
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1999 – 2004

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, June 20, 2000

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, June 20, 2000.

PRESENT

His Honour J. M. EDGHILL, J.P., (Deputy Speaker)
Hon. Sir Henry FORDE, K.A., Q.C., M.A., LL.M.
(Cantab.)

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.) (Prime Minister, Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs) (Minister of the Civil Service)

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

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A.

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

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.), LEC (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, Community Development and Sports)

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. N. A. LYNCH, B.Sc., M.B.A.

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

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

Prayers were taken by Canon Father Ivan Harewood.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Minutes of the last meeting of Tuesday, June 13, 2000.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to move subject to any amendment that the Minutes of June 13, 2000 be taken as read.

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

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY HIS HONOUR THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have before me the Accounts and Statements for the month of August, 1999 as prepared by the Accountant General.

PAPERS

Rt. Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay:

The Report of the Social Investment Fund for the quarter ended March 31, 2000.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the rest of today's sitting. In so moving, Sir, I remind Honourable Members of the Chamber that due to prior agreement the debate on the Fair Trading Commission as well as the Utility Regulation Bill will be debated as one in a consolidated manner. We have had agreement on the fact that there will be telecasting of this debate for the duration of the speeches in the said debate.

With that, Sir, I beg to move that those Standing Orders previously mentioned be suspended for the rest of today's Sitting.

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

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

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

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

ORDER NO. 3 – TO MOVE THE SECOND READING
OF THE FAIR TRADING COMMISSION
BILL, 2000

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was approximately some 35 years ago when a group of very bright Barbadian men and women spanning the political divide of this country, decided that the time had come when Barbados had to have its own Constitution and it was accordingly prepared which was largely a socio-political Constitution. That Constitution in my view has served this country well. But recently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you would recall that a debate began in this Honourable Chamber to ensure that reform was carried out in relation to the provisions of that Constitution.

I am pleased and honoured today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to stand here before this Honourable Chamber charged with the responsibility of introducing fundamental and

revolutionary legislation which will play a very pivotal role to the rewriting of the economic Constitution of this country. As you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Government has decided that the Fair Trading Commission will replace the Public Utilities Board. Before I go into detail, I would like to publicly acknowledge, although I will do so in greater detail later, the assistance that the Ministry has received in the preparation of the process to get us where we are today. A wide cross-section of the Barbadian community made significant input into the process and I think that from the outset I want to commend them both those who complimented the work of the Ministry or those who from time to time criticized it. I would like to start at the beginning and without being too long to give some details in relation to the thinking of the Government when it decided to establish a Fair Trading Commission.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, from around the mid-1990's, Barbados had been faced to take certain measures to deal with serious changes that were taking place around us. Firstly, there was the advent of the World Trade Organization which in terms of world trade meant a move away from a system based on preferential access and quotas to one based on reciprocity. Despite our efforts to get our major trading partners, particularly the European Union, to extend the old arrangements that were in place in relation to preferential treatment, the time would most assuredly come when that system would be abandoned.

Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, with the plan of an inevitable advent of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy, it means that added to the right of countries in the region to liberally trade in goods that there will now be a right to ensure that there is movement of capital and a movement of businesses around the region, and the right of business from one country to establish in another country.

To deal with these challenges which clearly indicated that around us business was not as usual, it was decided that we could no longer do business as usual in Barbados either. Therefore, a number of policy measures were embarked upon by this Government. I am just going to mention two of them.

First, this Administration decided that it had to maintain and did in fact maintain sound fiscal policies, whereby we have been able to keep our fiscal deficits within acceptable limits. Secondly, there was massive reform in relation to our taxation system given that changes in the international trade meant that we could no longer continue to rely on duties that we would have earned as a result of imports. We had pursuant to commitments to the World Trade Organization also to replace the systems of licences and non-tariff barriers with tariff barriers which were going to be substantially reduced with a consequential significant decline in revenue. Therefore, we had to reform our taxation system in such a way as to broaden the base of tax and at the

same time lower the rate of taxation which saw the introduction, for example, of the Value Added Tax system.

Those are just some of the areas of reform that we embarked upon. These were things that we did to honour our commitments and meet the challenges faced at the international and regional levels.

Clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, further action was required and needed at the local level to provide for Barbados' sustainable development. Barbados has to move to what the Prime Minister refers to as second generation reform or sectoral reform to enhance the capacity of our productive sectors in order to make them produce more while also being more efficient in the production process. We need to be able to compete in the context of globalization, particularly to compete with international businesses who have had years to learn by experience about functioning effectively and competitively in the context of market conditions and forces that do not obtain in Barbados.

We in Barbados do not have the time that those in the businesses in the international arena have. Globalization is now upon us and it is very necessary to increase the capacity of our productive sectors, whether it is in the area of tourism or manufacturing or whatever, the fact is that those sectors will not and cannot be expected to maximize their potential unless certain factors are dealt with. These factors include the absence of any real market forces in Barbados and the abuse of dominant positions held by companies and oligarchies in this country. A factor includes also the cost of doing business in Barbados, particularly the cost of utility services which are provided as you are aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by monopolies.

These things serve to prevent entry into the market by a number of enterprises and entrepreneurs who are willing to do so and, as a result, there are no improvements in efficiency. Therefore, a number of willing businesses and, of course, the welfare and interest of the consumers are marginalized and left behind in the process. It was in that context that a decision was taken by this Government that a number of areas needed to be critically looked at. These areas are centred on a need to look seriously at the system we had in place in Barbados in relation to the regulation of utilities and monopolies with a view to modernising and reforming that system.

11.25 a.m.

There was clearly a need to look critically at the area of consumer protection and there was the need to look at putting rules in place to ensure that there was free and fair competition among businesses in this country. After a study was done by a reputable, regulatory firm in the United

Kingdom, namely, London Economics, in relation to the operations of the Public Utilities Board and recommendations that were made in relation to the change that should take place, this Cabinet decided that it would abolish the Public Utilities Board and replace it with a Fair Trading Commission with enough responsibility for the administration of legalisation not only in relation to utility regulations but also in relation to consumer protection and serious competition.

From the outset, Mr. Deputy Speaker, given what I have just said, it ought to be clear to all of us, the Barbadian Public, that the Fair Trading Commission is an issue-oriented type organisation. It is a people's organisation. There is nothing abstract about the Fair Trading Commission. It is going to be very intrinsic to our existence. Based on my presentation today you are going to see that it will bring about fundamental and radical change to the way in which things that affect us are done in Barbados. It is going to bring about changes that will take effect, in my submission, forever in this country. Barbadians have to start to see the Fair Trading Commission as exactly that.

What I propose to do is to deal with these three areas I just mentioned in some detail and I want to deal first with the issue of utility regulations. In Barbados and, indeed, in most places in the world when you speak of utilities you are primarily speaking about monopolies. In Barbados, the Barbados Light and Power, BARTEL, BET, Barbados Water Authority etc. provide utility services and are all monopolies. The simple truth is that once you are a monopoly, and I make no apology for saying it, that there has to be a trade-off and the trade-off has to be regulation. Monopolies have to be regulated and they must be prepared to accept that regulation is the price that they must pay for what some may refer to as the privilege of being monopolies in any country. Regulation is a must in the case of utility companies, particularly since one of the consequences of being a monopoly is that consumers have no choice.

Regulation of utility companies is not only a very serious and highly technical undertaking but any regulatory agency through the decisions and the orders that it will make plays a very significant role in the economic life of any country. The fact is that the current legislation in Barbados covering the regulation of the utility companies was passed some 45 years ago and while the then legislators would have taken into account the economic, social and political conditions prevailing at that time the fact is that since the fifties utility planning and regulation have undergone many changes in many places and Barbados as a developing country cannot allow itself to be left behind in the area of the regulation of utility companies, particularly if you are to maximise the benefits of the very good infrastructure that we have in relation to telecommunications and electricity and transport.

There is no denying, and this strengthens the point that I am seeking to make about the antiquity of the legislation, that there are a number of problems that have plagued the area of utility regulation in Barbados over the years which need urgently to be dealt with.

I am now going to highlight some of these problems and say how they will be cured after the Fair Trading Commission and Utilities Regulation Acts and any attendant regulations are brought into being. You will see exactly how the Fair Trading Commission will be impacting on the lives of ordinary Barbadians.

First, Mr. Deputy Speaker, arguably the current legislation provides only for the setting of rates and does not at all deal with the question of the regulation of service standards to be observed by utility companies. Clearly, the quality of service must be an integral part of utility regulation and what is worst is that currently the Public Utilities Board has no teeth, no power to deal with poor quality of service provided by utility companies. This is obviously unsatisfactory.

When proper standards of service are not being provided, it means that the quality that the consumer is expecting to receive is being compromised and in effect the consumer is being shortchanged in the process. Quality of service is particularly important, especially, as I said earlier, in the context of monopolies, consumers have no choice. The residents of Eden Lodge, Cave Hill, Grazettes, Whitehall, Husbands Development, Clermont or wherever else in this country that matters have no...

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: ...Those are the important parts of the country.

They have no alternative in monopoly markets. They cannot decide to switch to an alternative supplier of the utility service because there is simply no other choice. We all have to use the telecommunications provided by BARTEL, the water provided by the Barbados Water Authority, the electricity of the Barbados Light and Power. Those organisations must constantly upgrade the quality of service that they provide and therefore provide value for money.

What the Fair Trading Commission will now be empowered to do, unlike what the Public Utilities Board cannot now do, is to set quality of service standards. Of course, there will be some process of consultation with the Fair Trading Commission and the utility companies before standards of service are finally set. The Commission will be required to monitor services, to monitor compliance by the service supplier with the standards and also they will be

empowered to impose compliance with service standards with the imposition of penalties for non-compliance with the standards.

I would just want to give some indication as to what we are speaking about when we talk of service standards in relation to some of the utility companies. If you look, for example, at electricity services I believe you will agree with me that when we are talking about quality of service standards discussion will evolve around things like time limit in which interruptions of service will have to be restored, the number of days' notice to be given to customers before, not after, interruptions of service take place and the time frame within which voltage complaints and meter problems or even the provision of new supply must be dealt with. Those are important matters that will occupy the attention of persons who set quality service standards in relation to electricity services.

In relation to telephone services, again, invariably, you will have to look at the length of time that it takes a customer to have a phone repaired; the quality of voice over the telephone; the length of time it takes to get a service in the first place.

I have been going around my constituency. I remember clearly a few weeks ago a lady told me that she had applied for a telephone service about a year and a half ago and all of her neighbours had telephones but for some reason she was unable to get a telephone. Despite repeated protests, no satisfactory explanation was given, yet she has been without a telephone for one year and a half. There are other cases, I am told where there are persons actually listed in the telephone directory by name with a number next to their name although they have no telephone service. All these things will be addressed when you look at the quality of service that has to be provided by utility companies: the length of time it takes to get the service; the level of interference whilst you are on the telephone; ease of access to operators and so on. Those are going to be issues that will be addressed.

11.35 a.m.

Secondly, although, as I have said earlier, it is important for the Public Utilities Board to set rates, even then the rate setting mechanism that it uses is very archaic and must be changed. Right now, the method used to set rates is simply what is referred to as the 'rate of return regulation'. This simply means that in fixing a rate all you are looking at and guaranteeing for the investors in utility companies is a certain return on their investment. There is no incentive whatsoever under such a regulatory mechanism for any utility service to think about having to become efficient because they are guaranteed a certain return on their investment. It means that all increases in the operating costs of utility are just automatically passed on to the consumer.

Under the Fair Trading Commission there is going to be a gradual move away from that archaic type system for setting rates to an incentive compatible type base where concepts like price caps or profit sharing will be introduced where utility companies will be encouraged to make huge profits if they wish. If they can become efficient, they will make huge profits but if they cannot become efficient, they will have to simply fall by the wayside. By encouraging efficiency they will be encouraged to make huge profits but they are going to be required to pass on a share of those profits back to the consumer in the form of lower prices. That is going to be the new type of rate setting mechanism that is going to be used. There is no justifiable reason for asking a consumer or a user of a utility service to pay for all the 'fat' with all the inefficiencies that exist in relation to utilities. This approach that is going to be taken will place emphasis on efficiency and will serve to cut out the 'fat' that currently exists in utility companies – that is the approach that will govern our modern regulatory system.

Of course, any well thought out and modern policy in relation to the regulation of utility companies must have at its core the long-term sustainability of the service by ensuring that investors earn a proper return on their investment. It must also ensure and promote the efficiency, whilst at the same time also ensuring that the utility companies provide maximum and optimum quality to the benefit of the consumer. What I have outlined, clearly, is compatible with that policy that has to exist once you are talking about policy in relation to the regulation of utility services.

Of course, reform in relation to rates and quality of service standards is extremely important if you are to enhance the competitiveness of Barbados and to reposition Barbados in the global economy. The fact of the matter is that the costs of utilities constitute a very integral part, not only of a household budget, but it also constitutes a significant portion of the cost of doing business in Barbados whether by local or foreign investors. There are other factors that impact on the cost of doing business in Barbados, for example, rental costs and because of the boom in this economy and the consequential rise in real estate values, rental costs have gone up and it is an added cost that businesses now have to face. When other things like that are happening the burden is even heavier on a regulator to ensure that prices of the utility services are kept to a reasonable minimum and that the quality of service is at its highest so that we can attract investment to Barbados and, of course, promote the expansion of our local business sector.

The third problem, Mr. Deputy Speaker, which I wish to refer to that plagues the regulatory process has to do with the procedure for hearings before the Public Utilities Board. These procedures, as you may well be aware, Mr. Deputy Speaker, are very long, cumbersome, long-winded and expensive. The expenses, of course, are always ultimately

borne by the consumer – me and you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to bear these costs.

There was an instance in Barbados where one hearing lasted 37 days. There were some 3 426 pages of transcripts, 190 exhibits and 12 witnesses were called. The cost of the hearing was \$3.5 million, the cost of the review \$376 000 and to top it off it went on appeal to the High Court where I think another \$350 000 were incurred in costs again. Over \$4.5 million went in relation to that one hearing alone because of archaic procedures and systems that were in place. That, obviously, cannot continue.

Hearings now have to be streamlined to ensure that we do not put the consumer through that additional expense ultimately. What will happen, as you will see in the Utilities Regulation Act, is that when any service provider – as utility companies are referred to in the legislation – makes any application for any increase in rate, they will have to set out at the time of making the application, among other things, the justification for the increase that they are requesting and any other information that the Commission will deem necessary.

In this case that I have just mentioned objectors, I was told, roamed all over the place, putting all kinds of scenarios to witnesses and by the nature of their objections protracted the hearings as well. Objectors are going to be required to submit in advance of the hearings the objections and any requests they want to make for information. Similarly, they will have to make it, writing it in advance of the hearings and at the hearing they will be constrained by certain time limits to present their arguments. Of course, they are going to be bound by the requirements that whatever they say must be on point.

Very interestingly and importantly in this regard is going to be the introduction of public counsel to assist consumers with presentation of their arguments before the Commission.

'Public Counsel' is referred in the Utilities Regulations Act as legal aid where persons who wish to be heard before the Commission and who would and should recognise that they may not be in the best position to articulate their own causes will be able to resort to the assistance of public counsel who will help them to prepare the case.

Also, where there is more than one objector, who essentially will be saying the same thing, public counsel will be able to advise on the consolidation of the action, prepare necessary documentation, go before the Commission on their behalf and argue a matter on their behalf. Public Counsel will not also play a role in assisting the consumers who use utilities for domestic purposes but will also by his knowledge, because he has to be a lawyer, be ensuring that the hearing will not wash far and wide and, in fact, be significantly streamlined.

The last point which I wish to make in relation to the area of utility regulation is that whereas now in Barbados there are only two utility companies currently regulated which are Cable and Wireless/Bartel and the Barbados Light and Power Company, other utilities are going to be added. These will be Cable and Wireless/BET and I just want to say that I think that the system of regulation in relation to Cable and Wireless/BET is the most shameful type of regulation that could possibly exist. The Honourable Member can correct me if I am wrong but as far as I understand an initiation of an application for a review of a hearing must come from BET. I am not sure that the Minister himself or anyone else can initiate a review of a rate.

There is no requirement whatsoever... then there is no requirement whatsoever for any economic or accounting analysis, there is no requirement for any sort of accountability, it is simply left up to the Minister in his total discretion to fix the rate for overseas calls in this country. 11.45 a.m.

Although I have every confidence in the integrity of the current Minister, the fact of the matter is that we never know in whose hand such powers can fall. Therefore that is why I said that the system of regulation in relation to Cable and Wireless and BET is currently the most unsatisfactory type of regulation that you could ever want to exist in any country in any part of the world. So, BET is also going to be brought under the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission, the Barbados Water Authority, Natural Gas, Transport Board, all these things as well, are going to be regulated under the Fair Trading Commission.

Government and non-Government organisations are to be regulated by the Fair Trading Commission. This is important because ordinary Barbadians need to be part of the process in determining what they have to pay for the provision of utility services. Barbadians have to be part of the process. It simply is not good enough for Barbadians to wake up one morning and read in the newspapers that bus fares, telephone rates, or water rates, or electricity rates have gone up. Ordinary Barbadians, like myself and you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, must always feel and know that we are central to the process of determining what our cost of living is to be.

By ensuring that these entities now currently unregulated, at least certainly not scientifically regulated, will now be brought under the Fair Trading Commission, we are ensuring that Barbadians will have a chance to have exposed before them all the facts relating to all the operations of all of these entities. Although there is a provision in the legislation for private hearings, in certain circumstances, there is still going to be a heavy dependence on public hearings, because Barbados, culturally, is

accustomed to it and it provides, significantly, for transparency in the process.

It must be necessary at all times to have exposed the view of all Barbadians all of the issues relating to the operations of these utilities, so that consumers can see how much fact there is, how much inefficiency there is, to play a role, have a right to object, have a right to be heard, so that in the final decision he would know that he was involved in the process and at the end of the day he will be able to live by whatever is the decision of the Fair Trading Commission. A very transparent process, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Government will not be able to hide behind any banner of being Government. Government is the Barbados Water Authority, Transport Board and NPC. All of them will have to expose their operations blatantly before the people of Barbados and everyone will have a right to play a role and object to whatever it is that they are requesting.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that you now have some idea, as I said earlier, that the Fair Trading Commission is a people's organisation. It is not something that is going to exist separate and apart from our daily existence. It is intrinsic to our existence. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that I may well have exhausted the points that I want to make in relation to the regulation, except to say that those other utilities that I mentioned that will come on stream, of course, will come on gradually because before you can regulate a sector properly you have to know the problems that plague the sector. Already Government has commissioned sector studies in relation to the water and gas sectors of Barbados, and I think that one in particular maybe well advanced at this stage. That concludes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, my comments in relation to utility reform.

Having made, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the decision that there will be utility regulation, consumer protection and fair competition, a decision was also made that all of these areas will be governed by the Fair Trading Commission.

I want to spend a few minutes on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because initially one institution, the Barbados Light and Power, who I must admit was always very reasonable, restrained and cooperative in the process of consultation that we had... I must mention that, at the very beginning they were taking the point that all three areas should not be dealt with by the same institution. They did not go on, as far as I am aware, to put it in writing when they were asked to and did in fact, submit any written comments on the draft at any stage. They did, in fact, make the initial objection and felt that it should be separated.

This Government and the Cabinet decided that it could easily be justified on a number of reasons. Firstly, one

of the things that has always gone against the Public Utilities Board was the smallness of its size and the fact that the very infrequent and sporadic nature of the work that it had to do. Unless you can expand the scope of activities, there was no reason for the Public Utilities Board to invest in establishing the procedures that I just mentioned, or even engaging full time personnel.

