
THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1991 – 96

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, February 06, 1991

Pursuant to the Proclamation by Her Excellency the Governor-General Dame Nita Barrow, the first meeting of the House of Assembly of the Parliament of 1991–96 convened at 4.00 p.m. at Parliament Buildings, Bridgetown on the 6th day of February, 1991.

Pursuant to the issuing of Writs, the Honourable Members elected to constitute the General Assembly for the Session assembled in the Assembly Chambers as follows:—

Right Honourable L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.), (Member for St. Michael South)

Honourable H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B., (Member for Christ Church West)

Honourable B. M. TAITT, B.A.(Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B. (Hons.), (Member for St. Michael West)

Honourable P. M. GREAVES, Q.C., B.A., (Member for St. Michael North)

Mr. L. A. WEEKES, G.C.M., J.P., (Member for St. Michael North West)

Honourable M. A. KING, Q.C., LL.B., (Member for Christ Church West Central)

Honourable W. O. FRANKLIN, A.I.C., M.I.A.S., J.P., (Member for St. Philip North)

Honourable N. K. SIMMONS, (Member for St. James South)

Honourable H. A. BLACKMAN, B.Sc. (Econ.), (Member for St. Philip South)

Mr. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc.(Econ.), (Member for St. Peter)

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M., (Member for St. Thomas)

Honourable C. V. WALKER, (Member for St. George North)

Mr. L. L. BRATHWAITE, J.P., (Member for St. Michael North East)

Honourable E. E. GREAVES, B.A., Ed.M., (Member for St. Lucy)

Honourable W. W. HALL, G.C.M., H.B.M., (Member for St. Michael West Central)

Mr. C. LeR. TROTMAN, M.A., (Member for St. Michael Central)

Mr. R. L. MORRIS, B.A., Cert. Ed., (Member for Christ Church East Central)

Honourable D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.), (Member for St. John)

Mr. H. B. St. John, Q.C., LL.B., (Member for Christ Church South)

Mr. L. R. TULL, Q.C., M.A., (Member for St. George South)

Miss B. A. MILLER, (Member for the City of Bridgetown)

Mr. DeL. O. BRADSHAW, (Member for St. Michael South East)

Dr. R. L. CHELTENHAM, M. A., M.Sc., (Econ.), (Member for St. Joseph)

Mr. J. O. TUDOR, (Member for St. Michael East)

Mr. D. A. BOWEN, (Member for St. Michael South Central)

Mr. G. W. PAYNE, (Member for St. Andrew)

Mr. R. C. EASTMOND, (Member for St. James North)

Mr. T. C. ESTWICK, (Member for Christ Church East).

The Clerk of Parliament read the following Proclamation:—

"By Her Excellency Dame Ruth Nita Barrow, Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Dame of Saint Andrew, Governor-General of Barbados.

R. N. BARROW
GOVERNOR-GENERAL

A PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS it is provided by section 60 (1) of the Constitution that each session of Parliament shall be held at such place and commence at such time as the Governor-General may appoint:

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that a session of Parliament should be held at the Parliament Buildings, Bridgetown, commencing on Wednesday, 6th February, 1991:

NOW THEREFORE by virtue and in exercise of the power and authority in me vested I, Dame Ruth Nita Barrow, Dame Grand Cross of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, Dame of Saint Andrew, Governor-General of Barbados, DO HEREBY APPOINT the Parliament Buildings, Bridgetown, as the place at which a session of Parliament shall be held and 15.30 hours in the afternoon on Wednesday, 6th February, 1991, as the time at which the said session shall commence.

Given under my hand and the Public Seal of Barbados this 1st day of February, 1991, and in the Thirty-ninth Year of Her Majesty's Reign.

GOD SAVE THE QUEEN."

ELECTION OF SPEAKER

THE CLERK OF PARLIAMENT: I am to announce to Honourable Members that I have received a letter from the Private Secretary to the Governor-General in the name of Her Excellency the Governor-General stating:

"Government House, Barbados 1st February, 1991

Dear Sir:

I am directed to forward herewith two copies of the Proclamation which has been issued by Her Excellency, the Governor-General, appointing Wednesday, 6th February, 1991 at 15:30 hours as the time at which the first session of Parliament shall be held.

I am further to inform you that it is Her Excellency's desire that the House should proceed to elect a Speaker at the beginning of that Session at 15:30 hours and before it proceeds with the despatch of any other business under the provisions of Order 2 paragraph 1 of the Standing Orders of the House of Assembly. I am directed to request you to inform the Members of the House of Assembly accordingly.

Signed: V. G. STUART,
Private Secretary to Her Excellency,
The Governor-General."

Is there a nomination for the office of Speaker of this Honourable House?

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Clerk, I propose that the Member for St. Michael North West to whom I have spoken and who has given me his word that he is willing to serve if elected do take the Chair of this House as Speaker, Sir.

Mr. CLERK: Is there a seconder for that nomination?

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Clerk, it is my distinct honour to second the nomination of my distinguished friend from St. Michael North West as the Speaker of this House and reserve my right to speak.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Clerk, the Opposition is not opposing the election of the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West to the office of Speaker of this House. But I think it is timely before his election is carried by the House that a few reminders be made at this time. The Honourable Member has now had five years of experience in his office as Speaker of the House and he would be able to reflect on the exercise of his powers during that time and to take cognizance of those areas in which he may not have performed in accordance with what is expected of the Speaker. There are, however, two areas that are of concern and I think that they ought to be outlined at the moment.

