitation unit; an environmental engineering unit; the South Coast Sewerage Project, the Sanitation Service Authority, the Vector Control Unit, the Animal Control Unit and the Solid Waste Project.

Mr. Deputy President, this is a large ministry. The list shows that the Ministry has wide-ranging responsibilities and it is important, as has been recognised by successive Governments, by the portion of the national budget which is allocated to health and it is usually second only to education. For the past five years, no less than 15 per cent of the allocation has been to health. Of that, over half is usually to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I turn now to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital was opened in 1965. When it was built it was recognised as one of the most modern in the Commonwealth Caribbean and it has not outlived its usefulness. It is still one of the better facilities in the region.

I have travelled very extensively in the Caribbean and in other parts of the world and I can tell you that when I pass by some buildings which were pointed out to me as the hospital, I can remember on numerous occasions saying a prayer that I do not get sick in this or that particular country. So that when we are ready to tear the Queen Elizabeth Hospital down and criticize it for every little thing that is going wrong there, we have to remember that in spite of everything it is still one of the better facilities in the region for health care. The fact is that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, like many Government buildings, and it is not only in Barbados, has suffered from a lack of maintenance over the years. It has also suffered, I guess, from poor management. Some have said that political interference at the junior level in appointments has also caused myriad problems and it has been said that pilferage of enormous proportions take place, that there is a culture of doctors who have used the institution as an extension of their private practices and that there is an antiquated and outrageously low fee structure for services provided to those who use it as paying clients.
2.55 p.m.

However, the QEH cannot be discarded like a pair of old shoes. The sensible thing is to upgrade and extend its services. This takes money and I can assure you that although I am no expert in hospital administration, that \$100 million will not be enough to provide the state of health care that we Barbadians would like to have. But what can we do? You have to cut your jacket to suit your cloth.

The USA has superior hospitals. When you go to the States you are always impressed by the hospital services they provide but, thousands of US citizens cannot benefit from the excellent health facilities they have because they cannot

afford to pay for it. In Barbados, this is not the situation. Even visitors who come here casually and walk into the Queen Elizabeth Hospital can get free treatment and this is because health care in Barbados has been grounded on the basis that all Barbadians have a restricted right to access to health care.

You may have to get a friend to take you there because no ambulance might be available and you may have to wait several hours in the Casualty or the Polyclinic before you can see a doctor, but the point is that you or me cannot rule out having health care at the QEH or in the hospital system because we have no money. It may take a little while but, however long we have to wait, in the end we are going to see a doctor and we are going to get medication. I think this is something we keep forgetting and for which we have to be thankful.

Also, if we are suffering from any diseases or any malfunctions or ailments for which there is no local attention, there are limited funds in the budget for sending and assisting people to go overseas to seek the necessary treatment.

Mr. Deputy President, as I said earlier, no matter how much of a national budget the Government allocates to health, it will probably be insufficient to provide the kind of health service some of us expect. The reality is that Barbados has one of the oldest populations in the Caribbean. At present over 11.6 per cent of our people are over 65 years of age and the number of centenarians is increasing.

Most men can expect to live to 72 and the women to 77. This elderly population places tremendous strains on the health budget and will continue to do so because younger folk are no longer willing or able to look after elderly relatives and Government is under pressure to provide more beds for geriatrics, many of whom have health problems such as diabetes, hypertension, impaired vision and senility. On the subject of young caring for old, I just have to share this one with you. A friend of mine, my age, in her mid-fifties, told me a few weeks ago that her son turned to her and said, "Mum, you can look around and tell me which institution you would like me to put you in when you get older." She was devastated. He did it with a big smile on his face. The point is that looking after older people is just not on the cards for some young people. I do not know if it is the way we brought them up or what it is but that is a reality. All these things impact on the cost of delivering health services in Barbados.

Another challenge is the rise in the number of people suffering from non-communicable diseases such as asthma, diabetes and hypertension. Of course, there is the increase in HIV/AIDS sufferers, especially among the 15 to 20 age group. The allocation in the Budget for HIV/AIDS Control

and Prevention is \$9½ million. The devastation, both in the short and long-term, which this disease can have on a country as small as ours should not be underestimated. Treating these patients is a costly exercise and the available evidence is that many of us are not seeing the disease as one which will affect us and therefore are continuing to live as before. What this means is that in the foreseeable future even more of our resources will have to be allocated to the treatment of HIV/AIDS patients.

Mr. Deputy President, I must declare at this point that I am in favour of the distribution of condoms in prison and anywhere else where people must be protected from themselves. The alternative is to contribute to the financial burden which the disease is placing on our health services and whether or not an AIDS czar is appointed at a super salary or a dedicated and lesser official spearheads this effort, unless educational strategies which can persuade people to change their lifestyles can be put in place, we will be whistling in the wind.

In the short time available it is not possible to mention all of the challenges facing the QEH but I can say at least that over the past several years and, especially during the last year, a considerable amount of work has been done in recognised problem areas. I will just mention a few. Ceilings have been replaced, air conditioning systems in some areas have been overhauled, foetal monitors have been installed, a mammograph machine, a new laser machine for the use of the ophthalmic care and a new ultrasound machine for use in cardiology and, of course, the much talked about dialysis machines and new laundry equipment have been acquired.

A few months ago, Mr. Deputy President, a bill for the introduction of a Board to manage the QEH was passed in this Chamber. The mere setting-up of a different management structure will not necessarily eliminate personnel and other problems because old habits die hard. Stern and possibly unpleasant decisions may have to be taken by the Board to deal with chronic absenteeism and pilferage. One would hope that the trade unions involved would remind their members that they have rights but they also have responsibilities and that the two go hand in hand and the health of the nation is a concern of all Barbadians. I have no doubt that the QEH Management Commission will need all the sympathy and support it can get.

Mr. Deputy President, I come now to the Psychiatric Hospital. It is acknowledged that this institution is over 100 years old and that it is testimony to an outdated system of mental care where patients are all kept in one lock-up facility. At the same time, the attitude to mental health held by many Barbadians is also antiquated and there lies the problem. While the mental experts say that many of the patients admitted to the Hospital should be returned to their homes, the community is not receptive. It is clear that a

massive publicity campaign is needed in this area as well but again change in attitudes is something that takes time. If in the near future we could get the public of Barbados to the point where many of us see mental illness as just another form of illness, which is usually treatable, much would have been achieved.

3.05 p.m.

Mr. Deputy President, it is totally possible that one way of changing the public perception of mentally ill people is to provide for access to mental health services at the polyclinics instead of at the Psychiatric Hospital with all the stigma that is attached to it and so on. It would probably just be necessary to upgrade the facility there and probably build a new, but smaller facility, as part of a larger community wide programme for dealing with mental health.

Sir, another urgent need is new legislation. The philosophy of the existing mental health legislation is not really to provide what is best for the patient. It is really to protect society and to shield relatives from having to deal with problems and new legislation is urgently needed.

Recently, I had to look at the Mental Health Act around the region for a research project which I was giving some students and one of the things we found was that the legislation of Barbados, while not being as antiquated as some in other parts of the region, showed very little concern for the rights of patients and the terms under which they should be incarcerated. This is a trend in modern mental health legislation and I hope that when we do draft new legislation that the question of patients' rights are taken into account.

Another shortcoming of the legislation dealing with mental health is that there is no provision for relatives to return for the ill whom they deposit at the Hospital. I have thought about this for a while and I am not sure whether it is the best thing for a sick person, whether mentally ill or not, to have to go back to relatives who do not want them. I do not know what the answer is. The point is that taking care of a large number of mentally ill persons, who with treatment could be returned to their homes, is placing tremendous stress on the resources we have for our health. This is one area that the Government will have to look closely at to see how it is to be dealt with.

Mr. Deputy President, I move to the Animal Control Unit. I note that \$407 700 has been voted for its operation. I am particularly interested in this Unit because during the last year one of my dogs which is ten years old developed cataracts, diabetes and other problems and I was advised to put her to sleep. I made all the arrangements but then could not get any transportation for her to be taken, dead or alive, to the Animal Control Unit. I was told that only one vehicle was working. It had to make pickups from all over the island and would be busy for the entire week. There were other

vehicles but they were down for a long time. I was told as well that the incinerator was not working at the time.

Mr. Deputy President, I would hope that because of the importance of the Animal Health Control Unit, both as a source for finding pets and as the only place in the island where you can dispose of the carcasses of animals which you love in a humane way, that it would be given sufficient funds to make sure that it can operate at its best at all times and that the vehicles can be up and running.

Mr. Deputy President, I heard one of my colleagues yesterday say that there is no long range planning for the Ministry of Health. I beg to draw attention to the Annual Report of the Chief Medical Officer for the years 1997 to 1999 in which projections were made and a summary of the proposals for health care.

There is a section on page 60 entitled "Policy Matters". It says that Barbados' health policy for the future will be a delicate balance of maintaining quality within the constraints of available human and financial resources. It goes on to recommend organisational strengthening, renewal and modernisation of the health system including new or amended legislation, the use of health promotion as an approach to planning and public policy, improvement of information systems, integration of the private sector and NGOs into the health system, establishment of norms, standards and systems for the delivery of quality service, human resource development and manpower planning, development and implementation of policies for the registration of essential drugs, emphasis on food and nutrition, oral health, care of the elderly, *et cetera*.

It is almost three pages and, to me, it is a fairly clear summary of the way in which it is envisaged that health care in Barbados will develop in the near future.

Mr. Deputy President, I thank you.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. Deputy President, I am pleased to have the opportunity to speak this evening on the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue for the year ahead of us and I would like to begin by congratulating the Prime Minister and Ministry of Finance on the proposals that he has presented. Sir, they are presented, as has been stated by other Members before, against a background of measured and stable growth in the economy of Barbados. He has proposed conservative projections for continued sustained growth in Barbados. Sir, this is quite different from the past when events like this were precipitated by a great deal of anxiety on the part of the residents of this nation.

I remember very well gas stations being filled with cars as people tried to get the last tank of gas at what they thought was a reasonable price. I believe it shows a great maturity on the part of Barbadians to accept this sort of initiative on the

part of the Government of the day in dealing with the financial affairs of the country. I again laud the Prime Minister in taking the initiative to capture it all in one event rather than having to come back again at another time.

Mr. Deputy President, yesterday Senator Mascoll in his presentation quoted extensively from Minutes of the Barbados Tourism Authority. I gather that things have a way of falling off the back of a truck but I thought that Minutes of a Board belonged to that Board. I am yet to see the document from which the Senator spoke so I do not know if these are confirmed Minutes or if, in fact, they are really the Minutes of the Board at all. His language could almost be interpreted as imputing victimisation or improper motives on the part of individuals based on what he indicated yesterday. These are very serious allegations and I would wish the Senator to be very cautious in making what appears to be that type of allegation.

Sir, one of the things the Senator alluded to was changes in the context of the Barbados Tourism Authority and its staff and management. Sir, the Senator, as early as a few weeks ago, was heard to be mouthing similar things with respect to the contents of that said document both in this Chamber now and elsewhere with regard to the changes. Sir, I believe this information is being used out of context, some even believe deliberately for reasons best known to the presenter.

The truth of the matter is that even if what he is indicating is so, anybody who has an understanding of management of companies or organisations would understand that it is necessary to access structures from time to time. Indeed, it is highly recommended because anyone who runs a business knows that if we continue to go on without taking stock you may find yourself in a position where you are no longer effective in that particular business, and in the context of the Barbados Tourism Authority, it is advisable to do this. In so saying, the Committee that has responsibility for reviewing and accessing the entire human resources of this organisation is well within their right to make these assessments.

Sir, I gather that it is a subcommittee of a greater Board and that the details the speaker alluded to were contained in these Minutes. Sir, the truth, we all know, is that committees of any Board can only make recommendations or proposals and they must go to the greater Board for ratification.
3.15 p.m.

Sir, the truth of the matter is that a committee can only propose changes. Anybody who is taking an interest in the affairs of the Government of the day would know that changes at management level in any organisation that is owned entirely or in part by the Government, before making management changes, those proposals must first go to the Cabinet. Sir, this has not yet occurred.

The truth of the matter is, there is no secret that a position is available at the management level of the Barbados Tourism Authority. The principal position has been vacated several months ago. I am not aware up to today, this moment of speaking, that those jobs have been advertised by the Barbados Tourism Authority. Further, Sir, without advertising, one thing that this Government can laud itself on, Sir, is transparency in its appearance and there will be no hiring without first advertising and without the requisite interviews that must follow. Sir, I would wish that in this particular regard the Senator would desist from these erroneous, willful and, I believe, mischievous insinuations.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Honourable Member, you cannot impute those things to other Members. I beg the Honourable Member to withdraw those words, please. You cannot say mischievous.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Certainly, Sir. Well in that case I would ask him to desist from erroneous statements.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: In your view.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: In my view, Sir.

Again, I would want to reiterate that the statement made by the Senator came from a document from which he quoted and that this Chamber is still to see copies of same. I believe the request went out yesterday but the document must be made a document of this House so that other Honourable Members would have in their possession from what document he quoted.

MR. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: I did rule yesterday that document be made a document of the House. So you will have to rely on the Clerk to tell us if the document is available.

SENATOR Miss J. C. ODLE: Mr. Deputy President, this afternoon I would want to take the opportunity to speak, not at length, but certainly to spend a little time on the tourism sector in general. I would also want to spend some time on the Ministry of Social Transformation. I believe that these Ministries, in particular, and not discounting, of course, all Ministries, that in a bicycle each peg is important in a wheel in order for that wheel to go around. I believe that the engine of growth is significant to the success of this nation and the human resource is significant and important to any nation.

Speaking about tourism in its broad way, at the Ministry level, Sir, the whole approach to sustainable tourism development is envisaged as the whole business of tourism. The role of the public sector must be one primarily of facilitation, Sir, and certainly of regulation. I know that

regulation is that – as we look around Barbados we begin sometimes to wonder if we do not need to be a bit more stringent and vigilant in certain areas because everybody feels that they can do whatever they want to and get away with it, winking here and there and pretending that things never happened.

Sir, the Ministry further recognises that participation is also very important. When I speak about our human resource element I will indicate later in the presentation the element in that regard.

