

THE

House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 - 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, October 24, 1995

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on October 24, 1995.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed. (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. MARSHALL, (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.),

J.P.

Mr. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.

Mr. B. M. TAITT, B.A. (Hons.), M.P.A., LL.B.
(Hons.)

Mr. L. A. WEEKES

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

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

Hon. Sir HAROLD. B. St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.B.

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

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER (Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Tourism, Foreign
Trade and International Business) (Leader of the House)

Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J.P.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE (Minister of Public Works,
Transport and Housing)

Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.)

Mr. D. CARTER

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, (Minister of Labour,
Community Development and Sports)

Mr. G. A. CLARKE (Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing)

Mr. J. M. EDGHILL

Mr. F. J. STUART

Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER, J.P., B.A., Dip. Ed.,
B.Sc., (Chairman of Committees)

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY

Hon. R. St. C. TOPPIN, LL.B. (Minister of State in
the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International
Transport)

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Minister of
Health and the Environment)

Prayers were led by His Honour Mr. SPEAKER.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: This House is now in session.
Minutes of Tuesday, October 17, 1995.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to
move that the Minutes of this Honourable House of
Assembly for its meeting the 17th October, 1995 which
Minutes have been circulated be taken as read.

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

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the
Minutes, at one of the paragraphs, my name is listed as
M. B. instead of B. M. with the assumption that that
typographical error will be corrected.

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

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY YOUR HONOUR THE SPEAKER

Mr. SPEAKER: I am to report that I am in receipt
of the Accounts and Statements for the month of June,
1995 from the Accountant General.

MESSAGES FROM HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL

Mr. SPEAKER: Her Excellency The Governor-General has the honour to inform the Honourable House of Assembly that she will be absent from the country during the period of October 19-24, 1995 on a visit to New York.

Her Excellency further has the honour to inform the Honourable House of Assembly that in accordance with the provisions of Sections 29(1)(c) and 30 of the Constitution the following persons have been appointed as Governors-General Deputy: Chief Justice, the Honourable Sir Denys Williams, K.C.M.G., GCM from October 19-22, 1995 and His Honour the President of the Senate, Senator Fred Gollop from October 23-24, 1995. Signed Dame Nita Barrow, Governor-General.

PAPERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am commanded to lay the Agreement for Economic Cooperation between the Government of Barbados and member Governments of the Organization of East Caribbean States.

I am further commanded to lay the Protocol for the implementation of a Prices and Incomes Policy 1995-1997.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am further commanded to lay a letter issued by the Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs to the President of the Inter-American Development Bank setting out the programme of policy reforms being undertaken by the Government of Barbados.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to note and approve the Protocol for the implementation of a Prices and Incomes Policy 1995-1997.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' NOTICES

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Resolution:

"WHEREAS the riots of 1937 in Barbados and in the wider Caribbean constituted a consonant and collective attempt to remove the causes and sources of social oppression, neglect and exploitation in several Caribbean societies; and

WHEREAS in Barbados many persons were killed or injured, arrested and/or imprisoned during those riots in the pursuit of social emancipation, liberty of the subject and the enjoyment of the fundamental rights of all persons; and

WHEREAS those riots have led to the commencement and continuing development of progressive social, political and economic reforms in Barbados; and

WHEREAS Clement Payne as its progenitor and leader and others such as Daniel Alleyne, Mencie Chase, Oliver Grant and Israel Lovell were some of the principal patriots and architects of the social and political revolution initiated in 1937;

BE IT RESOLVED THAT this House urge the Government to establish a public memorial to Clement Payne, erect a monument to commemorate the sacrifices of Barbadians in 1937, take steps to secure a pardon for those patriots who were convicted of offences relating to the riots, commission an official record of the events of 1937 and allocate to the events of 1937 a pre-eminent place in the curriculum in our educational institutions."

Mr. SPEAKER: We will return to that matter at a later time.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the first reading of a Bill to revise the Barbados Tourism Authority Act 1993(1). In moving this first reading, Sir, I note that the Opposition has requested although no request came to me in my capacity as Leader of Government Business either written or spoken, but I believe that in the public domain the Leader of the Opposition has made it known that it wishes to have more time for the consideration of this matter. The Government wishes to do what it can to accommodate the Opposition without at the same time preventing the Government from getting on with its very busy programme.

I would propose, Sir, to have this matter debated on Friday, October 27, 1995 at 10.00 a.m. in the morning. The matter of whether the debate will be televised is entirely a matter for you, Mr. Speaker, and I leave that to you.

I move that this Bill be now read a first time.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just wanted to clarify something and to assist the Leader of the House. I have not moved any Bill here today. I have

not given notice of any Bill and therefore it would be previous of me to write to anybody or speak to them to raise a concern about a matter of which I have no knowledge.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I only wish to say that in a note to me or should I say in the Order Paper which is dated October 24, 1995 and signed by the Clerk of Parliament, it says at the bottom: "Government may wish to proceed with Order No. 5 in all stages during the sitting." I assume that this is some kind of communication to me from the Leader of the House because the Leader of the House does not communicate with me on matters as to how the conduct of Business in this Chamber should be dealt with. That is not a matter for you, Mr. Speaker. You expect, as have all previous Speakers, that between Members on both sides there is some level of collaboration and discussion relative to Government's Business. Had the Leader of the House made an approach to the Opposition as is in keeping with the tradition of all Parliaments throughout the world and indicated as did last week, the Minister of Agriculture, that this matter was urgent and would be dealt with that way, we may very well have put the matter in a different way or perhaps agreed on Friday as a suitable date for the debate of this matter. This is Government's Business and the Leader of the House is free to set any date for anything subject to the House being adjourned later on that date. I wish to say, Mr. Speaker, that I am thoroughly dissatisfied with the way in which the conduct of parliamentary affairs in this democracy, Barbados, is being exercised. I have been in this House of Assembly for eight years and even when there had been great difficulty between Government and Opposition there must be a basis of common ground between the person who is in charge of the conduct of Government Business and the person on the Opposition benches who is designated as the person responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Opposition. Right now that is in the hands of the Leader of the Opposition. 11.30a.m.