The Speaker is in the very fortunate position under the Parliament (Privileges, Immunities and Powers) Act, Cap. 9 of this Island to have an independent role to play in so far as the rights of the subject are being determined in the Courts in this country. Under that Act he is at times requested to exercise the statutory power of permitting the Official Debates of this House to be made available within the confines of the Courts. I have been disturbed, Sir, by the information which I have that on 29th September, 1988 permission was sought to produce the Official Gazette in the House containing a particular debate and that no reply to that request was sent and that request was repeated on 27th October, 1988. It was a case involving the Crown as a defendant and I am informed that the Crown wrote for a similar permission on 13th October, 1988 and a favourable reply was sent to the Crown on 28th October, 1988.

So I would wish, Mr. Speaker, when he is elected to be reminded that, in exercising those sort of powers he is acting in a quasi-judicial position and that they must be exercised fairly, judicially, and even handedly when the Crown's rights are under scrutiny by the Courts of law.

The other point that I think we should timely read into the records of this House at this time relates to a ruling in the last Session of Parliament where Mr. Speaker recognized the role of Leader of the Opposition but had to find that there was no opposition in this House. I can assure Honourable Members and the House that there is very

much an Opposition in this House. It will be an opposition that will comply with the Constitution but will at the same time be rigorous in seeing that the laws and practices of this Parliament are maintained. I think that it is timely that these words be said, Mr. Speaker, when he claims the nation's rights and privileges from Her Excellency, the Governor-General, and he will be doing so on behalf of us all and we would expect in the high traditions of Speakers in the past that those rights will be stoutly defended and maintained in an even-handed manner.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: You will recall, Mr. Clerk, I reserved my right to speak and, in the absence of my good friend, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, who is not able to give an account of what might have occurred on the basis of what the Honourable Member and Leader of the Opposition has just said since he is not in his place, I feel bound to point out that in the five years when I sat with that distinguished gentleman as the Speaker that at no time did I feel or did I have the suggestion that any other Honourable Member had come to feel that he would act or did act in any other than a fair and judicial manner. I cannot myself recall any comment or statement by the Speaker as to the absence or presence of an opposition and I, therefore, will not address that matter at this time. But I feel that on the question of the Speaker responding to queries from the Courts that the Speaker is governed by and directed by the ancient methods that have been used by Speakers in the past and in these matters I have no doubt whatsoever that the Speaker would have taken advice and would have been guided by such advice. In the absence of actual facts and information, therefore, I can only defend Mr. Speaker's rights and position as I have observed him function on all other occasions and assume that he acted correctly, properly and in the interest of the House. I feel that the matter which was aired is a matter which might properly be discussed when Mr. Speaker is in his place, assuming that he is elected, since the Honourable Member said that there would be no opposition to his nomination. We assume that he will be elected and I feel that it is not beyond the bounds of this House given its composition for us to have a discussion, normally called a debate, on a substantive matter relating to the method used. But I think in the absence of Mr. Speaker it might be a little unkind and hence I felt bound to speak on the matter.

3.55 p.m.

Mr. SPEAKER was called to the Chair without any question being put.

Hon P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker-elect, I am proposing that the House proceed with the election of various Committees. The matter of the Management Commission of Parliament, Mr. Speaker. This comprises, Your Honour as Chairman, the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister, the Leader of the House and Leader of the Opposition all as *ex officio* Members. I am proposing Sir, that on this side, Mr. Speaker...

Aside.

ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am so sorry, Sir, we haven't elected the Deputy Speaker or the Chairman of Committees. So sorry, Sir.

I propose, Sir, that the Honourable Member for Christ Church East be appointed Deputy Speaker.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am proposing Mr. Speaker, that the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East be elected to serve as Chairman of Committees.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, subject to the approval of Her Excellency and Your Honour as Speaker-elect of this Chamber, I move, Sir, that the Standing Orders of the Honourable House of Assembly be the Standing Orders of this House.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am proposing, Sir, that on this side the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East be nominated to join the *ex officio* Members along with others proposed by the Opposition.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I propose that the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and the Honourable Member for the City be the two Members on this side of the House.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am proposing, Your Honour, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, the Honourable Member for St. James South, along with Your Honour to serve as Chairman and other Honourable Members to be proposed by the Leader of the Opposition.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: I beg to propose that the Honourable Member for St. George South and the Honourable Member for St. Andrew be the Opposition representatives.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, the laws indicate that the Leader of the Opposition must be the Chairman of Public Accounts Committee and I am proposing, Sir, from this side, the Honourable Member for St. Philip South, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central and the Honourable Member for St. Michael East be the Members to constitute this Committee along with other Members from the other side.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to propose the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Honourable Member for St. Thomas and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East as the other Opposition Members on that Committee.

Hon. E. E. GREAVES: I beg to second that, Sir.

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

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: I am proposing for this Committee, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East who is the Deputy Speaker, the Rt. Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Prime Minister, Sir, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central and the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central along with others.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am proposing the Honourable Member for St. Peter and the Honourable Member for St. James North as the two nominees on our side.

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

4.05 p.m.

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I am nominating the following Members, along with Your Honour as Chairman of the Committee: the Honourable Member for St. Michael South, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central, the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the Honourable Member for St. John, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North being myself.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, I am proposing the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the Honourable Member for St. Joseph, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew and the Honourable Member for St. James North.

The question that those Members, as nominated, be appointed to the Standing Orders Committee was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I believe we now have to await Her Excellency's pleasure.