Collaboration is also important. As I said before, one sector cannot hope to be successful without impinging in a positive way on others. Specifically, Sir, we want to ensure that communities are included in the whole broader tourism picture. These sub-sectors within this sector are integral to the whole development efforts of the tourism sector.

Mr. Deputy President, gone are the days when tourism in Barbados can only be seen as a visitor coming to these shores, spending a few days or a week at the beach, soaking up the sun and probably giving himself skin cancer. Long ago we recognised that this was not going to be the way our tourism sector was going to generate the sorts of revenue we need. Sir, clearly there is still a very large percentage of that because Barbados is still voted as one of the best warm weather destinations.

Sir, the whole concept of tourism as a sector has to be a necessity to engage in other areas that draw persons to Barbados. I know that we do so by way of our informatics sector in particular but certainly in the element of the tourism sector. I would want to suggest that initiative the Government took to create an entity that would deal with another element of tourism that is, conference tourism, is an exceedingly important and necessary part.

Sir, over the years, the sector was seen as December to April, a very few short months, and there was not much activity outside of these months where revenue could still be generated. Sir, taking the initiative to create organisations that would deal with different elements of the product at such a conference and other areas of investment, these entities were set up.

The Sherbourne Conference Centre, Barbados Conference Services is the organisation that manages this entity. Sir, any one of us who knows the history behind the Sherbourne Conference Centre would recognise that from the inception there was no clear definition to what this, very beautiful exterior building, what purpose it would truthfully serve in the context of Barbados. The reason and rationale changed almost nightly and daily. My job today is not to back Sherbourne because it is part of our national heritage, we have to say now, because a great deal of money was spent on it, Sir, and we have to make it work as best as we are able.

The reality is, Sir, that structure calls for extraordinary sums of money to keep that wonderful facade up. Even a simple thing like a storeroom is something that does not exist up there at Sherbourne. Therefore, it would mean that capital item such as desks which call for considerable space is a challenge. Even to maintain them in good condition could not happen without the Government's grant.

Sir, you will recognise that in these Estimates there is an amount provided for the Barbados Conference Services Limited for the maintenance and the up-keep of Sherbourne Conference Centre. The company as a whole, Sir, is continuing in its mandate to position the Sherbourne Conference Centre as a premier event and incentive and conference facility in the Eastern Caribbean. The truth of the matter is, Sir, even with our challenges that is beginning to take place. It has been a very difficult period in terms of positioning and in terms of marketing to ensure that it is maximising use. Sir, the reality is, for that facility to ever break even, there needs to be 98 per cent occupancy of that Centre year round, Sir. The truth of the matter is, Sir, that while being beautiful, the Conference Centre has predominately large meeting rooms and obviously there is a need for that when you have events such as very large conventions consisting of over 200 persons, or over 800 persons you can even squeeze in, for want of a better expression, but that is where the Conference Centre is positioned.

3.25 p.m.

To cool that building, Sir, the way that it was constructed, there are three chunks of building requiring three air-conditioning units, so it means that if you want to cool one room in one section you have to cool the whole building and in order to make that work you have to put out more revenue, do split systems, *et cetera*, so that we can save on revenue, and it is interesting. I heard Senator Barker say some time ago about the use of solar power as one of the initiatives he would soon hope to be able to introduce as a facility to reduce its expenditure in terms of running that building.

Sir, over time it will become necessary for the Government to continue to inject funds into the management of the organization that deals with ensuring that the Sherbourne Conference Centre continues to be available, because Barbados now is highly recognized as a very capable, all-systems-in-place type of destination where meetings of any sort can take place effectively.

Sir, that is an area of revenue generation under the Tourism authorities and also revenue-generation from use outside of the tourism sector and so I believe that that initiative was an excellent one on the part of the Government of the day, which happened to be the Barbados Labour Party Government.

That is the only sector I am going to speak of in that regard, but we do know that the Barbados Tourism Investment sector, which not too long ago received funding, is moving on in full speed trying to deal with the issue of tourism investment in Barbados. Indeed, the Needham's Project, of which the Hilton is a part, has already begun to take some steps into positioning that too as again one of the most beautiful peninsulas with a brand name product on it.

The statistics for the year 2000 – and I believe in order to do a full assessment we have to look at it, since we are talking about finances for the year ahead, we need to look at the total year that has just passed us. For the year 2000, Sir, we were able to realize over 1 000 000 visitors to Barbados, and that is above 545 000 long-stay and 533 cruise ship passengers, both exceeding the 500 000 mark.

Sir, this is against a background where there were many challenges and obstacles of the sort. You would recall that at the beginning of last year there was fear with respect to what would happen with the Y2K bug. We know that many people did not travel and that was at the prime of our tourism peak with respect to the months that I have already indicated.

The Olympics later in the year in Sydney also would have had an impact on that. The U.S. Presidential Election would have also been challenging because anyone of us knows that when an election is imminent in our country, we are not going to go away from home because we all believe in democracy. We have to be there to make sure that we are doing the right thing and we all want to be able to take our part in doing that.

Sir, also against this background was the unavailability of two of the leading hotels in Barbados, the Sandy Lane Hotel and the Hilton Hotel, both of them under reconstruction. Sir, both of these properties are brand names and when we think about brand name in terms of the hotel sector, it is a known fact that visitors from abroad, North America, in particular, and the United Kingdom to a lesser extent, like to go to a destination where there is a brand name they recognize as being a familiar and household name, but against that background, we were still able to generate that growth in that sector of the tourism market.

Sir, today as we speak, one of those properties is back on stream catering to the higher end of the market, that is the Sandy Lane Hotel and, of course, that is going to impact in many different ways. As a matter of fact, even when it was under construction, it had an impact relating to the levels of employment and the sorts of money we would spend in Barbados by the persons doing that work, some of whom were from outside but, of course, the money they were earning was being thrown back into the community.

Tourism performance has, therefore, been credible showing an eight per cent increase over 1999 in spite of

many domestic and international challenges. Of course, challenges that will still continue to plague any competitive destinations, particularly the small destinations, would be the increase in demand by international tourists.

Now, whether we want to believe it or not, Sir, we are still a Third World country in size and in many other ways, even though many of us live like we are living in the first world and have at our fingertips all that is available in a first world, but, of course, we know that these things do not come without a cost.

Another challenge is greater competition from other destinations in the Caribbean and a thrust by the United States. For some time now, the United States has been very forcefully promoting incentives in terms of encouraging North Americans to stay at home for their vacations, and by "at home" I do not mean in New York or in Florida, but travelling within the context of the United States. Of course, that will be a challenge for us and we have to address that in our marketing as one of the thrusts we have to ensure will keep bringing people to us.

There are other destinations, for example, Cuba. We all know that Cuba is one of the places at our back door and while we embrace Cuba in a large measure as a player in the context of the Caribbean, we must recognize that because it is new, it is going to be something that will encourage people, perhaps, to want to shift their weight from current and familiar destinations such as Barbados.

Changing technologies and, of course, the Opposition would like to hear this, crime and visitor harassment, with the harassment part certainly on the decline. The police are certainly taking the time to position officers to walk the beat, although I must say that I would like to see them walking the beat in more practical gear. I do not think that boots and sand, or the long pants and sand is the order of the day but, maybe, that will come later. And so, against these challenges we were still able to organize our tourism in a manner that was beneficial to all of us who live here.

Sir, whether we would want to believe it or not, the sector provides a tremendous amount of employment opportunities for many Barbadians. It employs in excess of 13,800 persons working directly in restaurants and hotels, *et cetera*, but the truth of the matter is that we know the whole of Barbados is tourist destination, not any one small part of the island. In that context many average Barbadians can make additional revenue from the tourist sector.

For example, I have a gardener who comes to my house once a week in the rainy season and in the dry season less frequently, to take care of my little 2x4, which I am very glad to have, but during the tourist season he sells jewellery to cruise ship passengers. He is a country man and lives right along the route where the coaches carry the tourists to see

the beautiful sights, and so that is an extra revenue that he is able to generate apart from doing his gardening.

Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that other Barbadians, in different ways of course, are able to expand in this regard and to obtain more revenue.

Sir, the approximate figure is 11.1 per cent employment in the labour market. Of course this is expected to be increased now in so far as the Sandy Lane Hotel is back on track and there will be more rooms to the disposal of the sector.

Of course, employment with respect to the Villa market is annual and ongoing because there are many villas here and whether we believe it, you know, Sir, in this day and age, we tend to believe that we are always small but we must recognize that the best thing in life is to have diversity. You have to have something for everybody, particularly in a nation where we cannot afford to "put all our eggs in one basket". We have to have and we do have at our disposal something for any individual wanting to visit Barbados, cost notwithstanding.

Again, Sir, in the presentation that Senator Mascoll made, and there may be some merit in it in some regard he compared the arrivals between the United States and the United Kingdom. The point was advanced that the United Kingdom tourists spend less than the United States visitor. While there might be some merit in this statement, as I said before, the fact is that the United Kingdom visitor stays a longer time and realistically, spending in the hotel, as well as in other areas, would be higher. So, Sir, the Senator, I believe, made a non point. Again, Sir, just another example of what may be deemed as an inaccuracy on the part of the Opposition in presenting information.

3.35 p.m.

Sir, Barbados continues to witness an increase in investment activities in the tourism sector. Projects such as the GEMS of Barbados, the Port St. Charles, the Hilton, when it comes back on stream, Almond Beach, although today I do not exactly know what is the scenario in that regard, as I said before, Sandy Lane is expected to play a critical role in transforming the tourism industry's product in the years ahead.

Sir, while we may want to criticise now, we have to recognise that if we do not put things in train for change and in life, some would say that even living on a day-to-day basis is risky, but if we just sit in a comfort zone and fail to plan towards a future, similarly the tourism sector, then we will fail to be competitive.

We know that in the whole global order we are as good as the product we create or as the service we render and in this regard, the investment activities are intended to intensify in the medium and into the long-term. There are others who

result in significant improvements in the quality of hotel rooms on the island and such positive developments could only redound to the benefit of the economy as a whole.

Sir, let us look briefly at the German market because many years ago the German market used to represent one of the largest sectors for Barbados and one of the challenges that faced that market was the unavailability then of transport from that sector. That economy has taken a downturn but it is now on the turnabout. We would like to believe that it would become once again one of our major markets.

There is discussion ongoing at the moment and it is almost finalised, I have been advised, with respect to Condor Airlines which would again be able to bring tourists from Germany. Air Jamaica, a regional carrier, has as well on its cards, a proposal to position an aircraft to deal with transport, I think, on a weekly basis. Of course, you could imagine then that this would be opening up or reopening a market that had gone kind of quiet and dormant on us.

Generally speaking, in the sector, Sir, we could assume that the industry is in reform because, to a larger extent, you have a vertical integration between carriers and hotels, and organisations are moving in that kind of vein. If we are supposed to be competitive, we have to begin to look at this and see to what extent it will impact on our tourism.

That is one of the reasons behind the Barbados Tourism Authority. They are the ones who are charged with the mandate of marketing Barbados, doing a great deal of research with respect to the competition and recommending initiatives to bring positive and meaningful change to the sector.

Sir, the whole research component, of course, is made a lot easier now since statistics can be achieved as soon as 15 days after the following month. This is quite different from the days, and of course, technology will have something to do with it. When one of our Senators sat on the Board of the BTA, and was managing the affairs of the sector when the decline went to unprecedented lows, along with other areas such as the employment sector, we will not deal with that today, Sir, but another time.

Sir, over the last number of months the Ministry of Tourism has undertaken to canvass across the length and breadth of Barbados by way of town meetings, seeking input on a draft tourism policy document. This document has benefited in large measure from inputs of not only those working in the sector but those who also see themselves as contributors to the economy by way of being involved in many different ways with the sector. It has also benefited from inputs at a community level.

Sir, this is the kind of Government that this Barbados Labour Party Administration is. We do not just bring

pieces of legislation and say, "Here, you have to go out on this, Sir." We give the residents of this country who are stakeholders in this country the opportunity to feel a sense of ownership in the policies we are bringing before them because we know full well, every single one of us I believe who is in this room at this moment, must be stubborn individuals one way or the other or certainly determined individuals or we would not be here at all.

The truth of the matter is, if anybody brought anything to us and said, "Here, take this," we would want to chomp at the bit. And so in the year 2001, I do not believe that the Administration of the day, the Government of Barbados would be so foolish as to want to bring something and stuff it down people's throats. Therefore, that whole dialogue that we encourage widely with respect to policy creation is present in this new Draft Tourism Policy. Sir, it is before the Cabinet now and I believe that in due course, it would be presented to Parliament. I want to state again, Sir, that policy changes are not implemented before these due processes are considered.

Sir, I would want to spend just a moment speaking about some of the activities within the Ministry of Tourism that are going to attack directly on the human resource component of the development of ensuring the effectiveness of Barbados and of the economy by way of this sector. There are some activities proposed for this coming financial year and, of course, that is the reason behind some of the figures you will see in the Estimates before us for example, the whole question of tourism awareness and a mentorship programme for small industry persons.

Sir, if I am a teacher, a manufacturer or a basket weaver, I would want to see what I do impact in large measure on the economy. First of all, it must impact on me so, therefore, I need to know how to put my product across, not so much the manufacture of it but the marketing of it, and, if I am marketing it to the tourism sector, then there are certain strategies I would want to employ.

Sir, one of the direct projects under the Ministry of Tourism is the whole question of tourism awareness for front line workers and we all know who those are. We know that when we travel the first person we make contact with is the Immigration person and then the Customs person. Anybody who has travelled to a destination and has had other than a warm and receptive greeting, body language and approach, *et cetera*, to form this greeting, knows that that first impression is a very lasting impression and can determine whether or not you would want to return to that destination for any purpose, whether it is a holiday and certainly you would not want to do business here, if this is the kind of attitude.

I am not suggesting, Sir, that this is the attitude of our front line people but I am suggesting that in the context of

the Ministry's work in this incoming year, is that they are going to have to ensure that no stone is left unturned. They also have to ensure that actions of the front line personnel will encourage and re encourage people to return again and again.

Another project is the Community Awareness Programme. This Programme, Sir, will continue. Do you remember some time ago we had carried on the television, "Tourism is our business, let's play our part." I think, Sir, more than ever now in this sector each and every one of us as Barbadians must recognise that if the tourism sector is not operating in a manner that can generate a comfort level of living for us then we all will fail.