By adding the additional utilities that would now come under the ambit of Fair Trading Commission, by adding that to the area of responsibility to be regulated, and also by adding the areas of consumer protection, and unfair competition, it means that now the Fair Trading Commission, which will replace the Public Utilities Board, will now have an effective size with sufficient interlocking portfolios as to be able to exploit economies of scale in relation to the provision of office resources and procedures. It will now be able to have in-house, the mix of professional skills that it will need to carry out its tasks. Skills such as engineering, accounts, law, economic skills, as well as customer service skills that are required in the regulation of utility matters and also in the monitoring and enforcing of rules in relation to competition matters.

You will also know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is increasingly being recognised that the same scales that are required in relation to regulation of utilities, in the area of monopolies, are also required in relation to competition matters. As you know Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have a situation where sometimes within the same entity there are certain aspects of it, certain parts of its operations still being a monopoly, so to speak, while other areas are deregulated and fall to be governed by the rules in relation to the competition and market forces.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, further justification, having all of them combined is the fact the consumer protection is, perhaps, the common thread that runs all three areas to be governed by the Fair Trading Commission. So it is easy to justify a decision to have the areas under the ambit of the Fair Trading Commission.

Before looking at the two Bills currently before Parliament, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that it is only fair that something – however slight about the other areas that will come to be governed by the commission as well, namely consumer protection and fair competition. I will begin with consumer protection.

I think Mr. Deputy Speaker, that everyone will agree that if there is one person in this society who is in need of assistance, it is the consumer. At present, I must repeat the point, that consumers are substantially, an abandoned species, with very little rights. Very little rights consumers have right now. To the extent that where consumers do have any rights, they are very vague, hazy or simply not defined,

and worst, there are scattered in a very marginal way across several pieces of legislation.

For example, if you had to articulate and say where consumers rights may be found in Barbados, you have to span Acts, Sale of Bill Act, The Hire Purchase Act, the Miscellaneous Controls Act, The Weights and Measures Act, The Control of Standards Act, the same Public Utilities Act, the Foods and Drugs Adulteration Act, nothing really, whatsoever, to shout about, Mr. Deputy Speaker.
11.55 a.m

That unsatisfactory state of affairs must of necessity change. The aim of the consumer protection legislation which is to be administered by the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) is to ensure that consumers will have adequate access to redress and will, in fact, get redress when they have been wronged in relation to goods and services which they purchased. I want to repeat that. The legislation is going to ensure that consumers have adequate access to redress and will get redress when they have been wronged in relation to goods and services which they purchased. Therefore, the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) will have to do a number of things to ensure that consumers are properly protected. These are some of the things that the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) will have to do.

Firstly, educating the consuming public about their rights and their available remedies. Right now, people do not know what their rights are, therefore, it is going to be no point introducing by way of legislation a whole set of rights and remedies and then the people of Barbados still would not know what their rights and remedies are. The Fair Trading Commission (FTC) will play an integral role in educating the public of Barbados about their rights and available remedies.

Secondly, the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) will properly investigate and analyze consumers' complaints. Generally speaking, it will be dealing with consumer problems. We need an institution to do that on behalf of the consumers. Where there are disputes between traders and consumers, the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) will be mediating in those disputes. Of course, the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) will also be carrying out market research and gathering data and so on to ensure that it has the latest available information in relation to the marketing of certain items, prices and what have you. It will be equipped to handle as far as possible on the spur of the moment any issues that it will have to deal with in relation to consumer protection.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, more importantly, the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) is going to vigorously prosecute businesses and traders who breach certain provisions of the legislation. I want to repeat that. The Fair Trading

Commission (FTC) will vigorously prosecute businesses and traders who breach certain provisions of the legislation.

I saw the Honourable Member for St. Lucy giving me a glance when I said that, but yes, there is going to be prosecution of persons or businesses who breach certain provisions of the legislation.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: I saw how you looked at me, but yes, there is going to be prosecution because we must protect the consuming public.

The following are examples of the things that will be made criminal offences under the consumer protection legislation. There will be a number of things which will be made criminal offences but I will just pick out a few of them. It will be an offence for businesses to make false representations about the standard or quality of goods and services that they supply. You cannot just put out false information on the goods and services that you are supplying in relation to their quality and just decide, 'well oh, that is what I said, I am sorry. It would not be a question of being sorry. You cannot disseminate false information or make false representations about the standard or the quality of goods and services that you are supplying, that will be a criminal offence.

You cannot indulge in what is referred to as 'bait advertising'. This is where a company advertises that it has certain items for sale at its store at a certain price and when you go there, they either do not have the things or they do not have them at the price that they were advertised at and then they use the opportunity which they deliberately created of your being there to then try to persuade you to buy other things in the store. That is totally unethical and it is going beyond the boundaries of ethics and, in fact, it must become an offence. Bait advertising happens in a large number of countries but if it happens in Barbados, any person who indulges in it, will find themselves guilty of an offence and liable to prosecution by the Fair Trading Commission (FTC).

Thirdly, falsely accepting payment, which of course, is going to be outlawed. This is the acceptance of money by any supplier for the supply of goods and services that he knows he does not intend to supply. How often do you go somewhere and somebody said, I will do this for you, you paid them your money, they never do it, or you pay them for something, they never supply it, and then sometimes they never give you back the money that you gave them in the first place, therefore, you cannot now go around falsely accepting money by purporting to do something that you

know you will not do, because once you do that, it is going to be a criminal offence under the provisions of the consumer protection legislation.

Another thing which is commonly done that will be outlawed is coercion. Businesses will now be prohibited from using undue force or strong harassment in connection with the supply of goods and services. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, sometimes how you are harassed when you go into certain stores where people run you down and use all sorts of high pressure sales techniques – in fact it goes beyond high pressure sales techniques – where it actually amounts in some form to coercion, that is going to be a criminal offence.

The 'pyramid selling schemes' which once captivated the attention of Barbadians is going to be made a criminal offence as well. I know persons who have lost quite a bit of money in them. I do not know to what extent they still exist, but certainly if they do exist now, or if anyone should seek at anytime in the future to introduce any of these pyramid selling schemes, they will find themselves running afoul of the laws of Barbados and will therefore be liable to prosecution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what would not be criminalised but will however be struck down in relation to consumer matters would be what is referred to as 'unfair contract terms'. Unfair contract terms exposes the inequality in bargaining power between the supplier and the consumer and the new consumer legislation will ensure that traders can no longer rely on terms and contracts that are not fair and reasonable. The test will be whether any term in a contract is fair and reasonable.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how certain organisations love to include a whole set of terms in fine print in most contracts that you usually enter into where sometimes you are not even able to see the fine prints far less to read it. Those are called hidden clauses. Then some contracts go on to prescribe and include a whole set of exclusion clauses where at the end of the day the suppliers hold themselves out to be liable for nothing at all in relation to the quality of what you have bought from them. Now, as I have said, those clauses will be struck down. Those unfair contract terms will be struck down and the burden will be on the company to show, in fact, that any such terms are fair and reasonable.

The last point I want to make in relation to the legalistic aspect of consumer protection is the issue of product liability. When this provision is included in the legislation – perhaps, it may be included in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East because I think she is far more interested in this than anyone else because she is constantly asking about it – the issue of product liability will be addressed by this new legislation.

She constantly asks me about the issue of product liability. This will be addressed by the new legislation and that is going to impose strict liability on producers for any injuries to persons or damage to property caused by defective products that are supplied to any consumers. We are going to have a whole range of items, some to be criminalized. Unfair contract terms should be struck down and product liability will be included. Those are only some. I could not go into all of the things that will be included in the legislation because there are too many.

12.05 p.m.

Of course, the area of cars in Barbados, there will be a section on that. Perhaps I see a whole part of the legislation to deal with the whole issue of the rights and liabilities in relation to the purchase of cars. There are too many things going wrong. It is too difficult sometimes to get good quality cars. When things go wrong, we cannot get them fixed in any reasonable time. You find yourself sometimes locked into warranties and you cannot use any other service or supplier at all. Yet still the person with whom you are locked into the warranty cannot fix the problem associated with your car in a sufficient or reasonable time because they do not keep spare parts. All sorts of things are happening in relation to the issue of cars. I am not saying that it happened to me, but I am saying that it certainly exists. I know of many complaints.

In the area of car dealerships, we will have a section on cars in my submission in the legislation to ensure that the rights of concerned individuals who purchase vehicles will not be thrown to the whims and fancies of the suppliers and dealers.

Of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in addition to the legalistic side I just mentioned, as part of the development of a comprehensive consumer protection system there has, of course, to be the development of vibrant consumer organizations. This must accompany consumer legislation. These are sadly lacking in Barbados at this time. In fact, no one or no organization in Barbados has really emerged as the voice of the people in the area of consumer affairs and the Ministry is currently examining ways in which perhaps it can go about facilitating the development of these types of vibrant consumer organizations.

Of course, one of the main challenges will be the attitudes of Barbadians in relation to getting involved in the movement. There is an attitude in getting involved in the movement because the simple truth is that consumers know that they will benefit from the work of consumer groups whether or not they are members of the consumer group. You do not have to be a member of a consumer group to benefit from the work that it does. Therefore, there is this free-rider type approach that perhaps has thrown out a certain amount of inertia to Barbadians really getting involved in the consumer movement. Certainly, the

development of independent and self-sufficient groups are encouraged. I must stress self-sufficient. I do not think that any consumer movement is going to feel too happy having to depend on Government for direct funding because they would certainly want to see that although that would not be the case. It certainly would not be the case of this Government. But they may well feel that may compromise their sense of independence.

Obviously, there are going to be times when consumer issues will arise where the Government will be at the receiving end of the complaint. So that consumer organizations funded by Government may well feel that their independence might be compromised. We are looking at the development of independent, self-sufficient consumer groups to aid in the enhancement of the development of consumer rights. Consumer organizations will augment the role that the Fair Trading Commission will play in relation to enforcing consumer rights.

In light of the fact that there is such difficulty in seeing the formation of these vibrant consumer organizations, one thing the Ministry is currently and actively considering is perhaps how best we can liaise with community groups. These include churches which have a very strong peoples' base to see how they can help in the consumer movement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, that concludes my remarks in relation to consumer protection. I would like to look at the area of fair competition. The intention here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to level the playing field in the business arena so that all legitimate business enterprises will have an equal opportunity to participate and compete in the Barbadian economy. I want to repeat that. The intention that we speak of enacting fair competition legislation is to level the playing field in the business arena, to ensure that all legitimate business enterprises of this country will have an equal opportunity to participate and compete in the Barbadian economy.

Sir, you will see in the Fair Trading Commission Bill that it is required to carry out its functions in such a manner as to *inter alia* promote competitiveness amongst business enterprises and pursuance of that attitude shall investigate whether business enterprises are engaging in anti-competitive business practices. The Fair Competition Act will, of course, detail what the anti-competitive business practices will be. That Bill, of course, is not ready.

Clearly, the broad policy in relation to fair competition can be put in a number of different ways. Firstly, Fair Competition legislation will open markets and guard against the undue concentration of economic power. Put differently, it will provide for competition and rivalry in markets or, again put differently and which I prefer, it will create an environment of free and fair competition to ensure that all

legitimate business enterprises of this country have an equal opportunity irrespective of size to participate in the Barbadian economy.

This matter of legislating to ensure that there will be fair competition is extremely important. As you would be aware, this Administration has done much to assist the development of the micro-enterprises and small business sector since 1994. The Government has done a lot to assist the micro and small business sector in this country since 1994. I will list some of the things which the Government has done from the invitation of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy.

Firstly, there was the creation of the Small Business Development Unit in the Ministry of Commerce to constantly advise the Ministry in relation to the policy development of small businesses. Secondly, there was the creation of the Youth Entrepreneurship Scheme. There was also the creation of the Micro Enterprise Lending Institution, commonly referred to as Fund Access. There was the establishment of the Rural Development Commission and the Urban Development Commission, Enterprise Growth Fund, and the Small Business Venture Capital Incorporated. All those institutions provided assistance where commercial banks have always been insensitive to the needs of poor people. They have never responded in my view to the social responsibility that they must carry. It has always boggled my mind why commercial banks have never seen it possible to set aside just a small portion of net profit for pure risk lending. That translates into millions of dollars which could help poor people develop in this country. They never do it.

Those institutions that I have listed were able to respond to the financial needs of a number of small people – small entrepreneurs and small enterprises – where the commercial banks failed to do so. Not only have they provided funding, but they also went on to provide technical assistance and training for the persons to get their business running. Of course, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the topping (this is no pun intended) on the cake was when I was privileged to be able to bring to this Parliament less than a year ago the Small Business Development Act. In fact, Mr. Deputy, I must tell you that while not wanting to appear to be blowing my own trumpet, I am flattered to have been able to bring to this Honourable Chamber in the space of perhaps 18 months three very fundamental pieces of legislation to effect the economic landscape of this country.

12.15 p.m.

The first, as I said, was the Small Business Development Act which provided a large number of fiscal incentives to assist with the development of the small business sector.

The provisions of the Bill currently before us, the Fair Trading Bill, will take the process one step further by, among other things, ensuring that these businesses are allowed now, having given them a lot of incentives, to enter the market and to participate equally and on fair terms. The Fair Competition legislation will take it one step further by ensuring that these businesses can now enter the market and have that equal opportunity to participate in our Barbadian economy.

This, I must emphasize, must not be taken by the small business sector to mean that once Fair Competition legislation is passed, although they might initially, perhaps, be the major beneficiaries in terms of being able to access the market that they might have been excluded from previously, there is not going to be any special dispensation for them. There is not going to be any special dispensation for anybody. The Fair Trading Commission is going to be fair. It would be up then to all participants to resort to the efficiencies that fair competition is intended to arouse. They must resort to efficient methods of doing business to ensure, in fact, that they will survive in the market. If they are not efficient, given the level of consumer choice, *et cetera*, that will be present then, they may well find themselves falling by the wayside and that can happen to any business, big or small.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the broad goals of Fair Competition legislation will really be to promote and maintain competition and thereby enhance economic efficiency in production, trade and commerce.

Secondly, the broad goal of fair competition will be to prohibit anti-competitive business conduct which prevents, restricts or distorts competition, or which constitutes the abuse of a dominant position in the market.

Thirdly, it will, consequentially I will say, promote consumer welfare and protect consumer interests.

In pursuit of those goals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Fair Competition legislation will make illegal any conduct that is found to exist which inhibits businesses from having that equal opportunity that I referred to of participating in the economy.

What I am going to say next may be a bit amusing. It was certainly quite surprising to me, but normally the types of conduct that you find outlawed in jurisdiction when you enact Fair Competition legislation, are the abuse of a dominant position by a company. I am talking about the abuse of a dominant position, not the existence of a dominant position because if a company is in a dominant position, there is nothing inherently wrong with that. It is the abuse of the dominant position that you hold, not the fact that you hold a dominant position.

You usually outlaw tie selling where once a supplier sells you something that perhaps only he can supply, but then insists that at the same time you buy that commodity from him, which you have to buy from him because he is the only one selling it, but you also have to buy something else from him at the same time. That is called tie selling.

Then there is price fixing by two or more businesses and double ticketing where some stores put two price tags on the same product. When you get to the cashier, the cashier rings in the higher price. That cannot happen. You would not only be able to pay the lower price under the Fair Trading Commission but it will be a criminal offence to go double ticketing. Then there is bid rigging, price discrimination, and competitive pricing. Those are the things you normally would see outlawed in the jurisdiction.

Now, what I say is a little amusing to me, is that a preliminary study was done, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in Barbados in relation to the market and the behaviour of businesses in the Barbadian market. The preliminary study is not anything official. I am reading from the notes I made from the document but not the document itself. That study identified the following as a sample survey of the unfair practices which currently exist in Barbados. Believe it or not, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that preliminary study found the existence of some 18 unfair practices which exist in Barbados right now as follows:-

- (1) Anti-competitive practices to maintain monopoly power;
2. Anti-competitive practices to prevent competitive entry;
3. Predatory pricing;
- (4) Exclusionary conduct in preying competition;
- (5) Discriminatory pricing;
- (6) Refusals to deal with certain people;
- (7) Monopoly leveraging;
- (8) Price fixing;
- (9) The division of markets;
- (10) Anti-competitive exchange of price information;
- (11) Resale price maintenance by sellers;
- (12) Anti-competitive exclusive distributorships;
- (13) Consumer and territorial restrictions;

- (14) Tying arrangements;
- (15) Exclusive dealing;
- (16) Interlocking directorships;
- (17) Anti-competitive mergers; and
- (18) Unfair competitive practices.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are the sorts of things that a preliminary study revealed. A preliminary document has already identified in Barbados the existence of some 18 unfair trading practices.

Before I make any further comment on that, Sir, I just want to get back and say what the creation of an environment of free and fair competition will mean because a number of benefits ensue when you put Fair Competition legislation in place and the environment becomes one of free and fair competition.

Firstly, you get increased efficiency that invariably results whenever there is competition. You only have to think for a minute and realise how efficient people get when they have competition. In fact, I think I heard somebody saying it applies to politicians too. It is amazing how hard a parliamentarian can start to work in his constituency when there is a declared candidate on the Other Side, so competition always brings about efficiency.

Then, importantly, it brings about lower prices and more choices for the consumer. Of course, it brings about then better products and services and provides increasing opportunities for existing and new enterprises to enter the market.

Now, as was in the case of the Consumer Protection legislation which I mentioned earlier, so too as I pointed out just now in relation to fair competition, it is a fact that there exists in Barbados unfair trading practices. There is scientific evidence to corroborate that.

What I want to do is to urge all those businesses who know that they fall into that category of operating with unfair trading practices, to use the time between now and when the Consumer Protection legislation and Fair Competition legislation are put on the statute book of Barbados, use this free time to put their houses in order.

Aside.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Yes, I want to repeat. I want to urge those businesses who know that they are guilty of unfair trading practices, whether they be the ones I just outlined or others, to use the time between now and when

those pieces of legislation are brought to this Parliament and are enacted to put their houses in order because the hour is drawing near.

While the Fair Trading Commission will be fair, it will also be firm. Therefore, I would use whatever persuasive technique I can at this time to urge businesses to get their houses in order so that when the legislation hits the statute book, they are not found wanting and find themselves facing the full consequences of a breach of the legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, again before I get to the legislation, the two pieces that are before Parliament, I think it is only fair that I go into some detail as to the amount of work that was done and the extent of the consultative process that was gone into by the Ministry to ensure that the legislation currently before us today was able to reach here. I think that is only fair.

I think that the legislation, subject to a few changes which even I will make, represents what I would deem to be Government's best effort in the areas of utility regulation and in general the structure of the Fair Trading Commission.
12.25 p.m.

It has not been an easy assignment. In fact, it has been a very complicated assignment. Barbados is breaking new ground and therefore a lot of work had to go into getting it to where we have gotten today. We did get some help and I believe that I should clearly set out all the work that was done for us to ensure that we got to where we are today.

The first thing that we did in the Ministry, recognising the seriousness of the task, was to establish a Project Implementation Unit to oversee the preparation of the overall legislative and judicial framework of the Fair Trading Commission. We set up a Project Implementation Unit so that we could approach the matter from a professional point of view. Secondly, a decision was taken to set up a very broad-based advisory committee to advise in relation to all aspects and all issues that emerge in relation to the establishment of a Fair Trading Commission. This advisory committee was no 'pooh-pooh' committee. It was representative of perhaps all the relative interest groups. We had the Dean of the Law Faculty of the University of the West Indies, Mr. Andrew Burgess, a representative of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados; a representative of the Barbados Manufacturers' Association; a representative of the Barbados Chamber of Commerce and Industry; a representative of the Barbados Consumers' Research Organisation Inc. We had Senator the Honourable Phillip Goddard; Mr. David Shorey, who chaired the Advisory Committee; Mr. Justice Frank King who, as you may well know, is part of the jurisprudence of the regulatory process related to the utility companies in

Barbados and has delivered eminent judgments in the area of utility regulation. We had, of course, the late Wendell McClean, may he rest in peace. We had a representative of the Small Business Association. We had Miss Anne Gittens, the Chairman of the current Public Utilities Board. Those, Mr. Deputy Speaker, were the persons who constituted the Advisory Committee. As you can see, we would be hard pressed to point out any particular interest group that would have been left out of the Advisory Committee.