Let me state, Sir, that after the Speech from the Throne, Honourable Members would have assembled in the Courtyard. I have already conveyed this to the Leader of the Opposition. We assemble here, on summons by the Bell, in order to complete the business of the day, Sir. This is really for Honourable Members' attention.

I think Honourable Members are aware that the Choir will be giving a performance in the interim, between our leaving here and returning here and after the Throne Speech. After the singing, the Bell will be rung and Honourable Members will then return to the Chamber and we will complete the business of the day.

4.15 p.m.

The Sergeant of Arms entered the Chamber and announced to the House the command of Her Excellency the Governor General of their presence in the Senate Chamber.

Mr. SPEAKER ELECT preceded by the Sergeant of Arms and Deputy Marshal bearing the Mace, and all other Members of the House in order of seniority accompanied by

the Chaplain and the Clerks proceeded to the Senate Chamber in accordance with Her Excellency's summons.

Her Excellency approved the election of Mr. SPEAKER and granted his request on behalf of the House of Assembly for their ancient rights and privileges.

Her Excellency then delivered the following address:
4.16 p.m.

**SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT
on Wednesday, February 6, 1991**

Mr. President and Members of the Senate:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

The representatives to the House of Assembly have been duly elected. The Members of the Senate have been selected. You have met and chosen your respective Presiding Officers, whom I accept. The process of constituting Parliament for this new term is now duly completed. In accordance therefore with tradition, I now outline my Government's programme for the new parliamentary term.

Fundamental Policy Goals

This programme seeks to solidify and clarify the national character of Barbadians on the basis of a vibrant industrious, urbane, responsible and creative people, aiming to attain the following objectives over the next five years and beyond:

- to increase the economy's total output of goods and services;
- to provide more job opportunities, thereby reducing unemployment;
- to keep inflation at moderate levels so that the purchasing power of wages and salaries is not eroded;
- to maintain the value of our currency;
- to enhance labour productivity;
- to increase living standards;
- to maintain a sound balance in our external sector through the expansion of exports, the relative reduction of imports, and through judicious borrowing on the capital markets;
- to increase investment from both domestic and foreign sources;
- to maintain the national debt at sustainable levels;

- to provide better health, education, training, housing and infrastructure;
- to increase food output; and
- to enhance the security, protection, values and self-esteem of our people.

This programme is also based on the need to maintain and enhance the vitality of our economy and society, and to promote greater economic justice in our nation.

The Economy

During recent years there has been real growth recorded in our economy, culminating in 1989 in the best levels of Gross Domestic Product, visitor arrivals, construction output, gross capital formation, and per capita income ever recorded in our country's history. However during 1990, as predicted in the Financial Statement and Budgetary Proposals of May 2, 1990, economic activity contracted in response to local, regional and international factors. Except for agriculture, output from the major sectors declined from the record levels of the major sectors declined from the record levels of the previous year. Construction and distribution also slowed, as credit restrictions remained in effect on lending to the personal and distributive sectors in an effort to contain the loss of foreign reserves. The production of crude oil increased in response to new policy stances adopted to alleviate the impact of rising oil prices and the crisis in the Gulf.

The total number of persons employed rose from 93,000 in the fourth quarter of 1985 to a record 107,000 persons for the same period in 1989, but fell to an estimated 104,000 for the first quarter of 1990, the latest period for which survey statistics are currently available. Unemployment levels, however, still remain unacceptably high. The foreign reserves further fell in 1990, due mainly to higher debt servicing combined with reduced foreign exchange earnings, especially from tourism. But it is encouraging to report that the rate of inflation, already at the moderate level of 6.2 per cent in 1989, was reduced to 3.1 per cent in 1990.

New Enterprise Administration

As part of its thrust to spur growth and development and to ensure greater economic and social justice in our nation, my Government will create the New Enterprise Administration as a means for bringing many more persons into the mainstream of economic life, for developing new export opportunities, and for encouraging small business

development. Legislation to this effect will be introduced shortly.

Fiscal Policy

My Government has on more than one occasion enunciated the principle that current expenditure should normally be met from current revenue. My Government will therefore in due course adopt measures to reduce the fiscal deficit.

During this session a study of the tax system will be undertaken and a fiscal reform programme implemented. Steps will be taken to ensure that:

- (a) all residential property, whether owner-occupied or not, should pay property taxes, on the same basis, namely on 70 per cent of the improved value;
- (b) all lands with a site value of \$10,000 or less as determined by the Commissioner of Land Valuation, and which carry no improvement will be subject to tax of not more than \$30 per annum.

The Industrial Credit Fund will be revitalised to make further loans to small and medium size businesses in areas such as tourism, manufacturing, agro-industries, fishing, services, mining and quarrying.

Monetary Policies

Policies will be devised to support the most rapid rate of expansion in the productive sectors, particularly those which are export oriented. In this regard, my Government will implement the following:

- review the operations of the Central Bank, including security arrangements, in order to maintain and enhance the Bank's capabilities in the areas of regulating the issue of money, promoting monetary stability, developing a sound financial structure, and fostering credit and exchange conditions for continued economic developments;
- further liberalise foreign currency control, and provide for the establishment of duty free shops where locals will be permitted to purchase duty free items paid for with foreign currency;
- further facilitate the holding of foreign currency accounts giving priority to exporters of goods and services;
- restructure the reserve ratio applied to commercial bank deposit liabilities so as to discriminate in favour of time deposits;

- review the current credit restrictions, and refine the categories of credit to facilitate adequate flows of such credit to the productive sectors, particularly where businesses are engaged in a wide variety of activities.

