
THE SENATE DEBATES

(UNOFFICIAL REPORT)

PARLIAMENT 1999 – 2003

THE SENATE

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

MR. PRESIDENT: This Honourable House is resumed.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Yesterday, in his presentation the Honourable Leader of the Senate gave a background against which these Estimates have been presented. Unfortunately, when we examined the Estimates and the policies being pursued by the Government not much of it seems to be related to the theoretical intentions of the Estimates.

Before I get to into the substance of my presentation I would like to refer to one or two issues which came up since the Estimates were presented in the Other Place when persons have been discussing the impact of the first conflict between Iraq and the allied forces.

Sir, I was taken back and embarrassed by some of the comments I heard in relation to the attitude of Barbados towards the USA. Yesterday we heard a coherent and well-thought out presentation made by Sir John Stanley Goddard with respect to his attitude towards the conflict in the Middle East and everyone is entitled to their opinion and Sir John put the matter in perspective from his point of view.

Sir, when we are dealing with our friends we have to be careful how we deal with them. If a friend does something that you think is not the correct thing to do, you do not ball the friend out in public in a manner that is undignified. I was taken back when I heard the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade making a broad side attack on the Government of the USA. Most of what she said may have been true but often it is not what you say or do but the manner in which you do so. Sir, if the USA is a friend of the people and Government of Barbados then we should deal with our objections to the way they behave in a more dignified manner because if a boat load of

mercenaries landed on the shores of Barbados tomorrow, the first country we would call to beg for help would be USA. If the Government of the USA through diplomatic channels communicated with the Government of Barbados the decent thing to do is for the response to be through the same diplomatic channel and not to get on the floor of any Parliament and curse the USA.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I ask you to withdraw the word curse. It is a well-established principle of parliamentary practice that Members of one House are not permitted to make personal references against Members of the Other Place.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Sir, I withdraw the comments. Sir, this is a national issue that affects all Barbadians that was broadcast live on radio to Barbados and in this modern era of technology a lot of the rest of the world.

I want to make the point that any response to a diplomatic note to any country should be done appropriately through diplomatic channels and not by publicly lambasting another Government particularly one which you claimed is a friendly Government. As far as the conflict is concerned my view has been and remains that when friends fall out you do not get involved because they must know something about each other that nobody else knows.

Mr. President, the Honourable Leader made reference to the fact that these may be the last Estimates in the current parliamentary session and I think it is a fair statement. Therefore, many persons will be taking the opportunity to make as much mileage as they can out of the presentation. He said that it came against the background of war and what has now come to be popularized as 'the silly season' when any statement made relating to the practises of Government is dismissed as a statement in keeping with this season. We have so little regard for people whether Opposition politicians or the general public that everything

is viewed in the context of trying to score cheap political points.

The Honourable Leader also made the point that there was a recession from June 2001 to August 2002. When the Democratic Labour Party through Senator Mascoll was saying that the country was in recession, the Government's spokespersons and other supporters of the Government said it was not true. I am also hearing statements that we are going through difficult times in this country at this point in time. This is certainly not in keeping with the feel good attitude portrayed by the Government time after time when we were being told that we never had it so good.

This time is identical to the period of 1991/92 in many regards. At that time there was a war going on between the same parties in the Gulf and the world was in a state of economic recession and we were approaching a general election. In many regards the climate that existed then is very similar to what exists now. In the 1991/92 period the Government was faced with certain difficulties and they sought to deal with it in the way they best could. The Democratic Labour Party was faced with some harsh economic realities like most countries and the Barbados Labour Party claimed that nothing that happened during that time had anything to do with the international situation but were homegrown difficulties. On the part of the Barbados Labour Party whenever something happens that appears to be good it is purely because of the genius of the Government but when there is adversity they blame external factors. They ignored the fact that there was international recession and that there was a decline in tourism and that people were not travelling as much as before.

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SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: All of these things contributed to the difficulties which we faced in that period.

Sir, we have a very interesting situation developing in this country. The Barbados Labour Party Government continues to engage in a lot of nationalistic rhetoric. As part of their manifesto of the 1999 Elections was that Barbados would become a Republic. There was a Republic song in place and all the trappings for the inauguration of this Republic status. Apparently, because of some negatives from some of their main supporters, whether financial or otherwise, they seemed to have backed off the idea of the Republic.

However, they continue to feed the public with national rhetoric and it is very much reminiscent of the

policies of a Nazi government and you look for scapegoats to blame when anything goes wrong and you put in place a person to spout national rhetoric and propaganda.

While there is all this national rhetoric, the Government pursues a policy of denationalising vital economic sectors in this country. Point in case is the decision to sell the shares of the Barbados National Bank to the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago.

Sir, Let us look at the origin of the Barbados National Bank, to the credit of the late Tom Adams who was the one who transformed the Government Savings Bank to a commercial bank. He also made the point that it was necessary to have some government involvement in the commercial banking sector and that the Barbados National Bank would, therefore, be in a position to help the Government to influence what was happening in the commercial banking sector.

Sir, he found a good supporter of the Democratic Labour Party in the form of a former Senator of this Chamber to place as the Head of that bank at that time. I must say that gentleman did an excellent job in nurturing that bank to the point where it was beginning to make a significant impact in the banking sector.

Asides.

SENATOR LeR. McCLEAN: Sir, we have to examine some of the sociological implications surrounding the Government's decision to sell the shares of the Barbados National Bank.

Mr. President, when this matter came before the Senate, I made the point then that Government was divesting of the Barbados National Bank's shares at the wrong time because they were competing with shares for the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, shares for BWIA and it was also at Christmastime when those shares were brought on the market.

I made the point then that you cannot expect the average Barbadian who has not, traditionally, been an investing kind of person to look at buying shares at Christmastime and that is a stark reality. I was told that I had a very low opinion of Barbadians and that I felt that they could not understand what was happening. The result was, the shares were under-subscribed. Nevertheless, Government continued to give the people of this country the impression that the share issue was an overwhelming success.

Mr. President, the reason that was given by the Prime Minister for the sale of these shares was the need to form some strategic alliances with other banks in order to bring new products to the banking sector in Barbados.

However, most of these products are already here in Barbados and available to the banking community.

I have been critical of the commercial banks before because I think they are not doing enough in order to help the average Barbadian entrepreneur, particularly new entrepreneurs in getting themselves established in business and the Prime Minister shares this view.

Recently, at the groundbreaking ceremony for a building at Warrens, the Prime Minister literally begged the commercial banks of Barbados to assist the entrepreneurs in this country. Yet, against a background where he realises that he is almost powerless in terms of influencing what the commercial banking sector does in this country, he opts to divest the Government's interest in the one bank that at least the Government has a say at the Board level. The question is why?

Sir, why this change of approach when we were spouting national rhetoric at the time of the sale of the bank and appealing to the patriotism of the Barbadian public? Why this change in approach? Why the change of approach when the shares in the Pine Hill Dairy were being sold and the national spirit and patriotism of Barbadians was called upon to rally in order to get public support for a Barbadian company to own the shares in the Pine Hill Dairy. Similarly, when the shares in the Life of Barbados were being sold, there was a similar public relations exercise. Barbadians were called on to exercise their patriotism and sell their shares to a Barbadian company.

Government that spouts this national rhetoric about '100 per cent Bajan', when they are selling the shares in the Barbados National Bank they turn to a non-Barbadian entity to sell those shares to, almost in a secretive kind of way. By the time Barbadians knew that the shares were being sold, the Chairman of that bank was in a position where he expected that in 90 days time the deal would be completed. Sir, this means that this is a process that was ongoing for sometime.

Sir, I want to find out if there is any nexus between the early redemption of the Trinidad and Tobago market for HRL, seven years early, and the sale of the Barbados National Bank's shares now. I would like the Government to say what percentage of that bond issue was taken up by the same bank now that the interest of the Barbados National Bank is going to be sold. Is there a nexus between the two events?

I recall both Senator Mascoll and myself asking the question when we heard that bond issue was being redeemed, where was the money going to come from. At that time the funds from which it would have come without requiring parliamentary approval was down to about \$3 million. Therefore, you could not get the money from there.

Sir, Senator Mascoll has already made the point in here and other places that it came from an account which forms part of the Consolidated Fund of this country. Therefore, to reduce that fund required parliamentary approval.

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SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: We have heard a lot of academic arguments about above the line and below the line, when in fact, all of the accounts that are mentioned in the Accountant General's report show that this money came from above the line, not below the line. Sir, anything that comes from above the line, as far as I know, and I am not an economist either in reality or by pretense, but common sense tells me that if anything that is above the line has to get Parliament approval, then the funds which were used to pay off that bond issue should have had Parliament's approval.

Sir, this Government has continued to reduce the importance and involvement of Parliament in the affairs of this country for quite some time. It has been an ongoing process where Parliament merely rubber stamps the decisions made by this Government so that is in keeping with that. But, these funds came from a loan which the Government of Barbados raised and said were for a rainy day.

I do not see, by any stretch of the imagination, Sir, how the early redemption of bonds for Hotel and Resorts Limited of the GEMS could be seen as a rainy day.

Sir, I also listened with amazement when the Prime Minister made the point that those two loans, in essence, have had a negative impact on the economy of this country and to some extent, are responsible for some of the measures that have to be taken now.

Again, Sir, when we raised the question as to the wisdom of taking up those loans, we were told, oh, we have a good credit rating. I remember Senator Barker making a big speech about the fact that we have such a good credit rating, we could afford to borrow. We can get money at good terms. Therefore, we could go and borrow it now and put it down for when we want it.

Now, Sir, we are hearing that Barbados' credit rating has declined. Now, at a time when you really might need to go on the international market to raise money, you cannot, or you are not in as good a position to do so. I am sure that those two loans contributed, to a large extent, to the present decline in the credit rating of Barbados, simply because when the Government was gloating that we had the highest foreign reserves ever, those foreign reserves were a result

of borrowing money on the foreign market. So you borrow foreign exchange and you put it there and you say that our foreign reserves are good.

The foreign reserves did not come as a result of the productivity in this country. It did not come as a result of our foreign exchange earning sectors earning more money because tourism was down, manufacturing almost non-existent and agriculture on its last leg. The major foreign exchange earning entities were all underperforming.

In addition, Sir, the international business companies that we were told were going to bring so much revenue into this country, did not perform as expected, we borrowed money and put it aside to make the books look good. All the international community is saying now, look, not only did you have an unrealistic foreign exchange outlook but now you have used it, but not in any productive means to earn the foreign exchange that is required to pay the debt. You borrow money on the foreign market and then you do not have the means to earn the money to repay it.

The result, Sir, is that the Government is now faced with the situation where it is not a matter of choice that they have to reduce the capital works. Sir, do not mind this rhetoric about the Prime Minister being so good and being clothed in this robe of statehood, that even in the face of an election, he is not going to reduce capital expenditure.

It has nothing to do with that, Sir, it is a stark economic reality that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made it abundantly clear that the Barbados economy is not performing. Therefore, you must reduce your capital expenditure.

Sir, I raised the question as to what was the nexus between the early redemption of the bond issue in Trinidad and the sale of the BNB shares. After some thought and investigation, it is clear, Sir, that what ties those two events together, is the current poor financial state of the Government of Barbados, both in terms of access to foreign currency, as well as access to local reserves, that they can use in the Capital Works Programme.

What in fact, Sir, the Government of Barbados is doing, is making a trade off with the Republic Bank where the Republic Bank would have paid off the bond holders in Trinidad and Tobago, then buy shares in the Barbados National Bank and simply pay to the Barbados Government the difference between what they would have been paid off in Trinidad and the shares here in Barbados.

Sir, some people believe that does not make sense but if they redeem the bonds in Trinidad for \$45 million, and you sell the shares in Barbados for \$189 million and the person who paid off the bond paid \$45 million in Trinidad, you will just deduct \$45 million from \$189

million in Barbados and give you the difference. You do not have to be an Einstein, Sir, to know that but what, Sir, is the reason for doing this.

Sir, you have a situation where the Government finds itself being unable to raise any money outside of Barbados in order to complete the Hilton Hotel. Again, Sir, the Hilton Hotel was razed to a pile of rubble sometime in 1996 or 1997, but about six years ago, the Government of Barbados destroyed the Hilton Hotel, not even knowing where they were going to find the money to rebuild that hotel.

I hope, Sir, that when we are talking about records, that we would be able to find records for the building at Warrens, records for GEMS, for Greenland and that we can find all the records that are not of personal interest but to the interest of all the taxpayers of this country.

Sir, the Government could have allowed the Hilton Hotel to continue to operate for another two years, while they looked to raise the funds to rebuild it, if in fact it was absolutely necessary to go the route that they did.

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SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: You do not knock down a building that is earning money without having the money to rebuild it. What is happening is that you have now at this time to sell the shares in the Barbados National Bank in order to find money to put into the Hilton Hotel when we were told that the Hilton International was going to be a partner in that project. All that has turned out to be now is that Hilton International will manage the hotel for a fee. They are not putting the kind of money into it that was anticipated. What kind of negotiation went on to bring us to this sorry state?

We have the Dover Convention Centre which is now an empty space. What madness could possess a Government that they could destroy revenue earning entities when they do not have the money to replace them and just leave the land there? That is what has happened in this country over the past six years.

Sir, if the Government of Barbados needed to form strategic alliances with the banking sector, what the Government should have done when Barclays Bank was anxiously looking around for somebody to sell their operation to, was to look at acquiring Barclays assets in Barbados and merging it with the Barbados National Bank. That is what they should have done.

We have a situation now where the Government is moving away from their initial policy when the shares in

the Barbados National Bank were sold. When the shares in the Barbados National Bank were sold, it was structured in such a way that nobody would have majority shares and would not be able to trigger the takeover process. Government has gone now and sell somebody the majority shares which means that the takeover process is triggered.

Sir, given the appreciation of the shares of the Barbados National Bank for whatever reason, many Barbadians will be tempted now to sell their shares to the Republic Bank which could end up, rather than owning 57 per cent, owing well in excess of 60 or 65 per cent of the Barbados National Bank. That is the reality of the situation.

I would like to tell the Government of Barbados for what it is worth that the average man in Barbados is not satisfied with that decision. Many persons whom I never even expected would have had an interest in a matter such as this have been approaching me and asking me what craziness it is that the Government of Barbados is selling the BNB to a foreign entity.

All I could advise the people of Barbados to do, in whatever way they can do it, if it means having to sign a petition, is to let their voices be heard and let the Government know in no uncertain terms that they are not satisfied with the decision which they have made. This Government in its attitude of arrogance have always believed that they can do whatever they want to do when they want to do it and the rest of Barbados would simply fall in line because you dare not oppose anything they say.

Sir, I will move on to another issue. The Barbados Labour Party, as a political entity, prides itself on being an election machine. We have seen the election machinery going into top gear in this country sometimes a year or so approaching an election but never before have we seen an ongoing process of electioneering by a Government as we are seeing now.

The election campaign in 1999 for the Barbados Labour Party has not yet ended, it continues unabated from 1999 to this present day. I will demonstrate to you, Sir, why I am saying that. The Estimates and Government spending have been geared toward electioneering for the entire process. We hear a lot of talk about the Prime Minister not increasing capital expenditure even in the face of an election, but let us see what happened in previous years. In 1992-1993 capital expenditure was \$113 million. Facing an election in 1994 capital expenditure rose by 7 per cent to \$121 million in the 1993-1994 period, while current expenditure only went up by 2.3 per cent. In 1998-1999, this is the Barbados Labour Party, current expenditure went up - from 1998-1999 and 1999-2000 - by 24 per cent approaching an election. Capital expenditure went up from \$241 million to \$267 million, an increase of 10 per cent over that period. So you would have thought that elections

have come and gone and Government would therefore now at least exercise the prudent management that they claim they always exercised.

They had a lot of VAT money available to them, so they decided to blow it. They had over \$90 million one time in the Public Enterprise Fund, so they decided to blow it. The Government went on a grand spending spree partying with the money from the taxpayers in this country. They gave money to Southern Meats. While they are spouting nationalist rhetoric, they are denationalising everything. They closed down the Government abattoir and gave a private company, Southern Meats, money to open a private one.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: On a point of order. The Honourable Senator is misleading the Senate. As far as I know the money that Southern Meats got came from the Agricultural Development Fund. It was borrowed from the Public Enterprise Fund, but was reimbursed from the Agricultural Development Fund.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, I maintain that the Accountant-General's Report shows that money from the Public Enterprise Fund was transferred to Southern Meats. I do not care what channel it went through. The record shows that it went from the Government's coffers to Southern Meats. I know what I am talking about. The record is there to show that it went from the Public Enterprise Fund. So I am sorry, but the Honourable Senator is mistaken in that regard.

Sir, in the year 2000-2001 capital expenditure again rose by 13 per cent. As I said, I thought that the election was finished but the election machinery was still in top gear. This is the first time we have seen electioneering from one election to another. In between there, there was a by-election where the candidate for the ruling party had to spend \$80 000 in a constituency they claimed to be a stronghold of the Government in order to win an election against the \$15 000 that was spent by the Opposition.

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SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: If only \$80 000 was declared, then probably the figure was \$150 000 because the Barbados Labour Party never declares what money they have spent in an election. I know the person who represented the Democratic Labour Party had no more than \$15 000 to spend.

Sir, again the Government increased the Capital Expenditure by 13 per cent. In 2001-2002, they increased it again by 15 per cent because probably Government was

gearing for an early election. Now we see a cutback of 4 per cent in 2002-2003.

Sir, why is the trend in cutting back on Capital Expenditure through the Estimates? The reason is that when there is money to put into the Public Enterprise Investment Fund, which does not require Parliamentary approval to spend, money could be taken from that source to spend on projects that were funded out of the Consolidated Fund.

In previous years, Government entities such as the National Sports Council, would have been funded out of the Consolidated Fund. The Ministry of Social Transformation projects would have been funded out of the Consolidated Fund. What do we now see? We are seeing programmes in the Ministry of Social Transformation being funded out of the Public Enterprise Investment Fund which does not require Parliamentary approval, so that they could quickly put money into enterprises.

This is the point Senator Mascoll was making when he said the money from the sale of the shares could be used to finance an election. It has nothing to do with putting money in the hands of the Barbados Labour Party as a Party. It is a matter where the money could be used like a slush fund and that is what has been happening in this country over recent years.

The Public Enterprise Investment Fund is being used by Government as a slush fund to finance their continued electioneering which has been going on from the last election until now. The money from the sale of the Barbados National Bank would go into the Public Enterprise Investment Fund and then channeled into something else in order to sway the electorate in this country.

I think the public of Barbados must be aware of this, which cannot be disputed. When we look at the recent record, it is clear that is what has been happening. We can see the sums of money that have been transferred to the Ministry of Social Transformation. We can see the sum of money that was transferred to the National Sports Council. We can see the sums of money that have been transferred to the Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation. We can see how Government has been using this Fund to get around the Parliamentary process and, therefore, shield themselves from any Parliamentary debate in respect to the matter for which these funds are being spent.

Sir, whether or not the Government wants to accept it, the people of Barbados are beginning to see through the smoke screen that this Government has set up with talk of nationalism, of 100 per cent Bajan but every opportunity Government gets, they are denationalising.

Sir, the Insurance Corporation of Barbados, I believe, would be the next casualty. The Government of Barbados will pursue the same process that they are pursuing now with the Barbados National Bank in dealing with the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. The Insurance Corporation of Barbados would also be sold off and chances are, it would also go to another foreign entity to form another strategic alliance.

Sir, the Honourable Leader in his presentation has stated, with some great glint of pleasure in his eyes, what Government is going to be giving to the care of the disabled community - \$2 349 666. Sir, the census shows that there are about 13 000 disabled persons in this country.

SENATOR the Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: On a point of order, Mr. President. I wish to clarify something for the Honourable Senator. The care of the disabled under the auspices of the Ministry of Health speaks specifically to the St. Andrew Children's Home. I believe the care of the disabled and the Disability Unit comes under the Ministry of Social Transformation, to which I have made reference yesterday.

Therefore, it is incorrect to say that Government is giving \$2.3 million as though that is the only amount given to the care of the disabled.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, that argument subtracts nothing from my argument and, in fact, adds nothing to his. The fact still remains that with 13 000 disabled persons in Barbados, that amounts to \$180.74 each per year, for the care of the disabled, since persons in that category cannot afford to wait every month for assistance.

SENATOR T. E. BARKER: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is still continuing to mislead this Chamber if he persists with the argument given that the Leader of the Senate has just remarked that the money refers to one specific institution. The Honourable Member must not continue to mislead this Chamber.

SENATOR LeR. H. McCLEAN: Mr. President, the point of the matter is, if the Government had done anything of significance, one would have heard them parading about it.

Mr. President, the \$180.74 amounts to \$15 per month to the disabled in this country or \$3.48 per week or \$0.50 per day. That is the situation with respect to the contribution made by the Government of this country to take care of the disabled.

Sir, the Honourable Leader also said the hospital has acquired some equipment for the Physiotherapy Department.

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Senator LeR. H. McCLEAN: He made the point that some persons will need the care of the physiotherapy department after the activity in the general elections. I think it is noble of him to ensure that he has the facilities in place for himself and his colleagues while he is in position to do so. There is a saying, 'whosoever diggeth a pit shall fall into it'. The physiotherapy equipment being provided for other people might be required for the Barbados Labour Party itself.

We hear that \$1 million has been set aside for consultancy for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. What about the recommendations from the Haynes Report? What is the need for this million dollars to be paid to consultancy? I would like Government to explain the need of this consultancy. This Government has adopted an approach in recent years where it feels that if they pay big money for consultancies they will get good service. They say that if you pay peanuts you get monkeys so we have to look for exotic amounts to pay.

Sir, we have seen continuing disregard for the people of this country where the Government has moved a public servant out of the public sector into the political arena and at the same time gave the person a lucrative consultancy. This is not a good example that the Government is setting and it is not in the interest of the people because people who go into the political arena do so at their own risk. Why should the Government move a public servant and then give the person a consultancy which is way in excess of what the person was paid as a public servant. It cannot be a proper approach to the way things are being done in this country.

Sir, the Barbados Labour Party prides itself on being an election machine and all of the policies of the Barbados Labour Party since 1999 elections until now has been geared towards wining the next elections. The Government of Barbados takes the taxpayers money and buys political support. They continue to talk about nationalism but their policies are far from being nationalistic. The people of Barbados deserve an explanation. I call on the people of Barbados to voice their concerns about this recent decision of the Government of Barbados to sell the shares in the Barbados National Bank because that is the first step but step two will come when Insurance Corporation of Barbados is sold in a similar exercise.

I thank you, Sir.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I rise to associate myself with the Estimates of Expenditure and Revenue. I want to say at the outset that I want to

contextualise my remarks along the lines of belief which we might do well to reflect on and embrace if I could be bold enough to make a suggestion to the other side. There are some issues which transcend partisan politics. Questions of national pride and dignity have to be among those precepts and values which we have to start to see as transcending the conveniences of partisan politics. I say that in all seriousness since reflecting on some of the things I heard fall from the lips of Senator Mascoll yesterday. There was much to be desired in the presentation and even if the Democratic Labour Party took pride in it, there was not much in the context of national pride.

We have to recognise that we came to this stage today after approximately eight years of consecutive growth between 1994 and 2001. The average annual rate of growth during that period of time was in the vicinity of three and four per cent per year. Speaking as a Barbadian it was an achievement in which Barbados could be proud. It was not an achievement of the Prime Minister of Barbados alone or the Cabinet of Barbados but of the people in an effort to make Barbados more competitive and efficient and able to stand on its own in the face of the regional and international community.

Therefore, it does not bode well when Senators seek to detract from that achievement and try to ask the citizens of this country to believe that Barbados can some time be insulated and encapsulated and protected from the slings and arrows which affect the total globe. Up to year 2001 we enjoyed that growth but we reached the stage where there would be some fallout for Barbados when the German economy went into recession in the context of the tourism industry which we hold dear.

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SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: When the economy of Japan, for a long time the second most powerful economy on the planet, went into recession, it had ripple affects on the basis of investor confidence in this region. When the United States of America went into a stage of crisis, precipitated largely by bad corporate governance, it was nothing to do with the Prime Minister of Barbados. It was nothing to do with the leaders and captains of the commercial world in Barbados. The reality is, there was an implication for Barbados in the context of investor confidence.

Sir, when the terrorists' attacks took place on September 11th, 2001, it was within a matter of days that the aviation industry recorded millions of dollars in losses. It was within a matter of weeks that the tourism industry in the Caribbean started to hemorrhage badly and that is a situation to which we had to respond. It is a situation, the

aftermath of which we have continued to grapple with and deal with.

Sir, there is, I think, a necessity to speak to the issues that are affecting Barbados outside of the context of the opportunism that can creep into partisan political discourse. I would want to say as one of my points for takeoff in this speech, that when we look at what has transpired within the last two years, we have seen a demonstration in how best to manage an economy which in the face of international recession, which in the face of investor confidence seems to have had tremendous potential and where the people of Barbados still anticipated that they could trust and rely on their leadership to give them the very best possible management and I think that there is nothing to be ashamed of.