I do not wish to keep back the business of Parliament, and since the Leader of the House seems to have some difficulty in dealing with the Leader of the Opposition on matters which relate to the conduct of business in here, I am going to make a concession and let her deal with somebody else, and in due course we will inform the Government who that person is. But I must say that I do not know of any Parliament in the world where the way in which an Opposition is informed that the Government wants to deal with a matter expeditiously is by way of a sentence written at the bottom of an Order Paper which is communicated to Members of the House a couple of days before the House is to meet. We are not standing for that on this side at all. Either the arrangements are going to demonstrate that this is a modern Parliament and a

Parliament which believes in some kind of tradition, or it is not going to happen. I am not paid as Leader of the House. The Leader of the House must do the job for which she is responsible in this Chamber and she is supposed to do it according to certain traditions and certain standards which are expected. I will make the concession of easing that pressure which seems to be on the Leader of the House by letting her deal with somebody else, because she does not seem to know how to deal with the Leader of the Opposition and I understand why, so I will make that concession, but I am not making any concession today because that arrangement has not yet been made, and therefore I speak on behalf of the parliamentary group.

The second point I wish to make, Mr. Speaker, is that I have written to you in accordance with your instructions to this Chamber and requested that the debate on this particular Bill be televised. This is a very important request. I make the assumption, therefore, that in adjourning the House to Friday the Leader of the House is either saying that she concurs in the view that this debate should be broadcast and that arrangements will be made to broadcast it on Friday, or alternatively, Sir...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. I was perfectly clear. I do not want words put in my mouth. I have said that the matter of broadcast is a matter for Your Honour.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I make the assumption that since it is a matter for you, that the procedure which you set in place, and since the Leader of the House does not communicate with me, even though I copied this letter to her, I am making the assumption.. .

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, it is probably at your office waiting on you.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Let us proceed, please. Orderly, please.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the real point I want to make is that the question as to broadcast of the debate is a matter for you, but I am making the assumption that in suggesting to the House a suitable date, since the television station in Barbados is owned by the Government and the other broadcast media, that the arrangement will be put in place by the Government on Friday for the broadcast of this debate. I assume that one can confidently make that assumption and on that

basis then we will wait until the House is adjourned to the appropriate date, but we will not be dealing with this matter in all three stages at all today, under any circumstances.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we all have before us a supplementary Order Paper. There is nothing unusual about this. As long as there has been a House here we have had Order Papers and Supplementary Order Papers. On the face of the Order Paper it says: "Government may wish to proceed with Order No. 5 in all stages during the sitting." This is a common occurrence. All the years, between 1986 and long before that, we lived with this. When the Members on that side were Members on this side, they would come in here sometimes on the Tuesday itself and tell us in an offhand manner, "We are dealing with this in all stages today, whether you like it or not" So it is nothing new. I have treated the Opposition with the courtesy of a notice that we wish to proceed with this in all of its stages. This notice was given on October 20. I hear the Leader of the Opposition making the point in here, and outside of here, that I have difficulty communicating with him. I do not have to give the Leader of the Opposition any special communication about this. The Leader of the Opposition thinks that he can subvert the Orders of this House. This is the same Leader of the Opposition who put down a Resolution under Private Members' Business...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. That is a reflection really on the Chair.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, I will ask you to withdraw those words, please, about subverting the Orders of the House.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I will use other words. This is the Leader of the Opposition, the same Leader of the Opposition who put down a Resolution in his name under Private Members' Business in this House, to do with kola syrup, and then...

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member, please. Let us abide by the Rules, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: What are the Rules? What Rule am I treading on?

Mr. SPEAKER: Standing Order 28 clearly says that you must not allude to any Bill or Resolution that has been passed in this House. Let us proceed, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Very well. This is the same Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, who put down a Resolution under his name, under Private

Members' Business, in this House and then goes behind the Resolution to try to bring Parliamentary Questions eliciting the same information to this House.

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition and myself sat down with you much earlier in this year, Sir, to sort out how we would proceed on matters to do with broadcast of debates, and other matters as well. I do not feel that it is my job to advise the Leader of the Opposition of how the Government plans to do its business in the House on a general basis. In matters which would require the co-operation of the Opposition, I do so and I do so in writing. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition must learn the Standing Orders. He stood up in here this morning and said he sent me a letter. I have received no letter. I have just come from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs directly here, my desk has no such letter on it and I have dealt with all of the files on my desk today. I have come down here where there is an office, there is no letter. This is like the boy who cried "wolf" over the IMF and other things. Nothing new in that.

The Opposition says that it wants more time and I have offered more time. I would wish to formally give notice now, Sir, that the Government would wish to proceed on Friday, October 27, with the Barbados Tourism Authority Bill in all of its stages.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, this is a very brief contribution I wish to make. Firstly, I would like to remind the Leader of the House that there is more than one Opposition party in this Honourable House. There is more than one Opposition party sent here by the people of Barbados exercising their democratic rights, and I would sincerely hope that in this consultative process you bear that in mind with due and appropriate respect for the wishes of the people of Barbados. Perhaps, Sir, I do not know, the Honourable Leader of the House might have informed me by sending a letter to the office provided for me in this Parliament by the Honourable Leader of the House and the Government. So maybe there is an address in Parliament I don't know about, where there is an office provided. 11.40a.m.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, with your indulgence, the Constitution of Barbados does not recognise minority parties. This...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, the Honourable Member must not mislead this Honourable House. She should speak to the Attorney General, because the Constitution of Barbados does not recognise any political party. None. You are not going to come in here and rewrite the Constitution of Barbados. There is

nowhere in the Constitution of Barbados where majority parties, official parties, minority parties, or any kind of political party, are recognised. The words "political parties" do not appear in the Constitution of Barbados, and I am not going to allow the Honourable Leader of the House to pervert or subvert the Constitution of Barbados by trying to take decisions based on a constitutional position that does not exist

I challenge the Honourable Member to bring a copy of the Constitution in this House and show me where the words "political parties" exists, where the Barbados Labour Party has a constitutional existence in Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, you have made your point. Let us proceed with the business of the House.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, this is a very fundamental point.

Mr. SPEAKER: On what do you rise? Dr.

R. C. HAYNES: I haven't sat yet, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Let us proceed. There is a First Reading Motion before the House, please. Could we proceed? What is the point you want to make?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Sir, the Honourable Member has misled herself continuously.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have made the point already, Sir.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I was interrupted in the middle of a sentence. I am saying that the Constitution of Barbados does not recognise any minority party. It recognises...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, let us proceed.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I have to claim the privilege of freedom of speech in here? It recognises a prime minister, a leader of the Opposition and an attorney general. I am under no obligation...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir, the Honourable Member must read the Constitution of Barbados.

