



THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Wednesday, October 5, 1994

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 1994-99 convened at 4:25 p.m. at Parliament Buildings, Bridgetown on the 5th day of October, 1994.

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:-

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT, B. A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B. (Rons.) (St. Michael West)

Mr. L. A. WEEKES (St. Michael North West)

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR, M.Sc. (Econ.), (St. Peter)

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (St. Thomas)

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (St. John)

Hon. H. B. StJOHN, Q.C., M.A. (Christ Church South)

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

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (City of Bridgetown)

Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J. P. (St Michael East) Hon. G.

W. PAYNE (St. Andrew) Hon. R. C.

EASTMOND, B. A., LL.B. (St. James North)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.) (St. Michael South Central)

Mr. D. CARTER (Christ Church East Central)

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE (St. Philip North)

Mr. I. A. ROETT, (St. Michael Central)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE (St. George North)

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL (Christ Church West Central)

Mr. R. D. MARSHALL, (St. Michael West Central)

Mr. F. J. STUART, (St. Philip South)

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER (Christ Church East)

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY (St. Michael South East)

Mr. R. St.C. TOPPIN (St. Michael North)

Mr. D. StJE. KELLMAN (St Lucy)

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON (St. James South)

Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY (St. Michael North 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 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, October 5, 1994:

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 16:00 hours in the afternoon on Wednesday, October 5, 1994, as the time at which the said session shall commence.

Given under my hand and the Public Seal of Barbados this 20th day of September, 1994, and in the Forty-third 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 20th September, 1994.

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, October 5, 1994 at 16:00 hours as the time at which the first session of the new 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 16:00 hours and before it proceeds to the dispatch of any other business, under the provisions of Standing Order No. 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.

Yours faithfully,

P. LAYNE,
Private Secretary to Her Excellency,
The Governor-General."

Under Standing Order No. 2, at the beginning of each Parliament and before the House proceeds to the dispatch of any other business, the Clerk when so directed by Her Excellency the Governor-General shall inform the House of Her Excellency's desire of the House to elect a Speaker.

Under paragraph 3, a Member having first ascertained that the Member proposed is willing to serve if elected

may, rising in his place and addressing himself to the Clerk, propose that any other Member do take the Chair as Speaker. If that proposal is seconded and no other Member is proposed for the office, the Member proposed shall be called by the House to the Chair without any question being put.

Is there a proposal to the office of Speaker of this Honourable House?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I propose the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central.

Mr. CLERK: Is there a seconder for the nomination of the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central as the Speaker of this Honourable House?

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Clerk of Parliament, I have the pleasure of seconding the nomination of the Honourable Member for St. Michael Central and I would like to reserve my right to speak. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. CLERK: Is there any other proposal for the office of Speaker of this Honourable House? If there is none other, I declare that the Honourable Member for the constituency of St. Michael Central should be called to the Chair of this House by all Honourable Members.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.

I would like to thank all Honourable Members for electing me and I hope that I will serve following all the traditions and practices of this Honourable House. Thank you. 4.35 p.m.

ADOPTION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Standing Orders be adopted as the Standing Orders of the Honourable, The House of Assembly of Barbados.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I beg to second that.

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

No. 6 - ELECTION OF DEPUTY SPEAKER

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move for the office of Deputy Speaker of this Honourable House of Assembly, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no further nominations the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central is hereby elected.

No. 7 - ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to nominate for the post of Chairman of Committees of the Honourable the House of Assembly, the Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: If there are no further nominations I beg to declare the Honourable Member for Christ Church East elected as Chairman of Committees.

SUSPENSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I beg to move that this sitting be now suspended for 2 minutes.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: Members are requested to retain their seats during the suspension.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. Speaker suspended the House accordingly.

RESUMPTION Mr. SPEAKER:

This sitting is now resumed.

We are now awaiting the pleasure of Her Excellency the Governor-General. 4.45 P.M.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, the Order of our Procession to the Senate Chamber has been circulated and I kindly ask that all Honourable Members observe this order.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that at the conclusion of the Throne Speech when the Honourable Members of the Honourable House of

Assembly leave the Other Place, that we should return immediately to this Chamber in order to finish today's business in respect of the Selection of Committees before retiring to the courtyard.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: There being no objection to the motion of the Honourable Member, we will return to this Chamber when we leave the Senate Chamber and conclude our business, and then we will go down to the courtyard to observe the festivities there.

