
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, December 15, 2000

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Friday, December 15, 2000.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P. (Deputy Speaker)

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.M.,
(Cantab.)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney
General and Minister of Home Affairs) (Leader of the
House)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of
the Opposition)

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN, K.A., Q.C., LL.B.

Hon. Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, Q.C., M.A., M.Sc.
(Econ.)

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., B.A. (Hons.), Dip.
Ed., LL.B. (Hons.), L.E.C. (Minister of the Environment,
Energy and Natural Resources)

Mr. D. CARTER (Chairman of Committees)

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, B.A., LL.B. (Minister of
Labour, Sports and Public Sector Reform)

Hon. G. A. CLARKE, B.Sc., Dip. Ed., J.P. (Minister
of Housing and Lands)

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL (Minister of Public Works
and Transport)

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY (Minister of Social
Transformation)

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of
Commerce, Consumer Affairs and Business Development)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, LL.B. (Minister of
Education, Youth Affairs and Culture)

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS

Mr. T. A. PRESCOD, B.A.

Rev. J. J. S. ATHERLEY, B.A., B.Sc. (Parliamentary
Secretary to the Attorney-General and Minister of Home
Affairs)

Mr. D. T. GILL, B.Sc.

Hon. A. P. WOOD, J.P., B.Sc., M.Sc., M.Phil.
(Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development)

Hon. R. R. FARLEY, B.Sc. (Minister of Industry and
International Business)

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday,
December 12, 2000.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to
move that the Minutes for the Honourable the House of
Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, December 12, 2000,
which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no corrections or
observations, then let these Minutes stand confirmed.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I apologise
to the House for the lateness of the Bill to amend the
Insurance Act. This matter came before the Cabinet

yesterday and it has to be done today in order to get to the Senate on Tuesday. I would be grateful if Honourable Members would agree to undertake this Bill in all stages today.

I beg that the following Bill be read a first time.

Insurance (Miscellaneous Provision) Bill, 2000.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ORAL REPLIES TO QUESTIONS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am to advise that the replies to Parliamentary Questions No. 20 and 22 asked by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, are ready.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that the following Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5) 43 and 44 be suspended for the balance of today's Sitting.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the order of the day.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

ORDER NO. 10 – TO MOVE THAT THIS HOUSE RESOLVE ITSELF INTO COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY TO CONSIDER THE GRANT OF SUMS OF MONEY FOR THE SERVICE OF BARBADOS

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The House is now in Committee of Supply.

RESOLUTION TO GRANT THE SUM OF \$21 734 479 FROM THE CONSOLIDATED FUND AND TO PLACE IT AT THE DISPOSAL OF THE GOVERNMENT TO SUPPLEMENT THE ESTIMATES 2000-2001 AS SHOWN IN THE SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES NO. 5, 2000-2001 WHICH FORM THE SCHEDULE TO THE RESOLUTION

HEAD 15 – CABINET OFFICE – \$113,785
AND \$226,466

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the Cabinet had agreed that any living National Hero should be paid a stipend per month to assist the person living the requisite standard associated with a National Hero. There is one, Sir Garfield Sobers.

These funds are required to pay the monthly stipend to the Right Excellent Sir Garfield Sobers with effect from September 1, 2000. It is necessary to seek supplementary funding for the Cabinet Office to facilitate this payment, which is the first part of the supplementary.

The second part of the supplementary relates to other operating expenses. The House will recall that a Bill was brought to this Parliament entitled the Centennial Honours Act. In May this year, the Cabinet agreed that there should be a special reward to mark the twentieth century and that one hundred Barbadians would be given this award as a unique national honour.

It is now proposed that these one hundred persons should be honoured on January 1, 2001, in an appropriate ceremony at Government House. Funds are needed to be appropriated to cover the cost of expenses of that function and also to pay for the design for insignia which will be presented. The amount, \$226 466 being sought, is required to host the Centennial Honours Reception and matters connected therewith.

I beg to move that Head 15 stand part.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.
11.30 a.m.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: First of all we would like to congratulate those persons, in advance, who are being selected for the Centennial Honours Award. I think that on the previous occasion that the matter came up for debate, it was at either a late hour or we tried to push it through and we were unable to formally, as a House, congratulate those individuals.

I believe that the end of the millennium and the beginning of the new millennium is good time to reflect on the achievement of those persons, particularly who have given

service in communities, but who because of the limited nature of the National Honours System may not have been considered for national awards.

As I understand it, the purpose of the Centennial Honours is to select 100 of those persons who otherwise would not have been considered but awarded or who may not have been considered at all. Sir, we can all think in our own respective constituencies of 100 or more persons.

There is often the comment made publicly that people who give service in Barbados should be honoured during their life time and that we are too slow to do that. If I were to compare what happens now to when I was a youngster, the number of awards ceremonies, honours, both nationally, community, constituency and political parties – in the 21 years of the existence of the Democratic Labour Party, the first set of honours that were ever given out was on the 21st Birthday to the founders, those that are still alive. Barbados had not yet caught onto what, by and large, was part of the American system where every organisation and community singled out people for awards and awards were very rare.

Nowadays there are so many ways in which an individual can be awarded at all levels. Only last night I was talking on the telephone to a constituent of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: He said to me that in all of his years of service that he has never been honoured by a political Party but that he was not looking for that kind of honour. His honours came from the Pinelands Creative Workshop, he is a man in his 70s and from the community, and he felt extremely proud of that. As I said that there was a time in Barbados when, even at that level, people were not honoured.

I think that it is very important that citizens be given a momento of their achievement. I say that because all of us would know in here that as we visit the homes of constituents, people can go into a drawer, a cupboard or in between the pages of an old telephone directory and pull out a letter that had been written to them congratulating them for their service. It is something that means a lot to people and let us not underestimate that.

I think that the Centennial Honour, which is a national honour, is an important consideration of the continuance of those Barbadians in addition to the work that is being done by many communities.

I want to take the opportunity to congratulate the community groups and organisations in Barbados that actively go out and seek the contribution of people in the

communities and also document that information. In a sense when you get up before a crowd of people and set out the achievements of Barbadians who may have done something 20 years ago, it may have appeared to be something small and inconsiderable, but in the context of how far we have advanced as a country it has made a tremendous contribution to our economic, political and social development.

These awards should also be seen as a means of encouraging others in communities to make a contribution to national development. With regard to the stipend to be given to national heroes, we have absolutely no quarrel with that. We believe that Barbadian National Heroes should be given the highest level of consideration for the contribution that they have made to our country. Barbados will never ever be able to repay any of them in money or otherwise for the contribution that they have made to our national development. Therefore any stipend or other contribution that is made towards assisting them with their living expenses, at a certain standard is but a small token of appreciation for the way in which they have projected our country or help build it in a significant way.

Sir, we have no problem with this part of the Supplementary at all.

Hon. Sir. Henry FORDE: Mr. Chairman, I take the opportunity to speak on the issue of the award of honours and to use the opportunity as well to clarify some of the mistaken views that one hears about the Barbados System of Honours and that one reads in the newspaper.

I must remind you that Barbados has its own system of honours. This was established by the National Honours Act, I think, in the 1980s. Therefore, we asked at that time that the specific system of honours be established which can only be awarded on the advice of the Cabinet and the Prime Minister of Barbados, to Barbadians or to those persons to whom we may give honour for some of the categories.

The change in the status of Barbados' Head of State will not affect those systems of honours. That is why the Constitution Review Commission made it absolutely clear in its recommendations that Barbados should retain, as most countries do, its own system of honours.

There is a fallacy among most commentators in believing that the highest honour in Barbados that of the Knight of St. Andrew, is peculiarly within the gift of Her Majesty the Queen. It is not. It is the single highest honour to Barbados and the Honour of Knighthood is not an honour that is only peculiar to Britain.

As a matter of fact, the whole system of Knighthoods and Honours originated long before the British had their system of honours – Turkey, Italy and Venezuela. Knights

meet very often and our own Governor-General, His Excellency, has attended the world fraternity of people who hold Knighthoods and meet from time to time.

I think that I ought to remind you that there are Prime Ministers of the Caribbean that have had Knighthoods awarded, not only through their own system or through the British system, but by other countries of the world.

I think that it will be a pity, therefore, if the fallacy persists in a misleading way to give the view that Barbados' Systems of Honours disappears at any stage should the country decide to change the nature of its Head of State.
11.40 a.m.

This is a good opportunity for me to say that. It is also a good opportunity for me to remind Members that when our Honours system was first set up, there were specific recommendations which came out of the Cox Commission, a Commission I have Chaired, in the initial years and was to limit the numbers available in the categories, whether it be the Knight of St. Andrew, the Gold Crown of Merit, or the Silver Crown of Merit, in order to ensure that there were not too many of them and that Barbadians appreciate the significance of the Honours in those categories.

I think that time may have come for us to widen the number of available Awards in any year, because there are, obviously, many more of our people and even at a younger age, who will qualify for outstanding service. Therefore, the country has to accept our own National Honours system and to widen those categories as well so that, instead of they being limited – I am not sure what are their limitations now, – but that we widen the categories to reward the number of people who qualify for recognition in this country.

I firmly believe, for instance, Sir, that there are certain offices that people attain in this country and that once they are of good character and have rendered service that, after a while they should be recognised in the Honours system. For instance, in the United Kingdom, there is no High Court Judge who serves for a number of years that does not, automatically, get some Honour, particularly, the Knighthood. That is almost automatic, and therefore, that is why a lot of the Lawyers who have been in practice for many years and have reached the top of their profession gravitate towards the Bench although it may not be as remunerative as remaining in private practice. That system in Britain can also be seen manifested in other countries that have their own system of Honours.

I believe it is good to recognise the setting of a Centennial Honours List for the occasion, but yet, there are going to be many people who are deserving, but who are still not going to be recognised.

It may well be, that one of the things we should do – and I stress “on a non-partisan basis”, because this is very vital with a system of Honours – is to re-examine the whole National Honours Scheme, so that we can sensibly, have both the criteria and the numbers clearly laid out for any category and, therefore, we are not passing over people who are deserving.

I have the privilege and the Honour to be the first Chairman of the Honours Committee when we set up our systems of Honours and represented on that body was the Democratic Labour Party. I think I had served with the late Sir James Tudor and other persons. Also represented were the public at large and other outstanding people. I believe Lady Scott, for instance was, at one stage, a member of the Committee.

We tried as much as possible to get recommendations across the whole spectrum of life in Barbados, because you do not necessarily have to be a person, in public life or at the political level to be qualified.

There are a lot of working-class people who have served this country outstandingly in their particular roles and one of our objectives was to recognise those persons for the value of their contributions; whether it be a carpenter, a fisherman, a labourer, a plumber, or a civil servant for their outstanding contribution. Still there are some people who have gone to the great beyond, some have retired, and yet have not been recognised. This happens, particularly, with teachers and I believe we can do more than we have done.

It has happened, as well, to people in the sugar industry. The sugar industry has been so vital to this country and, therefore, we should recognise that.

It has happened in the medical profession. Barbados has done tremendously well in the number of people that have brought a level of medicine which is in tune with what we see in other developed countries which has more resources than us.

The Press as well and it is not often that we recognise the Press for its contribution. The Arts, and Sports – and I can go on and on, Sir.

I would hope, as I said, on a “non-partisan basis”, that we can take this subject at that level. I make a plea to those people that they must get away from that low-down approach, people who are using the Constitutional recommendation for being personal about Honours.

There are some standards that one has to elevate towards, if this country is to project itself to become an excellent country without being so personal on almost

everything that we do, when we are discussing matters that set our standards and values. Therefore, I use this opportunity to say that I would hope that we will set out these criteria very carefully and try to maintain a standard.

I would like to see and I am aware of this, that Members who have served in this Parliament for many years at Ministerial levels should be recognised, but they are not.

We can think of others who have gone to the great beyond without any recognition whatsoever. It is not unusual for people who hold the role of Speakers of Parliaments, Leaders of the House, Leaders of Opposition, Deputy Prime Ministers to be recognised and so, there ought to be a provision in the recommendations of a list coming from both Government and the Opposition.

Great Britain has even gone further than that. It is not only the official Opposition that can recommend people, but also the minority Opposition as well. Then, there is the public overview and regardless of your political affiliation, or non-affiliation, once that contribution has been made you are so recognised.

I believe that that is how Barbados should go, Sir. I also believe in Honours being given to people on a Honorary basis. Those persons who may not be Barbadians, by decent, by birth, or even by registration, but who have made outstanding contributions.

We have, to some extent, adopted that. I believe the late Sir William Demas, who has made such an outstanding contribution was recognised by the Centennial Honours of Barbados.

That is another category that we had so restricted and that there are probably not many vacancies available now. I hope that we will widen the numbers that are now available.

I think our country recognises the Awards made in the past have been made very conservatively, but that those persons were deserving.

I am not giving myself any praise for that, but I would hope in the future we would find this non-partisan approach to issues with criteria clearly set out and that our citizens can feel that their country recognises their valuable contributions to whatever sphere of activity they had been able to contribute to our country.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I rise also to support this measure and to remind this Parliament that I have always been calling for these types of Awards, especially for those persons who have worked so hard in the fields of Barbados.

There is a myth in our society, that Awards can only go to people of certain professions. I welcome this particular measure and I will support it.
11.50 a.m.