Mr. SPEAKER: What is your point of order, Sir?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Honourable Member is misleading the House on a very fundamental point. The Constitution does not only recognise a prime minister and

an attorney general and a leader of an official Opposition, it also recognises a minister of finance. Go and read the Constitution of Barbados. You are misleading the House saying there are only 3 persons...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I never said that. People try keeping to put words in my mouth because they see people in the Press Gallery.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member for the City, hold it please. Could you finish your point and let us move on.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, what I am saying is that I am under no obligation even to recognise that there is a minority opposition - I can't say party - person in here. But, in the past, Mr. Speaker, I have treated the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central with the courtesy of consultation and he cannot deny it.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Jack in the Box!

In the past Sir, I have treated the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central with the courtesy of consultation in certain matters and he cannot deny that and, whenever in the future, I think that it is incumbent upon me to do so, I will do so, which is more than the Barbados Labour Party when in opposition ever received from the Honourable Member from St. Michael South Central.

Mr. SPEAKER: Okay. Let us proceed with the business at hand, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, I was never at any time Leader of the House so how can you say that I never extended a courtesy when I was in no capacity to do that?

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I will deal with you personally on TV.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please!

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, since at the very shortest possible notice the Government is not in a position to proceed with the matter which it wanted

to proceed with today, namely, the Barbados Tourism Authority Act, the Government at this time is willing to open Private Members' Business to both sides of the House.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, we are always anxious to do Private Members' Business and we have a lot of items and, therefore, if you could be so kind as to let us continue debate on Item #3 under Private Members' Business.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 be suspended for the rest of this day's sitting.

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

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division. 11.50a.m.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Item No. 3 - Resolution urging Government to consider amending the constitution to (1) create a commission on integrity in public life; (2) assign to the public service commission total responsibility for all appointments (including temporary appointments), transfers, promotions and discipline in the public service; and (3) create an office of contractor-general to be responsible for the award of all government contracts for goods and services, subject to general policy directives of the cabinet.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central moved this Resolution on August 8, 1995 and to facilitate debate I seconded the Resolution and was happy to do so, particularly to give the people of St. Michael South Central the opportunity of having their representative put before this House issues that are of concern to him.

St. Michael South Central has always been a very strong and devoted supporter of the policies of the Democratic Labour Party in their purest form, and sometimes in their watered down version, if you want to put it that way, or even now in a stronger version. So we accept that the opportunity should be given to the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central to have issues of this sort put before the House and we were very happy to assist in that process. I hope in the winding up he would be able to acknowledge our support for his initiative to have these matters discussed.

Now, I am not saying, Sir, that we are going to support the features of this Resolution. It would be premature for us at this stage to make any definitive position on it. But we agree as a political party that in a modern democracy as times change, as the way of doing things changes, as new ideas come on to the scene, and as the structure of Government has to accommodate new thinking, that it is very important for issues relating to the Constitution of Barbados to be reviewed from time to time.

The Honourable Attorney General has indicated that he will shortly, and I hope he means very shortly, be engaging his party and those who will be part of that arrangement in the process of reviewing the Constitution of Barbados and we would be very happy to receive and examine the report when that particular report is forthcoming.

In the Democratic Labour Party, Mr. Speaker, we have persons with wide-ranging talents in relation to the Constitution of Barbados, the Laws of Barbados and the political system. We are a political party 40 years old which has made an outstanding contribution to this country and we will be carrying out our own analysis over time on the Constitution of Barbados and in either specific areas or in relation to specific matters we will develop our own view points or, alternatively, at an appropriate time we may wish to make a broad statement about the way in which we feel the Constitution should be amended to reflect modern Barbadian democracy.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the question of the creation of a Commission on Integrity in Public Life is something that has had a long and testy history in this Parliament and I am not about to get into that particular exercise. The Honourable Member for St Michael South Central has expressed very strong views in relation to this matter and we wish to say that there have been many Commissions of Enquiry set up by the Government of Barbados since September 6, 1994, and they can threaten to set up more, or set up as many more as they wish. On this side we can defend the actions which we took either as individual Ministers or as a Government in defence and in furtherance of the interest of the people of Barbados so we have no problem with any Government.

We have had many threats and many promises, some forthcoming, some badly set up, some disorganised, some doing things they should not do but we are not worried by that. We believe that the Government should feel free to set up as many commissions of enquiry to investigate us. I understand they may be setting up one to investigate some of their own, various areas, the Drug Service, Caribbean Airways, a whole set of other investigations and they can feel free to do it.

Mr. Speaker, commissions of enquiry are not by themselves going to clean up public life in Barbados. It is necessary for political parties in the process of candidate selection, in the process of articulating their views to the public, and in the process of obtaining a mandate to put in place within the party structure mechanisms which can monitor and review the performance of persons who are put forward as their representatives and their candidates. So we have no problem with the concept of commissions of enquiry.

We believe that the people's business need, however, to be more focussed on the other critical issues that affect Barbadians and that so far of the 10 commissions which have been set up by the Barbados Labour Party Administration at no time has any of those Commissions of Enquiry been able to point any accusing finger at any member of the Democratic Labour Party Administration.

You had a commission, Mr. Speaker, that was established already to enquire into what the Prime Minister alleged were shady dealings by the Minister of Finance and the other Members of the Cabinet relative to casino Gambling and that Commission which was paid a princely sum of, I think, \$300 000 out of the Consolidated Fund headed by a judge, made a definitive statement as to what the previous administration had done in relation to casino gambling and it did not square in any way with what the then Prime Minister had made his allegations against the Democratic Labour Party.

In other words, lies were told by various people in Barbados all over the place seeking to link the Democratic Labour Party to acts of corruption, lack of integrity by members of its Cabinet and those allegations were not able to stand up to the scrutiny of their own enquirers, including retired judges and other very eminent Barbadians, who looked at the facts and said the Government went no further than establishing a committee of the Foreign Exchange Committee.

Mr. Speaker, we have no fear about the establishment of commissions. We have no fear about any investigations which are conducted according to law and therefore the Government should feel that it can take any course in that regard. The Democratic Labour Party stands on the side of integrity and honesty in public life.

Mr. Speaker, the second limb of the Resolution deals with the Public Service Commission. The Resolution of the Honourable Member speaks of assigning to the Public Service Commission total responsibility for all appointments, including temporary appointments, transfers, promotions and discipline in the Public Service. This is a matter which, again, when the Constitutional Committee is

meeting and reviewing those aspects of the Constitution which may need to be looked at again, changed or modified, this is something that could be considered by that Committee at the appropriate time.