We went on to ensure that there were study tours embarked upon by the Ministry, particularly our legal consultant, who toured other jurisdictions in the region, Jamaica, New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom to have a look at their systems to gain knowledge and bring back a wealth of experience for us. Having gained all of that knowledge and experience, it was ultimately recognised and the point was made, particularly by the late Wendell McClean, that we still had to ensure that we designed a system to fit our own peculiar needs.

In recognition of that fact, we then held a national consultation when the Bills were being drafted. The first one was held at the Grand Barbados where the invitation was issued to the general public and everyone who wanted to attend it. It was very well attended and we were able then to receive input into the process even before a first draft Bill had been made because of having that national consultation which, of course, was in addition to the input we got from the Advisory Committee.

Meetings were then held with all of the stakeholders, all the utility companies, to get their views and they were asked, of course, to submit their comments in writing and after submitting them – the early drafts, discussion were held. At the end of December, a revised draft of the Bill was again circulated to all of the stakeholders and they were invited to make their comments.

Even at that stage, we sought the comments of the same regulatory firm that I referred to at the beginning of my speech, the London Economics. They made comments on that draft Bill, as it was in December, and again, persons made their comments. We evaluated the comments and after that we prepared the Bills that were actually laid in this Parliament in March. After the Bills were laid in March, they were then distributed and comments were invited from the general public. They were specially sent again to the utility companies and service suppliers for their comments to be carried back to the Ministry. We met with them again to go through their views and to top it all off another national consultation or town hall meeting, if you prefer, was held at the Queen's Park Steel Shed where we were able to hear the views of everyone as it were in relation to the Bills that were laid in March.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even now when I am finished today and the others who speak are finished, the House will be invited to make a decision that the matter go to Select Committee for further consideration before it is finalised by Parliament.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not believe that more could have been done by anyone or by any Ministry to involve the general public and all interested parties at all times and at all stages of this process. I really want to thank all of those who assisted in the Ministry, the Permanent Secretary, our legal consultant the Chairman of the Public Utilities Board, Mr. Justice Frank King, the entire Advisory Committee, everyone who really worked beyond the call of duty. I must tell you that days like Boxing Day and Errol Barrow Day when people were out partying we were in the Ministry working on this legislation. It has been a steady grind and I am very pleased that today represents a significant advancement of the process.

Having said that, of course, that does not mean that as a politician I would ever believe that you can please everyone. I do not expect that the legislation therefore will find favour with everyone. As I said, I have certain amendments to make to it at the appropriate time. Certainly, in my view, the legislation, as currently presented to this Parliament, does contain all of the core ingredients necessary to ensure that the essential issues are dealt with.

With your permission, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will now want to take a look at the two Bills. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Fair Trading Commission Bill, I will deal with first. This Bill establishes the Fair Trading Commission as a statutory board which will have up to seven commissioners, a Chairman, a Deputy Chairman, and not more than five other commissioners all to be appointed by the Minister for a term of up to five years and all of whom are eligible for re-appointment.

This represents an increase from the previous terms of three years because it was felt that the management of this task should require that persons might take a little longer to entrench themselves in particular areas and therefore should not be subject to expiration of their appointments at such a short period of time.
12.35 p.m.

To allow for speed and to be not too unwieldy in its deliberations, a panel of five Commissioners instead of the full seven will hear matters in relation to utility regulations. Rate applications, complaints about billing and complaints about standards of service provided by service providers will be held by this panel of five Commissioners whose decisions will be as valid and binding as if it had been made by the entire seven Commissioners.

The functions of the Fair Trading Commission are set out at Section 4. You will see that Section 4 states quite clearly that the functions of the Commission are to enforce the Utilities Regulations Act and any law relating to consumer protection and unfair competition which the Commission has jurisdiction to administer.

The Commission shall carry out its function in such a manner as to promote efficiency and competitiveness amongst and improve the standard of service and the quality of goods and services supplied by service providers and business enterprises over which it has jurisdiction so that right away we entrench the approach that we are looking at promoting efficiency in the Fair Trading Commission Bill.

In carrying out its function, it is entitled to and empowered to do a number of things which are to establish principles for arriving at rates to be charged by service providers and principles are defined: to refer to the formula methodology of a framework for establishing rates. This gives the Commission the flexibility to move away from the current 'rate of return' type criteria used for fixing rates toward the incentive type regulatory rate setting mechanisms that I mentioned earlier, things like the price caps, profit sharing and so on and gives them the flexibility to move forward.

It is also required to set the maximum rate to be charged by service providers. It does not say to set the rate, it says to set the maximum rate because one of the criticisms made by one of the utility companies in Barbados before was that they wanted to lower their rates but could not do so despite their wanting to do so because it would have meant that they would have had to go back to the Public Utilities Board and go through a very lengthy hearing and for that reason, therefore, they could not lower their rates.

Any time that any utility company wishes to lower its rates it will be able to do so without having to get the O.K. of the Fair Trading Commission subject, of course, to the fact that when rates are lowered they must apply to everyone equally and not to any particular class or area. They will be able to monitor rates, set standards and direct review, hear complaints and so on. Of course, they will be consulting with other service providers as it performs its functions. As you can see, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it will be a consultative type body.

The integrity of the Fair Trading Commission will be preserved by virtue of Section 6.9 in paragraph 6 of the First Schedule. Section 6 states that:

"No Commissioner shall accept employment with or enter into a contract of service with a service provider whilst being a Commissioner or be within six months of the date of ceasing to be a Commissioner."

Section 10 has a strict requirement for disclosure of interest by any Commissioner and states:

“A Commissioner who has an interest in a service provider or business enterprise under investigation or deliberation by the Commission shall disclose to the Board particulars of the interest; and the details of the disclosures shall be recorded in the Minutes taken at the meeting at which the disclosure is made.”

What is going to happen here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that a Commissioner who has an interest in a service provider that is under deliberation is required to disclose its interest however slight that interest may be. Even if he has one single share in the utility company that is under deliberation, he has to disclose the interest. What will then be done is that the Commission will evaluate the interest and publish the interest to the public of Barbados no matter how small it is and then make a determination as to whether they think the interest is significant enough that the Commissioner should be precluded from sitting in the particular matter or whether in fact, it is so insignificant that he can sit during the hearing of the particular matter.

Significantly, if a Commissioner who has an interest fails to disclose his interest, he is liable on summary conviction to a fine of \$25 000 so the integrity is preserved.

Paragraph 6 of the First Schedule empowers the Minister to terminate the appointment of any Commissioner other than the CEO if the Commissioner fails to disclose his interest in a service provider or business under investigation or deliberation by the Board and other circumstances as well in which the services of a Commissioner can be determined – the integrity of the Fair Trading Commission is clearly preserved.

In terms of professional staff because it is important that the staff be professionalised because that was, as I have said earlier, one of the shortfalls of the Public Utilities Board, a lack of professional staff.

Sections 7 and 8 empower the Commission to appoint a Chief Executive Officer and Section 8 authorises the Commission to appoint three directors, one director in relation to utility regulation, one in relation to consumer protection and one in relation to fair competition, each for terms not exceeding five years and who are all eligible for reappointment.

The Commission also preserves the privacy of confidential information at Section 12. In fact, the way the Section is written, all information once it directly or indirectly refers to any person at all is deemed to be confidential information in the hands of the Commission and therefore, unless the Commission authorises it, cannot be

disclosed at all outside the confines of the Commission, even if the Commission made a decision that it was necessary to disclose the information for the purposes of carrying out its functions. At that stage, a person who supplies the information can still make the allegation that disclosure of the information is injurious to his interest and the Commission, if it agrees, will ensure that the information is not revealed to any one other than a member of staff.

Much was made of putting in a provision that expressly dealt with preserving the confidentiality of commercially sensitive information but in my submission, information, the disclosure of which will be injurious to the interest of the person, must of necessity include commercially sensitive information as part of it.

Section 18 of the Bill authorises the Minister after consultation with the Chairman to give the Commission directions of a general nature in respect of the policy to be followed by the Commission in exercising its functions in respect of utility regulation, consumer protection and fair competition matters and the Commission shall comply with those directions.

Obviously, from time to time policy matters will arise and it is only fair that the Government should be entitled to advise the Fair Trading Commission what particular policy it intends to pursue in general terms. For example, if Government intends, as it has indicated, to move from a rate of return regulation to incentive type regulation the Commission shall be required, which is quite understandable, to act in accordance with that sort of policy direction and not to retain, for longer than possible the approach of rate of return regulation.

Insofar as the Commission will be spending money that will be provided by Parliament from the Consolidated Fund, and insofar as it is going to be spending funds levied on service providers, it is but right that the proper reporting and accountability provisions be included in the legislation.

These are to be found between Sections 21, 22 and 23. 12.45 p.m.

Firstly, not later than the 15th day of November each year the Commission shall submit to the Minister a plan with details of the objectives, strategies and policies of the Commission, and its estimates of revenue and expenditure for the following financial year.

Section 22 requires the Commission to keep proper accounts and adequate financial and other record in relation thereto the satisfaction of and in accordance with the directions of an auditor appointed under subsection (2) and

shall prepare a statement of account in respect of each financial year.

The Commission shall submit its accounts for audit to the auditor appointed by the Commission, and once more the Auditor General may at any time and shall on the direction of the Minister responsible for Finance, carry out an investigation or audit of the accounts of the Commission. All persons are required to cooperate with the auditor and failing to do so may result in a fine of some \$5,000.

After your financial year is ended, within four months after the end of each financial year, the Commission has to submit to the Minister the activities and operations of the Commission throughout the preceding financial year and a statement of the audited accounts of the Commission for the preceding financial year and a copy of the report and statement shall be printed and laid before both Houses of Parliament and printed in the *Official Gazette* not later than three months from the date of receipt by the Minister. So, there is full reporting and accountability requirements in the legislation.

Sections 24 to 36 give the Commissions full investigative powers and the powers to hold hearings and to deal with complaints. You will see that the approach being taken will be to discourage persons running to the Commissions with matters without first making an attempt to get some redress for themselves. Before a complaint is entertained you will have to satisfy the Commission that you have made some attempt to obtain redress from the person against whom you are making the complaint and satisfy the Commission that you did not, in fact, obtain reasonable redress.

If the complaint is deemed to be frivolous, trivial or vexatious or it is felt that it is not made in good faith, or that the complainant does not have *locus standi* in the matter, again, the Commission will not proceed to investigate, but, of course, it will be able to hold public hearings in relation to these matters.

At section 34 mention is made of the right to have private hearing, which does not now exist, which, of course, will be necessary in certain circumstances, particularly, an argument, for example, as to whether or not information is confidential. Let us say that you are going to have deliberation on that, it certainly could not take place in open forum. There are situations where a private hearing will be appropriate but by and large, as I said, there is not immediate intention of moving away from the public hearings so that all matters can be thrown into the public view and all Barbadians will have a right to scrutinise and question, and be satisfied as to any decision taken.

Sections 44 to 48, Mr. Deputy Speaker, deal with the issue with penalties. I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I have no apology, whatsoever, to make anyone who has any problem with these penalties, the level of the penalties or anything of the sort. I well recall that all the national consultations that were held, one thing that was emphasised at all times is that no one wanted to see the existence of a paper tiger. It did not want the Fair Trading Commission to be a mere paper tiger, they want it to have teeth and to bite when necessary.

The highest fine in this Act is \$100,000, and that may be well in sections 46 to 48, which, incidently, we are asking to have deleted. Fines range around \$50,000, \$60,000 and \$100,000. In New Zealand fines go up to \$500,000, that is outside of the region.

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: The Honourable Member for St. John said that in America there are \$10,000,000 fines. In Jamaica, in the region, individuals can be fined up to \$1,000,000 and companies up to \$5,000,000, and a dollar is a dollar in Jamaica so it is \$5,000,000 to a Jamaican. One million in Jamaica for an individual, \$5,000,000 for a company, \$500,000 in New Zealand and \$10,000,000 in the United States and people are making a big 'brouhaha' about \$40,000 or \$50,000.

In fact it has led me to believe that, perhaps, I should keep these provisions in my top drawer and if anything monitor it closely to see whether or not an argument cannot be made for coming back soon to increase them, but certainly decrease them. I feel that it is important that incorrect perceptions not be spread across the public domain. For some persons to make comments like \$50,000 is the fine, the Act speaks of \$50,000, and it is every single type of offence that will be attracting a full...

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Every single offence, certainly, is not going to be as serious as another offence, so you should not just put \$50,000 *carte blanche*, you should categorise it according to the seriousness of the offence.

First principles in law tell you that any time you set a cap on a fine saying that someone shall be liable on conviction of a fine of \$50,000 or imprisonment for six months or both, it means a maximum of \$50,000. Not that you are subjected automatically to a fine of \$50,000. It is a maximum. It can range from a warning, through CRD, probation, a dollar fine, five dollars, right up to the \$50,000 in fine.

It may be unfortunate that those who write, sometimes allow themselves to be led astray by others who might

publish the same information to serve their particular motives. It was a bit annoying to see those types of comments made by persons who I know are intelligent and know better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have no apology to make for the level of the fines. The late Wendell McClean, God bless him, may he rest in peace. First of all Wendell McClean was not any one in favour of lessening any grip on the utility companies. He was not in favour of that. He told me that as the day of reckoning got nearer I would find that the level of resistance and the noise making would get louder and louder from certain sections, and so it has come to past. He told me to be consoled by the fact that the more noise that is made from certain quarters, the more you know that you are doing the right thing, and therefore I am guided by his comments in that respect.

I want to make one point because...

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Much was made of a certain provision in the legislation when it was laid in this Parliament in March. There was a clause that empowered the Fair Trading Commission when there was a breach in relation of an Order that had been made, to go in...

Asides.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: There was a certain clause in the Bill that empowered the Fair Trading Commission to take over, pursuant to a Court order, the company and run it to ensure compliance and so on. Then another clause has been put in which said that while the application before the court was being argued and so on, if it was an essential service, you could go in and take over so that supply would not be disrupted.

12.55 p.m

First of all, I will have to question the *bona fides* of anybody, who, would have a provision in the legislation from 1955 that was clearly draconian and unconstitutional if it were enacted word for word but who never said a word about it at all, but after we jazz it up and modernize it and require that it will have to go to court to act pursuant to it, then for the first time they make a noise about it. I have to question the *bona fides* about that.

Secondly, I have found two pieces of legislation, one in Alberta and one in British Columbia which had – one is the British Columbia Utilities Commission Act, RSBC 1996, Chapter 473 and Alberta Public Utilities Board Act, Chapter 337 – sections that are word for word with what existed in our current 1955 legislation. I have taken the precaution to ask an eminent lecturer at the university to check for me to

see if these clauses which give the board the power to go in and “forcibly or otherwise enter upon, seize and take possession of the whole power or any part of movable or immovable property of the owner... and take over the management...”, if they can go in and do all of these things without any reference at all of having to get a court order. I have had it researched and these clauses have never been struck down in these two jurisdictions but yet still you can hear people saying that this sort of thing is draconian and does not exist.

The clause which I put in Parliament in March contains a requirement that they will have to go to court first to do this but they could have the audacity to say – that is BARTEL and a writer – that these provisions should be taken out because they are not found in any part of the civilised world. That is what was said. Yet still, these two provisions exist, in my estimation, unchallenged, in two jurisdictions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have taken out the provisions because the truth of the matter is that from the very beginning in terms of those who were advising me, the advice was always strong, that it should be taken out. In fact, it was felt that it has never been used before, therefore, I am taking it out and I will keep it in my top draw so that if the occasion should ever warrant itself, or, in fact, the Select Committee may take the view that it should go back in, but in any case it is not going to be kept far from the process because at no time – and I make this statement unreservedly – in Barbados’ history for as long as I am a political player particularly in the position I am in, will any utility company ever hold this country to ransom – never ever.

Asides.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, those are my comments in relation to the Fair Trading Commission Act. I believe as I have said, that it contains the fundamental provisions to take the process forward.

In relation to the Utilities Regulation Act, section 3 deals with the functions and empowers the commission – what I will do is just pull out the functions from the Fair Trading Commission Act which are specific to the Utilities Regulation Act, on setting rates and setting principles and so on and having the power to establish principles. In establishing principles, the question of the efficiency is to be paramount. The commission is to protect consumers by ensuring that the service supplied by the utility company is safe, adequate, efficient and reasonable.

Section 7 of the Bill introduces the concept of Public Counsel, which I explained in my presentation, who would be empowered to advise consumers on matters relating to this Act. The Public Counsel will also assist consumers in preparing for reviews and hearings and presenting arguments

before the Commission in relation to the setting of rates, the determination of principles, the setting of standards of service and complaints regarding the billing and the standard of service supplied by the service provider. Of course, only those consumers who use utility services for domestic purposes will qualify for assistance by the Public Counsel. There is no point having a multi-million dollar entity seeking the services of the Public Counsel.

Section 9 deals with the setting of rates. As I said, the rates must be fair and reasonable and in accordance with the principles established by the Commission under this Act or set out in rules, orders, or regulations and shall take into account a number of principles which include the provision of universal access to utility services.

There will be a requirement for the quality of service that the Fair Trading Commission is going to have to enforce in relation to service quality which is defined as referring to the quality and extent of service. Therefore, part of the dissemination of standards will be a consideration of the extent of service that the service provider is going to provide over a particular time and, of course, that will be monitored as well.

Section 10 deals with the tariff setting and inspection but every service provider must file with the Commission tariffs showing all rates established. The rates specified shall be the authorised rates of the service provider as authorised by this Act.

Of course, as I have mentioned earlier, at section 12, no service provider should supply or furnish to any person any utility at rates which are unduly preferential or unduly discriminatory. We must for all intents and purposes supply all consumers and certainly those of us in the same class and the same locality – when I say class, I mean domestic consumers as opposed to commercial consumers – a commonality in terms of the rates and so on to be provided.

In relation to the burden of proof, we have said that in any proceedings before the Commission involving existing or proposed rate of a service provider, that the burden of proof to show that the rate is fair and reasonable and in accordance with the principles, shall be upon the service provider. They must have the burden of proof to show that the rates are fair and reasonable. They have all the information and they will therefore be the best persons to assist in any serious determination in the matter.

Section 14, envisages a move to the incentive type regulatory mechanism. I mentioned price caps and profit sharing arrangements which are usually set for a certain period of time which is usually five years in some countries. Of course, the rates can be reviewed and so on.

Section 16 states what information must accompany an application by a service provider for change in respect of the rates and the statement shall contain the existing rates and the principles and standards of service, the proposed new rates and the principles and standards of service, justification for the review of the rates and the principles and standards of service and a date from which the service provider proposes that the new rate and principles and standards of service, as the case may be, should take effect.

Section 19 strengthens the requirement for proper standards to be adhered to.

Section 20 gives the Commission the power to order that compensation be paid to any person where a service provider fails to meet the prescribed standards of service. 1.05 p.m.

Section 21 provides that no service provider shall cease its operations or any part of its operations without first obtaining the permission of the Commission in writing. That must stay in obviously. It is a trade-off for being a monopoly because you have no choice.

Section 23 deals with inter-activities and considerations and Section 25 onwards deal with the issue of penalties which substantially come from the Fair Trading Commission Act. Of course, reference to employees and so on being liable, that is one of the amendments that I am to make as well. That will refer to officers and directors. An officer has a certain meaning in the Companies Act but somehow it includes directors apart from the chairman. We will leave in director and use the word “officer”. We are going to delete the word “employee” and substitute the word “officer”.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we will retain the provision that says that no service provider shall issue any stocks or shares or any debenture or other evidence of indebtedness payable in more than one year from the date unless you have first obtained the written approval of the Commission to the proposed issue. This will largely turn out to be a formality, but it is important that the Fair Trading Commission is kept abreast of any restructuring by any service provider because this will effect sustainability. Of course, the consumer is the one who will eventually suffer if the service collapses.

