
THE House of Assembly Debates

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Friday, February 2, 1996

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 10.20 a.m. on **Friday**, February 2, 19%.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed., (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. **MARSHALL**, (Deputy Speaker)
Mr. B. M. **TAITT**, B.A., (Hons.) M.P.A., **LL.B.**
(Hons.)
Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., **LL.M.** (Attorney
General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, **Q.C.**, U.B.
Mr. L. R. TULL, **Q.C.**, M.A.
Hon. ~~Miss~~ B. A. MILLER, (Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tourism and International
Transport) (Leader of the House)
Mr. J. O. TUDOR, J.P.
Hon. G. W. PAYNE, (Minister of Public Works,
Transport and Housing)
Hon. R. C. EASTMOND, J.P., **B.A.(Hons.)**, Dip.
Ed., **LL.B.** (Hons.), LEC (Minister of Agriculture and Rural
Development)
Mr. D. CARTER
Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**, B.A., **LL.B.**, (Minister of
Labour, Community Development and Sports)
Mr. G. A. CLARKE, **B.Sc.**, Dip. Ed., (Parliamentary
Secretary, Ministry of Public Works, Transport and
Housing)
Mr. J. M. **EDGHILL**
Mr. F. J. STUART, B.A., **LL.M.**
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,
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)

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

Prayers were *taken* by His Honour *the* Speaker.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: The Minutes of Tuesday, January
30, 19%.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I **beg** to
move that the Minutes of proceedings of the Honourable
the House of Assembly for its meeting of Tuesday, January
30, 19% which Minutes have been circulated be taken as
read.

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

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg the
pardon of the House. I do not think that the Minutes of
January 30 have been circulated.

Asides.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I am aware that Your
Honour has a copy and some Members may have received
theirs but some have not. In the circumstances, Sir, I **beg**
to move that the matter of Minutes **be** deferred.

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

Mr. SPEAKER: So **be** it.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the Police (Amendment) Bill, 1996.

FIRST READING OF BILLS

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the following Bill was read a first time:

The Police (Amendment) Bill, 1996.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that Standing Orders Nos. 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.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. SPEAKER: Government Business is now the Order of the day. Order No. 1.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER the House resolved itself into Committee of Supply, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

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

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY GENERAL - \$250 000

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, this aspect of the Resolution namely a request for supplementary provision in the sum of \$250 000 is sought to enable the Government to have certain necessary and urgent remedial works done to a wall at Glendairy Prison. The background to this is that on January 15, about 9.30 in the morning, a wall at Glendairy Prison collapsed and exposed the inside of the Prison at that part of the Prison near the female quarters and the animal farm. This wall was about 20 ft. high and the section of it that collapsed was about 150 ft. The reason for the collapse, according to the best advice given to me thus far, was that on the night of January 14, the same night as the performance of Ray Charles at the Gymnasium, as those who attended may recall, some time after that show, probably about 1.00 or 2.00 o'clock in the morning, there was a very, very heavy downpour of rain.

Some parts of Barbados recorded as high as 2 ins. of rain, and the next morning a part of the wall collapsed.

It appears that that wall had been undermined for some time by previous heavy rainfalls, particularly the heavy rains the country experienced in 1995. The wall was of some considerable age but was built, as it were, on the bank of, call it a river - it is more often dry than flowing - but a river-bed that runs right back from behind the Prison in a northerly direction and then it turns back East into Licorish Village. The wall from all observations seemed to have been built in what was essentially earth without any foundation, and it is clear then that over time the activity of the river would gradually eat away at the base of the wall and undermine it. This is what we think happened. Indeed, on the day that I went, the Monday afternoon, there was still evidence of water in the riverbed.

Now, I can just try to give the House a picture of how this wall is situated. In the area of the female section and the animal farm, there is an inner fence of barbed wire, quite high. Then beyond the barbed wire, perhaps as far from here to my friends on the other side, is this wall that runs at 20 ft and that encloses the Prison.
10.30 am.

Immediately behind the wall is the river-bed and then the land slopes up back towards what they call Dr. Proverbs land, back towards Flint Hall and there is another big wall out there. It is this inner wall that has been affected.

The fact that it collapsed was not a circumstance for which anyone could have any anticipation. It was just one of these things that happened. I remember some years ago the wall at District "A" Police Station collapsed from the pressure of water inside. This seemed to have been pressure of water at the base of the wall and the gradual weakening of the structures. What has collapsed are massive boulders, massive pieces of what we call soft stone. They are not concrete blocks. They are big, tremendous things.

The collapse of the wall put the security of the prison at immediate risk and it was necessary to take very swift action to try and ensure that the security of the prison was not compromised. With the assistance of the American Government we have got a number of coils of wire, I think they call it razor wire but it is a form of protective wire, barbed wire, and we have strengthened the inner perimeter of the prison by laying down this wire. We have improved the security in the area by increased lighting provided by the Defence Force and we have a 24-hour shift guarding the area left exposed by the collapse of the wall. It is guarded by the Defence Force and the Police. In fact they have pitched a tent on the other side of the river-bed on

the other side of the wall. We have been able to ensure the security of the prison despite the collapse of the wall.

Immediately we recognized the problem, we were able to engage consultants to give us an estimate of the cost of repairs and remedial works and the **structural** engineers have told us that it will take about two and a half months to rebuild the wall at a cost of, at present, \$250 000. We may have to do some considerable technical work to restore the wall at points.

The other interesting thing about this is that, let us say this is the wall and in here came down, at the two ends that remain standing, there are some weaknesses. Obviously when the wall collapsed it pulled and these two ends are sagging. But we intend to restore them and fix them at the same time.

The supplementary is needed **as** a matter of urgency and I have said that this is a good example of why you have supplementary provision to do things quickly which **arise ex improviso**. The supplementary provision will be required to do the urgent work to restore the wall. That is all that there is to this resolution.

Later on today, Mr. Chairman, when I **am** moving the Second Reading of a Bill to amend the Prisons Act, I will expatiate for longer on the prison and why we need to do certain things that we are planning to do at the prison. But for the purposes of this supplementary, I confine myself to the problem of the wall, the need for urgent remedy and ask the House's support for the money.

We will get into debate on penal reform and whatever else with the other Bill.

I am obliged to you, Sir.

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

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The question is... The Honourable Member for St. Michael West.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I think it is necessary for me to bring it to the attention of the Chair – we have not raised the issue – that I was just handed my **papers**.

We knew about this supplementary. We knew it was to be discussed on Tuesday. We never saw it. You know how it is when these things are circulated in here. He is handing them out now. I just got mine.

That is not going to stand in the way of our supporting the resolution because, clearly, it is not the kind of resolution on which there can be a divide. But I think

you should be aware that in terms of being ready for discussion of the issue, we are not as ready **as** we normally would be, in the circumstances.

Let us establish for the record that this side of the House has no **difficulty** supporting the necessity for the restoration of the wall. What we hope would happen is that in restoring the wall, I presume opportunity will be taken to check the remainder of the perimeter to ensure that, as soon as this one is finished and the next rainfall that comes, we do have another fall down of the wall. Because it stands to reason that if it gave way after 20 years or whatever that the whole structure has reached the end of its life and therefore it is required to do testing.

I am sure the **Attorney-General**, although he has not said so, will have put in place the machinery to ensure that the entire perimeter is tested.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: My colleague is suggesting that the labour to do it should not be expensive given the ready availability of workers. That is another matter which we can discuss.

Mr. Chairman, I **am** not **sure** the Government intended to have a big discussion on the Prisons.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: In all the circumstances therefore, Sir, we would agree that this sum of money is necessary and we will support it.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Just in reply, Mr. Chairman. I should like to assure Honourable Members that I did speak to the Press on this matter. Perhaps I need to put on record that I am grateful to the Press for the restraint which they showed in the publicity of this matter. I did not know the Opposition knew. But I knew that the Press knew and I appealed to them to restrain themselves until we had put in place certain temporary security measures. They did that. I compliment the Press for their maturity and I am told the Opposition did not make a fuss about it and they could have.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, just to make the record clear. Almost the same night as one got home from the Ray Charles show perhaps the **same** people who called the Minister, I do not know, we were asked; "Were we aware that there is a big hole up at the Prisons and what we were going to do about it?" Clearly, a responsible Opposition does not break that kind of confidence and create confusion in the camp.

If we are putting it on the record, let it be recorded that we were aware, almost immediately, of this particular difficulty but we felt a responsibility to do as **all** of the public institutions in Barbados would expect us to do, to wait until the matter was dealt with by the Government.

Mr. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I am grateful for those comments and I will also commend the Opposition for their restraint and maturity that was shown in what was really a matter of national security.

But, at the same time, when I spoke to the Press on the Friday after the wall collapsed, after the signing of the agreement with the Inter-American Development **Bank**, I explained to the Press then and I explain to the House now that we gave the structural engineers who went to do the assessment a remit to examine the whole of the inner prison wall and to let us know their findings and recommendations. I am depending on those findings. I am not saying that it follows as the night follows the day, it may well be that you may have to do other remedial works to strengthen the structures of the wall in the new financial year but that will await the **report** of the structural engineers. But suffice it to say that they not only looked at the area which had been affected, but they are also carrying out a survey on the whole of the inner wall structure. I therefore beg to move that Head 30 stand part.
10.40 a.m.

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

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

HEAD 43 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM, INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT AND THE ENVIRONMENT - \$2 796 563

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of the Environment seeks a supplementary in the sum of \$2 796 563. Sir, that sum is predicated on two things, one to supplement the activities of the National Conservation Commission and secondly to restore to a full 5-day week the entire staff of the Commission that had prior to now been on a part-time week.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that this is an **important** supplementary insofar as it seeks to put the staff back on a full work week. We come to Parliament in circumstances where in October of 1991 the staff of the Commission was reduced from 1038 to 502, a considerable cut in the numbers, Sir. Not only was that done, but the remaining staff of artisans, drivers, caretakers, and watchmen were put on a 3-day work week. That occasioned much hardship and difficulty for the employees who were affected by the policy decision of the last administration. In fact, Sir,

throughout my constituency wherever I walked during the election and since and particularly since coming to this Ministry there were appeals.

If I walked in town, outside of my constituency, there were appeals from several workers of the NCC to please let us go back to a 5-day work week. People pressed the fact that by the time they got their moneys in their hands some people were left with \$40 or \$50. In a situation where their expenses continued as before, they still had commitments to the bank. They still had commitments to their landlords. They would have, based on their previous salaries, **taken** things **from** stores on hire purchase and so on. It was difficult for them to send their children to school, to provide them with lunch money and with basic things for school, school shoes, school uniforms and other items. In **fact**, Sir, throughout several parts of my constituency many of the employees of the NCC had their utilities cut off because they had difficulty in meeting their financial commitments. Many went into rent arrears for the premises that they were leasing and some in fact were **given** notices of eviction and were in fact evicted.

When I became Minister of the Environment last year this was a matter which concerned me deeply. There has been much public discussion about the NCC and about the return to the 5-day work week. I was committed to it **and** in fact this administration was committed to it. Throughout the course of the election campaign we **repeatedly** said that it was unconscionable for a Government to unilaterally, not only cut the staff by more than 50%, but to cut the people's work time so that in effect their wages **and** their standard of living were significantly reduced.

I am very pleased, Sir, to bring this Resolution. You may want to know, Sir, that there are a number of things in my discussions with the union, prior to Cabinet agreeing to the resumption of the 5-day work week for all of the staff of the NCC, and I want to stress that. It has **been** said in the papers that only some people are being **returned** to the 5-day work week and I would want to dispel that notion. The policy and the commitment and the resources being allocated are for the entire staff who were on a short week to **return** to a full 5-day work week.

As a result of this cut, not only did the staff have a **drop** in their standard of living but it meant that the properties serviced by the NCC also deteriorated. We did not have the staff to cover the 48 beaches that we maintained before. There were 20 land based sites maintained by the NCC, again these were adversely affected. There were 14 buildings, 8 bandstands **and/or** esplanades, 16 other facilities like Codrington and so on, 7 restaurants and 14 life guard stations, and wherever you went throughout Barbados you would **see** that, as a result of this reduction of the work time of the staff **and**

reduction in the numbers of staff, every property **looked** after by the NCC and under the **NCC's responsibility** went into decline.

We hope to get from the staff, **and** certainly it was part of the discussions with the unions, an increased level of productivity. We are looking, Sir, at increasing the efficiency in the way the NCC operations **are** handled **and** we discussed and alluded to having bench **marks** for **productivity** and incentive packages for staff so that they will not just **return** to a 5-day work week and continue **business** as usual but that a new standard of application of self and a new standard of excellence would be what the staff would **strive** for.

Since I came to the Environment Ministry I am mandating the NCC to give to the Government and the **country** of Barbados a development plan, a long-term development plan, despite its operations having been established in 1982 and prior to that being vested in the Parks and Beaches Commission. There has been an absence of a **long-term** development plan for the NCC. What is it that **the** NCC hopes **to** do? Yes it can be an agency to generate employment but it must move beyond that **and** **find** a new **mandate**, a new niche in terms of national **development**.

The Commission can play a pivotal role, not only in the **beautification** of Barbados but in the national development. It **has** potential for significant revenue generation. In fact in my **first** speech since coming to the **Environment Ministry**, I spoke about the potential of the NCC facilities like Farley Hill for use **as** sites for outdoor **concerts and** other types of entertainment which could be **revenue** generating, which **could** form places of entertainment for nationals to come to, to relax and enjoy **and** increase the number of tourists visiting these facilities.

I was very happy to see that the appeal for the use of Farley Hill **has** not gone on stony ground and recently we had the very successful staging of a Jazz Festival at Farley Hill, and we will see, Mr. Chairman, an increase in the use of the facilities falling under the NCC. There will be a **long-term** development plan which will be articulated so that the nation can know what this plan is and what role the NCC will play in the **socio-economic** development of the **country**. There will be a similar plan produced for the **Harrison's Cave** which perhaps is **the** principal revenue generating facility under the management of the National Conservation Commission. Underground at the Cave, there is a large area that has not yet been developed so that the area over the Cave can be expanded into an even more beautiful **and** larger underground facility. There are nature **trails** in and around the Cave. All these plans will be developed
10.50 am.