I heard Senators Mascoll and McClean speak, sadly, in a negative way about the fact that we went off and secured fundamental capital on the international market. It was not capital to squander. It was capital to protect this country against what was obviously going to be a severe and significant impact from the same international sluggishness and fallout of September 11th, 2001.

Barbados' economy is by no stretch of the imagination a large one. It is not one which is anything other than a dependent one. We do not possess any large manufacturing industrial base where people can live off the proceeds of the domestic production free of the impact of external trade. We rely extensively on tourism and that is a reality. Equally, we rely extensively on external trade. Those two limbs upon which we rest our fortunes economically, came under significant threat and something had to be done to correct the potential fallout. It is as simple as that.

Therefore, when a meeting was convened of all the relevant parties of the private sector in Barbados and we had a consultation, in fact there were two of them, one in February 2002 and October 2001, to look at how best we could parcel a set of policies to protect Barbados' short-term and medium-term interest against these potential fallouts.

Sir, that was a move which was not only unprecedented down here but which the United States of America and England subsequently imitated. It is important to recognise and read into this record the fact that the Democratic Labour Party was invited to participate in that consultation and they refused to do so. It is equally important to read into this record the fact that the decision to go to the international marketplace to raise the loan in question was a decision which was taken after that consultation and which was thrown out to the floor at the consultation and it was one which, to the very best of my recollection, the participants in the consultation agreed.

Therefore, I think that we would do ourselves a terrible injustice if we try to couch that loan and those steps in the national welfare, in the interest of protecting the Barbadian economy, society, way of life, jobs and family if we try to decontextualise those steps and try to read into it something perverse or reckless on the part of the Government.

I want to say that we also have to be mindful of the fact that post September 11th, 2001, a new phenomenon has crept into the global marketplace which is impacting very heavily on Barbados, our neighbours in the Eastern Caribbean and it is something over which we have limited control. There is a new form of uncertainty about movement. We have a situation whereby people from North America and Europe who are largely ignorant of the degree of security and culture of our Caribbean society, believe that they are hard-pressed to contemplate leaving what, for them, is the known "safety of their neighbourhoods, environment, security of their countryside" and then to travel abroad. The irony of it is, Sunday Advocate revealed, there is a view that the Caribbean today is, perhaps, one of the safest places in the world to be but that is not the prevailing and prevalent view in Europe, Germany or United States of America.

We have a situation where we are contesting with a new phenomenon called an 'uncertainty about travel'. It is that uncertainty about travel and movement that means that we have a more difficult task as we rest an abundance of our expectations, economically, on the success of our tourism industry.

Sir, We also have to recognise that one of the by-products of going to the marketplace when we did was that we were in a position to raise our foreign reserves to a level which was well beyond the minimum twelve-weeks recommended for the basic level of comfort to be felt in the country. Having so raised our platform of reserves, we were then in a position to continue to go about the way of business that Barbadians had become accustomed to with the minimum amount of dislocation.

Therefore, unlike what transpired in 1991, there was no widespread layoff. There was no large-scale loss of jobs. There was no economic hemorrhage in foreign exchange that imperiled this country. There was maintenance of investor confidence in Barbados. There was a maintenance of a good-feel factor among our people and that is something for which we ought not to be placed in a position where we should apologise.

It is also something which, if it were a more self-respecting Opposition, the Democratic Labour Party would be anxious to have associated itself in the cause of the greater good and welfare of the people of Barbados but alas, that was not to be the case.

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SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I would want to say that we have come to this stage against that backdrop but with a set of Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure which essentially now places or seeks to place Barbados in what is really a holding pattern, until we can be more reasonably sure as to where revenues will be coming from, as to how effective certain types of industry will be in the future, as to when we get a clear position on what will happen with the war that is currently taking place, as until such time as a lot of the ambiguity that now exists out there has passed.

The Prime Minister in his presentation to the Other Chamber described what we are going through as part of a cyclical period. Quite rightly, it happens in Barbados or has been noted to happen in Barbados since Independence on a ten-year basis. We are at the tail end of that and therefore, Sir, there is a need for us to hold strain.

Sir, having said that, I do not, at any stage, allow myself to embrace the view that the IMF has started to dictate or to determine to the Government of Barbados how it is supposed to conduct the management of its revenue. I cannot accept that and I do not know whether Honourable Senators have read the IMF report, but the suggestions and hints which come from Senator Mascoll and Senator McClean cause me great consternation.

Sir, if you were to speak of that report in its totality, then there are things which they suggest that we do, which are not even within the contemplation, not only of the Government but of the people of Barbados. It is not within anybody's realm of discussion that we privatise the Barbados Water Authority. This is nobody's realm of immediate discussion.

I have listened to people complaining about traffic management, I have listened to people complaining about the appropriateness of the ways in which the Transport Board operates but I have not heard anybody suggest that we privatise it. Therefore, Sir, we have to be very careful how we subscribe to this view that because the IMF has published a report, the men who operate in big buildings consequently are possessed of the biggest and best brains and that the Government has decided to lay prostrate before them so as to do their bidding.

Sir, that is basically the message which is coming across from the Opposition and that is not fair. It is not correct. Far from the methodology and fable about them telling us how we should conduct our revenue, it is to my way of thinking, abundantly clear that if we paid careful attention to some of the revenue raising departments of the

Government, we could demonstrate, not only to the Opposition but also to ourselves, because part of the problem here, Sir, is that we need, nationally, to approach this problem.

We have to demonstrate, beyond any doubt, that it is possible by simply taking a number of small steps to rectify some of the difficulties that we experience. One such step, Sir, is the question of revenue raising capacity and function of some of the Government departments. It is arguably legendary that some of the Government departments of Barbados charged with a revenue raising responsibility are either somewhat lackadaisical in their approach, or somewhat inefficient in their approach but the truth of the matter is that potentially, we are allowing a large sum of money to go by untapped. If we go to the Estimates of Expenditure, Sir, and I have, in perusing here at page 14, Sir, for argument sake, the Ministry of Agriculture, the capacity of the Ministry in terms of its earning revenue in the context of fees for central live stock station, laboratory fees, soil conservation proceeds, import and export permits. Import and export permits in Barbados are approximately \$250 alone, fees for cold storage, \$903 000, we have fees charged for analysing samples, \$300 000, the Ministry of Tourism and International Business, Airport charges alone are more than \$6 million.

Concessions and rentals at the airport are \$5 million and international registration fees are \$140 000. Sir, that is just but a glimpse into the revenue raising capacity of different departments of the Government. Sir, I think a certain degree of efficiency now has to be brought to these revenue raising departments, so as to ensure that there is less potential for persons who must pay and who should be paying to slip through the system and the cracks in the system.

It is unfortunate that the Opposition does not seek to speak to issues of that nature because I genuinely believe that Barbadians have grown tired of the traditional fear about what somebody has on this body and what piece of information you have on the next person and so on. I do not think that we get ourselves anywhere when we go that road. I honestly believe, Sir, that we have to reach a stage where we are looking at what we have some real control over, how we do business, how effectively we seek to do the business and therefore, Sir, make the corrections that need to be made and implement them as a matter of urgency.

Sir, I go further to the issue of tourism and international transport. It seems abundantly clear to me that when you read these Estimates, one of the principal objectives of the Ministry is to foster the development of full potential of the tourism sector in order to provide maximum employment opportunities for persons engaged in the industry.

Sir, if we are seriously looking at developing the full potential of the tourism sector so as to provide maximum opportunities, we come to a point in the debate where I part company completely with Senator McClean and Senator Mascoll and I say why.

It is abundantly clear, I think, that we have come to a point in our development as a society where we have to stop seeing things only from inside the box. We have to stop trying to ask the Government to do that which we know the Government has done and overburdened itself for doing from the time of independence.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Yes, some peripheral vision. There have to be alternative ways of raising revenue. You cannot on one hand be saying that for the first time in the history of this country, we are recognising the importance of the disabled in the society and trying to advance their cause and elevate them to a status and stature which they justly deserve, to find the revenue for that and at the same time, you are saying that we must do so without raising taxes. Because the issue of taxation, the Opposition thinks the taxes are high, but at the same time, there is not supposed to be any social fall out.

At the same time as you have that, we are supposed to still depend on the Government to be servicing the development of industries, such as the tourism industry. Sir, that does not make sense. It defies the most basic levels of understanding of how a country has to develop. It defies the most basic levels of understanding.

Sir, we have a situation where we have an asset like Harrison's Cave. Honourable Senators who have passed through the Caribbean would realise that every country has some of the same basic infrastructures. We have all got the beaches. We have all got the nice hotels and so on. We have all got water sports activities but when you have a natural resource such as Harrison's Cave which presents something exceedingly rare, exceedingly special, something unique in the eastern Caribbean, it is a premier tourist attraction, then common sense would seem to be that we ought to be developing the Cave to the highest level possible.

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SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: When therefore I see that the Government is interested in investing another \$10 million toward the expansion of the Cave, I believe that is an idea whose time has long come. The Cave as a natural resource of that type is subject to levels of exhaustion because there is such a density of human traffic

passing through. It must be replenished in terms of its expansion because it is so attractive that we want to get more people in there, but we have to find innovative ways of doing that and accommodating that. It cannot be through the same entrance and take them to where you see the chandeliers et cetera and come back down. You have to think in terms of how you relate to the asset in the broader interest of the well-being of Barbados so that there is something special about coming to Barbados.

Senator Mascoll made the point that there was some talk and some evidence about persons from the cruise ships saying that the people should get off at Barbados and take a drive through the country and so on and not necessarily go equipped to expect the best of shopping. I too have heard that. I will come back to that issue but if we are saying that the cruise ship people are saying to get off at the Bridgetown Port and go through the country, where are they going to go. We know that nine times of out ten they will see the east coast of Barbados because that too is a very special area. Some will play golf with Senator Haynes, but largely they will be going to see the Cave. Therefore, when we see that we have an asset of that nature, it is in our best interest to make that asset as developed and as competitive as possible, but where would the money come from.

We have heard that there is a plan to develop the Pierhead so that Barbados, which has long since the days of slavery benefited from being the first stop on the transatlantic route once you get to the Caribbean, will at long last have a marina of competitive standards, but that is pooh-poohed. When it is not being pooh-poohed as an idea, you are told that you should find money from the public purse to finance it. The question I ask, if you are supposed to be raising taxes and you are not supposed to be decreasing revenue via taxation, where then are we supposed to get the money from for the development of the asset. We have the geographical asset, we are the asset, but are we just going to continue to allow our competitors to capitalise on the fact that Barbados has decided not to get off that which it sits upon and get about its business to make its resource product more competitive so as to employ more Barbadians.

I think, without reflecting on the Senator, that there is a danger in coming to a certain level in public life without having had the opportunity to do more than read text and be very theoretical.

I reflect in a personal way on about nine months of my life spent in Road Town, Tortola. There is a Marina at Road Town, Tortola and the place where I stayed was on a hill overlooking that marina. That marina, apart from being obviously exceptionally well laid out because it plays home to about 400 to 500 boats, has services attached to it. I am not talking about the basics of a restaurant and a cafeteria

because they are there and I am not speaking about the fact that there are shops and so on because we expect them. I am talking about boat repairs which provide job opportunities for the young men in Road Town, Tortola. There is not only the boat repairs, there is the servicing of the boats in terms of cleaning them and in terms of the maintenance of engines, the security facilities and the storage facilities.

It is a reality that many people come down to the Caribbean and leave their vessels which have to be stored somewhere, so you have a expansive dry dock. A similar thing exists in St. Maarten and the storage facilities come at great cost, but because you are part of the yacht owning class you do not shrink away from paying a cost to store your investment because your investment is worth nearly a \$1 million and in some instances more.

The fact of the matter remains that once you have that raft of ancillary services associated with something as simple as an investment in a marina, it gives an opportunity to a range of persons in Barbados to get themselves involved in a range of different types of job opportunities that previously was not open to them.

Therefore, we come to ask the question, where does the money come from? I hear Senator McClean heralding his return to the Chamber.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I am not going to share any licks now, I am speaking to the question of what I see as a real concern. I prefix my remarks as I did purposely because we are really talking about Barbados being at a cross road. This election is about national development and I am satisfied that the people of Barbados are listening to hear about national development. Now, if therefore we come to the question of where the money is to come from, the Prime Minister has made it abundantly clear. He has suggested that by the sale of certain shares which Barbados owns in some institutions, we give ourselves capital which can be injected into some of these projects. I feel it necessary to draw a distinction between these shares, for example, the sale of shares in Barbados Dairy Industries Limited, Heywoods Hotel or BET when said shares were sold in such a way as to the detriment of the long-term interest and development of the people of Barbados.

I find it difficult to understand how someone can come in here today and keep so much noise about shares when they know that they were party to a shameful exercise when BET had an extra 20 years in Barbados. As the Honourable Senator said, that will hang you. The reality of the situation is that we should not be getting into the issue of the sale of shares in 2003 anyway and I will tell

the Chamber why. It is shameful for us to be getting in here debating whether or not shares should be sold.

Sir, the Government of this country - I do not care whether it is a Barbados Labour Party Government, a Democratic Labour Party or whatever party Government - has to come to an understanding that the time has come when Government is best served reducing the amount of ownership that it has in entities like that and become a financial regulator in the marketplace. That is the role of governments around the world. We have to stop holding on to these Stalinist and Leninist thinking because of the fact that in 1950 or 1960 we had to do all of this in order to help lift a burdened country out of a colonial situation that you must continue forevermore to be the big brother or the big sister to the people of Barbados.

The people of Barbados having benefited from free education must now be carried to another level where they become familiar with how they turn their educational well-being into investment and financial opportunities. That is nothing to be apologetic about because there is nothing to say - as I heard Senator McClean on the radio today saying, that is perhaps why he...

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Order, please!

Asides.

11.30 p.m.

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SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Mr. President, it is a sad thing. Senator McClean made the point that in the year 2000 at Christmas time, people would not have wanted to take their money and bought shares. Sir, I know of one situation where a lady who is employed in a clerical capacity in a hotel at the front desk, bought some shares for her 15 year-old son as a Christmas gift. It was not a toy guy, a new set of jeans or a new pair of shoes but an opportunity for the young man to understand that there is something important in thinking along the lines of what one owns.

Sir, it is very necessary for us to come to recognise that the world is changing and is in danger of passing us by. We live in a Caribbean today where we have the creation of a First Caribbean National Bank. Sir, it would not have been sensible for Government to have bought Barclays Bank Plc's interest because Barclays did not begin and end in the Caribbean nor in Barbados but was throughout the region. When the linkage was made, Barclays was throughout the region, not only in Barbados. Sir, this shows the limited insulated problem that we have,

where people's vision, politically and economically, begin and end on the 166 square miles of this island.

The reality of the fact is that once there is a situation where one creates a First Caribbean National Bank, the Barbados National Bank whether or not we like it, is hard pressed to compete and to survive. The Barbados National Bank automatically is smaller than the First Caribbean National Bank. It is automatically smaller than the Banks of Nova Scotia, which are throughout the region. It is equally smaller than the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago. It is smaller than the Bank of Jamaica. It is smaller than the Caribbean Commercial Bank. Therefore, it is hard-pressed to survive.

Sir, the limited thinking that we have been hearing for the last two days in this Debate goes further. The danger in it is that we have a would-be finance minister sitting amongst us, who does not understand that the Barbados National Bank must not seek to attract new port folios if it is to survive. The realm of the investment banking which larger institutions are doing in order for them to survive in the Caribbean, the Barbados National Bank cannot do because the Barbados National Bank's port folio is too small. Are we supposed to say that because the Barbados National Bank exists in Barbados, we should have never sold out a share because, in some way, we are doing damage to Barbados?

Sir, I know that the insurance companies in Barbados, Sagicor in particular, the former Barbados Mutual, dominates the insurance industry in Jamaica. We cannot be a part of a Caribbean Single Market and Economy and be heard to continue to practice and preach xenophobic nonsense. We are trying to give meaning and effect to a Caricom Single Market and Economy. If we are trying to give effect to a Caribbean Single Market and Economy then we have to understand that we cannot approbate and reprobate at the same time. It is Barbadian business which dominates the insurance industry. It is Barbadian calypsonians, who are holding private places in Trinidad, the so-called home of calypso. It is Barbadian construction firms that are holding pride in place across the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States. One of them does more business in the Eastern Caribbean than it does in Barbados. If we are talking about building Caribbean Single Market and Economy, we cannot willy-nilly pick out what suits Barbados to dominate Jamaica in insurance, construction, in their services and skills, et cetera, but it does not suit Barbados when a bank from Trinidad comes here and seeks to acquire shares.

Sir, I feel the region and the country has to be governed and, in the year 2003, I will not allow my political mind to be limited to only the 166 square miles of Barbados. There is something larger than Barbados. It is called the Caribbean region and that I want the Honourable

Senators on that Side to understand. We are not talking about destroying the Barbados National Bank but about giving it life for it to be competitive.

Sir, do you know where the philosophical distinction lies? I sat in this Chamber today and listened to the Honourable Senator McClean. He asked the question, who will be buying shares in the Barbados National Bank once the two of them link up?

Sir, the question is not that. The question should be, does not a strategic alliance between the National Bank of Barbados and the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, give the Barbadian an opportunity to invest in shares in the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago? If the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago is doing well, does it not, therefore, mean that the Barbadian investor has created wealth for himself?

This is where the problem began. When they went across the water in November, 2000, there was an Independence meeting where one could have run rats through it - I would not say that because I had already left the Party, it had lost its mass appeal - that Senator was not invited to speak because he was persona non grata at the time. He still is.

The fact of the matter is that the leader of the Opposition and Senator Mascoll kept castigating the idea of selling the shares. They never had the vision to understand. If they were a responsible Opposition, they could have told the Government that it must conduct a broader educational campaign, that Government could well work harder to try to get people to understand that rather than condemn investments in shares, they should try to understand its benefits. If you are going to say that people should not buy shares because it is Christmas time and people have to find money, first of all, to buy furniture or vehicles, then the Opposition is bankrupt of ideas, bankrupt of policies and unsuited to public life.

Sir, in passing, I want to say that the Constitution of the Barbados National Bank contemplates these kinds of strategic linkages. They may not know it but it does. I believe that Government is not selling all of its share interest. The fact of the matter remains, I hold fast to the philosophical belief that Government has to move with some haste towards being a regulator largely in the financial marketplace rather than the owner, because it gives people the opportunity to say things depending on how the wind blows. I speak one thing constantly.

I have seen too often where people have seen where Government has been the primary controller of companies and interests there has been a raft of corruption. That has been a Caribbean experience and

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SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: therefore, we need not continue to fear the market but we have to understand that you transform those abilities and formal skills into an awareness and understanding of how in practice they can assist you to make money.

I would like to move to the question of some of the economic efficiencies in the social context of this country. Every day in some parts of Barbados there is a line of mothers and children waiting at the Magistrates Court for the purpose of collecting maintenance for children. We need to recognise that these matters need to be dealt with a greater degree of consideration to provide a level of dignity and privacy for the mothers and children involved. I experienced being at the magistrates court where a young girl dressed, in civilian clothes was waiting in line in the hot sun to collect maintenance money because it was supposed to have been posted to her mother but she had not received it only to discover that the cheque was not at the court.

Sir, we have to understand that the time has come to make the system more responsive to the need to have persons' dignity and privacy protected and that the systems must be more organised where persons are contacted in these instances.

Sir, I am speaking under the Head of the Attorney-General and the courts of Barbados. I contextualised my speech at the beginning along the lines of the ways in which we proud Barbadians can better order our affairs so as to make more productive use of our time and resources. Anyone who has visited a traffic court in Barbados has seen one of the largest exhibitions in squandermania. The Attorney's time is squandered, the litigants time and the court's time is also squandered. Very often, the court does not open until 9:30 in the morning and there is a situation where people have to sit for the entire day because there is no system to the way cases are called and you may wait for three hours only to be told to come back next week. During that period of time the employer is bereft of his employee and things that could be done to advance the productive sector of Barbados are not being done. We have to ensure that the courts of this country are not unwitting contributors to being the agents for lawlessness in the country.

Once we have recognised the way our judicial system impacts negatively on the question of time management and economic resources we have to look at the quality of protection which is offered to the judiciary.

I spoke to this Head one year ago in another Appropriation Bill debate and I am sad to say that little has

changed in Barbados and I gather they are complaints that have been made long before I made them. I want to say to Senator McClean that if I am fortunate enough to be successful in the upcoming elections I will be raising Cain in an effort to ensure that we treat seriously to these matters.

We talk about CARICOM Single Market and Economy and I understand that the legal system has to be embraced in that as well and inefficiencies in any country should be of concern to us because we are seeking to merge with other Caribbean countries at some level.

This Parliament has passed a number of statutes which have expanded the work of the magistrates and the scope of their jurisdiction. One that comes to mind is the Drug Abuse and Control Act which empowers a magistrate to inflict upon a guilty offender seven years in prison. He can also fine someone \$250 000 and, Sir, this is a lot of money. My concern is not the ability of the magistrate to effectively execute such punishment or conduct such trials but my concern is the temptation persons may have towards trying to pervert the course of justice. We have to recognise that the status in which we hold our magistrates has not changed throughout the years because a magistrate is treated like an ordinary civil servant. He is not given the kind of constitutional protection that his judicial counterpart in the higher judiciary is given. A better salary and the perks of office are not the purview of the magistrate.

Sir, the Organisation of American States has seriously started to look at the potential for structured corruption taking place in the Caribbean as a result of cartels being formed by criminals.

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SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: These criminals might be white collar criminals. They need not be drug men. It could be all sorts of things. The fact is, if we do not look and treat our judicial officers, at every level, as though they are an integral part of protecting, safeguarding and maintaining an efficient system, then we run the risk of trying to close a stable door long after the proverbial horse had fled.

Asides.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Address the Chair, please. I have already spoken to Senator McClean and I do so for the last time.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I want Honourable Senators to realise that I am not in any way

casting an aspersion on the quality of our magistracy. I went to great pains to say that I do not do so. However, I cautioned this Chamber and by extension the powers that be, that there is a real risk out there of persons seeking to undermine and tarnish the credibility of our judiciary at the lower level, which is the level which, I believe, cries out for strengthening and protection in terms of their constitutional safeguards which are given to the senior members of the judiciary. I do not think that is an unreasonable point.

Sir, now that I am provoked to think about it further, I believe that Senator Sir Stanley Goddard would have been part of a Constitutional Review Commission which would have made similar recommendations.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: I want to spend a little time on social transformation.

Mr. PRESIDENT: You have about four minutes left.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Very well, Sir. I think that it was Lord Diplock who said that a society stands judged by the way in which it treats its minorities. The Book of John would tell us that when Christ was on the Cross he was making arrangements for the well-being of his mother. I believe that is correct.

I want to say that there is everything good, proper and correct about having a department of Government which is specially set up to look after the well-being of the more vulnerable aspects of our society. I believe that fundamentally, especially in the area of poverty alleviation, we have to understand that poverty anywhere is a threat to prosperity everywhere.

Sir, fundamentally, this Parliament, historically stood in the way because of its colonial legacy and has passed laws which have had the effect of hindering certain underclass in this country so that vendors at one stage, through the laws of Barbados, were inhibited and prevented from conducting their trade in different parts of Bridgetown.

I want to make the point that I am happy that today the Government on one hand is doing the kind of work that it is doing but yet I am saddened, it is like a tale of two cities, that the Opposition does not embrace that work. When you have persons like the vendors in Oistins, shoppers in Paynes Bay, those persons who could go to Rural Development Commission or Urban Development Commission and access micro loans at loan interest rates, those persons who not only could access the loans but get the benefit from management expertise and advice. What we are doing is seeking to empower a class of people who

have previously been treated as an irrelevant class by a colonial legacy enacted through the Parliament that we now sit in. It is a good proper and righteous thing that we have sought to reverse that.

We live in an era where there are landlocked tenancies and there are people who do not have the access to their homes, not only that, they have to walk through mud when it rains. The social disconnection is larger than that because when an ambulance cannot get to somebody's house because there is no road, it may mean a loss of life. When a fire engine cannot get into Chapel Gap, St. James, because there is no concrete road, it could mean a loss of property. Therefore, the work of the Urban Development Commission and Rural Development Commission in ensuring that concrete roads go through these areas is work which is worthy of commendation.

Sir, we talk about community technology. I am happy and encouraged that persons who would not have had the opportunity to gain access to the internet, can learn to use and manipulate the computer and to correspond with that technology so as to advance their small businesses and make them more marketable, attractive and efficient, because those persons may lack the financial means, all is not lost because they can now have the benefit of a state-sponsored community technology programme.

Asides.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, the problem is, this Parliament, unfortunately, has not been hearing these things from the Opposition.

Mr. President, I am sorry that Senator Mascoll has absented himself. The issue for Senator Mascoll is not what anybody on this side may have on him. That is not the issue. Sir, the issue for Senator Mascoll to debate with himself is whether there is anything to him. The people of Barbados know that there is nothing intellectually, politically, economically useful about him.