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. 4.57 p.m.

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:

SPEECH BY HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL AT THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 1994

Mr. President and Members of the Senate:

Mr. Speaker and Members of the House of Assembly:

This new session of Parliament commenced earlier this evening, and each of your Houses has carried out the requirements of electing its presiding officers.

In accordance with tradition, it now falls to me to outline my Government's programme for the new Parliamentary term.

National Objectives

My Government is committed to transforming Barbados into a dynamic, prosperous and stable democracy, capable of sustaining a high quality of life for all of its people.

It seeks to create a just, humane and compassionate society; a society governed by laws which are appropriate to our traditions, our culture and our times; a

racially cohesive society in which the creativity, energy and enterprise of all our people are given every opportunity for full expression.

My Government is committed to the full economic empowerment of every Barbadian, and to the creation of sustainable job opportunities for our citizens, especially for our young people.

It is also committed to the management and enhancement of our environment and natural resources in such manner as would support the livelihood of this generation of Barbadians and redound to the benefit of Barbadians yet unborn.

My Government is committed to the positioning of Barbados in the global community of nations as a nation whose voice is heard and whose word is respected.

Strengthening Democracy

The convening of this new session of Parliament provides a good opportunity to outline the framework within which my Government proposes to broaden Parliamentary democracy and create a genuine and vibrant participatory democracy.

At the centre of these objectives is the need to reform those areas of the Constitution which have proven to be deficient both in the recent past and earlier.

The recent decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the case of *GLADWYN OPHELIA KING v. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL* devastated the morale of the Public Service. In order to ensure that the emoluments of Public Officers can never again be cut, my Government will cause necessary amendments to be made to section 26 of the Constitution and the Civil Establishments Act.

In similar vein, the Constitution allows for unfair discrimination in regard to the right to citizenship for the non-Barbadian spouses of Barbadian citizens. The non-Barbadian husband of a Barbadian wife has no right to citizenship.

My Government will seek to abolish this anomaly. My Government will also strive to give greater representation to Opposition parties in the Senate. In the matter of constitutional reform, my Government will not dictate the agenda for such reform but rather, will institute constitutional devices to enable the people more effectively to participate in the exercise of their political power.

In this context, the referendum and the establishment of a Constitutional Review Commission will be two such devices. The Constitutional Review Commission will be mandated to consult with the public to the fullest extent

and only after due consultation, to make recommendations for Constitutional change.

In an attempt to make participatory democracy a reality in our country, my Government will consult widely with relevant interest groups, with employers' and workers' organisations and interested members of the public. My Government, in order to ensure greater use of Parliament, will expand the system of Parliamentary Committees providing opportunities for members of the public to participate in the legislative process in a direct way.

Full use will also be made of the system of circulation of Green and White Papers to ensure public understanding and public discussion of important matters of Government policy.

My Government believes fundamentally that the general public has a right to information and, particularly, a right to see and hear the Members of both Houses of Parliament at work. Provision will therefore be made very soon for live broadcasts of the debates of both Houses of Parliament.

Similarly, my Government sincerely hopes that the electronic media companies will see it as their duty to permit the broadcasting and discussion of matters political outside of an election period.

Drafts of major legislation will be circulated to all political parties and be available to the public in order to facilitate discussion and comment prior to introduction into Parliament.

My Government has already established a Commission for Social Justice whose principal function is to advise the Office of the Prime Minister as to the manner in which the process of Constitutional Reform should be managed and a genuine participatory democracy created.

The Public Service

In the past three years, the Public Officers of Barbados have been called upon to suffer a diminution in their accustomed rights and privileges. They have borne their privation with commendable fortitude. But, in an increasingly competitive world the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service are crucial to the rapid and sustained development of our nation. My Government therefore proposes to establish a broadly based Commission with wide terms of reference to review the role, status and function of the Public Service.

Ultimately, but after the report of that Commission, my Government will enact a completely new and contemporary Public Service Act and General Orders. There is need also for the chairmanship of

the Public Service Commission to become a full time post, and necessary steps will be taken to appoint a permanent full-time Chairman of that Commission. The computerisation of departments which has already begun will be intensified and coordinated to further modernise the Public Service.

My Government is convinced that there is need for improvement in the system of public accountability, and accordingly it will suitably amend the Financial Administration and Audit Act, the Financial Rules and introduce Integrity Legislation.