Financial Services

In order to ensure continued development of the financial sector, my Government will:

- establish an appropriate administrative framework, including new financial services legislation;
- introduce incentives to encourage further diversification, upgrading and automation of financial services;
- introduce incentives to stimulate the growth of institutions which specialise in providing investment portfolio management services and other specialised fee based activities.

International Financial and Business Services

My Government will continue to provide a supportive environment for active business enterprises to pursue legitimate objectives in international banking, trusts and investment management, exempt insurance, shipping and aircraft registration, data processing and other business activities. To this end my Government will:

- introduce a new International Business Companies Bill;
- set up an International Business Advisory Committee;
- extend the network of double taxation treaties; and
- negotiate investment protection treaties to attract further foreign investment.

Balance of Payments

My Government will take further measures to stimulate the export of goods and services and will seek to maintain the good reputation of Barbados in the international capital markets. This is essential if our country is to continue to enjoy the support of the market for its development efforts.

Energy Policy

My Government will seek to make maximum use of domestic energy resources; and in view of the likely impact of the Gulf crisis, it will place great emphasis on the following:

- a sustained exploration and drilling programme by the Barbados National Oil Company;
- increased production and use of natural gas;
- energy conservation in the public and private sectors;
- incentives to encourage the use of alternative energy sources, such as solar and wind power.

Tourism

My Government recognises the importance of the tourism sector for sustained economic growth in the country both in terms of foreign exchange earnings and employment generation, and as such will seek to increase the economic contribution of tourism. In particular my Government will adopt and enforce measures to rid the tourism industry of negative factors, such as drug peddling and harassment which impede its development.

Emphasis will continue to be placed on inter-sectoral linkages which will stimulate increased tourist expenditure as well as efficient import substitution, and which will secure investments for Barbados. To this end, the widest possible consultations will be pursued.

As part of my Government's tourism policy appropriate measures will be taken to reform the current regime of incentives in order that hotels and the ancillary services may further benefit from concessions to improve the quality and range of services offered. As far as feasible my Government will also implement the recommendations of the recent Tourism Sector Study. In particular it will encourage both the expansion of the luxury class hotel plant, as well as the upgrading and refurbishing of elegant class and budget class hotels and guest houses.

My Government will also provide increased training for workers in the industry, provide additional golfing and other sporting attractions and integrate the cruise ship sector more fully into the economy, and seek to maintain tourism as an all-year round business activity.

In the light of the recessionary conditions prevailing in some of our major markets, and in view of the negative impact on tourism travel brought on by the Gulf Crisis, my Government will as a matter of urgency redirect its advertising and marketing strategies to target those groups who are likely to travel in spite of the recessionary conditions, as well as those groups who will seek a relatively safe haven at this time.

Sports

My Government is fully aware of the importance of sporting activities in building character, providing a healthy outlet for competition, developing positive attitudes to co-

operation and offering lucrative careers to talented sportsmen and sportswomen.

My Government will continue its programme of parks and playground development, and encourage the establishment of an international cricket school.

My Government will remove or reduce the duty on sports goods and equipment, and will also continue to provide incentives to ensure that sports will develop further and thus enrich our national character.

Agriculture

The agriculture and fisheries sector has a key role to play in the development of the Barbados economy. Consequently my Government will seek to exploit the full potential of the sector. Further special steps will be taken to strengthen the linkages with other sectors such as tourism and manufacturing.

My Government will seek to implement agreed aspects of the Action Plan for the revitalisation of the agricultural sector. This plan will provide for special measures, including a refinancing package, being put in place to return the sugar industry to a state of viability. This will be conditional on a reorganisation of the management structure of BSIL, restructuring of field and factory operations to achieve greater efficiency. Further, we will place greater emphasis on the expansion of exports of cut flowers, foliage, fruits and root crops.

The existing incentives for agriculture will be renewed with the aim of improving their effectiveness.

Increased attention will be given to research and extension services to provide better support for agricultural development.

Fisheries

With respect to fisheries, my Government will press ahead with its programme for upgrading and modernising the industry. Very high priority will be given to the provision of improved facilities at landing sites, particularly at Consett Bay, Skeete's Bay, Tent Bay and a location to serve the northern parishes.

International and Regional Trade

My Government will maintain close relationships with our trading partners, in particular with those from which we benefit through preferential trading arrangements. We shall continue to support the efforts of international organisations to improve conditions of access for trade between developed and developing countries.

My Government is firmly committed to the deepening of regional economic integration.

Export Promotion

My Government proposes to place new emphasis on Export Promotion in light of the fact that economic growth depends on our ability to export goods and domestically produced services. In this regard, it is proposed to strengthen the capability of our foreign offices so as to make them more trade and investment oriented. In addition, my Government will as a matter of urgency seek to bring about a closer working relationship between the Export Promotion Corporation and the Industrial Development Corporation.

Industry

My Government is committed to an industrial development policy which will continue to provide jobs, widen and deepen our industrial base, reduce dependence on imports, improve our balance of trade and our foreign exchange earnings, and consequently the economic welfare of our people.

To promote the growth of the industrial sector, my Government will establish a central clearing facility to deal with and speed up the process of all matters pertaining to investment decisions in industry. In addition, my Government will facilitate the expansion and retooling of industry to enable it to be more productive and quality oriented, introduce measures to promote development of co-operative enterprises in order to reduce the burden of overheads on individual business, as well as to facilitate the penetration of export markets.