So that we hope, Sir, not only to give the staff this return which they deserve that is consistent with the Prices and Incomes Protocol and with our commitment to the implementation committee of the Prices and Incomes Protocol, but to show also a return to good faith between a Government and its citizens, where people can expect the Government to be here for them as employees of the Government. There will be, **as** I indicated, a large development plan. It will come to this House later on and we will have the opportunity to debate it in full and to discuss it in full. But I would just want to alert the Chamber in conclusion at this time that one of the things we will see is an amendment to the legislation currently governing the operation of the NCC. You will be familiar no doubt, Mr. Chairman, that the NCC grew out of the Parks and Beaches Commission and therefore much of its activity is focused on parks and beaches and historic sites related thereto. But there must be now an extension of the mandate of the NCC so that the NCC is able to take part in and spearhead the general beautification of all Barbados and the debushing and cleaning of Barbados. There are complaints that there is cow-itch spreading and there is overgrowth of private lots and other lots owned by the Government all over Barbados. If we are to keep the country truly beautiful not only for the use and the benefit of tourists but for our own enjoyment as citizens, if we are to have an image of national pride that speaks of a beautiful Barbados, then the NCC must be one of the institutions and indeed I do believe the institution which will spearhead making Barbados beautiful. We must not only ensure that our environment is clean, sanitary and sustainable but remove those conditions which militate against good health, for instance, like many overgrown lots which often lead to harbouring places for rodents which is a major problem. It also leads, Mr. Speaker, to where people discard garbage indiscriminately and containers for collecting water are concealed in the bushes and very frequently become harbouring sites for the aedes aegypti mosquitoes and other types of mosquitoes. We know what the consequence of that has been in relation to the recent dengue outbreak. So that is going to be part of the new **mandate**, the amendment of the legislation, that will allow for the NCC to undertake these broad functions of the general beautification of Barbados, **not** only from the environmental perspective but **genally** from the perspective of public health.

I am very happy, Mr. Chairman, to bring this Resolution before the Chamber and to urge the support of **all** in relation to this matter.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. **JOHN**: Mr. Chairman, I have great pleasure in seconding this Resolution because I am a great believer in the usefulness of the work that is carried out by the National Conservation Commission. All over Barbados successive Governments have made it their

policy to ensure that Barbadians have an adequate number of parks and adequate access to beaches and other recreational facilities. The principal instrument for carrying out this objective has been the National Conservation Commission which previously was known as the Parks and Beaches Commission which in itself was created subsequent to the abolition of local government in Barbados where local government authorities carried on the function of the creation of parks and the cleaning of beaches in Barbados. So the National Conservation Commission has done good work throughout the years in Barbados. If I have some criticisms to make of it, they would be that it does not advertise and sell to the public the real value of the work that it has done. It is true, Sir, that it has been hobbled like many other institutions in Barbados by the measures that were taken between 1991 and 1993. But now that we have been able once again to **refocus** on the utility of this Commission, I have a few suggestions to make.

I am very glad to hear the Honourable Minister state that she has mandated the Commission to come up with a long-term plan. I myself am fully aware of the fact that in constituencies in which you, Mr. Chairman, and I share a border that, for instance, there is a tremendous area of land known as the **Arawak** Park, I believe, which provides a great opportunity for the NCC to continue the work that has been started in the creation of a large park area and a playing field for children. Some work is being done there now at Silver Sands. It is really a **wonderful** spot and a Labour Party Government has previously done work there and a Democratic Labour Party Government has done work there. The question is now that we wish to see it continued. I would like to **see** that work continued as a matter of urgency. Every now and again one sees some very irresponsible articles in the newspaper emanating from people who should know better and who suggest that the Government of the Barbados Labour Party is in favour of denying people access to beaches. There is nothing that could be more stupid, ignorant and wicked and untruthful than such a statement or of the whole history of this Party which is of improvement in beach access and in the acquisition of new areas for the expansion of such activities. In **Rockley**, Silver Sands, Oistins, St. Lawrence, **all** the way down in the back of **Holetown** and all over Barbados there is visible evidence of that. What we need to do is to continue the work that used to be done previously, that **is**, to ensure that the National Conservation Commission has published a map of Barbados showing all the public accesses. I am aware of such a map. There is a record of every public access in Barbados, certainly in the Ministry of Tourism, certainly in the National Conservation Commission. The Government Information Service should publish an update of that, because there have been more acquisitions and the public should know all of the access they have.

11.00 a.m.

I know that in the Maxwell area part of the work of the National Conservation Commission, in my time, was to reclaim and beautify the area where the graveyard, the old churchyard, was between Maxwell and Dover. A lot of work was done in there and many people do not know that that is a big public access area to the beach by Half Moon Bay. I know also that there were accesses along that same Maxwell Coast area, some of which I see closed up now. They were not closed up in our time. I want the National Conservation Commission to clean up the access between Maxwell Road and Maxwell Coast Road. It is situated to the east of the hotel, which I believe is called **Shangri-la**, and the Jemmott Hotel. An access was created there years ago so that people who live in Maxwell Gardens and others could walk along there and go on to the beach at Maxwell Coast Road. All of these things must be done. I wish to re-emphasise that publicity should be given to those public access areas so that everybody will know.

The second point I want to raise is this, Sir. There is obviously a close integration between the work of the National Conservation Commission and the Public Health Department. At the present moment they happen to be under the same ministerial portfolio, but I wish to emphasise that the work of the National Conservation Commission in the area of public health is subsidiary to the work of the Public Health Department. The health services legislation of Barbados casts primary duties on the Public Health Department in Barbados. It is their responsibility to **see** that the health services laws are carried out. They must not shelter under any division of responsibility or by saying this is Parks and Beaches or National Conservation Commission.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am very firm in this, because many lots we have in Barbados **would** have been debushed if the Ministry of Health had **carried** out its responsibility. I make no apology to any man about that. I have been around long enough in politics to know. From the time of local government, from the time of the Vestry system, right through, every year from the month of July on, when the rains came in, everybody was diligent to see that all the pre-conditions for the thriving of mosquitoes did not exist. I am saddened to say that there has been neglect in this area.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I don't care what you are talking about. You can sit down and cower and **feel** that you must curry favour with people because otherwise you will be unpopular. I care nothing about that. In this game people respect you when you tell the truth, and

that is a fact. It is a fact of life that something went wrong with the enforcement of the laws which are on the statute book.

Constituents in my area besiege me every year with this question about bush. I say this. If you are a Barbadian and you live abroad and want to buy a lot in Barbados, you must understand that ownership of land carries with it obligations. If you **are** a foreigner and you wish to buy land in Barbados, you must also understand that ownership of land **carries** obligations. I would like to see the staff of the **Ministry** of Health with its own legal unit search the titles of every one of them, serve the notices and put them up for sale.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. **JOHN**: I know they have the authority, but they tell you they do not have any machinery to find out who owns the land, and **all** of that. I know the Land **Tax Department** has it. There must be a systematic pattern and programme, because this is causing all Members of Parliament a tremendous amount of problems, particularly last year when we had a lot of rain and a lot of dengue fever.

I am all in favour of **the** resources of **the** National Conservation Commission being hired by the Ministry of Health to carry out this, because when the National Conservation Commission was created and its function expanded, it was envisaged that the National Conservation Commission would utilise some of its staff in carrying out work of a rather large nature for which it had experience, and therefore the National Conservation Commission Act was amended to permit the National Conservation Commission to be contractors to the private sector, to anybody. So that in looking at the role of the National Conservation Commission, I invite the Minister to consider the fact that at the present moment there is nothing to prevent the Ministry of Health from hiring the National Conservation Commission to carry out the work which it is under obligation to do. It was always envisaged that the National Conservation Commission would be able to do rather large jobs, because of the fact that they had experience of the parks and things of that kind.

We must not allow some people to fall off from work. I feel very strongly about this area, because I honestly feel that there is not a consciousness in the Ministry of Health about their responsibility in this area. I have had all kinds of discussions about it, and all I am hearing is about the reasons why it can't be done.

We used to have this problem with derelict buildings and I remember once that this thing created so many problems with all the Members of Parliament that we

decided at a Cabinet meeting that we had to sit down and work out a solution for the demolition of derelict buildings in Barbados. A Paper was prepared and every relevant Ministry was invited to make a suggestion. When it was over, an amazing thing happened. There were at least five different pieces of legislation **which** permitted various Ministers to do it, and in the end **the** Cabinet said this was the primary responsibility of the Ministry of Health and from then on the Minister of Health was charged with the responsibility. Now a lot has been done in relation to that, because now you will **see** notices served. You will see them advertised and all of that. The same thing can be done to land which does not have a building on it. If you have machinery and you feel the existing law is good just adapt that law to include land. So that is the position, Sir. 11.10 a.m.

I want to **see** something done about that, because I think it is quite wrong that land owners who do not live in Barbados and even some who live here... What is even more galling to me is that you have people who are abroad, who own land in Barbados, sit on it and don't do anything about it at all. Now in **the** cities in which they live, there is legislation under local municipal authority which will prevent them **from** doing that. So why should they in their country of residence have to obey the domestic laws relating to these matters and here in Barbados they don't **have** to.

Sir, in that area I would advise the Minister to have a careful review of what the existing law is and the respective roles. Surely there is a role that can be performed by the National Conservation **Commission**, but the primary responsibility for public health in this country can never be **the** National Conservation **Commission**. That is the Ministry of Health and the respective functionaries in that area.

I am very glad too, Sir, that the Government has seen its way to contribute in a meaningful way to further generation of useful employment. I have never been one of those who believe that the NCC is some **make-work** institution. It is an important institution **contributing** to the improvement of the physical environment in Barbados and that is a very desirable thing. There cannot be any **make-work** in there. Of course, I am not saying that some of the methods that are presently carried out cannot be carried out in a more efficient manner, but that is a matter of management and I am pleased to see that the Minister has said that part of her management directive is that the management should look at those things.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, I am going to participate in this debate in a very unusual way by agreeing with the Honourable Member who has just sat down in almost everything he has said. I entirely agree with

what the Honourable Member has said in relation first of all to the existence of sufficient law to deal with the matter. In fact, when the Minister indicated that she would seek to get legislation, I turned to my colleague and said in almost identical words what the Honourable Member has just said. I do not believe that this is a matter on which there ought to be a political divide because the question of parks and beaches when it first came up generated a lot of political heat but subsequently all and sundry in Barbados agreed that the environmental development of this country requires an agency such as what is now called the National Conservation Commission. Its name is significant. It seeks to do a level of conserving of the very precious environment which we call our own. It is a fact that the derelict buildings programme has done a lot to improve the environmental image of Barbados.

One of the areas of difficulty is what I call an **over-caution** on the part of public officers, especially those officers who have become public health inspectors – I think they are celebrating their week – and especially the ones who have been trained in more recent times. When I was Minister of Health, it was a source of constant concern to me that we had x number of public health inspectors and you could not find any prosecutions in the courts. It is impossible to have as many law enforcement officers as we have in any particular area and they have no prosecutions – none.

The last time they prosecuted anybody, it was a man with a pig who had some stuff running out of the back of his house in Goodland. Whenever anybody is going to prosecute anybody for that sort of thing it is somebody in Goodland or somewhere like that. You will find that the hotels down the west coast will have violations on a continuing basis. I mean violation after violation. They get a warning. I used to have a big row on an ongoing basis. They call it ministerial interference when it suits anybody, but if they don't have what they call ministerial interference then they don't have any government, any management of what should be done.

There are a lot of namby-pamby people in this country, who because it is convenient heap political coals on the heads of those whose responsibility to the people is to see that things get done.

The public health inspectors are among the most highly trained people in Barbados. They are some of the most decent people in Barbados. So I don't want anybody to say that I got in the House of Assembly and cursed the Public Health Inspectors. I am saying however, that the whole question of enforcement is an area which needs to be beefed up. I tried when I was there to get the Attorney General's Chambers to give a course in prosecution, because when we were in the Ministry of Trade, Industry

and Commerce, the price control inspectors used to prosecute. We got a price control inspectors' course, so to speak, for the price control inspectors to be able to go and prosecute people, and they are still frightened. I wouldn't be surprised Sir, if they prosecute 1 or 2 Ministers who may have a piece of land somewhere. They like to show that they are fearless by coming to a Minister or Member of Parliament or some senior official and give them the green paper. That is cool. But the truth is that they are afraid and as the Honourable Member for Christ Church South said, it is necessary to have an enforcement unit.

I discussed this with the Attorney General formerly in a different matter where it is necessary to put some kind of legal capacity in those Ministries that have enforcement authority and enforcement powers. We cannot go on forever having an administrative system which centres all the legal decisions one place and at the core point where the issue has to be dealt with, there is no one who is trained sufficiently to deal with the matter. It doesn't **mean** that you have to have an Attorney General in every department or a Solicitor General in every department. What it means is that there are legal issues that come **up** which ought not to be the responsibility of the Minister or indeed the **Permanent** Secretary. These are not matters which should be coming up for decision by the people at the top but, because they come up with a decision at the top, the people at the top when they get involved in making a decision get all kinds of harassment about interference. You see all kinds of letters going to the Press.

But the simple measure of clearing a lot – sometimes there is misunderstanding. There is nothing in Barbados which requires anybody to cut down bush that is natural vegetation. What is required is that if you have a lot **and** it is dirty you have to clean it. If it has a capacity to **have** utensils hidden under bush and it can be demonstrated that there are utensils under the under bush then you are liable; but it does not mean that if you have a piece of land somewhere in a development and the land grows natural shrubbery that you have some responsibility to bring a tractor and push it off. That is not what the law says.