Similarly too, the whole question of integration, Sir, and it was to my distress very recently, if I could come off of Tourism for a minute to make this point, for the need to be integrated and each one has that sense to buy in. A young MP from a neighbouring island, whom I had the fortune to share in a parliamentary experience with away from the Caribbean shores, discussed the whole question of integration. He mouthed that it is never going to happen and I asked him if we do not come together, what kind of future will we have. He said that he does not know or he does not care. I said, well young man – and I felt I could say that because he is 30 years old and I am 45 and therefore I am the next generation almost – if we do not come together, then individually, we would subside into the bowels of the earth and be no more in terms of competitiveness.

3.45 p.m.

Sir, it is important for each and every Barbadian to have a stake in the success of this industry. Sir, one of the initiatives that would be spearheaded by the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport is a stay at home programme. Sir, we should ask ourselves when last we had a vacation on this lovely rock that so many people come to visit at great cost. I believe that this programme will encourage and highlight to some extent the very wonderful areas where we can have very cost effective visits at home for those of us who are able to take a little vacation from time to time, even if it is only a weekend vacation.

The Ministry of Tourism and International Transport has a plan for tourism. Newsletters would be spread far and wide to share information on that. There will be DNSA competitions for primary schools because if we do not start to attract the interest of the very, very young then we cannot expect an adult to want to buy into the concept. We have to begin to condition the minds at this stage. There is also a plan to have a tourism news conference and a showcase for secondary schools because there is still a perception that tourism, hotels and even to some extent restaurants, are not "for the average Barbadian". That is a myth that has to be dispelled.

So in creating this awareness, it is going to encourage, I believe, a lot of young people to want to become participants in terms of service and hospitality to the industry which can bring much rewards at all levels because there is experience in Barbados to prove that you do not necessarily have to come in and start at the top but you can start at the basics.

There is experience that most of the top management usually comes from overseas, or used to come from overseas, but there is very living life experience where more than one Barbadian has moved from bellhop to being the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chairman of the organization of one of the principal properties here in Barbados. That, Sir, is mentoring. That, Sir, is experience that can certainly encourage the participation of young people in this particular sector.

Sir, I had promised that I would not speak long but time has a way of going along. I talked generally about the sector. We talked about hotels. We talked about visitors' stay. We talked about visitors spending and we talked about the numbers coming to these shores, but we have to pay attention to the organisation that more or less brings people in, which is the Airport. So to continue, I believe it is important that we look again at the figures that are recognised in this document for the Airport Management sources.

Sir, in looking at the Airport infrastructure, the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport's whole outline is to continue its development, its upgrading, its expansion and its maintenance. We have to dwell on maintenance because the message has already gone abroad that the Government, generally speaking, is not on top of its maintenance programme. Again, this is an initiative by the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport to make sure that the Airport is maintained in accordance with changing international standards, as well as to enhance the revenue generated and the capability to do so.

There are many Heads under this but I would want to speak specifically to the works which are ongoing now and the rationale behind that. The Grantley Adams International Airport, to all extent and purposes, is really and truly the premier Airport in this region. That is not surprising because our visitor arrivals show, with the exception of The Bahamas, that we are up there in terms of the numbers, so why not too our Airport and anything else we have to offer as a tourism product.

It is important for us to have a hub that is efficient, that has comfortable airport facilities and also has the capability to expand and generate revenue through the Airport shops, particularly the duty-free shops and special retail offerings therein.

I must say though that in the context of the general retail, there is room for the individuals who have the

concessions within the shops, particularly those on the outside of the Airport, to beef up the presentation to ensure that there is more variety in the types and quality of goods that are being served there, whether it be goods to wear, whether it is decorative and certainly whether it be food because there need be more visible local juices and drinks. There is certainly one beer manufacturer that is recognised there.

On your first arrival you should be able to get something cold with ice like tamarind juice or something like that. Tamarinds are retail items which hardly cost anything to produce. If it cannot be the tamarind, then there should be some other local delicacy because, let us face it, people do not come here just because they want the same. We recognise that wherever we go in North America we would want to see a hamburger and chips but certainly in the context of local fare and produce these shops should make provision for having the choice and to project that choice so that when persons leave the Airport and go down into the communities then lo and behold the produce is there and again revenue will spin off in that regard.

Sir, in order to begin to produce that comfort zone for visitors to this island, two airport information facility desks have been established to give assistance to arriving and departing passengers with respect to the request for any number of things such as knowing where to find what and where to put the duty-free slips, for argument sake, if you are on the way out and so on.

Of course, the service as well as the staff will need to be upgraded as well. We know that change, as one Senator said before – I forget which culture uses that as a reference – that the first step must go on to make the next step and to make growth. This is an experience where you are seeing a relationship and a good example of cooperation between the private and the public sector because the initiative is for Government to put the desk and the salary will be paid by the Airlines Association of Barbados. That is certainly an initiative we would want to have a lot more of in the sector because I think the day is long gone when we believe that the Government of the day can do all with respect to any sector, so input must come with the private sector as well and there must be a good relationship between these two.

Sir, I am not going to dwell much longer on tourism so I just want to say that the whole project, as identified, can only redound to the general benefit of the nation as a whole because we already know that the engine of growth is the tourism sector along with others.

Sir, I want to now move quickly to the Ministry of Social Transformation and in doing so to recognise that the Ministry of Social Transformation has several components. Senator Newton spoke about the health sector having several components. The Ministry of Social Transformation, which

is a Ministry established by this Barbados Labour Party Government, because it recognises that for our human resources all persons and players in Barbados have to have equal opportunity in the sector, have several subsections that were in need of beefing up and coming under one umbrella to ensure that no sector is left out.

I want firstly to speak to the whole issue of gender. This is important because we in Barbados recognise that relationships are not what they should be. Sir, there is a need for a greater and better understanding of gender. We have to recognise that gender is not sex and that gender is culturally and socially determined whereas sex is biologically predetermined. Of course, gender does not mean men or women only. Very often when we talk about gender it is usually what more women want. I have had that said to me in this very Chamber. It tells me that there is not a sufficient understanding of what we mean when we say gender. This does not mean men or women only but it means our relationship each with the other and how these relationships are constructed in the social context. Like any other social category, the concept of gender draws attention to inequalities between the component parts, in this case it is between women and men.

3.55 p.m.

Of course, these days the variable roles are changing, flip-flop, as some will say, and that is putting tremendous pressure for perhaps not the right reasons, and there is never a right reason for pressure with respect to harassment or abuse of any sort, whether it be in the home or whether it be in the work-place.

Dr. Eugene Barriteau offered a definition of gender that I have found very useful and I thought I would like to share it. It says, the complex systems of personal and social relations of dominion and power through which women and men are socially created and maintained and through which they gain access to or are allocated status, power and material resources within the society.

Sir, this Gender Bureau that was in a manifesto of the 1999 election has a list of areas of responsibility, and I am not going to take time to go into them all but to say it is a broad statement on page 65 so you can read the rationale behind Gender Affairs: to be a focal point for gender and development issues. It, therefore, has responsibility for facilitating monitoring and evaluating matters pertaining to the achievement of equality and I dwell on that "equality" through social, economic and political development for both women and men.

It has been some 18 months now and undoubtedly this Government has always taken responsibility for the advancement of women generally some 25 years or more now. Clearly the commitment is there but I have to say that

I find it is a little bit lax in bringing this Bureau to full function. As I look at the Estimates for this year, I am not seeing the sort of figures that would indicate that we are going to make significant change to carry out the mandate as so defined by this document as its *raison d'être*.

Sir, with respect to the staffing of that Bureau, I find that there is little provision in these Estimates for any expansion in terms of personnel. I understand well that the posts have to be created by way of the Ministry of the Civil Service and that funding to pay these have to go through the Ministry of Finance, but it was my understanding that this initiative has been taking some time now so that I am disappointed that I am not seeing it, unless I missed it. I looked up and down and even compared last year's figures to see if they indicate a change in that.

At the centre of any development, of any monitoring towards a pledge for any kind of equality between the sexes, and to create that gender balance that we speak of has, as a large percentage, to search to identify the causes so that we can correct any inequalities. So I am disappointed that I am not seeing that. I would hope, Sir, that if I have missed it that someone else in speaking might bring it forward. It is time that this starts to happen and I certainly await its speedy implementation.

I believe that everyone of us must recognise that the numbers increase in terms of harassment, sexual and otherwise, and abuse of all sorts tells us that we are not communicating in a manner, and this is men and women, and women and men, that is conducive to good relationships.

At this juncture, Sir, the NGO community is largely responsible for ensuring that the whole gender awareness factor is brought to the forefront. The National Organisation of Women receive a small subvention from Government, albeit very small, to the tune of \$2 000 and I believe it would be useful particularly at this time where they are carrying on a community programme entitled "Learning for Life" so that individuals, women in particular, because I make the point very clearly that while we speak of gender equality we must always – and one of the Honourable Senators said it in this Sitting earlier – ensure that the gains women have made are not eroded. We also have as a responsibility to make sure that the women in communities understand and believe to what extent the whole question of the legislative process, policy initiatives impact on their lives in a manner that would make them want to be aware and to continue to be involved in decision making no matter how small and at what level.

Sir, as we speak of the question of equality, and in this document it speaks about political equality as well, we recognise that women certainly do not have any obstacles with respect to voting and so on. There is need for women in large measure to recognise at the political level that their

input is also valuable. The perspective that each sex would bring to bear on the decision making process is valuable as God created us to be equal, man and woman together, for procreation of the species. So, too, should be the equal opportunity for the creation of legislation to impact on all elements within this society.

Sir, now "Learning for Life" is embarking on a programme that will continue at the small level in terms of the smallest community base to begin to build that awareness and that strength. I must also indicate that I believe a committee has been formed under the Ministry of Social Transformation as well, comprising members from the Men's Forum, to look at how the whole gender relationship can be improved and enhanced. I look forward to hearing what they are able to work on in that regard.

Sir, I am going to end on that because I am conscious of time, but to sum up, I think that at the end of the day, and I want to speak about the Disability Unit as well, but one would never know that an hour could run away so quickly. Sir, let me say quickly and I will spend a few minutes on the Disability Unit and you will stop me if I am running over time.

The Disability Unit has quietly been going about the work because if all stakeholders in Barbados are to play their part and to be beneficiaries of the pie of Barbados so too must persons with disabilities. This Unit has been created to give opportunity to persons with disabilities so that we know who they are and so that advocacy can take place. This advocacy has already brought about the acquisition by the Transport Board of a number of buses so that persons with disabilities can still move up and down without the embarrassment or the harassment of trying to step up too high into buses. I think that they must be lauded for the attempt. Gone are the days when persons with disabilities had to be shut away in their homes because they could not get out. Some would still want to shut them away from embarrassment but that too must change as we recognise that every single person has as its right that opportunity.

One of the other initiatives in this particular division is the telephone linked support group which will give support and provide companionship for persons with disabilities. It will also encourage the sharing and the building of confidence in one's self. We know that if confidence is lacking then we have little opportunity to do anything at all. It is also to provide moral support.

Sir, another important factor the Disability Unit is working on is creating a pamphlet for prospective employers because the day is here when persons who might have a physical disability – there is nothing wrong with their heads – should be able to be employed in a meaningful way in one of the sectors within this community. This is beginning to happen because through a Christmas project that the Unit

created, several persons with disabilities went on a temporary basis and many were then hired on a permanent basis. This is an avenue where they can gain their own financial independence.

To sum up, we talked about the tourism factor which will give employment and create revenue. We talked about the whole question of equality in terms of gender being well positioned to ensure that all Barbadians, male and female, have an equal opportunity and recognise this opportunity and use it to ensure that we are maximising on whatever gains there are to be had and we are talking about persons who have disabilities.
4.05 p.m.

Sir, our entire human resource product, that is everyone here in Barbados under these Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue, has been identified.

This Government must be congratulated and as long as these initiatives and policies continue to be implemented and the average Barbadian understands what this means in the context of their lives, Barbados as a whole will benefit.

I want to again suggest that it is in the management of the affairs of this country, just as we would manage an organisation to maximise growth, just as we would manage and make structures and changes in our lives to maximise potential, so too, on this occasion the Ministry of Finance and the Prime Minister have ensured that we are going to maximise on the revenue and work with the expenditure to ensure equitable arrangements for a successful Barbados.

Sir, I thank you.

SENATOR the Rev. L. W. B. ROCK: Mr. Deputy President, thank you for affording me the opportunity to share a few thoughts on the Appropriation Bill which we are discussing in this Chamber at this time. Certainly the quantum of the Appropriation Bill is ample evidence of the growth and development of this country over the years and that we are able to discuss the sort of money in proposed projects and all that the Government proposes to do, is ample testimony to the place where we are in our development.

I am sure all of us are proud of this country of which we are citizens and residents and we thank God and we thank those who, in the past and present, continue to give sacrificial service and dedication and who are motivated by the highest and noblest interest in seeing that this country progresses.

In the midst of this progress, Mr. Deputy President, we cannot close our eyes to certain disturbing elements in the society, elements which can undermine the achievements which we have made and elements which demand our attention.

Sir, I refer particularly to attitudinal changes which are contributing towards some of the tension and the uneasiness which some of us feel in the society at this time. Those attitudes are expressed in the selfishness which we see in our society, the thoughtlessness and in the lack of sensitivity which seems to be pervading the whole of the society.

Sir, it is for this reason I believe that attention must be given to what is required to change the attitudes that are so prevalent in our society. I do not think that we can just sit back and complain, I think it has to be addressed.

While it is true that attitudes do not change overnight, neither do they change by wishing they would change, they still have to be addressed. I do not see this as the responsibility only of the Government but as the responsibility of all of us who have leadership responsibility in this country. How can we collectively address the problem of changing attitudes? How do we help our people to understand that by some of the careless and thoughtless actions they endanger not just themselves and their families but the whole of the society? It is for this reason I believe that one of the efforts which we must engage in, is a massive education programme to raise the consciousness of our people about their own responsibility for themselves and for others.

It is true that on television, radio and the Press some efforts are made but I think this has to be increased. I believe it has to be intentional. I believe that it has to be a collective effort where Government, the media and other agencies which impact upon the lives of the people come together and plan a programme to sensitise the community to what is happening and to challenge all of us to take responsibility for our actions.