The only problem I have, Mr. Chairman, is that I have been trying the whole morning to figure out why one hundred. I honestly thought it would have been 200, seeing that we are in the year 2000 and I could not see the significance of the one hundred.

When you really think about it, Sir, it is only one person per year and it is no way that in a country like Barbados that we can only find one honouree per year. One would have thought...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...I would even challenge two but at least if you had two, you could easily say that you have the year 2000 and 10 per cent of the year 2000 is 200. I can live with that but I cannot understand the one hundred. It seems to me that you are playing games with the masses.

I would hope, Sir, that when I am around and it comes to the year 3000 that it would 300 and then in the year 4000, it would be 400 because you would see the significance. Not only that, Mr. Chairman, you also will get the impression that there is prosperity and there is something to achieve. As the country gets prosperous, then you can increase but to come with a hundred for the year 2000, one per year, Sir, is insignificant.

I would hope, Sir, that it is not too late for us to make the change. If we do, what the Honourable Member for Christ Church West calls for could easily be implemented. I would hope those who have the authority to make those changes would recognise that it is not too late to move it from one hundred and we could easily go to 200 and it would not be a problem.

As far as I know, we are not in a financial crisis that we cannot buy the necessary things to go with this honour. There should not be any big debate on it, Sir, especially when you take it on a constituency basis, you can hardly get five persons per constituency. All of us know, Sir, that in one section of our constituency alone, we could probably find five persons who are deserving and even more...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...I cannot honestly feel happy to know that we have a situation where we are honouring people and we cannot honour five people per constituency or even ten. I have difficulties with this particular proposal even though I support the measure and

this something I think the whole House should reflect on and reconsider and come back with it again.

Sir, we have to recognise that we as Parliamentarians will not have the opportunity to travel this road again and if we are going to do it, we have to do it right. We have not only to appear like we are doing something for the masses but we must do something for them. I would ask the Leader of the House to reconsider this measure, Sir, and to make sure that the necessary increases are given.

I do not see any political divide over this particular measure. I believe everybody on the other Side will support a proposal like this and that is why I am beseeching this House to recognise that these people are the ones who have shaped Barbados and who would have started the rural Barbados and would have built the Bridgetown and the towns as we have known them today. I believe they are deserving of more honours than these.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael East.

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, it would be remiss of me if I did not add my two-cent worth to this supplementary before this Honourable Chamber this morning. Obviously, I would want to join with previous speakers because everyone so far that has spoken has supported this measure before this Honourable Chamber, particularly, those sentiments echoed by the Leader of the Opposition. I have no difficulty with that. In Sir Henry's presentation, Sir, he asked to widen the number of awards and it is on this particular point that I want to add my three-cent worth.

Sir, I believe for too long in this country, we have been honouring people when they are dead. In terms of coming up with a new set of initiatives, plans and programmes, this Centennial Award is just one aspect of what this Government is trying to do to honour those persons throughout this entire country for their deserving works over a process of time.

It is against that background, Sir, that in the Ministry of Social Transformation, we are setting up a number of committees to start a Community National Hall of Fame in the new year. This will see that every resource centre throughout the country becoming a Hall of Fame, basically to honour the achievements of those persons that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is speaking about, at the community level, who would have made outstanding contributions to those particular communities across Barbados.

Also, Sir, we are examining the possibility to see if

school halls across Barbados could also become Halls of Fame by honouring those teachers who would have made significant contributions to the teaching profession. We will not only have their names put inside books but hang their achievements on the walls within the school halls.

In addition to that, Sir, Barbados has the highest number of centenarians in the English-speaking Caribbean. In actual fact, the latest count was 153. It is against that background that in March next year, we will be having the second centenarians' luncheon at Sherbourne where we will be honouring those persons in Barbados who would have achieved the envious feat of achieving 100 years.

Also, Sir, the United Nations has earmarked this month as the International Year of the Volunteer. We had a meeting with the committee that has been established to supervise, the activities for those volunteers. I can assure this Honourable Chamber that there would be another series of awards for those persons who over the years, would have contributed to the social fabric and development and made the sacrifice to this country as volunteers.

There is a feeling in this country, Sir, that once you have volunteered your effort that you have to do it and there is scant respect shown in this country to those persons who have made the sacrifice, on a daily basis, to look after our poor and our marginalised. It is against this background that civil society, NGOs and CBOs, this Parliament and all of us have a greater role to play when it comes to voluntary effort in this country. This is the only solution that we have, collectively, to solving some of these social problems in Barbados.

I want to say, Sir, that this Government has initiated a number of systems of awards throughout this country to honour those persons, meeting the very persons at the community level or what we like to popularly refer to them when we make the contributions as grass roots people. This is a terminology that I have some difficulty with because when people refer to you as grass roots, they tend to look down on you as in the grass at the very root of problems that exist in this country. I have a problem with that.

Sir, I just wanted to add my three-cent worth, as I said, that could make the public of this country and this Honourable Chamber aware that we as a Government and the Ministry of Social Transformation, not only through the centennial awards but we have also undertaken a number of award systems and schemes to honour those persons that matter most in the society when they are alive.

It is against this background again, Sir, that I rise to support this measure and to inform this Honourable Chamber of our efforts of Government in honouring those persons

who would have made considerable contribution to this country.

Thank you.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I am grateful to the Honourable Members who spoke. There seems to be a large measure of unanimity on this matter. I wish to make a few observations in response.

Sir, I recall that my constituency branch was probably one of the first, if not the first to recognise that community persons should be recognised for their contributions and for Independence 1987, the newspapers will have it that the St. Thomas Constituency Branch then honoured 21 persons. It was the 21st year of Independence and it honoured 21 persons from St. Thomas who it was determined had made a significant contribution to the development of St. Thomas and indeed, Barbados.

12.00 noon.

I entirely support the point made by the Leader of the Opposition that persons in local communities need to be recognised. Many years before that in this House, I made the suggestion that we could name some of our streets and our roads after persons who had made outstanding contributions.

I remember saying in this House, on that Side, I think we were the Government at the time, it would have been before 1981, that streets in areas of Barbados where persons like Sir Edwy Talma and Fred Goddard represented could be named after these people in recognition of their contribution. That has been accepted in a limited way to the extent that we have designated certain roundabouts with the names of outstanding Barbadians but the point is that there are many more Barbadians apart from those who have been identified and named on roundabouts who have made contributions worthy of some tangible recognition.

I feel that perhaps the Honours Committee – I have to confess that I do not know who are the members of the Honours Committee, it is not an area that I have ever taken any interest in – should look at expanding the area of recognition, thus providing more opportunities for Barbadians who have contributed to be recognised, indeed, during their life time.

In that regard, I have been putting forward a suggestion for the last two years which has not so far found favour and I will repeat it because this is the first time that I am saying it in this House. I feel strongly that the two occasions in every year on which Barbadians should be honoured should be National Heroes Day and Independence Day. I see nothing wrong at all with that but it is not being taken on, even within my Party, and I will put it in the record, Sir, that

on National Heroes Day and on Independence Day a number of persons should be honoured.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: ...anyway, on November 30th and April 28th, it will give us two occasions. It will enable us to extend the numbers of people recognised but that may have to depend upon an amendment to the National Honours Act or some new Act but whatever has to be done to extend the categories to allow more persons to be honoured should be done.

I make the point, Sir. So far I have been a lone bird but I am going to make the point again that I think the occasion of National Heroes Day should be an occasion when a number of Barbadians should be honoured for their contributions, as well as Independence Day. So we have two occasions. I think Britain has the Queen's Birthday and Summer and New Year's Honours.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I cannot get any support for it.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy made a very impassioned plea that instead of honouring 100 people, which is going to be a once and for all honour, that we should have tried to increase that number to 200. That was discussed but the majority opinion was that it should be limited to 100.

However, Honourable Members will recall that the public were asked to send in nominees. The forms were available at every post office in Barbados and I had a check done with the Cabinet Secretary just now by a colleague and as I understand it only 121 persons were nominated but the effort was ...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Yes, but it did not stop anybody. You see perhaps if 600 people had been nominated then the Government or the people who deal with it in the National Honours Committee may feel more compulsion to expand the numbers.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I think these are matters that should be kept under constant review. As I have said if another occasion can be found during the year for other persons to be honoured, Sir, then I think that should be done.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 23 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH
– \$3 914 810

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the amount of \$3 914 810 is required to supplement the current Estimates for the fiscal year 2000-2001 which is required to finance the temporary extension to the Mangrove Landfill and the construction of a new operational area.

Honourable Members are aware that the existing problems at the Greenland Landfill which are being rectified will however, mean that for the time being until the Greenland Landfill is properly rehabilitated and able to take refuse that the Mangrove Landfill has to continue. The Government has, therefore, taken a decision to extend the work at Greenland by acquisition of additional land and the land required for the Phase III operation is 4.8 hectares south/west of and adjacent to Phase II which is owned by S. P. Musson and Sons. In order to facilitate the work at Mangrove these funds are required to supplement the transfer to the Sanitation Services Authority (SSA) which has the responsibility for managing the landfill.
12.10 p.m.

The Cabinet gave a directive on April 27 this year that the Ministry of Health should take whatever action necessary to ensure the environmental viability of Mangrove for at least another 18 months to two years. It is anticipated that within that time the problems at Greenland would have been overcome and we can move to Greenland and close Mangrove.

These funds are required for the additional work to be done at Mangrove Landfill to allow it to be properly functional and to provide adequate space for dumping until Greenland is properly commissioned.

I beg to move that this Head stand part.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, this particular supplementary is creating a problem for me for the simple reason that the landfill is to the east of a road I have to travel at least twice a day and every time I pass there is an obnoxious smell coming from it.

I think that something has to be done and we must get some commitment from the House that something will be done to solve this problem, especially for the residents of Arch Hall. I do not think that it is fair to the residents to have this continual problem. I am willing to make a prediction to this House that this problem will only be solved when the villas at Sandy Lane have been completed.

As you are aware, Sir, to the west of Arch Hall there are a number of villas being constructed which will be on the market between a period of 18 months to two years from now and it is significant that the Honourable Member said that this particular landfill will have an additional life for 18 months to two years, the same period of expectancy as the new owners of the villas on Sandy Lane.

I would understand that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas would be reading from his brief and I am informing him that it is not for the expectancy life of the landfill but for the first tenants moving into the villas at Sandy Lane which is next to Arch Hall. One can see the connection between the two scenarios. I do not feel that the residents of Arch Hall should have to put up with this situation because it is clear to me that we have not heard one single word from Sandy Lane about the smell at Arch Hall or of complaints to the Government.

I understand why the people of Sandy Lane are not backing the people at Arch Hall because they understand that if you frustrate a man you can get what he has for sale. This is all frustration to make sure that the people of Arch Hall are removed from that location and that the people at Sandy Lane will be able to buy their properties. I am saying that it is not fair, Sir.

I am warning the Honourable Member for St. Thomas to be careful of the information given to him because I am aware that there are people who want to buy the properties at Arch Hall and there is a particular man who has been commissioned to buy and to negotiate with all the residents to sell their properties at a particular fee.

You would have heard and not believed, but it is true. There is a particular man living now who has been commissioned so I do not want anybody to get the wrong impression that I mean the person I am not speaking of.

I do not feel that the masses of the country should be held at ransom and the Government should find itself where one of its agencies is helping to remove the masses of people from a particular location because it is now beneficial to those people.

I want to warn the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and I believe that all parliamentarians should be aware of this that previously, travelling on Highway 2A, you were able to see from Highway 2A to the sea and now somebody has come to Barbados and believes that he can change the landscape of Barbados so that when you are travelling on Highway 2A you cannot see the sea anymore. That will have to stop. I am calling on politicians with an interest in the people of Barbados to make sure that we understand that when buildings are constructed that they will block some of the view but I do not think that people should grade the land

Subject to those observations, Sir, I beg to move that Head 15 stand part.

to such an extent that when you are driving in Barbados that you cannot enjoy the beauty of Barbados. If you do not want to think of your own people, think of the tourists who also admire the sea and recognise that you might also be depriving the country of an economic benefit.

I am saying that this is a serious problem, Sir. If we continue to build these bridges in Barbados because of what we call investment we are going to destroy the Barbados we know and I do not think that is fair.

We just discussed something rather significant to this country. How can we honour people on one hand and on the next deprive them of having the ability to enjoy the fruits of their labours. Those people must continue to enjoy the scenery of Barbados and do not allow a man who feels that he can build from Highway I to Highway II with the intention also to buy into Highway III that he can come and destroy the whole scenery of Barbados through self-interest. I cannot as a parliamentarian stand in this Parliament and allow things like this to happen without speaking against it.

I know that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas will support a measure like this. I know him well, Sir, that he does not like it either but the problem with the Honourable Member for St. Thomas is that he is the chief link in the Cabinet and the Leader of the Cabinet as it stands today and he will have to agree with certain things in Cabinet but I am sure that when he goes to Arch Hall he will have to tell his constituents that he supports the view of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. I personally believe that the Honourable Member for St. Thomas agrees with me when I called on this House to acquire compulsorily the 52 acres of land to the east of Arch Hall to make a housing development and to protect that particular land from getting into the wrong ...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...under the hill. I believe that because he understands the importance of expanding a district like Arch Hall. When you expand a district like Arch Hall it means that there will be more land that people have to buy and the possibility of people trying to buy up a small community will be lessened.