If it is in a residential area there is another part of the law which says you are required to keep that in a sanitary condition. What constitutes a sanitary condition is determined by the Public Health Inspector and his discretion to a large extent. If you want to test him go to court. But you don't get the opportunity to go to court because nobody puts anybody in court. We are not **talking** about putting people in court per se. We are talking about people enforcing the law.

The other thing is that if you have Public Health Inspectors, the Ministry has to ensure that they are properly allocated and somebody has to supervise that they go and do what they are supposed to do. What they are supposed

to do is what they used to do 30 years ago. Thirty years ago when anybody heard that the Public Health Inspector was coming they used to run and clean their premises. Nowadays, it is true that the nature of inspection has changed because we have different kinds of houses, but it has not changed that much that the Public Health Inspector should not create some kind of concern in the minds of citizens when they hear he is coming.

11.20 a.m.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: This will probably get me into a little trouble but some of the more modern Public Health Inspectors do not want to walk with the ladle and they **seem** to misunderstand what the ladle is for. The ladle was literally for testing the water to see if it had any movement in it or if there was anything living in the water.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: If you say larvae that might sound **too technical**. If they saw anything living in the water you then used to be able to say "This water has been contaminated." It did not call for a lot of genius. The Inspectors are still trained in that way. They are still properly trained. In fact, they are more highly trained now.

We had a man come from Jamaica. The highest **trained** public health person in Jamaica came down through PAHO to do a study of the public health system in Barbados **from** the point of view of the Public Health Inspector - they are now called Environmental Health Officers - to change the image. All of this lies somewhere in the Ministry. First of all the man took about 6 months to write the report, but a report was written. Then when the report was written what it said was what everybody knew but, at least it was a PAHO Report and you know if you have a **PAHO** Report that it is of a higher quality than if the ordinary people say so.

That **notwithstanding**, Mr. Chairman, you still have the situation in Barbados where inspection and prosecution do not form part of the process. The inspection, yes, the prosecution where necessary, apparently no. Maybe there is a good reason why we should constantly settle all these matters in an amicable way, but the **truth** is that when you look at the cost of doing a massive clean-up suddenly one time a year, the cost is unnecessarily high because it is difficult to get coordination between the Public Health Inspectors, the Sanitation Service Authority and all the forces that should move up to the **landfill** whatever is **cleared**.

The second thing that happens is that when you have these massive clean-up campaigns, they inundate the

landfill and create a different kind of problem. If, in fact, we had a constancy in the inspection on a daily, weekly or monthly basis, then the need for massive clean-up campaigns would be considerably reduced.

In the context of the derelict buildings programme, there has been a tremendous amount of removal of derelict buildings, but there has been no enforcement of the provision which the Honourable Member's Government put in that for those persons who are overseas and for whom the property has been cleaned up by removal of a derelict building, the property should be sold and the amount expended should be recovered. The law is there. It has never, as far as I know, been implemented.

Aside.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: They are supposed to. I have never seen one in the newspaper where they were going to sell and recover. There is a substantial amount of money that would be due and owing to the Government for all of the derelict buildings that have been removed over the last 10 years or so since the Bill came into the House.

Mr. Chairman, I share the view that the law as it now stands allows for the same thing to be done for lots of land for private persons. A few minutes ago, I checked the legislation which we have already passed, and there is one other piece which we could not put our hands on, as a matter of fact it reads 'on lands of any person' and therefore the NCC is capable of working for any person who owns lands.

The one thing I would like of the Minister, now she says they are finally going to restore the 5-day week, is to give those persons who worked for the NCC before an opportunity to resume their work. I think it is very unfortunate that, starting with Parks and Beaches, they built up a political culture about who works at the NCC because in our quest to deal with that particular issue at the political level we sometimes forget that we are dealing with the very lowliest of our citizens. A person who manages to get a job at the NCC, whether she or he gets it through the political representative or otherwise, is invariably a person for whom the job is a matter of life and death. When that person is laid off for 3 years, and that person hears that people are being rehired at the NCC and that person **cannot** get back because that person may live in the wrong constituency - and I am not accusing anybody of anything - it is devastating for the person both psychologically and actually.

Where persons have a bad record, they obviously cannot expect to be treated in a particular way, but where a person has worked for the NCC for 3 or 4 years, as a matter of fact, the first **Protocol** had indicated that any-

one who had worked for 2 years or more ought not to have been separated. That might not have been honoured or it might have been hcnoured in the breach, but I would invite the NCC in the rehiring of people to give first preference to those persons of unblemished record who have worked in the NCC continuously.

I know at least one constituent in my constituency who has journeyed to the NCC religiously once a week in quest of being returned to work. This is a poor woman who is not likely to be able to work anywhere else, and from what I have understood, she had an unblemished record at the NCC. She tells me, and they have this way of knowing way before any parliamentary representative, that they are taking on people. I tell her, I have not heard that. She tells me that they are taking on people. I have learnt to trust those people, and if she says they are taking on people, they are taking on people. I told her: "Wait, your turn will come." I invite the Minister to invite the NCC to pay some attention, not to bringing on new people, because I do not expect that the goodies are going to be shared out like how you share out **warri**. I know that sometimes you have 4 in one hole and 1 in the other hole, if you know how **warri** is played. I do not expect any new ball to play like if it is an old ball but I would expect those who were there before to be considered first. Anybody who works at the NCC weeding the road or cutting grass is not likely to be any massive political threat. It only means they got the job when one party was in power and I believe that it is not unreasonable for them to get back their job. My own position is that parliamentarians have a responsibility to help people find work if they can.

11.30 a.m.

You cannot help them to keep the job. If they do not work when they get on the job, that is their problem. But where they have had an unblemished record, I feel very strongly that they ought not to find themselves unable to feed their families because of the fact that they may have got the job during a particular regime.

Mr. Chairman, that is about as close as I can come to not being partisan in this matter.

Mr. G. A. CLARKE: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I should like to support this Resolution and congratulate the Minister for returning those people back to 5 days per week. I think that these are the workers of this country who should never have been cut, in the first place. When you cut those workers who are working for \$150 per week for 5 days to 3 days per week you were only giving them less than \$50 sometimes to take home. This presented a tremendous hardship on those persons.

I believe the time has come where, if Government has to cut back on workers' remuneration and days per week,

it should not be at the lower end of the ladder. If you are going to send home people, you should send home those persons who are **working** for \$5 000, \$4 000 and \$3 000 a month. I feel very strongly on this that one must congratulate the Minister and the Government for **returning** those persons at NCC to work for 5 days.

We know the hardship – this is not a political **point** – that was faced by those people at **NCC**. I remember many people told me that sometimes they take home, after taxes, \$50 and \$60 and it is very hard. Of those persons who were sent home, I believe the point should be made, we should consider returning some back to work.

If you look at the central parish of this island, St. George in particular, I believe there is a need for a proper development plan. I heard the Minister speak of a **micro-economic** development plan for the **area** and for Barbados, as a whole.

I firmly believe that in areas like Gun Hill – there **are** about 20 acres of land at Gun Hill and we have seen sometimes the NCC doing work at Gun Hill – there is **need** for proper planning where they could implement some form of positive idea because it is a tourist attraction. I know you have people **working** there but there is a **need** to present it as a tourist attraction. There should be some **form** of new ideas. In the final analysis, you see workers up there but all I see is that they are weeding from time to time. I am not seeing output. For the last 10 years they have been weeding one spot and doing the same thing.

I believe that something has to be done. I believe there is need for proper supervision and supervisory **staff** within NCC. I think the Minister, the Ministry and the department should look strongly at creating either the manual capabilities of improving that or the supervisory part. Something has to be done to create new awareness within NCC so that people will know that they are spending Government's money, taxpayers' money and that something could be developed.

I know that NCC grew out of the Parks and Beaches. St. George does not have any beaches but we have land. Something has to be done to clear the land. For some time now, I know a number of residents have been asking **NCC** to come and clear the bushes within the area. **NCC** should be privatizing some of their work, putting out some of their work so that they can earn some revenue. Many people have been complaining that when they call NCC the response has been very negative. I should like to see a plan where NCC can also help in debushing some of the areas within the country area.

I also think that there is need for a centre for cultural outdoor activities within the St. George **area**. I find

that Government and the church own a lot of land within St. George which can be used for a development programme within the central area. I am calling on NCC to do some work in this area.

The Honourable Member for Christ Church South looked at debushing. I believe that they can do more of that to develop the country area within the southern area. I therefore feel that, within the next year or so, NCC should be concentrating not necessarily on the Parks and Beaches but the bushes and trees on the roadway and also on land that private people have.

I would want to support the Bill. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I like the Honourable Member for St. George North commend the Government for putting back to work a number of the NCC workers. This 3-day week was really working tremendous hardship on them because of their low income.

I am literally flooded with requests from people in my constituency and, particularly, women for these low paid jobs, NCC and MTW weeding and so on, and it is a little bit difficult for these people to maintain their households and so on unless more and more opportunities are created for them to work. It is really tough on them. I do not believe that I have to go on along that line. The way I feel about the poor of Barbados is well-known and I believe that more determined efforts must be made to put these people in employment.

But I rose to make another point, Sir, and I would not be very long on it. This relates to this lick up and lock up mentality that is developing in Barbados, that for every little thing, you put people in court. Who are they putting in court? We have a situation with the growing of bush across Barbados that is not always the fault of the land owner. The law says that you must clean up but it is difficult at times to get people to clean up these overgrown lots and I speak from experience. What are you asking the people who cannot get anyone to get a bobcat to go and clean up the land they have around? What are they supposed to do?

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: I understand that I can call a certain constituency office to get the labour. But I have tried on many occasions, like others that I know, to get people to clean up land and they do not want to do it. One of the main reasons is because of the prevalence of the cow itch. The young people are not going to clean up any bush with cow itch.

Aside.

Mr. L. R. TULL: The Fire Service cannot clean up all the cow itch in Barbados. You have to borrow the Fire Service from Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Guyana, all of them, to clean up the cow itch that presently obtains in Barbados.

We have to be careful, Mr. Chairman, Sir, that we do not always have a knee jerk reaction to every problem in Barbados, to put people in court, because that is all I am hearing week, after week, after week.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, just for the record. Since I raised the question of enforcement, he probably was not listening when I raised the question of enforcement I was not relating to the question of cleaning up lots at all. One remembers giving the example of hotels which might be in violation and one remembers saying that only the little people would be susceptible, apparently, to prosecution. I do not wish the 2 things, the juxtaposition of the Honourable Member's statement about inability to clean the lots that have cow itch and my statement to be taken out of context.

Mr. L. R. TULL: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I did not say anything about the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. I made no reference to anything he said. But if the cap fits, wear it.

I want to juxtapose, to use his word, the point I was making about the difficulty in getting land cleared up with the return of workers to the 5-day week. The Government has a responsibility, which began I believe with the greater hours, and greater days' work being made available, to keep Barbados clean. This is not only in relation to garbage, it relates also to the question of debushing and the Government has started to work on that programme. I believe that the Government, through NCC, should start moving into these private lots, including lots owned by Members of Parliament when they cannot get anybody to fix them, clean them, and bill them. The enforcement has to come from the Government to get the NCC to do the work they are being paid to do. The legislation was passed. I was a Member of the Cabinet when we passed legislation in relation to the clearing up of dilapidated buildings and cleaning up these overgrown lots. Get the people to do the work and bill the owner. That is where the enforcement should come in. Ask persons who own land and who make determined efforts to get the place cleaned and cannot get it done.

11.40 a.m.

I know, Sir, that I have on one occasion contacted the authorities, the people who run the Government programme, and asked them to clear up an overgrown lot and I did not get any response. I do not believe that my position is singular. I believe there are several people like me and I will tell you the reason why some land owners

like myself like the Government to clean the lots up. It is cheaper. If NCC cleans up a lot for you the bill is less than half what an owner of a bobcat and his work gang would charge you to do it. It is not only a question, Sir, of getting the Government to do it, it is cheaper to the land owner. The Government therefore has the responsibility which I see it is beginning to meet.

I passed down driving from my home to town today and I saw a large number of workers and equipment pushing off a lot of the bush in the area of Groves and I was really happy to see the kind of work they were doing. I think, Sir, that is part of the work for which NCC people will not be paid because the bush is along the Government roads. I believe that the NCC, if they are properly organised, can have a fairly solid source of income by tackling those overgrown lots owned by private citizens.

The enforcement I heard about earlier is not the enforcement I am talking about. I believe the enforcement has to be an enforcement of the Government workers to do the work that needs to be done and we cannot take chances. The responsibility to clean up cow itch falls to the Government, not the private citizen. Under the law, the Government has a responsibility to make sure that **Bajans** are not overrun by the dengue bearing mosquitoes. That is the responsibility of the Government. Therefore if that is the responsibility of the Government it is also the Government's responsibility to go in where people are delinquent for whatever reason and do the work, thereby minimizing or removing the risk of danger to the health of Barbadians and make the people pay.

In other words, Mr. Chairman, I am not making any loose and irresponsible statements that NCC should go on private lands and do the work without reward. I know that from the amount of money that is being charged for cleaning a lot a big income can be made by NCC and if they do that, I am sure that some of the workers from St. George who were laid off after the 1986 elections by the Democratic Labour Party... I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. Those persons who were laid off from St. George after 1986 should be re-hired. That is my contribution, Mr. Chairman.

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of this Resolution brought by the Honourable Minister. Mr. Chairman, putting the NCC workers back to a 5-day week guarantees what could be considered a decent pay for poor people. In the Constituency of St. Michael West Central I have some people, mainly women, working with the NCC department who, since the Barbados Labour Party came back to power, have been approaching me and asking me how soon you all are going to look out for the people of Barbados again, when we have been working just 3 days a week? Sometimes there is a case where a woman

is the main bread winner of the house, having 4 or 5 children to go to school, rent to be paid, supermarket bills to take care of, and taking home, sometimes, when the taxes and the National Insurance and so on come out, less than \$75.00 or \$60.00 a week. I am glad to see that these people would be in a position where they can stretch the budget a little further at home.