Mr. PRESIDENT: I think, Senator, that in the absence of Senator Mascoll, I must provide a measure of protection. I think that you are going a bit far.

SENATOR K. D. SYMMONDS: Sir, I withdraw in the absence of the Senator, I will not be uncharitable to him. I only want to say that there will be more opportunities and I hope that we could have met with Senator McClean on the political platform but I gather from his own words that after 6.00 p.m. on Elections day, he is finished with the Democratic Labour Party and politics. I would take this opportunity to bid him farewell.

Thank you, Mr. President.

12.00 p.m.

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SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: We are bound by international agreement to have a census for agriculture. We are supposed to do this every ten years. The last census was held in 1989. Therefore, in 1999 we were supposed to have a census. We did not have it and we still have not had it and every now and then I hear a little flurry, oh yes, we are going to appoint things, I see a little money put in the Estimates for a census and we have not had it as yet. I do not understand how we can go ahead and plan anything without the necessary information on what is the position out there. How many animals and how many farmers are there and so on.

What can we do with these ministries that are supposed to do these things? They are supposed to hold the census. They did not do it, what can we do with them? Sir John Goddard the other day mentioned in the Senate that you see reports and they continue to be laid. We had some laid yesterday for the year 2000 or before and what happens?

Sir, we have legislation that says you are to pay Income Tax. If you do not pay on time, there is a penalty. If we do not pay VAT on time, there is a penalty. If we do not pay NIS, there is a penalty. The Ministers who are responsible for these matters, should put this one on the Table of Parliament. There should be a penalty. Do not tell me it is the civil servant.

Every time we pass legislation there is more and more power being given to Ministers in the appointments of boards and so on. Surely a Minister could say to a board if you do not produce it in time, I will fire you and he would be within his rights.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, I will give an overall picture of agriculture and try to express my vision as this will be my last opportunity here before the elections in August.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, regarding sugar cane, why should we continue to grow sugar cane on most of our arable land with the price of raw sugar that is continually falling, and over which we have no control whatsoever.

There are some good reasons for growing sugar cane? It is a grass. It gives good control of soil erosion. This is a very serious concern because our soils are

relatively shallow and we do not want to lose any more than we have lost over the years.

Sugar cane is a most efficient converter of solar energy into useable energy. It is seven times that of corn. As a tourism dominated country, we want to see a maintenance of aesthetic countryside so that people driving through the area will see everything looking nice and tidy and not just full of bush.

We have grown sugar cane here for over 300 years and therefore we have locally, all the expertise and technology that we need to continue to grow it. The possibility now of continuing to look at sugar cane as a producer of products, other than sugar is where my vision leads me. I would see all sugar cane grown on the relatively flat arable land, in the medium to high rainfall areas.

I think this is very clear that we are going to have to mechanise. Nobody is going to cut sugar cane by hand again. This is dead. We have to face it. I think the unions have fully accepted that we are talking now of being fully mechanised. All the production of sugar cane will come under a single commercial company, publicly owned by the people of Barbados.

There are two basic types of sugar cane that we can grow. We have the potential here because we produce varieties of sugar cane. We want to produce two varieties particularly. One will be a high fibre cane that is low in sugar but very high in bio mass production. It must be a variety that will ratoon for many years because the major cost in the sugar production is the replanting procedure. So if we can get a cane to run for ten years before replanting, this will bring our cost down considerably.

We have to produce that cane so that we can take it and put it through a mill, de water it, take that juice out and use it for fermentation, alcohol and hopefully the rum producers of the island would come together and produce a crude alcohol which will then be shipped to rum refineries for further refining and so on. Sugar cane juice rums are I think the future for us to go down.

The bagasse from that could be dried in the sun light and then burnt to produce electricity. We will then take a very high sucrose gain. We have here in Barbados canes at the present moment in the research area that have more than 30 per cent sugar. The conventional cane is 18 and 20 but we have some that are over 30.

We need to grow these canes. We need to process them through some new technology such as the trilby separation system which will produce a direct consumption sugar, about six thousand tonnes of sugar for local consumption and some niche market exports maybe and then the rind from that sugar cane, produced by this

machine, will be used to produce building boards for making cheap houses and so on.

We would also produce table syrups. I think that we spend about nearly \$100 000 a year importing table syrups such as Aunt Jemima and Log Cabin which we could easily produce here and probably produce better. Then the things like sugar cane wax and pharmaceuticals and other various things that we should be looking at. But the major emphasis would be on fuel cane, where we would keep the country side in sugar cane and produce electricity for which we have an unlimited market.

If we had the whole of Barbados in cane, we still would need to burn some other gas roll in to produce electricity. So the market is there and that makes it very attractive.

Let me talk about these other sophisticated products, then we are looking at market problems and so on. For electricity, there is none.

Now where would all this happen? It has to happen at a central place. The Government for some reason has indicated that a single factor would go at Andrews. I had meetings with all sorts of engineers and technologists and nobody is supporting the idea of Andrews for the following reasons.

We think that Bulkeley site is the site and there are very good reasons for that. There is an old train line that runs from Bulkeley going into St. Philip, Christ Church and that is where the major amount of cane will come from. The bed is there and it could be easily converted to a road for sugar cane only and this would take a lot of that traffic off the roads.

Right now they are pulling cane up to Andrews and we are already seeing congested roads. The Buckeley site is situated right next to the main natural gas pipeline going to Bridgetown and therefore, you have another source of energy that could be used if you do not have enough bagasse. Right now if one of our factories shuts down for any length of time because they run out of bagasse, they then are in real trouble. They have to go around the countryside gather wood and all kinds of things. It is a crazy system.

The Bulkeley site has that advantage. It is the sheet-water area, therefore, their water supply is not a problem. Andrews has a water supply problem right now. They have to pump water from down in the St. George Valley back up to them. The other very important thing is that all the cane coming into this site will be coming from the flat or downhill. From St. John coming downhill, it is much easier to come down loaded and go back up empty. Right now we are pulling cane uphill to Andrews. I think they tried going

through Gun Hill and found that to be a real 'no-no' and really messed up everything. Now they have to go around and come up from the west side.

The site would include a sugar cane processing plant, consisting of a mill and some evaporators. We would not be using water or anything like that, it will have a distilling unit for the production of crude alcohol which would go to the refineries and the electrical generating plant.

There we will have another building which would be a multipurpose plant, which would hold the Trilby separation system and also be in a position to process vegetables and so on out of crop. The Trilby separation system for sugar would only operate for about four months out of the year, from February to May like the normal crop now, but then from May onwards, when vegetables are available we would then bring them in there, process them and make flour like we did during the war years out of

cassava, sweet potato and so on.

Sir, turning to live stock, the poultry industry right now has a gross domestic product of about over two and a half times that of the sugar industry. It is a huge industry in Barbados. There are big consumers of poultry and the poultry industry is highly efficient. It is as efficient as any poultry industry anywhere in the world in terms of conversion of feed to meat, eggs and so on.

12.10 p.m.

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SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: One of the problems that we have with the poultry industry is that it utilises imported feeds. Sixty-five per cent of the money spent on the cost of production is for feed. What I am looking at is that we could produce a high energy feed from the molasses that could be used to replace some of the grains. Some of the proteins in that feed could come from an expanded cotton industry where we would process the cotton seed to produce oil and cotton seed meal. The small farmers would be encouraged to produce free range chickens. That is like organic farming. People are looking to get chickens that have not been fed on these imported feeds but that are mostly fed on grass and so on.

The raising of the Barbados black belly sheep has traditionally been a small farmer operation. The problem with that is that the animals are tied out on grass and are not slaughtered while they are still lambs. They do not reach slaughtering age until they are already mutton, so we have been producing mutton for years.

The sheep farmers own a feedlot now which has been established with the help of the Inter-American Development Bank, the Peter Moore's Trust and most significantly with a grant from the Agricultural Development Fund which have put it on soft ground and hopefully and we will be able to progress from there. The feedlot presently purchases weaned lambs at \$70 to \$90 a piece. That makes it very attractive to the small farmer who is the producer of lambs and who owns the feedlot because it is economically feasible for them to buy the lambs at \$70 to \$90 because they would be able to make a bounty.

The feedlot now produces a very high quality, nicely flavoured lamb that we have introduced into the tourism industry. We have been working closely with the Barbados Agricultural Development and Management Corporation (BADMC) with the assistance of the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) and we have developed linkages between agriculture and tourism. The first one we worked on was the lamb and we now have lamb being served at Sandy Lane Hotel on a regular basis, I think they call it Rachel Pringle Lamb. They are very happy with the quality.

What we need to do is to improve the genetic selection. The feedlot is an ideal place for doing that because you are getting lambs from all over the countryside coming in there. We need to check the ones that are growing the fastest, take out those and put them back into the farms rather than slaughter them and in that way we will have the genetic selection toward production of meats.

We need to do some work right now. We are using some imported feeds in the feedlot. We also need to replace a lot of those with local ingredients. We also want to look at some of the recycling products. We did some work with paper and it looks like it has exciting potential to replace some of the hay and the roughage part. We want to develop an export industry for the semen particularly for artificial insemination and perhaps embryos for embryo transplant. One of the things we are producing up there as a by-product is organic manure which can go toward the production of organic feed for vegetables.

The beef industry in Barbados has seen a major expansion in the last 25 years. Due to the reduction in profitability of sugar cane, there has been a switch from the sugar cane in the pastures and we have seen beef... The big problem so far is in the marketing. We brought in a master butcher. This man has transformed the local meat situation in Barbados. From here he went on to Trinidad and did the same thing. The other day at a CARICOM meeting I met a guy from Jamaica who said that the same guy went to Jamaica and did exactly the same thing. He has shown people how to age, how to cut, how to package and how to display meat.

Ten years ago when you went into a supermarket 75 per cent of all the meat there was frozen. The fresh meat situation has grown now and only 25 per cent of the meat that is displayed in the supermarkets these days is frozen. Barbadians have gone onto this age thing and everybody is very happy with it. Of course it is much easier to deal with. The housewife does not have to thaw it. She just takes it out of the fridge and cut it and deal with it right away. Of course, the flavour, the texture and everything is so much better.

However, the quality of the grass-fed beef in Barbados is still not up to what the hotel would want. As with grass-fed lambs a similar thing happens to the grass-fed cows and it takes longer to bring them up to slaughter weight, so they are slightly older and they do not have the finish that you would want for top quality meat. My vision is that we should establish a beef feedlot alongside the lamb feedlot which would share management and security and all of the other things so as to help to reduce cost of production.

This feedlot would be funded by grants and from loans from the Agricultural Development Fund and would be owned by the beef farmers in Barbados so that they would be happy to supply weaned animals again.

The cattle would be slaughtered at the Southern Meats Abattoir. That abattoir needs expanding to establish a meat aging... Right now we are aging meat down at the old BADMC abattoir in town. We are working very closely with their butchers and they are the ones who are aging, packaging and sending it to Sandy Lane Hotel, but we really need to do this at the Southern Meats Abattoir. I think there is also potential for export of this meat.

Proper Pork: this is a very popular meat with Barbadians. Our pork processing industry has to import certain cuts for making ham and bacon. One of our problems is that we need to reduce the cost of production because we cannot really compete with some of our Caribbean neighbours.

My vision is that we should look at taking weaned pigs and put them into a central rearing facility which would rear them under the proper condition to get rapid weight gain in order that they be low in fat and that type of thing. We could then put in a biogas digester to deal with the pig manure. If we did all of this at the same central area up there, not far from Woodbourne, we could inject the meat. Right now if you put a biogas digester, you would end up on the farm with vast quantities of meats, but then what are you going to do with it. You have got to find some use for it. We have the ideal opportunity, we can inject it into the natural gas mains and it would enhance the content of the natural gas so that it would be an easy market for it. The liquid from the biogas digester would be

an organic manure of high value which would then be used in the production of organic vegetables.

The major problem facing the pig industry right now is that we are very short of pigs. We need to give an incentive to the pig farmers because what is generally spent...

Aside.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Some farmers do both, but quite often you get specialised farmers who produce weaned piglets and then there are the other farmers who do the fattening as two separate operations.

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SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: We need to encourage that by giving farmers an increased incentive and I suggest the Ministry could give an incentive in the amount of \$30 per piglet. Presently, farmers are getting about \$90 per piglet. They need to get about \$120, yet the pig farmers cannot afford the \$120. Therefore, if, for the next year, the Ministry could put the \$30 incentive there. It must be done without too much bureaucracy. Let there be a simple process of issuing a receipt between the farmers for the sale of the piglet and take that receipt to the Ministry to be paid.

The Ministry sets up schemes of \$1.7 million every year for such incentives and sometimes we cannot get any of it. Sometimes the Ministry's officials set themselves up as policemen, wanting to scrutinise every thing. For example, they want to make sure that the spray is not used for any other purpose to which it was intended. The result is that the farmers are not using it because it is too much trouble. We have complained about the bureaucracy at the Ministry. They have revamped it but the situation still remains the same. An officer at the Ministry said he is there to make sure that a farmer does not get any incentive to which he is not entitled. The result is that there are a few dishonest farmers but the majority of the farmers are honest and are, therefore, put off by this bureaucracy.

Last year in the Budget, the Prime Minister said that he wants to see the Barbados Agricultural Society bringing in the entire group. We brought in the sugar industry. The cotton industry came in. The fisheries and sugar industries came in.

We now have an extension officer who can work with us. What is in it for us to come in? The Minister, foreseeing that, has granted us \$250 000 for institutional strengthening. A senior civil servant in the Ministry of Agriculture said that if the Prime Minister has said that, he should not have, and if he did, the Prime Minister did not

mean it, which resulted in the fact that we did not get any money.

We would love to take over some of these officers in the extension services in the Ministry. Presently, an Extension Officer in the Ministry, would spend 17 seconds per year with one farmer. If they were employed under the Barbados Agriculture Society, we would put them under an incentive scheme where they would receive bonuses for bringing in work. We cannot do that in the Ministry but that is what I understand institutional strengthening to mean. It is frustrating. Like my friend Senator Bolden said, Government is an army of occupation.

SENATOR C. L. BOLDEN: Mr. President, on a point of order. I would not like my Friend Senator Laurie to give the impression that I have made the statement that the Civil Service is an army of occupation.

I have been in politics since 1964 in this country. I remember the history from that time until now. It was the late Right Excellent Errol Barrow who said that the Civil Service is an army of occupation; when they are in, you cannot get them out. Therefore, I do not want him to label me with that. If I do speak today, I will say my position in respect of this situation.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Thank you for the correction, Senator Bolden. I know you do not believe that.

I would like to address the subject of food safety. An essential part of the agricultural setup is that we would be producing food to the standards of the World Trade Organisation sanitary standards that were set up to cover food production. All of our sectors should be set up using the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) practices. This is laid down internationally and where appropriate, we also have International Standard Organisation's (ISO) which we should meet. We have to work very closely with the Ministry of Health on it, I am looking forward to the promised establishment of the National Agricultural Health and Food Safety Authority, which would take elements from the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health and put them less than one authority to deal with this specific issue.

We now have a system where there is huge overlap between the two Ministries and where things fall between the cracks. I am somewhat skeptical because we have legislation which was drafted in 1985 for controlling slaughterhouses but which is yet to come to Parliament.

There seems to be no political will to close down the 'chop-and-gut' shops that are out there. We have 19 licensed slaughterhouses by the Ministry of Health that have no right being in operation. Government has one at Six Cross Roads that could not pass any kind of standard. It

is disgusting. We should be aware that we are entering the food chain in Barbados that is not properly inspected.

A politician remarked to me that his father used to slaughter under a breadfruit tree and he is still healthy; that nothing has happened to him because of the fact that his father slaughtered without set health standards.

We cannot afford that because of our tourist industry. I have spoken to Mr. Jean Holder of the Caribbean Tourism Association and he is worried about the situation that one day a food-borne disease would occur because of this kind of slaughtering which will significantly affect the tourist industry.

The Dominican Republic had a serious food outbreak which set back their tourism industry. Mr. President, we cannot wait for an outbreak to occur, not even in one hotel because of the fact that word would spread.

There was a food disease in Trinidad and Tobago where desserts that included raw eggs were served and caused an outbreak of salmonella poisoning. Luckily, it was a school graduation ceremony but it just goes to show that we have to be very careful and to do something about it.

The Southern Meats Abattoir has been designed for the sanitary requirements of the World Trade Organisation. This not only allows us to export meat but to set up trade barriers that say that others must meet our food standards. I think we have to move towards these international standards with haste.

What is the problem with Southern Meats Abattoir? Why did the Government have to inject money into it? It is because the 'chop-and-gut' businesses are taking a number of animals and slaughtering them when they should be going to the Southern Meat Abattoir, under proper conditions which would make it viable. The Southern Meats Abattoir was designed to operate at its maximum but it has never ever been operated in that way. When the Barbados Marketing Corporation (BMC) Abattoir operated in Bridgetown, they were getting \$40 000 per month in subsidies from Government.

Another aspect we have to look at is the grading of meat. The consumers in this island are paying good dollars for meats that are not up to standard and there is no law that controls that.

The Government has brought in a consultant from overseas who has prepared a grading system for meats to be done at the Southern Meats Abattoir but it has never been implemented.

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SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Recently, we wanted to sell the lamb to Sandy Lane but they said they were not going to buy ungraded lamb. The sheep farmer's association has set up a grading system for lamb from the feed lot and we can now guarantee that what is going there is lamb. We need to train someone to grade lamb. We need to have the legislation to protect the consumer and prosecute the person who is selling old sheep for lamb.

Sir, we have done nothing about genetically modified foods and we have no policy in place. In Europe they do not allow genetically modified foods on their shelves neither do they allow American beef because it is raised with hormones. Sir, there is no secret about this, all American beef is raised with growth hormones because they believe that they cannot be competitive unless growth hormones are feed to the animals. Sir, we need laws that speak to labeling so that we know if the beef is local or raised with growth hormones. We must continue to prohibit the use of growth hormones and antibiotics in our production here. Sir, the consumer must be protected and we must have labels so that people are given a choice as to what they want to buy.

Sir, another problem at Southern Meats is the by-products. Southern Meat spends \$100 a day taking blood and inedible offal to dump at Lonesome Hill in St. Peter. If you visit the site, it smells horrific. Most efficient abattoirs in the world today sell their byproducts. We need a complete edible offal processing plant for skins and horns and also develop a leather industry. We sent three people to India to train in producing leather. When they returned from India, they were put at the IDC in a plant that cost \$0.5 million. They knew the technical side of leather making but since they were not given a manager, within two years the plant was closed. IDC wanted the space so they put the equipment in the yard at Spring Garden and it is now totally rotted. There is interest in trying to revamp it and IICA is doing something in that regard.

In vegetable production we are going to see a movement towards organic foods and there is an area in St. Philip where the livestock manure is being produced. We also have to look at cassava because it has a good potential to be used for flour and livestock food to replace some of the imported foods.

After the disastrous experience with CARSICOT it would appear that Government has no concerted plan for cotton in Barbados. I notice in the economic Report made recently by the Prime Minister that the yield of sea cotton has fallen under 500 pounds an acre and we used to produce 1200 pounds per acre. We had a think-tank at the

Barbados Society for Technology and Agriculture and we had a think-tank on cotton and we brought all the experts and...

SENATOR The Hon. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is unwittingly misleading the Chamber. I have been enjoying his anecdotes and insights into agriculture but he misleading the Chamber when he says that Government has no coherent policy on cotton because Government has just gone to the expense of establishing a cotton forum to bring together various forces to revive the cotton industry and to get back the trademark so it is quite inadequate for the Honourable Senator to make that statement.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I was present at the meeting and we produced a report which we gave to the Ministry three years ago but the said they never saw it. The next morning he called to say they found it sitting in the Ministry for three years and apologised.

I am happy that Government is doing something but we do not have a policy because the forum has not met yet.

SENATOR The Hon. G. S. H. MURRAY: Sir, on a point of order. There must be some policy that has guided the Government's thinking to set up the bureau. This is the beginning of the development of the policy because Government does not pretend to have all the answers about cotton and it is seeking to draw on the expertise and I hope that Senator Laurie will be available to contribute whatever he knows about cotton.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: I would like to touch on the subject of water because farmers are getting more concerned about the future of vegetable production which requires irrigation. The Water Authority has gone to desalination to put water into the drinking water mains but what about agriculture. The integrated rural development project has some wells. I live near to one next to Salters in St. George and as the dry season comes, for three days there in no water.

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SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: In my operation, which is mainly livestock, it does not vary a lot between dry and wet season in terms of water. I know that my water during this time is approximately ten times what I usually pay. I showed the people from the Barbados Water Authority and told them that I cannot use ten times the amount in water.

Sir, this integrated rural development project needs to be expanded, particularly in the area of St. Andrew. The idea of the land for the landless project is very good. In

1992 we started a programme at Barbados Agriculture Society (BAS) called 'Idle Land for Idle Hands', which is similar to land for the landless project.

The private sector sold the land that they could not make money on to the Government. The Government tried with it and then abandoned it. Now they are giving this land to, sometimes, inexperienced farmers and saying to them to work this land, they lease the land for a very small price.

SENATOR The Hon. G. S. H. MURRAY: Mr. President, I am sorry to interrupt the Honourable Member again. The Honourable Member is misleading the Chamber. On the issue of land for landless, farmers are not akin to giving idle land to idle hands. These are persons who are either farmers who have no land or persons who want to be farmers but do not have the land. As a further clarification regarding the cotton, Government has set up two institutions an advisory committee and \$200 000 are allocated in the Estimates for this programme. I think that the Senator is a little bit off-target with our policy.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, I have seen some of this land for the landless and I think that it is pathetic. Here are farmers who are really trying but without help in the areas of irrigation and marketing. There is a problem. If all the farmers in the land for the landless produce food, who is going to market it for them? Sir, they do not know anything about marketing. Marketing is a major problem for the most sophisticated farmer in Barbados.

Sir, I back this programme 100 per cent but it cannot be successful without serious planning and support. I would love to see it work but I have some grave concerns about it.

Government continues to lead this country without a land use policy. This is something that is basic, not only to agriculture but to the general development of this country. Land is a scarce resource. We spend millions of dollars bringing in consultants to produce an area development which was to look, particularly, at agriculture.

The Physical Development Plan was laid in this House about four years ago but it was never debated. We have a Town and Country Planning Department that is operating there with, apparently, no modern plan. Maybe they are using the physical development plan without it being law or they are confused. That is why it takes two years to get anything through that department.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: It is something that I cannot understand. The area development is yet to be laid in Parliament and the Physical Development Plan was laid,

not debated and not yet into law. Is it such a political problem? Do we have to wait until after August to get this document through Parliament?

Sir, transport and traffic are the main problems. Overcrowding on the road is getting worse. There is a waste of petrol because motorists are stuck in long lines of traffic and as a result there is a lot of pollution. There is also a significant loss of productivity since employees arrive late at work because they were stuck in traffic and you cannot blame them for that.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, the country is losing a lot of productivity time and that is something that needs to be looked at. We are losing a lot of money. We need to have someone carry out a survey and look at the problem. Please, do not bring in any outside consultants because there are people in Barbados who can do this.

Mr. President, we have an increase in stress, road rage and accidents. Years ago, road rage was something unheard of in Barbados and now we are seeing it daily.

Sir, we need to have a series of Town Hall meetings where we can talk to the Minister. There is an organisation called 'Treading Lightly', which is involved with the environment. A meeting was set up with them to discuss this problem with the overcrowding on our roads. The Minister, Permanent Secretary and the Chief Technical Office were invited and not one of them turned up. This meeting was held at 7.00 p.m. and they just did not turn up or called to inquire about what was discussed.

For example, jambusting was discussed. We have to stop this nonsense that is going on at the roundabouts. It is crazy. The left lane should turn left or go straight and the right lane should turn right only. This is so at one or two roundabouts but at every roundabout there are different rules. The police are saying that it is nonsense and what are we doing about it?

I invited the Minister of Transport to meet with me and I told him that I would bring a few of the people who were very vocal at this meeting that was held. He told me that he would call me and I am still awaiting his call.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Sir, we talked about a new highway starting from the Globe, Belle Gully to the Norman Niles Roundabout. This highway would not be very costly and the land that may have to be acquired would be cheap because it is gully land and we will be able to get traffic in and out of Bridgetown easily. There could be an outer bypass road from Newton, through Bannatyne,

connecting at Dash Valley, St. George Church, Charles Rowe Bridge, Lower Estate, Lears, Vaocluse, Content and meet at Highway 2A. This would mean that the congestion that we have at the Wildey area would be alleviated.

Sir, the only time that the traffic in the area at Caribbean Broadcasting Corporation flows freely is when the traffic lights are not working.

Asides.

SENATOR C. K. LAURIE: Mr. President, I hope that Government would recognise the urgent need to make the necessary decision to ensure that whatever happens in the world, our people would have nutritious foods produced locally and produced under healthy conditions.

I thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

SENATOR The Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended for one hour to resume at 2.00 p.m. today.

The question that the sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m. today was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. PRESIDENT suspended the sitting accordingly.

1.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2000

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT: This Sitting is resumed.