Small Scale Industry

My Government recognises the crucial role which small business can play in the economic and social development of Barbados particularly in respect of ordinary people with few resources. It is therefore proposed to establish a Small Business Bureau which will co-ordinate the wide range of services required by such business, including feasibility studies, technical assistance, finance, product development, and skills development. Special emphasis will be placed on export-oriented activities.

My Government will also, in consultation with the manufacturing sector, establish an international trade centre to provide a venue for manufacturers and craftsmen to display their goods. This centre will also serve as a venue for trade fairs and exhibitions and encourage the establishment of international business companies.

Handicraft Development

My Government recognises the importance of handicraft in providing opportunities for employment and developing the creative talents of Barbadians.

My Government will re-develop Pelican Village, and establish a Craft Centre at Belleplaine in order to better utilise the indigenous materials which exist in the area.

Co-operatives

My Government knows that the co-operative movement is highly beneficial to persons in the lower and middle income categories. In order to assist in the further development of the movement, my Government will after consultation with the movement introduce legislation to provide for a stabilisation mechanism. My Government will also assist in providing training opportunities in principles and practices of co-operation. Co-operatives will also be encouraged to invest in the productive sectors of the economy.

Education

My Government is committed to the development of an education system which both encourages and enables all persons to realise their talents to the fullest possible extent.

Nursery education will be expanded and enhanced. At the primary level, emphasis will continue to be placed on high standards of functional literacy and numeracy for all pupils. It is my Government's intention to allocate more resources to remedial and diagnostic work. Adequate provision within the school system will also be provided for the development of exceptionally talented individuals.

All secondary schools will be provided with computer networks. The ongoing programme of improvement in the facilities and equipment of the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and the Barbados Community College will continue.

My Government will continue its policy of providing free university education at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies for all Barbadian students qualifying for entry.

The programme of Continuing education will be further expanded to provide new learning opportunities and skills to young school leavers and adults. The National Curriculum Development Council will be reorganised to ensure that all of our education programmes continue to be relevant.

Steps will be taken to provide for the continuous assessment of pupils in the primary schools, and also to modify the system of transfer from the primary to the secondary phase of education.

My Government will continue to provide training for teachers and public servants, and will continue to facilitate the training programmes in the private sector.

Health

My Government is committed to the development of a comprehensive health care system that will meet the varied needs of our population and enable every Barbadian to have access to high quality care.

The programme of upgrading facilities at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, the St. Michael Geriatric Hospital and within the polyclinics will continue. A refurbished St.

Joseph Hospital will provide additional medical, surgical, obstetric, gynaecological, and emergency services.

Training programmes for development of human resources will be further expanded to ensure that qualified Barbadians are available to fill positions in all of our health services.

My Government will continue to enhance the diagnostic capabilities of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. An angiographic suite to facilitate the diagnosis and treatment of persons with cardiac conditions will be installed.

A comprehensive study will be undertaken to rationalise and strengthen institutional and community-based geriatric and mental health services. Improved facilities for the mentally ill will be provided. It is planned to replace the district hospitals at Christ Church, St. Thomas and St. Lucy by group homes. It is also planned to provide additional halfway houses to facilitate the re-absorption of persons back into the community. The elderly and mentally ill will be supported by more vigorous community-based programmes.

The Drug Rehabilitation Centre at the St. Joseph Complex will be developed to provide residential care for Barbadians afflicted by the problem of substance abuse. This will be coupled with a vigorous Health Education programme.

Primary Health Care Service

The primary health care services will be upgraded. The hours of operation of the polyclinics will be examined with a view to providing better service to the various communities.

Chronic Diseases

The chronic diseases – hypertension, diabetes mellitus, heart disease and cancer – are the leading causes of death in our country. My Government will give support to the proposal to establish a chronic disease research centre under the aegis of the University of the West Indies, Faculty of Medical Sciences.

The Barbados Drug Service

The range of drugs provided by the Barbados Drug Service under the Special Benefit Service will be expanded to include free drugs for persons suffering from glaucoma and mental illness.

Environmental Health

The Public Health Inspection System will be re-organised to improve efficiency. Projects are being planned for sewerage the South and West Coasts.

Housing

My Government is committed to the further attainment of better housing by Barbadians, through such means as serviced lots, greater accessibility to financial resources, the stability of existing mortgage interest rates, and the creation of a secondary mortgage market.

In its efforts to qualify a larger number of families for mortgages my Government intends to explore the feasibility of thirty (30) year mortgages and graduated payment mortgages.

My Government is committed to the execution of a National Low Income Housing Project whose objectives are:

- to provide serviced lots;
- to provide improved physical infrastructure including roads;
- to provide home improvement loans.

Joint Ventures

My Government is committed to consolidating and expanding upon the innovative housing policies which it set in place in 1986. As a further attraction a waiver of duties will be offered to developers who build a specified proportion of low income houses in any development.

My Government remains committed to its declared intention to sell certain National Housing Corporation housing units to the tenants. A maintenance/repair programme has been ongoing in order to improve the condition of the units prior to sale. My Government will continue to encourage the tenants to purchase the units.

Sites and Services

It is the intention of my Government to provide 500 lots during the coming year. The National Housing Corporation is actively engaged in a Sites and Services Programme throughout the island.