We do not have to have a scenario in this country where the fire station will be built in the interest of the people at Arch Hall and when completed the people of Arch Hall will not be able to enjoy the benefit of the fire station because it blends in with the architectural work that is going on at Sandy Lane more so than with the village.

Mr. Chairman, we have to be careful of what we are doing and make sure that what is being done by Parliament is in the interest of the masses and not only in the interest of the "too few". What will happen is that the "too few" will

own the major resources of the country and the masses will have to wait on the crumbs, and we cannot have that.

One thing is sure that whenever we have a problem in this country the masses will always be with us and the "too few" will run from us. I am warning this Parliament that we need to look at this scenario.

12.20 p.m.

Sir, I also have another problem. Everybody knows that to the west of this landfill we have a reservoir. Sir, if one looks at the recycling plant at Brighton, one would recognise that the water which the recycling plant is using comes from the hills of St. Michael. If we have a reservoir to the west we have to be careful that the landfill does not impact on that reservoir at Brighton. Sir, we cannot continue to extend the life of that landfill.

Mr. Chairman, what worries me is that every year I am being told next year. Sir, in 1995, in a church at Arch Hall I was told next year. In 1996, I heard next year. In 1998, I heard next year. In 1999, I heard next year and now in year 2000, I am hearing that it will take two years. I would really like to know when Mangrove Landfill will be closed because as far as I know, Mangrove Landfill should have been closed since 1996. I honestly believed the Honourable Minister of Health when she said it would have been closed the following June because it was said in a church.

Sir, we now have to find out why Greenland needs \$3 million to correct the problems yet we are spending \$3.8 million to extend Mangrove Landfill. Sir, one would have thought that it would have been easier to spend the \$3 million on Greenland, pack up shop at Mangrove Landfill and go straight to Greenland.

Mr. Chairman, I can easily accuse the Government of wasting \$3.8 million on Mangrove that could be given to the Honourable Member for St. Philip South under Rural Development to build roads in my constituency and fix other tenantry roads.

The Government must find out what they are really doing because they are saying that it will only take \$3 million at Greenland so they should spend the \$3 million at Greenland and save us \$3.8 million at Mangrove because when the \$3.8 million is spent, they will still have to spend the \$3 million at Greenland. If the Government were to open the landfill that they promised the people of Barbados they would not have to extend the life of the Mangrove Landfill which will cost an additional \$3.8 million along with other costs.

Sir, I somehow believe that the Government of Barbados recognised that what the environmentalists have been saying is correct, that they have made an error in

putting a landfill in that part of Barbados. If Government regrets that decision, then the Government should come to Parliament and tell us that they have made a serious error in interfering with the views of the environmentalists and that Barbados should have had an incinerator a long time ago.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is true that Barbados should have had an incinerator a long time ago. I want to know from the Leader of the House when we are going to debate the incinerator that is long overdue for Barbados.

Mr. Chairman, I thank you.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying that I have to do some damage control. Sir, I do not know of any damage control that I have to do because all I have to do is get up and speak in this House rationally on issues such as this. I take my time over it because I have reached the stage, both in age and political wisdom, where I can speak very frankly on matters of this nature without being overly concerned.

Sir, there is no doubt that the issue of landfills has now become for Barbadians, a very divisive, political and partisan issue. As a result, sometimes we are losing a rational approach to how we manage a very vital aspect of our affairs.

Sir, the environmental protection of a small island is a very necessary matter, a *sine qua non* for proper economic development, political stability and social stability and for the health of a nation. I believe that the problem of the landfill at Mangrove has now passed from the realm that it should become a partisan issue.

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: The Honourable Member is saying that the Barbados Labour Party won the Elections but that does not matter, I am simply telling you my views on this matter. We must recognise that we must move from that realm and try to find a proper solution to dealing with the problem of garbage, sewage, *ecetera* in Barbados. Barbadians must be told that they have a primary duty in minimising the amount of garbage and raw sewage that is polluting the atmosphere of the country.

We have seen a tremendous growth in the use of plastic bags. People take those bags out their homes and cars and throw them without consideration along the streets. They are washed into the sea, they get into the system and cause problems. In my own constituency and in the parish in which I live I see that we take garbage, including old fridges,

material from our houses and throw them out for the Sanitation Service to deal with.

Sir, last Saturday in Bonnetts, the Sanitation Service Authority had to move from this area twenty seven loads of garbage including old fridges, stoves and whatnot. They have still not completed it. I am most grateful to the Sanitation Service Authority, to its Manager and the workers for the tremendous job which they have done. Sir, we started in Harts Gaps, where some months ago we had to move more than what we moved at Bonnetts. The problem of garbage does not begin with the Sanitation Service Authority or the politician. It begins in how we train ourselves and our people to recognise that we are going to have garbage but that we should deal with it properly.

Sir, some of that garbage can automatically be turned into proper use if we train our people to separate what can be reused almost immediately and recycled into the land to form part of compost, as I have seen done in other countries, without having to take it into another community in order to dump it.

12.30 p.m.

We have to preach to our people. We just cannot see the partisan politics of everything. This country needs some education about how we deal with our own environment because in the long run it is not whether the Honourable Member for St. Thomas or the Honourable Member for St. John lose their seats, in the long run it is the damage that we are doing to our community. I have seen that damage by the garbage to the reefs on the south coast and we are spending millions of dollars in order to resuscitate those reefs so that we can save the damage to our coastline and to our prime industry of tourism.

I think that we as politicians have a duty, not always to look to see whether we are going to win a Government or to get back a seat, but to tell and help the people understand that these are obligations that lie on the people. You will see in the Constitution Review Commission's Report that we have put a section in there dealing with the responsibility, not only of the State but the responsibility of the citizen as well.

Sir, I believe that you have to, until we have got it right, to have some way to put your garbage. I believe that before we reach that stage, that the Government has to seriously take on board the industries that are necessary to help us convert that garbage into proper use.

I believe that the Government must have a package. If necessary it should get involved in a sense of equity in expanding and setting up companies that are going to deal with garbage to convert its use whether it is energy, compost or export and selling the iron that we have in our country.

There was a time when people like Mr. Victor Chase and the late Mr. Tommy Miller would use those old materials and export them back to the developed countries so that the metal can be recycled just like how plastic is being recycled today. There is a strong case that can be made for this. Although I know that there are a few young people who have gone into this industry, I feel that more can be done. The Industrial Development Corporation must take a leading role and if necessary Government must put capital in it, because in the long run it is going to save the environment and minimise the health and sanitation costs that we have.

I say to our people that it is wrong for us to be expecting the Sanitation Service Authority to be all of these things, Sir. There is an educational job to be done and it has to be done in the schools, with householders and among the younger people. We householders have to take some blame for the way in which we are managing this whole issue of garbage and creating the problems that have accrued in our community environmentally.

I read the very interesting articles coming out of both the National Conservation Commission and the Coastal Project, as well as those written by some people in the media. I cannot call the name of the gentleman in particular but I can recognise him even now. This is a subject that at least one person in the media has highlighted and has been very rational about writing some of the articles that I have seen appearing and that I have followed up, Sir.

I believe that we have an educational duty through the media, in the schools and I have seen this done in Vancouver and elsewhere. I believe that the Government Information Service can do more to bring home to people the benefits that you can get from the proper management of garbage and the disadvantages that follow and how you can minimise those disadvantage, I am talking about the possible industry that can come from that.

The third thing that we have to say to our people is that until we have all the resources to deal with garbage properly, you have to put it somewhere. We have had this problem in Workmans where that caused a lot of problems in the parish of St. George. We have had the problem in Christ Church, the dump that occurred up by the Old Foundation School. We have had it in Melrose, St. Thomas, Mangrove and we will probably have it at Greenland as well.

I have heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy say that the people of St. Lucy do not want a dump there. He said that he has five dumps so far.

I have seen where there are dumps in other countries and those of us who have traveled have also seen it. After they have reached that stage, they beautify it and turn it into beautiful parks, lawns and useful to the community.

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: My own view, Sir, is that we have to get past the Greenland problem. I believe that the Government must let all of the facts hang out regardless of those facts. You have to face up to it. There is a division among the people as to whether or not the Greenland area was the most suitable site but Governments act on recommendations and make choices. If in this case the Government acted on what it thought was the best recommendation and they made a choice in those circumstances, if that choice is wrong the Government has to say to the people that we have acted on the best and we move on beyond Greenland.

My view in politics is that if you have to lose the Government you lose the Government anyway or you get on with the job. I ran a Party and lost an election and I got on with the job. You just try to tell the people the truth. I lost an election even though I told the people the truth. The truth came home to them by the March and they realised what I had said then about the economy was 100% true and we were in the hands of the IMF and the Structural Adjustment Programme, yet I was the liar of the time.

In my public life I can take that, Sir. That is why I say that the Government has to let the facts hang out on Greenland. Do not worry about who is on what side. The Government's duty is to let us have all of the facts. If a wrong choice has been made, we have to minimise what is done.

I see from the vote that part of the three million dollars is not only for the temporary position at Mangrove but also to have the third phase of the construction of the station that collects, I believe, and then goes on to Greenland. I assumed that Government has handled any problem that there is, if there is a problem at Greenland. When I spoke to the engineer, on whose word I believed at the time, Mr. Archer, when this matter was being talked about, I learnt from him that all of the proper research had been done because he was part of the research and that Greenland was suitable. I have since seen an article which I do not know whether it is a fact or not, that he has some misgivings. I do not know whether that article is accurate because I have not spoken to him since that time.

He is one of our outstanding citizens with knowledge in this field. If I were a minister and got his view and the view of the experts and I followed that and the country cannot understand that the decision we called in the light of the facts, well, I would have to take whatever the country wants to do about it. If you have acted honestly and I believe the Government has acted honestly in this regard, people have to understand that is how you have acted. You do not act wantonly in a manner such as this.

I also believe, Sir, that in the long run even if we complete Greenland, that this country has in the future to face up to the fact of an incinerator and we have to deal with that.

Sir, I remember when the issue of an incinerator was first raised, there were people who were objecting to incinerators being brought into their areas and that was part of the problem. It was not only the issue of cost, but it was like the issue of a crematorium. The crematorium at one stage was a very divisive issue. Nobody wanted a crematorium near them because in many respects they did not understand what happens. If you go back and read down through the ages, you will hear the objections to crematoriums. As a matter of fact, I have been in this House, where my good friend, the then Honourable Member for St. Michael West said that he was not going to agree to a crematorium, over his dead body.
12.40 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has got one minute to wind up.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: So that the attitudes change, and situations change. If you will give me just two minutes, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: In the 70's there were incinerators, too. They were against incinerators.

Sir, you have to give me a couple of minutes just to finish on this point, Sir.

My view is that we have to realize that as people learn more and technology progresses there will be fall out and dangers will be minimize coming from things like incinerators.

I believe in the long run that Barbados is going to have, even with the Greenland, to face up to the cost and the implications, of an incinerator.

What we must do now, is to face up to that early and let the country understand that there is a cost involved. If it turns out to be the cleanest and the best system, then we should go to it as quickly as we ought to.

We cannot allow the issue of Greenland, or Mangrove, or elsewhere, to continue to hang us in a political sphere, whilst we are losing the bigger picture of the necessity to harness our environment that we must pass on Barbados as a legacy to the many generations to come.

At the moment, my concern is that we are getting the impact from garbage and other things in our community, to the extent that we are not yet dealing adequately with our environmental problem, Sir.

I am not throwing blame at any particular government, or minister, but it is my view that the environment is a major problem for us which may be rapidly dealt with at all levels: from education to getting our people to understand that they have an obligation to themselves, to the State, and to the future.

We ought to use whatever there is to use to the better advantage by the government getting involved in creating industries and jobs out of it and if they cannot be used, then we must be able to manage and dispose of them properly.

I would hope that level of approach would be the one that whoever, whether the present government or in the future, Government will realise that those are the goals to which we must aspire.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I agree with most of what the Honourable Member of Christ Church West said, but I only seek one clarification from him.

The accusation which, in normal circumstances, I would not even respond to, about the landfill becoming a divisive political and partisan issue. It cannot be an accusation thrown at the Democratic Labour Party...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Right, I now understand what he is saying. As a Senior Member of Parliament, if he is cautioning his colleagues, former Cabinet Ministers, and others, then I agree with him because, while it is true that between 1994 and 1999, on several occasions, in a partisan way, Greenland surfaced in debates in this Chamber but after 1999, we took a different approach.

We asked the Minister to let us go and see Greenland. Well, the first Minister, much to her alleged peril – although I do not think that she should have suffered from that. She had different purposes for the dump. She was looking for people to dump in it, and she suffered the consequences. We then went and looked at the landfill.

I am not speaking as an engineer, because I am not an engineer. I am not speaking as a resident of St. Andrew. I have not lived there since the 70's. I am not speaking in any other capacity, except as a person who saw with my own eyes, and heard the experience, not of environmentalists, not of engineers, but of residents of St. Andrew, who know the

area and who, in their own, unique language and dialect, have explained to me the reason why it was not feasible to locate a landfill on that site.

Having left Greenland, I was of the view then despite what the Egyptian gentleman had to say that within a year the Government would have announced that it was abandoning the project.