My next point is looking at NCC as it relates to tourism in Barbados. We know that tourism is our number one earner in foreign exchange and we are expecting a very good season in Barbados, thanks very much to those people responsible for tourism. Since we depend so much on tourism we have to make sure that when the people whom we encourage come down here, they can see what they have come to see in relation to how we sell Barbados overseas. I am hoping that the NCC role would continue and that the workers who are having their 5-day week again would be doing the job to give tourism the extra spunk that it needs.

I would also like to look, Sir, at the indiscriminate dumping that goes on in Barbados in all these overgrown areas. Take for instance, the Clermont area that is now being **debushed** because of the road improvement in the area, when you look at the debushing done by the excavators just last week, out of the bush you see all kinds of old utensils and old iron and so on. Hence, the outbreak of dengue that we had the other day. Only this morning in the newspaper we are reading about the possibility of an outbreak of leptospirosis in Barbados also. What I want to say is that since the NCC have gone back to their 5-day week, when they start to work in these areas this situation will be taken care of.

My next point is that I see the NCC as a revenue earner. There are a lot of people in the middle class areas who try very hard to get a landscaper or a handyman to come and cut their lawns and so on. Sometimes it is hard to find these people but the NCC, if they **take** their horticulture seriously, can offer a service to these people. They can put an ad in the newspaper and offer their services to these people where they would come and cut the lawns on contract. You can offer plants to people and in that way NCC will be able more or less to support itself and not be dependent at all times on the Consolidated Fund as we are doing today. I thank you.
11.50 a.m.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, this debate is a rather interesting debate because we are being asked today for \$2.7 million from the Consolidated Fund to the NCC I have no problem with that, Sir. Although the Honourable Member for St. James South has stated to me across the Floor that she is not involved in the day-to-day affairs of the NCC, I would like her kindly to ask

the members of the NCC Board to recognize that St. Lucy is part of Barbados and we also play a part in promoting tourism. I cannot understand, Mr. Chairman, that you can have **Maycocks** Bay, Naval Base Bay, River Bay, Cove Bay and many more bays and yet you find it extremely **difficult** to see anyone from NCC in St. Lucy.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Minister is telling me that that is not **true**.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. The NCC is responsible for maintaining at St. Lucy – Cove Bay, Wakes Bay, Little Bay, River Bay and Half Moon Fort for the record.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Thank you very much. But then I would like to see work being done there, Sir, if they are responsible.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Oh, I understand now, Mr. Chairman. When they were on 3 days, Sir, they were not good enough for St. Lucy. There is a possibility that now they are on a 5-day week they will get to St. Lucy. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman, it is not affecting us in St. Lucy. We know what to do, but we also have got to recognize the fact that tourism is a major part of the economy and that the beaches are also used by the tourists. We know how to clean up. When we go on the beaches and they are dirty, we know how to clean them. But all we are saying is that St. Lucy is **part** of the tourist belt and, if you want us to appreciate that it is part of the tourist belt, treat us in the right way. I know that I will get the support of the Honourable Member for the City because she wants to see us on a higher level in Barbados. So I would ask her to ask the Honourable Member for St. James South to do the things that need to be done in St. Lucy.

They had a clean-up **campaign** and I know that she is going to tell me that some people worked in St. Lucy, but tell me how many. It seems to me, Sir, that as you get to Judge Gap you are not in Barbados **anymore**, that you are in a different part of Barbados. The clean-up campaign stopped at Judge Gap.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You stopped at Holders Hill and somebody else stopped at Judge Gap. I wonder how many Ministers have responsibility for the NCC, Mr. Chairman. Judge Gap can take you either to **Colleton** or

Half Moon Fort. So the people in St. Lucy were judged at the Judge Gap and they had no workers from the NCC involved in the clean-up campaign. We were judged.

Mr. Chairman, as I said, I have no problems in supporting this because I am always speaking on behalf of the small man in this country. Once you are putting them back on 5 days, I have no problem with that. What I will say is that the vote should be bigger and I am going to tell you why the vote should be bigger. I feel that the ones who were laid off, whether it was in 1986, 1991 or 1994 should be back on and I will tell you why, Mr. Chairman. We gave concessions to people in this country and they promised us that they would give us jobs and they have not done it. Furthermore than their not giving us jobs, Mr. Chairman, they have increased the price of beer, stout and everything. That is part of the NCC. The workers have to buy beer and stout too. What are you talking about? Do you not realize that? I am saying, Mr. Chairman, if those people cannot understand that Government has given us concessions to help with the employment situation, it seems to me that the Honourable Member for St. James South has a problem with people getting work. But I know the Honourable Members are glad to hear that pressure needs to be put on the private sector to create jobs.

Mr. Chairman, we are in a serious situation where we have just signed a Prices and Incomes Protocol in this country. We came to this House and as soon as we turned our backs the NCC workers are asked to pay increased prices on these items. I am saying that it is not fair and these people have to live by the Protocol. The same way that Government and the unions expect us to live to the Protocol then we would expect the private sector to live to the Protocol. In the same way that you would expect the NCC workers to come back on a 5-day week with a small increase, we would expect the private sector to make living conditions better for those workers. It does **not** make sense, Mr. Chairman, for us to come in here and ask the Government to give them a 5-day week, to employ more people, and at the same time the private sector is putting pressure on those people. Is that fair, Mr. Chairman?

Mr. Chairman, I also have another problem. I honestly believe that Government has a role to ensure that all the roads leading to beaches in Barbados should be well maintained. If we are promoting tourism, we must have the necessary facilities not only for tourists but for Barbadians alike. Sir, I would expect that some money will be put in the vote for these roads to be kept and maintained in good condition.

Regarding the clean-up campaign, I remember in 1986 when the late Mr. Barrow said in this House that the NCC should have a commercial **arm**. I am even more convinced today after hearing the Honourable Member

for St. George South that they have something that is good which they can market. The pricing policy of the NCC is so good that they should be out there competing with the private sector and providing some jobs for Barbadians. I am saying that, if you have a problem of people paying you, charge them up front and do the work. There is nothing wrong with that. Mr. Chairman, I would expect NCC to recognize that in St. Lucy we have some work to be done. Thank you.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, first of all I would like to pay my respects to the workers of the National Conservation Commission who over the period of structural adjustment were asked to suffer because of the economic difficulties that the country was experiencing and were asked to continue employment at terms all of us in Barbados know are totally **undesirable**, but yet in circumstances where the situation is that drastic it was considered prudent at the time that to have a 60 per cent continuation of employment was better than none at all. I was consistent in my call, because I was an advocate against those kinds of cuts. I understood the hardships that would have occurred and I lobbied within my political organisation, and publicly, and stood up on the side of the workers and argued that every opportunity should be given to them to continue at that standard, without cuts.

12.00 noon

Aside.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: That is now history. I would like to compliment, as I said initially, Mr. Chairman, the staff and management. I will say this. The staff at the time worked as if they were on a five-day week and Barbados did not suffer as a result of the cut back to any noticeable extent, except in a few areas, and the staff should be highly commended. In the whole question of productivity money should be up front. I agree with that.

I regret that our administration did not find it possible, because of the economic constraints, to restore the five-day week but certainly, as we did not want to have the Barbados dollar devalued, the workers paid a significant price. What is very, very important is that during the election campaign of 1994 the Barbados Labour Party, then in Opposition, indicated that they would have immediately restored the five-day week once they assumed office. That was an election pledge and they, like the Democratic Labour Party, did not find it possible to increase the work week from three days to five days immediately because the economic crisis is not yet over in Barbados. So literally for the last 16 months or so of the administration they had to do likewise as the Democratic Labour Party had to do during our term.

What has happened today, Mr. Chairman, is that we have had a lot of talk about forecasting, budgeting and poor

planning on behalf of the Democratic Labour Party. The point is, Sir, we were in an economic crisis and we regretted we had to take the action that was taken. We recognise that the workers produce under very adverse conditions and we are very grateful to them, but the Barbados Labour Party today has brought a Resolution. After all the talk about forecasting, budgeting and poor planning, during the financial year 1994-95 there were two or three supplementaries that came to this Honourable House around **November/December** and one in the early period of 1995 to provide for an additional 177 persons on three days a week.

This new financial year, if we are to accept the Right Honourable Prime Minister's arguments about budgeting and forecasting, we would have to accept that had he intended to restore the five-day week to the workers, he would have included in his **1995-96** budget provision for those workers.

But I will tell you what has happened. An evaluation was done on the jobs for the top three executives of the Barbados Tourism Authority. No evaluation whatsoever was done on the work of the workers at NCC even during the period of structural adjustment, so it was **fair** and easy to bring to this Honourable House salaries that are...

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order. The Honourable Member must not mislead the House or speculate as to his knowledge of the deliberations of Cabinet. Since October, 1995 papers were coming to Cabinet with an evaluation of the cost of restoring workers in all statutory organisations to a five-day week.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I wish to remind this Honourable Chamber that the announcement in relation to the **evaluation** of salary and the return to the five-day week in relation to the NCC staff preceded the evaluation and the announcement of the salaries to the bosses of the Barbados Tourism Authority. It is not fair for the Honourable Member for St. Michael East to try to mislead the House that there was no intention on the part of the Government to restore **the** work week at NCC, but that it came out of the BTA exercise. It preceded it, it was put out in the public before and it is not connected.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. **Chairman**, I am glad that the Honourable Minister enlightened me, because if that is in fact true I find great difficulty in understanding why this supplementary did not appear before. If that is **true**, why couldn't you have taken a decision at that point to pay the workers and restore them when you had completed the evaluation?

Mr. Chairman, I am submitting to this Honourable House that after the knee jerk reaction of the public when the Barbados Tourism Authority salaries were announced, there was a hue and cry in this society and the workers at the bottom of the scale knew that there was disparity between the workers at the BTA and the lowest paid workers in the industry. You cannot underscore the importance of the work done by the NCC workers, because one of the **comments** tourists would make is how clean a place is. Many times they even comment on the fact that dead dogs are lying along the highways. These are little things that visitors notice and would pass judgement on a country for, and I am submitting that the role of the NCC workers can never, ever be undermined. It is of significant importance.

We cannot, of course, on the one hand be trying to give the impression that the persons at the top of the scale **are** the only ones who can create miracles for this country. Everybody has to play a part. As I said before, that slogan: "Tourism is our business; let's play our part" is one that I **had** developed, and every person's role must be properly recognised. Being very consistent, and to show the kind of approach we have to this, on the one hand you have an administration that can **talk** about proper forecasting, budgeting and planning.... They laced us on this whole question of proper forecasting, budgeting and planning for the future, **prioritising**, and yet today we can see these supplementaries coming at a late stage in a financial year. I am submitting to this Honourable House that it is reactionary and meant to do some damage control as a result of the unfortunate decision to raise those salaries. I am glad, I am very happy for the workers, I believe that they deserve....

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. The Honourable Member says that to bring this supplementary today is reactionary. I am challenging his use of language. I will dispute with him that it is reactionary, because reactionary really means backward. I would have thought this was very progressive legislation. He meant reactive, not reactionary. He doesn't know the English language that well. That is a point of English, Sir. 12.10 p.m.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I will help the Honourable Member. My submission is that this Resolution today is as a result of an unfortunate decision to pay salaries that are out of sync with what is real in Barbados. It is reactionary. That is what I am saying.

I must make 1 or 2 comments before I press on. Mr. Chairman, the National Conservation Commission used to play a major role in the cleaning of housing developments around Barbados. I am not sure if it is as result of the lack of workers who were on a 5-day week that that practice

has stopped. I have found situations within my constituency where the constituents themselves, along with assistance from the parliamentary representative – and I go and assist them myself on occasions – get involved in clean-up campaigns around houses. Maybe it is a good thing. I am not sure. I believe that a situation could be arranged where equipment that belongs to the National Conservation Commission could probably be loaned to communities if they notify them properly that they want to clean up a particular area and they would want to have access to lawnmowers or choppers or wheelbarrows for a day or two so that they can get their area cleaned up. I am not sure that it is a **process** that is in place, but I would like to suggest a policy for cleaning up housing areas where the community itself can borrow equipment and there can develop a system where they can get equipment by signing it in and out. I think it may be a good thing to bring communities together. I am sure you have experience in clean-up campaigns. The atmosphere is fairly good when that kind of activity happens.

In addition to that, there are a number of young people who have from time to time embarked on cleaning specific areas and then they deem them to be parks. I am wondering whether some provision could not be made for those persons so identified to have access to finance that would assist them as well in the preparation of cleaning up some of these areas and parks because they also form part of the natural beauty of Barbados and are areas that should not be ignored. I have one such **area** and I would like to place on record my appreciation to the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Housing in that he has recognised the need to allow residents of the St. **Barnabas** area to keep an area as a park. It was not originally intended to be a park, but the residents for security reasons got together and cleaned that area and they have come to the clear determination that they want it to remain as a park. We have had a lot of co-operation from the Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry, and I would like to place that on the records of this House.

With those few remarks, Sir, I would say that I am glad that the workers are going to benefit from a 5-day week and I sincerely hope that in the near future we would be able to expand the program. I am an advocate for what people like to refer as crash programmes. I remember during this session of the House I spoke about it and people put it in the context of a crash programme. I do not see it in the context of a crash programme. I see it as a necessity to ensure that the ambience and the whole physical development of Barbados are properly maintained. I have no difficulty in supporting the Resolution even though it is late and under strange circumstances.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I rise to commend the Honourable Minister for having brought this

Resolution. Indeed, what I am surprised about is the fact that the Opposition has not opposed it. I am extremely shocked that they have not opposed it because I recall when we brought the Protocol just a few days ago before the House which was actually...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is violating a rule which says that a matter which has been debated before cannot be re-debated. The Honourable Member should know that, Sir.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I know the issue relating to legislation which we brought before this House to prevent Government from cutting the salaries of public servants again was opposed by that side and it is things like this, Mr. Chairman, which would cause me to say that I am surprised that they are not opposing this particular measure which is brought on behalf of those workers from the NCC who will now be put back on a 5-day week.