Mr. Speaker, during our term of office the Democratic Labour Party adopted a very sound policy in relation to appointments, transfers, promotions and discipline in the Public Service. Once again we do not believe that this particular Resolution is aimed at the Democratic Labour Party. In fact, we know it is not aimed at our tenure. It is aimed precisely at the kinds of things that are happening in the Public Service today with public officers being treated with scant regard by this administration with levels of victimisation rising beyond what had ever been seen even in the darkest days of the Barbados Labour Party. 12.00 noon

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Honourable Member is accusing the administration of victimisation in the public service. The Prime Minister is the Minister responsible for the Public Service. That is an accusation or a reflection of the Minister responsible for the Public Service. I ask you to rule whether he is entitled to do that without some degree of particularity.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Member you have heard the Member for Christ Church South and he seems to be inferring that you are imputing some kind of improper motives to the Minister responsible for ...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I am not trying to do that, Sir. Perhaps what the Honourable Member is calling for is evidence. Maybe he does not read the newspaper or walk around on the street.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. The Honourable Member...

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I was not imputing improper motives to the Prime Minister and if there is any such suggestion I will in that case ...

Mr. SPEAKER: I rule that you withdraw the word "victimisation".

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Well, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will withdraw the word "victimisation" if it is assumed that it related to the Prime Minister but I am going to state as a fact...

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have withdrawn it. I am stating as a fact, that in relation to the public service in Barbados today, Sir, that there is victimisation. There is victimisation in the public service today and nobody can get up on that side to challenge that allegation. No matter how they try to make people re-word it or no matter how they try to ascribe blame in the absence of others, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am saying there is victimisation in the public service and that the level of victimisation in the public service in Barbados today ...

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Honourable Member is virtually repeating what Your Honour cautioned him about. He is insisting on repeating it, that there is victimisation in the public service.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think you understand what I am saying, Sir, and I made it very clear that the level of victimisation which is being witnessed in the public service today goes far beyond levels which have existed under previous administrations to which I did not belong.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. As soon as you do that... You stated there is victimisation, full stop. Let us proceed along that line.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, if there is anyway that mechanisms can be put in place to insulate public officers from capricious acts by anybody or victimisation by anybody then the Democratic Labour Party will support any of those kinds of amendments to the Constitution which in effect enhance the quality of the public service.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, what you have in Barbados today is an impression being conveyed by the Government that the public service is a cesspool of acting appointments and I am quoting almost verbatim from comments that have been made, that the situation which Government came and found was totally disgraceful.

Now, Mr. Speaker, Sir, when comments were made about persons acting at certain levels no attempt was made to determine whether those persons are in fact appointed to the public service and whether by virtue of those appointments they do not enjoy a level of security in their offices which people in the private sector do not enjoy. What public officers need is insulation from the potential by political operatives to victimise them and to emasculate them in the conduct of their public duties and the Democratic Labour Party is going to be watching out very carefully, Mr. Speaker, we are going to be paying very careful attention to the way in which public officers in

Barbados are being treated since September 6, 1994. Therefore if the Government wishes any cooperation from us in relation to its amendment of the Constitution in matters of this sort it must be on the basis that public officers are going to be insulated from that kind of interference in their public duties.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, regarding the matter of the creation of the office of Contractor General, this suggestion arose out of a debate in here relative to decisions which the previous administration took on the allocation of contracts in a Government Department

I wish to say, Mr. Speaker, Sir, that I can defend and any other Minister in the Cabinet can defend any decision which was taken by us in relation to the award of contracts and I see no need for any Contractor General to oversee anything. The simplest solution is that where the Minister of Finance overturns the decision of a Tenders Committee that he can lay in this Parliament the directives which he has given in relation to that matter and the entire Parliament can scrutinize the action of the Minister.

I would have been very happy if we had had the opportunity when we made certain decisions in relation to the award of contracts if we could have made that information immediately available by way of laying it in this Chamber so that the public of Barbados, rather than being treated to a diet of rumours and suggestions of scandal and corruption would know up front that the Minister of Finance and the Cabinet of Barbados had made a decision to allocate contracts in this way for this reason and that would be the answer to the concerns which are being raised.

A Contractor General is not going to solve that problem. I know it would not have solved it in Jamaica, it would not solve it anywhere in the world. What will solve it is greater scrutiny by Parliament of the actions of Ministers of Government. The allegations which were made against the Democratic Labour Party are not being made by any wandering souls or any journalist who has turned up information. Information is being put in the hands of newspaper journalists by persons who have access to that information so that the battle is not between the Fourth Estate and politicians, it is politicians when they come to office who make skewed information available to the Press to give the impression that their predecessors in office have been corrupt and dishonest. The best way to solve that problem, Mr. Speaker, Sir, is to bring the matter in here from the beginning so that when a Minister of Finance makes a decision to vary the award of a contract, Parliament immediately has knowledge of that decision and if any Member wants to discuss it he can bring a Private Members' Notice to do that because we can defend any

decision that has been made in that regard. To improve public administration, Sir, does not require bringing in an additional tier of supervision or management.

There is no public officer in Barbados to the best of my knowledge in recent times who has made any allegation which has had merit against any politician which has been the basis of a prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act or any other Act. The allegations are made by politicians against politicians and most of the sensible politicians I assume are already in this Chamber. So the answer is...I said most of them are presently in this Chamber. The ones I refer to are not in here, Sir. I mean in the Chamber today. I make no allegations in that regard. Therefore, the answer to that is let those decisions be laid. So for example if you make a decision in relation to the award of contracts for the supply of items to the National Assistance Board to certain companies which have links, then lay that information in here. Let us scrutinize it. If any Minister intervenes in the award of a contract, then he should have the right to come to Parliament and say look, I believe that "X" should be awarded this contract for these reasons. Then you would not need any Contractor General unless the person is corrupt. This view of mine extends to other areas even though I do not have 100 per cent on that point. But where Ministers give directives to a Board, those directives I assume can be defended or supposed to be sound and, therefore, there is absolutely no reason why Parliament should not have scrutiny of those directives, absolutely no reason whatsoever. You would not need the Contractor General in that regard. 12.10 p.m.

So that we are not in support of the concept of the Contractor General. We are in support of a process which brings Parliament more into the process of accountability so that instead of doing trivia...sorry, Sir, we do not do trivia. Instead of having an Order Paper which when you take out one item, you do not have anything else to debate; instead of having a scenario like that, Mr. Speaker, you can have Parliament involved in other things and we can be scrutinizing a whole range of other areas of Government activity today where Ministers may have laid directives and Members of Parliament could be involved in discussing those directives.

The object, Mr. Speaker, of any decisions by the Democratic Labour Party to support any amendment to the Constitution of Barbados must bring Parliament to the heart of public life in this country. Parliamentarians are the elected representatives of the people and one assumes that they keep in touch and know the pulse of their constituents and the opportunity therefore should be given for more active participation by Parliament in the process of public administration in this country.