Now of course, if the Government had done so, as we did with the crematorium at Warrens, which the then Barbados Labour Party criticised... It has a long history. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is a little bit selective in his interpretation of events. We wanted a crematorium in the 70's, the Barbados Labour Party opposed it.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: That is why I said "partisan", or "non-partisan". I think, as the Honourable Member said it was both parties on these issues, including myself at one stage.

For instance, I remember the Barbados Labour Party took a beating on Workmans, as well, just as the Democratic Labour Party had taken a beating on the crematorium at Warrens. We then took a beating on Mangrove and now the Barbados Labour Party is taking a beating on Greenland. It is that context that I am not singling out either Party.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: As far as I know, we have always been pro-crematorium. At one point, it was whether it was to be publicly funded, or whether you could get private sector persons to do it. That was the level of the dispute.

At one point, Bushy Park was even considered in the administration as the site for the crematorium. There had been a divide on the question of an incineration issue. That divide, however, centered on cost, at that time.

Barbados has had the resources at its disposal. The \$30 million that had been thrown, and wasted into Greenland, some of it could have been diverted. There had been other funds available to Government, particularly, its buoyant revenues from the growth in the economy and the VAT.

The Government has found other ways to finance a housing programme by bringing, either resolutions to raise bonds on the commercial market, going into partnership with the National Insurance Scheme, joint ventures with the private sector, or private capital market issues, to raise money.

The information is there and it is available. It is divestment, yes. When the Government divest the Insurance Corporation of Barbados and the Barbados National Bank,

it will be in for a large windfall.

I know that it is looking for money to build the Judicial Complex. I know it is looking for money...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, you can buy bonds out of the Public Enterprise Investment Funds, there is nothing wrong with that...

There will be a substantial sum of money in that Fund. Yet, the Government seems to want to cling. The landfill is not like the St. John's Polyclinic. The Government announced, three weeks ago in this House, in reply to Parliamentary question, that it does not propose to complete the St. John's Polyclinic.

The people in St. John do not know that yet, because the Press did not carry it, but in response to my question the Government said that the site is not suitable. Apparently, the whole of St. John is unsuitable for a new Polyclinic, that seems to be my impression. Even if they flood away the present Polyclinic, and it flows out to the East Coast, St. John will never be feasible for a Polyclinic.

It was feasible for a landfill. It was feasible for people on Sundays, driving trucks. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West lives in that constituency. A large amount of the water that we consume as Barbadians, comes from there. People are dumping garbage in Pothouse broadly. They are dumping in Bath. They are dumping in between where you live and Haynes Hill Plantation. Last week I drove through the back of Gall Hill in St. John and saw that wells, which may be suck wells or they may even be wells from which they used to draw water, are overflowing with normal household garbage. I am not talking about fridges and stoves, normal plastic bags with garbage in them. 12.50 p.m.

In St. Philip and St. John when they cut the canes, you can see the large number of people who are throwing garbage out of their cars into the cane fields in Barbados.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The only way we are going to lift the debate out of the so-called partisan divide... I do not even think it is a partisan divide, I think it is a question of a perception of the way in which resources are allocated by Government and a resistance to the use of new technologies at a high cost to the country.

People always seem to think that you do not need to build an expensive incinerator or landfill because if you leave it to them, they know how to dispose of their own garbage so they prefer to say that that money should be spent on something else. Therefore, as engineers themselves see the opportunity of giving advice to the Government on the likely benefits of a landfill over an incinerator or over other forms of disposal, you will find that there is going to be contention and there is nothing wrong with that because these are very sensitive issues, not just at the level of technological or scientific discussion, let us understand it. The money involved in the construction of an incinerator will pay some significant engineers' fees, architects' fees and there are a lot of down stream benefits and those who are pro-incinerator will be anti-landfill as long as they see money available to them. Those who are pro-landfill will be anti-incinerator.

What the Government needs to do is to find those persons who have a genuine impartial approach to the assessment of these alternatives and seek to build a national consensus on the way forward. Part of the reason why people say they do not want a landfill in their parish – and I was one who said I did not want it in St. John – is that I did not want a landfill managed the way that Mangrove had been managed down through the years, including under the Barbados Labour Party.

Sir, that is a valid criticism but when you say that there are people in here, who say you are being unpatriotic, the landfill has to go somewhere. Instead of making the point that the management of garbage disposal is what we should be focussing on and if that in itself was properly and effectively managed, nobody would complain.

If you go to St. Lucia, you will see the site of their dump, I do not even remember the name of the dump, is now Wyndham Hotel. That was a dump that you could drive on the road and look down and see the garbage, a little bit of beach and then the sea. They covered it over and it is now a beautiful site for an up market Wyndham Hotel.

Sir, I do not think that you can expect, other than a divisive partisan divide on issues of this sort because of the cost involved. The significant amounts of money that would have been spent on Greenland, the fact that as the Honourable Member for Christ Church West implied, though he did not say so, that they had been a cover-up and a withholding of the facts.

Hon. Sir Henry FORDE: On a point of order. I wish to speak on the allegation of a cover-up and what I would say, quite clearly is that there is a large segment of the country who feels that all of the facts have not been revealed to the public, not a cover-up. My view is that the Government should make all of the reports freely available, not only to

Parliament, so that the people can have all the facts. I agree with the Honourable Member for St. John that all the facts should be made available to the country.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Yes, but that is my view. That is why we asked to go to Greenland and that is why we asked that when a consideration of the review was completed that the information be made available to us. That information went to the Cabinet. The Cabinet considered it and then the Minister who has an interest in the outcome – because he is not going to want to be called incompetent – if it is successful, he is going to want to attract to himself the praise, is the person who announced the next step in relation to Greenland.

Even before that, there should have been an opportunity for the public to review that information because even when the Cabinet takes that decision, it should be taken against a background of informed public discussion. I certainly could not trust the judgment of a ministerial colleague alone in a matter such as that. We asked for the facts, we visited and we made alternative recommendations in relation to the problems at Greenland.

What happened at Greenland could have happened to any Government. Let us understand that but how you manage what happened at Greenland is a different matter. The Honourable Member for Christ Church West made a timely intervention because there has not been, in the history of Barbados, a project like this that was not based on advice.

St. Joseph Hospital, the establishment of a hospital in the north was based on advice. It was not conjured up out of the blue. There were problems, it appears in relation both to information flows and the management of the project but it was based on advice. Later on today, we may deal with a matter which again, the Government would have entered into an undertaking based on advice.

Sir, when we were on that Side, the Government would have taken the position that the Minister is to accept responsibility. All of a sudden, where the shoe is a bit tight and \$30 million have been wasted and it is clear that the project should not have proceeded, what we hear from Members on the Government's Side is that it was based on advice so the Minister is not to take any responsibility.

It is like the Millennium Dome in Britain. The man who recommended it was Mr. Michael Heseltine. He lost the Government and the new Government come in and said it was a wonderful idea, made some changes and improved it. It turned out to be a disaster and they blamed him. They went back to him. They forgot the changes that they had made, the adjustments and the money that they blew in the project and they threw it back onto the Millennium Dome and the

responsibility of the man who came up with the idea. That is all he did, came up with the idea.

Likewise in a scenario like this, I think as I say it, we cannot hive off Greenland from Barbados. It is part of Barbados. It has to be accepted that major mistakes have been made there. The Government did not make all the facts available and resisted some of the basic advice that was constantly being given.

Let us abandon Greenland and look for sensible alternatives and find the cost of meeting those alternative methods of garbage disposal in Barbados, rather than persist with the folly that this is only temporary at Mangrove and eventually Greenland will be opened. Everything tells us that Greenland cannot be pursued and let us put a halt to it now. That is my view, Mr. Chairman.

1.00 p.m.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported progress to His Honour the SPEAKER and ask for leave to sit again so that the luncheon break could be taken and Mr. SPEAKER, resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2:00 p.m. today.

Hon. R. C. EASTMOND: I beg to second that.

The question that the sitting do now suspend until 2.00 p.m. today was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.

1.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed. When the suspension was taken, the House was in Committee of Supply, to that it will now revert.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY – (Cont'd)

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This House is now in Committee of Supply.

Mr. D. T. GILL: Mr. Chairman, I would like to add my voice to the Resolution which speaks to the environment of this country.

Sir, if Barbadians are to follow the three Rs, reduce, recycle and reuse, we would not be in the position or we would not be in as sad a state as we are today. Sir, it is not

always so easy to recycle if one does not have the technology and the resources because we have seen some companies in Barbados or at least one company which attempted recycling and it turned out to be an extremely costly exercise. It takes a lot of money and you must have the volume. Sir, it is like an economy of scale, if you do not have a certain volume of garbage or disposed waste then it does not become economical to carry on such exercises.

Sir, if we look at the problem or one of the problems which I am extremely concerned about which is, where do we dispose of all the engine oils, lubricants and surfactants that are used in the island. There are several new cars on our roads and that would also imply that just as an exponential increase in motor vehicles there would be a similar increase in the use of oils and surfactants.

In addition to that, with the improvement of all our office machinery and computers, be they photocopiers or fax machines, again there are those volatile liquids which are used whether to maintain them or as part of the operation. Where are those containers disposed?

We know that in the pharmaceutical industry there is an inspector who comes around and you sign off what is to be disposed of but I do not think that such an exercise obtains with respect to our garages. We get a fellow carrying on a workshop here, he is either going to dump the used oils into the closest gutter or toss it in the closest gully. The sad state is that these oils and surfactants to which I referred have a way of getting into the food chain. You just have to go up by the Constitution River and you will see cows grazing alongside it and using the water entering the Carenage as a means of survival. We also have to look at these moieties getting into plants, be they vegetable or otherwise, which we consume. Research has shown in some developed countries that the consumption of these products either directly or as they have gone through the cycle have had serious effects on the ability of marine species to reproduce, in addition to other problems.

2.10 p.m.

Sir, quite a bit has been said on the Floor before lunch about incinerating and burial. We do not only get a political divide in Barbados, it is an international problem just as you have people with one school of thought who are psychologists, whether they be Watsonian or Freudian you have those people who are so consumed with the environment and the ecology that they have no time for an incinerator. Then there are the other people who take a diametrically different stand.

The big countries that you hear talk about the evils or the ills of incinerating have their incinerators too. I was in Germany and I am awaiting information about an incinerator used in burning, a state of the art incinerator. The ecologists and the environmentalists used to talk about the ash which comes off during incineration and they linked it to some sorts of cancer and they were concerned about the dioxins.

Sir, it has been shown that those same dioxins are present in the leaching of landfills and are found in the food chain. They have even found it in the paper products that we use in farming, for litter in parts of Western Europe where the same dioxin was used in the chicken litter and then into the pig industry and it was really one cog meshing with another cog, as it were. They suffered serious problems. I think it was Denmark and France just as the problem which arose in England with the 'Mad Cow' disease, and they had a kill off on a similar large scale problem in their poultry and pig industry.

Sir, for a small country like Barbados with limited land space we have to get it right. We have heard one engineer speak recently about the generation of energy from an incinerator. It is nothing new. It is as old as the hills. I think that Barbados could do with one huge incinerator and then maybe two subsidiary not so state-of-the-art incinerators, depending upon what they are going to incinerate.

The big supermarkets should have their own incinerator because when you go to the developed western countries you will find that they have a system of separating their garbage, what is to be incinerated is incinerated and what is to be buried is buried and what is to be sent back to the country of origin is sent back to the country of origin.

We ask ourselves where do the housing of our televisions, our radios, our computers, the polybenzenes and the polystyrenes end up. Recently you have people coming up with all fancy stories about healthy lifestyles but our biggest problem is the air we breathe and the water we drink and if you go back, those of us of the Anglican faith, I think it is either the omnia opera where consecutive verses speak about the winds and the dews and the frost and the waves and floods praising the Lord.

Sir, if those verses were written today – I almost said you would call it Ode to the Environment – but I would not like to mix up the two. I would say, Sir, it would probably be the Chant to the Environment. The person who wrote those psalms or the persons or tribes knew about what they were speaking and I think our solution is to have a comprehensive environmental Act, and I have said it more than once and the Attorney General has informed me that it is being put together.

The next thing, Sir, would be to bring all those in the environs, if we use the root meaning of environment to which this speaks, if we could bring them under one Ministry

rather than having part attached to health and part here and there. The policing and the monitoring of these problems would be a lot more simplified.

Therefore, Sir, when the psalms speak of the air, that would refer to the atmospheric science and the marine environment. They never used those words. The coastal environment and our natural water resources, something about which I feel rather strongly, Sir, if all of these were to be brought under one house as it were then, the problem as I said would not be as difficult to control or to monitor.

Sir, from the time man explored and synthesised the products which we use today, whether it is the cups, the plant pots, the houses for the televisions or the computers. From that time after the First World War there was no turning back as man sought to improve and to extend on the fabrics which he synthesised and manufactured. Sir, the landfill and the days of landfilling, particularly in Barbados, should be drawing to a close.

We should be concentrating more on where and how and what we import. As I said, Sir, I was in Germany this year and I did not come across a soft drink in a plastic bottle. I think that we have gone a little too far. There is no problem in my opinion for us to see some of those old and abandoned sugar factories which could be looked at as sites for our incinerators.