Economic Policies

My Government is committed to pursuing policies designed to achieve a strong, stable, export oriented economy with a vibrant service sector, in which unemployment is reduced to negligible proportions. Our key strategy will be to unleash the talent, energy and enterprise of our people by providing them with the means and abilities to compete in the international economy. To this end a Ministry of International Business has been established and charged with the responsibility for ensuring that Barbados achieves its fullest potential in telecommunications, captive insurance, informatics, off-shore banking and other financial services.

My Government will treat tourism and financial services as the principal engines for economic development and a number of measures will be introduced to facilitate its achievement of their maximum potential, both as an earner of foreign exchange and as a provider of jobs.

My Government is firmly committed to maintaining the existing parity of the Barbados dollar.

My Government will seek to contain inflation within single digits and to maintain a sound foreign reserve position.

My Government will implement a series of measures to create a business friendly environment which will be conducive to new investment both foreign and local.

My Government will support a dynamic private sector and will place emphasis on the development of small businesses as one of the ways of encouraging entrepreneurship among our people, while at the same time creating job opportunities to reduce our unacceptably high level of unemployment. An important feature of the reconstruction of the economy will be the rehabilitation of the traditional and mainstream productive sectors, particularly manufacturing and agriculture, whose contribution is essential to the economic health of the country.

In this regard, my Government has already brought some relief to those sectors by waiving the duties and taxes

on raw materials, packaging materials, machinery, equipment and spare parts. The removal of duties and taxes will enable those sectors to regain some of the ground which they lost during the past four years and will in due course result in additional employment opportunities. Further measures will be implemented to deal with the importation of inferior and dumped products, the reduction in energy costs, administrative impediments, transfer of technology through the promotion of joint ventures and other areas critical to increasing efficiency of the business sector. In relation to tourism, my Government will reduce and subsequently remove taxes on inputs with a view to making the sector more competitive and to increasing its profitability.

My Government will introduce a new Hotel Aids Act that will broaden the concessions for investment in new plant and provide concessions for the refurbishing and expansion of existing facilities.

My Government will support further development of new forms of tourism activity such as heritage tourism; eco tourism; sports tourism and health tourism.

My Government will also support the development of marinas, conference facilities and the facilities for duty free shopping. In addition, my Government will introduce new marketing strategies and will increase and redirect funds for tourism development.

My Government will work closely with other regional governments in the search for solutions to regional air transport services.

Monetary and Fiscal Policy

In the execution of monetary policy, my Government will introduce measures to liberalise the exchange controls. A range of new instruments will be provided in order to mobilise savings and to encourage Barbadians to increase their investment in the economy.

My Government will liberalise the Foreign Exchange Regime to stimulate foreign currency earnings by local businesses. Barbadians will be allowed to hold foreign currency accounts.

My Government will pursue a fiscal policy that is intended to minimise any negative impact of the fiscal deficit on our foreign exchange reserves, on domestic liquidity conditions, and on interest rates. The Tax Administration and Expenditure Management Project which is already in progress and which is designed to improve the financial management of the public sector, will be fully implemented. During this session, there will be a new thrust in Government's Capital programme with emphasis on human resources development, environmental

projects, development of the water resources, rural development, urban renewal programmes and projects geared to support the export-oriented sectors.

Taxation

My Government considers that the level of taxation is too high. Taxes must be reduced in order to re-energise the economy and bring a measure of relief to the taxpayers while creating opportunities for increased savings. The proposed VAT will be re-examined to ensure that the level of indirect taxation is reduced and the cost of collection kept to the minimum. The present Income Tax regime will be reviewed. Within the context of budgetary objectives, special concessions will be given to promote home ownership, stimulate investment in small businesses, develop venture capital funds and protect pensioners.

During this session, a review of all tax incentive legislation will be undertaken and special provision will be made for foreign currency generation from all sources.

Barbados National Bank and Barbados Development Bank

Measures will be instituted to complete the restructuring of the Barbados National Bank, making it a more viable institution. The future of the Barbados Development Bank will be determined within the context of the overall development of Barbados' Capital markets.

State Enterprises and Privatisation

My Government believes that enterprises which perform purely commercial functions will benefit from divestment. However it will ensure that priority is given to employees, non-traditional small, investors, and local institutions, including Credit Unions, in the sale of equity. In the case of state enterprises performing critical services in the national interest, steps will be taken to ensure their efficient management with a view to providing a reliable service at reasonable cost.