Sir, I believe to the extent that every citizen and resident in Barbados is prepared to take responsibility, that we will be able to arrest and bring to an end some of the disturbing features in our society. I believe this with all my heart and I challenge Government to take the lead in mobilising all of the institutions and agencies necessary to effect this attitudinal change over a period of time. It is not something that will happen overnight, it is something that must be planned, consistent and believed in, if we are to achieve any measure of success, which I believe that we can.

Where we have arrived at in the development of our nation is due to the commitment and the confidence that we have in our ability. Even though we had few resources, we have progressed, and we have done so, certainly, only to the extent that we had confidence in our ability and we evidenced that confidence in our commitment. I believe what we have achieved in the past will give us the necessary motivation to press on and to overcome those situations which challenge and threaten us at this time.

Sir, I want to make a few points on some of the Heads. I refer to Head 23 under Health and to the area of sanitation. The Leader of Government Business almost gave us a lecture which was very helpful. I believe that part of this programme of sensitisation and consciousness raising must relate to some of the areas of concern in this part of Government.

Under the area of sanitation, I became aware that there are three dumps in Barbados – one for metal collection at Bagatelle, one for asbestos at St. Thomas and the Mangrove dump. In spite of this, we find that through carelessness and inconsiderate action citizens dumping refuse in areas where they should not dump refuse. One of the things I wonder about is if more skips like those that are placed in the City could be placed in some of the areas where illegal dumping is taking place, whether this may not improve the situation where dumping refuse is threatening our water system. This may have some impact on employment but I believe it is something that needs to be explored if we are to arrest this very bad and careless habit of dumping stuff anywhere.
4.15 p.m.

I want also, Sir, to raise the question of those who are called Environmental Health Officers. I believe before they were called Public Health Inspectors. I am told that in that particular department they are still such persons. I want to say I believe that the reduction in the visits of such Health Officers may be a contributing factor to some of the health problems with the *Aedes Egypti* mosquito. I can well remember when these Environmental Health Officers visited homes more than once or twice a year and possibly some attention should be given to encourage more frequent visits as one of the measures adopted to arrest the spread of dengue and other health hazards in our society.

Sir, I turn to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. It is very encouraging to hear of the plans that are being made and I look forward to the implementation of those plans in the not too distant future. My particular concern for this institution is that it is the institution which, as Senator Newton reminds us, is available for all Barbadians, but it is a place to which those who cannot afford the medical care look to for attention.

While there are some of us who have the resources to go to private doctors and to receive assistance from them, there are many who cannot and that is part of the urgency of this particular institution being brought up-to-date to provide the sort of care which I am sure the Government wants to provide for all of the citizens of this country.

As you address this problem, Mr. Minister, I hope you would give some consideration to parking because that is one of the problems at that institution. When I go there to perform some of my pastoral responsibilities, sometimes it is difficult to find a place to park and I would ask that some attention be given to this particular problem.

Sir, I turn to the issue of HIV/AIDS. I commend the Government for the Commission which has been established. I am a little concerned that the emphasis that is being placed and, maybe I am misunderstanding it and I am open to correction, the emphasis which seems to be placed on HIV/AIDS, AIDS in terms of the physical or biological aspect of it. What I find absent is the concern for the moral aspects of it. I believe that the moral issue is paramount in addressing this particular problem. Sir, the sexual lifestyle of people cannot be corrected by legislation. It is to the extent that in the development of this programme, the emphasis is placed upon morality then I believe that we will achieve the objectives that are before us.

Sir, it means also that what appears to be a conflict at times between the positions which the Church and religious bodies adopt are not necessarily in conflict with Government, although at times they are presented as though they are in conflict and to represent the Church as only being interested in the soul and the Government interested in the body is a dichotomy which I find very difficult to understand.

The Church is interested in the whole person as I believe Government is. It is less than helpful when we try to present or make it appear as though the Church and Government are in conflict when the Church addresses on HIV/AIDS and other issues from a moral and spiritual perspective. That dimension which I would like to commend is a very important dimension and we must see ourselves working together rather than one against the other. I know that leaders of the Church certainly would lend support to Government in what is being done even if we question the issue of the distribution of condoms in the prison at this time.

I want also to look for a moment at Education under Head 34. I believe this country owes a debt of gratitude to a man whom I refer to as the voice in the wilderness. I refer to Mr. Gladstone Holder. I think that Mr. Holder in his articles continue to point out to us a dire need in our society of reading. While the Government must be commended on what is being done through EduTech and to equipping our children and young people to function in the technological age, one of my fears, Sir, is that you will be able to master a computer but we have people who cannot read.

I believe that more attention must be given to reading in schools. I believe also that attention should be given to those students in schools who are slow learners and who are having problems. I am aware that the Alma Parris School has been established to address this problem, partly, but it cannot meet all of the needs. What I believe is required is that each school, I am not aware that it presently exists, and Senator Forde can correct me if I am inaccurate, must develop a remedial programme for those children who are just coming through the system.

There are many of them who are just coming through the system because they lack the literacy skills and many of them do not have any confidence, self-esteem and they see themselves as virtually worthless, and sometimes we also make them feel that they are useless and many of them become involved in areas of crime.

Therefore, I would challenge the Ministry of Education to increase, improve, strengthen, if you will, this programme within the individual schools to address this problem of children who are slow learners and those who have learning disabilities.

4.25 p.m.

I want briefly, to associate myself with comments made by Senator Miss J. C. Odle about the officers who meet, not just our visitors, but people as they come through the Ports.

When I lived in Trinidad and my job required me to be out of the country quite a lot, I always dreaded returning to Trinidad, not because I did not like the country but because of the attitude of some of the Immigration Officers.

In Barbados, I have never had that problem, but there are many people who have complained that the attitude of some of the officers at the Grantley Adams International Airport leaves much to be desired, and visitors from abroad whom we have hosted have sometimes been very concerned at the way they have been made to feel. Some of them said that some of the officers did not make them feel as though they were welcomed. I believe that in the training programme of the Public Sector Reform we need to be especially attentive to those that are chosen to be the Customs and Immigration Officers and bring home to them the importance and the manner in which they carry out their duties. They have a very important job and it is not an easy one. There are people with attitudes and some who come with attitudes that are certainly not proper, but the officers have to be patient, understanding and certainly express an attitude which is welcoming.

The question of the Tourism Representatives is one which has been a concern of mine for a long time. When I go to the Airport I often wonder what some visitors to our country feel when they see the disproportionate number of black Barbadians who are Tour Representatives and I believe this is something that needs to be addressed. I am not racist, but I believe that it gives the wrong impression when coming to a country that is predominantly black where we have that disproportion in the ethnic group that are Tour Representatives. I believe this is something that needs to be addressed.

Together with that, Sir – and I have to be very careful in what I say at this point, but I will say it nevertheless – I believe that within the development of our tourism sector and recognizing the importance of that sector, we also need

to be very conscious of the message that is being communicated and in the way which this sector is developed.

I remember a remark that was made by a friend of mine, not a Barbadian, as he looked at the hotels and those who work in the industry, and while it is true that there are some black Barbadians who are in management position, most of them are not.

I believe, again, in that sector, the way in which those who are involved communicate and present themselves to the public is very important. Some of the comments made by owners of hotels leave me to wonder if, at times, they do not feel as though they own this country. I believe they need to be sensitive to the message that is being communicated and what we need in this sector is for Barbadians to feel they are part of it, not that they are serving people who are not Barbadians, but that they are part of this whole industry. I also believe that if attention is not paid to this, Sir, it can be a disadvantage and can affect relationships in this sector and in the country as a whole.

I want just to end by again focussing upon the importance we must place upon attitudinal changes. I want to lift up the point of the value of life which seems to be not as prevalent as it ought to be. I also want to say that it is important that in the Prison Service – this is the last comment that I am going to make – while rehabilitation is important, punishment is also important. I believe that the attitude being displayed by certain elements with the ease in which they speak about going to the Government's "guest house" does suggest that Her Majesty's Prison does not hold the sort of fear and stigma that it formally held. I believe in rehabilitation, but I also believe in punishment. I thank you and I would support this Bill, Sir.

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Senator Goddard.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. Deputy President, I move that this Sitting be now suspended for fifteen minutes and reconvene at 4.55 p.m.

The question that the Sitting do now suspend until 4.55 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.
4.35 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. President, you will probably hear that I say the same thing every year, but if it is worth saying, then I will say it.

I have been trying to have an overall picture of the Government's finances. Let me say that the formulation of my views of public finance was influenced largely by the concepts of the 1950s and 1960s, from economists who were experts in public finance. Those views, which may now be considered as conservative, held that the management of public finances should accord with the same concepts which apply to an individual managing his personal finances.

In such a context, public financiers used to say that you should spend no more, or very little more than you have in income or revenue. Indeed, in Barbados, just before the mid-1960s, there used to be a fund into which was paid all of the excesses from each year's financial operations, so that the objective was always to make a surplus on current account which was then transferred to something called, "The Revenue Equalisation Fund." The objective was that when there is a shortfall in any one year – like in 1955 after the heavy expenditure that had to be made after the hurricane – if there was any major reason why that balance could not be maintained, the Government drew from The Revenue Equalisation Fund to make up that shortfall.

It is partly because of that system of public financing that the country was able to make substantial contributions to the construction of the Deep Water Harbour and the construction of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Aside.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Yes, there were funds obtained in the case of the QEH from the Colonial Development and Welfare but the local counterpart funding came from the source that I have just mentioned. The same thing with the Deep Water Harbour where we borrowed funds on the London market but the local counterpart funding was provided without any great difficulty.

Now, I know the business of economics is not static and that it has been constantly changing, so after that period, we came to the period when it was considered silly almost to have funds stored away for a rainy day and money had to be utilised so that you could make the best opportunity benefits and opportunity costs which were important buzz words. Therefore, money had to be utilised if you had it.

There is some merit in this doctrine, particularly as it relates to a Government whose development strategy and development expenditure really benefit generations to come. Therefore, the borrowing of funds for capital expenditure became a norm to the extent that it could be argued that any projects developed in any one generation benefited subsequent generations who should therefore help to pay for those projects.

Now, I note that looking at the Estimates as a whole, expenditure on current account is largely confined to

personal emoluments, debt services and transfers. Personal emoluments, I think, is given \$691.6 million. I have to argue that is perhaps just about two-thirds of what personal emoluments expenditure really is in the public sector. I say this because in terms of transfers, the beneficiaries are largely a number of statutory boards, pensions for public officers and public employees and the University of the West Indies.

In terms of statutory boards, if you look at the Barbados Community College, the National Cultural Foundation, the Schools – primary and secondary, tertiary institutions, SJPP, Sanitation Service Authority, the National Sports Council, the National Training Board, IDC, National Conservation Commission and the BTA, the amount of money being spent, in terms of the transfer for them to run their services, amounts to more than half of the allocation for transfers, if pensions are taken out.

We know that in every case of those institutions mentioned, the money transfer goes largely to personal emoluments. I would dare say that with the NCC, 80 per cent or 90 per cent of that money is directed towards personal emoluments. Therefore, what I am trying to say is that the personal emoluments bill is not just \$691.6 million, but perhaps another \$200 million which is part of the money transferred to public institutions, and of course, the \$106.1 million that is allocated to pensions which, in a sense, is deferred personal emoluments.

Now debt services – in the context of my opening remarks, when I said what used to be the doctrine in public finance and the change that has occurred – that debt service is now the second largest allocation outside of personal emoluments and one can see why this has to happen. If you look at the Estimates 1997-1998, there was a small surplus on current accounts. In 1998-1999 there was a large surplus on current accounts, maybe because of the VAT but 1999-2000, we went back to deficits under current account and again, 2000-2001 is anticipated there will be a deficit under current account and for the new year 2001-2002 as well.

Sir, we are not only borrowing for capital development, we are also borrowing for current expenditure. Even in this day of modern economics, I do not consider that to be a good thing to be happening consistently. Now, I say that all of the expenditure on current account is taken up more than the revenue forecast. If that is happening, there is no money left to go towards development expenditure and what is worse is that you have still to finance some aspects of recurring expenditure by borrowings.

I know we will say that the country is in an economic upturn or has been for several years. It takes only one untoward happening for us to run a downturn and run a downturn in circumstances where we have a substantial unavoidable debt service.

Whilst you may be able to cut back on some things, it is extremely difficult, once you have given people the high levels they have come to expect, to cut back on other things. Here I speak of the two most expensive of our services, education and health.

We who were raised during World War II know what it is to have to sacrifice. We know what it is to go to school, even with a scholarship and still have to pay a portion of the fee of some sort. We know what it is to walk four miles to and from school.

5.05 p.m.

We have now brought up a few generations who know nothing about these things. They have come along and have been able to access the best in education and the best in health and they expect even more. Therefore, while I am not one of those persons who would say that you should cut back on your expenditure in these areas, what I would like to suggest is a refocusing of the country's attention to these things, especially education, and I make this with some emphasis. I think education is taken for granted because we are still hearing stories that only 30 per cent of our children are leaving school with the requisite five subjects that could allow them to go on to higher levels.

In 1966, we were looking around for a number of people to enter the Public Service when the required qualifications were five subjects and there were only 100 children leaving school in 1966 with five subjects and half of them went on to the University at that time. The University instituted a four-year programme and half of them went to University. We felt this was a sad thing and therefore the birth of the Barbados Community College came into existence which was considered as a very good thing for allowing us to get more people with higher qualifications.

Education is now taken for granted. Children just waste the time and energy of their teachers and everybody else. They go to school and do not care whether they come out with or without any qualifications. A refocusing and a re-emphasis is needed in education. Do you know who are young people's heroes? They are Celine Dion and Michael Jordan. That is not a bad thing. I think Michael Jordan is a genius, but there are not many people of the five billion people on this earth who can become a Michael Jordan, but all of us have been endowed with a brain and to a more or lesser degree we can use that brain for our own existence and for contribution to our own credit.

Everybody cannot achieve a first class honours degree. At the same time, with the facilities that are now available for directing skills into areas where people have aptitudes, it seems a most unfortunate turn of events that we are still producing more people with no interest in education and people with no interest in looking to work for themselves and a burdening collection of youths on the block. How do we

refocus it? I do not have the answers. I think we have to start in the preschools so that in another few years we can have a generation of youths who come up with a different focus on this question of education.