The Honourable Minister has given you some figures where she said that there were some 1 038 workers originally and then they were cut to 502 by the last Administration. What an exercise in downsizing, Mr. Chairman! Mr. Chairman, when they unilaterally placed those hundreds of NCC workers on...

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. I do not like to interrupt an Honourable Member, but the Honourable Member in making the point is misleading the Committee. He said when they "unilaterally". It is known, Sir, that the lay-offs were done on consultation with the workers' representatives. It was not done unilaterally and it is wrong to make the statement that the Government of the day unilaterally laid off anybody.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Chairman, I withdraw the word "unilaterally". When the workers were put on a 3-day week by the last Administration it was a terrible blow to the workers at the NCC.

I have always looked at the period 1991 to 1994 as a period when there was a climate of hostility against workers in this country and I know which Administration it was that presided at the time when there was that climate of hostility against the workers of Barbados. There were some workers at the NCC who were taking home \$200 a week and with the 3-day week some of them took home \$120. In cases when other things had to come out of the pay packet some of them took home even less and the result was pretty obvious that those workers' purchasing power decreased and they could not look after their families as they would have wanted to. It was a very painful experience simply based on the fact that they were not getting enough money. I believe that there is another

aspect of it which a lot of us tend to overlook and it is that there was a much deeper hurt because putting the workers from NCC on a 3-day week was an onslaught on their psyche. That is the way I have to put it.

12.20 p.m.

One lady has actually told me, she is on 3 days, and the way she has actually put it I believe would help me to make the point because what she is saying is that workers who are on 3 days per week tend to be more frustrated and miserable than even workers who are out of work all together. At first I found it a bit hard to believe, the whole thing that somebody is getting something in their hands and yet they are frustrated and miserable. It was the emotional aspect, Mr. Chairman, which she was actually speaking about. It is like a father trying to put a son out of the house and taking him to the door and resting his hand on his back and just keeping him there. You do not know if you are out or in and it was that kind of situation she was actually trying to describe to me.

I believe, Mr. Chairman, that the return to a 5-day week will restore some confidence in the minds of the workers. I think it is important for their sanity because a lot of them, as I have said before, felt a kind of psychological trauma at being put on 3 days. I believe that this present administration can now be seen as carrying the torch for the workers of this country because it is like leading by example and measure after measure on behalf of the workers is coming before this House. I believe everyone can see which particular administration cares more about the small man, as the other side likes to refer to it.

Now, I have received a number of calls from persons working at the National Assistance Board and at the National Sports Council. I want to say that a similar exercise has been carried out with respect to workers at the National Sports Council who were also put on a 3-day week. We have every intention of ensuring that from April 1, those workers will be back on a 5-day week as well. That also applies to the workers at the National Assistance Board.

I want to make a point here, Mr. Chairman. It is something which everyone should realize. It was not done under this administration. There were some home helpers who were recruited up front as being part-time workers. They were never 5-day workers. They were recruited as part-time workers per se. They were always part-time. Therefore this particular measure will not apply to them, but we are taking steps to ensure that, as soon as humanly possible, even those part-time workers whether it will be by instalments or what have you, will also be put on 5 days. This is something which we found, that these workers

were actually recruited by the last administration I **daresay** as part-time. They were never actually put on a 3-day week.

Now, I also share the concerns of those who spoke before as to the importance of the National Conservation Commission to this country. I recall that when there was the **flood** which unfortunately took the life of the "Mighty Carew" a lot of people had complained about drainage in Barbados. I believe we have to be environmentally conscious now. I certainly support any measure which would help assist us in making Barbados a much cleaner place. I do not think it is a good thing for us to bring tourists here where we **talk** about eco-tourism and all the rest of it and everybody wants to keep their country in as **sanitary** a condition as possible, and then we expose them to conditions where we have a lot of bush, drains are not cleaned and such like. As I said, I support any measure where we are going to do our best to make Barbados as clean as possible.

I know that in the constituency of St. **Philip** North things have got so bad, Mr. Chairman, that we actually had to put a constituency **group** in place. Every Saturday **morning** a group of them had to go down to Bottom Bay, and **Harrismith** and so on to cut the bush to keep the place looking a certain way. That little group is still in place. The point I wanted to make is that things had **gotten** so bad that they thought it necessary to do these things on their own.

Three days, certainly, a week by the National Conservation Commission was not adequate, and the Honourable Minister has listed the number of places they would have had to keep clean, 48 beaches, I recall, and a certain number of parks, bandstands, restaurants, esplanades, lifeguard stations and so on.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has 2 minutes.

Hon. R. N. **GREENIDGE**: The overall point I want to make, Mr. Chairman, is that I am very happy, and I **am** sure the NCC workers are happy too, that they will be reverting to the 5-day week. I support any measure at all which is being made on behalf of the workers of this country.

Hon. Miss B. A. **MILLER**: Mr. Chairman, I am delighted to support this Resolution. I give great credit to the Honourable Minister of Health and the Environment who has seen fit to fight for those workers who fall under her responsibility in the National Conservation Commission and to bring this supplementary before the House. There are many things which are high on this Government's priority list and there were some things over which we had little or no control. In excess of \$70 million in short-term

debt repayments had to be made and it was not easy for the Honourable Minister to have brought this before this House before this time.

I hear Members on the other side mouthing off but if they had not put these workers on a 3-day week we would not be dealing with this in here today. I am delighted that these workers have now been returned to a 5-day week, and I **am** delighted for several reasons, Sir. I agree with what Honourable Members have said. It is good that people are back in a situation where they earn a full week's wage. They have their commitments like everybody else.
12.30 p.m.

But the National Conservation is not only about the cleaning and maintenance of parks and beaches in Barbados, not in 1996. The role and function of the NCC is a much larger one, in my submission. The general **greening**, the landscaping of Barbados, the whole of Barbados is the parish of the NCC.

I am very supportive of the Honourable Member for St. Lucy in that the North coast is a part of Barbados too. I would not say it is more important. Nowhere is more important than anywhere else. But I will not agree with the Honourable Member for St. Lucy about the NCC needing to become commercial and competitive with the private sector. I do not think the NCC should have time to be competing with the private sector because there is so much work for them to do in respect of their public sector obligations that they would not have the time, the East coast, the North coast, all the Government offices, all of the premises of other statutory corporations and including this parliamentary building falling into the Government's control. The Government owns over 7 000 properties in Barbados, Mr. Chairman, Sir, all the housing estates, and all of the nature trails that are so important to the tourist industry.

As for the cleaning of gullies, gullies can be beautified. Gullies need to be cleaned and beautified for several reasons, so that they do not become clogged and occasion the kind of flooding which happened at **Weston** in St. James. The Honourable Member for St. Philip North has just referred to that.

Where gullies are blocked high up, the water must find another way out. I notice of my own knowledge, of my own experience, since I have always lived on the western side of Barbados where you have a number of terraces stepping down. I used to live in the Risk Road and I remember 20 years ago seeing water coming like a waterfall from what is now West Terrace and taking my two 100-pound gas cylinders like hopping balls and carrying them down to the beach at **Fitts Village**.

All of that happened because we failed to clean gullies. They become blocked up with fallen trees, old motor cars, illegal dumping of garbage and the water will find another way out. I believe that that was partly responsible for the flooding at **Weston** because the West coast is characterized by these deep gullies draining – this is the natural drainage – down to the sea. These gullies can be beautified. We can put in more trees, more shrubs so that they too can become nature trails of one kind or another. A lot of Barbadians are into jogging, walking and exercising. It is a beautiful thing at the weekend or early in the morning if you are so disposed to walk these gullies. Very interesting flora and fauna could be encouraged. Beautifying of the whole of Barbados is part of the role and function of the NCC. I have decreed certainly in respect of the rehabilitation of Bridgetown that the tree must be the motif. The tree must be virtually the theme. Those who attended the town meeting at the Frank Collymore Hall just 2 or so weeks ago when we introduced to Barbadians the concept for the rehabilitation of Bridgetown in respect of Broad Street would see that the proposal is to pedestrianize Broad Street, to put in fully grown trees, interesting lighting, seating arrangements, even a little bandstand, really beautiful accommodation for vendors and so on and so forth, decent arrangements for taxis and so on.

But the tree must be the theme. The Lower Green must become a green again and that is all part of it. We want to invite the Church Council at St. **Mary's** Church to allow us to take down the church wall and put up railings instead and to landscape the graves so that it would all be part of that green ribbon which must run through Bridgetown. Cemeteries and churchyards are normally part of the function of the Sanitation Service Authority.

But I should like to recommend to the Honourable Minister that she considers, very seriously, **transferring** to the National Conservation Commission the landscaping and general maintenance of public cemeteries in Barbados. I felt embarrassed when I went down to the **Westbury** Cemetery just a few weeks ago making arrangements for the State Funeral of the late Dame Nita Barrow to see the state of bush. I said it had to be cut. Obviously, it was **too** much to be cut within that period of time and I had to demarcate an area which would absolutely have to be cleaned. Landscaping was not part of the function. **Westbury** is a place which should have far more trees and could be a beautiful place.

I was in Grand Cayman last weekend attending a CTO meeting and they do not have one big cemetery but lots of small cemeteries, all painted beautifully in white. People are buried in vaults in the grounds.

There are beautiful flowers adorning almost every grave, not all fresh flowers. But at the distance, even the

plastic flowers were softer on the eye than the bush that we see in the public graveyards in Barbados.

Bridgetown as a town, Speightstown as a town **and** Oistins town as a town all need to be 'green **and** landscaped, and distinctively so, so that when you **are** approaching Speightstown, you know that you **are** approaching Speightstown. When you are approaching Oistins town, you will know because you will use different trees, different kinds of shrubs. You can make very beautiful statements with landscaping. This should be the role and function of the NCC. NCC should be envied by the private sector. The private sector should want to aspire to what the NCC does. This is the time to employ the services of trained landscape gardeners and really make Barbados into a garden island. We are small enough, one hundred and **sixty-six** square miles.

If only every individual were encouraged and incentives could be provided to encourage people to landscape, no matter how small their properties and there is no Barbadian house at which you do not see even a pigtail bucket or a half drum with some little thing in it, even some like myself. I do not have any land around me. I just have a few hedges. I live on a chattel spot. But you get your plant pots and you do things. You enhance your home by the landscaping.

Another important and perhaps, the most important reason of all is that all of Barbados should go on a **tree** planting exercise. The NCC should be the initiator of this. We have 262 000 souls in Barbados. We should plant a tree for every single one. I sit down so often in my house and I see the rain come right over and fall in the sea in front of me. Because we do not have enough **trees**, Mr. Chairman, Sir, to pull it down. But there are places in Barbados where the rain falls all the time. The rain falls all the time in Sandy Lane. The rain is falling in Sandy Lane but it is not falling in Fitts Village.

Aside.

Hon. B. A. MILLER: Exactly. Wherever Barbados is heavily **treed** at this time, you will see that the rain will **fall** there. People must learn to understand the nexus between trees and rainfall. Barbados does need to be **greened**. We all travel. You go to New York, Washington, Miami, London, wherever and these cities have trees and little park areas. All we have is Queen's Park at the one end and then asphalt, **tarmac**, concrete and glass throughout. This is not how it was found. Barbados was called Los Barbados for the bearded fig trees. Those who began to populate and settle it came here, it was the tree. Barbados is named from a tree. That should tell us that Barbados was **treed** in those days. We have slashed, burnt, chopped down and cut down. Wherever we cut down a tree, we should replant not one but two.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: This is it. You have to be very selective with the debushing. Wherever you cut down one tree, be it a fruit tree or an ornamental tree, you should plant back two in repayment to cutting down the one tree.

In our parks, along our highways... I remember I was in the Ministry of Education when we finished building the Samuel Jackman Prescod Polytechnic and I begged them to plant trees along there. They put them in but they never cared them and even now, if you drive along on the side by CBC, you will still see a few frangipanis. On the other side towards Parkinson, you will see a few spathodias, the African tulip tree. But they are not well cared for.

We should plant fruit trees. Just as every Barbadian backyard has a lime tree and as I say, even some people like myself and the people who live in the city who do not have a lot of land around them, you can plant them in a bucket or in a barrel or an old oil can. Every Barbadian backyard usually has a lime tree or a pepper tree.
12.40 p.m.

We should be planting fruit trees all along the highways and the byways and on the rab land, we should be planting fruit trees. It is an incredible thing that in this Barbados there are even sometimes when we have to import limes. We are only self-sufficient in bananas. We should be self sufficient in mangoes, in grapefruit, in oranges. All of this can be built into the role of ...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: I can talk for hours on monkeys. I was a great monkey watcher. When I lived near Hometown they made my life impossible. They would pick every pawpaw. Father monkeys 4 feet tall, one under each armpit, smiling at me and walking by because they understood where the wrought iron was and where I was, on the other side of it. Very intelligent creatures. Mr. Chairman, Sir, I hope that the NCC now that it is back on the 5-day week and now that it is fully seized of the magnificent physical development programme that this administration has for Barbados will recognise its enlarged function and get on with the job. Thank you, Sir.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, I want to make one point. After listening to the Honourable Member for St. Philip North and the Honourable Member for the City, I am convinced that we have completed both equations and that the equation never worked. There were 5 previously and then they were working only three; now they are giving back two days, Sir, but we have another equation and that equation is the number of workers that were employed.