SENATOR The Rev. L. W. B. ROCK: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to make my contribution to this debate. I am grateful for this opportunity.

The Leader of Government Business, in presenting the Appropriation Bill, set it in the context of national trends as well as global events. One such global event, he reminded us, which will impact upon the economy of this country and also on the economies of the Caribbean and the world, is the war in Iraq.

I think, quite rightly, he reminded us that though we are an island, we are not isolated from the events that have and are transpiring across the world.

I think, therefore, Sir, as we respond individually to the Bill that is presented to us, that it will be remiss of us, if at sometime, we did not embrace the opportunity to say something about the war which is taking place in Iraq.

It is with a sense of pride that I received the news, as I am sure many other people in the Caribbean did, that the CARICOM community took a stance against the aggression and invasion by the United States of America's President, his administration and his allies against the administration of Iraq.

I say it is with pride that we received that news because we, as a people believe in law and, certainly, as members of the world community and participants in the United Nations, we certainly must support the rule of law.

Our country, as part of that CARICOM community, took a stance in favour of the decision of the Security Council which was against the invasion of Iraq by the Bush Administration and its allies. I think that stance was a right one. It was very evident from the report of the inspectors that some progress was being made and, indeed, one got the impression that they were willing and encouraged the UN Security Council to give time for their effort, because what was primarily their concern was that peaceful means be employed to achieve the end of disarming Saddam Hussein and his regime.

It is regrettable, Sir, that the President of the United States, His Administration and those who support him did not heed the advice and intention of the Security Council, and sought to pursue what they believed to have been the only way to achieve the end of disarmament.

Following hard upon this, it has been brought to the attention of the nation and beyond it, that the United States administration is unhappy with any effort for the United Nations Assembly to meet, so that nations which are not represented in the Security Council would have an opportunity to express their mind on the issue of the war.

What strikes me, Sir, as hypocritical is that we are told in one breath that the aggression of the US Administration and its supporters is to liberate. It is to bring freedom to the people of Iraq. But on the other hand, according to the reports which we received, it seems as though the same liberators would deny Caribbean Leaders the right to express their minds freely, as democratic sovereign nations. That seems to be very hypocritical and, certainly, raises the question of what are the true motives behind the invasion.

I think, Sir, that the people of the Caribbean and all the people of this nation of ours, should fully lend their support to our Governments, if the occasion presents itself by way of a meeting of the United Nations, to freely express what are our views. It may be costly but there are some things, Sir, that we need to stand for or we stand for nothing.

The sacrifices which we may be made to pay, I think in the end will be worth it, but what is important for us, is that we stand together as a Caribbean community and we do not allow the old principle of divide and rule to weaken us, or in any way to cause us not to stand for that very important principle.

Therefore, as I make my contribution in this debate, I would ask that we, as a democratic country and as we meet in this Parliament, join our voices with the voices of people across the world, calling for a cessation of this war, calling that even now, the means to find a solution which can save the lives of thousands of people, be pursued.

We must be concerned for the value of human life, whether it is human life here or human life everywhere. Life is a gift from God and it is not the right of anyone to deprive another human being of his or her life. We condemn, Sir, the dictatorial policies and sufferings which people in Iraq have undergone over the years. I am sure that we long with them for liberation but we believe that through the means of peace, that can be achieved and that we need more, now than ever, to support the United Nations in all of its efforts, not only in this instance but in what lies ahead in the future. Because it is evident to me that this war is also intended to send a message, over the world, about the strength of the United Nations and it appears as though, the message we are seeing is that might is right.

We cannot, Sir, support that and it leaves me also to say that while we challenge that principle, in terms of military might, we ought also seriously analyse our own situation and wherever, in this instance it may not be military might but it may be economic might, that we also challenge that principle which seems to be evident at times in our community and which leaves our people with some concern.

I want also to say that what is happening in that situation, in terms of the importance of the democratic rights of people, should lead us to continue to be vigilant and to do everything that is humanly possible to preserve our own democracy. Vigilance is the call for all of us.

I would like to continue, Sir, having addressed the context in which this presentation has been made, at least one of the hearings of the context in which it has been presented, to draw attention to one or two areas mentioned in the presentation of the Leader of Government Business. I refer first to him.

It was most heartening to hear Senator Walcott tell us of the many achievements in his own Ministry. He numbered to us the steps taken by the Ministry to improve the work of this Ministry and, particularly, in terms of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH), to enhance that

institution and to enable it to fulfill and give the services for which it was created.

As I listened to him number the acquisitions and the enhancement of the medical service being provided by the QEH, I also paid very careful attention to what he shared with us, in terms of the bureaucracy in that institution which impedes its effectiveness. The question which came to my mind is, whether the Ministry and the Government are aware of the bureaucracy which hinders the delivery of proper medical services by that institution, why have they not done anything in order to remove the bureaucratic road blocks which affect the efficient delivery of service?

I know that they will say that it is the Board, but it seems to me that it is years now that we have been aware of the bureaucratic stumbling blocks. It seems questionable, and the Minister himself reminded us that every year, more money is being voted for that institution, why would you continue to vote money to improve services and do nothing about removing the road blocks and hindrances to the efficient and effective service of that institution?

2.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR The Rev. L. W. B. ROCK: It is true that it is being addressed, but I would still raise the question, why was not more done in order that the institution be more effective in its work.

I am very concerned that the Accident and Emergency Department is not doing what it ought to do. I believe I have mentioned before, the length of time people have to spend there in order to receive treatment. These are people who are very ill and who are in pain. I know of more than one person who has had to spend almost an entire day there awaiting attention. It is not the fault of the staff - in fact, I think we should congratulate the staff for their performance and efficiency - but there is, as I am told, a lack of adequate staff. One would think that an Accident and Emergency Department should be so functioning that people are given good quality treatment and at a time when they need it most. The result of what is happening is that those who can afford it have to leave the Accident and Emergency Department, go to the FMH Clinic and pay for the service.

Asides.

SENATOR The Rev. L. W. B. ROCK: Some of them are sent back which is also true, but that is part of the tragedy of that situation.

I hope that as attention is being given in terms of the establishment of the Board, and great hope is being raised

on what the Board can do, that we can see an improvement in this area at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital not in the distant future but very soon.

Sir, I would like to address a concern which people have raised about certain chronic diseases in Barbados which is costing the Government much and which is impairing the health of the nation. I refer to diabetes, hypertension and such illnesses. As that question is being addressed, more than once we are told about the necessity for people to pay attention to nutrition and the necessity of people to eat properly. We are told about the strong weakness which some of us have, as one of my ministerial colleagues would say, for fast foods. To me one of the areas that needs to be looked at very carefully is the affordability of foods to help our people to be healthy. What I am getting at is whether it is not time that the whole question of the Value-Added Tax on food not be addressed and that the tax be removed from all food stuff. I do not think that you can in one breath talk about enhancing the quality of health of people and on the other hand it is so expensive for people to buy the sorts of foods that they need and do nothing about it. So my own challenge to the Government is to look at the area of Value-Added Tax on food and to give some attention to the possibility of removing it.

I want to touch on the Immigration Department. I believe this comes under the responsibility of Senator Murray. For a long time, we have been hearing much about public sector reform. I remember there was a time when there was a great outcry on the indignity which our people had to suffer, like having to wait long hours in lines in the sun when they had to go to the US Embassy to apply for visas. It is no less so in our own Immigration Department. The Immigration Department opens at 8.30 a.m. and sometimes there are people outside the department waiting from around 7.30 a.m. and then when the door is open there is a mad rush to get inside. Our people have to stand there with the sun beating down upon them before they can get in to take a number and to wait. It seems to me that this needs immediate attention. It is very humiliating. I can talk about it because I have heard about it and I went and joined the crowd one morning. If we are going to complain about it as it affects what people have got to do with a foreign embassy, then we need to address that situation and improve it for our own people. I trust that some attention would be given to that.

I have raised this question before and I would raise it again and it has to do with what I would term the failure of some of the members of the Royal Barbados Police Force to take action on keeping the sidewalks of the city clear. I believe the sidewalks are placed there in order to facilitate the pedestrians when they are walking. I will use James Street as an example. It is possibly one of the worst streets in town when it comes to the way the people walk in the

middle of the street. They are walking in the middle of the street because some of the sidewalks are blocked with people selling and I have seen policemen walking up and down and saying nothing to the people. It is not only there, but in other places the sidewalks are being blocked. I believe that if action is taken immediately when people begin to sell on the sidewalks, then it would help to address this problem. Let us not wait until somebody is knocked down because they cannot walk on the sidewalk and we have a great accident before some action is taken. I believe that a little more vigilance on the part of some members of the Royal Barbados Police Force certainly would help.

The last thing I want to say is by way of my disappointment that to date the Report of the Constitution Review Committee languishes somewhere and seems not to be as important as we would like to think that it was when that Committee was appointed. I have had the honour of being a member of that Committee and the impression we got when the Committee was appointed was that there was some urgency about the revision of the Constitution. The members of the Constitution Review Committee worked very hard. They solicited the support and the responses of people here and abroad. The Committee gave its time and so confident were we that the Government was really serious about the reform that the appropriate legislation was even prepared so that when the review came forward for debate that the legislation would ready to implement it.

2.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR The Rev. L. W. B. ROCK: What we have had is a tinkering with the Constitution where a number of changes have been made but that urgency seemed to have waned. It seems that we would come to the end of the life of this Parliament before that revision and the legislation are debated fully. That is a disappointment to me.

I share this, because together with Senator Goddard, I have had the honour to be on that Committee. We had high hopes for it but it is the disappointments with which we end. With these words, I would support the Appropriation Bill, 2003.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to congratulate the Prime Minister on his sterling effort in managing the Barbados economy for over the last 8 years.

The Prime Minister's leadership has been pivotal in the success of this Government and this economy, through the economic highs and lows that have evolved over the 8 years. Sir, I believe some rough times lie ahead.

Indeed, his leadership has captured the imagination of the Opposition and of our Caribbean neighbours. He also has a well respected worldwide following. I think he has the courage, the loyalty, understanding and vision. These are all virtues which are currently lacking in the Opposition and, indeed, the current West Indies team.

Sir, I am happy that you are in the Chair today because yesterday Senator Mascoll was like Poonka - all over the place. Sir, I never knew that I was a threat to Senator Mascoll because I am no longer in the race. What I would like Senator Mascoll to do is to stop fishing in this Senate. He should go to St. Michael North West and fish there, which I am sure he would come up with an empty net.

Sir, Senator Mascoll should look at the polls which state that nobody wants him to be their leader, not even his Colleague in the Senate; not even Mr. Kellman and for sure, not Mr. Thompson but yet Senator Mascoll shouted and masqueraded yesterday, talking about how he is going to lead the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) in the next election, et cetera, but I leave Senator Mascoll in the hands of Mr. Williams, Mr. Thompson and Mr. Kellman.

Sir, Barbados is well governed. It is my experience that both locals and visitors alike, have all expressed their sentiments that Barbados is a gem. I had the privilege to be with a number of cricketers from England a few days ago and listening and observing how those cricketers feel about Barbados, I am not sure if they have left Barbados already but some were talking about staying because it is too cold back in England. Let us not forget that some of those guys are not blind but visually impaired.

I was also accused of playing a lot of golf. I was told I would have been the next Tiger Woods. Again, talking to persons playing golf they believe we have a nice place to live, that is why we have so many returning nationals to Barbados who are building and investing and I believe this should be encouraged.

Sir, the efforts made by the Prime Minister in these Estimates is no exception to the high standard set over the years. The emphasis placed on health, housing and education, shows a commitment to the most important social aspect at a time when the economy is being challenged by many external events, most important, the war in Iraq. Sir, I am one who believes that the war will have a mixed effect on Barbados and it will all depend on how we can manage our affairs at this crucial time.

I want to concentrate my efforts on those things that are dear to my heart, which can impact on our young people and the average Barbadian family. I want to concentrate on sports tourism and I would like to start on cricket. I would like to congratulate the Australians for

winning the World Cup, 2003, in South Africa. I believe that in South Africa, Australia was the superior side and, as was quoted, the only team that would have beaten them would have been the Beckworth and Lewis side.

Sir, in a number of weeks we will be having the daunting task of getting revenge and trying to beat Australia. Sir, the World Cup champions will be playing in the Caribbean and I believe that is a great promotional tool for our tourism. We are going to have visitors coming from London, America and Australia. Let us hope that the war in Iraq does not impact negatively on this tour. I believe it is going to be a great test for our young cricketers who would be playing against the Aussies. Sir, I said "our young cricketers" and, therefore, I am hoping the selectors would pick some because we need to look to the future. We need a three-year to a five-year plan. I do not know who would be the captain, the coach or the manager but I believe the West Indies Cricket Board is looking into that.

I believe this tour should be a big foreign exchange earner. It might not be in the vicinity of the 1994 tour of England when we made about \$59 million but Australia, being such a good cricket side, I believe a lot of people would follow.

I believe it could be of significant value to our tourist industry but I am looking forward with excitement to 2007, when the World Cup would be held in our region.

2.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: South Africa has set a very high standard and we need to follow it. I listen to Dr. Ali Bakr talk about the amount of work done in South Africa by volunteers but in the Caribbean we need to be paid for everything but we might have to look at groups like the Lions Clubs and other charitable organisations to assist with some of the volunteer work for the World Cup. From reports coming out of South Africa, they benefitted significantly from the World Cup. There were 31 000 people watching the game and Restaurants and other facilities were fully utilised. People were disappointed that many of the top sides were not involved in the finals but this region must act now because it is going to be the biggest event held in this region. Barbados must position itself to embrace the opportunities that will redound from the World Cup. The business sector must start now to put plans in place and the tourist boards of the region must advertise, Governments must get on board and lead the way. We talk about the CARICOM Single Market and Economy and this is the time for the Caribbean to become integrated.

When I read the newspapers this morning, I realised that Kensington will be the venue for the World Cup games here in Barbados. There will be serious renovations and I hope there will be provisions for wheelchairs and people who are differently able. I have a nephew who is 16 years old who has never walked and I understand the challenge that people who use wheel chairs face in this country. There is going to be a capacity of 28 000 at Kensington Oval and there will be temporary stands that will be taken down after the World Cup and go back to 15 000 which will be more manageable capacity. There is talk of building a new stadium and new cricket grounds but in Barbados we are aware of places like Grenada and St. Lucia who build massive stadiums and then find it hard to support them. It is important when these types of stadiums are built that they are multi-purpose and that they are used all year.

Sir, we in Barbados will look at Kensington Oval and make sure it is adequate for the semi-finals. I know that Trinidad is bidding for the finals to be held there but Barbados will hope to be able to hold the finals here with the new renovations.

Sir, we in Barbados should look to strengthen the structure of our cricket because people come to Barbados for the sun sea and a smile but we have produced some fantastic cricketers like myself. People come to Barbados to play golf and talk to people who have made a contribution to the country and we need to look at a professional system of cricket in Barbados.

There is talk about having a professional league but I am concerned because we would need to invite players from overseas and with the international calendar so hectic it will be difficult to have a professional league here but we do need a professional system because the test match brings \$59 million to the economy and Government should be willing to spend \$2 million to contract 30 of our best young players so that when 2007 comes, five or six Barbadians will be ready to play for the West Indies, even if we pay \$25 000 yearly to make a tour to England to maintain linkages with South Africa and England. In the 80s we were the top cricketers in the world because we played county cricket in England with teams from South Africa. We played under all types of conditions. We played when it was sunny, wet, windy, cold and when the wall was swinging around and we learned our trade that way.

Sir, there may be a few Sir Gary Sobers out there but we have to look at a new system to bring our young people on board.

2.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR D.L. HAYNES: I believe that we need to get them on very early and we must have them on a contract because they must be able to look after themselves, their families and they should be paid.

Sir, for example, the reason that I am so serious about our players getting involved in professional set up, we are now talking about Vasbert Drakes, as captain of the West Indies. We are talking our Vasbert Drakes and his performance in the World Tour. Our cricketers must get more involved in understanding the professional system. This happens in Australia. When you see the Australian team, you would think that these guys are having a party. There is a posse of about 24 persons, a sports psychologist, physiotherapist, trainer, and someone to keep all the information on the game so that the players can be kept up to date. This is what we call a professional unit and this is what we need.

Sir, we cannot keep falling behind and expect our players to wake up one morning and become professional cricketers. There must be a system in place. You do not play professional cricket when you are in Barbados because you make about \$400 when you are playing in the Busta Cup or the Red Strip Game. After you put some petrol in your car, you have to beg a fellow for a drink. So, we need to make sure that these fellows are paid properly and that we try to form a linkage with our neighbours.

Sir, currently, in England each County now has two overseas players attached to it, so we need to get our guys exposed to some professional cricket and to some good cricket as well.

I hope that when you look at Kurt Wilkinson, Tino Best and the other fellows in 2007 we would be able to see some cricketers to play for the West Indies, even though a lot of people believe that the selectors are not too keen on players from Barbados.

I am saying that Barbadians must perform. They must go out there and do well in order to fight for a place on the West Indies side. I believe that with this system we would have more productive cricketers. I am sure that we would not have any Hoopers.

Asides.

Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Professor Hilary Beckles and his team for the fantastic work that is being done at the Cave Hill Campus. I realise that there will be some indoor facilities and they are getting ready to play against Australia when they arrive here in Barbados. I believe that the work which is being done there is very good. Yesterday I looked at the outfield and I am very impressed with the work that is being done there.

I would like the University of the West Indies to do a little bit more for all sportsmen and sportswomen. Again, I must be biased. I am talking about cricket now. We find it very difficult to study and at the same time put yourself in a position to play for the West Indies. It is very difficult. You have to make a choice, one way or the other. You have to say, I am going to take my chance and see if I can play for West Indies and make some money and then I will study. Sir, there is no way you can do both at the same time.

I believe that the university can do a bit more. When you are coaching young people and you go to the parents, the parents are very interested in making sure that the child gets his education first. The parents do not care how good the child can bat, bowl, field or keep wicket, the only thing those parents say to you is that they have to make sure that he gets his education right before they allow him to play cricket.

Sir, we have a situation where young Sebastian was prevented from playing in the Busta Cup this year because he should concentrate on his A'levels. His dad said that his education must come first.

I would like to see the university making a special effort to allow sports persons to learn at a pace that would not affect their education and their sports. I think that is very important.

Mr. President, I want to touch on horse racing. I want to make it clear that I am not a betting person but I love to see horse racing. I believe that it is a great spectacle. I have some friends who make a living by looking after horses from the breeding stage to the stage of racing.

I have many friends who have horses and they breed these horses. I believe that the Government should pay some attention to this area of sports. This could be done by way of tax concessions. There are a lot of Barbadian jockeys, trainers and grooms who ply their trade in Canada and make a good living from it.

Asides.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: The point I am making is this, horse racing is a vehicle for promoting sports tourism and attracting some overseas investment.

Mr. Deputy President, for example, look at the Gold Cup event which has a viewer-ship of 15 000 000 people in North America and other parts of the world. I know a lot of personalities who have decided to own horses and farms in Barbados. They also purchased homes and live in Barbados and as a result of this type of activity employment is generated.

During the Gold Cup, I was invited to play in a charity Golf tournament at Sandy Lane.

Asides.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: Sir, that charity raised over half million dollars. The money was to be distributed among several organisations in Barbados. These people who come to Barbados and organise such events should be commended and encouraged to market Barbados as a sports tourism destination.

Sir, I love watching horse racing and I believe that we should have night races as well. The reason why I believe that we should have horse racing at night is because whenever there is an important cricket match at Kensington Oval, it is always clashing with horse racing on Saturdays. We need to make sure that we have a lot of the sporting organisations arranging their calendar in a way so that these big events do not clash.

Mr. Deputy President, night cricket is becoming big in Barbados. People want things to do after 6 o'clock in the evening. We want to help those persons who are involved in burglaries to find something more profitable to do such as watching sports or playing sports. Having horse racing at night would also give them the opportunity to go and watch good horse racing.

Sir, a lot of my friends love going to the Garrison but when I look at the infrastructure of the Garrison, I believe it needs some improvement but I leave that to the BTC. I understand that they have some financial challenges but I would suggest to them that a proposal should be sent to Government. Sir, with night races in Barbados we would be able to attract some of our Caribbean friends. That is another area where we can promote sports tourism and invite people to come to our shores.

2.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: Sir, we need our Caribbean neighbours in our tourism market. Again, Sir, the sport of horse racing plays an important role in employment as I said before, in entertainment, foreign exchange earnings, and financial contributions to the social needs of the people of Barbados.

Sir, I would like to turn to golf tourism. I did mention it in here last year and I think I will mention it again. I believe that we need to promote Barbados as a golfing destination. I think we need a few more golf courses. I know that the people from the agricultural sector might not agree with me. Tourism is our main foreign earner and we need to look at increasing our golf courses

here in Barbados by four or five. We have some young players. We may not produce a Tiger Woods but I believe that this will create employment for our young people and it is going to be good for our economy.

Sir, I just want to caution about the golf courses. I am all for having golf courses here in Barbados but I do not want this Government to make the mistake that the last Government made with Royal Westmoreland. They allowed people to build the golf courses and expensive houses and they made no contribution to the surrounding communities.

I am saying that when they want to build the golf courses and they want to build their 140 houses and they want to sell them from \$2 million to \$4 million, if they are building 90 houses, they should be building 140 low income houses for the people of Barbados with the land provided by the Government. We cannot expect them to buy the land and then build the houses for our people. But they should build the houses for our people and sell them at what it cost to build them.

Sir, I saying that they need the permission to build the 90 multi million dollar houses and they should build 140 low income houses for our people so that my friends and family will be able to own a house in Barbados.

I know it happens in England. When you get permission for development sites in England, and you are building houses of a certain calibre, you are asked to build some low income houses in order for people to be able to have houses. I do not believe they will run with this if they have to buy the land but as long as the land is provided, I believe that the investors will be quite happy to build the houses.

Sir, that would ease the National Housing Corporation (NHC) because, we always look at the Government to be building or doing something. We have to go out there and make sure that we start doing something for ourselves. The same way we are going to give these people a concession, we have to make sure that the concessions are benefitting the people in the community.

I am sure that we cannot afford to let these investors come because what happened in the Royal Westmoreland project is that the concession was not given to all of the property owners. It was given to one company, so he was charging a property owner \$15 000 just to bring his furniture from the Port to Royal Westmoreland. That money was not coming into our pockets. So when we are granting this concession, I think we have to be very careful whom we are giving it to because sometimes, we as people and as locals, look at people and we believe that they are the ones who got the concession. Why do you give him concessions to build a house and I did not get any, and I

built my house, but the concession went to the investor of that company? That person only bought the house from him. I am saying that we should not make that mistake like the last Government.

Sir, I would also like to see the supporting organisations with a central location and a secretariat. I know that cricket has one. I know basketball and I think athletics has a secretary.

We need to have the sporting bodies with their records on computers and a filing cabinet. I believe that the National Sports Council should be helping with the day to day running of the organisation with a secretariat. Sir, I would like to see that you take at least three or four sports and form a secretariat with a CEO who will look after these sports. So that there will be a central location to access information where people will know they can get the information. Whether it is the YMCA or UWI or some place that is central so that people know that this is where the information should go.

I think the secretariat will help with the organisation of the tournaments and again, making sure that we do not have these very important sporting events clashing with other events in Barbados.

Sir, I want to talk about the prisoners. Our prison is overcrowded and there are a lot of people there who need to come out and do some community work.

Sir, we have a lot of sporting organisations that are struggling to pay their light bill, to pay for the use of the national stadium, to pay for the Sir Garfield Sobers Gymnasium. There are many cricket clubs and football clubs around that cannot get the football field marked out and we have people up there in prison sitting and getting fat. I believe that we need to do something about those people who have committed petty crimes. We should get them back into society and get them out there working and paying their dues.

Sir, I remember when I first played for the West Indies, I went to Antigua where I played my first one day international and the prisoners prepared the wicket. They were supervised but they prepared the wicket. The wicket was good, Sir, I made a hundred.

Asides.

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: I am only telling you, Sir, that those prisoners can do a good job.

Sir, not only the cricket, look at Blenheim. When I attended the Federal High School, I used to play at Blenheim A and the MHO used to play at Blenheim B, and

the prisoners in this island used to prepare Blenheim wickets. We need to get those fellows back out there.

There is a lot of bush and we get a problem with mosquitoes in the rainy season. We cannot ask the Government to do all of this. Let us get some of the prisoners to do some de bushing. Let them start looking after certain parks and beaches.

Sir, we are beautifying Barbados but we need help and we have a lot of those fellows there who can assist. Sir, I am very serious about this. I believe that we can organise something where we can get these guys to do some community service.

Another subject, Sir, I would like to touch on, is that as a sportsman, and I believe that I share the sentiment of a lot of sportsmen and sports women in this country that we must revisit the daylight saving time. I believe that we should have daylight saving time in Barbados because I find it very difficult when people are working and getting involved in sports by the time they leave work and get home, it is dark.

Sir, we need that extra hour. I do not know the reason why it stopped, in the first place. I used to enjoy it but I am saying that I would like us to look at daylight saving time.