Let me tell you about health. It is not unusual to find in people's homes dozens of vials with tablets which they get free from the polyclinic or the hospital which they do not use. A friend of mine who was here on holiday a few days earlier in the year had diabetes. He stumped his toe and in two days it turned blue. His hostess, quite rightly, immediately took him to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. He has been living in Montreal for 42 years. He still speaks pure Bajan. He did not have his identification but the Hospital took him in and took care of him for one week and the doctor said that his foot was saved because of this quick action by the hostess who took him to the Hospital.

He is full of praise for the Hospital and the staff. He does not cease to praise the Hospital, the nurses, the doctors and everybody else for the week he spent in the Hospital during the month of January. They sent him out at the end of the week and gave him a paper and told him to go to a polyclinic by name every other day for two weeks. The foot got better and I asked him to write something for us to publish to say about the Hospital. He said that if he was in Montreal he would not have got that service free and that when he got to the Hospital they would have asked him if he was insured and if he was not insured, they would have turned him back.

Now, those are things that we here in Barbados take for granted. I am not saying that a lot of things are not wrong with the Hospital. I was one of the people who sat on the Haynes Commission that carried out the Enquiry and there was a lot wrong.

I might have said in here that back in 1964 when the Hospital was instituted, I worked at the Hospital for a year in the Administration section so, therefore, I have some affinity and feeling for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Let me tell you from my view what is wrong with the Hospital. I will probably give two examples to pinpoint one of the things that was wrong from the inception.

When we were there back in 1965, there was a system of transferring information through a chute. That system worked well for nearly a year but it backed up one day and has never been used since 1965. It required some part in its installation. No provision had been made for installation, servicing and maintenance. They said it would require a few thousand dollars to get it back in place so it never worked since. That would not be relevant today anyhow with the computer and all of these things.

What is needed is the facility for faxing or transferring information from one department to another which I saw

being done quite easily in Toronto as part of the information technology development in the hospital service. No attention was paid to maintenance from its inception in 1964 at the Hospital. Successive Governments and successive Ministers of Finance stand condemned for failing to give the Hospital the kind of allocation for maintenance.

I will give you another story relating to maintenance. I sat at Estimates Committee once and the Hospital Director who was quite good in terms of knowing his business made the best presentation I have ever seen in an Estimates Committee about why he should get about \$2 million or \$3 million for maintenance. He demonstrated it with an overhead projector. He did everything that was beautiful and showed that in hospitals in the United States of America, Canada, Britain and in Jamaica of all places at that time that six per cent of the budget was allocated to maintenance. His representation was for two per cent. He told them to start giving him two per cent every year and he will do miracles in maintaining the Hospital. The Minister of Finance listened and congratulated him on his presentation and told him he will get the same as he got last year and that has been the pattern in terms of maintenance at the Hospital.
5.15 p.m.

A high degree of frustration sets into a system when people find that this is happening year after year. Some of the frustration could be attached not only to the absence of money but also to management. There was a dedicated list at the Hospital which was to take highly sensitive equipment from one department to another and it was dedicated only to that service. It was installed and has never worked. After eight years, nobody knows who installed it, who ordered it, nothing like that.

Now these are revelations that came to the Haynes Commission and I am saying that with that kind of thing happening staff must become frustrated. That is not to say that that is the only reason. My experience of some years in public service and, more particularly, after I left the Public Service is that there has been an unnecessary – I do not say “interference” because Ministers say they do not interfere, they intervene. There was unnecessary intervention in certain aspects of the Hospital that could well be done without.

Two or three of the senior people who were responsible for important sectors of the Hospital came before the Haynes Commission and said they could not control their staff. They were talking about insubordinate staff – “You know how I get this job?” That is the response they used to give. “You cannot take it away from me and I don’t care about you.” That was the kind of thing that was going on. I am saying that it is the absence of money for maintenance and unnecessary, in my view, political intervention, especially in matters like personnel.

I worked with a Minister who used to get jobs for people but he would say in front of me to the person "I get the job for you but you have to do the work." I think that if Ministers adopted that... I do not say that Ministers do not get jobs for people. They have to. I am saying that that kind of problem existed at the Hospital and it will not change, and I want to make this quite clear. If you set up a run of the mill statutory board to run the Hospital – our experience with statutory boards do not lend hope to any better improvement at the Hospital. I make that point quite clear and when we come to debate the Bill I will say what I mean. If it is a run of the mill statutory board there will be no improvement at the Hospital.

The Hospital has to have a change of culture and that does not happen overnight. People have been in the worst possible habits throughout the life of the Hospital and it moves from one generation to another. How do you get that changed? I think this is the greatest problem that any new structure at the Hospital will encounter. It is to change the structure of staff. You cannot do without most of those people out there. You still have to have a lot of them working in the system and therefore I could wish Barbados luck in getting change.

There is a lot that is good about the Hospital and I do not want the impression to be given that I am knocking it just so. That leads me to what is a burning question. Since we cannot raise more taxes of any substance, since we are spending all the money we have collected and more, how do we try to improve our services and ensure, and this is a difficult one, that we get returns for the money we are spending?

The opportunity for wastage in the public sector is tremendous. I would like to think that there is some real attempt to deal with this waste. Some time ago there was a strong effort in 1995 to move to what they called "administrative or public sector reform". Noble, we have tried before! It is a process that takes long and cannot be achieved overnight and you have to have the institutional framework to follow. You cannot have that institutional framework if one Ministry is responsible for one aspect of this reform and another Ministry is responsible for another aspect. You cannot separate public sector reform from training.

Training is an important aspect and element of reform and if I look in the Estimates, as I have this year, and I see that the Ministry of the Civil Service is now getting back training, and its objectives include promoting and implementing the best management and personnel systems for the public servants, and I look at the Ministry of Labour and it says the same thing, although I understand that training has been put to the Ministry of the Civil Service, the Ministry of Labour is doing the same.

I think that the coordination of this effort to reform must be centred in one place and it must be driven by a person of no less a stature than the Prime Minister. You cannot have 25 000 people, one-quarter of the working population of Barbados who require dedicated training and the whole question of performance left in that disparate way.

I would beg that this is looked at again and that the whole question of training is brought to the level that it should be at in the scheme of dealing with the public sector especially since we are talking about increased productivity and effecting a control over wastage. That same argument extends in a way to statutory boards which are the greatest wasters of money in the system. I do not apologise for that.

I believe that if we had more – hope it is not unparliamentary to say more "common sense" in the running of statutory boards – that things would improve considerably and the kind of happening that one hears about in the award of a contract should never occur in terms of any expression of opinion from a Minister. That is one of the main problems with statutory boards.

I am not trying to be a bringer of bad news but what I am trying to point to is the necessity for us to start seriously thinking how we can manage our limited resources, especially, too, as it seems we are living on borrowed time because we are spending borrowed money and a lot of it. We are living on borrowed time because the whole world economic situation has changed, not suddenly, but it will descend on us suddenly if we do not prepare for it.

We have a problem with our various agencies which produce and also cause us to earn foreign exchange. If we go on in the way we are going on it does not matter. I do not mean we, the Government, I am saying that the Government has to take the lead and take over the situation, but everybody else in this country and all the other organisations beside the Government should join in trying to stem this tide that is happening.

There is a book by the name of "The Big Picture", a recent publication, in which a famous neurosurgeon sets up his own life history in terms of the disadvantages he had and how he had achieved. Those disadvantages were termed advantages.

In the United States to be black in the '50s was a major disadvantage. To come from a ghetto was another disadvantage. To be duncy as he was deemed by his primary school teachers was another disadvantage; but what he had was a strong mother of great character who had only gone to the third grade but who saw the value of education and who by dint of hard labour was able to refashion his thinking and get him, with the help of a kind neighbour, to concentrate more on the basics in education. Those basics are very important. Do not let us be talking about computer literacy unless you are literate. We have to make people literate.

5.25 p.m.

It is very important to make people literate. She did all of this, got him through college working three jobs sometimes and at age 51, he is now considered to be one of the greatest neurosurgeons in the world.

Sir, that is the big picture I am talking about but that is the refocusing we want to see. Everybody will not be able to become a neurosurgeon but if you are a good mechanic you are a surgeon of vehicles. If you are a good carpenter, whatever you are, this is the opportunity which we must not let slip to refocus our young people. If we think we have lost generations, let us start with this generation, but do not let us lead people to believe that all is well and that they will be provided for.

I have heard a story which I hope is not true of a young man who is drawing \$300 a week from the Poverty Alleviation Fund. He is a first-class carpenter drawing \$300 a week who refuses to work and he says that \$300 is not enough for him. Sir, that kind of mentality is dangerous in our society.

Sir, I am not dealing specifically with any particular Head in the Estimates. I think the Estimates have been prepared how they have to be prepared. There is nothing that could be left out and you have utilised all the revenue that you have and still have to borrow. There is nothing wrong with borrowing but my school of public finance under the tutelage of G. Arthur Browne was that we should be careful when we are working that we save something for ourselves and that applies to Government even though there are completely different circumstances. You have to make provisions for the rainy day.

Sir, I do not think I can be otherwise critical of the Estimates and Budget, as it is rightly called, but I have tried to present my view in a comprehensive way.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. President, I believe it would be appropriate to comment on the fact that, notwithstanding the PA system, I feel I am competing with a tremendous noise from my left. While it is not connected to the Estimates debate, I believe it is important I mention that, from time to time, in my respectful opinion, we are disturbed in our proceedings by various noises that happen on the side street. We cannot do anything about Broad Street but certainly, I believe the time has come when we remind people that it is important to respect our institutions and that we respect the debate and the democracy for which this Parliament is known. No better evidence of democracy can be seen where people are allowed to deliberate on matters of public interest free from disturbance of any kind.

Mr. President, be that as it may, I believe it is important for me to forge ahead with a few comments in support of the Estimates, 2001.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marshall, I am having the matter investigated and I hope in a short while to be able to indicate to the Senate what is the problem and how long it is likely to last.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. President, I am grateful, but like most persistent noises after a little while you tend to forget. It is like the noise of a barking dog, after a while the noise fades into the background and you can still get on with matters.

Mr. President, I am extremely happy to speak in support of this year's Appropriation Bill.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Marshall, I understand it is a garbage truck which I am sure the Honourable Leader of the Senate has nothing to do with but it should not be too many minutes.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: I believe the Honourable Leader of the Senate has received so many laudatory comments on the Ministry of Health today, perhaps more today than he has for the last year and a half, that we should all be pleased of the fact that the trash is being collected in Bridgetown, but somebody will speak about noise pollution very shortly but, rest assured, it will not be me.

Mr. President, I believe, like one of the speakers who preceded me, that the amounts in the Estimates are a clear indication of the direction this country is going in, and I believe that to be a positive direction. Another Senator commented on the fact that any prudent person who engages in any enterprises, one clear example of the measure of his success and the measure of his skill at managing has to do with his ability to manage his money and the ability to manage his debt.

Without doubt, there is an excess of expenditure over revenue in the sum of \$400 million, but I would wish to assure all those persons who want to detract from the Government's programme, that that is not something this current Administration is in any way fearful of. In fact, we boldly move to the future recognising that skilful management, as we have benefited from over the last seven years that has seen us this far, will take us further.

In terms of my comment in this year's debate on the Estimates, I would want to speak on a few areas. I believe it is important for me to start out by speaking on the administration of justice as represented under Head 30 – the Attorney-General's Office.

Mr. President, no country can hope to achieve any kind of success in terms of its financial affairs, its social environment or in terms of the very quality of life except the

administration of justice is supported, by and large, by all of its people. One measure of that support is the money which has been budgeted in the Estimates for the Attorney-General's office.

I would want to begin by reminding Honourable Senators of a saying which emanated from the continent of Africa. I regret I do not remember which country but the essence of it is that you can make a man sell his land, you can make him pay taxes but you cannot make him live an honourable life.

The essential point is that through the administration of justice and through our laws we are able to put things in place, to impose certain kinds of standards on our citizenry. However, what we cannot do through the operations of our law and through our system of justice is to compel people to show respect for each other and common decency. These things, I am happy to say, are still the purview of the way in which we are brought up as children. There are still things which fall within the responsibility of the home and the Church. However, we cannot abdicate our responsibility by saying that we need to tackle the problem at the source. We still have to contemplate the role of the Attorney-General's office.

Let me begin by saying that when we think about the administration of justice I think we always have a narrow view and we think only of the operation of the courts. I would want to deviate from this view and suggest that the delivery of services to the people of a country is, in many ways, the administration of justice as well. Perhaps not justice as embodied in our laws but, in my view, the administration of justice is delivery of service at the Hospital and delivery of services in Government departments are all part of this thing which we call societal justice which, of course, might be another debate. Suffice it to say that the Government of Barbados is making tremendous strides in dealing with justice as administered through its courts and as an attorney, I feel it is important for me to comment on this.

One of the frequent criticisms of our system of justice, which includes not just our lawyers and courts but also includes our judiciary and magistracies, is the complaint of delay. When I started practising law over a decade ago, I came to a judicial system where our only comment was that we were not as bad as Trinidad or Jamaica and somehow we felt comfortable in being able to make that comparison because when I left law school in Trinidad, delays of six and seven years for matters coming to trial were common. In fact, most people in those jurisdictions became so frustrated that they settled simply because they could not wait on justice.

As time moved on, I experienced delays in our own system which, as a person representing both litigants and defendants, indicated to me clearly that the average Barbadian was being extremely frustrated with the system and the delays. We all know the maxim, "Justice delayed, is justice denied".

5.35 p.m.

I am happy to say, Mr. President, that the efforts of the Barbados Labour Party Administration have brought us a significant way along the road of reducing delays in our court system. Our Court Registry is largely computerised. We have had a very successful project where our transcripts, I believe it is called the Computer Aided Transcription Department, where court transcripts are now rendered at the end of the day's proceedings.

Certainly, not long ago you would have seen the Judges writing every note and interrupting witnesses to say, hold a minute, I do not write so fast. Those things are rapidly becoming a thing of the past. I believe this Honourable Senate is quite aware that all of our criminal courts are now covered with this transcription system and our civil courts are now expected to be going in that direction very shortly, certainly before the year is up.