Plantation Tenancies

My Government will accelerate the programme which allows tenants on plantation tenancies to purchase the house spots which they have occupied for five years or more. In this regard as at December 1990, a total of 5,452 lots had been surveyed and received, while 2,401 had actually been conveyed. It is Government's intention to have the outstanding lots not yet conveyed, to be done so speedily as part of its land ownership thrust.

Land Registration

The registration of all land titles is an aim of my Government and it is hoped to complete this process within the next eight years. Already 4,000 registrations have been

declared, and it is projected that by the end of 1991 another 5,000 titles will be registered mainly in the parishes of St. James, St. Thomas and St. Michael.

Personal Social Services

Services for vulnerable individuals and groups, including the elderly, the poor and the physically disabled will be strengthened by rationalising the provisions of existing services and encouraging greater community and voluntary input in the provision of assistance.

A comprehensive review of the Charities Act will be undertaken to provide encouragement for the growth of charitable organisations.

The Welfare Department will be restructured into a Social Services Department, and emphasis will be placed on counselling and guidance.

The Elderly

The National Assistance Board will expand its social and recreational services to the elderly, its housing welfare programme, its home help service to rural communities, and its "meals on wheels" service, in collaboration with voluntary agencies. Support will be provided for agencies such as the National Council on Aging.

The Disabled

My Government is committed to enabling the disabled to lead full and useful lives and intends:

- to amend all legislation which discriminates against physically disabled persons;
- to provide improved social assistance grants to facilitate acquisition of specialised equipment and aids;
- to modify, on a phased basis, existing public facilities to cater to the needs of the disabled, and ensure that all newly constructed public facilities are equipped to cater to the special needs of this group of persons;
- to extend day care facilities and the "Home Help Service" to the disabled community;
- to consult widely with bodies which represent the interests of this group.

My Government will also seek, in collaboration with social organisations, to encourage the provision of shelter for side-walk dwellers.

Children

Families as well as the wider society must be cognisant of their responsibilities and obligations towards

our children. My Government will continue to develop and protect this precious resource through:

- the provision of adequate care and protection of children;
- the maintenance of family units;
- the strengthening of broad-based community and youth organisations;
- the updating of legislation related to the care and protection of children.

Women

My Government maintains an enduring commitment to the improvement of the quality of life and standard of living of the women of Barbados, and will continue its programme of improvement of the status of women by:

- the adoption of a programme for the further promotion of equal status for women, and strengthening their role in decision-making;
- the appointment of a new National Advisory Council on Women.

Youth and Community Development

With the firm conviction that youth need encouragement, guidance and a sympathetic hearing, my Government intends to establish a broad-based commission to enquire into all aspects of the negative factors impacting upon our youth and to focus national attention on the needs of this group.

Sustained efforts will be made to establish Community Development Councils on an island-wide basis to assist in meeting the felt needs of individual communities. Financial assistance to community groups and the programme of upgrading community centres will be continued.

Labour Relations

My Government remains committed to the attainment and maintenance of good labour management relations.

To this end my Government proposes:

- to examine the feasibility of establishing a tribunal to adjudicate on industrial disputes in the public sector;

- to prepare draft legislation on unfair dismissals after wide consultation on the matter.

My Government will take steps to ensure that workers' representatives are provided with basic information about the operations and finances of the enterprises in which their workers are employed.

My Government will continue to support the training programmes of trade unions and will pursue the establishment of a Chair in Industrial Relations at the Cave Hill Campus of the University of the West Indies in collaboration with the International Labour Office (ILO).

Employment

My Government will improve the services provided by the Labour Department and the National Employment Bureau so as to enhance their capabilities to find more jobs locally and overseas for the unemployed.

Occupational Safety and Health

My Government will expand services in the area of industrial safety and health by the establishment of an Occupational Health and Hygiene Unit.

National Training Board

The National Training Board will continue to promote occupational training programmes in support of economic activity in Barbados.

The number of trades under apprenticeship and the number of persons in training will be increased.

Consumer Affairs

My Government intends to pursue a strong and effective consumer policy in the interest of the consuming public.

A committee has been appointed to review the existing legislation and make recommendations for strengthening the laws relating to consumers, encouraging consumer associations and providing assistance for their development.

Communication Services

In the area of information, my Government will facilitate a free flow of information between itself, the media and the people. The Government Information Service will continue to publicise government's activities, and will put special emphasis on the search for solutions to social problems, including the problems of deviant behaviour, drugs and other criminal activity.

My Government remains committed to its policy of maintaining a publicly-owned broadcasting system for the people of Barbados. It will therefore continue to support the radio and television services provided by the Caribbean

Broadcasting Corporation and will ensure that the Corporation becomes a more effective medium of education, information, culture and entertainment with greater emphasis on local programming.

Culture

Cultural development contributes to the building of national self-confidence, and identity. My Government will therefore seek to deepen cultural awareness through the following measures:

- the completion of the Sherbourne Centre, which among other things will be the home of the National Orchestra;
- the development of a centre for the performing arts;
- the establishment of a national art gallery;
- the organisation of workshops to develop writing skills in order to stimulate the literary arts;
- the development of a folk music programme.

The Civil Service

In order to increase efficiency in the Civil Service, training will be intensified through the provision of both local and overseas programmes.

New General Orders for the Civil Service will be issued.

The programme of administrative reform will continue.

Environment

My Government is committed to the protection, conservation and management of the environment.

Emphasis will be placed on environmental education programmes for the public.