3.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: I find that we are always very quick to criticise our sportsmen and sportswomen when they go on tours and have not done well, but nobody worries about them. Nobody cares about if the fellow is training, if he is working, if he has a job, if he is eating or what, but from the time he makes it, you will hear someone says, I know him from ever since, I know he was always going to be a good cricketer and he gets a sponsor. We need to get people involved in the development of our youth from the stage where they are nobody.

Sir, you might not want to agree with me about daylight saving time, but I am sure you must agree with me that we need some indoor facilities in this country so that we can get, as I said before, our young people off the street so that they can get involved in sporting activities which will stop the laziness. We have got to start protecting this country. People love this island and they want to invest in it. However, a lot of people are not going to invest in it if they do not feel safe. So we must look very seriously at protecting our citizens and the people who come to this country to live. We cannot afford to let a small percentage of people create all of the problems we have in Barbados

and then nobody is getting hanged. We have a situation here that as soon as we put them in prison, they are out of it after a few years.

We have got to look very seriously at how we go about protecting our citizens. People build lovely homes here in Barbados and they want to enjoy the comfort of them. People pay a lot of money to stay in the nice hotels in this country and they want to be comfortable. They do not want to be prisoners in their own home or in the hotels in which they are staying, so we need to find ways to stop our young people who are being tempted to go and break into somebody's house at night or to go down the street to smoke herb. I would love to see at least three or four indoor facilities in Barbados.

These facilities would also help to ease some of the workload at the Sir Garfield Sobers Gymnasium. Every dog fight in Barbados is held up there. We need someplace to relieve some of that workload. We had a situation where the netballers could not use it because it was already booked out for another function. We need to have areas in Barbados where we can go to events, where we can pay to watch a little netball or a little volleyball, so that the volleyball club could make some money to pay for the lights. We need to have some indoor facilities where people can get off the street and if a guy wants to coach a fellow after 12 o'clock, he can do so. A fellow can get a bowling machine. We do not have a bowling machine when it comes to training cricketers and so forth in Barbados.

With these indoor facilities, I believe that we will be able to get a home and a place for amateur boxing because as we know there is no place in Barbados for amateur boxing. People might say yes, you just got to set up a ring and it goes, but the boxers need somewhere to train. It is not only fighting for the night. We got some of the best boxers around, but they need some place to train. We have Junior Greenidge and Christopher 'Chaka' Henry. We need some place for these fellows to train because what is going to happen is that when we produce a world champion, all of a sudden everybody is going to jump on the bandwagon and say, man, they can come by them and train, we 'gine' do this and we 'gine' get this for you, but we need to do it now.

The other problem I have is that there is a lot of companies in Barbados which refuse to give time off to players when they are selected to play for Barbados. I experienced this myself when I was Chairman of selectors for Barbados. We selected a guy to play for Barbados and his workplace refused to give him time off. Not only that, in that same week we had the death of Sir Conrad Hunte, so he did not get paid for the week he was playing in the trial games and when he was off for Sir Conrad's funeral he did not get paid for that either. I confronted the workplace and asked them what is going to happen, this

guy who has a family to support. I told them that they could not say they were not going to pay him. The lady told me that they gave him the time and asked what more he wanted, that he did not work. This is a guy who is trying to represent Barbados, but when he makes the Barbados team now, that same place where he was working is going to jump and say, 'man, he is one of my staff, he is a good cricketer, I know him for years, I always knew he was going to make it.'

Sir, it is not only the management of the companies, some of your own work colleagues envy you and they do not want you to get time off because they do not play any sports. We really need to draw to the attention of the people of Barbados and these companies that they need to give time to these sportsmen and sportswomen in order for them to ply their trade and to do their training which is very important. The Australian cricket team and the top athletes in the world did not get to the top by getting up one morning and went and hit a cricket ball or a golf ball or box. People talk about Tiger Woods and VeeJay Singh but these persons trained for hours. We need to look at the training so that we can develop our young people. So I am appealing to the business community to give these people some time, to be more lenient on them and pay them. I also want to appeal to the work colleagues not to jump on the bandwagon when the fellows make it, but make sure that they support them even if it means having to go and do a shift to help them out.

Sir, when I first played for the West Indies I was working at the Miramar Hotel on the 7-11 shift. I missed the morning shift and after the game I had to go and do the 7-11 shift in the evening. When I made the 100 runs against Pakistan here, I was so embarrassed when Sir Garfield Sobers said to Indicat Allen that the guy who just passed with the tray is the one that is 116 not out. By that time I had the tray leaning so that Indicat could not recognise me, but that is what I had to do. So because I am a living example of it, I do not want Ryan Hinds or Tino Best to be in that situation. I want the business people of Barbados to be a little bit more sympathetic to the sportsmen and sportswomen of this country.

3.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR D. L. HAYNES: Sir, Senator Desmond Haynes would like to see a Sports levy. I know that everyone is talking about the lotteries that we have but I believe if we were to ask everyone who is working for \$1 to assist with our sportsmen and sportswomen in this country, it would be a dollar well spent. Sir, I said that because there are people who are remortgaging their properties to provide for their athletes to succeed. That is why I am saying we need a Sports levy. Along with the Sport levy, I would like

to see a committee being set up to manage the distribution of these funds because it is going to be very important that the committee realises that these funds go to people who really need them.

I know that people would ask the question why a sports levy when there are a number of lotteries already in Barbados. I know that as the system goes, the lottery owners first take out their profits and whatever is left back, then distribute to other sportsmen and sportswomen.

Sir, in conclusion, I would like to say that I feel honoured and privileged to be in this Senate. I know that Senators might think this is a farewell speech but I want to say that I have enjoyed the Debates in this Senate and during my two years, have learnt a lot and has got much respect from Members. I would only hope that the Debates in the Senate remain of a very high standard. With that, Sir, I am obliged to you.

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy President, with rapt attention, I listened to my Friend and Colleague, Senator Haynes. In fact, I am reminded that one of my lecturers used to refer it as sitting at the feet of Gamaliel. I feel honoured to sit next to my Friend, Senator Haynes but I also feel I have had the privilege of sitting at the feet of Gamaliel. Rarely have I heard such an elaborate and intensive treaties on sporting and sports as it relates to the fundamentals of Barbadian society. For that, I would like to congratulate my Friend and Fellow Senator.

Mr. Deputy President, I too rise to speak in support of the Appropriation Bill, 2003. If I might reflect on a quotation which I would attribute to a French writer who said:

“The problem with our times is that the future is not what it used to be.”

I think that cryptic quotation speaks volumes about Barbados at the start of a new millennium. There are many things that confront us. There are many things that we lack the capacity to influence and to control but despite the difficulties and travails that we see in today’s world, this country with a population of 260 000 but with the tenacity and intellect of a country where one might imagine have 250 million people, has continued to weather such storms that were thrown our way and have kept our pledge with the Barbadian electorate.

I believe this administration is a results-oriented administration because, at the end of the day, no matter what plans and policies are put in place, the true test is whether or not the results speak for themselves or whether or not the results bring about the kinds of policy initiatives that were put in place.

Mr. Deputy President, I believe the work of this Government in managing Barbados’ affairs since we were last here debating the Appropriation Bill, 2002, clearly demonstrates a Government with foresight, initiative, and perhaps, more importantly, courage. It demonstrates a Government with the courage to take a stance that may not be popular or the courage to take a stance which said loudly and clearly that fiscal prudence is of greater value than the short-term gains of what people might call election spending.

With those introductory remarks, I would like to focus my presentation on a few selected areas. I would like to begin by looking at the work of the National Housing Corporation. Whenever I speak on the issue of the National Housing Corporation, I do so with tremendous pride because I number among many of the people who have had the honour of chairing that statutory body. I had the daunting task of chairing the National Housing Corporation from 1994. It was daunting because it was immediately after the 1994 election that this Government found a situation in the National Housing Corporation where it had not built any single-terraced unit for several years. We had applications from the General Workers Loan Fund which dated back to 1986 but were not yet processed. It was a difficult time. However, today, Mr. Deputy President, the National Housing Corporation continues to demonstrate to the people in this country that given what it takes, it is able to deliver and to meet the housing needs of Barbadians.

I can hardly think of another statutory corporation that has served the people of this country so well. It is a corporation that has been on the receiving end of many criticisms but at the end of the day, the results have to speak for themselves.

The idea of selling terraced units goes back perhaps to the time when they were first built. There have been many promises made but for the first time, we have a Government that is determined to meet those promises.

The matter of selling terraced units is not an easy matter but one that has been fraught with difficulty. Mr. Deputy President, with tenacity and determination, the National Housing Corporation has put itself in a position where very concrete proposals have now been put to Government to establish, once and for all, that the Corporation is intent on meeting the housing needs of the citizenry.

On the matter of the sale of terraced units, some of the issues that confronted the National Housing Corporation (NHC) would have been matters such as the communal wells. I think it is well known that every terraced unit does not have the benefit of its own well and this is a matter which has attracted much attention and consideration. It had been considered that the terraced units

could have been sold under a condominium-type approach. That kind of approach is not really user-friendly and requires a great deal of complexity and sophistication to set up and to maintain.

The fundamental position is that the Government is determined to sell the terraced units but to accept and to maintain the responsibility for those things that cannot conveniently be passed onto the tenants. Therefore, the proposals that have been put by the National Housing Corporation (NHC) is that in cases where there are communal wells, despite the sale to the tenants, the National Housing Corporation (NHC) would continue to maintain the wells and the open spaces.

This is an important point to reach because the whole idea of selling the units is to empower the residents while recognising the difficulty of having tenants contribute to a central fund in order that the wells be maintained into perpetuity. The Government would also be taking the position that they would maintain the wells, the opened spaces and the hard courts.

3.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: In terms of the mechanics for sale that have been proposed this indicates to the world at large that Barbados is truly a sophisticated society. I remember several years ago meeting the Secretarial General of Habitat when he came to Barbados to look at our housing situation and he could hardly believe the extent of the ongoing commitment of this Barbados Labour Party to the housing solution. What we in Barbados insist on as a minimum standard for the housing of our people is what would be considered in many countries across the globe to be high income housing. Our Government's position is clear that whatever it takes to meet the needs of the people as far as housing is concerned we are prepared to do.

Of course, it is recognised that many of our housing units have repair requirements but to set about repairing all of these units would result in tremendous delay so we proposed in lieu of repairing the units tenants would be given a rebate of \$5 000. On the basis of an assessment done last year the National Housing Corporation was able to determine that the average cost per unit to effect the necessary repairs would only be \$1 600 but recognising that some units may take more or less to repair and the position is accepted that we would give a rebate of \$5 000 this would be a tremendous savings in the hands of a tenant. If the only thing that needs changing is a door or window, a tenant could get this done for far less than \$1 600. I have to give credit to many of the people who occupy the National Housing Corporation properties

because in many instances they have taken a noble and proactive approach of effecting minor works themselves without waiting for the machinery of the corporation to come to their aid. The concessions being offered are realistic from carrying out assessment and surveys in the various estates.

There used to be 3 765 asbestos roofs on terrace units on National Housing Corporation properties in Barbados. Today there are about 1 200 remaining. The National Housing Corporation remains committed to removing these asbestos roofs and when the units are to be sold the corporation fully intend to change these roofs at their own expense and this has nothing to do with the proposed debate. If an occupant of a terrace or single unit has an asbestos roof, the corporation is committed to changing it prior to any sale at no cost to the tenant.

There is going to be a concession of 40 per cent of paid up rent over the period of the tenancy to a maximum of \$25 000. This is in fulfillment of a long-standing promise of this Barbados Labour Party that moneys which tenants have paid in rents over the years will go toward the purchase price. The 15 units that exist in Lammings, the tenants of them are going to be able to benefit firstly for \$5 000 rebate and secondly, from having 40 per cent of their rents added back as a credit against the purchase price.

This will see us in a situation where we will substantially increase the number of Barbadians who for the first time in their life can own a piece of this rock. It has to be taken in context that the history of Barbados makes it clear to us that the enfranchisement of its people in terms of property ownership is something that started to expand in the late years of the last century. Only in the 60s did you see Barbadians buying real estate and with ownership of real estate comes empowerment of a kind that an individual does not feel except he holds a title deed.

At the time of the riots less than five per cent of Barbadians owned any real estate and we have come to a situation today where over 50 per cent of all Barbadians according to the last census are owners of real estate and this percentage is probably not exceeded anywhere else in the developing world.

Sir, this represents the second phase of the Barbados Labour Party's drive to empower the people of this country through real estate ownership. The first phase came at the time of the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act which saw thousands of Barbadians for the first time owning property. We are now going to a new phase where people for many years lived in housing estates and will now become home owners of those properties. It is a significant point to reach and a tremendous point of conduct of our society over the next twenty years.

It is common knowledge that when people are owners of real estate they develop a mindset which sees them thinking for the first time of investment and of what happens to the next generation. This special kind of empowerment will see greater unity, civility in our community and greater respect for other people's property. Also we begin to recognise the importance of inheritance and passing on property to the next generation of Barbadians.

This is not only a terrace unit initiative because the Government through the National Housing Corporation is going to be selling lots to thousands of tenants across Barbados who rent lots. Last month the National Housing Corporation began sending out letters to people who rent lots. These lots will be sold at a price of \$2.50 per square foot which is far below current market values. In addition these tenants will be given rebates so that anyone renting a lot for over 25 years will be given a maximum discount of \$2 500. Persons who have been living on a lot for less than 25 years will receive a discount of \$180 per year for each year of tenancy.

I want to caution tenants that the various concessions will only be given to people whose rents are paid up to date.

3.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: It is very important that we mention this because tenants are not to believe that they can have arrears going back years, then come to the corporation and say that they are ready to buy the land now. That kind of thing is not going to be allowed. The concessions will only be given if the rents are paid up in full.

Sir, there are, of course, one or too unfortunate situations that I have encountered where some of the residents of St. Joseph, Bissex and Lammings, said to me that they are very happy for the opportunity to buy the lots and are happy with the concessions. However, they are not working at this time and would like to know if they are going to be thrown off the land because they cannot buy the land at this time?

For the benefit of those people who are concerned about this, I want to say emphatically that no such action will be taken against them. It is recommended that these individuals go into the corporation and talk to the officers and explain their difficulty. As a matter of policy, the lots are being offered to the tenants and it is hoped that they will buy. They need not fear that if they are not in a position to buy, that the National Housing Corporation will take stern measures to evict them from the property.

Sir, again, this is part of the Government's initiative to ensure that Barbadians are in a position to pass on property to the next generation and the generation after that. These are not initiatives to be taken lightly. It is clear that we need to develop Barbadians in all aspects of their existence.

I believe that any individual who takes the opportunity to walk into a district where there is significant landownership, the first thing that they would notice is that the quality of housing is better by far than in tenancy situations. It is better by far because these individuals will have the necessary documents to walk into a financial institution and borrow money to improve their housing. Many people would like to improve their housings but because they are tenants they are being told that they cannot borrow money.

Again, that is a feature of the normal commercial institutions but that is something that I am pleased to say that we at the corporation in recent times, took a tremendous initiative to say to people that we will continue to support Barbadians who live on tenantry lots; whether there are owned by Government or private landlords, the National Housing Corporation is going to lend you money and use your lease as a security. This is an entirely new approach.

The fundamental assistance that the corporation has rendered Barbados over the years of its existence cannot now be doubted. It continues to develop housing estates. St. Joseph, Blackmans and part of Claybury are being developed. Sir, there are 120 lots at Blackmans. I believe that the desirability of these lots is clearly seen that 1 200 people from across Barbados have applied for the lots at Blackmans. For every lot that was available at Blackmans you had ten people applying.

Sir, 80 per cent of those lots have been allocated to people who are from St. Joseph and this is a very important initiative. It is most desirable that people who are allowed to reside in the parish that they have grown up in feel more comfortable. It also eases the transition in such a way that if you were to move to a parish that is completely alien to you, there is a certain feeling of dislocation that one experiences.

That project is likely to see construction starting in the very near future. I am reliably informed that the final permission for the construction and designs of the houses has recently been given by the Chief Town Planner for the start of construction there.

It is a hallmark of this Government that we cannot just develop residential districts in isolation. So, adjoining the development at Blackmans will be the development of Tamarind Hall where we will see the construction of a new

court, post office, police station and a library. A library is something that the people of St. Joseph have been asking for and this will be coming to that development.

If I may digress a bit, we complain bitterly that our young people do not read and that they spend too much time watching television. We can only levy that complaint with any seriousness if we provide the facility for them and they do not use it. I am happy to say that this Government continues its support of literacy and it continues its support of the concept of childhood reading and the development of a library at Blackmans that is going to be a welcomed adjunct to the community that is going to be springing up at Blackmans.

We will have a residential community of 120 lots and a new court, police station and a library so that the residents of this new community and those across St. Joseph are going to have a library at their disposal for the first time.

Sir, Barbadians have always been resourceful people. Many of the youth groups in St. Joseph have been talking about creating their own library. It is worthy to note that the Government is going to be putting a library at Tamarind Hall, which adjoins Blackman.

Mr. Deputy President, I would also like to laud the work of the National Housing Corporation in terms of its General Workers Loan Fund. I experienced a very unfortunate meeting with a client recently. He said that he was a painter and he had two employees. He wanted to buy a piece of property but when he went to the financial institution, they ask him to bring proof of his earnings.

There are some things that we take for granted. A person who is employed can walk into a bank with a job letter in his pocket but a self-employed individual is generally unable to provide that kind of proof, particularly a self-employed individual who has a small business. A self-employed lawyer or accountant may not have such difficulty. This gentleman, who to the best of my knowledge has been working as a painter for many years, has employees, but is simply not able to establish to the financial institution that he has a legitimate continuous source of income. Unfortunately, he was turned away from that financial institution.

The General Workers Loans Fund represents an entirely different kind of thinking. The conditionalities associated with processing loans from the loan fund do not bring with it that kind of stringent application of rules. It is a very flexible arrangement but it recognises that when you are dealing with that particular segment of the society, you are not going to be able to find the kind of documentation that one could normally find if you were dealing with a person who is employed by another.

The irony is, if one of that painter's employees had gone to the same institution and said that they want to borrow money, that individual could have given his employee a job letter stating that he employs 'John Brown' and this is his weekly wage and 'John Brown' may have got the loan. In terms of his own proof of earnings, he found himself unable to do that.

3.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

Senator D. D. MARSHALL: Sir, the General Workers Loan Fund has, for many years now, been serving the Barbadian community where people who formerly would have fallen through the cracks of our financial system, this loan fund has been there to support them.

In closing, on the matter of the National Housing Corporation, therefore, as I said at the beginning, I can hardly think of a corporation that has done so much for so many in Barbados. It is a corporation, I reiterate, I had the distinct pleasure of Chairing at sometime in the past. The good work continues and we can expect much further work from them in the future. What is seen now is a shift in their approach because it is result oriented and the results in housing are seen, not in terms of statistics, but in terms of land ownership and in terms of residences.

Mr. Deputy President, there are several other areas of the Barbadian landscape that I would want to mention this afternoon. Having touched on the matter of, I suppose what people might call these days grass roots issues, we have to recognise that we live in a world which is not unidimensional and while we must at all times focus and remain committed to domestic issues, and remain committed to, in a sense parochial issues, we have to recognise that our capacity to deliver on the parochial issues is determined, in large measure, by our capacity to manage the macro aspects of our economy.

We have to recognise that in a globalising environment, and I know that Senator Laurie will agree with me, standard are not things that we can continue to set for ourselves. I do not support the comment on the matter of back yard slaughtering, but I believe that Senator Laurie's emphasis, if I may take the liberty, is to say that we must have standards which must be capable of being maintained and which must also be maintained.

Standards do not always operate in the area of food and food safety. Standards are now being applied across every aspect of our existence. Standards are now being applied internationally, in terms of how our financial institutions work. Standards are being applied in terms of such things as transparency in Government acquisitions, so

we are living in a world, which, to all intents and purposes, is ceasing to look inward and looking outward.

Barbados, therefore, perhaps because of its good track record, finds itself under the scrutiny of many international agencies. We do not have to go too far back to remember the challenge posed to us by the OECD and the fact that the Barbados Government, singlehandedly caused the OECD to back away from a position which they had taken against larger domiciles. It is on this occasion that the persuasiveness of the Barbadian leaders has really come to the fore.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is clear to all rational thinking people that under the leadership of the Right Honourable Member for St. Peter and Prime Minister, the Hon. O.S. Arthur, the OECD had to stand up and reckon with a jurisdiction 250 000 people. There is no other country in the world that can claim to have fought off the threat of the OECD, without making a single concession. We know the history of CARICOM and the history of the concept of unification in approaches. I believe one of the Senators earlier spoke about CARICOM needing to be united, in terms of its positions.

There was no unity in this case because Trinidad said it had nothing to do with us and they bailed out early. The Bahamas accepted the OECD's position, without complaint and it was left to Barbados to lead the charge against the OECD, which we did successfully.

This now represents a significant turning point in the fortunes of Barbados. We have put our eggs, essentially, in carefully crafted and thought out baskets. The International Financial Services Sector is one that continues to provide for Barbados, Sir, strong prospect for success in the future.

We cannot fool ourselves into thinking that other people do not have this sector as well. It is clear that there are certain international organisations that it would do us well to associate our work with, certainly the work of the Basal Committee on Banking is one that is well known. It is when we recognise that standards are being set, in a sense for us, but really are being set for a global marketplace, that we begin to understand the importance of zeroing in on the global issues that face us.

Barbados has, over the years, benefitted tremendously from a well-skilled Public Service, a public service that has served internationally as well as domestically. I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who have worked ably in negotiating various matters in the FTAA, the World Trade Organisation and so on.

It is precisely because over the years, we have emphasized education and the development of our people

that we have domestic resources that we can call on today. If we look across the Caribbean, we will see that many of our neighbours have Government departments that are so poorly staffed that one wonders how they get by at all. I understand that in St. Kitts, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has about three people, including a permanent secretary. In Antigua, there is a similar situation.

Now, we have clearly benefitted from a civil service that is well skilled and well trained and I have to say that having had the pleasure and honour of negotiating for CARICOM, that as we negotiate in the fora of the FTAA, sometimes CARICOM's position is really the Barbados position. Precisely, because the ranks of our civil service take the trouble and follow the lead of the Government to ferret out what the issues are and to determine what positions are beneficial for the development of this nation. So that when we go with a position, it becomes really very easy for other countries to sign on to the position, partly because they have not had the resource base to enable them to do it.

Sir, people are constantly amazed when Barbados leads a delegation on property issues. The delegation often consisting of one or two issues to a meeting where the US Delegation might consist of 30 or 40 people on the other side of the table. I have experienced that myself. The people with whom we negotiate, remain amazed that a small country like Barbados is able to hone in on the issues and to come up with intelligent and solidly backed positions.

It is of tremendous credit to Barbados and it is something that has continued to hold us in good stead so that when Barbados speaks in international fora, people sit up and listen. This is something that is sure to continue in the future, so long as the reigns of Government in this country remain in the hands of a caring and progressive administration.

Aside.

Senator D. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Deputy President, having fought off the challenge of the OECD, we are now poised to take off in our offshore financial services sector. Sir, having enacted physical legislation that is consistent with the various international recommendations and the various international standards set, we find ourselves in a position really to comply with international criteria, far more easily and effectively than many of the larger jurisdiction.

I was pleased to see an e-mail this morning from an international investor which posited, essentially, that Barbados is in a better position to comply with the standards set by the Financial Action Task Force than

countries, such as South Africa which have far larger budgets and far greater resources available to them.

We sometimes think of our small size as being a hindrance. We think of it as being something which would impede our progress. The truth is, and I am convinced now that the fact we are small has always enabled us to make the changes and adjustments that we need to make with some skill and alacrity, so that we are able to face the challenges as they continue to come at us.

We have a well thought out EduTech policy, a well thought out E-commerce policy and Barbados has been able to move to make tremendous strides, in terms of our telecommunications policy. So that in a very short space of time, because we are dealing with smaller numbers but at the same time, we are dealing with highly skilled people, working on behalf of the Government, we have been able to make such changes as we need to make, to ensure the continued success of Barbados as an international financial services sector.

3.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR D. D. MARSHALL: The regard with which we are held today, therefore, is a thousand times higher than the regard with which we were held prior to 1994.

As an attorney in a busy law firm in private practise, I am able to say that we encounter clients who have thought about investing in Barbados in a previous administration but who found that they could not do so because of the uncertainty of the environment with which they were faced not just in terms of economics but in terms of what roles would be applied when seeking concessions.

There is a saying in law that equity is as long or as short as the Chancellor's foot. The message conveyed through that maxim is that when you are talking about something as slippery as equity no one knows really with certainty what is going to happen.

This Administration has been careful to enunciate its investment policy in legislative terms and in clear policy guidelines so that an investor coming to Barbados is not faced with any illusions as to what is available. He is told clearly, if he wishes to invest in the Scotland District, in Carlisle Bay, in Speightstown or in Bridgetown, what concessions are available. He is told clearly what concessions are available if he is interested in inland tourism. There is certainty that attends the fortunes of Barbados today in a way that was entirely absent ten years ago under a different administration, and investors are interested in certainty. It is true that you can never be

certain that you would make a profit but they are interested in certainty of the environment. They are interested in knowing what are the concessions that are available to them should they make an investment, secure in the knowledge that they will not have to make some special accommodation with a Minister of government or anything of the sort.