Environment

My Government is convinced that enduring economic development is only possible when the balance between the physical and social environment allows present as well as future needs to be met.

My Government will pass comprehensive legislation to protect the Environment. Specifically, my Government will ban the importation of certain chemicals, require that all major projects undergo an Environmental Impact Assessment Study, close the dump at Mangrove, St.

Thomas, while implementing an Integrated Solid Waste Management Programme, and give incentives for environmentally friendly projects and products.

Water

My Government will not tolerate the continuation of a situation in which one quarter of our people do not enjoy a regular and reliable supply of pure drinking water.

My Government will therefore carry out a comprehensive programme to develop and manage all of Barbados' water resources. It will provide incentives for the installation of storage tanks, ensure that the funds of the Water Authority will be used to finance its maintenance and leak detection programme and to replace defective water mains. New measures will be instituted to encourage water conservation.

Urban Development

My Government will implement an urban development programme to improve the physical environmental, social and cultural conditions in our main urban areas. In particular, it will modernise existing markets and provide new facilities for vendors.

My Government will implement the Carlisle Bay Development Project and introduce measures to improve housing conditions in urban tenancies and other communities.

Rural Development

My Government has already set up a Department of Rural Development to carry out its Rural Modernisation Programme. While paying attention to the enrichment of the quality of life in rural Barbados, priority will be given to the rehabilitation of the Scotland District, the creation of a Rural Enterprise Fund to assist in the financing of new projects to create new jobs in rural Barbados. Attention will be given to a Sites and Services Programme in rural communities.

Physical Infrastructure

My Government recognises the importance of a fully developed infrastructure to the achievement of economic and social growth. To this end, our road system will be improved and maintained. My Government accepts the objective of providing tenantry roads in communities where none currently exist. During this session it will embark upon that programme. There will be intensive island-wide programmes to improve drainage along with intensive cleaning of water courses. An independent Transport Authority will be established to regulate the entire ground transport system.

Quality of Life

My Government is fully committed to providing our people with the opportunities and social services to enrich the quality of their lives. It will establish a National Youth Development Programme including an expanded Barbados Youth Service, a Youth Entrepreneurs Scheme to stimulate employment, establish a Corps of Youth Commissioners to coordinate youth programmes, establish a special National Order to recognise the achievement of young people.

Education and Culture

My Government's educational policies will be aimed at making Barbadians competitive in all areas of human endeavour while preparing them intellectually, physically, socially and morally to meet the challenges of the future. My Government will strengthen the capacity and resources of teachers to detect and remedy learning difficulties at the pre primary, primary and junior secondary levels.

The Common Entrance Examination will be continued. However, based on a system of continuous assessment, children will be allowed to sit the examination when they are ready. My Government is firmly committed to financing tertiary and other levels of education. After appropriate consultation a Teachers' Service Commission will be established.

Culture

My Government is committed to cultural development as a means of building communities, enhancing national identity and also as a source of employment and foreign exchange. My Government will support the development of cultural industries, the restructuring of the National Cultural Foundation and marketing Barbados as an international centre for the performing arts and the recording industries.

Health

The access to comprehensive, adequate and affordable health care facilities is crucial to maintaining a high quality of life for the people of Barbados. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital and its further development will remain focal to the efficacy of the health care system. My Government will review the role of the St. Joseph Hospital and its utilisation within the context of the overall arrangements for health care.

My Government will implement a comprehensive rehabilitation programme for substance abusers; expand training opportunities and generally improve the conditions of service of nurses; and expand and improve the services provided to psychiatric and geriatric patients.

Housing

My Government is conscious of the severe housing shortage in Barbados and is committed to rectifying this situation. To this end, my Government will resume building terraced units and offer the units for sale with rents credited against the purchase price. My Government will also resume the Sites and Services Programme. My Government will restore income tax concessions on mortgage interest, home repairs and insurance; establish a secondary mortgage market, introduce a Building Societies Act and institute a Home Mortgage Insurance Scheme.

Labour

My Government will consult with employers and workers' organisations before legislating a comprehensive Employment Protection Act and modernising other Labour laws, particularly those relating to occupational health and safety. My Government will review the laws relating to severance payments to ensure that workers receive adequate protection and that the formula for computing benefits is fair and reasonable. It will restore to seasonal workers the eligibility to receive benefits under the Unemployment Benefit Scheme.