Mr. Chairman, although I support the purpose for voting for these monies here today, I am saying let this practice in the next century take a less and less important role as we go forward in other forms and techniques of dealing with our refuse and our garbage. Sir, I am most humbled and appreciative. Thank you.
2.20 p.m.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, since last year I have made a commitment to myself that I will not comment in this Chamber or publicly on matters that have to do with the Ministry of Health. This project in particular is a project which has been closely associated with me. Some might feel that it was the harbinger of my removal a year ago. I am today going to break the promise that I made to myself and make one intervention only in this debate.

Sir, the landfill at Mangrove was the first very large public issue with which this Government had to deal and certainly, it was the first controversial issue with which I was forced to deal, having come to Cabinet without any previous ministerial experience.

On or about 1993 the selection process for a landfill site started. Everybody knows that Mangrove Landfill was

christened, rightly so, by the Barbadian public as 'Mount Stinkeroo'. Three or four Ministers of Health in the Democratic Labour Party Cabinet had promised to bring it under control without any success. The search for a landfill site started and a Canadian firm, Stanley Consultants, was brought into Barbados to do a report on landfilling in Barbados and to identify a landfill site. They went hither, thither and beyond and after much searching they identified some twenty-four potential landfill sites, established objective criteria for the rating of these sites and after the application of the criteria four sites were short-listed for land filling – Blowers in St. James, Harrison's Point in St. Lucy, Lamberts in St. Lucy and Greenland in St. Andrew.

For a number of reasons, both the local technocrats and the overseas technocrats who had been appointed to deal with the project, identified Greenland as perhaps being the best suited for a landfill site. The Government of the day established a committee to look at the sites, make a decision and recommendation to the Minister which would then go to the Cabinet. The committee comprised the Ministry of Agriculture, the Barbados Association of Professional Engineers, a representative of the Chief Town Planner, National Conservation Commission, The Soil Conservation Unit, National Trust, Government Satellite Corporation and other Government departments. It was a massive committee. They met for months reviewing the sites identified. Eventually, they all came down to Greenland in St. Andrew. In March of 1994, long before this Government came to office each of them was given a remit to go back to their respective directors and agencies, discuss the matter, make a decision and come back and vote on a landfill site.

In May 1994 the committee reconvened for the vote and every agency represented voted in favour of Greenland in St. Andrew, except two. One was the representative of the Chief Town Planner who said that she had no remit from her boss and was not in position to take the vote at that time and the second agency, I do not recall at this time. I know for sure that the Barbados National Trust who were later to become one of the biggest objectors, that their representative voted in favour of Greenland.

When we came to Government in September of 1994, Greenland had already been identified as a site where the landfill in Barbados would go. In March 1995 after establishing technical committees with Government and non-governmental representatives we again reviewed all of the sites and in particular, reviewed the decision in respect of Greenland in St. Andrew and once again, the recommendations coming back from local and foreign technocrats was that Greenland was the best of the twenty-four sites to go to. It was in that context that this administration made the decision to go to Greenland.

Mr. Chairman, I wish to say that Greenland has not been the only controversial project undertaken by the Government or indeed any Barbados Labour Party

administration. Let me remind this Chamber that when it was proposed by the then Minister of Health, Freddie Miller, to put the Queen Elizabeth Hospital on its present site, it was predicted that the hospital would sink because it was being built on a bog. He was pilloried for that decision but the hospital is still standing today.

When this administration decided to build the Barbados Port there was another set of controversy which caused us to lose the Government at the time. When Tom Adams chose to build the ABC Highway, several agencies went crazy in their objections and we live to see one of the principal objectors, the late Right Excellent Errol Walton Barrow, came to have his name put on the same highway which we are now saying is over-utilised and is very much needed. Greenland is not the only Government project ever to be deeply steeped in controversy nor is it the only Government project that will stand the test of time.

This project, Mr. Chairman, has been one of the most transparent projects that any Government has ever executed in this country.

Sir, there were many objections by people who have personal interests, not altruistic interest nor interests relating to national good but personal interests in ensuring that a landfill is not put next door to their personal properties or in their backyards. Sir, let us not cloak some of these objectors with altruistic considerations because those considerations in respect of those people are non-existent.

They have been myriad letters to the Press in respect of this. They have been at least two town hall meetings, one at Bethel Methodist Church and the other at the Alleyne School. Those are the two in which I was involved but they have been other town hall meetings in respect of this project. 2.30 p.m.

The landfill has been reviewed in respect of technical decisions, in respect of design, location and suitability. It has been reviewed repeatedly by local technocrats and foreign technocrats, local and foreign experts, by people who are true experts, by people who are quasi-experts and by people who have an opinion on everything without any expertise at all in the relevant subject.

The Stanley Report which formed the basis of the decision, and indeed the review of all the landfill sites, was given to every media house in Barbados so that they could study it, pick it apart, publish it and question it as they wished. They have chosen to ignore the Report, preferring instead to print anecdotal commentary, objector remarks and all kind of things that are not necessarily based in fact. Every media house in Barbados has a copy of the Stanley Report and I believe that it is true to say, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that it

is the only Government project that any media house in Barbados can say that the Minister personally saw that they had delivered to them a copy of the consultant's report which formed the basis for the Cabinet decision.

Full particulars of the rationale for the decision and a synopsis of the Report were printed, I think, over two consecutive days, with middle page spreads in both national newspapers. An advertisement appeared in the newspaper indicating that any person who had objections to the landfill could make those objections to the relevant Government office. They could come to the relevant Government office and photocopies of the reports and other technical material were available. An Environmental Impact Assessment was done by an independent set of consultants because we did not want to use the same people who were involved in the recommendation process, given the nature of the controversy.

The Environmental Impact Assessment indicated that Greenland was a suitable site for the landfill. Then we did something that was, perhaps, new in Barbados, which is, we invited all the persons who indicated that they have objections whether individuals or representing organisations to sit on the Committee to review the Environmental Impact Assessment recommendations. Mr. Chairman, Sir, we were so transparent in respect of that process, that I gave permission for the recommendations of the consultants to be given to that review committee, to the National Trust and others. All of them sat on the Committee. They had the recommendations for Environmental Impact Assessment before the then Minister had them. So transparent were we, attempting in the process. Long livers from St. Andrew, Shorey and the various areas, were invited to comment to the consultant to give anecdotal commentary and advice of their experience with land slippage in the area.

We had another committee looking at other options for waste management in Barbados. We had a media gathering down at Greenland. There was more than one media gathering. There was one preconstruction and one post-construction. Some of these are the myriad attempts that Government made to ensure that there was transparency at every stage of the process to keep reviewing the decision all the time.

Post-construction, the criticisms and the objections continued. The last function I performed in respect of Greenland was to have employed another team of consultants to review the constructed landfill to give an opinion in respect of any defects in design, construction or otherwise before we move to the landfill. That quasi review committee delivered its report immediately prior to my dismissal from the Cabinet. I did not have a chance to make it public because as the Report came in I asked the Permanent Secretary to comment on the implications of the recommendation, so that Paper would have gone to Cabinet

before we could have made them public.

As I understand it, the review committee, by these independent consultants who were brought in for this process, not anybody who has been involved in it before and therefore had a stake or interest to be defended, have indicated that Greenland is indeed a suitable site for the landfill but in respect of the constructions, there are some construction defects which have to be corrected prior to the landfill becoming operational.

Mr. Chairman, Sir, when you build a house, before you move into it sometimes you discover construction defects. A plug may not be functional or some minor things that you may have to deal with and you may have to pay some money to have these things corrected and usually under the terms of your building contract, if in fact you have one, there is a period in which defects have to be corrected and remedied before all of the payment is made and that same consideration applies in respect of the Greenland landfill. There was a clause dealing with defects and so on that have to be operational. The view of the technical committee was that the construction defects were minor, they would cost some money to repair but they did not serve to compromise the landfill.

It is interesting that despite all the controversy, allegations that we would never have been able to get a landfill built at Greenland. After we got past that hurdle the yard stick then shifted to say that the strength of the rivers at Greenland is going to tear it open and we would not be able to operate it. That landfill has now been sitting up there for three or four years in the driest and wettest of conditions. While land all around it has slipped, the landfill remains sitting there as it was built. When the temperature outside gets very hot and I see cracks in my front lawn, because the earth is so dry during the summer, you will see some up at Greenland.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, I hate to stop you in your flow. You could have two fifteen minutes but not one thirty-minute. So I ask you to conclude this first speech in the next minute and you can come again.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Thank you very much.

At that time when the earth is saturated, that applies to Greenland as well. The fact is that the landfill has been sitting there, it has not been washed away or ended up in anybody's back yard or in the sea as has been predicted.

I would wish in the half minute remaining to make one point. I hope never to speak on this matter again because I do not consider it my responsibility to have to defend the project.

I wish to say, Sir, two things very quickly. First of all, when the Leader of the Opposition wrote to me on June 9, 2000 requesting to see the landfill, the letter reached me on the 16th June. The record shows that on the 17th June my Secretary minuted it. I wrote, in my handwriting, on his letter of request a directive to the Permanent Secretary to ensure that he saw the landfill and to speak to me about the matter. The record shows that on June 17th, the following day, that letter left the Ministry of Health Headquarters for the then Permanent Secretary. The diary also shows that on June 18th that letter with the directive in respect of letting the Leader of the Opposition see the landfill was received at the Permanent Secretary's office. I cannot say what happened between then and August 9th when I was dismissed because I was out of the country. I can only say that as the Minister I passed the letter of request on to the Permanent Secretary for him to carry out the directive. The project has been so transparent and I do not feel now that there was anything up there to hide and I have absolutely no reason to stop the Leader of the Opposition from seeing it.

In conclusion, Sir, I would say that I know what it is to honour the collective responsibility of Cabinet. It is my view now and it has always been my view, Sir, that land masses as small as Barbados cannot keep picking up 25 acres of land and large tracks of land and turning them into landfills. That was my personal view when this decision was made but as a Member of Cabinet and as the Minister responsible, irrespective of what my personal view was, I had to defend the decision of the Cabinet and I defended, Sir, to the best of my ability and in the end it cost me my job.

Asides.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Sir, it is my view that sooner or later this administration has to look at the matter of incineration which is in my view, the preferred waste management choice for Barbados. It was my view in 1995 when this decision was made and it remains my view today.

I am much obliged to you, Sir.
2.40 p.m.

Asides.

Miss H. E. THOMPSON: It is my view that sooner or later, this administration has to look at the matter of incineration, which is, in my view, the preferred waste management choice for Barbados. It was my view, in 1995, when this decision was made, and it remains my view today. I am much obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, as early as 8th November, 1994, I asked this Honourable House to consider an incinerator for this country. I told the House, Sir, and I am quoting from page 199 of Hansard:

"I am saying that if an incinerator is the right thing for Barbados, and I am hearing the figure from the other side of \$130 million. In the same way one sewage plant can cost \$U.S.72 million, \$130 million for an incinerator that we should be prepared to spend \$130 million to look after a problem that is an island wide problem, the same way, Sir..."

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The truth is, Sir, that they did not reply to what I said, because the last person that spoke after me was one Honourable G.W. Payne and he did not touch the topic. What I am saying to you, Sir, is that we must recognize that solid waste management is a serious problem in this country. The same way that we think the hotel industry is important, we need to look after the coral reef of the country, and must also recognize, Sir, that if we do not treat our solid waste as it becomes a garbage problem, that that will also impact on the reefs.

There is a belief, Sir, that once you put garbage into a landfill, that that is the end of it. But the same problem that you get from the hotels' waste, *et cetera*, you can easily get from a landfill.

As I pointed out earlier, Sir, the water at the recycling plant, at Brighton, comes from upper St. Michael and the same way that someone who now turns on a tap in Barbados might not know that the water previously used in Hinds Hill is now flowing down to the recycling plant and is being circulated somewhere else in Barbados.

I am saying, Sir, that we have to be careful how we continue to manage our landfill, because when one looks at the height of that particular landfill, one can easily recognize that we do not know where the leakage there will filter down to and anytime that we have a problem with the leakage pond, or the connection, it can end up on the West Coast.

When we toured Greenland, it was clear to me, Sir, that the information given to the experts, was that the clay being used at Greenland was different to the one being used at Mangrove and, therefore, I had to remind the gentleman that it could not be true; the clay at both places was the same but, for some reason, he did not feel that it was.

Sir, the same way that we have this problem at Mangrove, I am saying that it is quite possible to have it at Greenland.

I want to ask this Honourable House once more to recognise that, based on what I am being told about the financial situation of this country, this is the right time to deal with this particular problem.

We have a situation where our revenues are up and our foreign exchange is supposed to be at its highest level. We also have a situation where Government is divesting a large number of their projects and are getting large sums of money from them.

Sir, I am saying now that we have the money, let us deal with this problem. I do not want to hear ten years from now that we cannot deal with this solid waste management problem, because we did not have the money.

If what the Government is saying is correct, I am saying that the time is right for us to build an incinerator because, based on all the information given to us, the money is here and based on all the borrowing that have been recently done and is about to be done, I am saying, let us do it right now.

If we do not do it right now, Sir, we will not be able to correct the particular problem that we will have, therefore, no other Minister of Health should have to come to this Parliament asking for additional funds to correct this problem.

We, as a Parliament, should recognize the seriousness of this problem and must stop thinking that we can only deal with problems as they relate to the tourist industry.

There is a myth in this country that landfilling has nothing to do with the tourist industry and it is wrong. Landfilling is a problem for everybody: Barbados, as well as the tourist.