Section 31, of course, is to be amended because it states that the Minister may by order designate the service providers that will be regulated. In fact, we are not going to be regulating service providers. We are going to be regulating services. That is a very important point. There are service providers with companies who in fact do things other than provide services. The only thing that we will regulate will be the services that they provide and not the other areas of business activity in which they are engaged.

In Section 32, it speaks to deregulation and provides that a service provider may apply to the Commission for the utility service which it provides to be exempted from the application of all or any of the provisions of this Act and where the service provider can establish that the market for the utility service is effectively competitive, and where the benefits to the economy of deregulating the provision of the utility service by the service provider will be greater than the cost of regulating the utility service. Then the Commission will make a recommendation to the Minister who may accept it or may not accept it.

The important point here is that there is a provision when a certain service becomes effectively competitive. The debate will rage on about whether and when the utility services can ever become sufficiently and effectively competitive as to be deregulated. Utilities industry, as it were, is one that is very high cost and is unlikely to really attract a sufficient number of entrants particularly in small societies. Therefore, careful examination will have to be made of any arguments on the markets in relation to utility services. The Commission will have to play a role in that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I reserve my right if necessary to make a few comments after lunch as I am advised that we are about to break.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I ask that this Sitting be suspended until 2.10 p.m.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that this House be now suspended until 2.10 p.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
1.10 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN: Sir, I am really indebted to you for having given me the opportunity today to make the presentation which I was able to do earlier. I do believe that the foundation laid today will result in the building of substantial benefits that will accrue to the population of this country, be it business or consumer, rich or poor. We endeavoured to create a piece of legislation that will be fair. It will target no one. It will favour no one. It is going to be a Fair Trading Commission. It is going to be an institution that is going to totally transform the economic landscape of this country. It is going to radically and fundamentally reform the way in which things that affect us are going to be done in this country. It is going to bring about changes that will benefit not only this generation but my children and their children and generations even beyond that.

Sir, I believe that what is here represents, as I said, the best effort that Government could have made in all of the circumstances. What is before us today has been informed by what is referred to as a monumental process of consultation to all relevant persons and stakeholders. We sought advice from a large number of people and I believe that we therefore have a foundation upon which we can build. Having said that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is also correct that in the spirit of further consultation and in the certain knowledge that this matter will, I am sure, transcend the political divide. As I said earlier at the beginning of my speech, it represents a significant step in the process of the rewriting of the economic Constitution of this country. In the same way that the socio-political Constitution is usually proceeded with in a non-partisan way, I expect that the debate on this Bill which deals with the economic Constitution will similarly proceed in a non-partisan way. In the spirit of our commitment to consultation which we embarked upon from the very beginning in relation to this legislation, the House is going to be invited to send the two Bills to a Select Committee for even further consideration.

With those few comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to second this Bill and reserve my right to speak. But at this stage, I also would like to move that further consideration of this Bill be postponed.

The question that this Bill be postponed for further consideration was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: In so doing, I am requesting that I move that Standing Order 45 be suspended for the operation of this Bill.

Hon. G. A. CLARKE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Standing Order 45 be suspended for this Bill was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.
2.15 p.m.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: After consultation with the Opposition, we have agreed, subject to the approval of this House, that this Bill be referred to a Joint Select Committee of both Houses and that, in those circumstances, the Government proposes to nominate the following persons to sit on that Committee from this House:

The Honourable Member for Christ West as the Chairman.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North.

The Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

I believe that we would invite the Leader of the Opposition at this stage also to nominate Members to sit on the Committee from this House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I propose to nominate the Honourable Member for St. John.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this Bill be sent to a Joint Select Committee with the persons so nominated by ourselves and the Leader of the Opposition to sit on this Committee.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that we send a message to the Other Place to nominate five Members to sit on the Joint Select Committee to be established to consider this Bill.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative.

ORDER NO. 4 – THE UTILITIES REGULATION BILL, 2000

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Pursuant to the discussions held earlier, it was agreed that this Bill would be considered part of the debate on the previous Fair Trading Commission. We have therefore at this point simply to request that further consideration of the Bill be postponed.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to move that Standing Order 45 be suspended in relation to that Bill.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move that this matter be forwarded to a Joint Select Committee of Parliament as previously agreed to under the Fair Trading Commission Bill and that a similar message be sent to the Other Place.

ORDER NO. 6 – TO MOVE THE PASSING OF A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE GUAR- ANTEE BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR THE REPAYMENT BY THE BARBADOS TOURISM INVESTMENT INC. OF \$25 MILLION

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will continue debate on this bond issue. The rate of interest is 8.25 per cent for these special bonds which are guaranteed by the Government of Barbados for specific projects related to the rehabilitation of the Bridgetown, Speightstown and St. Lawrence Gap areas.

Sir, this bond is for \$25 million, \$5 million of which will be used to fund the capitalisation of BTII. If you remember, Sir, BTII was formed in 1998 out of the former Barbados Tourism Investment Corporation. The principal function of the company includes the promotion of tourism investment through marketing of specific opportunities; monitoring the effectiveness of incentive programmes for educating potential investors on the advantage of Barbados as a tourism investment market; the facilitation of tourism investment in advising on incentive programmes, facilitating of approvals and assisting with public financing; the development of its vested property for tourism related purposes and promoting tourism related development of these properties through public and private partnership.

The issue which we are concerned with today is the implementation of infrastructural renewal programmes for key tourism sectors, including Bridgetown, Speightstown and St. Lawrence Gap.

Sir, the BTII was designated by Government as executing agency for these urban rehabilitation projects. These works have already started under the Ministry and by the time BTII was formed these projects had already received approval. The design work was done by Design Collaborative and BTII took over from where the Ministry of Tourism had left off. Phase Two and Phase Three of these projects, in agreement with the Ministry of Tourism, were actually undertaken, but BTII will manage this process as opposed to the first project which the Ministry of Tourism actually oversaw.

These areas that we are looking at fall under special development areas and in this first drawdown of \$25 million we are looking at specific areas under the programme. The

programme covers the wider Bridgetown, the Inner and the Outer Careenage. There will be improved arrangements for berthing in and around the Inner and Outer Careenage, replacing of the Chamberlain Bridge. In terms of the Constitution River, there will be engineering improvements, enhancement of the river banks and improvement in the drainage capacity of the river course.

In terms of Independence Square – redevelopment as a civic park. In Speightstown – street lighting, landscaping and improvements of the North and Southern gateways. In the St. Lawrence Gap area – street lighting, removal of wires, access and signage. In Dover Beach – the provision of rest-room facilities, restaurants, food courts. In Dover Pavilion and its environs – upgrade of structural facilities and construction of a police outpost and a car park.

Sir, the proceeds of the first issue of the special development bonds will be used to finance the cost of the following development projects:

The Princess Alice Bus Terminal in Bridgetown – Phase One.

Queen Street, Orange Street, Sand Street and associated streets in Speightstown.

Street lighting in Speightstown, Princess Alice Highway, Hincks Street, and James Street and High Street.

It is important for the perspective of all Barbadians that we understand the scope and nature of this project. What we are seeking to do is to rehabilitate the urban side of Barbados particularly as it relates to these three areas.
2.25 p.m.

I want to start first with Bridgetown because what must be a concern of any Government, and it is a prime concern of this Government, that Bridgetown must come alive. Bridgetown as we know it, is the main commercial centre of Barbados but what we do seem to get is that people come in and out of Bridgetown only in terms of specific commercial activity relating to their work but people do not really feel a sense of ownership and belonging to the urban area, particularly Bridgetown. People must feel that there is development going on around them that they can easily identify with, in this society. There is much development going on all over Barbados, particularly in residential areas as well as in areas which the common average man in the street is not easily associated. Development in the heights and terraces certainly excludes the majority of Barbadians. Bridgetown in itself belongs to all Barbadians. It is the major commercial centre and as such, Bridgetown needs to belong to the people of Barbados.

This project, Sir, we believe, brings Bridgetown alive because a city in which people do not actively participate in activity after work or a city in which people do not live, is a city that ultimately will die. People are hurrying and scuttling through Bridgetown in and out every day and people who live on the south coast and west coast only pass through Bridgetown in and out, particularly after hours. People drive through Bridgetown and there is no need to stop so we want to create Bridgetown as a place where people ultimately pass through but also as a place where people would want to stop and feel that they can participate in expanding activities. The new boardwalk that has been created in Bridgetown has certainly brought into focus the fact that people want to stay in Bridgetown. What has been happening is that since the new boardwalk has been created although there is not a lot of economic activity taking place in and around the boardwalk we are seeing larger numbers of people actually wanting to come into Bridgetown and actually wanting to stay in Bridgetown after hours.

The Pierhead Project is going to encompass a part of what is happening in terms of its own rehabilitation project and it is also an ideal model for public/private sector co-operation in terms of building the new Barbados that we want to build. This new boardwalk and the new boardwalks that we intend to move in both directions both going north and south must create for Barbados a sense of ownership particularly in an era when we are concerned about beach access, beach land and windows to the sea and the Pierhead Project, in a sense, brings a sense of ownership. There are two additional boardwalks planned. A boardwalk that will move south from the Pierhead to as far as the new Hilton Hotel and another boardwalk that moves from the Pierhead area right down toward the Harbour. Sir, in being able to create these boardwalks we are focusing as well on the expanded economic activity that will take place. We need, obviously, to regulate the environment. They will be a lot more traffic coming into Bridgetown, there will be a lot more people moving in and out of Bridgetown and there will be more parking. Of course, what will easily be identified is that we can now then create areas of economic activity particularly for some of the more vulnerable sets in our society who have been left out of our development. These people will now have an opportunity to have the kind of space and place in a structured manner, within the law that they can actually operate businesses and can actually move forward.

Sir, it is important to realise that by engaging in these projects we are not, as a Government selling off Barbados. We are actually retaining the ownership of the access of this country for future generations of Barbadians.

Sir, when we speak about the beach front project going from the Pierhead up to the Hilton that is considered to be maybe one of the best pieces of beach front property there is

in Barbados. The fact that you will have a boardwalk, the fact that people, through the boardwalk will have access to the beach, the fact that people can actually walk there day or night and can actually go down toward the beach, in essence retains a sense of ownership of that particular beach front property for all Barbadians. There are many people who can relate to this type of boardwalk activity particularly in the United States and in other areas of North America.

Sir, in terms of where we go with these rehabilitation projects, tourism potential is obvious. The tourism sector is obviously going to undergo serious reformation. In that reformation must be the concept of how we reform our marketing within tourism. These expanded projects give more than another fillip in terms of being able to create the types of attractions that most of our tourists want.

Sir, there are also plans on stream for expanding attractions to appear. People now do a tour of Barbados and they do it in a couple of hours. We need to be able to create enough attractions in Barbados that a tourist cannot do a tour in two or three hours but instead in four or five hours because what is necessary for us, is to create attractions in all areas that will also fuel increased economic activity. It has been proven through our intelligence and through serious studies that fifty cents to sixty cents of the dollar of every tourist is actually taken back to his home.

What we need, Sir, is to be able to create a new brand of tourism, a new sense of marketing in a way that takes more than what that tourist is taking back home. We need to be able to get eighty cents or ninety cents or even the entire dollar out of the pockets of the tourists when they visit Barbados. The only way in which we can do that is if we are able to create in Barbados a new sense of attraction. These projects are more than enough opportunity for us to be able to get closer to taking that entire dollar away from that tourist population. My own experience of tourism in another life related to the distribution channels and I am speaking of those who actually send people to Barbados. The agents of the consumer will tell you that Barbados has become a very sedate and laid back destination and that Barbados is not seen as a tourism destination in which there is a lot of activity. People even make remarks about sending old people to Barbados to convalesce. What we want to do is create for Barbados an entirely new consumer and an entirely new product – an entirely new product, placed at the feet of both Barbados and the tourists that will create more economic activity and will also give a sense that Barbados is a more active destination than we already have.

It is in this regard as well that we need to also understand how this new project also impacts on the social side of our development. We spent a lot of time talking about the economic side of our development but this particular project and these other projects should also change the

concepts in the minds of Barbadians about the social side of our development.

If people see that around them the areas which they call their own are being rehabilitated... it is in this regard as well that we need to understand how this new project also impacts on the social side of our development. We spend a lot of time talking about the economic side of our development, but this particular project and these projects will also change the concept or should change the concept in the minds of both Barbadians on the social side of the development.
2.35 p.m.

If people see that around them and the areas which they call their own are being rehabilitated, it gives them a sense of feeling and belonging to this country in a way in which they felt before. It also gives them a sense that if they are rehabilitating around me, the things that I own, the onus is on me as well to rehabilitate my own surroundings.

It is very difficult for a man to have a badly kept lawn and if both neighbours on either side have theirs in pristine condition – what is necessary for many people to realise is that through this project people will feel good about themselves, people will feel good about the environs of Bridgetown, people are less apt to indulge in anti-social behaviour and the type of behaviour that we are seeing. If the place is kept well, if the place is rehabilitated, people are less apt to litter once you have the proper receptacles, once you design it in a way that it is user friendly to all Barbadians.

We think, Sir, that this project is going to bring to Barbadians a new sense of belonging, a new sense of feeling. What is Barbados and who Barbados belongs to.

This project, also, it must be made clear, is not only about the ownership of these particular properties, but borrowings obviously to show the kind of projects that we need to do, what we need to do in the future. This obviously is different from the property development issues which fall under the aegis of the BTII. This is only the first draw down and the first tranche. As I said in the beginning, \$5,000,000 will be used to capitalise BTII so that they can be future projects of this nature.

Now BTII is also engaged in a number of additional projects which speak more to the ownership of the lands of Barbados, ownership to properties in Barbados which have been vested in BTII, and which will move BTII forward in terms of holding on to these things for the future ownership of Barbadians.

There are a number of projects which are already underway under BTII and I just need to go over a number of these projects. The old spirit bond, BTII will hold 25% equity in a venture company and would sell its property to that venture, and these plans are just awaiting approval from

the Chief Town Planner. There is the old eye ward and the open lot adjoining it, and these properties are going to be used for mixed use development under BTII. There is already a major company that is interested in it. The Town Hall, on Princess Alice Car Park, the Town Hall building is to be reconstructed and renovated to provide approximately 15,000 square feet of office space on two floors, and private sector partners are to be invited for joint-venture participation.

In terms of the Speightstown Post Office and the Library, this property was vested a couple of weeks ago, I hear that BTII plans to redevelop the site even on its own, but will also consider joint venture participation from the sector. The old Harbour Police Station on Bay Street, this has already been vested and there are already people looking at getting into joint venture arrangement with BTII to create in that particular site, enhanced economic activity which tends a lot towards tourism but also has a local element to it.

In terms, Sir, of Fort Willoughby, the Pier Head and the Screw Dock, there will be a major project coming for that area which includes one of the major conglomerates in Barbados. What is planned there is to be able to create a massive hotel, a 500-room hotel. Most of the area has already been vested in the BTII. The Screw Dock is now to be vested in BTII as well and some of the areas are going to be left to the Barbados Port Authority. Then there is the fish market in Bay Street which is another project. This site has not yet been vested but should be vested soon in BTII, so that we can also retain that to increase economic activity.

It is important that through this Bond we recognise that the major urban areas of Barbados are rehabilitating for the long term use for generation of Barbadians to come. The Bond, as I said before, is \$25,000,000 to mature in the year 2015 at 8.25%. We have also thought that the denominations in which it is issued, a thousand or less, also allows other people, non traditional partners to get involved as players in this rehabilitation project.

With those words, Sir, I thank you.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also rise to speak on this particular Resolution and to say, Sir, that Barbados is now not part of the Caribbean but Barbados is now part of the world, and that the Government must recognise that globalisation is here and it is here to stay. We cannot continue to see and behave as if tourism and the tourism by product is a product only for the minority. We must recognise that our tourism is part of the tourism of the world and we must behave and put particular measures in place that will make sure that Barbadians, on the whole, will be able to get some of the successes of tourism.

We are at a stage where we are now borrowing \$25,000,000 for the BTII and nobody can give you any

concrete information why we are borrowing this money and what we are going to do with this money. We are told that this money will be spent on Bridgetown, Speightstown and in St. Lawrence Gap, and no concrete projects have been put in place to earn foreign exchange for Barbadians, as a whole.

We, as an Opposition, must recognise that the BTII has been in control of large portion of lands throughout Barbados and which they have been able to rent to the private sector, and in some cases they have sold some of those parcels of lands to the private sector. We would like to know how come they have been leasing land and they need this sum of money. We want to know that at the end of 2015 what are we going to get to show that we have done anything in Barbados to develop tourism to the point where \$25,000,000 was extended and that the people of Barbados should feel good with this particular investment.

We are also at a stage in this country, Sir, if you leave here today, between Monday and Sunday, you cannot find two cruise ships in the harbour of Barbados, and we are at a stage where the Governor of the Central Bank can tell us that our tourism is doing so well and that it is being led by cruise tourism and yet we cannot find two cruise ships in the port of Barbados. I challenge any Member on that Side to tell me that I am misleading this House. Ever since the Honourable Member for St. Andrew has been replaced as Minister of Tourism, I have not seen two cruise ships in any one week in the Port in Barbados, and somebody must tell me what has happened.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I said cruise ships and somebody tells me that I can find cruise ships by the Cement Plant. I want to know what type of tourism you are involved in.

I want to know, Sir, what is going on with our tourist product. I want to pause here to say that I am not blaming the new Minister for what is going on in tourism, he cannot take the blame for the number of cruise ships failing to arrive in the port. What he might be able to take the blame for is whether a shopkeeper, a vendor or a taxi driver sits on the Board, but he has to decide, and only he, must decide who sits on the Board. It is not for the Opposition to tell the Honourable Member for St. Michael South who should sit on the Board. It is Cabinet policy and if the policy is such that the Honourable Member feels that nobody of that type should sit on the Board, then we must consider that is the policy of the Cabinet.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: So, the \$25,000,000, we want on this Side to see something concrete about this,

because what I have seen in Bridgetown, so far, could have easily be done by the particular company that intends to invest , or claim that they are going to invest large sums of money to develop Bridgetown.

2.45 p.m

We, on this Side, want to see something concrete about that \$25 million, because what I have seen in Bridgetown so far could have easily been done by that particular company who intends to invest or claimed that they are going to invest large sums of money to develop Bridgetown.

The Government is prepared to spend millions of dollars to develop the city of Barbados but the only people in Barbados who will make money from that happens to be the large business people but the vendors who have a right also to have a share of the cake in the City of Bridgetown cannot even set up shop there.

In one short space of time, the Government will be coming to this Parliament to give that large company the right to utilize Independence Square car park as a marina. The vendors cannot get one space near the Careenage to ply their trades but one company could get the Government to spend millions of dollars to develop their businesses and also negotiate with Government to build high-rise car parks in southern locations in Bridgetown and to remove Independence Square car park which is a landmark in Barbados by turning it into a marina.

I want to know what is going on in this country. I do not accept that the Cheapside Market or any other market is the fit place for vendors to be because they are not pigs that you can put them in a building and shut them away.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, there is a point of order.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: No. No. I have not heard anything about a point of order, I am not supposed to look at him, I look at the Speaker.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of order. I need to remind the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that very shortly Government through the Ministry of Agriculture Markets Division will be embarking on a rehabilitating project for Cheapside which will see us spending pretty close to \$7 million all told. We will be spending over \$6 million on Cheapside and approximately \$700 000 on temporary accommodation for the vendors. Work on the temporary accommodation should start in August this year and then the major work on the Cheapside project should commence in December or January next year.