It will implement training programmes which emphasise computer literacy and other skills essential to Barbados becoming a services centre of excellence. My Government will honour its responsibility for promoting human resource development by adopting a broad-based programme of technical, vocational education and training activities.

Community Development

My Government will promote community development by encouraging the establishment of councils within districts to generate resources for self-development at the grass-roots level.

Women

My Government will create opportunities for the advancement of women by supporting programmes of the Women's Affairs Bureau, especially those designed to create self-employment and income-earning activities.

The Elderly

My Government will increase Old Age Pensions and expand the Home Help, home repair and other programmes of the National Assistance Board.

Child Care

My Government recognises its responsibility for the care of the nation's children. It will reduce the

reliance on institutional care by promoting care within the community.

My Government will also enact a new Children and Young Persons Act to protect children against abuse and exploitation.

The Disabled

My Government is committed to the rehabilitation of the disabled to ensure that they lead useful and productive lives. To assist in the achievement of this objective, it will establish a building code which will make provision for ramps and other aids mandatory in the construction of buildings intended for public use.

Sports

In recognition of the multi-faceted nature of sports, my Government will promote sports programmes as a means of generating employment, foreign exchange and providing a healthy outlet for the energies of our people. In addition my Government is committed to the reduction of duties on selected sporting goods and equipment, and the establishment of a national Hall of Fame.

Information and Broadcasting

My Government will restructure the Government Information Service so that it can function as a professional public information agency and an independent source of untainted, timely and reliable public information.

My Government will issue licenses for the operation of additional television and radio stations. My Government will update Intellectual Property legislation and enact Privacy of Information legislation. A new Defamation Act will also be enacted.

Caricom

As a co-founder of the Caribbean Community, my Government will continue to promote the widening and deepening of CARICOM and will seek to make it work more efficiently and effectively.

Foreign Policy

My Government, while paying attention to the more traditional aspects of our relations with other members of the international community, will introduce an economic perspective to our international relations.

It has therefore reorganised the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to assist it in coordinating the work of our development agencies abroad. Our Missions and Consular Agencies will play a crucial role in mobilising investment, promoting our trading interests and marketing Barbados as

a centre of excellence for financial business and information services.

My Government will strongly support and play an active part in the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the Organisation of American States. Similarly, my Government will actively promote its links with African and Pacific States.

In concert with other CARICOM member States, my Government will continue our participation in the Association of Caribbean States and will seek affiliation with the North American Free Trade Area and other such initiatives.

Defence and Security

My Government will work steadfastly to make the Caribbean a Zone of Peace. My Government will continue to support the Regional Security System and the Barbados Defence Force in properly carrying out their responsibilities.

Law and Order

The preservation of law and order must be at the centre of our developmental strategies. My Government, as a consequence, will increase the numbers of men and women in the Police Force; integrate special and island constables into the regular Police Force; speed up the process of computerization and communications; provide a forensic laboratory; enact a new Code of Discipline for members of the Force; and establish an independent police complaints authority.

My Government will establish a National Task Force on Crime and a multi-disciplinary Advisory Committee on Narcotic Drugs and will wage war relentlessly against the traffic in illicit drugs. It will also review the law relating to capital offences and will carry out the death penalty where applicable. A new Penal System will be introduced which will provide for a larger number of sentencing options and more diverse punishments.

The Judiciary

The conditions of appointment of Judges and Magistrates will be reviewed to ensure impartiality in appointments and the greater independence of the judiciary.

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 session of Parliament, and I extend to you my best wishes in your new Parliamentary Session and

pray that the blessing of Almighty God may rest upon your deliberations.

RESUMPTION

ORDER No. 8 - APPOINTMENT OF MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that the Management Commission of the Honourable the House of Assembly should comprise Mr. Speaker, Honourable Member for St. Peter, Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, Honourable Member for St. John as *ex officio* Members of the said Management Commission and that in addition the Honourable Member for St. Joseph and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central should be the members of the Management Commission.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with respect to the Members of the Opposition who are being nominated for the Management Commission of Parliament, I wish to nominate the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West.