One of the things that I certainly have preached is that there are no hidden costs to doing business in Barbados. There are hidden costs in other jurisdictions, but there are no hidden costs to doing business in Barbados precisely because this Barbados Labour Party, following the best of standards and the best of practices, has set high standards and practices for itself and has insisted on maintaining those standards in terms of governance and fiscal prudence.

So, Mr. Deputy President, we are poised to move ahead. The challenges that have been thrown up to us at the start of this millennium have certainly dulled some of the enthusiasm that we would have felt at the breaking of the year 2000, but under the skilful and compassionate leadership and under the leadership of a Government that understands clearly what brief it has been given by its people - I think it is important to make that point because as a Government we preach policy, but our policies are informed by a brief that has been given to us by the Barbadian electorate - which says that they want a civil society that works, a society where there is continued and increased respect for law and order and a society where no one can be left behind. That is our brief. That is our manuscript.

I venture that as long as this Barbados Labour Party follows from that manuscript, we are in a position to create history when it comes to the quality of life for Barbadians. That is a manuscript that I am happy to associate myself with.

As we continue in the reign of Government the support of the Barbadian people is clearly behind us and we as a Government will pledge to continue in the direction that we have been going always recognising that the results speak for themselves. We have a large number of achievements which are speaking for us over the last eight years. As a result oriented Government we intend not only to publish those results but also to indicate to the people of this country that our plans are never short-term. We have to think today about how we are going to pay our bills 10 or 20 years from now. With that manuscript, we are in a position to secure the lives of the Barbadian people and the children of tomorrow.

With those comments I again wish to reiterate my association with the Appropriation Bill and commend it to the Members of this Honourable Senate.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: I would firstly like to congratulate the last speaker who skilfully used the parish pump. It was probably the first time I heard it being used so skilfully from this House. I think that his use of the National Housing Corporation to demonstrate the policies and the programmes in housing certainly stole the thunder of the Minister of Housing and Lands. We certainly do have before us a potential Minister of Housing and Lands when you think of it.

What I like about the last four presentations was that there was the absence of posturing and ventriloquy. I think there was a lot of merit in what was said by these four speakers. One would expect that at the end of the parliamentary session or near the end of the parliamentary session that there would be a large degree of self satisfaction and praise. One would expect that the exchanges would be routed in party considerations and therefore we should not be entirely surprised. What it has done however is to deflect substantially from the Estimates of Expenditure. I do not think it was dealt with in any meaningful way by most of the speakers in this debate.

4.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. Deputy President, what I would like to point out is that in these Estimates for the first time that I can recall is, debt servicing has been the largest single item while personal emolument has now taken third place in the allocations under Current Expenditure. The debt service is \$622.269 million. Current transfers to organisations and individuals is \$650 million. Wages and salaries, \$582 million. Sir, that sounds to me like an exercise for a good thinker in financial and economic management to arrive at some conclusion which might not be as salutary as we are led to believe.

I think in a situation where the public sector is over 26 000, has had five years of annual salary increases, has had reasonably good conditions of service maintained in areas such as traveling, et cetera, it is surprising that we have reached a stage where debt servicing is our largest outlay on current estimates. That tells me that we are traveling on a serious path. It recognises \$100 million more in debt services in the coming year than it was in the last year at a time when we are saying we have cut back on expenditure in order to reduce the deficit in order to pay the high debt servicing bill.

With transfers, I accept there could be a change in terms of transfers based on the fact that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) is now added to the transfers bill and, therefore, comes from salaries and wages.

I think that the decreases have been in places which have not been satisfactorily explained by any of these people so far. There has been a serious decrease even in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH) at a time when the hospital should have more money in current expenditure. Here is a new institution, a statutory board that at present benefits from a number of services rendered by central government and would now have to finance itself. Here is a new institution that would have to deal with its own printing and legal services, insurance and travel. A substantial bill is insurance and the hospital itself is probably the most expensive in terms of insurance of Government's institutions. This suggests to me that we either have to be looking for substantial new money later in the financial year or - and I hope this is not so - we want to saddle a new institution with a debt because it is required to borrow. That has been the undoing of too many of our institutions in the past. They had been undercapitalised at the start and have found themselves in debt forever. The one to which I must constantly refer is the Barbados Transport Board, which started in 1955 with \$30 000 and has never gotten out of that bind.

I think the hospital is much too important, and one of the things that should be pursued with vigour is to find alternative sources of finance. I have seen hospitals in Canada where one-third or more of their financing comes from foundations but people are not going to covenant money for an institution unless they are satisfied that it is rendering the satisfactory service that it should.

I know there is already a foundation that has offered to do some work for the hospital but it has not received any response from the hospital about requests or suggestions made to it. We, therefore, need to look at the question of finance of the hospital, its dependence entirely on the public treasury and see if we could come up with innovative ways of dealing with it from its inception and not to wait until it starts to deteriorate further.

The fee structure at the moment would provide much revenue which the hospital needs. It is true that revenues are not being collected. I want to suggest to the Minister responsible for Health that early in its operation, the Hospital Board be mandated to develop ways and means of finding additional revenue for running the hospital. Much has been said over the past year since the Act was enacted and proclaimed last year about instituting the Board with effect from April 1st, 2003.

I think a golden opportunity has been lost between 1998 December, when the Haynes Report was submitted and now, to do the work that had to be done if it was to be a smooth transition. It is not the National Union of Public Workers (NUPW), nor Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Association of Barbados (CTUSAB). No trade union will do the work that should have been done in sensitising the

staff of the hospital and in encouraging them to join the new organisation. No trade union now can either prevent it or cause it to happen.

It has come to my notice that up to now, bodies of staff at the hospital have not been spoken to by anyone. It is not possible to have the staff coming over to work from April 1st, because nobody is going to send them. Note they are the employees of the Government of Barbados and as such, they are the responsibility of the Chief Personnel Officer and the Public Service Commission on behalf of the Government of Barbados and the Government cannot send them over to work with a Board. Therefore, the question of secondment is a sensitive area which should have been worked on years ago.

I do not think there is any other place where the staff at the hospital could work but what they can do is to hold Government to ransom, get the benefits of what the constitution allows them and still work at the hospital afterwards as employees of the Board and still the taxpayers would have to pay this large sum of compensation.

There is a gentleman who was one of the three persons who were dislodged from the hospital. I hear the Minister of Health sing the praises of the Psychiatric Hospital more than anything else because that person is the Director of the Psychiatric Hospital. He has not got his money as yet but he is the one, if I had to make the decision, I would invite to take over the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH).

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: I am better informed than most of you when it comes to public sector matters. What I am trying to say is that we have skills here that we should use but we go and depend on foreign consultants. I believe the hospital would do well if it had a powerful, foreign consultant to launch it, with a local counterpart who would be able to take part at some point in time. If the hospital is going to be started with a Board and has been given the money from the 1st April, 2003, it would have no authority to pay that staff unless the staff agrees to be seconded to the hospital and the Treasury, the Government of Barbados and the Chief Personal Officer, would have to continue to pay them because they would remain members of the civil establishment and the order is still there where all their posts have been provided.

4.10 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: As one who is a signatory to the Haynes Report and one who is particularly

concerned about the transition that I took it on myself to talk to people in the public service who had responsibility for these matters to sensitise them to the importance of this transition and prepare the road for it but I have failed. I have tried to talk to Mr. Joe Goddard to ensure it was done in the correct way but he advised that no one talked to the people, therefore, I have to keep my views.

The Barbados Tourism Authority got \$60 million in the current financial year. It is scheduled to get \$49.5 million in the new financial year. Pray tell me, with the present situation in the Middle East and the uncertainty in the whole area of travel do we believe that you can short change the Barbados Tourism Authority by that kind of money in 2003/2004. I am more reasonable at the others that have been cut, like the Rural Development Commission and Urban Development Commission. I hear boasting about the roads that these two Commissions did over the last number of years but we were always doing tenantry roads in Barbados. Between 1983 and 1986, the Ministry of Transport and Works did 150 tenantry roads. This is a record that the Urban Development Commission or Rural Development Commission can ever reach. Sir, we do not make a big sound and dance about a few roads built. If we were able to build roads all year long and we have the same technical staff that MTW now has the question is, what will the staff do now if they are no longer responsible for designing, supervising and building roads?

Sir, the rental of property is now over \$18 million. I am disturbed as a citizen and taxpayer that we are not reaching the stage where we can completely revamp lots of our buildings and complete the new ones because we pay \$18 million for rent.

The greatest eyesore in Bridgetown is the west wing of the Public Buildings. In 1983/84 a sum of money was voted specifically to start the repairs of the Public Buildings. A plan was drawn up to show the scheduling of the various changes but it never materialised. After 20 years the west wing is worse off than it was in 1983 because in 1983 Government offices occupied the west wing but now no one can enter it.

Sir, this is a disgrace. It is not a credit to our capacity to deal with serious matters if the west wing is allowed to remain in the condition it is in presently. It seems that unless there is a BOT arrangement that nothing can be done now. Sir, BOT means build, operate transfer where the private sector builds, then manage the property to get back the money invested and transfer it at a cost back to the owner but we cannot do that with the west wing. I suggest that the west wing is put high on the agenda for reconstruction because it is an eye sore and a derelict building.

I will touch on the question of the Barbados National Bank. I was most impressed two years ago at the pronouncement that Barbados National Bank and Insurance Corporation of Barbados shares were going to be put on the market. It was an aspect of shareholding democracy and I thought it was not necessary to do that if Government owned the shares as the Government represented the people of Barbados but I was told there was merit in giving these shares to the private sector. Now I hear that because of a good offer it is advisable to sell these shares to a foreign purchaser. Hidebound

Sir, I am not hidebound to anything of nationalisation but the Government should not ignore the expression of disgust of people that these shares are being sold to a foreign company. It seems to accord with the concept of privatisation which we referred to in here in our last debate in relation to the GAIA and the Minister gave the assurance that there would be no privatisation of the GAIA but shortly afterward the Chairman of the board said the airport would be privatised.

Sir, who is speaking on behalf of the Government? We need to get our policy right on this matter of privatisation. Any entity that has to be privatised the Government should be the spokesperson and not a minion who says this after the Minister.

If we are going to sell the shares in the Barbados National Bank I hope that care is being taken that the provision in the Bank Act gives Barbados National Bank an exclusive position in relation to other banks where the Government guarantees the deposits and interest for people who use the national bank. When we did the amendment here there was a section in the new Act that said it should continue for as long as the Minister considers it necessary.

4.20 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: I hope that he will not consider it necessary one day after the shares are being sold to Trinidad. It is not something which can be left to be done later unless you want to hear a lot of talk.

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: On a point of order, Sir. The Barbados National Bank shares are not being sold to Trinidad. They are being sold to the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, as I understand it. Thank you.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Thank you for the less than important intervention.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Sir, I would think that my presence in this Chamber arose from a consideration that because of my long experience in the public service and my present association with a group of older citizens, I could make a contribution in those two areas. I do not want to dwell too much on that.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: In 1999 when I first participated in a debate of this nature, I was told quite glibly about a regrading exercise and that it would take two years. I want to repeat this. In 1999 when I first sat in this Chamber, I was told about a regrading exercise that was being contemplated and that it would take about two years to be effected. I said then and I repeat, it could not be done in two years. I say now that it will not be implemented in a hurry.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Mr. Deputy President, I want to make the point that it will not be implemented in a hurry.

Sir, the other point I want to make about the public service has to do with the question of reform. I am not sure that the people of Barbados have recognised any significant reform in the public service. If you cannot get your response from Town and Country Planning, if you cannot get your passport in a week or so, if you cannot get your birth or baptism certificate in a few days, if you cannot get these things done then you are not going to be satisfied that there has been any significant reform in the public service.

Sir, one of the Senators spoke earlier about the red tape and bureaucracy in accessing funds from the Ministry of Agriculture. I also heard the Minister, who led off the debate, refer to the bureaucracy involved in making a simple appointment at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, for the record I am saying that was not always so.

I think that there is no need for some of the stops in the procedure. I cannot see if you are appointing a doctor at the hospital why you have to go to any Minister. Therefore, while it is salutary to hear that this will not happen with the board. I warn that it happens with boards now and I hope that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board will really be the exception.

In reference to older people, I want to say that we are talking about 15 per cent of the adult population of Barbados, not Barbados Association of Retired Persons

(BARP), and among the older people some very poor circumstances are existing. We cannot ignore the claim that VAT on food is a heavy burden. It is a burden

for the person who gets \$80 a week, who has to go into the supermarket and buy groceries, and there is VAT on some food items.

Sir, there was a relief through the instrumentality of Barbados Association of Retired Persons (BARP), 42 items which we asked that VAT be removed.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: In addition to that, I want to repeat a plea that I made before. Where old people are being shuffled left, right and center, they do not know where to go for information. We asked as an organisation, that is BARP, that at some point in the Ministry of Social Transformation there will be an information desk with relevant posters et cetera publicising information so that people will know that when they need information they would know where to go.

Sir, when you think of older folks in Barbados, there are not many that are rich and we need to do these little things to the 15 per cent of our adult population.

Over the years, BARP has made an irrefutable case for a relief on pensions. I am speaking of National Insurance pensions. I am not speaking of pensions generally. The level of rationale is so clear that it boggles the mind that it cannot be understood, if not implemented.

Asides.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Sir, if you look at a person who pays a registered pension plan, a person who contributes to the Widows and Children Fund and other funds, even a covenant, that money is allowable for tax purposes.

4.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

Senator B. R. COLLYMORE: It used to be allowable in 1967 to 1992 for Income Tax purposes, the national insurance contribution. In 1992 because of the crunch, it was no longer allowed but on top of that, the tension formed part of taxable income. So you are saying that it is not allowed for tax purposes but what you get from it is taxable. If you want a strong case of double taxation that, certainly, is one.

I repeat that it is important to recognise, not who it is coming from, not who is bringing the message but look at the message. I regret to say that we will have to find other ways and means of publicising our efforts because it is too easy, in my view, for anybody to understand far more than

somebody in the calibre of our Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

I am not too sure how I should sum up my state in this Chamber so far. I think it was a great learning experience. Here I saw some of the basics of political-back-and-forth. I think that, by and large, the Chamber has listened to the views expressed by those who are not themselves part of the Government side. I could name three or four things which, unfortunately, were not noticed and they were not matters of mere mention. They were matters of substance. When that Bill was being discussed, for changing the Constitution, to allow the females to have the same status as the males citizens, in matters of marriage. I think we pointed out, quite clearly, that there was duplication and conflict of what was passed, in relation to what was allowed to remain in the Act and we have not heard anything. We were told that will be corrected in due course.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I want to draw to the Honourable Senator's attention that it is improper to reflect on a Bill which has passed this House, unless it is on an amendment.

You are now criticising what the Chamber has done and has already passed.

SENATOR B. R. COLLYMORE: Thank you, Sir. I would only say that if something is wrong, it should be told that it is wrong. We said it was wrong then and nobody took us on.

I would like to wrap up by simply saying that in some respects, there has been some good work done, over the four and one half years. In many respects, there have been incomplete projects and bits of legislation, some that one feels fairly strongly about. I think there is certain reservation to express about the whole question of the Constitution Reform, the Reconciliation Report and the question of the Republic.

I think what it says is that within a Parliamentary session, no Government can achieve all that it says it would do. What it does not say is that the practice of coming back to the people midterm and explaining this through a new speech from the Throne, has been abandoned over the last eight or ten years, not since 1989, was this done.

I think that shows, not so much disrespect for Parliament as for the people. It is not answering Parliamentary questions and that is something that one feels bad about, when one has been responsible for twenty years, for ensuring that all Parliamentary questions that are asked relating to the Ministry in which you were charged, had to be answered within two months. We do not do that

any longer and that is the public sector matter I would like to see being tackled.

Mr. Deputy President, all in all, I feel honoured to have been a part of this system and I look forward to every good success for the Senate.

I thank you.

Senator P. C. GODDARD: Mr. Deputy President, I rise to support this Bill on the Estimates 2003-3004.

Mr. Deputy President, these Estimates have to be seen in the context of the past eight years and the preparation of the development of this country entering into the new millennium and into a new economic environment. It has to be seen in a much broader context than just in the snapshot of this week or this year.

It is very clear, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this Barbados Labour Party Government has done a remarkable job in the initial phases in the transformation of our society and our economy. It has addressed both the development of human capital and the development of the people, and it has addressed the infrastructural development of Barbados. Sir, because we have lived with it day in and day out, month in and month out, year after year, many of us do not recognise the gradual change and in some instances, the dramatic change that has taken place in many sectors of the economy and in many areas of our infrastructure.

At the same time, the economy of this world is rapidly being transformed. The impact of technological change has had resounding repercussions around the globe, in the world economy and in the economy of this country.

The Government has put in place, a steady stream of legislation, infrastructural development, human resource's development and it is creating an environment for the business community to respond to the challenges of this new century.

Mr. President, while driving in to be with us here in the Senate today, I listened to an amazing rendition of a Brahms violin concerto with Itzak Propman playing and I was reminded of the excellence of the orchestra and the musicians and the coordination that it took to reproduce that magnificent piece of work. In large measure, that is how the Barbados Cabinet, the Government of Barbados, has worked over the past nine years.

Asides.

Senator P. C. GODDARD: It is very clear that the Prime Minister has done a remarkable job of interacting with his Ministers who have had initiative and resolve to change the Barbadian economy and our society, in a way

that will prepare us for the vicissitudes of the coming century.

Mr. President, I will just mention a few of the accomplishments of various ministries. I will start with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade to show that this Ministry has really transformed its operations and had to deal with a number of major complex issues, simultaneously.

4.40 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: As we deal with negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO), in the Free Trade Areas of the Americas, with the Caribbean Single Market and Economy and with the European Union and our relationship with the ACP Nations, the Division of Foreign Trade has had to garnish critical skills and to do an enormous amount of work over the past few years to come to grips with the many issues that have arisen.

But more dramatic, Mr. President, is the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has interacted with the many different ministries that have interest in these various negotiations. These include the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, the Ministry of Industry and the Ministry of International Business with the Corporate Registry. This Government has created a new post in Geneva which to my mind is probably the most important foreign affairs post for Barbados in the coming decades. That is the post that interacts with the World Trade Organisation, the World Intellectual Property Organisation, the International Labour Organisation, the World Health Organisation and the International Telecommunications Bureau.

We are at the stage where we are creating a new global order where new frameworks are being forged for the conduct of the global economy that is emerging and the global systems that will impact on that global economy.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has developed some critical skills and has gone a long way into utilising modern technology to facilitate their communications and the development of the knowledge that is necessary for the negotiating teams to be able to fulfil or to carry out our national objectives.

At the same time, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade has also been tremendously active in the physical development of Bridgetown. We have the trading environment and our foreign affairs relationships to look after, but we also are keenly aware of the need for upgrading our physical infrastructure. This year, in the 375th Anniversary of Bridgetown, the Minister can be

justly proud of much of the work that has been done to upgrade Swan Street, Broad Street and the Boardwalk. Fairly soon the Baxters Road/Tudor Street complex will be completed. Work is proceeding along with the Town Hall. We have had the old customs liquor bond renovated. There is the London Bourne Towers. Church Village is still to be completed. Last but not least, there is going to be the breaking of the ground this year for the Pierhead Development which has been long in coming but which truly is a massive project which will spread beyond the Pierhead to encompass Independence Square and the work to be done on the high-rise parking and the Empire Theatre. All of this is being done to enhance the capital city of Barbados.

At the same time we are also developing the international structures and trading structures that would let us meet the new economic environment that is unfolding before us.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport have been similarly active in developing our hospitality industry. We have much criticism about the GEMS Project and people are focussing on the specific project itself, but many government works around the globe, not just in Barbados, are works that are intended to cede private sector activity. I am minded of the Marriot Marquee that was built on Broadway in New York with a subvention of \$40 million from the City of New York so that it would have a keystone effect for the development of 42nd Street and the Broadway area which was an area that had become very depressed and needed significant clean up.

In the same way, the GEMS project has stimulated renovation and building activities along the South Coast and has uplifted the quality of the hotel plant on the South Coast to a significant degree. Just a few days ago I was talking to one of the managers of one of the newer places on the South Coast and he told me that his annual occupancy rate had risen from 85 per cent last year to 89 per cent this year. An average year-round occupancy rate of 89 per cent in the Caribbean is a laudable and substantial occupancy rate and certainly one that would create profit for the enterprise. Some of these things have been a result of upgrading the plant and upgrading the human resources in that plant through the training and development of people. This is being done along the South Coast.

We are just not looking at this thing in a linear context. We have had the South Coast Sewerage Project under the auspices of the Ministry of Health, and though there have been delays due to contractor problems in that operation, it is coming to an end and it will clean up the inshore waters of the whole South Coast area and provide a much more conducive environment for the hospitality industry.

I think you would recognise, Mr. President, that there have been hotels that were plagued with offensive odours and overflowing cesspits and so on for a very long time in this area, but that now will become a thing of the past.

Mr. President, we have got the infrastructural development going and we have had a complete renovation of the St. Lawrence Gap area and it is now one of the most pleasing hospitality industry areas in the country today.

This has brought about continuing investment and there are more private sector investments that are now flowing. Several of the hotels have upgraded significantly and we have had some of the other hotels also expanding their operations.

I find it most heartening, Mr. President, to see the development of the old Barracks area that is across from Coconut Court that had been abandoned and disused for a very, very long period of time. I think that it is being renovated most tastefully and will add to our overall activities. I am advised it is an heritage site. I think behind that there are going to be other developments being built.

4.50 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: Mr. Deputy President, the Ministry of International Transport has also been active in the development of the airport and in the expansion of the harbour facilities. We have had significant dredging activities which have allowed the new super ships to berth in Barbados and because of the twin activities of developing the Bridgetown Port and the Grantley Adams International Airport, Barbados is now going to become a more attractive sight for sporting cruise ships. I understand this coming year we will see more home porting taking place and the addition of approximately 250 flights in the winter season alone, to service those ships.

All of these things are predicated upon how things pan out this year but I am hopeful and optimistic. We have also seen the continuing expansion at the Airport. People only see the buildings that are going up but over the past few years we have expanded the parking apron substantially so that we can handle more aircraft. The taxiway has been completely resurfaced. The runway has been resurfaced and the equipment upgraded.

Mr. Deputy President, the activities of the Ministry of Tourism and International Transport are geared to our hospitality industry capacity and to add to the infrastructure of Barbados that makes it a premier destination for holiday activities, as well as for international business.

With that, I move to the Ministry of Economic Development where continuing activities of that Ministry has prepared Barbados to continue into the development of international business. Last year we had an increase in the number of International Business Companies (IBCs) that have been formed in Barbados.

I think with the robust negotiations that are taking place, we are forging a unique environment for international business to be conducted in specific fields of activity. Already we know that international business activity contributes 40 per cent of the corporate tax take in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy President, we have heard much about the over taxation of the average taxpayer. However, I think when one does an analysis of the taxes paid by international businesses through corporate tax, the VAT paid by those businesses and VAT paid by visitors in Barbados, one would find that approximately 17 per cent of the tax take is from international businesses and visitors. Therefore, when one starts to adjust the tax take for individuals, one would find the average tax being paid by Barbadians on a per capita basis is much lower than that quoted by Senator Mascoll earlier in this Debate.

Sir, the Minister of Economic Affairs has been active in pursuing more business from the global insurance industry. This is meaningful business because it provides significant back office support for many insurance corporations and could be a major generator of meaningful employment of highly skilled individuals.

Sir, the global insurance business has been in a turmoil since 9th September, 2001, along with subsequent developments and declines of the world stock market. Despite those facts, Mr. Deputy President, we have noticed an increase in the business activity by the international insurance companies in Barbados. We are now positioning ourselves so that when the upturn comes, we would be able to capitalise on the growth of that market once again.

Mr. Deputy President, we have to look at this development in a realistic sense. We have to have a continuity of development through good times and bad times. We have to maintain both the stability and the social fabric of this country. We also have to continue to upgrade our infrastructure so that when the waves come we can catch them and we have a boat on which to sail. That, precisely, is what the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance is doing with these Estimates and has done with the Estimates in the previous years, to ride out the rough times and to be prudent this year.

Mr. Deputy President, I have heard much said about the fact that suddenly we are responding to cutting the deficit spending because the International Monetary Fund

(IMF) told us so to do. I distinctly recall hearing the Minister of Finance saying last year when he announced the deficit spending that he was envisioning for that year, he would be cutting it back this year. He said that was to be a one-off time and that we would be returning to a regime of prudence and we would not do it all in one fell swoop. That is precisely what is happening here today.

Therefore, I do not understand how people could wake up yesterday morning and decide that it was the IMF who were here last November, that told the Prime Minister last March, that he should cut the deficit spending this year. It is very clear this was all along in the strategic plans in the Ministry of Finance and they have acted accordingly.