If we do not correct this problem now the same way we recognize that there is a problem with the sewage plant, and, we are prepared to spend over \$U.S.260 million on this, then, we must be prepared to spend \$130 million, as was quoted at that time but it is obvious that it would have to be much higher now, taking inflationary trends into consideration.

Mr. Chairman, I am asking this Honourable House, and those Members who sit in Parliament, to recognise we need to deal with this particular problem right now, or, we will destroy our whole tourist industry.

We cannot afford to destroy our tourist industry, because, right now, it is the only hope that we have, because, after the sale of land, we do not have another industry in this country.

As I have said before, it is tourism, and, now the sale of land. The sale of land is now an industry in this country.

I am saying that if the sale of land is not an industry in this country, whatever, we do, in solid waste, is also going to impact on that.

I am begging the Members of this Parliament to recognise, that even though, Sir, it might not look like a problem right now, I can easily recognise, two years from now, we will have a serious problem in this country.

I agree with those who have said that we cannot continue to look for 20 acres of land, whenever we have a problem, to put a landfill. We do not have the land space.

Then, why are we fooling ourselves that we do have all this land space, when, in truth and in fact, we are selling the land, and people are coming here and buying it by whole plantations, why are we going to give the impression that we have this land to play with, when, in truth, and in fact, we do not.

One major point, we have to recognise that that land is now being sold at a premium price. Whenever Government decides that they want a landfill now, they will have to pay the market price for the land. So, it is better now, to recognise that we have a problem, and to continue to play around with this particular problem.

I thank you, very much, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, we had a very, very good debate; an illuminating debate, in many ways. The former Minister of Health, I think, set a lot of the historical background to this matter in its proper context.

I wish to respond to a few points made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. In his first presentation he made the allegation that all of the residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts, are being lobbied by the developers of Sandy Lane, to sell their properties.

I wish to say that I do not have any evidence of that. What I know is, two families in Bennetts were approached, including one well known to us.
2.50 p.m.

Sir, to say that two out of the one hundred households would be all wrong. I do not have any evidence for all. I said two families, I know, that I have been spoken to about those two...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, that I have evidence of offers being known to them.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I have been into Arch Hall as recently as three weeks ago. Prior to that, one morning I went with the people from Arch Hall, Mr. Williams from Sandy Lane, the members of the Ministry of MPT and we looked at what Sandy Lane was going to do in terms of putting in an additional road in the village to give access to people near Mr. Gibson's residence to get in and out.

Three weeks ago when the Minister of Housing and myself went to the area, Sir, it was to discuss with the developers the retention of what is presently the cart road that leads from Highway 2A straight down to Mr. Carlisle Greaves' house and brings them into Arch Hall. That was the first point of the visit.

The second point of the visit was to look at where we were with the 46 lots that are being created at Arch Hall. It would be incongruous for the Honourable Member to suggest that the developers were going to buy all of the land around there and yet the Government is poised to do a development of 46 lots behind the fire station.

You have a cart road. On one side of the cart road is a golf course and on the other side is a fire station. Immediately behind the fire station there are 46 lots. I do not know if they have advertised them yet but the layout is there and it has received the Town Planning approval. I already have 51 names on a file for the 46 available spots. I do not know how many the Ministry of Housing has but these are people who have come to me so that I want the residents of Arch Hall and the country of Barbados to be assured that the Government is doing a housing project at Arch Hall.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not want to project myself. The Government is doing that, Sir, the National Housing Corporation... immediately behind the fire station. The Fire Station will be opened in February if not before. It is looking that we may do it even before but I am going to say for the time being, February to be safe. The reason why that Fire Station was built there was that for all the years that I represented St. Thomas, I was aware that the Arch Hall and Bennetts villages were threatened by fires, in at least five of the 15 years that I have been representing that constituency.

Before we had the Highway 2A, Sir, when we had canes, under the Hill at Mangrove Pond, every year the canes used to catch fire and on two occasions, the fire jumped the road, went through Bennetts and threatened the people in Bennetts and Arch Hall. I said it was not fair that the residents of Arch Hall and Bennetts should be threatened by the fire which used to catch every year under Mangrove Pond.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We decided way back, Sir, to establish a fire station at Arch Hall, not only because of the threat from fire under the hill but because Richard Gill Associates had done a study on the location of new fire stations for Barbados and recommended Arch Hall, a place in St. Lucy, Nessfield...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: ...This started when I was Attorney General in 1985, 1986 because I gave the instruction for the study to be done.

Richard Gill recommended Arch Hall, Nessfield, and an area in the south for additional fire stations. The choice in the south was between Six Cross Roads and Foursquare, somewhere in that area because of the build up of housing in St. Philip South and the Airport, we need to maintain appliances at the Airport permanently. The oil development at Woodbourne, they said they wanted one in that area. That is how we got Arch Hall Fire Station.

Sir, I responded first to the point made about the residents being lobbied to sell their houses. I do not have any evidence of that. The one thing that the Honourable Member said that I agree with, towards the end of November, it is true that because of the heavy rains there were odours emanating from the landfill because they could not work efficiently and effectively with that period of heavy rains that we had.

In fact that is on this file in the Cabinet Paper itself and there were odours that we had but generally that landfill has been properly managed since this Government has been in office.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You would get the odd flare up. I went to Israel in 1993 and on the Highway from the Port, I passed a landfill right there, smelling to high heaven. They had one in Trinidad, just down from the Hilton going back to McCouva and so on. Sometimes you smell it and sometimes you do not smell it but I am not saying that anybody has been perfect in the management of the landfill but I am going to say that this Government, particularly with the Honourable Member for St. James South who was the Minister, she was dedicated to ensuring that that landfill was properly managed and there were very few complaints. I am not saying that from time to time you would not have the odd flare up but generally speaking, the landfill was properly managed.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I wish to say this thought, there is a point, I think the Honourable Member for Christ Church West mentioned Victor Chase and M. L. Seale years ago and the point is this, something has to be done about the disposal of old metal: old vehicles, old fridges, old stoves and so on.

I do not know which Ministry deals with these matters. Why I am saying that, sometimes it is Health because they have something called Environmental Engineering, sometimes it is the Ministry of the Environment and people need to get their act together.

I know an Englishman who has been coming to Barbados every year for the last 29 years. He made 29 or 30 visits to Barbados. He has been all through the Ministries. The Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Health, the Town Planner and everybody, to put a project to them that there is a company in England which does scrap iron collection and disposal, that is willing to come and help Barbados collect all the old buses, cars, trucks and melt them down and then export the scrap iron and the ingots out of Barbados.
3.00 p.m.

I cannot get any decision. He telephoned me only the day before yesterday and said that he had to come back again, that things are worst than last year with the build up of old metals. It only cost about \$750 000 to set up a plant. You do not want more than an acre of land and you can do a joint venture with the Government of Barbados to help dispose of this thing. This is something we have got to get after.

I heard the Honourable Member for St. John talking about dumping, but he does not have any dumping in his constituency like what I have in St. Thomas in Jack-in-the-Box Gully or in Russia Gully and those places.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, Bajans gone wild about dumping, indiscriminately. But we have to tackle this business of the scrapped iron and let us get a project that will deal with this thing quickly. There are companies over the world which are interested and somebody has to take the decision to let some company come as a joint venture, partner or on their own and get it done and let us get the country clean up.

Finally, Sir, on the question of incineration, on December 01, 2000, the Cabinet of Barbados instructed the present Minister of Health to examine the feasibility and implications of incinerations in Barbados as a matter of urgency.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Well, he is the Minister, he

has to go back and get the department that will deal with it to deal with it. We went further, Sir. We also said that he should get a team to go and look at what they had in Bermuda. I understand they have three incineration plants in Bermuda and there may be an example there that we can follow. The mandate has been given to the Minister of Health by the Government to examine the matter of the incineration as one of the greatest urgencies.

With those points, I beg to move that Head 23 stand part.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 24 – MINISTRY OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION – \$16 418

Hon. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, in the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 2000-2001, the sum of \$130 000 was provided for under our Ministry for the purchase of a heavy duty vehicle, namely a bus.

Sir, this bus is intended to assist the Disabilities Unit in its effort to create a more comfortable environment for persons with disabilities and will also transport these members to various events and locations as desired and organised by the Ministry of Social Transformation.

Sir, at the time when we were preparing the Estimates, the bus was quoted at \$130 000 but when we actually placed the order the price had risen to \$146 418. The difference of the cost reflected is \$16 418 and I am asking Parliament to approve this supplementary for \$16 418 to purchase this bus for the disabled community, Sir.

I beg to move that Head 24 stand part.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

HEAD 30 – ATTORNEY GENERAL – \$1 000 000

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I am going to take a little time with this matter. I do not intend in any way to be acrimonious or to reap up the past because I think we have more important things to do now in the history of Barbados than to go back through a tissue of misfortunes. Suffice it to say that this request to the Committee of Supply for \$1 million marks the first step toward the conclusion of the Caribbean Sea Island Cotton (CARSICOT) affair.

I am not going through a whole set of the details about CARSICOT, Sir. That occupied this House with many days of debate, I believe even a no-confident motion and so on.

However, arising out of the joint venture agreement between Scothalls Ltd., the Canadian company and the Government of Barbados, Honourable Members will be aware that the entity called the Government of Barbados was placed in international arbitration this year under the rules of UNCITRAL, that is the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

On May 01, 2000, Scothalls Ltd. filed international arbitration against the Government of Barbados. In that international arbitration, they claimed not less than US\$20 million for a series of claims which I will come to. However, the matter can start slightly before the commencement of the arbitration in May because in January and early February of this year, the Government of Barbados was the subject of very negative and adverse publicity on the Internet through the *Global Mail* Newspaper of Canada and other agencies. 3.10 p.m.

The present Government of Barbados had no intimate knowledge of the CARSICOT affair but it was our duty as the Government of Barbados to try and ascertain all of the facts and to deal with the matter. The Prime Minister therefore convened a meeting on February 25th this year at which were a number of senior Government Officials, the then Director of Finance and Planning, Mr. Griffith, and the Government constituted a negotiating team. That negotiating team was led by me and consisted of former Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Albert Brathwaite, former Managing Director of CARSICOT, Mr. Clifton Maynard, Miss Valentina Blackman, Principal Crown Counsel and we were mandated to meet with Scothalls' lawyers to try and resolve the dispute.

The dispute arose under the Canada/Barbados Investment Protection Treaty, an agreement between the Government of Barbados and the Government of Canada for the reciprocal promotion and protection of investments. It was under this treaty that Barbados was taken to international arbitration.

Under that treaty, it is provided however that the parties should seek to resolve differences by alternative dispute resolution including negotiation, mediation and so on. In pursuance of that part of the treaty which calls for alternative dispute resolution, the Government authorised that the negotiating team should meet the lawyers, Blake, Castles and Graydon who are supposed to be the leading lawyers in Ottawa who were working on behalf of Scothalls to negotiate a settlement of this matter.

I said that when the international arbitration was filed on the first of May, it was for not less than US\$20 million. On June 14th when the negotiating team got to Ottawa we were presented with this document, very nicely done, the Statement of Issues and the Claims filed by the lawyers for

Scothalls. We were to meet on June 15th and on the afternoon of the 14th, I was presented with this in my hotel room. When I looked at it the claim had now gone to US\$66 million including a quick summary: legal fees paid – US\$1 117 000, this is what they are claiming against the Government of Barbados, unpaid bills – US\$300 000; travelling costs – US\$135 000; an outstanding judgment of US\$1 517 436 which I will come to; licensing fees with the Japanese – US\$2.7 million; property loss – US\$2.385million; loss of profits – US\$4.25 million and other country contracts – US\$100 000; loss of a loan – US\$200 000; trademark fees – US\$38 500 000; future selling commissions – US\$8 500 000; set-up expenses – US\$500 000; loss of reputation – US\$6 million.

I do not get excited. I am not very excitable about things at this age but I am telling you that when I saw that US\$66 million, I said that is more than the budget of the Ministries and I asked for a brandy, and had it double.

I told the team that after dinner we would work and we went through that nearly all night, each page, each claim, getting the responses. This is the most difficult negotiation I have ever had but I have news to report. We went into the meeting the 15th and we worked the 15th and 16th – very hard, tough negotiations. To cut a long story short we have been able to reduce the claim from US\$66 million to US\$3.5 million. We have advised the Government that we should settle for US\$3.5 million. I cannot see how we can get it down any further than that.

I thank the negotiating team who have supported me in this that we have done fantastically well to reduce that claim from US\$66 million to US\$3.5 million. We have to pay costs of \$600 000 on top of that.

What would be involved in the settlement? The key thing, in the claims that I read was that they were asking for US\$38 500 000 for trademark benefits. West Indian Sea Island Cotton Association (WISICO) that had the trademark in all the confusion that went on in the past. That trademark, West Indian Sea Island Cotton, was assigned to the Japanese by the CARSICOT people. That is in court in Barbados. There are four cases in court in Barbados. Now that there has been international arbitration all four cases are on hold because the Canada/Barbados agreement says that if we are having international arbitration all local cases are stayed. So those four domestic cases are stayed. Once we settle this bill all those will come to an end, so we are cleaning up.