It is incorrect for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy to say that the vendors are not going to be looked after and

that large businesses will be the only ones to benefit from the investment in Bridgetown in the next couple of years.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is attempting to mislead the House and I would ask him to desist from such practice.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am happy for that supposedly correction. What the Honourable Member is telling me is, that where the development in Bridgetown is going on runs from the Careenage up to Bay Street and they are going to take the mass-based people and push them in a building down Cheapside away from the action and the large companies in Barbados are capable....

You are on a point of order, you are supposed to say that you are on a point of order, you cannot just get up as you like.

Hon. A. P. WOOD: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy was in this Chamber some months ago when I outlined the plans of the Markets Division for the refurbishment of the markets in Bridgetown and he would have heard back then that in addition to the Cheapside project, as a sequencing programme, that we will be moving to Fairchild Street Market as soon as the Cheapside project is completed.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy is once again attempting to mislead the House by insinuating that the work to be undertaken by the Markets Division of the Ministry of Agriculture will be concentrated on lower Bridgetown.

We do have plans for the Fairchild Street Market and that work will proceed in the next couple of years. As a matter of fact, work on that project will start next year when the Cheapside project is completed.

Thank you.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, proceed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I thank you too, to let you know that Fairchild Street, the same thing. You shut the poor people off away from the action, you build a building and you divide the rooms like this. You got some pigs and you put them in a sty.

The area of Broad Street coming from the Careenage is off limit to people like myself who cannot get a piece of the tourist action. The tourists must be able to travel freely and if somebody invites them to a market they must be able to go there. The tourism industry is not for the mass-based people of Barbados any more because compounding on the problems that the vendors and the taxi drivers have now is

this stupid concept called the 'all-inclusives' tourism, where now you are not only taking the tourists away from the people but you are now taking the people away from the tourists. Tourists travelled Broad Street and what you are saying is that Barbadians cannot use Broad Street as an area to ply their goods and they must be shut away in some other location where they cannot come and connect with the tourists.

I am saying that Barbadians must understand that they have the same democratic right to that part of the tourism industry as anybody else and no progressive Government...

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. Once again, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has no concept or understanding of how the tourism sector works and should therefore not even address it. The 'all-inclusives' that Barbados has, does not exclude anybody or any tourist from going into Bridgetown or the like. As a matter of fact, the kinds of 'all-inclusives' that we have here, does not shut away people inside of a hotel but rather encourages people to go out for lunches. They have a number of contracts with small operators who not only shuttle people into Bridgetown but they have created economic activity and services in their own communities in a way that other 'all-inclusives' in other jurisdictions have not.

The fact is this, Sir, if you have a hotel that has been running at 40 and 30 per cent occupancy and then you are able to bring it to 90 per cent occupancy, do not tell me that 90 per cent of the people would not utilize the additional goods and services much more than the 30 per cent.

The Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not even understand the concept of the 'all-inclusives' and should therefore not even speak on it.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am shocked and alarmed to hear the Minister of Tourism getting up and making a point like that and I am going to tell you why. The Minister does not even know that part of the marketing tool of 'all-inclusives' tourism is to leave your wallet at home. I can bring a brochure to show the Minister of Tourism where people advertise and market their businesses and tell the tourists that they do not have to bring their wallets with them.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of elucidation. Again, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not have any concept about 'all-inclusives' tourism, because when the man leaves his wallet at home, it means that the goods and services he received are already paid for. It does not mean that he does not go out there and get them. That is nonsense.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: That is what I am telling you. You leave your wallet at home, you pay all the money overseas in the United States of America (USA) – let us have a debate on this issue – and the money is left in the United States of America (USA) and the people who collect the money only bring to Barbados what they want to bring to Barbados.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: On a point of order. This is gross ignorance and misunderstanding of the industry.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: The most important aspect of the operations such as salaries and wages, utility and other related cost, where are they paid? They are paid right here in Barbados. The bulk of the operation is not left in the United States of America (USA) or anywhere else. The bulk of the 'all-inclusives' money is paid out right here ...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying that prior to what is going on in Barbados now, tourists were free to go to any place in St. James, Oistins, St. Lawrence Gap, Dover or Silver Sands with money in their pockets and were able to buy freely in any shop but now they can hardly do that, because the all inclusive tourist will tell you that they can get their liquor at the hotel whenever they like and there is no reason to spend money twice.
2.55 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not interested in the tourist belt. I am interested in people who stand to gain from this. We believe that just because Jamaica is doing something that we have a right to follow Jamaica in everything they are doing. I am telling you that, when the tourist comes to Barbados under the all inclusive concept, he or she could be any place in the world because he does not take part in our tourism product like how the tourist used to be.

The tourist that used to come to Barbados in the 1960's, 1970's and even in the 1980's had a special commitment to Barbados. They could tell you every single hawker's name on the beaches of Barbados. But the people who come to Barbados now do not even know the people. They are shut away in their rooms. They drive around in coaches and they do not even have contact with the taxi drivers of Barbados.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not even know how many all inclusive facilities there are on the island. There is nobody shut away in the hotel. The operations of the major all inclusive facilities in Barbados in the first place are set up. The Honourable Member does not know what he is talking about. If they had so much against the all inclusive concept, why did they sell it off to a major conglomerate in Barbados to build an all inclusive in the first place? Well, they knew what was coming there. Furthermore, again not being able to understand clearly the concept, this does not mean because it is all inclusive that the man does not share in the economic activity of Barbados because the goods and services are already paid for.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I will say this, Sir. If I am lying, I stand on the same side of the Honourable Member for St. George South brother's house. Because he is the person who is making the identical point that I have made on the call-in programme and also in a tourism forum.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Are you calling the Honourable Member for St. George South's brother a yard fowl? Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am now hearing that, if you are a sitting Member of this Parliament and you call in to the call-in programme, you are a fowl. I wonder if the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central is very serious. Up to yesterday, Sir, I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael South on a call-in programme speaking to the people.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy stick to the subject matter.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am saying, Sir, that \$25 million of the tax payers' money cannot only be spent for a few. It must be spent in the interest of the masses of Barbados. If we are going to be spending \$25 million, it must be spent right through Barbados and not in special areas.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: I have already explained and so did the Honourable Member for the City that the money is being spent to rehabilitate Bridgetown, St. Lawrence Gap and Speightstown which is primarily for the use of Barbadians, not for the use of any select set. Who is using the Boardwalk now? Who are the people that spend there every night and walk there every day. It is Barbadians. It is not anybody else and that engenders a sense of ownership for Barbadians. The Honourable Member does not even understand.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am glad to hear that point coming from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South

that the Boardwalk is specifically for the Barbadians. So that when the project that stretches from the boardwalk up to Bay Street comes in place, I do hope that nobody will tell me or my Barbadian comrades that they cannot freely use those facilities. I hope that since they are for Barbadians that the Honourable Member for St. Philip South will recognize that it is big enough for vendors to be placed there and that from tomorrow there will be declared a place for vendors to display their locally made craft. One of the best locations in Barbados that you can place for vendors to display their local craft is the Boardwalk and it is for Barbadians. I agree with you that it is for Barbadians.

I am saying, Sir, that tourism cannot be a product for only a few. The tourism cake must be shared fairly throughout Barbados. I cannot understand why an area like St. Philip which is growing so quickly and people appreciate the area as a tourism area that this money could not be spent on those tourism products in St. Philip. What is so special about St. Peter or St. Michael...

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Again, the Honourable Member is misleading the House. We have already said that this is the first tranche of a draw-down that will work for these particular areas. I spoke as well about new areas that we are looking at as well including areas like Farley Hill and the likes which are areas that we want to develop for other purposes. We have already said that.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, for six years I sat in this Parliament and heard a brilliant idea from the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East about community development in a place like the Pinelands. I want to know why this \$25 million could not help to develop a project like that also?

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Now the Minister is telling me that they are doing something specific and St. Michael South East is not important. I cannot believe my ears that a Minister of Tourism is saying that people in St. Michael South East should not be entitled to a piece of this cake. All of a sudden the private sector boys in this Parliament will decide whether the private sector gets or whether the masses get none.

I am saying that tourism cannot only be for the private sector boys to come in here and declare whose interest they represent. In the same way that they have a right to come to this Parliament and represent their interest, I have a right to come to this Parliament and represent the masses. That is why I am expecting, Sir, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael East will back me on this particular matter because the bottom line has been drawn on this matter. Where the Honourable Members who have decided that they are going

to lend with the private sector, I would expect him to lend with the masses and the Honourable Member for St. James North to come on my side. They are on a rampage. Everybody is breaking for their own, so we must unite and stand by those people in whom we have a general interest.

Sir, I do not have to ask where the Honourable Member for St. Michael West stands, because I honestly believe that he will have to back me on this matter if he follows the Christian principles which he always does. He has no private case to be laid in this Parliament and people must understand that it is the politics of Barbados. We have come to a sad state when we see politicians lining up and befriending a particular interest that has always been defended. Here we see a situation in this Parliament where the interest needs defending and people are not prepared to come and defend the interest of the vendors, taxi drivers and shopkeepers.

There is no way in the year 2000 that any parliamentarian should have to come to this Parliament and put a case for taxi drivers, vendors or shopkeepers. We should have been passed this stage and that is why we feel that if we are going to move forward in Barbados that all the laws which made vending illegal without a license should be abolished. For a black man to develop a business acumen, he can only do it by vending. He does not have the capacity to own a business like how some people can own them in Broad Street and Swan Street. The only way he can develop that culture is by natural vending. He needs that start.
3.05 p.m.

Barbados has developed good business people out of speculators, shopkeepers, taxi drivers, so why we as a Parliament would want to destroy that. We have built the foundation. Those people have supported their children. Some have gone so far that they have supported their children so well that they have educated them to get to the highest heights in this country and now we as a Parliament want to look down on these people who have fought to develop this country. We must take a stance on this particular matter.

Can you imagine the masses in this country have to fight the whole world because of globalisation and now they are compounded with another problem where they have to fight the Cabinet of Barbados for survival. I am saying that it is nowhere that the masses should have to fight externally and internally at the same time when the rich and famous in this country do not have to fight only the internal forces but they have to fight the external forces.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am arguing that certain Ministers like yourself recognise that people in Barbados have a right when they come from certain social backgrounds

to have the same privilege as those who you think have all the commonsense in the world.

Aside.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Could you please address the Chair, Honourable Member?

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not interested in what happened before. The point is we are in the year 2000. We are dealing with globalisation. We are dealing with trade liberalisation and we must understand that a taxi driver in Barbados today could be a taxi driver any place in the world and that this competition is not his comrades in Barbados anymore. His competition is every single taxi driver throughout the world. It seems to me that this Parliament is not ready for this type of politics and that we are still cutting one another's throats when we have to fight against the whole world.

The Ministers of Government must understand that globalisation is here to stay and we must stop being petty and move on. We must understand that we must be our brothers' keepers and we must fight on behalf of the under-privileged in this country to help them fight against globalisation. Instead of helping them fight against globalisation, what we are doing in this Parliament, we are impacting on those same people, creating headaches for them and we seem to be sending them to the grave faster than they should be going.

I am saying that no taxi driver should have to worry about globalisation and worry about what decisions are made by Cabinet. It should be clear that any decision made by Cabinet will have to be in the interest of them and they would not have to wake up every morning wondering what will happen with the Cabinet decision...

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: ...whether that Cabinet decision will make him sell his car or not, as the Honourable Member for St. Michael South said.

I am saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that with globalisation we must understand that we as a Parliament must help those less unfortunate.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Less fortunate, sorry. You can slip sometimes. That is a correction and I am grateful for that.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member has two more minutes.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I can admit when I am wrong. I hope the Honourable Member for St. Michael South would recognise when he is wrong and correct himself too. This particular one I was wrong on and I have corrected it. Work on the Board. Make sure that the taxi drivers who collect the most information about tourism that you have them there to protect your interests. Make sure the vendors who know the people on a one-to-one basis are there to give you the information to have the policy, but the problem is those guys you see as the marketing experts they are only marketing experts in self-interest.

The taxi drivers are interested in Barbados. The marketing experts are interested in the hotel or hotels they control. I hope the Minister would, at least, listen to that and the same way you corrected me just now with two negatives, I want you to correct yourself with a positive coming from me.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am saying somebody must tell the Tourism Investment Inc. that they have had prime land in Barbados. They have been able to give out leases. They have been able to sell the land but what they seem not to be able to tell people is what they are doing with the benefits and proceeds from those leases and the sales. They must tell Barbados whether they are there to develop Barbados as a whole or whether they are just going to select three areas and feel that selecting three areas is the right thing. The same policy that is being practised by the private sector with their all-inclusive tourism is now being practised by Cabinet with their all-inclusive three areas.

I thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to participate in this debate which, in my opinion, relates to an exceedingly important mechanism of this Government to carry out development in specific areas of Barbados, a part of which area is in my own constituency, namely the St. Lawrence area.

I remember when the Budget was delivered by the Minister of Finance in which the idea of passing legislation for Special Development Areas was first announced that in my response to that Budget I was quick to point out that an important area of Barbados was left out, namely, the Maxwell/Oistins/Silver Sands area. Notwithstanding that, I am happy to note that we have progressed to the point where we are now providing essential funding to the organisation, the Tourism Investment Inc., to allow it to start in its work for the development of these areas.

As we all know, this funding must be taken against the background of the properties that have been vested in the Tourism Investment Inc. As far as I can recall, specific parcels of land starting in Bay Street and extending in

Bridgetown as far as the area which is now known as the Wharf Road and containing in particular the whole Spirit Bond area, the old Eye Hospital and a whole number of other properties have been vested in this Corporation in that area. I am not sure what has been vested in the Speightstown area. I know that acquisitions are taking place in the St. Lawrence area.

The essential point though is that this money we are voting is the beginning of Government's commitment to finance the development of those properties. As I understand it, this Corporation is charged not only with the responsibility for carrying into effect on the basis of not only exclusive ownership by the Corporation but by means of private/public partnerships.

I recall myself seeing advertisements taking place by the Corporation for the development of a mall at the Spirit Bond Centre in conjunction with the private sector. In Bay Street, I know for a fact that the Corporation invited tenders from businessmen for the development of part of the old fishing market. I can see as I pass Bay Street that a building is being erected by a corporation which was formed as a result of its being the successful bidder for that parcel of land which is vested in the Corporation and formerly housed the Harbour Police Station. There is, therefore, little justification for some of the comments of the Honourable Member who just sat down.

3.15 p.m.

As far as I am aware, the shareholders in the companies and the owners of the individual businesses who have so far been successful are all enterprising small businessmen in Barbados. The Honourable Member may be in a better position to tell me who are the shareholders of the new development that is taking place at the old Harbour Police Station. Certainly, those who have proclaimed themselves to be the promoters of that project, I do not believe they regard themselves as anything other than small businessmen in Barbados. Some of them even proclaim themselves to be small, black businessmen in Barbados.

I, myself, am also aware of some of the planning that has taken place in relation to this area. I am fully aware of the fact that the plans call for the implementation of a new development scheme between the Duncan O'Neale Bridge and the area which goes up to Queen's Park, the bridge at the entrance to Queen's Park. It is not surprising to me that a Barbados Labour Party Administration would be dealing with that, because I sat in a Cabinet in which many years ago it was clearly envisaged that an area between the Duncan O'Neale Bridge and the bridge that leads from the Belmont Road into Queen's Park would be dredged and embankments on both sides of that bridge would be created on which properly designed and constructed vendor malls would be created so that vendors would be able to take advantage of

the traffic that inevitably is attracted to bus stands and that Bridgetown would have a well planned and well executed market for those vendors under better conditions.

The Fairchild Street bus stand when it was redeveloped was just but the beginning. We are not responsible for the fact that all of those years were wasted under the administration of the Honourable Member's Party. We are not responsible for that. They had full opportunity to implement the plan from Needham's Point to the Baggage Warehouse. They squandered that opportunity, far from implementing the plan. They, deliberately, as a matter of decision making, made decisions which prevented and which will now act as an impediment to the full development of Bay Street.

The former Barbados Labour Party Administration made it known that from the Police Boys' Club in Bay Street right down to the Harbour Lights should become the major window on the sea and a major beach facility in Barbados.

The Democratic Labour Party used a building that was acquired by the Barbados Labour Party to be demolished. They rebuilt it for the purpose of putting the Caribbean Development Bank Annex in it. It was a terrible mistake they made. I do not listen and sometimes I am hurt the way the Honourable Member makes these wild speeches he is accustomed making in respect of these matters. He makes them from a position of a lack of knowledge and appreciation of the damage that his own Party has done.

As far as I am concerned, I hope the BTII makes sufficient money out of developments in the area that they develop that they will go further and acquire the piece of land that was the old Ice Factory to add to Government's land, because I would like to see that area fully developed as a model, a showcase, for a beach facility for Barbadians.

We have to go further. I hear the Honourable Members in this House repeatedly say that the area which was the old BICO headquarters on the seaside should be developed also for facilities for small business people, particularly those who are connected to the fishing industry or who wish to ply their trade in that area. That is an obvious development. Anybody who is connected with the Barbados Labour Party would know the planning that went into the realisation of that concept.

Do not forget the Bridgetown Fisheries Terminal was conceived and started by the Barbados Labour Party. Do not forget the reformation of all of that area was done as a result of the Barbados Labour Party's planning. What you did was to put a helicopter pad on it. That is another point that the people of Barbados must know, that on a piece of land that was reclaimed for development, the helicopter site should never have gone there.

The Democratic Labour Party, again, used a piece of land which was designed for the improvement of Bridgetown to allow their friends to bring their helicopter pad to put on it.

Asides.

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN: As soon as the Democratic Labour Party has to answer a few points, the Honourable Member is indulging in abusive language.

Aside.

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN: Deal with me!

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please!

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN: The Honourable Member must learn that the Rules of the House say that you must not use abusive language in here.

3.25 p.m.

The Honourable Member must remember that the records will show that as far as the development of Bridgetown, which this Resolution is about, that the Democratic Labour Party had envisaged this scheme from as long ago as the early 1980s. That is why when the Honourable Member speaks on these matters and accuses this Side of not wanting to do any of these things, it is necessary for people who know the origin of these things to get up and point out these matters. I do not mind the Honourable Member for St. John getting annoyed. If he gets annoyed because we bring these matters to the attention of the Government...

Asides.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, please. I would like all Honourable Members to know that this House must be in silence when an Honourable Member is speaking. I only expect to hear from one Member at a time. Any time any person decides to flout that I will have no alternative but to send that Member out.

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN: Sir, I also want to point out that the Honourable Members seem to forget that the whole area between the Deep Water Harbour to Cheapside Market, which the Honourable Member spoke of is now being develop as an area...

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would like to listen to one Honourable Member at a time. Honourable Member for St. John, you will have your chance to speak whenever this Honourable Member is finished and I would not expect you to be constantly interrupting an Honourable Member. Honourable Member for Christ Church South, please proceed.

Hon. Sir Harold St. JOHN: Sir, I am not dealing with personalities, I am dealing with a Resolution and the Resolution speaks of the BTII being funded for the purpose of executing the schemes that were created....

Asides.

Sir Harold St. JOHN: I am enunciating the programmes that the Barbados Labour Party are implementing pursuant to its promise to develop Bridgetown, Speightstown, St. Lawrence Gap and other areas of Barbados. I am pointing out, Sir, that it is incorrect to say that in the implementation of that plan that opportunities are being restricted to particular groups of businessmen.