My Government will continue its programme of establishing new protected areas across Barbados, including areas of natural, historic or scientific interest.

Coastal Conservation

My Government will be executing a major Coastal Conservation Study in co-operation with the Inter-American Development Bank, and focussing on the protection and enhancement of the south and west coasts.

Scotland District Road Rehabilitation Project

During this parliamentary term, my Government with the financial assistance of international funding agencies and friendly countries will undertake a comprehensive road and bridges rehabilitation and drainage improvement project in the Scotland District.

Drainage

A comprehensive drainage project will be implemented to resolve outstanding drainage problems throughout the island and to utilise as much of the water as possible for water resource and agricultural development.

Postal Services

New postal facilities will be provided at Oistins in Christ Church, and at other locations.

The International Express Mail Service which presently covers thirty-seven (37) countries will be extended to other countries.

Public Transportation

My Government proposes to undertake a rationalisation and restructuring of the public transportation system with a view to reducing the subsidy paid to the Transport Board. It is intended to provide a frequent, safe and reliable service to the people of Barbados.

Maritime Transport

Existing maritime legislation will be reviewed and efforts will be made to expand the Barbados Shipping Registry in order to generate more job opportunities for Barbadians.

My Government proposes to establish a marina. Proposals for port expansion will also be examined.

Air Transport

A feasibility study for the further development of the airport will be undertaken. Barbados will be promoted as a regional air transport hub for passengers, goods and produce. Efforts will be made to attract new scheduled and charter air services into Barbados.

Telecommunications

A new telecommunications Bill will be introduced into Parliament.

Piped-in Water to Houses

Presently some 94 per cent of the 80,900 homes in Barbados are served with piped-in water, while the remaining 6 per cent are within easy access of a public standpipe.

An instalment plan to facilitate the provision of water into the remaining 6 per cent of the houses in the island will be maintained.

Incentives by way of grants and loans will be made available to encourage and enable customers to connect to the sewer system in a more expeditious manner.

Foreign Affairs

My Government will embark on a restructuring of the Foreign Service to ensure that it is equipped and structured to pursue an aggressive promotion of Barbados' trade, tourism and investment strategies in the major markets of the world.

My Government reiterates its strong commitment to regional integration as the central plank of its foreign policy, and will continue to pursue and support vigorously initiatives to strengthen and deepen CARICOM. In this context, my Government will actively promote and support all mechanisms aimed at strengthening regional integration, including the proposals for an Assembly of Caribbean Parliamentarians, enhanced regional security, monetary union and the regional disaster preparedness mechanism.

Barbados recognises the right to equality of all states in the international community, particularly the right of small states to conduct their business free from coercion by the more rich and powerful.

Law and Order

My Government shares the public concern over the increase in crime against the person and crime against property, and is committed to taking positive steps to deter criminal acts of violence and lawlessness. To this end, the Government will seek to further increase the complement of the Royal Barbados Police Force.

My Government will establish an independent Police Complaints Body to hear serious complaints from aggrieved members of the public concerning alleged wrong-doing on the part of a police officer.

My Government will continue to improve the accommodation of the Royal Barbados Police Force through the completion of the St. Cecilia Barracks for the Police Band by the middle of this year, by the construction of the Hometown Complex which incorporates a new Police Station and Magistrate's Court, and by building a new District 'D' Police Station. The maintenance programme at Police Stations and Fire Stations will be intensified, and the Marine Police Unit will be re-established to secure our coasts against illegal and criminal activities.

A restructured Court of Appeal will be established for the better administration of justice. Work on the construction of the Judicial Centre which will house this Court will begin later this year.

The Domestic Violence and the Sexual Offences Bill will shortly be brought before Parliament. Legislation seeking to reform the law relating to Evidence, Theft, Bail and other areas of criminal law will be introduced early in the life of this Parliament.

The rise in crime can be attributed in substantial measure to persons trafficking in drugs, and indulging in criminal and immoral behaviour to feed their drug habit. My Government intends to take additional steps on a co-ordinated basis, and including elements of prevention, law enforcement, rehabilitation and international co-operation, in order to eliminate the drug menace.

Defence and Security

My Government believes that Barbados can achieve its goals of peace, development and democracy only in conditions of stability. This requires adequate security and defence arrangements.

My Government will revise the Defence Act to set out explicitly the mission, role and duties of the Barbados Defence Force and to make the Act more self-contained.

My Government will expand the Sports Department Programme being implemented within the Barbados Defence Force. Under this programme, unemployed young athletes will be encouraged to join the Barbados Defence Force where their main specialisation will be in their sports discipline.

At the regional level, my Government will work for the strengthening of the Regional Security System, and will promote and support efforts to wider security co-operation within CARICOM.

Mr. President and Members of the Senate:
Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

I have outlined to you my Government's programme for this new term of Parliament. Other measures will also be laid before you. The legislative programme promises to be a very full one. I extend to you my best wishes in your new parliamentary term and pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your counsels.

(SGD.) R. NITA BARROW
Governor-General.

Government House
BARBADOS
6th February, 1991.

RESUMPTION

ANNOUNCEMENT BY HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to announce that I am in receipt of a copy of the Throne Speech delivered by Her Excellency the Governor General.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, I give notice of the following:—

Bill entitled the Sexual Offences Bill, 1991

Bill entitled the Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Bill, 1991

Bill to amend the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Office Act, CAP 21A

Bill to revise and consolidate the law relating to Telecommunications and for related matters

Bill to make better provision for prevention of Praedial Larceny

Bill to amend the Companies Act, CAP 308

Resolution to provide for the compulsory acquisition of land at Cluffs, St. Lucy for Housing Development.