Mr. President, once again, it just shows the prudent, financial and economic management of this country.

I will refer to the Economic and financial policies of 22nd October. I said last March but I was mistaken where the Prime Minister said the following:

“Over the course of the last year, we have relied upon a counter-cyclical fiscal policy to help us offset the severity of the recession facing this country. This essentially is entailed as a means of maintaining a satisfactory level of domestic demand in the economy, incurring an overall fiscal deficit that has been larger than the deficit that we would normally seek to incur.

The policy was feasible and could be implemented without severely impairing the Balance of Payments because of the extraordinary foreign exchange position that has been built up over the past 8 years. There is a limit, however, to the degree to which the expansion physical policies in this time can be used if we are to achieve sustainable economic growth. In addition, the Government does not propose to foist on Barbados, debt service difficulties of a kind that has brought so much havoc in so many developing countries. We propose, therefore, as soon as circumstances permit, to return our overall fiscal deficits, to a level of approximately 2.5 per cent of GDP that we regard as being sustainable.”

Again, in the Estimates Debate, it was pointed out that this was an interim step to move us back to the 2.5 per cent level. Therefore, there has been extreme prudence in the development of these Estimates.

5.00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: Mr. President, the Ministry of Public Works, over the past few years has presided over an unprecedented programme of road building. They have completed most of the bypass road

going around Bridgetown and in Bridgetown itself. Roads were resurfaced from the Crane, Gemswick and all the way back to the airport. There is a major road programme on Highway W and most of that is completed. People do not recognise that there has been an improvement in traffic flow in recent months. Last week I was on the west coast and had to return to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and traveled the bypass road up to Culloden road and traffic moved expeditiously and flowed swiftly. I come to work along Pine Road every day and travelling now as apposed to five years ago is like chalk and cheese. It is smoother, quicker and much more expeditious. Once again, these things are not done overnight.

We have tackled the issue of drainage around the

country. We do not hear of flooding as we used to hear before. We have undertaken a major project in Headleys Land which will drain the entire area into the Constitution River and there is significant improvement. The representative for that area is to be commended for helping to oversee the activities in that area.

The Sanitation Service Authority has been upgraded substantially over a period of years and the collection activities have been much improved and enhanced. The Ministry of Health will speak more about that but there are ongoing plans for further improving the collection capacity and a much better disposal and management plan for solid waste.

We continue to spend significant sums of money on education. I want to talk about EduTech and the development of the university college of Barbados. These are significant projects where additional activities are going to be undertaken at the tertiary level particularly in the area of information technology and research on the new internet protocols which are being developed which are going to define the internet of the future.

Mr. Speaker, I speak of Internet Protocol Version 6 as opposed to Internet Protocol Version 4 which we are currently using. This heralds a new internet development which will add better band-width, increase security, tele-medicine and tele-education, better handling of video and has major impact on trading activities around the globe. This will transform the way people use distance learning and the way the medical profession uses telemedicine. This use of protocol is in the developmental stage and countries around the globe have been asked to participate in the trials and experimental phase of the development of this Internet Protocol Version 6.

I am happy to report that the principal of the Barbados Community College is interested in the IT department being involved in the process and will be meeting next week to define how this may well be done.

Once again Barbados is in the lead in the Caribbean in this area because no other country is involved in this type of activity at the present time.

EduTech is an extremely important programme and I am astounded to hear an educator say it is a waste of money. Sir, EduTech is not about teaching people to be computer literate. It is about changing the mindsets and the way they use and transit information. It changes the way they communicate and their perspective of the globe they live in. It takes them out of the island mentality and hopefully will create a less xenophobic population.

Once again, this programme is the one that will define the Barbados of the future. At the same time, the Government is well aware of the problems of digital divide and I am pleased to say that in the Ministry of Social Transformation there is a most exciting programme to develop resource centres. Resource centres have taken on like wild fire and there are oversubscribed and no more people can be taken into them.

There are approximately nine centres opened presently and Government's eventual plan is for 18 more centres to be open. I would like to throw out a challenge to the NGOs, the churches and the private sector to match Government with this programme. The churches have buildings that are disused or under-utilised. The private sector has skills, capital and equipment that it may be replacing and the NGOs might have volunteer people who would like to involve themselves in community activity. If they came together, they could compliment Government's programme by creating resource centres of their own which will allow for computer training, internet access and development of skills for those less fortunate in our society. To my mind, this is an activity worth doing. I am sure that the Minister of Finance will be more than generous in assisting this particular programme.

I intended to say something about housing but after a full explanation from Senator Dale Marshall I can only say that Government has done more in the past eight years to provide housing for low income people than any other previous Government.

We have also continued the revolutionary programme by taking the Tenantries Freehold Purchase Act and applying it to urban tenantries where people can now buy their own property at a subsidised rate of \$2.50 per square foot. We have seen dramatic changes in the country where people have bought their own land and are building their own homes with the help of neighbours and friends and through very creative financing activities.

5.10 p.m.

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SENATOR P. C. GODDARD: We have seen a transformation of the rural tenancies. I have no doubt that a similar transformation will revitalise the city areas.

I hope that there was some disquiet about the difficulty of the elderly in accessing information regarding their national insurance et cetera. I will illustrate what is being done about this to show in a microcosm what Government intends to do in the area of e-government, that is, electronic government.

The National Insurance Scheme has embarked upon a programme that will put in place a network system that would allow every worker in Barbados and every retired person to access their National Insurance account to ensure that it is up-to-date and to that the contributions are being made to it. This is a remarkable programme because it will create a self-policing system. It will reduce the administrative cost considerably.

Sir, when we take that system into account, we will see that ultimately there would be widening circles of information that could be layered on this network so that through the enhanced security systems that would be available, which would maintain individual privacy, people would be able to access information they want regarding naturalisation, immigration forms or any information required from any government department.

Sir, this would be accessible to all Barbadians because the Government is providing the opportunity for anyone in our society who has the skill and desire to come to a kiosk and get that information.

Mr. President, we talk about living in a dynamic environment. The cost of technology is plummeting daily and more and more devices will come on stream which will allow people to communicate at a lesser cost until that cost approaches zero.

I feel that the Barbados Government is focused on making Barbados technologically liberal, making sure that everybody comes along regardless of their status in society or economic capability. I hope that this would be met by the private sector in the area of training and development of their own staff.

Mr. President, we talked about Public Sector Reform. Public sector reform cannot happen in a vacuum. Public sector reform and private sector reform have to happen together. The greatest challenge that we probably face in this regard is the creation of new systems of communication and management, utilising the technology that we already have in place.

I must say that much of the technology that is in place in the private and public sector is tremendously

under-utilised. I would not want to put a percentage figure to it but because people continue to do things the old way, people continue to take paper-based systems and transfer them to a computerised system, we are not maximising the potential of the communication of a network system. We also have to devise different lines of authority and communication. Therefore, the overall hierarchal concept of how a corporation, NGO or Government is structured has to change.

Mr. President, this is going to be the transformational thing that we need to get through to move Barbados firmly into the 21st century. It is not about technology. It is about management structures and it is about how we do business.

Mr. President, all of the Ministries in Government are challenged by providing better service to the citizens of Barbados. More cordial, swifter and accurate service is required. Therefore, they are utilising technology to arrive at this. They are also involved in massive amounts of human resource training but it is about changing mindsets. It is a matter of changing our society and this is all part and parcel of the reform that is taking place.

Sir, recently, the Minister of Physical Development and the Environment addressed her Ministry. She outlined a list of things that had to take place: The need to improve the slow nature of the initial computerised application process; the need for improved training and courtesy of front desk staff; the availability of senior Town and Country Planning to answer complex developmental planning queries at the front desk; the sensitivity of Town and Country Planning staff to economic implications to applicants in Barbados where the planning process is severely protracted, and the need for a geographic information system which is likened to a general management system. Sir, that is a revolutionary system where we use digitalised geographical information systems linked to a management system. This means that a week's work can be done in five minutes.

Mr. President, we can see that the Minister has been highlighting a series of initiatives in her department in streamlining Town and Country Planning to make it more transparent, efficient and user-friendly.

Sir, there seems to be a general perspective that when you buy a computer system and you put it in place, train everybody how to use it and start working with it, you have computerised the operations. Sir, nothing can be further from the truth. That is the beginning of computerisation and you must continue to develop that programme, process skills of people and to interact with the customer and user to see how things are more friendly and how they can be adjusted to better suit the needs of the customer. That is the process of computerisation.

5.20 p.m.

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Senator P. C. GODDARD: Now, Mr. Deputy President, we all know that we are going through a traumatic period of time and the war has had much play and we do not know how this will impact on Barbados or the Caribbean. There has been much criticism of the way in which the war has started and I appreciate that criticism. However, it is almost immoral to oppose the war in Iraq and not simultaneously address Saddam's crimes against humanity.

Sir, you have to understand that while I understand and also identify with a great feeling for peace, I think I can speak with a little bit more authority here on that subject than most in this Chamber, because I have seen the horrors of a war and still recall things that I would rather forget.

However, we cannot ignore the crimes against humanity that Saddam and people like Pol Pot have visited upon us. I said Pol Pot because I recall, with anguish, how the rest of the world turned their backs on Cambodia and let him do as he would, until the Vietnamese had enough of it and stepped in and put a stop to it.

So I think that there is something we have to learn about intervention and about how the United Nations works or should work. Nothing is perfect in this world, but I am also mindful of the fact that both France and Russia have sold substantial amounts of technology to Iraq and that there is a certain disquiet about what may be uncovered in the coming weeks.

Mr. Deputy President, I also am concerned about the effects of this war. I am also concerned as, Sir John Stanley said, about the wider connotations, when one considers what is happening in Iran and North Korea. We live in a fragile world and at a fragile time. It is in that context that the Prime Minister has been prudent in these Estimates and has also stated that he would revisit them in the light of unfolding activities.

Mr. Deputy President, I support a call for a peace that will be long lasting and a peace that will be beneficial to all those involved in the current conflict. How that may be achieved, I do not know. The dye has been cast and what we have to do is to ensure that we manage our economy and environment in a way that will be in the best interest of all the people in Barbados.

Mr. Deputy President, with those few words, I support this Bill. Thank you.

SUSPENSION

SENATOR The Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. Deputy President, I beg to move that this Sitting be now suspended for 15 minutes to resume at 5.45 p.m.

The question that this Sitting be now suspended until 5.15 p.m. was put to the Senate and agreed to and Mr. DEPUTY PRESIDENT suspended the Sitting accordingly.

5.30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

RESUMPTION

Mr. PRESIDENT: This sitting is resumed.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, after spending two sessions in this August Chamber I welcome the opportunity to speak to the Appropriation Bill and I will carry on from where Senator Goddard left off. He gave a list of areas that the Minister of Physical Development and the Environment would like to look at and I want to say a few words in that regard on pollution control.

This Ministry has a grant of \$44.9 million, but if you look in the revised objectives, pollution control cannot be found in any of the old objectives or the new objectives. I would like to know if this is an oversight or if it is an error and what is the policy on pollution control.

I would like to deal briefly with plant emission. I am thinking in terms of the Barbados Light and Power Company at Batts Rock, Pine Hill Dairy and the sugar factories that pollute the air that we breathe in abundance. If you are wearing a white dress in the Batts Rock area, the amount of black smoke that is spewed out down there turns the dress black, so can you imagine what that will do to your lungs. There are filters that are available worldwide that control this pollution. I would like to see the Ministry of the Environment taking a closer look at that type of pollution.

I would like to talk a little about automotive pollution, motorised vehicles that emit clouds of black smoke. Sometimes if you are driving behind them you would see that they even mark the ground, so could you imagine what they will do to you when you breathe? All you have to do is to visit the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Asthma Bay and see the number of people who are suffering from asthma. If you talk to elderly people like myself you would hear about the problems we are getting in the golden years of our life simply because of the many cars that have been added to our streets and the polluted air that is making our life uncomfortable.

In addition to that, we have the burning of refuse. I heard the Minister of Physical Development and the Environment speaking on the radio when she was trying to promote her policies and somebody asked her about the burning of stuff and she said that they were not planning to look at that, but I suggest that they need to start looking at it very fast because many of us who are in our homes cannot breathe. I myself have spent \$6 000 in all sorts of equipment to control the air that I breathe at home, but yet some days when I come home, people are burning the leaves that they raked up on top of the Lazaretto Hill which defeat the purpose of the money that I have spent to purify the air that I have to breathe.

The point is that the air in Barbados is getting more and more polluted. It is nice to have all of these vehicles but it is also nice to bring some form of legislation to control emission of smoke and noise pollution. There is a group, the Society for a Quieter Barbados, which has banded together to promote a reduction in the noise levels. We also need a cleaner Barbados with cleaner air to breathe because it would save quite a lot of money in health because health care as we know is a very expensive item in our agenda.

In addition to that, there is dumping. For example, the refuse from the St. Leonards School. What they are doing is taking all of the rubble and dumping it in the village where the people live and they are not even putting any water on it to dampen it and sometimes at night those poor villagers cannot sleep. They are trying to clear the rubble at the St. Leonards School but they are not carrying it to the dump, they are putting it in the village which is disgraceful. I myself have written a letter on the behalf of my maid when they pushed down all of her fence and mash up her bicycles and they have been giving her the run around for about five months now by promising to come and look at it to compensate her. When Honourable Senators leave here on their way home, they can drive down there at the back of the St. Leonards School and see that they are dumping the rubble in the village that gives off a lot of dust for the people to breathe in. When they ask them if they are not going to wet it, they say no, they do not have any time.

The Minister of Health is here and he is hearing this now. This is election time. Burning stuff is a fire hazard. The St. Peter's Church was burnt down because they were burning refuse. Now in all fairness to the health workers, we use to teach in the olden days that one method of controlling the burning of refuse was to burn it in a bin or a can. In those days that was okay because we did not have all of these buses and cars on the road polluting the road. Today that is no longer okay. It is really a nuisance to the elderly people the very young and the very old. When you are in your middle age and you are a young adult these things do not seem to worry you, but when you are very

young and when you are much older it becomes a problem. Could you imagine how many man hours are lost because of pollution? We have to think seriously about doing something about this pollution in the new year. This is one of the things I have spoken about during my two terms in office and I would like to see something being done about that.

Mr. President, I was really ashamed the other day to hear that schools had to be closed because of mosquitoes and fumes coming from a laundry for over two years. I can understand two months but not two years. Something has to be done about these fumes that are affecting our children and going into the atmosphere. When it comes to mosquitoes, I cannot believe that a school had to be closed because of mosquitoes.

Mr. President, I have spoken about this and I am going to speak about it because this is my last chance to speak. Years ago we used to have a cadre of people stationed at the Lazaretto called the Aedes Aegypti control workers. A department was headed by a public health inspector and those workers did absolutely nothing but to go from house to house 365 days a year looking for mosquitoes and spraying them. Now with centralisation, it was disbanded and they brought them under the public health inspectorate unit and it is lost. We have to get back to decentralisation in certain areas. That is one area that we have to look at especially with the West Nile virus stirring and we are not sure when the plagues are going to bring that mosquito to Barbados.

In those days when I was a health education officer, they used to look at the Aedes Aegypti index to find out how many Aedes Aegypti mosquitoes were in the area. We have managed to get rid of the Dengue Fever and keep it under control because you had people who did absolutely nothing but go from house to house and look for the mosquitoes to spray and get rid of those mosquitoes or do something to get rid of them and educate the people what to do. I am pleading for us to get back to those days where we do not have to close schools or any institution because of mosquitoes infestation.

In addition to this unit, we have the Coastal Zone Management Unit. I see that they are trying to upgrade it because they want to have geological surveys et cetera. I sincerely hope that would come to pass sooner rather than later because it is really necessary for persons who live on the coast to know exactly the quality of the land on which they are building. It costs about \$10 000 to get someone to do a geophysical survey which is a lot of money for a poor person.

5.55 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Government needs to make that available to persons and to examine it so that people know exactly what they can and cannot do, so that it becomes transparent.

In addition, I would like the Ministry of Physical Development and the Environment to look at the legislation and to stop making decisions based on what they term as merit. They cannot say whose merit. Is it the owners merit? Is it the Minister's merit? Is it Town Planning merit? Whose merit is it for them to make a decision? They have to define exactly what they mean so that people will know when a decision is made, it is made fairly.

Mr. President, I declare an interest in Town and Country Planning. I have had a lot of problems with the Town and Country Planning Department and will not stop talking about it. I have also declared an interest about the mosquitos. As Health Education Officer, I have brought the Ministry of Health up to a certain level of health education. Now there is only one education officer there, neither has the Ministry expanded that department despite the fact that I wrote a number of proposals for them to staff a proper health education unit.

We cannot go very far without health education. There are diseases such as HIV/AIDS. There is no cure for that and, therefore, there has to be health education. The number of administrations, Barbados Labour Party and the Democratic Labour Party, seem to have a fear of setting up a proper health care education unit with persons going out into the community, in order to help educate the people to be healthy.

Before the time runs out, let me start with my pet topic - nursing. When I came to this Senate, I said I would have tried to use my position to bring nursing from the 1900s into the 21st Century. I have not been successful but would still try, though this is the last opportunity that I have to do so.

Mr. President, the Leader of Government Business has mentioned that the nurses have recently developed a strategic plan. One hundred and twenty five persons were invited to Sam Lords' Castle to develop a National Strategic Plan for nursing services from the year 2002 to 2012. The Nurses Assistants Aides Association of Barbados (NAAAB) of which I was the founding President was not invited to the organisation. Senator Rickinson who has been in this Senate speaking about nursing was not even invited to the opening ceremony. No professional organisation was properly represented, yet all kinds of organisations were invited.

I would like to say publicly that nurses in this country must get their act together. There cannot be a strategic plan of nurses and not invite the professional

organisations to be heavily represented. Who then is going to develop the strategic nursing plan? It does not matter how many boards are put in the hospital, if this is the way the nurses are going to function, then the Hospital is not going to go anywhere.

It does not matter how much money is poured into the Ministry of Health. I see in this Budget that the Ministry of Health has the largest budget. From the first day I entered this Senate I said that health is a bottomless pit. It has reached the point of diminishing returns and increasing costs and would suck in any amount of money that is being put into it. It has to be restructured and I have outlined the way in which it should be reconstructed. The Ministry of Health has to be decentralised.

Aside.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: That was not the only strategic plan that had been developed. They developed one just before the last election and have never discussed it. It was simply put aside and another one was developed. I was not invited to the first strategic plan because I told them where they were going wrong and they did not want me there. They had no idea what they were doing.

Aside.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, please address the Chair. Try not to be distracted by asides that are coming from the Other Side.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, we all know that in a day like today, everybody is talking about what is happening in Iraq. We do not know what is going to happen tomorrow. How could one start developing a strategic plan from 2002 to 2012? This long range planning has to be cut out and formulate a plan from 2002 to 2005 and revise it. The world is changing so fast that one does not know what is happening throughout the world. There is also the need for different types of nurses because there are different types of specialisation. The problem is that they do not want to listen and I am saying this publicly. Once I was asked to give a lecture at the Barbados Community College on health and the law and the majority of the nursing teachers boycotted the feature address. They did not want to learn about health and the law, yet when they had the strategic plan, they wrote the wrong things because they did not know about the process of legislation.

Nurses have to sit up, that is why we cannot go anywhere. That is why, as soon as we train the nurses, they leave. This is not the first time that we have begun to train many nurses. We used to train 60 nurses every six month during the last administration when Mr. Brandford Taitt was Minister of Health. Where are those nurses now? They

have gone overseas and those who are now being trained, will go. They will not give them a proper wage.

The Hallam Report indicated that nurses should be given a proper wage in order to stop them from leaving. In 1966 when I came back to Barbados, they were given a proper wage. I was one of the people who was attracted back to Barbados because it was worthwhile coming back to work. The wages were not as much as the developed countries but the pay was a decent one. One cannot raise the Parliamentary wages and not the nurses and expect to keep the nurses in the island.

6.05 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: The nurses are leaving and will continue to leave until you give them more money and restructure the nursing service by decentralising it. All those persons walking around with boots giving the nurses trouble should be put on the ward as specialists to do some of the work and guide the nurses. Sir, the managers deal with the personalities of the nurses, not the function of the nurses and they are very petty. This is what is causing the nurses to leave.

We have to decentralise the nursing services, allocate a budget to each ward, train people in modern management practices and bring in specialists in nursing in order to get anywhere. This is nothing new because a proposal of these ideas was sent to the Ministry of Health since 1995 when I was President of the organisation and it has been ignored and year after year I talk about specialisation in nursing and no one listens. Sir, a doctor comes from medical school, trains and in three years they specialise and move forward but the nurses come in as staff nurses and when they are 60 years old they leave as staff nurses. Sir, this is the system that exists in Barbados.

Nurses who are trained to work in the intensive care unit, if the manager does not like you, you will be moved elsewhere even though you are trained to work in that area and no Board will change this culture. When the nurses become administrators and work in the office, they change and adopt old practices. We have to quickly bring in two nursing administrators from overseas who do not have an axe to grind in order to sort out the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

I know it is has been said that the Psychiatric Hospital has done well and I accept that because I hold no brief for the person in charge even though we do not see eye to eye but he has done an excellent job. In fact, he has written me some nasty letters but he has done an excellent job and continues to do so. In fact, we had a seminar for 75 of our members and he gave the feature address. He is an

excellent manager and a professional person. We need professional people in the system who can agree to disagree.

Sir, we all await the Board to begin its work in two weeks time but it will be business as usual once people are there with the same culture and attitudes. I cannot leave the Senate without saying that I was a member of the Haynes Commission and we invited the National Union of Public Workers several times to appear before the Commission and they bluntly refused to come to represent the workers and are now publicly talking all sorts of things.

Sir, I want to say that I support the Board because the Queen Elizabeth Hospital needs a Board. It will not change things overnight but the Board is needed to get rid of some of these prejudices. I will give an example. In August 2001, a poor health aide caught scabies from a patient and infected her clothes and her mattress and since then we were trying to get money to replace the bed but to no avail. She took her money and bought a new bed. The matter went before the Hospital Director and the Ministry of Health and presently it is at the Minister of Finance.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: The last letter we received said the matter was before the Minister of Finance and the cost of the bed is only \$1000 yet we hear that GEMS is allocated millions of dollars.

Mr. President, the nurses do not give reports to the health aides. We have begged the nurses to give the health aides but the nurses do not want the health aides to work at Queen Elizabeth Hospital and therefore, do not give them a report of what is happening and the aides then pick up scabies and other diseases and infect their beds so the Government should be responsible for replacing the bed.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Why should we need a Board to solve the matter of the bed. I am also lobbying the Leader of the Senate to solve the matter. But, do you think I should have to bother a Minister about a mattress?

Sir, the Hospital Director has not made a decision nor has he said yes or no.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: We are not interested in suing anybody. We know that we can sue them and get more than a mattress but I am giving an example because we are only interested in the development

of the nursing system and making decisions about the future of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, I have the letter here which says that the Minister of Finance is dealing with the matter and I will make it a document of the Senate.

6.15 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR Mrs. P.E. RICKINSON: Sir, are you going to tell me that is what happens at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital? What sort of managers we have there that they cannot sit down and make a decision? They brought in human resource managers and they cannot do the work. Sir, we have to bring in a team of people to do the work because they cannot sit down and make simple decisions.

There is a lot of talk about the Accident and Emergency Department. I do not know what is going to happen when the Queen Elizabeth Hospital is going to be financed by its own money. I looked and I realised that there is no new money being allocated. I realise that the Queen Elizabeth Hospital has to function as a clinic. I said that in this Senate on several occasions because after a certain time at night and you get sick, there is no place to go for medical attention other than the Accident and Emergency Department.

Mr. President, very few private doctors want to make house calls after a certain hour at night. The Sir Winston Scott Polyclinic does not open 24 hours a day. Unless you can open the polyclinics 24 hours a day, you cannot relieve the pressure that is being placed on the Accident and Emergency Department at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, I am cautioning the public not to look for any miracles from any Board. The Board can only do so much and it is going to take years to do it. It is a good thing that the Government has to pay them because it would give them time to put things in place because there are a lot of things that need to be sorted out.

Mr. President, if the situation with the nurses is not sorted out, we will never get the Queen Elizabeth Hospital sorted out because nurses are working 24 hours a day. During the night and on bank holidays the nurses practically run the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because all the other staff go home. When the nurses want a doctor, they call them at home or in their room if they are on the compound.

I spoke a lot in this Senate and I sent in a minority report to the Haynes Commission and nobody listened to me because they thought that I was being awkward when I

sent in the report. I sent in this letter from my heart and the same thing that I told them would happen is happening. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is in a mess.