So that, Mr. Speaker, with regard to the totality of this Resolution, we feel that it has thrown up some good ideas for public debate and we are very happy for the opportunity to discuss them. Members have an opportunity during the course of this debate to deal with each of the areas which the Resolution raises one by one and the Government has the opportunity to respond to them. Therefore, Sir, I am very happy to second this Resolution and will now give other Members an opportunity and when we have heard the fullness of the debate we will then make a decision as to the nature of our support or lack thereof for this particular Resolution. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Any other contributions on this Private Members' Business? Could someone move then that we suspend?

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Do you want me to move, Sir? Well, Mr. Speaker, Sir, since nobody else wishes to speak, I beg to move that further consideration...

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. I have put it to the floor. Nobody responded. Please. Is someone else willing to make a contribution at this point please?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, this is my Resolution. Do you want to speak on it? No, no, I just see a vacuum here.

Mr. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Thomas.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I saw the Resolution as amended. I think the original Resolution was amended. It is now different from the first one that was introduced. It deals with three things, Mr. Speaker:

- (1) Commission on integrity in public life,
- (2) Method of dealing with Public Service appointments,
- (3) Office of Contractor General. The Resolution that I have in relation to the Contractor General said that he should be responsible for the award of all Government contracts of goods and services subject to general policy directives of the Cabinet. That is the one I have.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: That Resolution was amended.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Government has made it clear a long time ago in this calendar year that it desires to establish a Constitution

Review body, whether called a commission or whatever...in due course that will be done...but a body that will examine after 30 years of independence those areas of the Constitution that appear to be in need of amendment and revision subject to full consultation with the public of Barbados. I want to make that clear, Sir. It is not intended that Government will repair some report suggesting amendments to the Constitution and submit it to the Opposition for their comments. Not at all, Sir. We envisage that the Constitutional Review body will go around the country and take opinions in writing and orally from a wide cross-section from the public, have such information as would subsequently determine the mass of recommendations that are desirable and that represents the majority points of view.

I fully expect and indeed it would be desirable that matters concerning the appointment of public officers, the appointment of judges, questions of the incorporation of Conventions in the Constitution and making them a positive law, the power of the Prime Minister, the procedure for dissolving Parliament in circumstances such as we had last year. All of these kinds of matters will be ventilated, discussed, argued, and ultimately a position will be put.

I am going to deal with three points of this Resolution and give a little position on each one. The matter of a Commission on Integrity in public life. I think the Leader of the Opposition said that this matter of integrity in public life has been banned about for many years perhaps going back as far as 1979 and at the moment we do not have any forum that determines how persons in public life should function. I would only wish to say that those Honourable Members who are members of the Standing Orders Committee will note that in the draft new Standing Orders that are being proposed there is provision for a declaration of Members' interest in the Standing Orders that are being proposed. 12.20 p.m.

I would also wish to say that I recently attended a Commonwealth Law Ministers' Conference for Small States in Namibia, and one of the things we did there was to settle a draft code of conduct for persons in public life. What I will do is to bring the document to the House and lay it or circulate it. It is very short, about five or six pages, but we agreed on a number of principles. I will try and remember to bring that next week or send it to the Clerk and let him send it out with the Papers for next week.

England has just gone through an exercise, represented through the Nolan Report, and all over the Commonwealth there is this search on for the establishment of a set of principles that would help to guide our conduct

as public officials and I do not see any reason in principle why we in Barbados should not join the debate and discuss this matter. It is something that is worthy of discussion. What we ultimately decide will depend on the synthesis of view that is distilled from the several discussions, but I think it is healthy to debate what are the core elements that we would want to see in a code, and so I had no problem in Namibia in supporting and having a hand in the drafting of the code that we ultimately came up with.

Again, Mr. Speaker, that is a matter that can be referred to the Constitution Review body who will determine whether there should be a code set out in the Constitution or whether there should be a separate enactment of legislation specifically dealing with the matter. Those are items better discussed by a body that is removed from the immediate milieu that those of us who are in active politics find ourselves in.

The second matter, Mr. Speaker, relates to the question of appointments. In the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party we have made it clear that we would wish to see reform of the Public Service. It is intended to bring a new Public Service Act and to bring new General Orders to provide for the operation of the Act. In addition to that, we have said that we would wish to see the chairmanship of the Public Service Commission put on a full-time basis rather than have a part-time Chairman. I do not believe that in 1995, having regard to the size and the complexity of the Civil Service, that an adequately satisfactory job can be done by a part-time person. I feel that there should be some Executive Chairman of the Commission who would have the authority to deal with certain matters in the name of the Commission. The way the system functions now, and has always functioned, is a great burden for us to carry. I have known a situation where for four months one was trying to have a half-day Maid appointed to clean a Government office, and for four months you could not get a half-day Maid appointed. Could somebody bring me from private practice and ask me to come into a situation like that to run this department and that department and for four months you cannot get a half-day Maid?

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: No, it went through CPO and the Ministry and all of that and up to now you do not know, you do not have a person. It cannot be that in 1995 a country whose development is recognised internationally, a country whose standard is respected internationally, can still function with a bureaucracy that is really rooted in the techniques and the procedures of 1940. It is impossible to work. We have therefore to have a completely new approach to public sector matters, Mr. Speaker, and that includes the question of appointments.

I am not taking any position in this. There are two views and I have put the two views, because nobody has put them yet. One view says that it is wrong to give a Minister of Establishments power to be responsible for temporary appointments. That was done in 1974 in the Constitution amendments that were introduced by the then Honourable Mr. Errol Barrow. He was of the view, and successive Governments and Prime Ministers have followed it, that one needed a mechanism for speed to ensure that where there was a vacancy the vacancy could be filled quickly. If it has been abused, I am not in a position to comment on that, I have never been responsible for Establishment matters, but the fact is that it is, let us face it, a powerful tool in the hands of the Minister responsible for Establishments.

The other view holds that all appointments, temporary or permanent, should be through Service Commissions. I know that in today's situation it would be impossible to get anybody appointed to a temporary post if they had to go through the Public Service Commission with the kind of systems and structures. They are using old-time typewriters with ribbons. I hear they are being computerised and so, and I am not reflecting on anybody, they have just been slow to come into the 20th century.