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

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

ORDER No. 9 - APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE OF PRIVILEGES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to nominate to the Committee of Privileges of the Honourable the House of Assembly from this side of the House the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the Honourable Member for St. George South, the Honourable Member for St. Andrew and the Honourable Member for St. James South with Your Honour being *ex officio* Member of the said Committee.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Opposition, I am nominating the Honourable Member for St. Philip South and the Honourable Member for St. John.

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

ORDER No. 10 - APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to nominate from this side of the House to the Public Accounts Committee of the Honourable the House of Assembly the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East Central.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Opposition's nominees for the Public Accounts Committee and the House already knows that the Leader of the Opposition is Chairman as of right, but in addition I wish to nominate the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

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

ORDER No. 11 - APPOINTMENT OF STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to nominate from this side of the House to the Standing Orders Committee of the Honourable the House of Assembly the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Honourable Member for the City of Bridgetown, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central and the Honourable Member for St. Michael North East.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the nominations for the Opposition on this Standing Orders Committee, I wish to nominate the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South and the Honourable Member for St. Philip South.

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

ORDER No. 12 - LIBRARY COMMITTEE - JOINT COMMITTEE

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to nominate to the Library Committee of the Honourable the House of Assembly from this side of the House the Honourable Member for Christ Church West, the

Honourable Member for St George North, the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central and the Honourable Member for Christ Church East.

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

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Opposition's nominations, I beg to nominate the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East and the Honourable Member for St. Michael South to the Library Committee.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. O. S. ARTHUR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in moving the adjournment of the House, I should like to congratulate you on the attainment of your high office. I have perhaps known you longer than I have known any other member of this Parliament. I feel obliged to put on record that you have had tremendous previous experience in leading teams. You happened to have been my cricket captain at the University, Sir, and I must also place on the records of Parliament that you discharged that responsibility with such a tremendous sense of fairness that you dropped from your team the person who has now become the leader of your party. With that strong sense of independence, Mr. Speaker, I think that this House can be well assured that we are in capable, fair and firm hands. But I rise speaking on the motion of the adjournment, Sir, to congratulate you on this appointment. I am sure that you will discharge the responsibility of Speaker in a manner that will be a credit to the position of Speaker and that you will protect our privileges and our rights in this House, and that you will jealously guard them and that you will be fair and firm and we will see in your discharge of your responsibility the conduct that is a credit to this institution.

Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be now adjourned until the 18th October, 1994 at 12 o'clock noon.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I beg to second the Resolution moved by the Honourable Member for St. Peter, the Honourable Prime Minister and to concur in all of what he said which falls within my personal knowledge in respect to your character. I must say that I am only aware of the reason for the excitement and gleam with which the Honourable Prime Minister has supported your elevation to the post of Speaker, because were the subject of cricket ever to creep onto the parliamentary agenda you would not be able to participate and tell us of his exploits or lack thereof and the reason for your decision when it was made. However, I wish you an outstanding

career as Speaker of this House following in the tradition of some very eminent Barbadians who have performed that role, none less so than the person who preceded you in that office who would be re-elected and for whom I believe all of the Members who served in the previous Parliament have the highest regard and respect for the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West. 5.40 p.m.

And I am sure that this Parliament having yourself in it as Speaker, as well as the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, the proceedings will be undertaken with vigour and fairness and with the kind of tradition about which this Parliament is spoken, not only in Barbados but in circles and in places far beyond our country. I wish you a successful sojourn as Speaker of the House and I have great pleasure in seconding the motion for the adjournment.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I am very glad, Sir, that I caught your eye on the very first day's proceedings, as it would not be difficult to do so. It would be very much remiss of me if consistent with the remit and mission with which I have been sent to this Parliament I did not seize this opportunity to congratulate you on your election to the high office of Speaker of this Honourable House of Assembly.

You have become, in accordance with the most ancient traditions the very embodiment of all those honours, dignities and privileges which have been associated with the long history of Westminster type democracy and Westminster type parliaments.

Very fundamental to your office, Sir, is the protection of the rights of minorities, especially when those minorities are rather minor, and therefore we look forward to your very early recognition of a very special responsibility which your office confers on you.

There are many acts symbolically performed here today, the many words all have in relation to your election, in relation to the process by which you were invited to take the Chair, they all have very deep significance in history that goes beyond and before the actual creation of this parliament. Therefore, Sir, I am always very highly respectful of those who occupy the position of Speaker of this Honourable House of Assembly because in many ways it is one of the premier offices in this country and it is often not recognised the extent to which the conduct of the Chair influences patterns of behaviour within the community as a whole and therefore, Sir, I confidently expect that you would add significantly to that

great tradition that has certainly been developed in relation to the speakership of the House of Assembly of Barbados.