It is also expected that this kind of technique may extend beyond the judicial system. I do not know if Parliament is earmarked for it but, certainly, it is expected to move beyond the confines of the judicial system. Mr. President, this has turned around many of the difficulties that litigants faced with getting decisions ready but, of course, there are still delays.

I believe, Mr. President, we have to recognise the important role of the Supreme Court Registry. The Supreme Court Registry, my understanding is, is no bigger in staff now than it was, perhaps, 15 years ago. Notwithstanding the same size that department, like many other departments, has been forced to deal with far cases and materials than they had to deal with previously. We need to congratulate the Registry for staying on top of things, and the officers for working so assiduously to ensure that justice is delivered.

It is, however, clear that we need to bring our judicial system from into the last century into this century. It will not be sufficient for us to provide transcripts for judges. We have to ensure that the entire court system, starting from the filing of documents to the delivery of decisions, and the completion of appeals is a system which is computerised and easily accessible by all parties.

Mr. President, I continue to be amazed that the process of getting a birth or death certificate is one that takes three to four days. In my respectful opinion this is something that ought to be delivered almost immediately. In fact, I am aware that most vital registration certificates in places such as Canada are delivered electronically and when they are sometimes presented to our Court Registry, the form of document looks so alien simply because it is not signed and embossed and it does cause some concern as to its authenticity, but we need to move in that direction.

Sir, I would like to point out to this Honourable Senate that a recent study conducted by the United Nations this year

showed that, perhaps, 20 per cent of all transaction costs came from our reliance on paper. One can hardly think of a more paper based and paper reliant centre than the judicial system. Mr. President, there are rewards to be reaped and I am able to say that the Government of Barbados, as it is now constituted, is taking us in that direction.

It will be remiss of me not to mention the reforms at the Land Registry. Very often and, perhaps, the Honourable Senator who spoke previously about delays in conveyancing, one of the main causes of delays in conveyancing used to be the search process. I have had many a search in my life and I can say to you that you used to go to the Registry and request books as far back as 1920 and 1930. You had to manually pour over the names and if you could not understand the handwriting of the Clerk who wrote it way back then, you were in some trouble. Of course, paper deteriorates and you would find that you would be missing a half of a page and so on. These things are moving gladly into the mist of the past and the Land Registry is now moving towards the situation where all searches will be able to be done online, and we can now reduce significantly the time that lawyers will take to complete conveyancing transactions.

Sir, not just that particular Registry but the Intellectual Property Registry and the Corporate Affairs Registry are moving in that direction. These things, Mr. President, represent a very clear indication of a Government that understands that innovation and ingenuity can lead to the kinds in efficiencies which we will rely on in this globalizing world.

In addition to the matter of the delays in the judicial system and the court reporting and so on, I would like to comment, and I do not wish this comment to be taken in an adverse context. I believe it is important to say that in Barbados we are getting on average about 20 or more lawyers being admitted to the Bar every year. We have a population of 260 000 plus people. In my respectful opinion, we are very far in reaching the situation point of lawyers.

Certainly, when I was at University in the early 1980s studying law, I had the discomfort of hearing many people say to me that they have too many lawyers. In fact, when I was in Sixth Form at Combermere School, I successfully dissuaded a colleague of mine from studying law. At that time I was not going to study law either. A few months later he met me in the bus stand and asked me what I was doing and I told him that I was in the Law Faculty and you should have seen the look on his face.

Sir, even then there was the prevailing view that there were too many lawyers. Today, I am talking about the administration of justice – I believe there are many Government departments which would benefit tremendously

from having in-house lawyers to process the legal matters resulting in tremendous savings and time, and resulting in a more prompt delivery of service and benefits to the individual involved. Too many departments have to be sending work out to lawyers who are not in the Government sector. I believe it is important to say this, especially personal injury matters which are to be dealt with by the Attorney-General's office which are not being dealt with as promptly as they could be.

Despite the able efforts of the Attorney-General there, we have to recognise that the Attorney-General's office deals with every single case of any kind involving the Government, many of which are very complex, some are minor but the important thing to remember is that there are many such claims. Sir, the number of attorneys in the Attorney-General's office, in my respectful opinion, will need to be increased.

On the question of education, this is a Head that has received much attention. I only wish to pick up on one comment. Mr. President, the comment was made that the budget for the Ministry of Education is too big. Mr. President, I am of the view that if we spend every last penny that was available on education we would be a far better society, perhaps, than we are now. There are some things we simply cannot measure in terms of dollars and cents. We cannot measure the cost of educating our people, our children or our entire populace in terms of how much money it is or whether this or that sum is too much.

In fact, I believe that the experience of the average Barbadian where every single parent, every single person in this room probably benefited from their parents spending every penny they had to educate them, I certainly did. In that kind of environment it would be wrong for me to sit back and ignore a suggestion which helps to eat away at the very system which has brought us to where we are today. It is very easy once we have passed a particular stage to comment that, maybe, we should not have spent so much money.

Sir, my own reality is that I would not have been anywhere where I am now were it not for the amount of money spent on education in this country. Therefore, I am a strong supporter of strengthening, wherever possible, the Ministry of Education.

5.45 p.m.

Mr. President, just a final comment on the matter of Housing. A few years ago the Ministry of Housing, through the National Housing Corporation, embarked on a Settlement 2000 Programme. This Settlement 2000 Programme had as its basis the provision of 400 starter houses for low income earners, the provision of 1 135 lots ranging from 3 000 square feet to 4 000 square feet for low income earners, and the provision of 450 lots of slightly larger size for people who earned a little more.

Mr. President, this Settlement 2000 is in full swing and represents a small part of the work of the Ministry of Housing and the efforts of trying to ensure that all Barbadians have a reasonable quality of life through housing.

I believe all Senators here have travelled across the length and breadth of the Caribbean, if not across the length and breadth of the world. Some years ago, the General Secretary of HABITAT, regrettably a gentleman whose name I now forget, visited Barbados for an official visit. I happened to have met with him in my capacity as Chairman of the National Housing and we took him to see housing projects in Barbados. When we showed him houses in Eden Lodge and in Silver Hill and told him that this was the Barbados Government's solution to low-income housing problems, he was amazed. He was amazed because these were the kinds of homes his doctors and lawyers in his home country and many other countries in Africa were living in.

He left Barbados with a view that a small country like Barbados, with a small resource base, was able to establish as its start-off point for low-cost housing something that would represent the combination of an individual's desire in his own country.

This is to tell you, Mr. President, that the average Barbadian who has worked hard, notwithstanding that he may not be benefiting from a very large salary, still sees as his lot in life, a home which is comfortable, solid and has the basic amenities: running water, indoor facilities, electricity and telecommunication.

That has become our low-income housing and we must not feel embarrassed to say to a person that for us that is low cost housing. Sometimes I think we feel that we are too generous with our own people. I get the impression that when we think of low-income housing we feel that we ought to be providing a mere shanty, but that is the lowest of the low, and that is not the standard that Barbadians have set for themselves.

Barbadians are known throughout the region and the world for having set as its minimum standard, whether it is education, law, politics, it does not matter what it is, our minimum standard often exceeds the highest standards of other people, and this is a true credit to our nation.

Certainly as I travel and talk to people about Barbados being a quarter-of-a-million people in size, 166 square miles but our health care and education are free, these people are completely amazed that in a society such as ours, we are able to cover our resources in such a way as to be able to provide a truly superlative quality of life for our citizens. This is something we have to be proud of and we have to ensure that the next generation does not start settling for less. So in terms of our low-income housing, yes, the Government is continuing to embark on its many policies to ensure that

Barbadians have, even at the barest minimum, a superb standard of housing.

The programme has been very successful and we have been able to build numerous houses in the last few years. We have been able to provide many house lots and more importantly, we have been able to put systems in place so that people can afford to purchase these house lots.

The latest incentive has to do with the Tenantry Freehold Purchase Act where the recent amendments provide that the Government guarantees the market price for the landlord but subsidizes the land. I believe it is currently a project of the Urban Development Commission where subsidies are given to people who are buying lands in tenancies and the Government contributes all the balance of the purchase price in urban tenancies over \$2.50 per square foot. So our efforts, Mr. President, continue unabated in terms of housing, in terms of the capacity to finance purchases, in terms of the advancement in our thrust for justice, in terms of the continuing education. These are the hallmarks of a Government that cares.

I do not believe I can be as emphatic as Senator Barker when he spoke and almost brought tears to my eyes. I would not even try to copy him, but the point remains that the Estimates clearly gives an indication of the direction in which, not just the economy is going, but the direction in which we are moving the people of our nation.

With those remarks, I again reiterate my support for the Estimates for the year 2001-2002.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Murray.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, it is with some pride and relish that I enjoin this debate. I must confess that I had hoped by the time I was ready to make my contribution, I would have been so stimulated by my Opposition colleagues that I would have been so driven and motivated that my political adrenaline would have been pumping. I had some notes set aside to seriously share some political lashes, but the way things have gone I am not in the spirit and the keeping with the tone and tenor of the debate.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I was not aware, Senator that there were ever lashes being shared in this Honourable Chamber.

SENATOR THE HON. G. S. H. MURRAY: I was thinking Sir, in the figurative sense. But Sir, nevertheless, even though I have put aside several things that I had hoped to say, I still have to put a number of them for the record and I just want to point out that at last Senator Mascoll would have gotten his opportunity to lock horns with the Prime Minister, albeit by quoting from his 1994 speeches. Therefore, I think that in some way he has achieved part of

his ambition, but it is expected that that obsession to lock horns with the Prime Minister will stay with us for a long time, but I would not go into too much of that. Sir, I think Senator Barker dealt so competently and arguably with this whole issue that I am not really motivated to get any further into it.

I would also like to take a few minutes to comment upon some of the comments made by Senator Laurie, particularly his overall views. The impression I get from Senator Laurie is that whenever he speaks on the public sector there is scarcely anything good to be found. He just went through a litany of woes for every department that he could think of and that is the way I understood it, but I might be wrong, Sir.

He had a great deal to say about the Auditor-General's Report and is claiming that nothing is being done about the charges in the Report. I want to refute that statement, Sir and to assure Senator Laurie that unlike persons in the private sector where the affairs of the Barbados Agricultural Society are concerned, we are still awaiting a report on their financial history.

This Government takes very seriously the strictures contained in any Auditor-General's Report. As a matter of fact, far from nothing being done about it, I can assure you, Sir, that the Prime Minister has instructed every Ministry to give a comment and an explanation why the criticism was made of each department. That will come to Cabinet and eventually will make its way for presentation in the House of Assembly and it will be done Ministry by Ministry. Therefore, I want to assure you that it is not being relegated to the dustbin or placed somewhere.

I also want to assure him that there are reforms underway where the Town and Country Planning Department is concerned and that the system is being modernized. The Prime Minister has realized that the Town and Country Planning Department is a vocal point in any country's development and has placed it in the Management Committee on Competitiveness.

Briefly, Sir, it is being modernized but there are some issues that have to go to the Town and Country Planning Department. This Department cannot be seen as a one-stop shop. There are some things which, by law, must go to the Ministry of Health, or to various departments for their comments and though that might be seen to slow down the process, the point is that we have to respect the law, and there are certain things that have to be fulfilled.

For example, if you want an Environmental Impact Assessment Study you have to go to the Coastal Conservation Commission because it would be expensive to have an expert from the Coastal Conservation Commission,

one from the Electrical Engineering Department, one from the Environmental Engineering Department; all installed at the Town and Country Planning Department to pronounce on these things when you have departments with all of the resources and the history to pronounce on it. So that while that might be desirous, in this respect, it might not make sense given Government's finances and the whole integration of Government. But that apart, I also want to deal with a few more issues that have come to light in this debate. 5.55 p.m.

First of all, I want to deal with the question of the churches and to assure you that the long outstanding compensation of the churches – I observe that Senator Rock will be very interested in this – is really a very important matter to the Government. We are holding talks on an ongoing basis on these matters which involve the Anglican, the Methodist and the Moravian Churches. We will be dealing with the question of the compensation for the use of their buildings, either to hand them back repaired, or to have a sum of money paid out to them.

There is some money in the Estimates this year for the Anglican Churches but we are also grappling with the issues being raised and that is only the beginning of the process. We know that the \$1 million cannot satisfy the vote but it is a step in the right direction and it demonstrates our good will.

The Anglican Church has some ten properties to be dealt with, the Methodist Church has four and the Moravian Church has five. But apart from that, we are dealing with the issue of the compensation to the Methodist Church and the Moravian Church and we are awaiting some documents from them in order to proceed further with the matter. I can assure you, Sir, that we are treating it with the utmost seriousness. The Prime Minister is very intent on having this matter resolved as soon as possible and we intend to do what we can to achieve that objective.

There is a ministerial committee consisting of persons from the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Housing and Lands, and the Prime Minister's Office who have been working on this issue. Some of the personnel involved have either been sick or off for various reasons which has somewhat delayed the process but, I can assure you, that it is our intention to resume in the very near future.

At the same time, I want to thank Reverend Rock for his word of assurance that the Church leaders are very supportive of the Government's integrating and accelerating the HIV/AIDS Programme. I can assure you that the Government has always considered the Church should be an integral part of trying to grapple with this issue of HIV/AIDS and with the tremendous consequences and implications it has for Barbados' health and social and national development.

We therefore welcome the Church's enlightened attitude and its intention to cooperate. As a matter of fact, Sir, the Church has already been asked to send a representative to sit on the National HIV/AIDS Commission which is going to be set up in the Prime Minister's Office. In addition, we have asked for representation from the Barbados Christian Council and the Barbados Evangelical Association. They all responded but have not yet named their nominees.

I just want to say that the preparations for the Commission are well underway and there is every indication that it should be fully functional by the 1st of April. We have obtained office space for the National HIV/AIDS Commission in the old IDC Headquarters building, and preparations are being made to get the offices ready for operation by 1st April.

The administration staff is being recruited and, like I said, the recommendations for the Commission will shortly be going to Cabinet for approval. The Prime Minister has given his word that shortly he will name the Special Advisor to the Commission on HIV/AIDS. The Government's focus is very much directed at this Commission which will assume responsibility for overseeing the Programme, and will provide overall policy direction and the necessary collaboration between the various sectors involving this multi-sectoral approach to HIV/AIDS. Like I said, it will rest in the Prime Minister's Office and I have the honour to be responsible for the day-to-day management of the coordination of this effort. That is why I can assure you that we are working very hard to have this Commission in place.