The redevelopment of the Pelican area is there for all to see. What is taking place down there, as I understand it, is the creation of units which can be used for crafts and which can be used by small scaled entrepreneurs to carry out a whole range of activities so that when you look at the Bridgetown aspect of it, you will see that the Government is faithfully implementing its mandate. I am not so familiar with what is taking place in the Speightstown area but I certainly am familiar with what will take place in the St. Lawrence area and I am very glad to see that funding is being provided for the basic infrastructural work in the St. Lawrence area. Everybody knows that the St. Lawrence area is an important part of the tourism industry in Barbados. Not today, not yesterday but forty or fifty years about maybe longer there were hotels and guest houses in the St. Lawrence area in Barbados. Everyone also knows that the area is in need of refurbishment. Part of this money, as I understand it, will provide infrastructural works in that area – draining, car parking and the provision of a police post among the other things. I am very glad and I hope I will live to see it, that a connecting link between Maxwell Coast Road and St. Lawrence over what is known as the Dover Woods Causeway where the sea meets at Maxwell by the old graveyard and where the old church was to the west of Lisbon Vale, will be connected by a bridge so that people will be able to walk from Maxwell Coast Road through the park, over that bridge and into St. Lawrence without having to walk all around. As you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would know, you have to walk all around Maxwell Coast Road and then walk down Maxwell Main Road and then go back into Dover. Those are projects that have been talked about in Barbados for a long period of time.

I repeat the point that we are fortunate that we are able to implement these plans. Nobody stopped anybody else from implementing them, they were there for all the years, why did they not implement them? When my friend from St. Lucy makes his points I will have to point out to him that these are not schemes that have now been concocted. These are important components of the policy of successive Labour

Party Administrations for a long period of time. It is the good Lord that gave us the good fortune to be back in office now to be able to implement them. If implementing them is a source of annoyance to some, Sir, that will not dissuade the Labour Party from carrying its policy into effect. This money, obviously, is the beginning and I trust that there will be as speedy an implementation as possible.

We know that there would be constraints in the form of difficulties with respect to planning, with respect to environmental considerations, irrespective of the fact that there will be engineering and architectural criticisms of the particular schemes, but the Board of the BTII will not be dissuaded by the fact that they do meet periodic objections to any proposals that they put forward. That is the nature of what happens in Barbados.

3.35 p.m.

There is a large number of people who have different opinions. Barbadians like to be able to influence the implementation of projects whether they affect them or not. That is the nature of how business is done in Barbados. Sir, I trust that the Directors of the Company will have the will to carry into effect these strictures.

I thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had always intended to speak on this matter, although from one angle, but I must say that I consider it to be an honour to be born of a generation who neither have the brazen arrogance nor nature and outlook such as to believe that because they conceived an idea or a part of a group that conceived an idea, that successive administrations, in their own wisdom, who have other priorities are not entitled to pursue those priorities. Therefore you will never hear me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, getting up in here acting as if development in Barbados must only be seen from one perspective.

The whole purpose of this debate was for the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, and any other Member who had that outlook, to point out to the Minister of Tourism that in his thinking, not the architectural plans or how much cement is being used, not the square footage of the Board Walk, nor how long the plan was in place, but that his thinking and language did not reflect the priorities which he as an Honourable Member felt, should be reflected in the planning process.

Between the year 1986 when the Electorate of this country made a dramatic change and now, there must have been something that happened in this country that would have caused, at various points in our history, in some cases

up to 100 vendors to come down into the yard of Parliament saying that they want the opportunity to earn a living in this country. Any sensible person from my generation who is not stuck in a time warp would consider it to be their obligation in designing a new city for Barbados to focus, at least in part, of placing those persons at the centre or as close to economic activity as possible. That is all the Honourable Member for St. Lucy is saying in a nutshell. Apparently that has caused somebody to feel that the record which they are sworn to protect and defend has been in some way tarnished.

I believe that the comments that have been made are sensible comments. If the design did not include provision for some of those vendors, whose activities have been criminalised and made illegal, who are being hounded off the streets by the police, acting in accordance of the law, whose stalls are often broken up and put on a back of a truck and dumped somewhere, whose goods have been rotting sometimes in the police station, who have had to spend hours down at Central Police Station, whose children see them in those conditions and believe that their parents, who are trying to carry out legitimate activities, must be doing something wrong. I heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East on this. All we are saying on this Side is to try, as best you can, in designing projects in the City to include them in those projects and to make adequate provision for them to be part of that planning and for access to be given to them or licences to be granted for them, and for opportunities for them to feel that they are part of Barbados too.

If there was a gap in the presentation of the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, it was because he did not focus on that. What the Honourable Member for Christ Church South should have done, as the senior Parliamentarian in here, is not to go down the road which would cost his own credibility to be in great difficulty, at least as far as I am concerned, but to go down the road of counselling his colleagues that people should be at the centre of development, and that providing opportunities for Barbadians, not just those who want to develop hotels, not just the existing small businessmen who want to go into activities, but other persons who now want to get into economic activity or whose activities are being stigmatised to become part of the process. That is what I hope, should I be around here in the later days of my political career, would be my responsibility, but wherever I am I will see that as my responsibility.

I would also see it as my responsibility in a debate like this where the Government, under an Act called the Guarantee of Loans Company Act, a piece of legislation under which certain companies in Barbados, formed by the Government of Barbados, which took over hotels owned by Parliamentarians and others and guaranteed loans which the Auditor General has pointed out recently, have amounted to

more than \$70,000,000 and yet to this day we have never seen a financial statement for that company or any of the others for which the guarantee has been provided.

I would have considered it my duty to come in here and point out that, perhaps, the Government should rethink this legislation and should consider, requiring that before this Parliament agrees to a guarantee for any private company, whether Government owned or in which Government had a majority of shares, that this Parliament should have oversight and have an opportunity to look into the financial affairs of that company.

When this last came up in here, the Honourable Member for the City and the Honourable Member for St. Thomas pledged to this Chamber, particularly because of the GEMS project, for which they could not answer a single question, neither about the employment practices, the finances, capital expenditure, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, what crowns it all, is that there is a question which has been on the Order Paper of this House. It is Question No. 1 asked since August 25, 1999 and it would merely repeat a question that was on the Order Paper from the previous session.

There are certain people in this House who must have a vested interest in continuing to keep the people of Barbados and this House in the dark about the activities in relation to the GEMS project. Asking some basic, simple questions about the GEMS project, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, asking what are the principal features of the business plan in existence, what is the expenditure to date on construction and building works, consultants fees, travel, promotional and entertainment costs, salaries and office expenses, what are the sources of funds, the revenue projections, the prospective dates for opening of hotels, any proposed ownership or other corporation relation between that project and hotels previously indebted to the Barbados Development Bank? Any write off of debt, any tax concessions, the number of rooms being operated and the anticipated profitability. We can't get these questions answered.

I want the Honourable Member for Christ Church South to use more of his time instead of spreading basic propaganda about the Democratic Labour Party, that is not something for a man at his level of politics in this day and age to be doing. Write that speech and give it to somebody in here to deliver. Do not debase your stature in Barbados or whatever is left of it. Give somebody else that task, if they will do it for you, but don't come in this Chamber with any holier than thou attitude, talking about friends of the Democratic Labour Party, as if you have proprietorship over Oistins, you have proprietorship over the City and everywhere else in Barbados because you help conceive a few plans that other people said were not acceptable to them and were not within their priorities.

3.45 p.m.

I hope I would never get to that stage in my life. I hope this will be a sobering debate as a whole for the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) to pull its senior Members back into line and to remind them what their responsibilities are in this Chamber, instead of getting in as I said, to those nonsensical and base allegations against Members on this Side.

We did not say that we were not going to support it, but if we did, we would have a valid reason for doing so, and the valid reason for not supporting this would be that we were promised that the legislation would be changed so that this Chamber would not be granting any further guarantees until Parliament had the right to look at the financial statements of those companies to which the guarantees had been granted and that every year financial statements would be filed so that we would know the nature of Government's obligation under this legislation.

That is a reasonable and fair request for the simple reason that there are ministries which are not spending \$25 million in this fiscal year. To the best of my knowledge, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North does not have \$25 million to spend in his ministry. There are private companies in Barbados undertaking more investments in a fiscal year than the money which the Ministry of Social Transformation has to disburse. These private companies have control over more money than the Minister of Social Transformation and the Minister of Health. These are private companies over which the Cabinet has no control except to its shareholders.

I know that half of the Members on that Side do not even know what the financial state of those private companies is. None of the Members on the back bench knows them. None of the Members on that Side could have defended the decision by the Durants Golf Club to write that letter the other day because they probably have not even seen the financials for that company. They have not seen the financials for GEMS. They have seen the financials for Needhams Point Development over which the Honourable Member for Christ Church South has some influence. They have not seen the financials for any one of those companies and have not seen the financials for Land Reclaimers, the Barbados Agricultural and Marketing Co. Ltd. (BAMC), or the Barbados Agricultural Credit Trust Ltd. (BACT). None of them. Yet, if we took all of the money that those companies were investing in this fiscal year alone and for which we have given guarantees in this Parliament, it is almost equivalent to Government's capital expenditure in one fiscal year. In fact, part of the capital expenditure is also going to be given to them to undertake investments.

That is why this Parliament has been brought to such a low level and that is why we have to endure some of the nonsense that we endure in here. As soon as we get an integrity commission and some integrity legislation, we

would not have that kind of problem because a man could get up and say all the things the Honourable Member want to say without worrying about what the Opposition might say afterwards but once we do not have that kind of legislation, we can only speculate.

The Honourable Members on that Side can only speculate. They do not know how much money is being controlled by the Chairman of any of these corporations. Perhaps, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South may tell us one of these days in here what he knows. It is a complete charade and Parliament is being brought low because of that and then you will have to go and defend these practices to the electorate, not me, because I am going to remind the electorate that in the interest of good governance and integrity, the Opposition has consistently asked for the right to see the financial statements of those corporations.

These are not statutory corporations that the Public Accounts Committee has any control over. These are not companies owned by private people or friends, to use a word coined loosely and irrelevantly so, by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South. We are talking about companies which Government has one hundred per cent ownership in and in which the Minister is the responsible person and shareholder and in which the Government appoints directors and yet nobody on that Side – the most I will hear when I leave in here today, is somebody will meet me at the bottom of the step and tell me that is true, but what can we do.

That has been going on in the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) for a long time and everybody frightened to talk but I do not have to be frightened to talk and I will say this, that any time they call the name of the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) in that disparaging way and seek to throw opprobrium on us for taking legitimate decisions that our Manifesto and our mandate permitted us to take, then we will have to respond.

Any time the Government's development agenda does not focus on the vendors or on the taxi drivers and all of the other persons who want to be a critical and central part of tourism in Barbados, then the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) will have to speak and will continue to speak despite the propaganda efforts of Members on that Side, or at least one Member on that Side of the Chamber.

That is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I said that I consider it very regrettable because everything that was said this morning told me that we should come in here and vote against this Resolution on the basis of the commitments given but that would be a pointless exercise. We know there is a 26-2 majority. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South is the only person who forgets when he got

thrown out and seemed to believe that all the odious practices for which the people got rid of the Barbados Labour Party (BLP) were apparently to continue and the saviour whom they threw out was to continue to have a say in this country for the eight years in which the Democratic Labour Party (DLP) was in power but although he was thrown out, he was still able to direct what development took place in this country. An absurdity if ever I heard one, for any senior politician to get in here and talk about.

The Barbados Labour Party (BLP) inherited the Government in 1994. They had all the time in the world, \$400 million in extra VAT money, foreign direct investments pouring in and had every opportunity to do all the things they should be doing and yet our pleas from this Side to include vendors and other small business people in the centre of their planning could provoke the ire of the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, without a single recommendation on how he could improve accountability lest he gets trapped in a credibility crisis before the end of this session of Parliament which would not be my fault.

The Barbados Labour Party (BLP) has to address those issues because it is not going to be the Boardwalk that is going to make the difference, it is going to be the people's ability to trust so that they can believe what the Members on that Side have to say. That is what is going to be the critical component.

If every time you open your mouth, somebody swings the lock on a cabinet and all you can see are skeletons behind there shaking around and pointing to practices that should not be acceptable by any modern Government in Barbados....

The other day, St. Lucia had some confusion over their Poverty Reduction Fund and the Minister fired the whole Board. He had an audit and restructured the entire entity including amendments to the legislation. Yet, this Opposition can agree with the Government to put in place legislation to assist private companies owned by the Government to carry out developments in Barbados on the understanding that the legislation would shortly be amended to permit Parliament to have oversight over the financial operations of these companies.

The Government has the temerity to come in here today with a piece of legislation to guarantee another \$25 million on top of what we already guaranteed for GEMS; on top of what we are going to guarantee for Needhams; on top of what we are going to guarantee for the Golf Course and on top of what we are going to probably guarantee for Sherbourne and all the other investments which are now being undertaken by private companies and the Opposition apparently is not to say anything but instead is to laud the Government on what it left undone in 1986.

3.55 p.m.

And the Honourable Member will be happy if that is what we on this Side did. That is not our task. We are not joining with anybody in that nonsense. This is an exercise in which Parliament has to reclaim its accountability in this country. If this Parliament can guarantee loans to these companies totalling millions of dollars, then we have to have the right of accountability. We have to see those financial statements once a year. The Public Accounts Committee has to have oversight of the operations. Members of the back bench should be asking questions about Government's priorities. If you can raise \$25 million for tourism, why can you not raise some money to help the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East whose departments are running out of money to carry out the many programmes which he identified in here? Why can you not raise money to give the Urban Development Commission some more money to assist with the backlog of grants and loans that it has promised and approved but has not been able to pay over? Why can we not find some money to give to the Rural Development Commission, again an entity that has approved millions of dollars in loans but cannot disburse a cent? This is creating an element of frustration out there with all of us as politicians. That is what we should be looking at.

Members on the other Side, as I said, have an obligation to weigh those development priorities. Is a boardwalk from Needhams Point to Bridgetown a priority over the concerns in St. Michael West of flooding, poor roads and the people who want to purchase houses under the Tenancies Freehold Purchase Act. There are concerns of the people in the Farm, St. Stephens and other areas which some Honourable Members have been raising, from time to time. Other Members of Parliament in Christ Church have concerns. They are not hobbled in a debate like this. Get up and speak. Do not let people who can only go down half way and face the boss speak for you. Get up and speak. None of you are bound in the way that some of them in here are bound by their past record. Get up and say what priorities that you think Barbados needs to focus on.

It seems as though Ministers go through a sudden transformation. When they are on the back bench, they see things from one perspective. As soon as they become a Minister, it is amazing the transformation of their outlook. It is amazing the things they can suddenly say. We had an example of it today. The Honourable Member for St. Michael South completely forgot that his was not to put a brief written by a faceless civil servant, well meaning but faceless. His job was to come in here and tell me what Government's priorities are and why I should agree to give this company \$25 million without seeing any financial statements, without knowing what its track record is and without knowing like the Gems Project who is getting what out of the project at the end of the day and why. That is what the back bench needs to do.

Sir, I am appealing to the Honourable Members on the back bench to reclaim the relevance of this Parliament and not allow us to be side-tracked by what has taken place in the course of this debate today. If there is going to be development in the City, they must take into account the needs of vendors. They must take into account positioning taxi drivers that they can see tourists.

We heard about traffic from the bus stands. Imagine you have a country now overburdened by motor cars where a large percentage of the population is travelling by motor cars and the people who have the spending power. Yet, Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, stuck as he was in the 1980's, is talking about putting vendors near the bus stand because there is traffic in the bus stands.

The traffic in the bus stands is the school children. The traffic in the bus stands is the people on mornings and evenings.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: There are plenty of vendors who know better than that. They set up around the roundabouts to sell newspapers, fruit, corn, nuts and ackees. Even in Belleplaine, they are selling fat porks and cashew nuts because we do not know where the traffic is occurring. It is not in the bus stands and the vendors in Bridgetown know where the traffic is too. It is not only in the bus stands. There are other kinds of goods that they sell and they do not need a marketing degree to know that. They know how to market their goods. They know where to market their goods and everybody cannot be in the bus stands, Cheapside Market and Fairchild Street Market. If you criminalize the activities of people by not giving them licenses, by not providing the opportunities for them to be in the centre of business activities, then you have a recipe there for social dislocation.

I am saying that there is nothing that the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said in his presentation that tells me that the priorities of the Government are in finding opportunities for those kinds of people. That is the error of your ways. We are saying to focus on those things and do not get side-tracked. At the end of the day when those people start to give trouble, they are not picking and choosing.

They do not understand there is a thin line between Government and Opposition. There is a perspective nowadays that everybody is in Government. Therefore, it is a threat to me if there is a Government in this country which does not seek to deal with the needs of the man at the bottom – the underprivileged, the vendors, the people who are most disadvantaged in this country. They perceive that this is a ruling coalition, but little do they know. I wish that they were in here to hear otherwise. But they do not come in here and

they often do not realize that there are elements of policy divide.

At the end of the day as I said, the focus in this debate is wrong. I believe that Honourable Members have time enough and Members of the back bench have an opportunity to reclaim this debate for the people and ensure that some of this money is spent for the advancement of working people in this country.

Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is but fair that my voice be heard in this debate, as I consider that the constituency of St. Michael North West which I represent, has played a major role over the years within the development of the tourist industry of Barbados. This shown by way of the then Paradise Beach Club, the non-existence of some place that is running to ruin in relation to something owned by some people called Sandals and since the emergence of the Deep Water Harbour that Brandons to Brighton which has become perhaps one of the most attractive beaches to be found anywhere in the region. I stand at this point to really be the Oliver Twist in this debate to ask for some. In asking for some, I believe that it is justifiable that the community tourism can be established in what I am going to say this afternoon in relation to St. Michael North West and some of the money that is allocated for Bridgetown and Speightstown.

Sir, I want to put in my two cents in relation to the Boardwalk as well. I do not want this debate to come down to a point of this Party did this and the next Party did that, and this Government did this and the next Government did that. During my years in politics, I could stand here and point my fingers at people as well who did things. I think that I want to move the debate above that. I want to carry the debate to the point to show that we are moving on.
4.05 p.m.

I have spent some time watching the movement of the Boardwalk. I do not know if any other Member of this Honourable Chamber has spent some time there. Up to Saturday, I fished from the Boardwalk, and I do not believe that the Boardwalk should be used for vending. I consider it to be a place where families can go and spend an evening relaxing.

One of the things that I saw that I hope will be rectified shortly is that some of those people fishing there use the bait and rest it on the benches where people sit. That is questionable. I would like to see that stopped. There is a situation where we start to see the Boardwalk being used for

other means than what it should be used for. I have seen men riding on the Board Walk and bicycles up and down on the Board Walk.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the Board Walk was not built for that. I believe it was built to bring back the days that I can remember, days at the Pierhead when you took your family a Sunday or Saturday afternoon and you walked to the Pierhead. As I have said, the most beautiful thing in a man's mind is to sit and watch the movement of the sea or to spend some time in an atmosphere where the sea surrounds you. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would not like to see the Board Walk commercialised. I would like to see the Board Walk there for the benefit of not only Barbadians but for the benefit of visitors alike and that it be maintained in such a way that it is something that we would be proud of.

If you are talking about vending, if you are talking about finding some place to put people to do vending, I think there is ample space between the Charles Duncan O'Neale Bridge and the old Swing Bridge. I have looked at where several taxis are parked and I think that that area could be modified to become one of the most attractive areas in terms of vending where you could build some nice cubicles and you can make provision for the vending set-up to enhance the whole City of Bridgetown in relation to the whole area.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that vendors could go on that particular area. It is well known in Barbados that in the early nineties the Barbados National Trust was opposed to that particular area for vending. I do not think, Sir, the National Trust in Barbados would allow people like the vendors to be privileged to have a location like that.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if that is the case I believe that Parliament has a right in the interest of the vendors of this country. Personally, if you look at that area, it is conducive for what I consider to be modern day vending in terms of its being between the Charles Duncan O'Neale Bridge and the actual Swing Bridge, instead of looking at the Board Walk. I am saying that the width of the Board Walk is not conducive in terms of the movement on the Board Walk it is not conducive for vendors. That is my point in establishing my feelings because I have spent some time observing.

I would also like to recommend to the Minister responsible that before the Board Walk is opened that you take a walk because some workmanship on the Board Walk needs to be looked at. It needs to be rectified before it is opened and I am hearing talk about it being opened next week. There are some boards that are up on the Board Walk. I do not know why they have not covered the rope on the Board Walk because any wicked person can take a knife and

cut the rope that is there on the Board Walk and all the money that would have been spent would be spent uselessly. I think all they need to do is to take what could be considered as an inner tube or something like that and cover the rope so that it will become safer.