I congratulate you once again and I wish you the very best and especially look forward to that particular thing that I referred to, your recognition of that very fundamental role that comes only second to impartiality, that is, the protection of minority rights in this Honourable House.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, as you would have noticed when we were going out, I am getting to the head of the line with my good friend, the Honourable Member for Christ Church West which means that I am now among the longest serving Members in this Honourable House and therefore, Sir, I have served under many Speakers and it would be remiss of me if I did not join with those who welcomed you to the Chair and offer you my congratulations.

I have no doubt that Your Honour will do well. Over the last very several years I have been functioning in a constituency where Your Honour spends most of your time in pursuit of noble work and I have had the opportunity to interact with you sometimes distantly, sometimes on a face to face basis and I have always found you to be fair and reasonable and I have no doubt that you will bring that great quality which you have to this particular role. I wish you well.

I know that apart from the protection of minorities you recognise special pleading when you hear it and you also will not spare the opportunity to allow the other minorities over here, Sir, to take care of the people's business from this and.

But, one of the things I wanted to do too, Sir, with your permission, is to pay tribute to the outgoing Speaker. Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael North West, who is my neighbour in every respect has served, with distinction, ever since 1986, in that august Chair, and I think it is without fear of contradiction to say he has brought great distinction and honour to Barbados across the Commonwealth, especially by the way he has performed, especially outside of Barbados. I think that the record, in these circumstances, should bear testimony to our thanks to him as he demits office from the Speaker's Chair.

I must tell you, Sir, that I am very pleased to see that he is back in the House and I look forward to those very astute interventions to which one has become accustomed before he assumed the role of Speaker. I think, Sir, that he will be able when called upon to assist any difficulties which Your Honour might perceive that you might not

wish to coordinate with the Clerks at Table. I just wanted to put on record the sterling performance of my friend and colleague from St. Michael North West, even as I welcome you and offer you congratulations as you assume this very noble office.

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

Mr. L. A. WEEKES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate you in your office but not to give any advice or place before you any submissions as other Members have done in respect of the office but I rise primarily because, unfortunately, when that nomination and election was made I really wanted to be here to be part of it. Somehow because of traffic procedures and others I was unable to share in that election and I do so now by saying that I am very pleased that the election has been completed and that you have been the successor to that office and I wish you well in that office and I can assure you I will always be thankful for the cooperation which was given to me in the past by all Members of the House. I can assure you that that cooperation and spirit is most likely to accompany you in your term as you go along. So thank you for giving me the opportunity not to be discourteous in any way towards your election to the office but to place on record that I was unable to be here to share simply because of circumstances beyond my control. Thank you, Sir. 5.50 p.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I, too, rise to add my congratulations and well wishes upon your appointment to the High Office of Speaker of this Honourable House. I also would wish on this occasion, Mr. Speaker, Sir, to say how appreciative we are of - and I believe I can speak for both sides of the House in this respect - all those, particularly the Clerks at the Table, who have prepared this Honourable Chamber and organised this evening's proceedings which have gone so well and which have added to our comfort.

We leave here to go downstairs to be entertained and to be refreshed and I wish to say too to those who await us there that we also appreciate the effort and the time and the care that has gone into making this State Opening of this Session of Parliament the success that it obviously and clearly is.

Mr. SPEAKER: I would like to thank Honourable Members for such kind words. I assure you that I will do my utmost to live up to the very high standards of this Honourable Chamber. I know that over the years we have seen a deterioration in the kind of respect and attitude, I should say, towards this Chamber. I myself will be striving very much to be part of an Honourable Chamber that brings Parliament once again to the people and brings the people to Parliament.

I assure you that I will be fair and honest at all times. I will at all times try to be extremely impartial in my dealings. I recognise from past experiences that the role of a Speaker is never an easy one; but I believe that with the experience we have in this Chamber and with the cooperation that I expect from all members that we can look forward to a first class time in this Chamber.

I thank you once again for all your kind sentiments and I assure you that at all times I will uphold the dignity of this Chamber. Thank you.

The question that this House do now adjourn was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. Speaker adjourned the House accordingly. 6.00 p.m.

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