Mr. Speaker, the matter of the appointment of officers in the Public Service is a matter which is grounded in the Constitution itself, and the amendments that were made in 1974, again and I would say assuredly, that matter is one that will be referred to the Constitution Review Commission and I prefer to wait for their recommendations, having taken into account a wide cross-section of opinion.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, the office of Contractor General. The present system for the award of contracts, as I pointed out in the kola syrup debate, is written in the Financial Rules made under the Financial Administration and Audit Act. The Privy Council last year, November, in *Cow Williams v Don Blackman* explained in their words that Barbados has: "an elaborate code for the award of contracts." That is Lord Bridge and the others in the Privy Council. They described our procedure under the Financial Rules for the award of contracts as an elaborate code. However, none of us will deny that there are weaknesses in that elaborate code, that the code which was made in 1971 is now outdated, having regard to contemporary prices, the march of inflation and so on, so that when you say now that work must go out for tender if it is above \$25 000, we are not really being realistic. Those ceilings have to be increased in 1995. For the time being, we are hamstrung by them. We are doubly wracked and have to follow the straight and narrow. That is the law; but what we are saying is that the law ought to allow the ceiling of

\$25 000 to go somewhere like a \$100 000 or \$75 000 which would be more meaningful than the present \$25 000. You cannot really do any proper work for \$25 000 in Barbados if you are repairing a police station or whatever. I am not going to get into that in case I give away anything. 12.30 p.m.

The procedure is not necessarily at fault because let me just remind Honourable Members and, in particular, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central, where a government contract is to be awarded the awarding body is the Tenders Committee. That Tenders Committee is comprised exclusively, totally, wholly of public officers, not a politician.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It comprises the Chief Supply Officer, the Solicitor General and a whole set of people, not a politician. No politician has a say in the award of contract. The procedure is that the Tenders Committee will evaluate the tender and make recommendation to the Head of the Department who is the Permanent Secretary, not the Minister, and if the Head of the Department does not approve, the matter is referred to what we now accept is the Minister of Finance or ultimately to the Cabinet.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central did not give, as far as I recall his speech, any examples of how the present system is inefficient. Any system, don't care how tight you put it, any system can be abused if persons operating the system don't have the necessary integrity. When the Honourable Member began his speech, he was asking for a contractor general who would award these contracts. That is now changed because those countries which have a contractor general do not allow the award of the contracts to be the province of the contractor general.

Belize has a contractor general, Jamaica has a contractor general, but they are not the ones who award the contracts. They are the ones who, as the Resolution now says, monitor. If a contract has been awarded and there is dissatisfaction, allegations of bribery, corruption and so on, the contractor general then comes in and he has the full weight of the law behind him to carry out an investigation.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Jamaica and Belize are the same. Belize is 1993.

I don't know to what extent the evidence in Barbados is overwhelming that there has been such a level of

dissatisfaction with the award of contracts that we need to establish this office almost like an ombudsman, separately staffed for a man to investigate awards. If Barbados had a history of unsavoury contractual awards, almost ongoing dissatisfaction with the current method, perhaps the establishment of the office could be justified. But because on the odd occasion something goes wrong, somebody succumbs to temptation and a matter is exposed, because of that kind of desultory situation, I have to question the need for a large mechanism to be able to respond to a situation which is rather the exception than the rule.

In other words, I am saying if my friend has compelling evidence that over the last, let us say, 15 years, there have been so many contracts awarded and out of that number there have been complaints about a proportion amounting to better than half and allegations of corruption, then I believe he would be beginning to make a case for the establishment of an office that would investigate.

In absence of that kind of compelling evidence, I think we ought to look carefully at the need to establish an office of Contractor General and perhaps look for another mechanism, amend the rules as they need to be amended, having regard to experience, the current rules, the supply rules. But I am not in a position to say No to the Contractor General or Yes to the Contractor General. I think that the debate must be ongoing and I welcome the initiative of the Honourable Member, because it gives us a chance to discuss this. I think again this is a matter that should be referred to the Constitution Review body.

Another thing. Do we need a contractor general or don't we need to rewrite the terms of reference of the Ombudsman? He is there to deal with maladministration. If there is some impropriety in the contractual award, that is tantamount to maladministration, and we should amend the Act to give him that pull. To set up this new fellow who is going to do... I don't think the case is strong enough. As I said, I don't mind the debate as an academic exercise, but I am not persuaded and next year I will have been in this House 20 years. February next year. I cannot recall, perhaps more than 5 or 6 allegations of impropriety in those years so that I think that by and large the system functions well. I think the system functions well because it has been insulated from the possibility of becoming contaminated by political influence and it is a system that operates on the basis of the decisions of persons who should not have any particular interest to serve or the public officers who are on the body. 12.40 p.m.

If I may summarize my position, Sir, the debate on integrity in public life is welcome. So something will have to come, in what form I cannot from this distance say. It

will have to come as a result of the wide ventilation of views and the recommendations of the Constitution Review Body having regard to what is happening in other parts of the Commonwealth.

I expect that next year April in Malaysia at the big meeting of the Commonwealth Law Ministers that the Draft Code will be accepted by the whole of the Commonwealth. We did the first draft but I expect that that will happen there. When I show Honourable Members the Draft Code - and I will make sure, since we are meeting on Friday that I bring it down on Friday - Members will see that there are basic principles which do not put us in any difficulty at all and I think that we can easily subscribe to them.

I would wish to wind up my speech, Mr. Speaker, by saying that all of the matters that the House is called upon to give consideration to, the Resolution asks that we give consideration to amending the Constitution to do these 3 things, (1) create a Commission on Integrity, (2) Provide for appointments, transfers, and so on to be vested in the Public Service Commission, and (3) to create the office of Contractor General. All of these, as the Resolution expressly implies - it implies amendments to the Constitution.

I am sure the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would not wish us purely as a group in here to amend the Constitution in these 3 material particulars to the exclusion of other areas which may require amendment and that he would much prefer if these 3 matters, together with the others that the public and other people have been talking about are referred to the Constitutional Review Body for their recommendations.

I am urging him, Sir, when the time comes, to appear before the Body, make an oral presentation or send in a written memorandum of his views because there is going to be ample scope for that I would be happy to discuss with him some of the other things that would have to be done in relation to these with a view to amending the Constitution. We do not have to amend the Constitution. We have to amend certain of the existing Laws and so on. But the Financial Administration and Audit Act, and the Rules, are being revised even as I stand here speaking today, Sir. In a matter of months we shall have the amendments to the Financial Administration and Audit Act and the Financial Rules.

Certainly, Sir, the matter of public sector reform is an ongoing thing that even this weekend, I believe, certain of the Permanent Secretaries, or most of them, are going to be meeting, and then next Monday morning the Cabinet is going to be meeting, and we are looking at the ways in which we can improve relationships.