I was not in my seat, Sir, but I was told that the NCC once employed 1 038 workers and at present they are employing 502 workers. I am saying that if they are to complete that job, Sir, we would have to complete the equation dealing with total workers and at present, Sir, we have 536 workers that would be unemployed because of the NCC. If we are to do the nice job that we expect the NCC to do throughout Barbados we would expect that those 536 workers would be re-employed at the NCC. That is the point I would like to make.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I just feel that since the Honourable Member was **talking** about the trees that it should be placed on record first of all, the work of a former Minister responsible for the NCC, Mr. Keith Simmons. As you drive along or walk along as I do every morning, Spring Garden Highway, you will see a number of trees on the seaside. There are mile trees, I think that is the best way to describe them, notwithstanding the technical name, and a couple of other trees that have been planted. In fact the area along Spring Garden has been kept or used to be kept in a certain standard up until recently. I notice that what is happening is that we are getting a season where it is cut and then it goes back to rab land for a period and then it is cut again. I believe that the system worked when there was a certain supervisor functioning there, whose name I will not call, where in fact they had a crew that was assigned only to Spring Garden. I believe that that system worked. They had a crew for Spring Garden, they had a crew for ABC Highway, they had a crew for somewhere else and they worked in those areas only. The result was that constantly the beautification of the Spring Garden Highway and other areas of the Highway was obvious. Every now and again what one is seeing is a kind of sometimes it is okay, sometimes it is not okay. I hope that the NCC would go back to the system of having quasi-permanent people **working** along the highway. This is really a management function.

I also want to just lay in the record my own view that the work of the NCC is something that ought to be treated, and this is a position which is a personal position and which did not always see the light of day in the past, the work of the NCC ought to be regarded as an investment. In terms of getting moneys from the international agencies for example, I think that the work of the NCC ought to be regarded as part of the development of the tourism plant in Barbados. It is something which is not **understood** by a number of people who feel that these workers who are working in the sun keeping Barbados beautiful are merely some kind of quasi-agricultural labourers. In fact they are very vital to the development of our tourism plant. It is crucial therefore that we get the thinking of the community adjusted to the fact that the next time there is necessity for laying off people you do not automatically start with the workers at the NCC or in any similar agency where it is believed that they are expendable.

In fact, if tourism is the major industry of Barbados then the people whose responsibility it is to develop the tourism plant have as much right to consideration **as** the people whose responsibility it is to direct the tourism industry. All one is saying here, Sir, is that we need to get the country to start thinking of the landscaping and the development of highways as part of our investment and not something to create a few jobs for people in the constituency.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, I wish in winding up to thank all Members for their contribution and to briefly address some of the issues that were raised. I agree that the role of the National Conservation Commission is of extreme significance to the socio-economic development of Barbados and it is with this in mind that I told the Chamber earlier that the development plan for the Commission will be coming to this Chamber so that we can all have our input and so that it can become a discussion paper, a paper for national discussion for the nation not only to understand what the vision of the Government is but to be able to articulate their own views on how they want to see the country develop.

There are several components to it. Some of the things raised by Members are included in it, others are not. But one of the things that one is going to be seeing is the beautification, for instance, of all the highways. We drive along the ABC Highway for miles, we drive from the **Airport** along Highway 1 and **1A** as far down as St. Peter and you rarely see plants and yet a type of plant can be planted on the edges of the Highway which would tend to be hardy but attractive. All of that is part of the development thrust that the NCC will be taking and I look forward to our debate because I think that there will be large consensus in the Chamber **as** to the role and the future of the NCC. I look forward to the debate when in fact the development plan does come before us for discussion.

During the course of the debate issues were raised in relation to the dismissal of staff but I think that, for the NCC to carry out its function, not only must it look at the staffing but at the deployment of staff. We have to discuss issues of productivity, of efficiency, of flexi-time because there is no reason since these workers are working in outdoor conditions why they cannot come to work maybe and work from 5 to 10 or from 5 to 12 and then work a shift in the afternoon. All of these are the issues that we are now raising with the union so that we can have consensus between the workers representatives and management in relation to how the NCC will function **as** it pursues its new development plan.
12.50 p.m.

Mr. B. M. TAITT: On a point of order, Sir. She may find it convenient to examine the Sanitation Service

Authority in that respect. We made provisions for it and they go to work whenever they wish to and most of them go at **4.30 a.m.** in the morning. They do task work and if the unions should wish to agree with that, all right. What it does is to allow the people whose job it is to work in the field to go to work at **4.30 a.m.** in the morning and go back home.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, in that respect, they will be their own managers. When the issue was raised with the unions it did not rule with dissent, but it has to be fully explored. Also, in relation to that, I am concerned about the whole supervision of staff. I think that one of the things we need to do is not only to bring in the landscape architects as we have been doing recently, but rather we should increase the training programmes. So that when the NCC bid on a contract, they can know how to cost the job and so that they can read landscape architectural designs and plans. All of that is part of the training that is now on board in order to equip the staff with the new development thrust.

We will have to look perhaps at taking on at the level of supervisor those persons who are trained in gardening and landscape architecture at the Community College so that we can bring in the expertise to assist those who are working in the gardens. All of that is being explored.

One of the issues which took up a large part of discussion was the whole matter of empty lots. First of all, whatever the Government's responsibility is in relation to public health, we must also agree in my view that the individual, the householder or land owner has a duty to himself or herself and his community to keep **his/her** property clean. No matter how vigilant a Public Health Inspector is, the fact is that we now live in a Barbados where often the inspectors are on the road and they visit when the householder is at work. So that unless you are home sick, you never get to see your Public Health Inspector and very often he is unable to inspect premises when he comes because your place is lacked. In some instances, the gate is locked and he cannot even get in to see the backyard. So each of us as householders or land owners must carry out our responsibilities and keep our lots clean.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: That is exactly the point. If you are living abroad and you own land here, that does not change your responsibility to keep it clean. You have the responsibility to pay land **tax**. Similarly, an arrangement can be made where a Government agency or somebody will accept the responsibility in keeping it clean on your behalf.

Now two things have handicapped us in relation to the matter of keeping lots clean. First of all, because there has not been a practice of prosecution when land owners get notices to clean their lots and they do not treat them with seriousness. Because there is an acceptance that even if the Ministry of Health threatens, they will not follow through with prosecution. I have been urging the Public Health Inspectorate to carry to court in the future not only for people from Goodland but at major commercial houses in Barbados who are at fault daily. It happens in relation to several of the hotels, in the absence of a sewerage treatment plant, and with illegal dumping. It is covered by legislation and it should be enforced. But the Public Health Inspectors are afraid. They have all the means to do it. They have no Court experience and, even though a cadre of them were trained in prosecution, they did one case and lost in such a humiliating way that they have not yet had the courage to go back.

Now what I have been doing at the Ministry is to get them to stop being gun shy by developing a corps of them who have been trained in a particular area to come together. We had an assessment done and we knew who were strong at prosecution, who were strong at collecting evidence and we were able to ascertain the strengths of all of those people who were trained. What we are now doing is developing them into a unit that will have the responsibility for enforcement and taking these matters to Court. But that is not the only solution and it seems to me that we must have some bite, not just a bark, otherwise people will continue to ignore us.

I am of the view that when we had the National Debushing Drive in each case we ensured that to protect them the staff who did the debushing were insured. I instructed the P.S. to develop a protocol for debushing lots, what pricing structure would be established, where will the duty equipment have to be used, and how are we going to cost that so that we can get a reasonable price which speaks to the recovery of our expenditure when the crews go onto lots to clean them. But what is more important, Mr. Chairman, is that within the Ministry we will be bringing before Parliament legislation that will allow us to attach the charges to the land tax, so that when we charge for these functions and we bill the people, rather than ignoring us, they will be compelled to pay because they will not be allowed to transfer ownership of the property unless these arrears are paid. That is one of the things we are exploring. But people have developed a very bad attitude to not cleaning and dumping illegally and feeling that sooner or later the Government will clean it up. As citizens, we have to bear in mind that each of us has a responsibility to keep our properties cleaned. In fact, in relation to the dengue outbreak when we did an analysis, we were able to find that in many cases people had containers on their own property that were not being

properly changed or emptied and that is where the breeding sites for mosquitos were. Whatever the Government does, it is the householder's responsibility and the community that cannot be ignored.

I am indeed happy with the consensus in the Chamber that the NCC should be restored to a 5-day work week. I look forward with a high degree of anticipation to the new development thrust of the Corporation and I am particularly happy about this measure because it represents a line of new measures of this new administration which it has brought to this Chamber to show the protection of worker's rights. We have since September 6, 1994 brought before this Chamber in the Prices and Incomes Protocol an end to wage freezes. We have now restored the NCC to a full 5-day work week. We have brought before this Chamber legislation that ensures that there will be no cut in civil servants' salaries in the future, and we continue on our programme of job creation for Barbados. So we look forward to a good future for the NCC about meeting its new mandate and its role in carrying Barbados forward.
1.00 p.m.

I will ask, therefore, Mr. Chairman, that Head 43 now stand part.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I beg to second the motion.

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

On the motion of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. Miss M. A. MOTTLEY, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Resolution in Committee of Supply and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this sitting be suspended until 2.00 p.m.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: I beg to second that.

The question was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER suspended the sitting accordingly.
1.05 p.m.

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

ORDER NO. 1 – SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES,
1995-96 No. 8 (resumed)

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: When we took the suspension, Mr. Speaker, the Chairman of Committees

had reported to Your Honour. I now beg that this Resolution be read a first time.

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

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

On the separate motions of Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, seconded by Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, the Resolution was read a second time and agreed to.

ORDER NO. 4 – THE PRISONS (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 1996

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, representation has been made to me that Members of the Opposition had not received their copies of this Bill prior to this morning, and in the circumstances it would be unreasonable to ask that we have a full-blown debate on this Bill today. However, the Government views the enactment of this bit of legislation as a matter of some urgency and, to accommodate both sides, the Government and the Opposition, I would propose to open on this Bill and explain as much as I can about it and the general situation at the Prisons and thereafter postpone further consideration to another date, which would allow the Opposition time to prepare for their own contributions.

Mr. Speaker, the amending Bill before the House is really a Bill about management. Management is perhaps the greatest problem that will afflict Caribbean societies for the balance of this century and into the next century. Many years ago, I think it was around 1979-80, I said in here in a debate to do with the Transport Board that management was the key to the success of developing countries in the 80's and 90's, and what I am going to be discussing with Honourable Members today will reflect the fact that, in so many of our institutions, weaknesses in the managerial structure can in fact produce difficulties and problems in institutions. What the Government is attempting by this legislation is essentially a mechanism to improve the management of Glendairy Prisons.

For several years the management of Glendairy Prisons has been a problem that has exercised the minds of various Ministers who held responsibility for the Prisons. There have been glaring weaknesses in the organisation and management of the Prisons over the years and little has been done to tackle the problem by the introduction of systems, policies, strategies, but the weaknesses in the organisation and management of the Prisons I think have been the result of at least four matters.

First of all, I think there have been poor recruitment policies by which they did not require that Prison Officers

have such academic proficiency on recruitment as would fit them for ultimate management responsibility. To some extent that has changed within the last three or four years, especially since the Smith Commission into the escape of Bradshaw and others, because Prison Officers are now required to have basic "O" Level – I keep saying "O" Level because that is what I am familiar with – CXC qualifications, and if they are not holders of three certificates, then they have to go through an examination to see if they do in fact have some minimal academic ability to fit them for the job of Prison Officer. So some attempt has been made there to improve the academic standard of Officers.

I think the second weakness in the Prison situation has been the lack of an organised programme for on the job training. There has been little or no proper training for Prison Officers in-house over the years. I will speak later to what we have tried to do in the last year about improving the training of Prison Officers.

Thirdly, I think the problems at the Prison, the weaknesses in management and organisation, also relate to a failure by this society to have developed a modern penal policy and strategy that would have looked in a holistic way at the policy relating to those on remand, those in prison for violent crimes and all types of persons charged for criminal offences, and to have developed a broad based correctional strategy to cater to the different types of people who get involved in criminality. If one did that, it would have been obligatory to look at the re-organisation of the prisons, the re-organisation of Dodds, the re-organisation of the Probation Department and how to proceed with community service and so on. I would have thought that such a strategy would necessarily have embraced the matter of training and organisation of such custodial institutions as Barbados has. Nothing like that has been done.

2.10 p.m.

The weaknesses have been a reflection of a failure to recognise that a rapidly expanding prison population necessitates a commensurate expansion ii. staff with new skills to match those of the contemporary criminal.

Because those 4 matters have not been systematically and relentlessly addressed over the years in all governments, what has happened is that management has devolved upon persons who have gained mobility to senior managerial positions, largely by reason of long service. In times of difficulty we have even had the situation of a police superintendent with no expertise, no skills, no knowledge and no training in correctional management or training in criminology and penology lifted straight out of the police force and dumped in the prison to bring a kind of heavy-handed and obtuse attitude to correction

which was totally unsuited to the operation of a modern prison. Those are the kinds of *ad hoc*, stop gap decisions. These are **all** personal observations and beliefs **born** of observation of what has been going on and of discussions with people in the system. I think that we have failed to look properly at the matter of the Prisons.

During that time, Sir, no proper steps were taken to plan properly the future management of the Prisons and managers brought to the job notions and attitudes which were rooted in unscientific, idiosyncratic, personal attitudes and the responses therefore were not scientific. Over time a fracture has developed – I have to speak frankly as I always try to do – in the relationship between the management of the Prisons and the officers of the Glendairy Prisons, the subordinate staff. A fracture has developed, not as serious, between the management and the prisoners. Really, don't let me sweep anything under the carpet. There are problems with the management of the Prisons.

When we assumed responsibility as a government in September 1994, by November the staff at the Prisons had made it clear to me that they were at their lowest ebb. Staff **morale** was at rock bottom. Indeed, between 1994 and today I have had more meetings with the Prison Officers' Association and the management of the Prisons than with any other of the myriad departments I have responsibility for. Every few months I have to have meetings with them.