I also suggest as far as the Board Walk is concerned that you take a look to see that the workmanship on the Board Walk needs to be looked at again.

In continuing the debate, based on the benefit of this money we are talking about today, it would be unfair for me to sit in this Honourable Chamber and not establish why St. Michael North West should benefit from it as well. Based on the fact that for too long the people of St. Michael North West had a voice in this Parliament but it did not say much and at some time again had another voice who came with a plan during the by-election...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West is misleading the House. The Honourable Member for St. Michael North West knows full well of the Brandons Development Plan which if it were executed or allowed to be executed... I hope the Honourable Member would recognise that that plan was a fantastic one and would have pushed the necessary development for his constituency. If he supports it, he has a right to get up and say that it is a good idea and that he would be supporting it.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not support that plan because that plan has a bus going underground. That was a hurried plan where a graphic artist was sitting in his house an afternoon and he was rushed by a group of people to provide a plan and Winston Jordan told me he did not know what he was even drawing. So I could not support it, Sir.

Nevertheless, what I would like to say is that for too long the people of St. Michael North West, of Brandon, of the Farm and of Brighton... Because Brighton is becoming a very commercial district with Malibu Centre which is a tourist attraction and Weiser's which is also a tourist attraction, you have a situation where the residents of Brighton have started to complain to me of certain activities that are happening in that area.

I would like to see more lights in Brighton based on the movement of bodies in Brighton at this moment and on the activities in Brighton.

I am saying let us see more development in that area. I would like to see, as far as Brighton is concerned, along the beach, that the average Barbadian is benefiting from vending. Right now they cannot benefit because even the people who are occupying Weiser's are restricted from

vending on the beach. If you are talking about free trade and developing, I am going to ask the Honourable Minister of Tourism...

I am in favour of the money being spent and I am in favour of the development of tourism but I am also in favour of community tourism so that the little boy or the little girl in Brandons who can plait hair can have a little booth. The woman or the man in Brandons who can make a beach wrap, who can do leather craft can do that. In terms of water sports at Brandons you have what I consider to be a no-no on water sports. I would like to see that the Minister of Tourism is prepared to see if there is some way that that Act could be repealed so that water sports can be developed at Brandons to the benefit of some person who can feed their family by that means.

Personally, I do not want to have this debate going down as what one Party or the other Government said, but I am concerned. I have residents who live on the land side of Brandons who have to fight traffic to get on the sea-side. Every Thursday, every Wednesday and every Friday there is a lot of activity because of the arrival of tourist ships. Most of the crew that come to Barbados on the tourist liners in Bridgetown go to Brandons. They do not take taxis. They walk out of the Bridgetown Port and they walk to Brandons. Every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Brandons is a hive of activity.

I would like to see that provision be made...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House, Sir. What he should have said is that every Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, prior to the dismissal of the Honourable Member for St. Andrew, Brandons used to be a place where you find a lot of tourists, but there are only two cruise liners in Barbados now on a weekly basis.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, being intransigent does not understand what is going on. I am always there. He passes through. He does not relate. I said Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. I can give you the names of the three tourist ships, so we do not need to debate that. 4.15 p.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member said every Tuesday and the Honourable Member is misleading the House because if you were to go to the Port now you will not find a cruise liner in the Port now, Sir.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me proceed because the Honourable Member for St. Lucy understands clearly that I would not be side-tracked by

whether tourist ships are in or out because I want to get my point across.

Sir, what I would like to see for the development of the small person of St. Michael North West, for him to benefit from any tourism project, are simply little things. If you take the area that was just cleaned on Cave Hill, it is perhaps one of the most beautiful sites to be found anywhere in Barbados – up on Dover Crescent. I see no reason why some money could not be spent in that area to beautify that area. Taxi drivers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a daily basis take passengers from the various hotels and cruise ships to show them the beautiful Barbados that they want to see but it needs to be developed. It needs to have an ecopark attraction. It needs to have a place where people can stop and buy the natural drinks of Barbados like water coconut, mauby and those things – natural things of Barbados I would like to see establish in that area. I would invite any Member of this Chamber to drive to that location at any time and see that it is what we call virgin territory in terms of tourism in this country but it needs to be developed so that the people who live in Dover Crescent will also benefit.

I spoke to the Honourable Minister of the Environment about it. I have also spoken to the Minister of Social Transformation and I have asked both Ministers if they would kindly find a way to beautify that area. I have not spoken to the Minister of Tourism yet but I am doing so on the Floor of the Chamber now by saying that that area could perhaps become one of the stops in Barbados as far as places of interest.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we take the movement of visitors to this island in terms of going in a northerly direction, we have a situation where at Brighton Beach – I am drawing this to the Chamber's attention – where business persons at Brighton Beach with what I would consider to be beach bars are being harassed on a daily basis and they cannot put up beach umbrellas or chairs. They are harassed by the NCC and other Government agencies and I am wondering why the people at Weisers and the Malibu Centre are faced with somebody from an agency telling them that the law does not permit them to put up beach umbrellas nor it does not allow them to put out beach chairs but still there are individuals walking around this country with beach chairs and umbrellas in the back of their cars stopping at certain beaches in this country and renting those things to people who are occupying those beaches but here you have two establishments in St. Michael North West faced with this situation. They are paying VAT and all the necessary taxes but simple chairs or umbrellas to rent they are told they cannot do it. I am concerned about it and I could not let this debate go on unless I put in a voice for a constituency which I consider to be ripe in terms of being part of the tourist industry of this country.

Sir, one of the things that we are neglecting in this country and I am certain that the Minister of Education and

Culture will support me in this one, is what would be considered a water festival. If you take the area of Brandons with its amphitheater look where you can stand by the Flour Mill, look inland and see the beauty of Barbados and where there is a stretch of land from the Flour Mill down to Batts Rock, I am saying Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I would like to see the day when one of the world's greatest festivals could be held at that location. Barbados is ripe for a water festival, Barbados has all the ingredients for a water festival. One of the things that we know could project Barbados in terms of marine tourism is a water festival. I am calling on the Minister of Tourism and I am asking him that when he is spending this money to sit down with people and look at these things and to also see the community involvement in a water festival. Should we develop what could be considered a water festival, we could have hobicraft, speed boats and wave runners involved. We could also have every association in Barbados involved – the marine life of Barbados has many organisations – the Barbados Yacht Club, the Sailing and Cruising Club, the Game Fishing Association, the Water Sports Association. All of them are organised and it is just a matter of embracing them and saying, this is what we would like to do to project Barbados in terms of tourism.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are two areas that I would like to see developed with respect to water festivals – the Brownes Beach area, although there are many boats moored there and the Brandons area, which, in truth and in fact, are both virgin territories.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, yes, Bridgetown and Speightstown, I see nothing wrong with developing these areas but I have heard nothing about First Street and Second Street. I am not only going to put my case for St. Michael North West but I will say that there is an area in Hometown that Barbadians do not understand is one of the most advanced areas. It is even to me more advanced than St. Lawrence Gap. The Honourable Member for St. Lucy or those who travel there will tell you that First Street and Second Street in Hometown just as you leave the Hometown Police Station it is the first street on your left and the second street on your left and it is one of the only places that you can see Barbadians intermingling with tourists without any harassment.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: You do not see any harassment in that area and yet you hear so much about harassment in St. Lawrence Gap and I do not think that the police records have shown anything like that in First and Second Street in Hometown and there is a lot of closeness. If we are talking tourism we need to talk tourism.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not being critical of my Party or my Government but I want to see my Government stretch

their hands out and be able to be involved in community tourism. Involve the community in aspects of tourism so that when we say that tourism is for us, the average person on the street will not resent the tourists. The average Barbadian has an attitude to the tourists and we need to remove that element and let the average Barbadian see the tourists as persons who can benefit this country and not as persons who take something out of it.

I am also going to appeal to the Members of the Opposition that they have a responsibility to this country as well because the day will come when they will be in this position and when they will have to administer this country and the things that they are critical of and the packages that they are selling, this idea of projecting Barbados as a place plagued with crime does not belong to one Government.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House. No one on this Side projected Barbados as a place of crime or violence today, Sir. This debate was violence free until the Honourable Member started to speak.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: This idea of projecting Barbados as a place where foreigners are buying up the land is creating inside of the mind of the average Barbadian an attitude that is not going to be beneficial in the long run.

Asides.

Mr. M. Z. WILLIAMS: The Honourable Member for St. Lucy just sat there and said it will be soon. If the argument is soon then the time will come when right at your doorsteps you are going to be faced with the very problems. How are you going to solve them then?

I am saying that now is the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to move on. Now is the time for all Barbadians to understand that tourism is our business.

Tourism is our business in the sense that we must play our part in it and we must be given an opportunity to play our part in it.
4.25 p.m.

I know for a fact that there are some people that should not be around the perimeters of tourism as far as business is concerned, because they are creating, what I consider to be bad images for Barbados. There are things that are happening that I will not speak about in the Chamber because they will be documented, but I can take anyone of the Honourable Members aside and tell them about some of the things that are happening in the country as far as tourism is concerned, and it needs to be looked at. It needs to be controlled,

otherwise the day will come when Barbados will be seen as a country for devious deeds, sexual deeds. We need to get serious about it.

We need to understand that we live here, we need to understand that we have to be responsible for whatever happens here, we need to understand that whatever is going to happen must involve us, we must be all part of it. We must be seen as part of the team. If we are not going to be seen as part of the team then the fellows in The Farm are not going to care anything about tourism. The people who live at Pile Bay, and I will like to close on this point. I have one of the most serious situations on my hands as a Parliamentary Representative, as far as the same tourism is concerned.

For many years, those people who live at Pile Bay, benefited from the doors of Paradise. Now Paradise is closed and there is a lot of unemployment as a result in that area. Some people worked as nannies, people who benefited from selling fish to the hotel and that type of thing. My concern at this point is that I would like to see something done as far as that area is concerned. I would like to see that some move is made as far as Sandals is concerned.

I would like to see that Batts Rock area, another area, another location within my constituency in St. Michael North West... If you go to Batts Rock any Sunday and you cannot get to park – it is one of the most suitable attractions for public outings, but what? It still needs to be looked at. Don't put it there and say that it is for the locals alone and treat it as for the locals alone. Spend some of the money on Batts Rock, upgrade Batts Rock. If it rains you cannot get down in Batts Rock, it is not fair.

I would like to see Batts Rock resurfaced, I would like to see, what you and I know as "paddle tennis" court, and a Lawn Tennis court at Batts Rock. I would like to see nice things in Batts Rock based on the fact that there can be interaction between the local community and the tourists.

In closing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have put my case in support of the motion before this Parliament, but also closing and saying as Oliver Twist, I am asking for some. That is all I am asking for, some.

Thank you.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: I rise to support this Resolution before us, Resolution to ask this Parliament to guarantee this \$25,000,000 Bond issue to be raised by the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. This entity, as you know, Sir, a wholly Limited Liability Company, was formed to perform some of the functions previously executed by the BTIC.

Sir, this agency will play a most fundamental role in leading this country's new thrust in tourism and I certainly

want to urge Members of Parliament to support this new institution in its attempt to carve a new way forward for tourism.

Sir, the reality is that the purpose of which this Resolution is before us, and the purpose for which this Bond issue is being floated, that is, Sir, the works in St. Lawrence, Bridgetown and Speightstown are essential. The activity in those areas have outgrown the physical clothing, Sir. It is as if a young person has grown but their clothes have not been renewed, and you can understand the measure of discomfort, the measure of ill health even which could ensue if timely action is not taken to expand and upgrade the clothing in which a robust and growing young person is trapped.

In the case of Bridgetown, all of us have witnessed over the years, the expansion of activity in Bridgetown. Increased shopping, increased requirement for parking, increased activity generally. I, Sir, would want to urge this Parliament's support of the efforts of this Government to expand Bridgetown. Not just to meet the demands of today, Sir, but to meet the demands of tomorrow.

All of the plans that I have seen, Sir, the focus of the development of Bridgetown, the focus of the development of St. Lawrence Gap, the focus of the development of Speightstown, is geared towards a proper fully integrated form of development, Sir, that provides opportunity for small business people, large business people and for the general public. The developments that I have seen would take care of a trend towards further pedestrianisation of those areas. One of the issues that we had to face overtime is the increased competition for limited space between vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic.

Sir, as it stands now, Bridgetown is a place where you go, only when you have to, and you try to get out as soon as you can, it is not a situation that provides ample opportunity for the small business in this country. I am certain that the investment to be made through the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc, which is only acting as a catalyst which other private sector investment soon follow, will create an environment in which we will be able to accommodate more small business people, whether they be those who will operate within structures such as the refurbished markets at Fairchild Street and Cheapside, as well as those, Sir, which will be accommodated along the expanded sidewalks and walkways in terms of street vending.

The plans which are being developed do not rule out street vending. They incorporate sidewalk activity as part of the attraction of Bridgetown, Sir. None of us, no one in their right mind, Sir, will develop a modern city, whether that city be in Bridgetown, Barbados or elsewhere in the world, without making accommodation for the general public to be able to relax by way of benches and other forms of seating

without some greenery, essential for structural support, and without providing opportunity for some open air vending. What will happen, Sir, is that, quite naturally, the opportunity, Sir, will be taken to improve the physical environment in which they work.

I do not hold any romantic notion that there is anything excessively attractive about keeping people stuck in alleys which are smelly, and you know what causes the smell, you know what happens to the walls and alleys after hours, Sir. I do not have any romantic notions about having Bridgetown continue as a place that has no public conveniences, and therefore, Sir, with vendors operating outside having no facilities to relieve themselves, other than depending on the generosity of store owners. With a new expanded and upgraded Bridgetown, Sir, those vendors will be able to operate with greater dignity by way of the facilities provided, both a mix of indoor and open air, Sir, as well as the higher health and safety standard, Sir. Sir, this investment is fundamental.

In addition to Bridgetown, I cannot think of many other places apart from St. Lawrence Gap, because St. Lawrence really represents a good example of how one could easily mix opportunities for wayside vending and for other larger activity.

4.35 p.m.

My favourite burger place is at the gentleman who sells in front of the Ship Inn and the After Dark. When I am hungry at night, I go there to get my burger.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: At Trevor's. I should give him the advertisement.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Natalie works with him. Natalie fries the fish and Trevor does the burgers. Natalie and Trevor – the Honourable Member for St. John goes there as well. You can get good conversation and very good burgers there.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: He is a St. Michael man and we in Christ Church are happy to be able to provide the economic opportunity for him. He is worthy of it.

Sir, the reality is that when this Government conceived the improvements for St. Lawrence Gap, it was to provide increased and enhanced opportunities for persons like Trevor and Natalie, Sir. The reality is, that with the limited sidewalks which are available, the absence of parking in St. Lawrence Gap and the absence of suitable drainage and

sanitation facilities, there are only so many Trevors and Natalies that can be accommodated there. By moving St. Lawrence Gap to a proper pedestrian focus, we are in a better position to provide enhanced opportunities for the small business people.

Therefore, there is no incompatibility between injecting \$25 million in infrastructural development and having a focus on people and having a focus on vendors because I will make the point that the infrastructure as it stands now in Bridgetown, St. Lawrence Gap and in Speightstown are hostile to small vendors and they would be better off with the investment than they would be without it. This is in keeping with this Government's focus on the ordinary man and who has done more than any previous administration to enhance the economic, social and political aspect of the life of ordinary people. That is a fact.

When you take into account some of the elements that some people may consider to be intangible, the general improvement in the economy and more people at work, that creates the first opportunity for small business people. As you would know, Sir, many small business people are engaged in activities that depend on discretionary spending. Whether it be the lady that I go by on Saturday's evening for my pudding and souse which is discretionary. When the economy was tough and when there were thousands of people out of work, they cook the pudding and souse and they stay home and cook rice and stew and sell it. Whether it be the hairdressers, Sir, and you would find that many more people have claimed to have gone back to natural hair during the hard times, Sir, I do not think it was a philosophical thing but rather a practical necessity, and I could go on and on and list examples.

The fact of the matter is that the tremendous increase of wayside fish frying and of people selling clothes, whether they put the stalls by the side of the road, or like even now there are some excellent entrepreneurs who come by my office at the Ministry in vans selling clothes and selling fruit salads in refrigerated containers. The abundance of entrepreneurs that you see out there making their way is because of the movement in the economy and because they perceived that this Government is not hostile to small investment. If they felt threatened and if they felt that this was not a Government that is supporting them, they would not have tried because they have greater confidence and chances for succeeding under this administration and that is why so many of those entrepreneurs have gone forward and thrown their hats in the ring.

Sir, getting back to the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTII), we need to give this entity all the support we can. In terms of tourism development, one of the most fundamental things we must do is to increase the number of tourism rooms which we have available in Barbados. The Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTII), through its work

as an investment, promotion and development agency, through its leveraging with holdings of land and being a dedicated investment facilitator, would help us get there.

You have heard the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West commenting on the fact that because of the closure of a major hotel in his constituency that unemployment would have gone up over the years that it has been closed. I do not think I will have to get into any fancy economics or any fancy analysis to indicate to you that the reverse argument to that is that in each and every area that the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTII) through its other direct investments or through facilitation, increases the number of hotel rooms that are available then that will be a direct increase in the number of jobs available. The ratios in the industry – and the Honourable Minister for Tourism can correct me if I am wrong – I believe is about 1.5 persons per room which are employed in the hotel industry. Honourable Minister, is that the correct figure, 1 to 1.5 persons?

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: According to the Green Paper on Tourism of this Government, there is a plan to have 2 400 more rooms by the year 2002.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that will have to be made a document of the House, Sir, because the House is now hearing about that document for the first time. We have not seen that document on this Side, Sir.

Asides.

Hon. R. R. FARLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the aim and the figures that are known for the industry, means that if the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTII) can achieve that target, there will be 2 500 persons who will be employed directly not to mention that the increase of visitors accommodated in those rooms will mean an increase number of persons taking the taxis run by the small business people and an increase in the number of persons using other services and I could go on and on, Sir.

Sir, where the Barbados Tourism Investment Inc. (BTII) role becomes even more important, is in helping to develop new areas for tourism. For example, Silver Sands in my constituency. Sir, Silver Sands already boasts a number of hotels but there are several infrastructural improvements which could be made in the area to make it an even more successful tourism destination. It is this Government's plan, by the areas mentioned today in this Resolution, Bridgetown, St. Lawrence Gap and Speightstown are but the first of several areas around Barbados to be developed by this entity.

I am making a plea to the Minister of Tourism that when the phase of locations that are to be developed by this catalytic entity that Silver Sands be one of them. There are areas around Barbados, like Silver Sands and Bath in St. John, which have prime potential for tourism and which will allow Barbados to continue its potential of community-based tourism and where Mr. Nurse at Round Rock will be able to accommodate in his shop, not just the fishermen of Silver Sands but guests from the Silver Rock Hotel and guests from the Silver Sands Resort and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at the Silver Sands Resort. Although that establishment would have been built many years ago to serve the community before the hotels came, it has now expanded its horizon and accommodates others. As the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West knows, these are prime examples of an excellent interface between locals and visitors.
4.45 p.m.

The role which the BTII can play is to improve the infrastructure in those communities, to invent in-hotel plant in those communities and give those communities that extra boost which is required thereby, Sir, making additional opportunities for small business people in their communities and not all over the island. I want to make a push that when the Minister of Tourism gets through with these three areas named for this \$25 million to come back to Parliament for the additional ones and I will give you Silver Sands.

I want to stress, Sir, that we must not allow ourselves to be side-tracked from having a very clear focus on how the tourism business works. There are those, Sir, who for the purpose of confusion and obfuscation would want to suggest that because the \$25 million does not have listed on it the names of individual small people which it will help, that it is only geared for big business people. That is as far from the truth as one could have it, Sir, because the fact of the matter is that there is a symbiotic between the small and the large. That is a fact.