The trademark was disputed in the courts of Barbados because Scothalls was saying that they had an absolute assignment, whereas WISICO was saying that the trademark was only assigned for ten years. That case has not been decided. It is still pending. In this agreement to settle US\$3.5 million part of that agreement is that we will get back the

trademark. It will be reassigned to Barbados so the value of that trademark is worth many millions and it will allow the cotton industry to be resurrected and I think we have to clean up a lot of this and put the cotton industry on a proper footing again.

I have been encouraged very much by the local cotton magnates, particularly Mr. Ward, to try and get this matter settled and to try and get back the trademark. I can tell you that in the settlement it is agreed that there will be a reassignment of the trademark to West Indian Sea Island Cotton Association.

Sir, to have pursued this to international arbitration would have the potentiality to break the Government, to be a never-ending drain on Government's finances. International arbitrations are not cheap and then you have to pay the arbitrator's cost, the cost of arbitration, flying people up and down and so on. It takes years and in the meantime this matter has been causing Barbados great injury particularly in Canada.

Only last week, a lawyer at the private bar told me that he had been to Canada on some promotion, I think it was in October, and he was being asked about this, what is the Government of Barbados doing because a lot of stuff was on the Internet about how Barbados sent in soldiers and took away the cotton and hid the cotton. We had a bad name. When I went to Canada for this negotiation from the 14th to 16th of June, the High Commissioner had a function for us on the Friday afternoon and he was encouraging us to settle because he said that up to then he had had four companies that wanted to do business in Barbados but then they told him they were reading all this stuff about Barbados and Scothalls and how we took away all the man's property and expropriated his assets, and that they do not want to come to Barbados now.

The Minister of Industry will tell you also that he has had that experience in leading delegations to Canada so it is important for the restoration of Barbados' image, good name and reputation that we get this matter behind us, let the rest of the world know that Barbados is prepared to settle at international arbitration according to best practices, clean up the situation, pay the people, get out and get back the trademark and let everybody see that Barbados will adhere to its treaty arrangements such as is in the Canada/Barbados Investment Protection Treaty.

I will have occasion, Sir, when we appropriate other funds to clear this debt, to speak at greater length but I felt that I had a duty to let this Honourable House know what was happening with this matter. Members would have seen it. It was reported liberally in the *Advocate* here when it first blew up in the *Globe* and *Mail* and I thought, Sir, that I had a duty.

Let me say that one of the inescapables in all of this is that Scothalls in 1990 as a shareholder... Essentially there were two shareholders in CARSICOT, Scothalls and the Government of Barbados. Scothalls got a judgment against CARSICOT which is now standing at US\$1 517 436.45 including interest and interest is running every day. That judgment that Scothalls got had to be settled and it has not been satisfied as yet.

There is some good news, Sir. It is not all going out. Since 1989 sea island cotton produced in Barbados was being shipped to Japan to two entities, Nitto Boseki Co. Ltd. and the Sea Island Co-op. Ever since then, Sir, and certainly for the last seven years we have received no accounts from the Japanese. They have been getting cotton. They have not been paying for that cotton nor have they been rendering accounts back to Barbados.

Dr. Orville Wickham of the Ministry of Agriculture was constituted by the Government to evaluate the amount of money that the Japanese owe for the cotton that has been shipped to them for which they have not been paying. He estimates it to be in excess of US\$3 million. The Japanese have alleged that they have not been paying for the cotton over the years because there were four cases in Barbados pending between Scothalls, Amersey, CARSICOT, Maynard, those whole lot of people there before. They did not know who to pay to so rather than send money that might go astray they held the money and they have held the money all these years. In September this year Cabinet gave me instructions to get the accounts verified from the Japanese. I wrote the Japanese and told them:

As you may be aware since 1990, the Government of Barbados and CARSICOT have been in various disputes and litigation.

Settlement was reached in August 2000 but there are outstanding financial matters involving your company which I have been instructed by the Cabinet to conclude. When CARSICOT began trading in 1988/89, a licence was issued to your company to use the West Indian Sea Island Association's trademark in return for your company's payment of license fees and royalties in respect of sea island cotton shipped to you.

No licence fees and no royalties have been paid by your company since 1988/89. Officials of the Ministry of Agriculture in Barbados have provided me with estimates of the amounts due and owing by your company."

3.25 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I would like to inform the Honourable Member that he has five minutes left.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: "The Cabinet of Barbados has instructed that I should forthwith seek to verify with your

company and the other company the true accounts receivable by CARSICOT with a view to having your company remit to the Central Bank of Barbados all outstanding sums due.

I should therefore be grateful if on or before September 30, 2000 you will reply to this letter, setting out statements of sums being held by your company to the account of CARSICOT in respect of outstanding licence fees and royalties pertaining to shipment of cotton to your company from 1990 to date.”

Sir, that was September 11, 2000. The Japanese refused to reply to say how much money they have holding for CARSICOT, half of which has to come to the Government of Barbados. The Deputy Prime Minister and the Honorary Consul to Japan, Dr. Peter Lloyd went to Japan last month and met with the two Japanese companies – they were there for the CARICOM/Japan encounter – and they started ‘hemming and hawing’.

Sir, only this week they have replied to me and now they want to challenge my right to write to them. I wrote and told them that the Cabinet of Barbados instructed me as Attorney General to write to them and yet they are asking on what authority I should write to them.

Sir, it is a battle but the point is that the Japanese have some money that ultimately has to come into the pot which will help offset what we are paying out in settlement. Sir, we would not be paying out all of the \$3.5 million in damages because we are expected to get \$3 million. Sir, the fine-tuning of the arithmetic cannot be determined at this time because we do not know what they are doing. The time will come when we will have to go through their accounts but the point is that they have had shipments since 1990, they have licence fees and royalties to pay which they have not been properly paying for under the agreement signed by them.

Sir, I am asking for the House’s approval to pay this \$1 million which we are appropriating today to the lawyers to Scothalls to show the Canadians the good faith and sincerity of the entity called the Government of Barbados in bringing this international arbitration to a close and allowing us to prepare the way for a proper cotton industry to be resurrected in Barbados free from all that went on before.

I beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

**HEAD 37 – MINISTRY OF PUBLIC WORKS
AND TRANSPORT – \$16 462 000**

Hon. R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move that Head 37 stand part.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to His Honour the SPEAKER, the passing of one Money Resolution in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, the Resolution was read a first and second time and passed.

3.35 p.m.

**ORDER NO.11 – TO MOVE THE FIRST READING
OF THE INSURANCE (MISCELLANEOUS
PROVISIONS) BILL, 2000**

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, this matter is really a technical amendment to the Insurance Miscellaneous Provisions Bill. This Bill goes back to 1998 when it was required that we undertake a programme of convergence in the insurance industry in relation to the exempt insurance sector, one of the offshore financial services provisions.

The matter related to providing a time period within companies, which were registered as Exempt Insurance Companies, when they would convert their registration under that act, to registration under the new provisions whereby they could register under the local Insurance Act. As it turned out, the matter of the decision by the companies in this industry as to their many options of registering under the new arrangements or continuing under the old, was primarily based on the outcome, which everyone was awaiting, the discussions on the protocol between Canada and Barbados double taxation treaty. Those discussions are still ongoing.

Therefore, having come close to the determinate date, which is given in the Bill as December 31, 2000, as the last day on which companies can make the change, we are advised that we should in fact amend this small piece of legislation to change the last date by which companies make the decision to change from registration under the Exempt Insurance Act to the main Insurance Act of Barbados to December 31, 2002. It is therefore, Sir, just a technical amendment to this legislation to give companies more time to make the adjustment and to change their status.

Members of the Chamber are very much familiar with the provisions of the Act and the convergence strategy which was fully debated by the House in 1998. I therefore simply move, Mr. Speaker, that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I will concur on this particular matter but I want to say that there is another amendment that I think that this House should make.

We are in the process of demutualisation and as I understand it, Sir, the Companies Act and the Insurance Act do conflict.

I think that it is inappropriate since we are having major discussions on demutualisation, that the Insurance Act be changed to read that instead of having a two-thirds of the members, that you have two-thirds of the members present. We do not want a situation in this country, Sir, where the majority of people who have bought into this particular company are not allowed to gain from the opportunity of owning shares in the Barbados Mutual. As far as I can see, Sir, if this particular change is not made, many shareholders will find themselves in a situation where they will be deprived of that opportunity. I am asking the Minister to take this into account, Sir, and to make the necessary change.

I believe that the Honourable Member is quite aware of what I speak and would recognise that this is very important. I do not want to have a situation where we come to this Parliament and we are operating on a piecemeal basis but we are cognizant of the particular problem. I feel, sir, that this matter should be dealt with now instead of having to come back to Parliament to deal with this matter again.

There is no doubt, Sir, that when the particular Proposal is studied, everyone in this Parliament should accept that demutualisation is the best thing for the policyholders. I would not like the masses of this country to miss out on this golden opportunity where they have the opportunity to have their policies and at the same time they can be shareholders. It is not normal for me, Sir, to advise anybody to be a shareholder in any company. The truth is that when you get a golden opportunity like this where there is no cost to you, I would ask people to use the opportunity and I think that the Minister should make the necessary change.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that the Bill be read a third time was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

On the motion of Hon. R. R. FARLEY, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on this Bill with Mr. D. CARTER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable House is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 and 2 inclusive were called and passed.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Chairman, I beg to move

that you do now report the passing of one Bill in Committee to His Honour the Speaker.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a third time.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to second that, Sir.

On the motion of Hon. R. R. Farley, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Bill was passed and cited as the Insurance (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 2000.
3.45 p.m.

ORDER NO. 8 – TO APPROVE THE GUARANTEE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE FOR THE REPAYMENT OF THE PRINCIPAL SUM OF \$15 000 000 UNITED STATES CURRENCY AND INTEREST TO BE BORROWED BY HOTELS AND RESORTS LIMITED FOR THE ISSUING OF BONDS ON THE TRINIDAD MARKET

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I must confess that I do not have a very great knowledge of this matter beyond what one sees from time to time, but I have to declare an interest. I was a shareholder in a company which was taken over by the persons who took over the Gems of Barbados.

I take no part in the affairs of this company, whatsoever, they are. In fact, any matters that come to Cabinet I sometimes declare an interest and sometimes go to the room.

Sir, it is left to me, as Leader of the House, to seek the House's approval for a guarantee by the Government for the repayment by the company known as Hotel and Resorts Limited, of U.S.\$ 15 million, to be borrowed by way of the issues of two series of bonds on the Trinidad market. The bond issue is to be secured by a trustee, made between the Caribbean Commercial Bank, and Hotel and Resorts Limited.

The proceeds of the loan are to be used for refurbishment and expansion, and working capital requirements for the property known as the Gems of Barbados Property.

Interest rate 9 percent.

In respect of the first series, \$8.8 million United States, and \$9.5 million United States, thereafter.

In respect of the second series, \$6.2 million United States, for a period of ten years.

Interest to be paid semi-annually, and, not subject to withholding taxes.

I am told that the bonds will be listed on the Trinidad Stock Exchange market.

This matter has been dealt with by the House already and this is just the formal guarantee that is sought by execution, by the Minister of Finance.

I beg to move that this Resolution be now passed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this particular measure creates some concern for me, for the simple reason, Sir, we are having the sale of two entities in Barbados, at the present moment, which is going to bring in over \$100 million for the Government of Barbados.

I have not heard, Sir, what will be done with these funds. When one considers the reported inflows of revenue and the status of our foreign reserves, one wonders, Sir, what is the policy of the Government. We are getting all the revenues that we need but, at the same time, we seem to be borrowing a lot of money. We are told that the expenditure is being in checked but, yet, we are borrowing money. I was just told that we would be paying something like 9.5 per cent. We have a high liquidity problem in the country and also a lot of money, but nobody to borrow any of that money.

Government now has the money from the sale of shares from the Barbados National Bank and the Insurance Corporation of Barbados. They have high revenues, but still, we seem to be borrowing from overseas.

I want to know, Sir, what are the plans for the money that we have? I cannot understand why someone will have a large bank account, no capital projects down the road that would absorb the large bank account, as put forward to this Parliament, but yet, every minute we are borrowing from overseas.

Mr. Speaker, I can only make an assumption. It is clear to me, Sir, that our productive sectors are not producing the way they should and that we are borrowing against that factor. On the other hand, Sir, we have a situation where we are selling large portions of land and making a lot of money. This means, Sir, that Government will be raking in a lot of money through the Property Transfer Tax, because of the increase in values of the large sale prices that they are being made Government will also be collecting a lot of money through the Land Tax Department.

We also have another scenario, Sir. The Bound rates will also rake in a lot of money, therefore, Sir, the question is, with all of these positives, why then, are we still borrowing on the external market?

I am told when I look at what is going on, that we are in for a recession because of what has happened with the United States of America Elections.

Am I to believe that we are expecting this recession to impact so severely on Barbados, that we are now making a cushion to protect ourselves against that, Sir? I can only throw out that scenario, Sir, because I have not been given the facts from the other Side.

I want to know, Sir, if I am right, or if there is something that is occurring that I am not aware of. Am I to believe that we do not expect our tourism to perform in the way it has over the years? Are we expecting a backlash because of what is happening with our relationship with London, as happened to us when we kicked out the Naval Base, Sir? Am I to believe that the sugar industry and the agricultural industry are not going to produce what we thought they were going to produce? Am I also to believe, Sir, that the off-shore sector is not producing the way it should? Am I to believe these things, Sir?