As a matter of fact, we have begun to receive submissions from a number of key Ministries indicating their involvement. They are submitting their programmes. They will be directing and operating from their Ministries which will be coordinated at the national effort.

It has been traditional for Governments to give subventions and make contributions to the Churches over the years. We, Sir, have looked at the Churches' contributions and some of them really were minuscule, almost embarrassing. We are reviewing the existing arrangements with a view to rethinking and refocusing the subventions so that we will have a standard formula that would apply to the various churches. Therefore, there would not be the great disparity and, as I said, some of them are laughable, to put it mildly. We have therefore asked various denominations and religions to submit information on their memberships, their programmes, their outreach programmes particularly because we are very intent on focussing and supporting the outreach programmes which the Churches have done very well and long without much public acclaim. As a matter of fact, our Government's eradication programme really can be seen as an extension of that which was begun by the Church a long,

long time ago. That is why we embrace the churches all over Barbados for starting that programme in the very beginning.

To date, only five denominations have responded to the request for information. We therefore have to go back to them and ask them to give us the information so that we could come up with a better and more realistic way of giving a contribution to the Churches to further their programmes.

I just want to briefly state a couple of projects we are involved in at the Ministry of the Civil Service and to respond to Senator Collymore's question of training. Sir, before I deal with that, I would just like to let Senator Collymore know that his concerns about the lack of a maintenance programme, not only at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, but service wide is a phenomenon that afflicts the whole Public Service. There are very few Ministries, or departments, or persons who operate from buildings, or even own buildings, who have a good enough appreciation of the importance of maintenance.

6.05 p.m.

As a matter of fact, some months ago, the Board of Harrison's College requested permission to create a post of maintenance manager or something like that at the school to maintain the building. We readily agreed to it and the Prime Minister asked why are all the other schools not doing the same.

Any person who has been to Government Headquarters in recent times will see the improvements that have been made not only on the grounds but on the building and on the whole layout. The standard of Government Headquarters has come about not by accident because if it had been left to the normal run of things, we would have to depend on the Ministry of Public Works and Transport to send a carpenter, a mason or a painter because they are all over the place and there is no coordinator.

We appointed a maintenance coordinator and that person's day-to-day duty is to go to work and make sure that he upgrades the building step by step systematically. Almost all of the rooms at Government Headquarters are air-conditioned. We have repainted the building. We have retiled it and we have designed a new lobby. That is the kind of programme that if other ministries and other buildings were to adopt, I am sure we will see a much greater appreciation and get better value for money where the Ministries and Government's properties are concerned.

There is an absence of the appreciation for maintenance and an absence of the philosophy of maintenance because when you maintain, you actually save more money than if you had to let it run down and then have to spend a lot more money in the longer term. In the long term you are better off. We wish that many more departments would adopt this same kind of attitude.

Where training is concerned, the Ministry of the Civil Service from April 1, 2001 will be concentrating on some of what we perceive as the outstanding needs of the Public Service. We are going to be focussing heavily on seeking to have a programme where we can tailor-make a programme for succession planning in the Public Service where we can focus on human resources management which is another crying need, the question of project management and the question of information technology. Those are some of the key areas we will be focussing upon while taking into consideration the other needs of the various departments.

Overall, we can focus on what we think are the outstanding needs of the service now and down the road in order to help to modernize the service so that when persons like Senator Collymore retires, there is not this great absence of separation of the institution memory that goes with it. As a matter of fact, I have often bemoaned the fact that persons like Senator Collymore have not spent more time writing on the Public Service by producing manuals and job descriptions. There is a lot of expertise which persons like Senator Collymore has and maybe they should form a group and collaborate on it and present some manual which will show persons who are entering the Public Service how to dress, how to behave and how to function because right now there is no manual to tell people who are entering the Public Service how to do these things.

A lot of those things are going to be dealt with under the new Public Service Act as well as some matters to be taken care of when we embark on the performance appraisal system which will start shortly on a number of key Ministries where we are going to produce a system for recruitment and promotion which would be done on a transparent and objective basis where persons will know what the target of the organisation is on a yearly basis. Therefore, a person is going to be judged on how they perform in helping that organisation to achieve its goals and objectives. So there is a lot afoot going on in the Public Service where the reformation of the Public Service is concerned and these are some of the issues which will be dealt with down the road.

Therefore, Sir, I want to give my full support to this matter and to congratulate the Government on another outstanding performance that not only balances the economic well-being of society but one which is sensitive to the social needs of the society as a group and, also to individuals where there are provisions for those who, as the saying goes, might otherwise fall through the cracks and escape the safety net. There is a humanness to this whole approach to Government and it is something which we can maintain with the national consensus how we want Barbados to be. We all agree that we want Barbados to be the best place it could ever be.

Sometimes, when persons are criticizing what happens in Barbados, I am not too disappointed about it or dismayed

about it because I think it is that element of dissatisfaction that has made Barbados progress where people are not prepared to settle for today and today alone and what is good now, because they want to see Barbados get better all the time on an ongoing basis because life is a continuum and Barbados' future also has to be a continuum.

Therefore, with those few words I want to give my wholehearted support to this Appropriation Bill, to commend it to the Chamber and look forward to the achievement of the goals and objectives contained therein as we seek to make Barbados a better and more livable place for all concerned.

Thank you, Mr. President.

SENATOR Mrs. J. P. ALLEYNE: Mr. President, I too would be very brief in my remarks but I want to add my few thoughts to the input of this debate.

First of all, I want to say that I wholeheartedly support these Estimates. To me, it adequately reflects the strategy of Government in relation to trade liberalization, the onslaught of the HIV/AIDS on society and the importance of the role of the public sector among many other things.

To me, these Estimates seek to shape and support the advancement of education for all which is bent towards this new scientific and technological age, a refined and re-tooled health care system that will be available to all, an economic system that provides opportunity and support for all, a political system in which all citizens capable can participate and be encouraged to participate, and a system that projects the rights of all its citizens. Those who have eyes to see, I believe, can look at the pages of this book and see all these things reflected in these Estimates of Expenditure.

To me, these Estimates have begun to shape the economic and political context of this country in order to leave a legacy for society for years to come. That is why I am so pleased with these Estimates in particular, and the foresight and vision of this Barbados Labour Party Government. We are aware that, coupled with being a small country, we have no natural resources. Therefore, the only resource on which we can really depend on is our people. It is our people who are going to make or break us in this new economic order. A large group of these persons, as we know, are employed by the public sector in this country hence the urgent need for public sector reform.

We cannot have a Government telling the other segments of society to prepare for globalization and not undertaking its role within its own. First of all, let me commend the work that has been done by the Office for Public Sector Reform so far. The general public seemingly does not know of the work done by them but to me the culture of the Civil Service has not allowed it to advance

smoothly. It is one thing to seek to achieve things in theory but it is another to achieve them in practice. To me, the following areas constituting public sector reform are increased efficiency, decentralization, increased accountability, improved resource management and marketization. The objective of all this is how best to implement reform. Before we can begin to work on these areas, I believe we need to work on changing the culture of the Civil Service, as Senator Collymore referred to. I hope when we work at changing the public sector that that will address the issues that Senator Laurie raised among his concerns.

6.15 p.m.

Those of us who have had experience in private enterprise know that it imposes a severe discipline on us as workers. We perform or we are moved out, unlike the Public Service where persons seem to believe that they cannot be fired. I had an example of a young man coming to me. He was working in the private sector and told me that he wanted a job in Government. I said, "You are working. Why do you want to go in Government?" He said, "Because you do not have to work."

That is the perception and what people outside think about what goes on in the public sector. Sir, I am not saying for one moment that there are not some dedicated public spirited people in the Public Service who use all the resources available to them to fulfil their mission against whom even sometimes the pervading culture will work. We know, Sir, that governmental agencies are organised very bureaucratically so that most civil servants cannot see or feel the social benefits and the meaningfulness of their work or have the satisfaction of self-fulfilment in it. For many of them, a government job is just a job with a pay cheque and benefits. The public sees them as self-serving and part of a cost of an often bloated Government.

With all that hostility and attack, I find it difficult for civil servants to have a good job morale. No institution will work unless there is a culture embodied in the institution that is shared by the people in it and by the people who are supporting it. When workers can identify with their work and find fulfilment in it, they love their work and gain self-respect and lift morale in doing it well.

It is my belief, Sir, that the offices of Government at all levels need to be organised so that officeholders can understand their role in the Public Service, be committed to public service and to assisting Government, whichever party is in power, to fulfil its mission.

I also believe, Sir, that we need to change the title of some of the workers in the Civil Service. For example, Permanent Secretaries. I think the word "Permanent" has a wrong connotation to it and we need to change it. As a matter of fact, I will go on to be bold enough to suggest that the

position of Permanent Secretary be contracted to CEOs to manage the Ministries so that at the end of a contract if you are not performing and you cannot get the Ministry to perform, that is the end of your contract. I do not know if that would happen but that is a suggestion to Government.

I would also like to suggest, Sir, that reform of the Public Service starts at the top. We cannot have leaders in the Public Service calling meetings at nine o'clock and when twenty minutes to ten the person is not there to start the meeting. It has to stop. If we want to implement change, we have to implement change from the top for it to filter down through the institution. You have to lead by example.

Under HIV/AIDS, we all know that this is a devastating plague to hit mankind in recent times. To my mind, it has the potential to even stop creation because when you have young men who carry the sperm to continue with creation dying, that is capable of stopping creation in its tracks. The importance of battling this disease from all angles cannot be underscored in this society.

Sometimes I find that we in the body of Christ tend to get a little too self-righteous when dealing with certain matters and I really have to stop and wonder what Jesus would say in this debate today about putting condoms in Prison. Sometimes we get so wrapped up in the letter of the law that we don't see past that. When it comes to this debate on putting condoms in Prison, Government is doing the only thing that Government knows to do. Government does not know to do anything else. To me, the Homosexual Law has been on the books of Barbados for ages before AIDS and yet the disease has spread exponentially within this country and the world. The law was on the books all these ages.

Again, I ask, what is Government to do? I hear people talking about if you put condoms in Prison you are condoning homosexuality and I beg the question. When Abraham beseeched God that if he could find at least ten persons in Sodom and Gomorrah, God said he would save Sodom and Gomorrah. Was God then condoning homosexuality? I beg the question. So what is Government to do?

I know that homosexuality is a moral sin. Adultery is a moral sin. Fornication is a moral sin. They are all moral sins. We have a society of many single parents and many broken marriages and divorces. What is the Church doing about that? Sir, I am not for one moment condoning a moral sin. God forbid! I try my utmost not to commit moral sins since I have come to understand why the blood of Jesus Christ was shed. Sex is not a moral sin as long as you are married.

I heard some comment being made that we need to increase the space for our prisons. I beg the question now. Is that not condoning criminality? I need to ask questions when I hear these things. What Government also needs to do, in

my opinion, is to make those who knowingly spread AIDS liable under civil liability. We need to put systems in place again for mandatory AIDS testing. We have to do it. Before you can get a green card to go to the United States you have to get an AIDS test. Why not for persons who want to live here? Why are they not subjected to AIDS testing? Sir, I know that it is Government's role to protect society and I believe that we can start with some self-regulation in our industries to narrow down catchment areas. Employers should be able to test persons to ensure that they can function in their jobs, if it is just to get the information back to narrow down the catchment areas.

I go on to say a few words on EduTech. I am surprised at learned persons in our society who continue to condemn EduTech. To me, it is unbelievable. I had the privilege of being given the opportunity to visually walk through the programme of EduTech and it is a programme that many larger and more developed countries have not even begun to undertake and we a small country have begun to undertake a programme of immense nature as EduTech. We all know that technology is the way of the future. We all know and we constantly state that we must close the digital divide.

I, too, agree with Senator Marshall who stated that the needs of children must be given high priority in the allocation of our resources. I also agree with Senator Collymore who stated that it is not only that you give the resource but be careful of how you use the resource that you are given.
6.25 p.m.

I understand the importance of retraining our people and changing the way we educate them and this is what is happening under the Education Sector Enhancement Programme. Sir, as a people we must get out of our traditional mode of doing things without losing our basic principles and values.

I believe that EduTech 2000 must move in tandem with our business community. If our business community is not to the level of the children that we are putting out of EduTech 2000, then all we are doing is using our tax dollar to teach these children, and then we will lose them to foreign countries.

Mr. President, I too would like to join with the Minister of Education who made the point that we must encourage and coerce our people to buy local. I know under globalization that we cannot print stickers or fliers which say "buy local", but we can speak to our people and encourage them to buy local. While on one hand you are saying to buy local, on the other hand we expect we will get a quality product for our money.

I am of the opinion that Government is adequately carrying out its role in the globalization process. In early 1994 the agreement was signed with the WTO and we now have to conform to it. It is my humble opinion that in 1994 we, as a country, sent a boy to do a man's job and this is the result of it today. It makes me wonder what would happen if we still had the same person in place to deal with the OECD and the Shiprider Agreement. I shudder to think of it. Anyhow, God has been good to us and we have moved on from that because we are now stuck with what was done. We have to stop murmuring and move on. I think that with free trade the responsibility is not only about having a choice, but it is the responsibility of making the right choice.

I think that the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) is of vital importance to the Caribbean. It is of vital importance because we need to form that nucleus of a regional trade bloc before the FTAA sets in. We need to broaden that scope of control by these countries against the world. Sir, in all of these negotiations with the WTO, where was the regional negotiating machine? In the reply I hope I would get an answer to this question about the regional negotiating machine.

Sir, I do not understand in the globalization process why decisions made by Heads of Governments are not immediately passed in the individual countries rather than leave countries to pass it in their countries at their own time.

Sir, I want to say that I know we are living in a world of complexities and contradictions and that we are going through a period of disorderly change in the world. I think we are going through an experience that we never had in the Caribbean before and now, more than ever, we as a country need to be flexible and adaptable to change rather than be victims of that change. I believe we have to fight and every single one of us as citizens of this country must fight for our survival.

Sir, I thank you.

SENATOR G. E. N. BROME: Mr. President, I rise to make my contribution and I support these Estimates laid here today.