Sir, we have to ensure that the environment which we create in this country is such that persons can move from small to large without hindrance. There are persons who get their entrance into business today at one level and are able to move through and expand. They are not constrained and restricted in remaining in that small state. It is in that regard, Sir, this Government has a very clear, consistent and coherent programme.

The efforts made by the Honourable Member for St. Michael North with the Small Business Development Act and the other institutional supports given to small business again are aimed at making sure that these small business persons who get their chance in an expanded Bridgetown, St. Lawrence Gap or Speightstown are able over time to become leaping business persons in those areas. So that none of the efforts that we make, Sir, are separate and distinct. They are

all part of this Government's commitment to create a Barbados which is able to provide social, political and economic employment for each and every citizen in this country.

Sir, it is for that reason that I have no difficulty whatsoever in supporting this Parliament granting the guarantee to the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated for making the catalytic investments which are required in the three main areas in order to boost our tourism industry and to facilitate the ongoing sustainable development of each and every citizen of this country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am grateful.

Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise just to make one or two very brief remarks in this debate and to offer my very strong support for the Government's guarantee for the issue of the \$25 million of the Special Development Bonds to assist in the urban rehabilitation of Bridgetown, Speightstown and St. Lawrence Gap.

Sir, we find ourselves at a critical junction in the development of our economy but equally in the development of our tourism product. One of the things that Government must grapple with urgently is the capacity to further develop and enhance many of the facilities that we have on shore in Barbados to attract visitors to this island. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the physical environs of Bridgetown, St. Lawrence Gap, Speightstown and indeed a number of other locations across Barbados are in need of urgent work in order to make them more user friendly for Barbadians primarily and secondly for those who have the fortune of visiting with us here on these shores.

We have recognized that many of our competitors in the region, not necessarily alone in the English speaking Caribbean but especially throughout the Spanish speaking Caribbean, have invested heavily in the restoration of many of the old parks of their cities. They recognize that not only to be an advantage for the enrichment for their cultural heritage, but also as one of the major reasons that they can attract visitors to their shores in order to be able to benefit and experience the cultural heritage assets that in many instances informed the foundation of the Americas.

We must stop the modest in Barbados, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have a unique history in this part of the world and very often in reading history books one can see reference to buildings and activities which we in Barbados need first to be able to educate ourselves. Then we must be able to use it as an economic opportunity for our citizens to attract tourists to this island.

We have the third oldest Parliament in the Commonwealth, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we do not make enough of it in respect of its value to the Barbadian population. I speak not, of course, of the proceedings within the precincts of Parliament but to the benefit of students. We had some in here this morning who came to learn about the history of this building and tourists who came in to understand the kind of value of our asset in respect of the construction of this entity here as our Parliament.

Equally, there are other sites of Parliament. Most Barbadians do not even know where in Bridgetown that Parliament previously met before they met in this building. We have a unique situation where the screw dock in Barbados which I believe is probably the last remaining functioning screw dock anywhere in the world. The reality is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that creates a major niche market for us to attract a certain type of tourist to Barbados to be able to benefit from seeing how these things used to work. In coming here, they will spend money and enhance the overall opportunities for vendors, hotels and all types of people in the building of our tourism product.

The fundamental point is this, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We formed the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated and we recognized that we would have to have a vehicle to promote investment in the tourism sector from the point of view of ensuring that the product which we have to market and sell is of a high standard. We also ensure that it is equally competitive and more interesting than anything else to be found in this part of the hemisphere and in any of the Spanish and English speaking countries. As I said, many are now restoring their old cities with the help of funds from international agencies as major heritage assets.

We also formed the Barbados Tourism Investment Incorporated to assist in the investments that were necessary to be able to increase the number of hotel rooms that this country now presently offers. It is something that we must all take cognizance of the fact that this country has not had a major increase in hotel rooms for over 20 years. In fact, I think that it is correct to say that we have lost rooms during that period of time.

Therefore, it has been the determination of this Government that an agency such as the BTII must have major responsibility in helping to bring about investments. We must know whether those investments will be at Needhams Point, which we have determined as a Government, should be a peninsula devoted to the construction of major hotels to boost that hotel plant or whether it is to be involved in investments relating to the rehabilitation of heritage assets.

4.55 p.m.

More and more people are indicating, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when they come here, yes, they want the sun, sea and sand but they also want the opportunity to be able to visit heritage sites and in many instances as well to participate in environmentally friendly activities with eco tourism, indeed, being on the rise in this part of the hemisphere.

I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the decision taken by this Government some two years ago to vest the nine properties, for the most part all derelict, for the most part all eyesores across Bridgetown, worth roughly about \$12 million in the BTII is one that recognises that unless we build the capacity in the tourism sector, both at the level of product as well as at the level of accommodation, that we could not fundamentally restructure Barbados' tourism industry.

It is amazing, when I hear the Honourable Members for St. Lucy and St. John coming in here and trying to ambush a debate for the purpose of making a call again on behalf of a man called "the small black man" that they never know about when they were in Government; that they forgot about when they left the vendors up in St. Lawrence Gap without anywhere to sell; when they ignored the potential of an Oistins' Fish Market as a site for small business people to be able to make money and to attract tourists at the same time; when they sold off the shares in the Port to a whole host of people without reference to the fact that there were small investors in this country, and they are going to come in here today and bring a disingenuous argument to suggest that because this Government is seeking to help the BTII raise \$25 million to invest in product development, to give people a reason to want to come to Barbados and to enjoy Bridgetown, one of the oldest towns in the English-speaking Caribbean, to want to enjoy Speightstown, or St. Lawrence Gap, and to give Barbadians the opportunity to be able to enjoy what we have here, that they are now trying to argue that we are ignoring the small businessman in this.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church East has already indicated in here that this Government has brought more initiatives to help small businesses in this country than the last Administration ever even thought about.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South spent a long time in here today talking about plans, many of which were put on the shelf for eight years when the last Government was in because they were not interested in building the productive capacity of the tourism sector in this country.

I do not understand, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how it is possible for two persons such as the Honourable Members for St. John and St. Lucy to come in here and seek to reduce this debate to a political platform when they know full well that were they to constitute the Government of this country tomorrow, they would be faced with the same problem of

having to upgrade the facilities in Bridgetown, Speightstown and St. Lawrence Gap.

You know what is sad about it? It is not only being done for tourists. More Barbadians have spent time walking on that Boardwalk which has not even been officially opened yet and have commented on how it has enhanced the beauty of Bridgetown. You know what that says? It says that Barbadians want to see Bridgetown looking good again. Barbadians want to see a careenage that is dredged. Barbadians want to see a careenage that is properly landscaped.

If one wants to talk about putting in facilities for vendors, let us put them in places where people will walk or have to travel by. If we dredge the inner careenage we could then ensure that in landscaping and putting facilities that there are treks for Barbadians to walk, participate and to relax themselves.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member for the City has said in this place and in other places that the Lower Green must become a green again and that within the Lower Green must be the opportunity for persons to be able to paint, vend and for craftsmen to be able to get opportunities.

You know what is sad about all of this? The Honourable Members for St. Lucy and St. John know that the investments, many of which are being planned by the BTII, like the Spirit Bond, have encompassed activities for craftsmen. I never see any craftsman in Barbados who was not a small vendor, so who are you helping if you are not helping small people? That is the kind of debate they would wish to bring in here on this Resolution in this Parliament as if people did not know better.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make the point that we have to recognise that we have a responsibility as a government to invest in the infrastructure of this country. I am 35 years old this year and I have never seen any concerted attempt to develop Bridgetown in my lifetime. I am saying to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we cannot continue to believe that we can have facilities running down and have citizens feel proud about them or have tourists want to come and visit them.

I strongly support, Sir, the issuing of this first tranche and let us be clear about it. It is going to cost more than the \$25 million to do the work that has to be done.

You know what is also interesting? The Honourable Member for St. Lucy like he has forgotten, but then again he may not go down Swan Street where the small vendors are, the extensive works that have been done down Swan Street to accommodate the very same vendors on whom he has cried much false tears in here today. The further

pedestrianisation of other parts of Bridgetown will create opportunities for other vendors.

I have been one of the ones, Mr. Deputy Speaker, who spoke out earlier this year when the vendors were prosecuted and I made the point that they should not flout the law but, in my view, Government has a responsibility to find alternative locations for them before prosecuting them.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that what I said did not connect with the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party. If the Honourable Member is not aware of what is in the Manifesto, I would like to read page 41 to the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East. It says:

“The Barbados Labour Party government will create additional vending capacity in the public markets, and at strategic points along highways, on tour bus routes, on popular beaches and at other tourism sites.”

It did not only state the public markets, as I am being told in this Parliament today, but the Barbados Labour Party apparently prior to the election knew where to locate these particular locations and after elections they seem not to understand it.

5.05 p.m.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really believe that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy has such a unique form of logic that he should patent it at the Corporate Office, not for its genius but for its totally uniqueness in terms of how he thinks because it does not fall into how other people think anywhere or in this Parliament. There is nothing wrong with being unique when you are right, but when you are being unique and wrong, then there is something fundamentally wrong.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to make the point that tourism contributed \$1.4 billion to our economy generating \$1.4 million in expenditure in our economy last year. Those figures do not even include the construction that is occasioned by the tourism sector. If we were to include that, its contribution to economic activity in Barbados would be far larger.

We have a responsibility to rebuild our plant and our plant in this instance is our cities and our communities. We feel strongly that we will not be able to see the kind of growth in the tourism sector unless we can:

19. Improve the quality of our product.
2. Improve the quality of our service.

3. Increase the number of rooms that are available within our tourism stock.

4. Have the requisite airlift to bring those people into the rooms.

5. Have a level of integration of the tourism product across the economy such that every Barbadian feels that they have a vested stake in this sector. That has been the mission of this Government in the tourism sector for the last six years. It, therefore, requires that a number of different actions be taken. The only action that this House has been asked to discuss today is the investment in the infrastructure of our cities.

I therefore want to reinforce that point because there will be other opportunities to talk about the integration of the sector across the community. There will be other opportunities to talk about why Barbados' all-inclusive product is unique in the Caribbean because it allows for contractual obligations to be given to small deliverers of service outside of the ownership of the hotel plant such that they are not deprived of economic activity as they are in other jurisdictions that run all-inclusive hotels. Those are the things that we can talk about on other days.

I only enter this debate, Sir, to reinforce the point that what we are doing is actually necessary for the catalytic development of Barbados for its citizens and for its thriving foreign exchange earners. I only want to say too that my Ministry would be seeking to cause the Government of Barbados to accede to a number of cultural conventions later this year, one of which is on world heritage. That World Heritage Convention would create further opportunities for us to list unique sites in Barbados for preservation and for the tourism persons to benefit from the marketing of these sites as a major attraction for people to come to Barbados.

We are seeing more and more the synergies between culture in its popular art form through things like Crop Over, and other activities, as well as culture from the perspective of heritage and heritage sites being more and more integrated into the tourism product. At the end of the day, when we sell Barbados, we must be selling Barbados for a particular reason or for a particular thing for someone to come here and do. If it were only sun, sea and sand there are many other jurisdictions across the world that persons could go to.

The sale of tourism and the sale of Barbados as a tourism product must include the sale of what Barbados has to offer and the BTII role in all of this is to be able to enhance those product offerings within urban Barbados. That is all this \$25 million is going to do. I look forward to a Bridgetown looking substantially different in 10 years' time from the one that we see today; the one that we see riddled with derelict buildings; the one that we see which does not

attract anybody to stay in it after they finish work; the one that we see that remains an eye sore for many of us who know that we can do better. I look forward therefore not only to this bond being fully subscribed to but that the work being executed and Barbadians being able to benefit from it in the same way that their enthusiasm has shown that they are benefiting from the Boardwalk prior to even the official opening.

I trust that the Minister of Tourism will reflect his enthusiasm with the activities that are necessary to integrate fully cultural and heritage tourism as one of the major reasons for persons to visit Barbados and to help boost tourism arrivals and, more importantly, tourism expenditure. I thank you Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to close this debate, but before I wrap up let me first say that we have been treated to rambling presentations from both the Honourable Member for St. John and the Honourable Member for St. Lucy. There were two presentations that were not at all focussed, with skewed and warped thinking in terms of their own sense of development. It is very much in keeping with the muddled and mundane thinking which is the hallmark of that Democratic Labour Party. Vintage DLP thinking! They would like us to forget the holocaust that we all lived through and every time that we come here we should remind them of where they have set us back, as the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said, in terms of where we are today.

Each and every one of these areas of this particular project has its own development focus and purpose. You cannot simply divorce that. UDC has its purpose, RDC has its purpose. This particular project looking to rehabilitate Bridgetown, Speightstown and St. Lawrence Gap has a specific developmental focus. To say that you should not spend \$20 million on urban rehabilitation because it is not a priority in their assessment is total nonsense. We must start by agreeing that all of these projects have their priority.

Sir, this \$20 million has its place and it is important first and foremost to focus on the entire social side. It has a social side to development. First of all, the goodwill factor, but also to encourage people to feel a sense of ownership for Bridgetown and the things that are theirs. People are far removed from a number of developmental projects in other places on the island but, simply speaking, this particular project has a focus in terms that it brings people into understanding that Bridgetown is theirs and that we can all focus on Bridgetown. Some people see Bridgetown being rehabilitated. When people see Bridgetown and its environs being kept up, then they are forced as well to do the same thing in their own surroundings near where they live and how they treat the place.

People are longing to see Bridgetown looking good again. Bridgetown must be made a place where people want to stay, not just pass through. Let me say first of all that the Member for St. Lucy and the Honourable Member for St. John sought to railroad this debate into a tourism debate. They will get the tourism debate that they want and when they get the tourism debate you will see that they have not a clue in terms of how to develop tourism in Barbados. They had their chance. We are going to show them how.

I have already outlined, and the Government has already outlined, through a former Minister of Tourism, new tourism reform which is already on the way and which will be coming to this Parliament in this year. This project is first and foremost about Barbadians and about Barbadians wanting Bridgetown to look good. Let me say, Sir, this BTII and its projects were already endorsed by the Opposition at its establishment but if they want to talk about tourism first of all let me correct a number of things that the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said in this debate.

Overall, it is clear that our tourism product must be improved if we are to take tourism forward. In any reformation movement what is necessary is that we reform not only our marketing strategy and our development but our product development is fundamental and at the centre of any tourism reform and these projects have a specific place in tourism reform because they are building additional products which are going to be desired by the tourists that are coming to Barbados.

Sir, it is not a tourism debate. First and foremost, if you are going to deal with tourism there must be a buy-in by the host community in the way tourism development is going. 5.15 p.m.

Fundamental to that must be the issue of the rehabilitation of areas around us which we need to own, which we need to embrace and which we can then lend to the tourists. The Honourable Members for St. Lucy and St. John have got to hone in on that.

The second thing is that I heard the Honourable Member for St. Lucy carrying on about cruise ships in the Port. Let me say, Sir, that over the past three years it is customary during the summer period that the number of cruise ship berths go down and they come back up during the winter. As a matter of fact, Sir, the projections for the year 2000 far outstrip anything that has ever been seen in tourism cruise arrivals in Barbados. There are projecting 530 000 to come to Barbados in the year 2000 which is 33% over the 1999 figure. When the Honourable Member for St. Lucy talks, he does not have the slightest clue about what is going on at the Port. Every summer the cruise sector loses some ships but we are more than making up for it in terms of the capacity of the ships that we are getting during the winter period and the projections are 33% higher than the ones in 1999.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point order. The Honourable Member is misleading the House by giving the impression that I am wrong in stating that the number of ships that berth at our Port has decreased. The Honourable Member is misleading the House and he should withdraw those remarks.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no need to withdraw any remarks. The Honourable Member said that we have reduced ship berths and calls and that you cannot find more than a ship or two down in the harbour during this summer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the point is this. It is a regular practice to have two ships during the summer. First of all, the two ships that come during the summer have increased in terms of the capacity of the ones that we had last year because they have more cabins which hold more people but beyond that, the projections for October onwards and into the winter season are even more than they are now and therefore, you are going to get an increased number of people. As I have said before the numbers that have been projected are 530 000 - 33% more than 1999.

Sir, the Honourable Member spoke about the issue of all inclusives. Again, there is a total lack of understanding and a total lack of knowledge of what goes on. This market is a specific niche market in which a customer wants a specific area of operation. If we neglect, in terms of our product development to focus on a fundamental area of tourism marketing now, what we are doing is losing out on a big chunk of potential business for our country and everybody needs to understand that. All inclusive has its place and the EP hotels have their place. Our system in the way we project and deal with all inclusive is another thing because you do not want a monopoly on either side. What you want is a balanced structure in terms of getting the most out of each area and that is what the Honourable Member for St. Lucy does not understand. They were the ones who took Heywoods and sold it in the first place as an all inclusive property and they would now like to come back here and tell us what to do.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: They sold off the silver of this country while we are seeking to protect it. They sold off the family jewels and now want to tell us what to do. Let us not let them forget the holocaust that we lived through under the Democratic Labour Party and, I am not going to let Barbadians forget.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: You are coming here every week and encouraging people to believe that you are looking after

the poor black man whom you totally decimated when you had your chance to look after them. It was not your administration but it was this administration here which has been looking after them from time immemorial. Every time that Barbados needs to get back to basics they call on the Barbados Labour Party again because the mundane thinking over there has never taken this country anywhere.

Asides.

Hon. N. A. LYNCH: I will go even further and say that what the Honourable Member for St. Lucy said about BTII is wrong because BTII has never sold any property. Properties have been vested in BTII and BTII has one lease for the old Harbour Police Station which is Atlas Corporation. The lease is for \$36 000 a year and it is a fifty-year lease with an option to renew at the end of the fifty years. That is the only income that BTII received in 1999. In 1998 BTII had zero revenue and \$230 000 in losses. BTII was never capitalised and this \$5 million is the first cash capitalisation that is coming for BTII. Do not give anybody the impression that BTII has a lot of leases, is making money and not doing anything with it.

There is a Government subvention that goes to the Urban Rehabilitation Project and it is for the Urban Rehabilitation Unit but monies to actually go about the administration of BTII were never given by Government so do not come with that.

I have said before that there is one lease that they have and in terms of the Urban Rehabilitation Project I would like to say that again, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy and the Honourable Member for St. John mislead the House. Under the Urban Rehabilitation Project three town hall meetings were kept in these three areas that were to be rehabilitated. Along with those three town hall meetings, there was an additional one kept in St. Lawrence Gap with the vendors where the vendors actually came and contributed to the meeting. The Barbados Labour Party and the Minister of Tourism sought to include vendors. The same thing was done for the city of Bridgetown in which the Honourable Member for the City put specific emphasis on vendors and also put specific emphasis on Baxters Road and its rehabilitation. To say that we are excluding the people at the lower echelon and the lower end of the social ladder from the rehabilitation of these three areas is absolute nonsense.

Again, sir, I say that this project is important to the development of Barbados. It is important for Barbadians in terms of our tourism development strategy, it is important in terms of property development and it is important to our marketing.

Sir, with those words, I would like to move that this Resolution do now pass.

Hon. Miss M.A. MOTTLEY: I beg to second that.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY: I beg to move that this Honourable House be adjourned until Tuesday, June 27, 2000 at 11 o'clock in the morning.

It is anticipated, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we will resume the Constitutional debate on that occasion and that all Honourable Members who have not yet spoken will have the opportunity to speak on that occasion. I have also had the

chance to consult with the Leader of the Opposition and it has been agreed that the same arrangements with respect to the telecasting that obtained on the first day of that debate should so continue for that date, Tuesday, June 27, 2000 at 11.00 a.m.

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

The question that the House be adjourned until Tuesday, June 27, 2000 at 11 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
5.25 p.m.

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