If I had to watch what is occurring within the government, one can only come to the conclusion, Sir, that this country is being prepared for something that will not be a positive measure, but will be a negative one.

If this is so, then I believe, Sir, that it is for the Cabinet of Barbados to tell Barbadians what to prepare themselves for, because what will be happening, is that the Trade Union Movement, will need now to come and tell the workers of Barbados, that they need to be guided in a particular direction.

Do you know what will also...

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Well, that is true, too. Do you know what is also interesting, Sir, and why one would have to speculate? When one looks at the timing of the sale of the shares of the Barbados National Bank and the Insurance Corporation of Barbados at the Christmas time. When one analyzes what will happen with that sale, one can only come to the conclusion that Government needed to put a credit squeeze in place and to recognize that if they were to ask for a credit squeeze, under the true guise of a credit squeeze, the whole country would be up and complaining. Someone has advised the Government the best way to get a credit squeeze, in this country, at this time, is by selling those two assets.

Do you remember, Sir, what had occurred at that time last year, when we were faced with the same problem and the civil servants had to get the 8 per cent repayment?

What was also interesting, Sir, is that last year at the same time the Unions of Barbados created a strike in the Bridgetown Port, for a couple of weeks, Sir, which stopped a large number of cargo ships from entering Barbados. That, in itself, Sir, was a positive move for the economy.

The truth is that we were not exporting anything, and it did not impact on the cruise liners, but it impacted on the movement of goods coming into the country. A point that we must bear in mind is that it worked well last year, Sir, it is clear to me, the Minister of Finance recognizing how a credit squeeze was instituted into this country, came this year and found another policy to create another credit squeeze.

I hope that I am not right, Sir. I hope that six months from now, they do not have to come and admit, as they did last year, that they had put a credit squeeze on the people of Barbados, using the Trade Union Movement and that they are not now selling the institutions to create that credit squeeze, and to remove the money that people would normally spend at Christmas time, and to move it from disposable income, into investment income column.

If that is so, Sir, then they need to level with the public, because I do not believe, that almost two years after the people of Barbados have given a mandate to a Government, that that is the way that Government should treat the relationship between the people who gave them a 26 to 2 majority, and therefore, two years after they must now come and hide what they are doing from those same people. I do not think that will be fair, Sir. That will be a breach of protocol and they would have created a protocol relationship with the people of Barbados at the General Election time. Sir, it now appears to me, that those people were only needed when their votes were needed and now that relationship has been divorced.

I do hope that I am wrong on this particular matter, Sir. I thank you, Sir.
3.55 p.m.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, he hopes that he is wrong. He is wrong.

Over this Side, Sir, there seems to be either a lapse of memory or a senile moment on the part of the Minister of Labour because he asked me if the Honourable Member for St. Lucy shadows finance. I said to him, yes, F I N E (one word) A N T S (another word).

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I think the display that he gave, Sir, has told us that he could not really hope to supplant and supercede the Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Sir, on a point of order. The Honourable Member should withdraw those remarks for the simple reason that last year around this same time when I warned the Honourable Member that he was printing money, he explained to me and agreed with me that he was printing money. Sir, but he then disagreed even though in his explanation he was right, he then disagreed that he did print money that it had to be the Central Bank people.

Based upon that, Sir, if anybody has to be 'fine ants', it would have to be the Honourable Member for St. Thomas because I knew what he was saying, even though I was not speaking it for him but he was speaking something that was too high for him.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: All square, Sir, and on that note of levity, Sir, and in the spirit of the Season, I beg to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, that concludes Government's business for the day and the year 2000.

In moving that this House be adjourned to January 16, 2001, I wish to take this opportunity, Sir, to wish all Honourable Members a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year.

This has been a year, Sir, in which all Members have worked exceptionally hard. I wish however to say that my job as Leader of the House has been made comparatively easy because of the co-operation which I have got from both Sides but especially the Honourable Members of the Opposition.

They are just two and life can be very difficult for them. We have tried to accommodate them as much as possible and made sure that we do not hold meetings on days that are not convenient for them. On the other hand, they have responded by taking full part in debates, Sir, and being co-operative when we had to ask for co-operation in order to facilitate some measures. It has made my job easy so that I have been able to talk to them in advance and say we would like to do so and so tomorrow. Sorry we have not given you adequate notice and I want to put that in the record of the House because I think that the spirit on both Sides of this House has been excellent.

I have read the comments in the newspapers about the elevation of Sir Lloyd Sandiford and one of these days when

one is not in here, one will have to perhaps speak and write about these things.

One of the essential differences that I have found, Sir, in my 24 years – in February I would have done 25 years – is that over time we have moved away from the feuding, the bitterness. When I talk about bitterness, I mean really bad, deep-seated bitterness that characterised this Chamber when I first came in here in 1976, when I saw a Member of this House draw a gun to shoot another Member and it took George Ferguson to intervene and restrain that. The differences that there were between politicians in those days, Sir, went beyond differences in policy. There were very personal attitudes held by the parties and we have tried over the years to move away from that.

One thing, Sir, and I think that has worked to Barbados' advantage is that we can still speak to each other, across the Floor, behind the Speaker's Chair, down in the dining room and so on. In some countries of the Caribbean that cannot happen. You would get poison. It has been an aspect of our democracy that I think has helped us mature as a people.

The Honourable Member of the Opposition said some very hard things about me this year, publicly but that is part of the game. You are in it so you take your public blows but that does not stop me from speaking to him, Sir, or even having a drink with him.

Sir, as I said, over the years, we have moved, I believe on the part of some of us, consciously, from the old time politics where people on different sides were prepared to fight and curse, to a stage where we can disagree now strongly, at the level of policy but yet do not carry it to the point where we want to get into violence.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I do not think we need to go back to that. We can maintain our strong positions as parties but at the same time, it is part of a trend. It may all be happening with the shift from clearly defined ideologies that existed when I came into Parliament, the difference between capitalism, socialism and communism and the breakdown of the barriers, the blurring of ideological lines and so on, may perhaps be one of the things that is taking the heat out of the situation.

Sir, I just said that in passing because I feel strongly that this Barbados Labour Party, since 1994 has brought a different approach to politics in Barbados, an approach to politics which recognises that there is a way to include persons within the political process, while maintaining the political divide or party divide.

4.05 p.m.

I see the new President, President Bush is talking about that, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, we have done a large number of Bills and Resolutions this year. I cannot give the figures, Sir, I thought we had them to hand, but all this work has been done expeditiously in the interest of the people of Barbados whom we are re-elected to serve. This would not have been possible, not only without the co-operation of all the Honourable Members but it has been made entirely possible, Sir, by the way in which you have conducted the proceedings from the Chair and indeed the Honourable Chairman of Committees. There has been no acrimony and I think that the House has paid due regard and respect to the offices of presiding officers.

Sir, it seems to me that this year – I just got the note from the Clerk at the Table, Sir, – we have done approximately 40 Bills, 20 Land Resolutions, 23 Money Resolutions and 19 other Resolutions. These would not include Estimates and Budget and so on, which is a substantial amount of work that we have knocked off this year. This is one of the most active Parliaments in the Caribbean, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I am saying that the part which the Clerks have played in facilitating our work this year ought to be documented. Indeed, we could not have performed, as I am going to say, so satisfactorily, and I am not being immodest about it, were it not for the support of the administrative staff, the clerks, the reportorial staff and all of those who serve us whether at the administrative level or even at the culinary level. I have to thank all persons but particularly those members of the staff of Parliament who have been called upon from time to time outside the normal call of their responsibilities to chip in extra and they have never, never let us down, Sir, and have always been very willing.

I look forward next year to similar satisfactory performance by our Parliament of which we are all very proud. There will be a number of substantial pieces of legislation coming, starting first, most likely, with the Electronic Transaction – E-commerce – legislation. The Bankruptcy Bill is finished and is just being fine-tuned. The new Securities Bill, quite a thick piece, is ready. Employment Rights Bill should be in the House within the first two months of next year and there are a number of Bills arising out of this year's Budget such as new Pensions legislation. The Mutual Funds legislation will also be laid, then we have the Police Complaints Authority legislation which I will be prepared to do in January as well as the amendment to the Police Act, to provide a more modern framework for the Police Association to conduct their business.

Asides

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, with those remarks, I repeat again my best wishes to all Members of Parliament. I thank you, Sir, and the Deputy Speaker who substituted. I look back for him and I did not see him in his place at first. When you were not with us for some months, I think I can say that he did very well deputising on your behalf, Sir. The Chairman of Committees and all other presiding officers, Sir. The other presiding officer who substituted for the Chairman of Committees, I must not forget anybody, Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, he deputised on a couple of occasion, Sir.

I wish all Honourable Members and their families a very happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year. I am obliged to you, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, if I could crave your indulgence to second the Resolution which the Honourable Member for St. Thomas moved, let me join with him in thanking the members of staff of Parliament, the Clerks at the Table, members of my staff and others who have assisted us in carrying out our duty during the course of this year and to you, Sir, for guiding this House as well as you have done.

I too hope that we could continue with the work that has been started during this year. We also had apart from what was formally on the Agenda of Parliament, the Joint Select Committee on two Bills which reported. We also had obviously obligations by way of Committees and hopefully in the new year we could have an early debate on the Private Member's Resolution in respect to the quorum for the Public Accounts Committee so that we can get the work of the Committee moving at a swifter pace.

I think we have done a lot of work this year. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas would obviously be surprised that at least with respect with his communication with us that he gets such good support having regard to the fact that in this session we were described as coming from a tradition of wild boys, goons and ruffraffs which I know, Sir, you would not yourself believed.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I know the Honourable Member for St. Thomas has not had that experience with us. When it comes to the discharge of parliamentary business we can set an agenda the day before, without arbitrators to determine what we can get through, on the telephone. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is one of those parliamentarians, I have noticed from my parliamentary experience, who is ever ready and able to debate any issue, at any time, no matter the conditions. If the lights go out,

the microphones went off or they were other disabilities, you can rest assure that he would be ready which makes my work easier as Leader of the Opposition. If more parliamentarians were as eager and as equipped to ensure that the work of Parliament continue as I say in those condition.

4.15 p.m.

We have had members in this Parliament who during the course of the year suffered the misfortune of brief but nevertheless difficult illnesses and we are very happy that they were able to get over them, not the least of whom would be yourself, Sir.

I am glad that you are with us today to be able to adjourn this House and I hope that the hectic pace that we set for you would not in anyway diminish your future health and I expect that we will have an exciting year next year. I wish you and your family as well as the staff and their families and all of those other persons, the people who provide us with refreshment, the members of the media who cover, the policemen who give us security here at Parliament and are always helpful and courteous, the marshals, the reporters and even the members of the public gallery for their support and encouragement for the work that we do here in Parliament.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before adjourning the House, let me on behalf of the presiding officers and myself wish all Members a very happy Christmas and a prosperous and happy New Year. I believe that this year has been once again one of very good co-operation on behalf of all Members so I thank Members on both Sides for giving us, the presiding officers, all the assistance that we would have required in conducting the business of this House, which reminds me that tomorrow night while you begin to enjoy your brief break, St. Michael Central at Bank Hall has the annual Christmas party.

I notice that some of you have taken tickets. Never mind, you would not have paid as yet, you can still come along. You can pay me later. That was brought to mind because I saw a transaction going on.

I thank all Members. This year is one that I will always remember because of my very serious illness and the kindness shown to me by Members on all Sides. I do not think that I can very easily forget that. It is said that men do not show that they care, but I must say that this was an occasion that all the Members did show very much concern about my health and I am glad to be back and I thank most sincerely the Deputy Speaker who I understand did an excellent job which I know that he is quite capable of and,

of course, the Chairman of Committees and all those who presided while I was not here.

I do not think that I am operating 100 per cent as yet but I am hoping with God's help that I would be in good health and up and ready when we begin next year. I will get a lot of rest to make sure that I will be able to stand up to the occasion when it arises.

Let me also thank, on behalf of the Members, the Clerks for doing an excellent job. I believe you do recognise that this year for the first time in many a long year we had some new officers, and the business of our Parliament has continued, of course, with the help still of Mr. Brancker. We always would want to thank him and the new and old members of staff and Clerks of Parliament.

Also, of course, the reportorial staff and all the other staff members, I thank on behalf of the Clerks, the other presiding officers and myself and a very special thanks I have to say for the Opposition members. The Leader of the Opposition whom I have always found to be extremely co-operative and I think I was fortunate some time this year to be in company overseas with the other member of the

Opposition and he did show that he was a real nationalist at heart and a true campaigner for Barbados.

During the next coming weeks as we celebrate our Christmas holiday, I believe that we will be attempting to get a rest. I know that is not so possible because all of us have planned some kind of activity for our constituencies and we will be very busy with our constituents. I sincerely hope that you get some rest and by January 16th you are all rejuvenated and ready once again to continue this business of our Parliament which we really must congratulate ourselves for conducting in such a way. That is why I have always maintained that our Parliament is still one of the best organised and the best run one, irrespective of what you might hear on the other Side, here in the Caribbean and in the world.

I wish everybody all the best. Without more ado, I would like to adjourn this Honourable House to January 16, 2001 at 11 o'clock in the morning.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.

4.25 p.m.

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