I must say that the Prison Officers' Association has been not only long-suffering but understanding of the need to approach the reform at the Prisons in a systematic way and indeed as part of an overall reform of the penal system which we are planning and for which the work is ongoing under the chairmanship of Sir **Clifford** Husbands.

I have seen in meetings with the officers in the company of my Permanent Secretary the officers castigate and lambaste the management of the Prisons to her face. Some of the things that have been said have made my hair stand on end. That is very easy for that to happen now because I am getting very thin on the top and at the slightest ruffle it stands up. Some of what they said really was quite shocking.

The **harmony** which one **hoped for** amongst staff has been largely superficial where it is and elsewhere is non-existent. Having said that, despite the problems of morale, the same staff has been able to maintain good order and discipline among the prisoners even in the face of the changing nature of **criminality** and a prison population that has exploded between 1987 and 1994. I want it recorded in **Hansard** that the prison officers have shown a dedication and commitment to duty that has to be highly commended. Despite their problems, they are determined to maintain the

best possible security at the prisons to make sure that the public of Barbados feel secure in their homes and to maintain good order and discipline.

The officials of my Ministry and myself have held several meetings with the officers and it was the opinion of all, the management, the Prison Officers' Association and the Ministry that we had to do something positively to strengthen the management structure of the prisons without divesting the Superintendent of her statutory functions. The Superintendent has certain functions under the law and this Government will be slow to weaken the authority of the Superintendent by trying to interfere with her statutory functions but we recognise that she needs to have assistance. She needs to be clothed and surrounded by a variety of persons drawing on a variety of skills and disciplines who could help her manage the prisons better.

Cabinet some months ago made no bones about it. They authorised me to take whatever action is necessary to improve the management at the Prisons and this Bill today is but one step in that process.

2.20 p.m.

Now, Sir, why do we have to set up an Advisory Board? Section 8 of the Prisons Act provides for something called a Visiting Committee and Rule 169 of the Prison Rules provides for the constitution of the Visiting Committee to consist of not more than 5 members one of whom must be a magistrate. The main duties of the Visiting Committee are:-

- to visit the Prisons frequently;
- to cooperate with the Superintendent in promoting the efficiency of the Prisons;
- to enquire into any matter referred to it by the Governor-General;
- to report abuses in the Prisons to the Governor-General;
- to have unlimited access to prisoners and receive reports from prisoners;
- to inspect the dietary arrangements for prisoners and report to the Governor-General.

Now, for the purposes of this debate I also should interject **here** that in addition to the Visiting Committee there is a second committee that is established by law under the Prison Rules. It is called the After-Care Committee and this committee can comprise as many as 15 members and has, in fact, comprised 15 members. Its main functions are:-

- to review cases of prisoners from time to time during their sentence;
- to consider recommendations of the Superintendent in regard to financial assistance to be given to prisoners on discharge;
- to assist in finding them jobs, housing, *et cetera* on discharge.

Now, history has shown that these 2 Committees, the Visiting Committee and the After Care Committee, are too limited in scope and function to adequately contribute to an improvement in the management of the Prisons. They meet on occasions but they do not get to grips with the real problems in the Prisons. If you were able to glean a thread from my recitation of the various functions, the thread is that those Committees are weighted in favour of the prisoners. There is nothing that looks at the position of the prison officer. I **think**, and the Government thinks that the time has come to redress the balance and we must have a committee that pays attention - I use the word "welfare" in a very broad sense - to the welfare of the prisoners, but we also must have a committee that pays attention to the welfare of the prison officers otherwise we will continue to have the problems of low morale on the side of the staff.

As far back as July 8, 1988, recommendations were made to the then Attorney General to amalgamate the two committees and provide for the Minister to have the right to appoint the committee. The then Attorney General approved the amalgamation and a paper was taken to Cabinet on March 6, 1990. I said the recommendation came from the Permanent Secretary on July 8, 1988. The matter got to Cabinet on March 6, 1990. In that paper it was recommended that there should be an amalgamation of the two committees because, and I quote from the paper "it would serve to improve the general management of the Prisons as it relates directly to the welfare, rehabilitation, discharge **and after** care of prisoners." Now, again, the emphasis is on the welfare, rehabilitation and so on of prisoners, although the paper did refer to general management of the Prisons.

Cabinet took a decision on March 15, 1990 and that decision was to defer the matter. It was **deferred**. It was deferred so long that the matter of amalgamating the two committees was taken off the Cabinet agenda on **August 31, 1990**. When it was taken off the Cabinet **agenda** without any decisions having been taken, the matter therefore went to sleep. It was resurrected on July 23, **1993**, so from July 1988 to July 1993, five years, nothing was done. They were only talking about amalgamating the two committees.

On July 23, 1993, the then Permanent Secretary complained to the Minister that the recent meetings of the

After-Care Committees were, I quote "trifling and discussion was trivial". The Cabinet Paper was **resubmitted** on October 19, 1993 and on November 4, 1993 Cabinet agreed in principle to amalgamate the Visiting Committee and the After-Care Committee.

Now, Sir, the weakness of the decisions of Cabinet, of course, was that the decisions concentrated, as I said, on improving the welfare of the prisoners without paying equal attention to improving the welfare, conditions of service and so on of the officers. I am not being critical. I am making an observation. I think the emphasis then was towards the prisoners whereas we needed at the same time to look at the position of the officers.

Cabinet agreed in principle to the amalgamation of the two committees, as I said on November 4, 1993. Nothing was done until the matter came again on December 15, 1994 when this matter was referred to me. Initially I was of the view, and I have so minuted in this file, that we should have had a Board of Management. We did a draft Bill providing for a Board of Management but then when we took it to Cabinet, and this is the benefit of collective wisdom, Cabinet was of the view that perhaps a Board of Management was not the thing because there could be problems with the Superintendent's functions, and a Board of Management, so Cabinet advised that we should go with an Advisory Board, and I have accepted that. That is what is before the House today, **an** Advisory Board.

Now, before we brought this legislation, there has been consultation with a number of persons who are knowledgeable in this area. But more particularly, there has been consultation with the senior management of the Prisons and the Prison Officers' Association. I have gone through myself - I did not ask any public officer to do it - with the management and the Prison Officers' Association myself clause by clause explaining how I thought it would function, what is the importance of this and that and so on and they have accepted it.

2.30 p.m.

So that the Advisory Board that is now being proposed is to take the place of what has been called for so many years and is in the law of the Visiting Committee. Nothing is being done in this legislation to **affect** the functioning of the After-Care Committee. The After-Care Committee will continue to exist. It depends for its existence on Rule 29 of the Prison Rules. It will continue to exist.

What I wish to tell the House is that I do not agree that much can be achieved with a Board of 15 and I will probably have to look at the reconstitution of the Committee. Some of the considerations that influenced the former Cabinet, over time, about the size of that are

as apposite today as they were in 1988, 1990, 1993 and whenever. We might just have to reduce the size of that. But the After-Care Committee will continue.

I depart from previous Ministers in that we are not going to amalgamate the two. We are continuing to have two separate Boards, Advisory Committee and Advisory Board.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Members will note that the amending Bill gives the Board two separate and distinct functions. First of all in clause 8A(1):

The Board shall advise the Minister on all matters relating to

"(a) the welfare of prisoners, including their conduct, standards of discipline and **safety**;"

Secondly, it will advise the Minister on all matters relating to:

"(b) the conditions of work of the Superintendent and prison officers;"

Thirdly, it will advise on:

"(c) the conduct and standards of discipline of the Superintendent and prison officers; and

(d) any other matter on which the Minister seeks the Board's advice."

In the first instance, the Board is advisory to the Minister on matters affecting prisoners and matters affecting staff.

Secondly, the Board shall advise the Superintendent - this is where again I said I want to strengthen the management by putting a Board that can contribute to the more efficient running of the Prisons and strengthen the Superintendent's hand. So it would advise the Superintendent on the management and supervision of the Prisons, the welfare, discipline and conduct of prison officers, education, recreation, employment, discipline and the welfare of prisoners and any other matter that the Superintendent refers to the Board saying: I should like your advice on this and I should like to do so and so. What do you think?

I think that we are trying to get some equity in the situation where the Minister can be advised and the Superintendent can be advised and the interests of the prisoners and the officers can be promoted simultaneously through the work of the Board.

Sir, I began by saying that there were weaknesses in the management of the Prisons and I explained that, over the years, the prison population has been growing at an alarming rate and, commensurately, the number of prison officers has not been growing. We are still in the vicinity of 180. Last year, we were able to fill 17 vacancies on the establishment and we have some temporaries now helping out as a result of the problems that have been occasioned by the fall of the wall.

But let me give Honourable Members an idea of what we are dealing with. A prison that was built to house 350 prisoners saw in 1985, 330; in 1986, 355; in 1987, 385; 1988, 420; 1989, 440; 1990, 450; 1991, 465; 1992, 540; and here this now 1993, 660; 1994, 716 and in 1995, still in the seven hundreds, 750. Those figures tell a story of prison explosion.

Between 1985 when I was last Attorney General and now, it has gone up by 400 and you still have space built to accommodate 350. We have all the problems of overcrowding, of contamination, of the inculcation of criminal learning processes from the mixture of remands with convicted prisoners and so on. We have a **problem**. I said the staff is still at 180. As it was way back in the eighties, it is still there.

Government has to increase the staff gradually to take account of this. Let me tell you one of the problems. It is all right for people to say that prisoners should be made to do hard work. All of us agree that they should not be up there cooling out, that they should be doing something useful and productive.

We have 23 acres at Waterford and probably another 10 acres at Lower Estate for prison farming. We do not have the manpower to manage it. If you put 16 men in a **farm** as you need to do, we do not have the manpower to manage them. Because you have to manage the 500 or 600 in prison and then you have to manage all the others that are around the country going on a daily basis to the Supreme Court, District "C", District "E" and all about. The prison farm cannot function optimally, in that situation.

I am going to make sure that, in the next financial year, that farm functions. In fact, the Ministry is negotiating now with a gentleman who has been helping out over the years, and is coming up for retirement but who wants to continue and do something. We are going to put some money in the Estimates for next year to bring him on and to make sure that we can get the farm functioning. However it is achieved, we have to find the supervision and surveillance to make sure that the **farm** produces. It can produce. It has produced. The kinds of levels of production that that farm has achieved - I am

not talking about the animal farm. That is okay – I am talking about the vegetable farm, the root crops and so on. It has the capacity to produce yams, potatoes, beans, tomatoes, carrots, the lot, feed the prisoners and save the Government from having to find the money to pay for food for them. We have to get it functioning.

Sir, this explosion in the prison population prompts a discussion of penal reform. One of the most distressing moments, in my entire life – the 26th of this month would be – 20 years in **Parliament**, was to return to Barbados in the first week in January and to read in the **Advocate** an article that lambasted me on my attitude to penal reform. Honourable Members on that side who have been in here for a long time know that for years, going back to 1977, I was like a lone voice. I am not critical of anybody. I have a philosophical, academic and personal interest in penal reform. I used to be out there battling away for a different penal structure, year after year to such an extent that Don **Blackman** on this Head, got up in a debate – he was not a man who was liberal with congratulations: his standard comment was that everybody else was empty – and congratulated me for about an hour for articulating a penal philosophy in here one day. I read something about double talk and all kinds of foolishness written by a charlatan. 2.40 p.m.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The **Advocate**. I have never changed my position on penal reform. In 1990 when that person was a Member of the Barbados Labour Party, when he was the leader of the Young Socialists, he would have attended an annual conference in which the organisers of that conference published an article, "Towards a new penal policy" written by me for which I have been complimented by international organisations. This man wrote that I had given double talk and all kinds of foolishness.

I have always been of one persuasion, that Barbados' penal policy must be so diverse as to provide a range of sentencing options to save people from going to prison. They will have to create alternatives to prison. I have promoted the idea of suspended sentencing. I have promoted the idea of greater use of community service to the point where, on platforms, my colleagues can tell you, I used to, talk about tacking on to a court order a requirement that a person convicted should have to go and paint old people's houses. I used to say all of that and I hear about double talk.

I mention, Sir, community service and expanded community service, suspended sentences as I have already said, attendance centres. I feel that some of the 750 who are in prison have no right in there. A magistrate should be

able to say, look your problem is, and you are finding this, that you cannot read and write. What you need to do is not only pay the court \$150.00 but for the next 8 months, every Tuesday and Thursday, be here at 6.00 o'clock. **Turn** up at such and such school and you will find people there who will instruct you and teach you how to read and write. All of that we are planning. I will explain what is happening about that, I have said that we need a juvenile offenders' institution to cater to the 18 to 25 age group where it is custodial, the regime is tough but you get training in all the skills and it has an agricultural wing to it too, everybody has to do a little agriculture and **grow** something to put in the pot of the institution when the evenings come.

All of that I had talked, Sir, and it really hurts to **see** how the historical record is distorted. I would not bother to reply to that in the press. I said I would wait for my chance in here because the general public knows **better** and for somebody to deliberately, wickedly, maliciously **and** viciously seek to distort the record just for the personal aggrandizement of seeing a name published at the bottom of a letter to the editor is scurrilous.

Now, Sir, I stopped writing a long time. You do not see my hand now. I do not have the time.

Sir, the Honourable Deputy Leader of the Opposition appeared in a programme with me before the elections on Brass Tacks. He knows that I talk these kinds of things. During that programme he asked for a study into the criminal profile. No problem. In the Manifesto of the Barbados Labour Party, both in 1991 and in 1994, we pledged to establish a body that would conduct scientific analysis into the problems of **criminality** in Barbados. We got our chance and we did it last year.

The National Task Force on Crime Prevention under Miss Yolande Forde, the first **Errol** Barrow Memorial Scholar, has been working. They sent me a draft Interim Report and I expect another report in another 2 to 3 months. They have done an investigation into, I think, 142 inmates at the prison and some very interesting data is coming out. I would not want to preempt the **report** but the whole idea of setting up the Task Force was to try and examine in a scientific way, analyse and evaluate, the kinds of influences that were predisposing young people in Barbados to a life of crime. We will soon have the detailed analysis. That is one thing we have done to try and understand the criminal mind that promotes criminal activity.