Sir, recently when my late sister was hospitalised, the people who work in the office had to run the ward. There were no nurses on duty and that is how bad it is. Can you imagine that the nurses who are running the office had to put down their pens and go and manage the wards. There are not enough nurses at the hospital and sometimes the health aides are the ones that run the wards. These are the same health aides that they do not want at the hospital. I blame the health care system for not educating the nurses about health aides. Mr. President, when I trained as a nurse I did not think that I would be a nurse if they were no health aides around. In 1955 when I was training in England, we had nurses' auxiliaries to give bed pans to patients and to bathe patients. Are you telling me that in the year 2003 we are trying to bring in health aides to help bathe, feed and do certain things for the patients and some of the nurses do not want to have them around by giving them a hard time.

Sir, the health aides are given some very ugly uniforms even though they had agreed on a suitable design. This design went to the Matron and the Ministry of Health and up to now they do not have a decent looking uniform.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Sir, I think that the Ministry of the Civil Service must take some of the blame for this because for over a year a letter for representation of these health aides was sitting on the desk in that Ministry and they would not even reply to the correspondence. They replied after National Union of Public Workers went into the hospital and convinced some of the health aides to join the union. The Ministry also did the same thing to the Elroy Centre. Mr. President, the Ministry of Civil Service is worse than the private nursing homes. We represent private nursing homes and we do not have those kinds of problems.

Mr. President, the Ministry waits until the members drop out from the union one by one and then they say to the union that they do not have the majority of the members, therefore, they do not have full representation and they can only represent the members one by one.

Sir, these are the kinds of things that are happening and people do not believe that these things are happening in the Ministry of the Civil Service. These things have to change if we are going to make any progress in improving the standards at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Sir, the Civil Establishment Order came out in 2001. Sir, they did not state that certification in ward techniques

should be a requirement. This is a requirement in order for anyone to work in an operating theatre. This qualification is not stated in the qualification for the operating theatre but a mental nurse is stated.

Mr. President, what does mental nursing have to do with the running an operating theatre? Absolutely nothing, unless you are going to analyse the doctors. It has nothing to do with it.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: This kind of information is what is required in a Civil Establishment Order for qualifications for workers in an operating theatre.

Sir, another area of concern is where a Chief Public Health Nurse is required to have less qualification than a Senior Public Health Nurse. A Senior Public Health Nurse is required to have a degree but not the Chief Public Health Nurse. We cannot have situations like these, Sir.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Sir, the Matron or the Director must have qualification in general nursing and mental nursing. There are approximately 8 beds for mental patients at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and all the other beds are for medical patients and no mental nursing qualifications are required to manage those beds for medical patients.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: The Queen Elizabeth Hospital is not a mental hospital. These are the kinds of things that we have in nursing and expect things to improve when we put a mental nurse to run a hospital. Sir, mental nursing is totally different from general nursing.

Sir, we have a similar situation at the Geriatric Hospitals. Nurses are trained as mental nurses and they appoint them as staff nurses at the Geriatric Hospitals. When the mental nurses are appointed in these positions, they say that they cannot do certain things because they are trained as mental nurses. Mental nurses should only function in a mental institution.

Sir, it is like getting a carpenter to do plumbing. We cannot run a hospital like this. These are serious anomalies in the nursing profession.

6.25 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Sir, when I get up and talk like this, you can understand they do not want me to help them develop any strategies in nursing because they want to go and do nonsense and write these upside down nursing practices that are not going to work. I would appeal to those who are responsible for civil establishment to look at the qualifications.

While I am speaking, I must congratulate the Minister of Health who invited me to sit with the General Nursing Council at a meeting...

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Since then, a committee has been formed and I was invited to sit with them to help them look at the General Nursing Council. The General Nursing Council is a body that controls nursing.

Nurses have to register every year in order to practice in Barbados. Those who do not work for the Government, like myself, have to pay a fee to get a licence. Many people do not know this.

The General Nursing Council is a very powerful body and is similar to the Medical Council, the Veterinary Council, the Legal Council, et cetera. It controls nursing in Barbados and it is the only body that can remove a nurse's name from the register, so that she cannot practice. It is a very powerful body and it needs reorganising. We are looking at that and we are discussing it. I do not know what the outcome will be but it is a professional body.

Sir, in that strategic plan, they had the National Union of Public Workers to be legislated as part of the General Nursing Council, not so, it has nothing to do with union. It is a professional body and I told them, if you want the National Union of Public Workers on the General Nursing Council, let the Minister of Health use one of the areas and appoint them as an interested party or somebody from the community, Sir, but not through legislation because it is a professional body.

There are doctors who are members of the Barbados Workers Union and you do not see the Barbados Workers Union on the Medical Council, not so, it is a professional body, Sir, and the other people that you can have are people who the Minister of Health could appoint. As long as you are going to write legislation for a professional body, there must be nurses, qualified nurses and nurses who are working.

Sir, in the GNC there are nurses who retired and who have not looked at a book for 10 or 20 years, examining people's papers and correcting those student nurses' papers.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: This is what is happening in Barbados.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: It is true, true, true. A lot of these retired nurses do not like to read and they are there marking scripts and these nurses are doing an Associates Degree at the Barbados Community College. Are you going to tell me that they cannot find, among the practicing nurses, enough people to examine the students' papers?

Sir, the Government paid for many of these nurses to do degrees, whom they can choose from but, no, they hand pick their friends and have retired nurses. Do you think if they came to me and asked me to correct papers I would agree. Not me, even though I read. I would say, no, I do not know what is happening. Sir, they have these retired nurses out there helping to correct student nurses' papers and helping to examine student nurses. They tell me that I do not understand how it works, when I pointed out to them that they cannot have this.

Sir, I understand very well. Anybody can tell you that if you are a professional and you are examining people, you have to have people who are practicing in the areas to do the examination. Do not bring people who have not done a stroke of nursing. These are not nurses who were on wards. These are nurses like a retired Chief Public Health Nurse, who sat in an office for years and did not read a book and they are correcting the nurses scripts. This is the nonsense that is going on in nursing. Do you expect the QEH to be any better?

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Not the Minister of Health, it is the Board. The way the GNC is set up, it is difficult for the Minister of Health to change very much of that, they would have to reorganise the GNC.

For example, in England, what the active nurses have to do, you have to put down your name and you have to be elected to serve on the Nursing Council. You have to go to your peers and tell your peers what you are going to do for them while you are in the Council and you are elected.

For example, psychiatry is elected, general nursing, geriatric nursing, midwifery, all the different branches of nursing are elected to serve on the Council. There is not the question of the Minister just appointing them.

Sir, this is how I saw them doing it. They say, this is your turn, do you want to serve this turn, or okay, you want to pick this turn? That is exactly how they go about sending the names to the Minister. This is how it goes out and they pick their friends from turn to turn, even though they cannot make a contribution.

I wrote to the last Minister of Health about one person who has been there for years. Year after year, he is there and nobody else who can contribute can be given a chance. He leaves his work and is up there at the GNC all the time. Doing what? What they say is, I am going to Council and you do not know what they are doing, so they get out of the work at the hospital and they are up at Council. They are doing nothing at the hospital and they are doing nothing at Council.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: This is the sort of thing. How are we going to get nurses? We have to get the bright young people in nursing who can carry nursing forward and we have to hand pick them and put them in, in order to carry nursing forward in Barbados.

Another area that I would like to speak briefly about is the area of solid waste. In Barbados, a 2x2 island, we do not have enough land for people to build houses as well as to make dumps. We have to go the incinerator route.

Asides.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: With the incinerator route, they are filters that could filter the smoke. When you have an incinerator, it does not have to let out the black smoke like the Barbados Light and Power and pollute the air. They have certain things that you could put on these factories. They have smoke emissions and control it. They do it very well in Europe.

Even in your house with a little fire place, there are only certain things you can burn when you are in Europe. It is against the law to burn certain things and emit certain things into the atmosphere and that is what we can do. We have to start getting an incinerator and I will repeat and I have said it before in this Senate, we have land.

Our family have land next door to Greenland and the family had to move from down there because one day they woke up and found the house down the road. That land slips. That is no place for a dump. It has springs and you cannot control a spring. Never mind what these experts come and tell you because when you capture one spring one way, it is going to find another way to come out and you will always have springs. So abandon Greenland, cut your losses and try and get an incinerator and let us get on with solid waste control.

Another thing is they are talking about the West Coast Sewerage project but recently I have heard persons on the call in programme, complaining of their eyes running from the Bridgetown Sewerage Project.

6.35 p.m.

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SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Now, I do not know what they do overseas, but as a nurse we had to visit several sewerage projects and we did not smell anything at all. I do not know how this sewerage project we have in Barbados works that it is always smelling up the place like that and making people sick. It is my opinion that nobody should be sited next to any sewerage project at all. You need to find some land and resite those people immediately.

Government have acquired a whole lot of land. They brought it to the Senate and we have passed it time and time again. It is not that they do not have land. They have a lot of land in a land bank. They need to resite those people immediately. Nobody at all should be living beside the sewerage plant. They can put something else there but not allow people to live there with little children and elderly people, they will get ill and then it will cost us money. We must not forget that people do not pay at source for medical care. When people get sick they go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and they are going to get drugs, but the taxpayers are going to have to pay for it. So why on earth are we going to have these excessive cost, we can do without that. Let us find some land in the next couple of months and resite those people out of the vicinity of that sewerage project.

Another thing I would like to speak about is the market facilities. Government spent a lot of money building markets. I pass that Eagle Hall Market every day and I would really like to get a bulldozer and knock it down. That is where they park cars at night and play dominoes. If you go to that market, I go there, you would see that the people are putting their stalls outside the market. They do not use that place. That market has all sorts of things sticking up and all sorts of crossways that need pushing down. They do not look artistic to me. It looks like madness. Those things need covering up from sight. We need to hide all of those things or do something about it.

Another thing is I shop every week in the Cheapside Market. You cannot build a market without stalls or without parking space and then tell people that they cannot walk across the grass and they cannot park here or park there, if you want all of us to come and shop in the market. The small businessmen grow all of those things and bring them down to market to sell. People support them and they

want to go and buy the things, but when you get there you cannot find any place to park. How can they design a market without parking space and then start complaining about people walking on the grass because people park where the people walk. You need to look at this. I do not know where these plans come from, but when these buildings are finished, they are not right, something is wrong with them. We need to start putting stalls in that market and it is going to be hot.

When they were building the one over here in Palmetto Square, I got in here and I asked for a refrigeration unit which was not put in. I said that if you do not do that the things are going to spoil with all that heat in there. These markets need to be open. In Africa they have an open space. We do not need any architect to design any market.

Mr. PRESIDENT: Senator, there are two minutes left.

SENATOR Mrs. P. E. RICKINSON: Mr. President, I welcome the opportunity to serve in this Senate for the past two terms. There are whispered asides that there are more sittings, but it is better to be sure than sorry. I have enjoyed my stay in the Senate. I like talking. I have talked and I hope I have made some form of contribution to health development and to nursing in particular even though they might not be accepted, but I feel that down the road when people read what I had to say they would say that Peggy Rickinson recommended this and that because we cannot get too far without some of the things that I have been recommending to you.

I thank you.

SENATOR The Hon. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, in rising to add my few words to this debate, I have to say that it is a privilege on this occasion to speak after Senator Rickinson because this was an excellent contribution on her part in many areas and I congratulate her.

Mr. President, I will just follow on naturally from where she left off by speaking about the Ministry of Health. We all know that the health care professionals within that Ministry of Health have been making an excellent contribution to the well being of our citizens. Persons who have come into contact with the present Minister are impressed by his competence, his sincerity and his sound common sense, but he cannot do everything himself.

We also take note of the excellent work being done in relation to the HIVAIDS programme, to promote healthy lifestyles among Barbadians and the work being done in the polyclinics. The polyclinics are like the younger sister

of Queen Elizabeth Hospital and often we do not hear of the excellent work being done in these polyclinics but I happen to know that they make a sterling contribution to health care in Barbados.

I also take note of the steps taken in recent times to upgrade the operation of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and to conduct physical plant maintenance which has been long overdue. However, this is the 21st century and hospital administration, like airport administration, is a highly technical area. Not only must doctors and nurses be well trained but the administrators must be well trained as well. They must be well paid and they will need consultants from time to time to assist them. I hope that the new Queen Elizabeth Hospital Board will do what is necessary to improve the quality of administration at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. The policymakers must be persons whose guiding principle is what is best for the health of Barbadians and they must not be hamstrung by outdated rules, regulation and procedures.

Many people who have had dealings with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital are of the view, in Barbados parlance, that it is not a bad facility, but we all know that all is not well. Almost every second person you meet has some horror story to tell in connection with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Some are obviously the result of lack of funds to do certain things, some are caused by poor management and others are caused by the fact that some of the staff have lost their way as professionals.

6.45 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR The Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: Mr. President, it is for these reasons that I believe a broad-based Board is the way to go at this point in time. I would say that after a number of years and the Board is found wanting, Government must have the courage to make whatever changes are necessary. We Barbadian love cricket and if our team is on the losing path, we clamour for the removal of the captain, so should it be with the administration of our most important institution. We should not be afraid to make changes if it is possible that better conditions would result from those changes.

In my view, one of the early tasks of this Board is to deal with personnel. I said earlier that some of the staff at the hospital have lost their way. There are nurses who, for several years, have been working in special units and I think some of them should be returned to general nursing. It seems to many persons who have had dealings with them that some of them have forgotten the tenets of general nursing and hide behind their specialities. Also, in some of these areas of specialties, it seems that some of the nurses are not aware of the most modern practices.

With our scarce resources, there should be no unit in a general hospital in which staff outnumber patients and can huddle together, chatting for hours, when in other units nurses can barely cope. As I said, I think those persons should be returned to nursing or from time to time, put on a rotation basis so that they do not forget the basic tenets of nursing.

I am sure there must be a programme in place at the hospital for continuing education, to acquaint the health care professionals to the latest developments in the areas of specialty. The Board must see to it that there is fair access to postgraduate training for as many as possible. There must also be a system for identifying those who have been suffering from burnout, have lost interest in the job or have forgotten what are the old rules of nursing. Some may need challenges, others might have lost interest with the working environment and some cannot work shifts. Lives depend on the service which health care professionals give and they should have the opportunity to be reenergised from time to time where this is necessary.

One cannot say that better wages would be the answer but I know that our nurses and police - like nurses and police the world over - are not very well paid. Teachers have managed over the years to get a better deal than previously but nurses and policemen, persons on whom we have to depend so much for our well being, are still, to a great extent, at the bottom of the ladder.

It may well be that the Board may wish to recommend a special wage scale to nurses when the Board is fully functioning and has got its personnel and other administrative problems sorted out. In my view, any recommendation for a special wages scale, should be accompanied by standards for productivity and patient friendliness.

Mr. President, having said that, I would wish to encourage staff at the Hospital who have been dedicated to their jobs and who give good service to their patients to continue. I am sure persons in that category are not in fear of being in the employ of a Board of Management. Those persons already have a good work ethic and would get the job done irregardless.

Mr. President, I now turn to the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Immigration Department. Some months ago in this Chamber, I had raised questions about non nationals working here without permits, mainly in the hospitality industry. I am aware that certain actions were taken some months ago but I have always been curious about the amount of due diligence which the Immigration Department carries out in relation to applications for work permits. For instance, Mr. President, do they examine the local application when an organisation informs them that there is no suitable local person applying for the job? Does

the organisation acknowledge local applications and inform the locals why they are not suitable? Is it true that persons from overseas visit Barbados ostensibly on holidays to carry out short-term work assignments at hotels and other places, for which they are paid and go back to their homes without paying income tax, which might be prejudicial to the qualified locals?

Mr. President, if the Immigration Department is going to be vigilant on a one-off basis, that is not good enough. They need to maintain the same standard at all times to ensure that our own people are not being prejudiced against, even though I am not one of those persons who believe there is no place among us for non nationals. I believe several of them, certainly the Guyanese and some from the other Caribbean countries, are making an excellent contribution to certain services in Barbados, such as the building industry. The work of Vincentians and Guyanese is well known and documented but at the same time, our Immigration Department has to be vigilant to make sure that in the final analysis, Barbadians are not being disadvantaged if they have the qualifications and are available for the available jobs.

Mr. President, the Ministry of Transport and Works has been a very busy Ministry during the past several years and it is evident to all Barbadians. We have seen road improvements and beautification on a scale not witnessed for many years and this Ministry must be congratulated for pressing ahead with its programmes, especially in urban Barbados, even though at times it has been heavily criticised by persons who are suffering temporary inconvenience.

However, I would like to focus on the Licensing Authority. If there is ever a department that is crying out for reform, Mr. President, it is this one. I am sure thousands of dollars have been spent and are being spent every year for computerisation of this department, yet when one goes to renew a license, one gets a sinking feeling on seeing the number of old dog-eared files that are sitting around in the offices and simply hopes that the information that is needed to process one's application, is not among those files.

To make matters worse, even if one's data has been computerised, the receipt that is given, is written by hand. Therefore, if it takes one hour to reach the counter, one still has to wait for another 15 minute to have it processed and then written in long hand.

I am wondering why is it that when one goes to the Licensing Authority early in the morning, the staff are slow to rise and even slower to begin. I have come to the conclusion that they are afraid of the amount of writing that they have to do daily.

I wish to say something on the matter of handwritten documents from the Licensing Authority. Recently, one of my daughters needed evidence that she has been driving in Barbados for a number of years. She took to Canada one of the handwritten documents. The Canadian Authority would have nothing to do with it. They could not believe it was authentic.

In today's age, there are computers in the department. It might well be that there are not enough network printers but I would think that if there are that number of computers, the next step which is purchasing network printers should not be too far off. I am not sure if that is the case or if the general management of the Licensing Authority needs to be overhauled. I rather think it is the latter. Mr. President, this department is a major revenue earner and both the staff who work there and the customers, deserve a better deal.

Mr. President, I next turn to the Ministry of Physical Development and the Environment. I would like to commend that Ministry, if it is responsible, for the job well done in beautifying the highway, just after leaving the airport. It is amazing just how a few healthy-looking bougainvilleas could make the visitors feel welcome and could make Barbadians feel happy to be back home after being overseas.

Congratulations are also due for the work done in the public parks, beaches and gullies around the island. The only problem is that our people persist in littering. We have had some 'stop and start' anti-littering campaign from time to time. I do not suppose that the funds are available for such campaigns to be carried out on a permanent basis but I would say that possibly placing more garbage containers around might be the answer to some of the problems that we are having. For instance, I have attended functions at the Sir Garfield Sobers Gymnasium and during break times, when persons have eaten, they are looking for a garbage can and cannot find any within the immediate vicinity, if at all. People are, therefore, forced to put their garbage on the ground or on the pavement, which certainly is not good enough. 6.55 p.m.

Tuesday, March 25, 2003

SENATOR Hon. Mrs. V. E. NEWTON: I am sure of the Ministry of Environment is responsible for it but it must be managed by the Gymnasium. It certainly is something that could be looked into.

The Ministry of Housing like the Ministry of Transport and Works has been maintaining a high profile during the past few years. The Housing Credit Fund has been providing loans to medium and low income earners to assist them in owning homes and between April 2000 and

March 2003, over \$10 million were disbursed for this purpose.

Senator Marshall spoke eloquently and at length about the work being done to provide housing for Barbadians over the past few years and I will not dwell on that to any extent.

However, one thing worries me about the housing programme. I do not think that the Government is placing enough emphasis or driving home to Barbadians as forcefully as it could that the era of owning their plot of land is fast coming to an end because our bank of land is not unlimited and we must build more high rise condos and terrace housing. I believe there is a long term plan for the provision of terrace houses and more creative ways of providing complexes in which people can live instead of using three or four acres of land for four houses.

Already the price of land is prohibited and the high cost of living leaves many families without extra income to pay mortgages even though mortgages are available through the housing credit fund. In a few years there will not be much land available to be purchased even if the money is available.

Mr. President, it is also desirable for Government to impose greater control on the amount of agricultural land being devoted to housing but it is like being caught between a rock and a hard place because both needs are imperative.

ADJOURNMENT

SENATOR The Hon. J. X. WALCOTT: Mr. President, I beg to move that this Sitting be adjourned until Wednesday, August 27, 2002 at 11.00 a.m.

The question that the Senate do now adjourn until Wednesday, August 27, 2002, 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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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

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BOLDEN, Senator C. L.

COLLYMORE, Senator B. R.

GODDARD, Senator P. C.

HAYNES, Senator D. L.

LAURIE, Senator C. K.

MARSHALL, Senator D. D.

McCLEAN, Senator LeR. H.

MURRAY, Senator The Hon. G. S. H.

NEWTON, Senator The Hon. V. E.

RICKINSON, Senator Mrs. P. E.

ROCK, Senator The Rev. L. W. B.

SYMMONDS, Senator K. D.

WALCOTT, Senator The Hon. J. X.

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EDITORIAL NOTES — NOT PART OF THE REPORT

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

EDITORIAL QUERIES

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

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

Q2. Opening. The source opens without the convening sentence (Pursuant to the adjournment ... met at ...). The date is taken from the heading of the source.

Q3. Dates in the text. The source gives 'Tuesday, March 25, 2000' (25 March 2000 was a Saturday). The weekday and date do not agree; printed as in the source.

Q4. Adjournment. The motion and the closing entry adjourn the Senate 'until Wednesday, August 27, 2002 at 11.00 a.m.', a date before this sitting of 25th March, 2003. Printed as in the source. Please confirm the date of the next sitting.

Q5. Adjournment and close of debate. The record ends with the speech of Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. Newton, which stops without a closing sentence, and the Senate adjourns with the debate on the Appropriation Bill unfinished; no further speeches or stages are recorded. Please confirm that nothing is missing.

Q6. Suspension, about 5.30 p.m.. Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott moved a suspension 'for 15 minutes to resume at 5.45 p.m.', but the question records a suspension 'until 5.15 p.m.'; the take-slip that follows reads 5.30 p.m. Printed as in the source.

Q7. Senator B. R. Collymore's speech and Senator P. C. Goddard's speech. With the Deputy President in the Chair, one ruling is labelled 'Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER', and Senator Goddard addresses 'Mr. Deputy Speaker' and, once, 'Mr. President'. Printed as in the source.

Q8. Senator P. C. Goddard's speech. The Senator refers to 'the Estimates 2003-3004'. Printed as in the source.

Q9. Senator LeR. H. McClean's and Senator D. L. Haynes' speeches. Figures are typed with a letter 'I' for the digit 1 ('\$150 000', '\$1'). Printed as in the source.

DEBATE SUMMARY

(Editorial summary — not part of the record.)

The Senate resumed on Tuesday, 25th March, 2003, with Mr. President in the Chair, to continue the debate on the Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure and the Appropriation Bill, 2003, presented the day before by the Leader of the Senate. The sitting was given over to that debate; Mr. Deputy President presided after the luncheon suspension, and Mr. President again from 5.30 p.m.

Senator LeR. H. McClean opened, criticising the public treatment of the United States over the conflict in Iraq; Mr. President required him to withdraw a word used about a Member of the Other Place. He argued that the sale of Barbados National Bank shares came at the wrong time, that the Accountant-General's Report showed transfers from above the line, including Public Enterprise Fund money to Southern Meats, and that the Dover Convention Centre had been demolished without funds to replace it. Senator C. K. Laurie, Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott and Senator T. E. Barker rose on points of order. Senator K. D. Symmonds replied that Barbados had enjoyed about eight years of growth from 1994 to 2001 at three to four per cent a year before the effects of Japan's recession and 11th September, 2001, supported \$10 million more for the Cave, and was asked by Mr. President to withdraw remarks about Senator Mascoll in his absence.

Senator C. K. Laurie, calling it his last opportunity before the elections, spoke on agriculture: the missed agricultural census due in 1999, the future of sugar cane and the need to mechanise, poultry feed costing sixty-five per cent of production, livestock and lamb marketing, water, and land for the landless; Senator C. L. Bolden and Senator the Hon. G. S. H. Murray corrected him on points of order. On the motion of Senator Walcott the Senate was suspended until 2.00 p.m.

After the suspension, Senator the Rev. L. W. B. Rock raised the Accident and Emergency Department and constitutional reform; Senator D. L. Haynes praised the Prime Minister's eight years in charge of the economy and spoke of horse racing, sports tourism and a proposed sports levy; Senator D. D. Marshall supported the Bill, describing the sale of land to tenants, the National Housing Corporation, the General Workers Loan Fund and the offshore sector after the OECD challenge. Senator B. R. Collymore noted that debt servicing had become the largest item in the Estimates for a public sector of over 26 000, recalled a regrading exercise promised in 1999, and was reminded by the Chair not to reflect on a Bill already passed; Senator P. C. Goddard rose to say the Barbados National Bank shares were being sold to the Republic Bank of Trinidad and Tobago. Senator Goddard then reviewed trade negotiations, the airport and harbour, road building and the tenancies. The Senate was suspended briefly.

On resumption, Senator Mrs. P. E. Rickinson asked why pollution control was absent from the objectives of a Ministry granted \$44.9 million, and spoke of emissions, the nursing shortage, the General Nursing Council and conditions at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Senator the Hon. Mrs. V. E. Newton supported a broad-based Board

for the hospital and spoke on health, housing and the use of agricultural land.

On the motion of Senator the Hon. J. X. Walcott, the Senate was adjourned, the date given in the source being Wednesday, 27th August, 2002 at 11.00 a.m.