Mr. President, as a small business developer, I feel that the Government has done a most wonderful job in presenting these Estimates in the manner in which they have been laid before us. I am quite concerned and interested in seeing more young people becoming involved in business, not because they may have money but because it will be the future of our economy.

Our people must be more equipped. There are more fundamentals that they must come to grips with before they

run off and make certain decisions. I find that there are a lot of people who are entering business for the first time who spend too much money as a start-up cost. I believe the Government should set up the infrastructure, if they do not have it, so that more young people would know where to go and what to do to avoid certain unfortunate situations.
6.35 p.m.

Sir, I come across people who have faced and who are plagued with problems. Sir, they enter business today and tomorrow they discover that they cannot make it and then they put the blame on the Government or other circumstances around them. The most unfortunate thing is that they attempted to do too much too soon.

Mr. President, I am very happy and quite impressed with the contribution which the National Housing Corporation has made to the social development of Barbados. Sir, I am impressed with the amount of houses I have seen being erected across Barbados.

Sir, what I also find is that they should position themselves a little more to compete with the car industry. Why? It is because our people put more emphasis on cars and a car which is going to cost \$15 000 or \$20 000 and I believe that money could be invested in sustainable development. Sir, that would be a house or a piece of land.

Mr. President, I have spoken to the credit union and I have asked them to put more emphasis on human development whereas they involve education. That organisation is one of the fastest growing local businesses in Barbados today. In the last few months they have attracted about 5 000 new members and I am very impressed. I somehow believe they must put a lot more emphasis on these young people who have been working in the construction industry who have not managed to save anything other than to purchase a car.

In Barbados where transportation is not a problem for us to get to work, it is not necessary for so many of us to own or to have vehicles. It is more important that we take that money and buy something more beneficial to us later on, because if you build a house today you will not have to worry about it the next five years. I hope that they would talk to the young people who have saved money and want to make wise investments. Every one may not have the understanding of investing in bonds but the best way, I think, is to invest wisely and that will make you a man. A house or a piece of land will make you a man but a car keeps you a boy.

Asides.

SENATOR G. E. N. BROME: Sir, I hope to see some attention being focussed on human development and I think that this can only be achieved as a result of better educational practices. Some of it can come from schools, youth groups and many other social organisations out there. Sir, what is

important is that the people must know who to go to for this knowledge because there are many organisations that do not promote themselves enough. There are some people who do not read and there are some people who do not have money or businesses that are taught the correct practices, so they do the first thing that comes to mind. The dream of one's life, especially a young boy, is to own a car and not to save.

As we approach a very dry season and we have been experiencing a dry season for quite some time, I believe we can utilise the spring water in the construction industry. I believe the same way we use tanks for distribution of water to households, that one day we would be able to use tanks to distribute the spring water to farms and the construction industry. Sir, if the factories are consuming most of the drinking water, I believe it will be more economical to use the spring water on the farms and construction sites rather than using the drinking water. I do not believe that you have to do anything with that spring water and it can be useful in construction and farming and I would like to see, some day, some effort being made use of this spring water.

Mr. President, in respect to education, unfortunately, I did not have the level of education that most people have but I have made the best use of what was available to me. I have contributed my limited education to my personal development and also a contribution to other people to ensure that they do not make a fool of themselves so that they can go anywhere in this world, stand up, be proud and say, "yes, I am able to do it," to be recognised and respected. Sir, if you go through this world as an idiot or you do not know, you will be considered a fool and will not be respected. I think that respect in whatever one does will be given as long as you know that you have a sense of understanding and you are willing to make some progress in life. Sir, if you make a start someone will be willing to lend assistance.

I believe that some of the young people should be given the opportunity in the School Meals Department to learn how to prepare meals from yams, breadfruit and sweet potatoes. Sir, the time will come when those adults who are currently working in the School Meals Department will not be able to work any longer and this is a good time to incorporate young people into that sector and be part of the cultural development of Barbados. Sir, if they only eat the food and are not able to prepare it themselves, they will not be equipped for the future.

Barbadians are still the kind of people who continue to cook at home whereas in America and Europe people eat in restaurants and cooking is a very strange thing for them. Therefore, I believe that if children are not given the opportunity to cook at home, the opportunity should be given to them in the schools as long as they have the interest.

Perhaps, I am a little bit guilty of producing a foreign dish which has caught on quite well in Barbados but I regret

that it was not a local product I had utilised to my advantage such as breadfruit which is a very lovely dish, sweet potatoes and some other local foods. Sometimes I am really annoyed with myself.

6.45 p.m.

The opportunity still exists for someone to take it up and with the help of some of the right people I think we can also make it, because it still has some future.

I think most of our breadfruits and sweet potatoes go back to the ground and I believe that we can do something to make better use of it. It should not be just grown and dumped. I am also certain that these products can also be exported and will be admired by other people of different cultures, therefore, it would not be a wasted investment. Sir, I do hope to see someone or more people trying to experiment with it and try to extract the best possible use out of it.

I also think that the fishing industry is practically a failing project, because we invested a lot of money into the fishing industry and only have fish up to a certain period of the year and therefore we have to depend on deep sea fishing and imported fish.

I believe that by now we should be catching enough fish so that some can be better processed, whether they are dried or not. We are still importing salt fish after all these years and I believe we have better sunshine here in Barbados than in Canada and other places where the salt fish is produced. I believe we should try to experiment with curing flying fish. We buy a lot of tuna and catch a lot of bill fish and so I believe we can do something with the bill fish to help replace some of the expensive tuna that we buy.

I think we can also produce on land, more fish and I want to see that we continue to encourage more young people to enter these projects. We have to think about such sustainable projects and I do think that local fish farming is one of the ways that someone can concern themselves. Most of our people are more used to fish coming from the sea, but they will not know the difference between sea- or land-bred fish and so I think that we can really experiment with this project.

The Department of Social Transformation is one of the most important departments in the Government, whereas it covers almost every aspect of the social development. I would like to see more people have a greater respect for it and not only to the part where it pays old people's water bills, *et cetera*. The Ministry of Social Transformation is very important and whereas this Ministry, in association with various other Ministries – Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Health – are doing certain projects together in respect to education and health, a lot can be derived from

that and the Ministry of Social Transformation must be commended and supported for its attempts to neutralize all social aspects.

The Prime Minister recognizes that in the line of roads and housing there are certain inefficiencies and has formed two Committees which are supposed to deal with this area, but I would like to see those Committees being a lot more vocal and actively involved in such decision making. Whereas there are persons out there who sometimes think they are being left out by the way things are being distributed by Ministers, those persons sometimes say that they were being unfair, but if the Committees have something to do with it then I believe this would be more justifiable. Thank you very much.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator Goddard.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, in winding up this debate, I would like to thank all Honourable Members of the Senate who have contributed, in many ways to the discussions on the Estimates and who have raised some very valid points from time to time, and between those points there was much space.

Today I would say that it was interesting to hear about the telecommunication's liberalisation and the affairs of the BET whose monopoly came to an end in 1984, largely at the instigation of Cable and Wireless who fought the wave-guard action here in the Caribbean well into this new century, but finally they have seen the light and I think we will be the beneficiaries of the liberalisation that is unfolding over the next couple of years.

There is no doubt that people have largely focussed on the issue of the cost of telecommunications but I feel, far more importantly than that, is the investment of new technologies, introduction of new systems and the introduction of new services.

Sir, we will be going through a very revolutionary period of time over the next five to ten years, where broadcasting itself will be redefined in the same way that you walk around with a hand-held radio today. You will be walking around with a hand-held internet device that will connect you to a radio or a television or any other device as well. So I see that this will redefine our business environment.

When we come to our business environment I would just like to talk about the private sector for a few minutes.

There seems to be a disconnect between the private sector and the initiatives of Government. There seems to be an inability of the private sector individuals to relate to the

initiatives that the Government is introducing and the benefits they provide for the private sector, in terms of tax relief, in terms of special windows of opportunity and, quite often, in terms of the direction in which the economy is going.

6.55 p.m.

I will say that with my six years plus sojourn now in the public sector, I recognise that the private sector does not invest in the human resources who will do the research and be the interface between the governmental system and the business community. They are not listening and in this regard, the private sector needs to be much more aware of the opportunities that exist. They need to be much more interactive with the Government to help us in streamlining some of those opportunities.

Now, Senator Laurie did bring up the tremendous bureaucratic hurdles that he has to go through and some of them are very legitimate. I think only by close interaction and an honest broker type situation, will we be able to streamline these things so that we can move together in harmony down the road.

Much has been said about Civil Service reform and cultural change within the Civil Service but let me just tell you that we are one culture here in Barbados. Quite often, the culture of the Civil Service is that of the private sector and the same Barbadians populate both sectors. Therefore, our perceptions about on time delivering, punctuality, time off from work and dedication to the job are common on both sides of the fence.

Sir, yes, there is a need for cultural change and there is a need for attitudinal change but I do not think we can just single out the public sector for that change. I think that change has to be taking place right across the board and there is a changing work ethic in this country.

Senator Laurie made some very valid points about the marketing of sugar and sugar products. I agree that the concept of selling bulk sugar to the European Union at ever declining prices is a no win solution for us. It is very clear that we will have to develop branded products from the sugar we produce, that is, sugar, fancy molasses, sling and rum.

If I tell you that there is a manufacturer who produces a rum that sells for duty free, \$115 a bottle at the Airport and cannot keep it on the shelf because they cannot make enough to put on the shelf...

Aside.

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: ...I am not in the business of advertising.

I am talking about a perception here where a high quality rum at \$115 a bottle is being produced and being sold

out continuously. It demonstrates the fact that people will pay top dollar for good quality products.

Just last night a gentleman came to me who was from Kent. They produce a tremendous amount of beet sugar in that region and he said, "Nothing beats the taste and the flavour of raw brown Barbadian sugar." Sir, here he is, in the middle of an area producing beet sugar but recognising the value of Barbadian sugar. The essence of that discussion is that that is a product that can get top dollar.

We have seen individual efforts of small retailers who have tried to retail Barbadian brown sugar to tourists and succeeded enormously at a very high profit margin. This producer bundled it with other products, such as local pottery, local basket work and local miniature rum bottles. Sir, all these things are produced here in Barbados and a high profit margin came crashing down because the powers that be in the sugar industry in those days – this is something that goes back a few years – were so focussed on meeting their quota demand of raw sugar in bulk to the European Union that they could not see their way of diverting five, 10, 15 or 30 tonnes of sugar to this particular enterprise. That is an indictment, but we should learn from that mistake and move forward from tomorrow.

Sir, some very interesting points were made in this regard and I think it was Senator Laurie who brought up the issue of the Meteorological Department. I am sure that the Government will be providing in real time, information on the Internet derived from the Doklar radars that are to be erected, so that much more information will be available in real time to a whole multiplicity of people, not just farmers but the hospitality industry people, individuals who may want to have their own little backyard farming activity or somebody who may want to go on a picnic. It is right across the whole spectrum of society. We should have the same real time weather information that many people have around the world and now we are moving towards that.

Senator McClean talked extensively about the external forces that buffet us and about the WTO ethics, *et cetera*. I will have to say that we are steering our own course, probably more so than any other small state on this planet.

Our Prime Minister has been vigorous in determining specific courses of action in the international arena, be it with the WTO or with the OECD. He has taken leadership that stretches far beyond the Caribbean region and that should be recognised. His intellect, his persuasiveness and his determination to chart our own course is unparalleled.

Sir, regarding the issue of school meals and chicken, I had an opportunity to research and though many different suppliers have provided the chicken for the school meals, including Hanschell Inniss, I am assured that every bit of that chicken was locally produced and it came from several

different suppliers. It was consolidated, repacked and sent to the School Meals Programme. Sir, I would just like to clarify that all of the chicken being used by the School Meals Programme is locally grown chicken.

Senator Reverend Rock raised some very valid points about the HIV/AIDS Programme and he may have detected a predominance of thinking within Government circles that we were not looking at the spiritual aspect or the changing lifestyles of individuals. However, as Senator Murray said, we have been in close contact with the church groups. I have been talking to the CCC because we have been taking a regional approach as well and we do recognise the tremendous value of the Church in this fight against HIV/AIDS.

The Ministry of Health does not want to appear to be preaching to individuals. We are concerned with bringing people into the fold so that they can be tested, counselled and treated. We recognise that a large part of the HIV/AIDS Programme is about changing our culture. It is about changing our attitudes towards promiscuity and it is about changing our attitudes about unprotected sex and these things are extremely important. It is also about the survival of our community and therefore we take your comments very well. We value the work of the Church and the work of other non-governmental organisations as well. Each one has its own role to play in this overall process and this is nothing that any one of us can do by ourselves.

Mr. President, I think that the debate has been full. Sometimes it was exhausted, but it was beneficial, I think, to all of us. I think we have all learnt a lot, certainly I did. As usual, I think we have now come to appreciate the value of the leadership we have today with the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance in strategizing and managing the economy of Barbados.

With that, Mr. President, I support this Bill wholeheartedly and beg to move that it be read a second time.

The question was put to the Senate and agreed to.

On the separate motions of SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Appropriation Act, 2001.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR THE HON. P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, I beg to move that the Senate do now adjourn until Wednesday, March 28, 2001 at 11.00 a.m.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn until Wednesday, March 28, 2001 at 11.00 a.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT adjourned the Senate accordingly.
7.05 p.m.

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The Senate met in the Senate Chamber, Parliament Buildings on Monday, March 19, 2001 at 11.00 a.m.

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Mr. President announced that three days had been set aside for the debate on the Annual Estimates – Monday, March 19, Tuesday, March 20 and Thursday, March 22, 2001.

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1. The Chairman's Report of the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust for the year ended June 30, 2000.
2. Financial Statements of the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Limited (Parent Company only) for the year ended June 30, 2000.
3. Reports of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund for the Quarters ended September 30, 2000 and December 31, 2000.
4. Annual Report of the National Productivity Council for the Fiscal Year ended September 30, 2000.
5. The Barbados Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure 2001-2002 and Schedules of Personal Emoluments 2001-2002.
6. Value Added Tax Order, 2001.
7. Value Added Tax (Almond Resorts Inc.) Order, 2001.
8. Annual Report of the Urban Development Commission for the Fiscal Year ended March 31, 1998.

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Standing Order No. 45(2) was suspended for the remainder of the Sitting.

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2. The Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2001.

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