I would question the allegations by the Honourable Member for St. John about victimisation. It is true when you are in Government a lot of people do not tell you certain things. They tell you things they want you to hear and think you would like to hear. I have a fairly efficient flock of ground doves, friends of mine, people known to me, all about this country who operate at that level and can let me know what is happening and I have not been picking up any allegations of victimisation.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I do not know about this victimisation talk. I do not know if they are speaking about the fact that the Manager of Caribbean Airways was dismissed very summarily and had to earn his money in court by pursuing an action against Caribbean Airways. I do not know which Government was in power when the former Manager of Caribbean Airways got sent home. I do not know which Government was in power when with 4 days' notice Patrick Hinds was sent through the door. I do not know which Government was in power. I know it was not this.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member may be misleading the House. The preamble to his statement would give an impression of what may be articulated fact. I happen to be the Minister of Tourism at the time. Patrick Hinds...

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Let us proceed.

Mr. B. M. TATTT: Patrick Hinds' contract came to an end

Mr. SPEAKER: Your point has been made, please.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. The Rules say that you cannot discuss matters that are *sub judice*.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Thanks. Let us proceed, please. The Honourable Member for St Thomas, please. The line you are going could you make your point and let us get on with the debate.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, just let me first of all apologise because I was not aware that that particular matter was still before the court. I thought it had been dealt with. I understand it is on appeal, Sir, so I will not pursue it. I was merely responding to the charges from the other side about victimisation.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Sir. The Standing Orders of this House are persistently misinterpreted by people who should know better. That provision of the Standing Orders does not relate to civil matters. It relates only in the United Kingdom to matters of a criminal nature and matters that should not be referred to in a manner which would prejudice matters before the court. There is no absolute rule to say that a matter before the courts cannot be addressed in this Parliament, neither under our Standing Orders nor the Standing Orders of the United Kingdom.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Before you speak on the point of order, I would just like to point out Standing Order No. 28 (3), which is very clear. It says:-

"Reference may not be made to any matter on which a judicial decision is pending, in such a way as might in the opinion of the Chair prejudice the interests of parties thereto."

Let us proceed, please.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am not dealing with that, Sir. I was referring to the allegations that were interlarded in the speech of the Honourable Member for St. John about victimisation. I have a duty to respond, Sir, given the facts. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Government has not abolished anybody's job in the Prime Minister's office nor have we sent home any Chief Executive of the Child Care Board, nothing like. Who sent home the Chief Executive of the Child Care Board and from the National Assistance Board? But the former Prime Minister, the late Mr. Barrow, he even so amended the law as to get rid of a person who ultimately turned out to be his chief cook and bottle washer and at one time a Secretary of the Democratic Labour Party. 12.50 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please, please. Honourable Member for St. John your point has been made. The Honourable Member please, could you wind up? Your time has expired.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I will wind up, Sir. I will give you another list on Friday, instalment number two.

Mr. SPEAKER: You have another list you said? Thanks. Your point has been made.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, there are a few comments that I would want to make on this Resolution

even though I have to say up front that I do not support the call for the appointment of a Contractor General for the monitoring of the award and implementation of contracts *et cetera*.

Sir, I believe that in 1995 and as we project into the twenty-first century that the monitoring that is suggested in this should be in fact a public monitoring. We tried on an experimental basis to have contracts that were tendered for the water metres at the Water Works to be opened in public. I think that exercise was one that the public respected. Those persons who attended and who had indicated an interest they were able to witness the opening of those tenders and I do not think that there was any dispute having to satisfy the technical evaluation of the tender which was to be processed and the financial evaluation which was the second process.

There are a number of different reasons why you would want to award a tender to a particular person and I think that respective Governments should retain the power to determine through their own policy who is awarded this particular contract or that particular contract. I think that is proper and in order for Government to retain that right.

The Honourable Member for St. John made the point that if they feel so strong on a particular policy matter or on an award that they should say openly and honestly with the public, "this is the reason why we feel we should go down this particular road". I think the time has come, Sir, that we should move towards having open public viewing of the tender process in this country.

We have recently had a situation where at one of the leading secondary schools in Barbados where the students themselves protested the canteen contract because they said that they were more than satisfied with the service that was being provided by the existing caterers and yet despite the protestation of the students they still imposed on the school a new contract which today is suffering serious financial losses because the students refuse to support the new contractors.

I think, Sir, that the widest possible consultation will serve to alleviate all of the doubts, all of the innuendoes, all of the crack shots that they have at politicians. I think that we have to move out of the realm of doubt and suspicion and we can achieve that by having an open viewing of the tenders. There can be no dispute. I support the call for accountability. I believe it is right and proper.

There is another consideration that we must not lose sight of. There is a problem and I will give you an

example why it is necessary to be very open in these matters. At the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing, there is the perennial problem of awarding a contract to one particular company for a particular type of material. Many times the situation may arise that because that person has been awarded a contract they may in fact run out of that particular material and the whole process is held up because there is now no other arrangement in place to purchase any other material from any other source because the contract was awarded to a particular business place. What we did in the Ministry was to set up a system which was very fair. We allowed opened tenders and we had a scaling of skipping to the next highest bid if Mr. A did not have the material which was awarded and there was an automatic process up the scale going higher up the ladder but at no time seeking to disadvantage the Treasury by awarding just simply to a friend or to a person who is giving the highest bid. On all occasions the Government Treasury must be protected in terms of giving the best deal for the country. I think this will go a long way to alleviate a lot of doubt and a lot of the cross talk, a lot of the political invective that from time to time comes to it.

I support the call by the Honourable Member for St. John where he stated clearly that we as political directors, must be free to say whom we want to be granted a particular contract but we must be able to take our blows in the public if our decisions are not well received. I think that is fair and that will go a long way in alleviating this problem and in that regard I would find difficulty in supporting the call for a Contractor General. I believe that the Contractor General should be the people of Barbados. Everybody in Barbados should be free to go and witness the opening of any tender.

There is one other concern, Mr. Speaker, and it has to do with the call for Public Service Commission responsibility for all transfers for most civil servants. Sir, I think that to date there are several complaints coming from the public that they register with the Public Service Commission for jobs, they present their curriculum vitae in good faith and yet the system is so blocked that you simply register and it is very difficult to get a call. Somebody has to put in a word for you and this person has to know somebody in this place. You have to know the next body in the next place. Some people go home and some others come on and it is a whole confused network. It is a system to my mind, Sir, not really producing the confidence level in the public domain that we should have. There are many of my constituents from time to time who become very frustrated. They will tell you that they have registered with the Public Service Commission, yet they have never received a call. They have had training and they are qualified in this and that area and the next area and yet they still cannot get a call. 1.00 p.m.