PRIVATE MEMBERS NOTICES

Mr. C. L. TROTMAN: I give notice of the following:—

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable House convey to Her Excellency the Governor-General our thanks and appreciation for her gracious speech on the occasion of the Opening of the First Session of Parliament, 1991-96.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the separate motions of Hon. P. M. GREAVES seconded by Hon. B. M. TAITT the following Bills were read a first time:

Sexual Offences Bill, 1991

Domestic Violence (Protection Orders) Bill, 1991

Bill to amend the Corporate Affairs and Intellectual Property Office Act, Cap. 21A

Bill to revise and consolidate the law relating to Telecommunications and for related matters

Bill to make better provision for the prevention of Praedial Larceny

Bill to amend the Companies Act Cap. 308

CONGRATULATORY SPEECHES

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the best traditions of Parliament as I am

advised, I wish to extend congratulations to you, Sir, on your elevation to the office of Speaker and I am sure that, with a full parliamentary programme, that you will ensure that the proceedings of this Honourable Chamber are conducted fully and fairly and that all Members will enjoy those ancient rights and privileges which you have claimed on our behalf. We all know, Sir, that you have those qualities of balance of judgement which are the hallmarks of one who presides adequately over a deliberative Chamber and we certainly look forward to a very fruitful and creative session of work under your direction, Sir.

Hon. H. deB. FORDE: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in keeping with our tradition, I concur in the statement made by the Right Honourable Member, but I would wish, Mr. Speaker Sir, now you have been duly elected to place on record two cautions which I made at the beginning of this Session. Mr. Speaker, the first relates to this: that I would hope that in claiming the ancient privileges and rights, Your Honour would find it possible always to remember as well the statutory privileges and the independent role which Your Honour has to play in relation to those rights and privileges as they affect not only the rights of Honourable Members in this House but as they affect as well the public at large and Your Honour would be fully aware of the rights of the subjects before the Courts of Law and the independent role which Your Honour has in that regard.

Secondly, Sir, as a member of Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and as Leader of that Opposition we would wish that in enforcing those rights you would always remember, Sir, that there is an Opposition in the House and not merely a Leader of the Opposition in the House. Sir, I hope that Your Honour's tenure during the present Parliament will not be in any way disturbed by the many differences which may occur across the floor of the House and that Your Honour will continue to exercise control over the House in the way in which we would expect the best traditions of this House to be conducted. I can promise Your Honour, Sir, that the Members on this side of the House will obey the Rules of the House but we will at the same time give vigorous defence of the rights of the Opposition and of the people.

Mr. SPEAKER: I should just like to thank both Honourable Members for their kind sentiments and I can assure you that I will at all times observe those rules and try to interpret them to the best of my understanding and ability for the betterment of good debate and not only good debate but a high level of debating skills. I know it is not always easy to make decisions that will suit everyone but at the same time I am sure that freedom of speech will be the hallmark of this particular Session and I want Members to feel extremely free to speak and debate within the limits of that particular observation.
5.50 p.m.

I can also assure you that any matters that come under my jurisdiction will be given adequate attention and serious thought even though it may take a long time to come to a decision. But one of the things that I must make clear is that Parliament must always be identified in such a way that it does not come into conflict with other separate bodies. I think that Parliament must always maintain its identity and traditions at all times and within that kind of thinking my decisions will always be based on the preservation and the traditions of Parliament.

I want to thank you once again for your kind sentiments.

Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD: Mr. Speaker, with your indulgence, Sir, also under the item of Congratulatory Statements, I would wish to take this opportunity to extend congratulations to all Members of this Honourable Chamber, Sir, on their election to this Chamber. I know that we have had a hard fought campaign and we have won the approbation of the electorate in the several constituencies and I would like to express congratulations both to the Members of this side of the House and to the Members of the Opposition including my good friend, Sir, the Leader of the Opposition. May I say, Sir, I am very glad to see him in that position, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would also like to welcome those new Members. It is true to say they are not really new to Parliament. But to those who are here for the first time I want to extend a very warm welcome to you and I can assure you that for any assistance that is necessary from my end to assist you in your participation you can count on me.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. P. M. GREAVES: Mr. Speaker, we have concluded on our part matters brought before this Chamber for today and I am now about to move, Sir, that the House do now adjourn to Tuesday, 12th February, 1991 at 12 o'clock noon, Sir.

Hon. B. M. TAITT: Yes, Sir, in rising to second this motion and bearing in mind that I did not get an opportunity during the congratulatory stages, it is good to see that we have at least one lady in this Chamber, Sir. It is good to see her back.

I beg to second this motion, Mr. Speaker.

The question that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, 12th February, 1991 at 12 o'clock noon was put and resolved in the affirmative, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly.
5.55 p.m.

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APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Hon. P. M. Greaves, 4; Hon. H. deB. Forde, 4.

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PRIVATE MEMBERS NOTICES

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Resolution of thanks and appreciation to Her Excellency the Governor-General for the Speech delivered by her during the first sitting of the Parliament of 1991-96.

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CONGRATULATORY SPEECHES

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SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

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GREAVES, Hon. P. M. (St. Michael North)
SANDIFORD, Rt. Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South)
TAITT, Hon. B. M. (St. Michael West)
TROTMAN, Mr. C. L. (St. Michael Central)