On the other hand we have a penal system that consists essentially of Glendairy, Dodds, Summervale. The Probation Department cannot cope with all of this. They are trying their best. They are understaffed and they

were operating out of some temble conditions in Country Road. We moved them out. They **are** now in **Rus-in-Urbe** in **Crumpton** Street. But we cannot introduce a system of community service powerfully with the kind of skeleton staff that we have in the Probation Department. What we are trying to do is to examine how we can implement a penal system that breaks with 150 years of what we have been accustomed to, **Dodds** and **Glendairy**. We have to move the penal system into the 21st century. We have to get in line with other countries and give our young people a chance. This business about locking up for everything is counter-productive. It is a waste of human capital. There are offences for which people must be locked up and must be locked up for a long time. There are offences for which they must be flogged, I believe in that; and for which they must be hanged, I believe in that. But there are offences for **which** a society has a duty to create a means of dealing with that offender, short of putting him in prison. Therefore, we would like to **see** remand homes rather than sending everybody up to prison. A magistrate cannot do any better now because of the system that he has inherited **which** says that, if you **are** going to remand even for marijuana, beating or cutting up or something, you have got to be remanded to **Glendairy**. It would be far better to remand that person to a separate institution for psychological **testings** and examination. When the person goes back to Court, the person goes back with a report and the magistrate can then decide if to remand the person again. What I need to do if you **are** guilty is to put you through community service or something but we are moving to that. I said something about the attendance centres and a youth offenders institution and the Government itself cannot deal with this matter as a Cabinet on its own. This involves the society at large. As I said, we **are breaking** with a tradition that has been hard and unfair even to the criminal element.

2.50 p.m.

There is a committee called the Steering Committee on Penal Reform under Sir **Clifford** Husbands. I have given **him** a year to come up with a report. Some of the things they have to do are not only to tell me that we need all **these** types of options that I have spoken about. But I feel that we can make use of existing Government property. **There** is no reason why we cannot have a school down in **Boscobel** that has been closed down by the Ministry. Renovate that as a remand home or attendance centre or whatever where people go and get instruction or if they **are** on remand put in some **beds** and so on. All this new penal system is going to do is provide work because you have to have people to run the remand homes. You have to have an expanded Social Work Department in what I would like to call the Department of Correctional Services and so on. As I said, I am not rushing it and I will wait until the Husbands' Committee reports sometime by July and we will look at it. But I have to go and look at all kinds of buidings around Barbados and recommend their suitability

for one type of activity or the other. Then I would know, for example, that we have to spend \$50 000 on a building to upgrade it to serve such and such a purpose. We can have a network of buildings around Barbados which are functioning in the penal system without having to build any new prisons or anything like that.

I want Honourable Members to be aware that we are planning a revolutionary reform of the penal system. I had announced it already. We got money since last March for it. The Task Force on crime is grappling with the other problem, to **try** and find out what are the factors that are predisposing to criminality in Barbados. In addition to that, Mr. Speaker, I wish to let Honourable Members be aware that I have not been resting on only considering the position of the prisoners and the new types of sentencing officers. I attended a World Ministerial Conference on Trans-national Organized Crime in Naples, November, 1994 and at that Conference I met the inter-regional advisor to the U.N. Office in Vienna. He discussed with me the need for training of prison officers and I said that we needed it badly. In April last year it started out as a Barbados project and, when he came in February, we were talking one afternoon and it got so exciting that he suggested that we involve the rest of the region. I thought that I could find some money to bring some prison officers from the other islands and I used my phone and contacted all of my counterparts all over the region and we had a regional conference put together from the 9th until April 15th or some such date. Out of that came a programme for training prison officers in the whole Caribbean region. Each island had to submit their various prison laws and each island was given a training manual where they can do training in their own country. We were grateful to U.W.I. because we were able to use the U.W.I. system to get a lot of that done before the conference started.

In August last year for the first time many can remember the 14 officers who were appointed to fill existing vacancies had a 7-week training course before we would let them go in and say that they are prison officers. So that we have been training the trainers and we have also been training the local prison officers before we allow them to function. Now that **training** never went on an organized basis before and we have every intention of continuing that type of training throughout the years to make sure that we improve the standards, techniques and abilities of existing prison officers.

Now subsequent to that conference last year and as a follow-up to the Naples meeting of November, 1994 there was a Ministerial Meeting in Argentina on December 1, 1995 which I attended and I was so impressed – and that is why I get angry with the nonsense of the Advocate – with these people at the Vienna office of the U.N.

with what we are doing in Barbados that they came down to Argentina with a project document for the modernization and reform of the laws, measures and institutions dealing with sentencing and the disposition of criminal offenders in the countries of the English speaking Caribbean to ensure there is greater conformity with the 1955 U.N. Standard Minimal Rule for The Treatment of Prisoners. The U.N. prepared, because they saw what Barbados was doing, a project document to help all of us in the English speaking Caribbean to modernize our correctional systems. All of us signed and I expect on Monday that St. Lucia and Trinidad & Tobago should be in a position to sign. They did not go to that one in Argentina. So that at the local level we are doing our own thing, as it were, for reforming the penal laws in Barbados through the Husbands Committee and, at the regional level through the U.N. Office in Vienna. They are trying also to raise funding to do a Caribbean project. The two can dovetail to the benefit of the people of the region.

3.00 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, with that broad overview, permit me to deal with some of the salient features of the legislation and then I will adjourn until the next time.

Sir, I explained that the committee is being replaced by the advisory board. Honourable Members will note that the existing legislation speaks a lot about the Governor-General, gives the Governor-General this power and that power and requires reports to the Governor-General and so on. The previous Government sought to change that by having the Minister substituted for the Governor-General and I entirely agree with that. The Governor-General remained as a relic of colonialism, don't let us forget. The contemporary constitutional democracy and the contemporary ministerial responsibility mandate that Ministers of the Crown now take over a lot of those responsibilities that were formerly vested in the Governor-General.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: You were a Member of the Cabinet that agreed that it should change. I am dealing with lawyers. I respect you as a lawyer. It is only laziness that he did not become an attorney-at-law because if he had listened to me 10 years ago he would have gone down to Trinidad...

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He would have made an outstanding success as a criminal lawyer.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We have also taken the opportunity to increase some of the penalties. In all prisons all over the world there are instances of prohibitive substances getting in. We did our best in Barbados to minimise and limit the opportunity for drugs getting into the Prisons. From time to time we get information and I want to send a message to prison officers that if they are caught taking a prohibitive substance such as drugs into prison they will not only be fired but they will have to appear in the criminal courts in Bridgetown to answer.

The existing fines are very small **so** we are **beefing** those up and section **25** says:

"Any person who without lawful authority brings or introduces in any manner into a prison a prohibited article or who without lawful authority takes out or removes from a prison a prohibited article..."

Right now you only pay \$200 or get **6** months. Now, that is not good enough. We have put in for \$2 **500** or a year. If you **try** to carry something in prison that is not to be taken in there the penalty is increased.

Sir, we have amended consequentially one or two other things in the general penalty clause **under** section **29**. That speaks of \$100 or **6** months for a person who is guilty of an offence under the Act or prison rules and that **has** been increased to \$1 500 or a year. We are hoping by the increase in the penalties to send a signal to those who may be tempted to break the Prisons Act or the Prison Rules that they will be punished severely if they are caught.

Before I sit down, Sir, I hope Honourable Members have a copy of the Prison Rules that **have** been amended. If they don't have, I will get them. They should have been circulated but we have had to do consequential amendments because the rules pick up where we had visiting committees. So we now have to change advisory boards to harmonise the amendments.

The constitution of the board I have left in determining as to the number of persons because I don't want a big board and I don't want a board that is too **small**. I am thinking about **9**. There are people in the **community** who do work in the prisons and who go and help out the female officers and do a lot of voluntary work. I would like to give them an opportunity now to serve in a structured way to help the superintendent and the staff. I might have a board of about 9. I am drawing up a list of members for Cabinet shortly. The members are appointed by the Minister by Instrument in writing and hold **office** as long as the Minister determines and can be re-appointed.

One matter of which, on the face of it, its importance is not obvious. Under clause **2** of the Bill we say the

"Superintendent shall, after consultation with the Board, submit to the Minister an annual report on all prisons and a copy of the report shall be printed and laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament."

An example is the Annual Report for 1990. It consists of 9 pages, 2 of which are graphs showing the growth in the prison population. Really this is not satisfactory to me. This doesn't tell me a lot.

There is a whole set of information that ought to be in an annual report of the prisons without threatening the security of the prison, which could help inform decision making. There is a whole set of statistical data that should be in this, but is not there. I have explained to the Superintendent that in future I want a report that... The Chief Medical Officer's report is a general repository.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: We cannot take informal decisions and do strategic planning, even if people want to do research projects. You cannot do research projects using this. So that is why I am going to make an attack on the quality of information that is produced in these reports and I have made provision for the Annual Reports to be done in consultation with the Board. The Task Force will be able to help with a lot.

A lot of basic information that you think they can add at the Prisons they don't have, a lot of which will change when we give them a computer later on this year and tie it in with the Police which is being computerised.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I said there was no local training and there has been no overseas training.
3.10 p.m.

Last year when I passed through London I had a meeting with the Home Office. He is a gentleman known to the Honourable Member for St. Michael West. He is the most senior and respected Barbadian at the Home Office, Mr. Trevor Hall, who has been organising a number of things in this area for Barbados, both in Immigration and Prisons. We are doing local **training** but we have to expose management now to overseas training.

With those words, Mr. Speaker, I am obliged to you, Sir, and, given the circumstances as I explained in the beginning, I now move that further consideration of this Bill be postponed to another date.

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

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be adjourned to Tuesday, February 6, 1996 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning. On that occasion, it is proposed that the debate on the Education White Paper will be televised live and broadcast on radio as well. If it is possible at all for us to start at least on the Income Tax Act at the end of that debate, if it does not take the whole day, well then we would. In the event that it does, and it is thought that it might not, then I am proposing, and I am serving early notice, **that** the House would meet again on Friday of next week to deal with the Income Tax amendment. That has **time** implications for a whole host of other things to do with the last Budget.

Then, of course, we have the continuing debate on the Prisons Bill, just started, and the Police Bill tabled today. Depending on how time goes we may be able to make a start on that. As I had advised last month, the first half of this year is going to be very busy and quite often, I think, the House will have to meet more than one day in order for us to complete the work so I imagine that on Tuesday next the entire day may well be taken up with the Education White Paper debate.

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

Sir, speaking on the adjournment, I omitted to tell Honourable Members that at 1.30 this afternoon I received a call from the High Commissioner in London here at Parliament to tell me that at the Bow Street Magistrates' Court today the magistrate ruled that Walter Mathieson he committed on the extradition proceedings to await the pleasure of the Secretary of State. He has been committed, Sir.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Well, the Press can consult with the acting Director of **Public Prosecutions** for the details. He has 15 days to appeal but his travel documents are still suspended. He has to sleep in **the** same place every night and he has to report. All of those are conditions attached to date, Sir.

Mr. SPEAKER: Honourable Members, before I put the question I would just like to take this opportunity to remind you, of our CPA Seminar next week starting Monday morning.

The question that the House do now adjourn until Tuesday, February 6, 1996 at 11.00 a.m. was put and resolved in the affirmative without division and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the House accordingly.
3.20 p.m.

CONTENTS

MINUTES

Hon. ~~Miss~~ B. A. MILLER 2264

Deferral of Minutes of Tuesday, January 30, 1996.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER 2265

The Police (Amendment) Bill, 19%.

FIRST READING OF **BILLS**

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER 2265

The Police (Amendment) Bill, 19%.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

Hon. ~~Miss~~ B. A. MILLER 2265

Suspension of Standing Orders 6, 16, 18, 20, 42(5), 43 and 44 for the remainder of the Sitting.

GOVERNMENT **BUSINESS**

ORDER NO. 1 - SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES
1995-96, NO. 8 - \$3,046,563 2265

HEAD 30 - ATTORNEY GENERAL -
\$250,000 2265

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 2265; Mr. B. M. Taitt, 2266.

HEAD 43 - MINISTRY OF TOURISM, **INTER-**
NATIONAL TRANSPORT AND **THE**
ENVIRONMENT - \$2,796,563 2267

Hon. Miss H. E. Thompson, 2267, 2283; Hon. Sir Harold St. John, 2268; Mr. B. M. Taitt, 2270, 2282; Mr. G. A. **Clarke**, 2273; Mr. L. R. Tull, 2274; His Honour R. D. **Marshall**, 2275; Mr. D. St. E. **Kellman**, 2275, 2282; Mr. J. O. Tudor, 2277; Hon. R. N. Greenidge, 2278; Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 2280.

RESUMPTION

ORDER NO. 4 - PRISONS (AMENDMENT) BILL,
1996 2285

Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 2285.

Postponement of further consideration of the Bill.

SUSPENSION 2284

ADJOURNMENT 2292

Hon. Miss B. A. Miller, 2292, Hon. D. A. C. Simmons, 2292.

SPEAKERS IN THIS ISSUE

CLARKE, Mr. G. A. (St. George North)
GREENIDGE, Hon. R. N. (St. **Philip** North)
KELLMAN, Mr. D. St. E. (St. Lucy)
MARSHALL, His Honour R. D. (St. Michael West Central)
MILLER, Hon. Miss B. A. (City of Bridgetown)
St. JOHN, Hon. Sir Harold (Christ Church South)
SIMMONS, Hon. D. A. C. (St. **Thomas**)
TAITT, Mr. B. M. (St. Michael West)
THOMPSON, Hon. Miss H. E. (St. **James** South)
TUDOR J. O. (St. Michael East)
TULL, Mr. L. R. (St. George South)