There are several people working in the Government Service who have been acting in Established posts for 10, 20 and more years who have never been appointed. These are things that the Public Service Commission should note and make sure that we do not have people acting in these Established posts for such a long period. There are people at the Ministry of Public Works who have been acting for some 20 or 25 years. It is ridiculous and it does not augur well for this country, because persons are working in a tensed environment where they do not know if they will go home tomorrow because they are not appointed. If we are talking about productivity as we go into the 21st century, there must be a degree of comfort that must be given to persons. I applaud the Government for having brought the legislation last week to Parliament and I really hope that it can seriously be implemented.

Mr. Speaker, they are the few comments that I have made. I respect the fact that the Resolution was brought. I think the Honourable Member means well when he brought the Resolution to Parliament but I am not so sure that it will serve the purpose. I think the call to send it to the Constitution Review is the right call and I think all of us should be able to input our views as to how we feel about it at the appropriate time. Thank you.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am planning to adjourn not to suspend.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I move that further consideration...anybody can move that further consideration be postponed.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Because other people were speaking. Other people wanted to speak. I will just adjourn the House.

Mr. SPEAKER: Just move the Resolution. Let him move it. Move the Resolution. Go ahead.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I move that further consideration be postponed.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: I second that, Sir.

The question that further consideration on this Resolution be postponed until a later date was put and resolved in the affirmative without division.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be adjourned until Friday, October 27...

Mr. SPEAKER: One minute please. Could we before the Adjournment is taken revert to Members' Questions please? The Honourable Member for St. John.

QUESTION TIME

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Question No. 17 to ask of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs:

1. Will the Minister state the date on which the Barbados Development Bank will be closed?
2. What proposals, if any, Government has for the provision of development assistance and financing for entrepreneurs and when these proposals will take effect?
3. Will the Minister state the proposed disposition of the staff of the Barbados Development Bank after its closure?

Question 18 to ask of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs:

1. Will the Minister state the capital projects undertaken in this fiscal year to the end of September 1995 by each Ministry and/or Department?
2. Will the Minister state the total amount spent for capital projects up to the end of September 1995?
3. Will the Minister state any new capital projects to be undertaken during the remainder of the current fiscal year?

Question 19 to ask of the Minister of Finance and Economic Affairs:

1. Will the Minister give full details of any medium-term economic programme devised by the Ministry and/or the Central Bank for international financial institutions and state the institutions to which the programme was submitted and the specific responses received?
2. Will the Minister include in those details for each year of the programme projections for growth rate, employment target, fiscal deficit, capital budget, current expenditure including the wage bill, amortization of loan, foreign and domestic borrowing requirements, the net domestic assets, the net foreign assets, public investment programme project of over \$250 000, annual inflation rate and financing for the University of the West Indies?

3. Will the Minister also identify any underlying public sector reform in which the medium-term economic programme is designed?

Question No. 20 to ask of the Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing:

1. Will the Minister state why the Transport Board bus service for Sargeant Street, St. John has been extended to Three Houses, St. Philip with the result that the service to persons on the Sargeant Street route has been considerably reduced with consequential hardship to them especially because the buses are often full after leaving Three Houses and before reaching Sargeant Street?

Question No. 21 to ask of the Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing:

1. Is the Minister aware that the Government in 1989 decided to give the disused public bath at Sargeant Street, St. John to community groups for community purposes and that contrary to that decision that bath is being put up for sale by public tender?
2. Will the Minister state whether the decision of 1989 has been revoked and if so the reasons for the revocation and whether alternative provision will be made for the community, groups?

Question No. 22 to ask of the Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing:

1. Will the Minister state what steps, if any, Government proposes to take to alleviate the plight of residents who use the road leading to the eastern most part of the Kendal Tenantry, St. John which is impassable on foot because of pools of water along the mud track where the water also breeds mosquito larvae thereby creating a health hazard?

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that this House be adjourned to Friday, October 27, 1995 at 10 o'clock in the morning.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Do you mean that I have to consult you on time now?

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, speaking on the adjournment, I do not know what is the...well, you can get up and walk out. Speaking on the adjournment, Mr.

Speaker, I do not understand what is being imported into the mores of the Honourable House of Assembly. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West and some other Honourable Members have been in here for a long time and we have had contentious situations, but there are certain things that are necessary. The Honourable Member just got up and almost contentiously said, "at 10 o'clock". Now it is true that the Government has a majority and that the Leader of the House can fix the time to suit herself and that the others will have to come.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Well, you can have the St. Joseph Hospital debate again. I am trying to speak to you, Sir, but I have a difficulty every time I hear the Honourable Member's voice. The Honourable Member got up and said 10 o'clock. We have a House of Assembly. We used to meet at 12 o'clock. Then we started meeting at 11.00 a.m. The Honourable Member could at least consult. She does not have to look up in the Leader of the Opposition's face if she does not wish to. She could at least indicate. 1.10 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: She is cantankerous, she cannot help it, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: You will have to withdraw those words.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: That she is cantankerous?

Mr. SPEAKER: Yes.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Speaker, I will obey your instructions, I withdraw the remarks, but in my head I know what I know.

Mr. SPEAKER: Sometimes when you know it in your head you cannot always say it.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Sir, you and I understand there is a thing called ellipsis. When the House was led by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas, there was a certain courtesy which was extended and no one could criticise, even if one did not agree. The Honourable Member could easily have said: "We are thinking of meeting at 10 o'clock." We know we will have to come at 10.00 if we want to participate, we are fully aware of that, but the Honourable Member must understand that by having the responsibility as Leader of the House that she gets a special responsibility. I am sure that if Philip Greaves was here he would say that that is so.

Mr. SPEAKER: Please! Okay! Honourable Members, please.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: All I am saying, Mr. Speaker, I am appealing to Your Honour. I hope that you will bring to the attention of the Leader of the House the discomfiture of some Members of a certain creeping attitudinal relationship between what she does and how we feel about the way this House is run.

Mr. SPEAKER: Seconder, please?

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

The question that the House be now adjourned until Friday, October 27, 1995 at 10.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly. 1.12 p.m.

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JOHN, Hon. Sir Harold (Christ Church South)
SANDIFORD, Rt. Hon. L. E. (St. Michael South)
SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. Thomas) TAITT, Mr.
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(St John) TUDOR, Mr. J. O. (St. Michael East)