THE

House of Assembly Debates

PARLIAMENT LIBRARY BARBADOS

(OFFICIAL REPORT)

FIRST SESSION 1994 – 99

HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, November 19, 1996

Pursuant to the adjournment, the House of Assembly met at 11.20 a.m. on Tuesday, November 19, 1996.

PRESENT

His Honour I. A. ROETT, B.A., Dip. Ed., (Speaker)
His Honour R. D. MARSHALL, (Deputy Speaker)
Rt. Hon. L. E. SANDIFORD, B.A., M.A., (Econ.), J.P.
Mr. H. deB. FORDE, Q.C., M.A., LL.B.
Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, Q.C., LL.M. (Attorney General and Minister of Home Affairs)
Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON, LL.B. (Hons.) (Leader of the Opposition)
Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN, Q.C., LL.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)
Dr. R. C. HAYNES, M.B., Ch.B., F.R.C.P. (Edin.)
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 led by Canon Ivan Harewood.

Mr. SPEAKER: The House is now in session.

MINUTES

Mr. SPEAKER: Minutes of Tuesday, November 12, 1996.

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, the 12th day of November, 1996, which Minutes have been circulated, be taken as read.

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

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

PAPERS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I am commanded to lay the following Guarantees granted

under the Exempt Insurance Act, Cap. 303, to the following companies:

Aviation Products Insurance Company Limited

Brookwell Insurance Company Limited

Columbus Fidelity Insurance Company Inc.

Enterprise Group Insurance Company Ltd.

European Finance Reinsurance Company Ltd.

Galleon Insurance Limited

Northwestern Professional Liability Insurance Co. Ltd.

Queensway Insurance Company Inc.

Retail Insurance Limited

Windsor Insurance Company, Inc.

WG Western General Reinsurance Corporation.

I am also commanded to lay, Mr. Speaker, Reports on the Operations of the Sugar Workers' Provident Fund for the periods January 1, 1994 to December 31, 1994 and January 1, 1995 to December 31, 1995.

Finally, I am commanded to lay the Duties, Taxes and Other Payments (Exemption) (No. 23) Order, 1996.

Sir, as I am on my feet, I am also commanded to lay the Annual Reports of the Royal Barbados Police Force for the years 1993 and 1994.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of a Resolution to approve the compulsory acquisition of land at Warleigh in the parish of St. Peter and Sion Hill in the parish of St. James for the improvement of Highway 2A.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDERS

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

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

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. 6 – THE PENSIONS (MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS) BILL, 1996

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, in the name of the Right Honourable Prime Minister I am pleased to move the Second Reading of this Bill, the Pensions (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 1996, to seek to regularise a number of anomalies in the pensions legislation and to ameliorate the position of public workers, both in the Central Government and in Statutory Boards.

This Bill seeks to preserve the pension rights of a public officer or a public employee employed by a Statutory Board who is subsequently appointed to another Statutory Board. The position at the present time is that public officers who become employed at boards have their retiring benefits computed in accordance with the provisions of the Statutory Boards Pensions Act, Cap. 384. These retiring benefits are computed differently under that Act from computations under the Pensions Act, Cap. 25, which applies to officers working in the Central Government. As a result, there has been considerable disadvantage occasioned to public officers who had been in the Central Government and who then subsequently became employed in statutory boards.

One of the purposes of today's legislation is to ensure that there is no disadvantage brought to a person who renders public service, whether in the Central Government or in a Statutory Board.

The Bill also, Mr. Speaker, addressed the matter of officers acting in higher or temporary posts prior to retirement. The current pensions law applicable to Government employees provides for an officer's pension and gratuity to be computed on the last three years of service preceding retirement. What has happened in many cases is that an officer whose substantive post, let us say for the sake of argument, is Deputy Permanent Secretary, finds himself acting in the higher post of Permanent Secretary for a considerable period, but when he retires, he retires at the substantive level of the lower post of Deputy Permanent Secretary. Now under the present law, no account is taken of the fact that the person has acted for a considerable time in the higher post and he is paid his pension benefits and his gratuity computed on the basis of the lower post.

11.30 a.m.

We don't feel that that is fair. If a person has acted for a long time, some as many as 3 years in a higher position, it is but fair and reasonable, we think, that

when that officer retires, his retired benefits are computed on the basis of the higher service that he rendered. So provision is being made for that.

In 1995, the Ministry of the Civil Service convened a meeting with various interested parties to discuss the possibility of reducing the qualification period for pensions based on the last post from 3 years to 18 months by officers in temporary posts and officers acting in higher posts from 3 years before retirement to be included in the computation of pensionable emoluments.

Arising out of that meeting, it was agreed that the pension regulations should be amended by adding a new section to make provision for pensionable emoluments taken for computation of retired benefits to include emoluments earned while acting in higher posts as well as emoluments earned in temporary posts for a period of 36 months during the last 5 years of service.

In addition, that meeting agreed that that period of 36 months to which I just referred did not have to be a continuous period of 36 months but could be 36 months aggregated over a period of time. A fellow acts 6 months here and 3 months there and a year here, not necessarily continuous but aggregated and dealt with cumulatively.

The provisions of this legislation will now allow persons acting in a higher post or temporary post 3 years prior to retirement to receive their retirement benefits based on the emoluments of the higher post and Honourable Members will see in this Schedule that we have dealt with the amendment to the Pension Regulations in Part III.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, an Act called the Pensions Miscellaneous Provisions Act of 1990, No. 33 gave pensionable status to employees of various statutory boards but since then a number of requests have come to Government for adding additional posts to those which were dealt with in 1990. A number of persons were left out and what we have provided in the Bill is to include additional categories of workers for pensionable status so that the Statutory Boards Pensions Act will be amended as appears in Part II of the Schedule to the Bill to include a number of persons. For example, at the National Sports Council there is no reason why the groundsman, the caretakers, the carpenters, the cleaners, supervisors, tractor operators, the truck driver and watchman should not be included and should not be entitled to a pension. A lot of these people at the National Sports Council I remember when I was chairman there in 1982-85 and some are still there.

Under the existing law they would not get a pension. We are providing now that they become eligible for pension. I think that that is but fair. I don't believe that there can be any quarrel with that and similarly at the National Conservation Commission. First of all, at the Child Care Board the Secretary to the Director will become pensionable under the substantive Board's pension Act.

At the NCC, there is a list of persons there: executive officer, technical officer, accountant, supervisor of rangers and wardens, senior life guard, security guard. At Harrison's Cave – tram drivers, electrical assistant, mechanical assistant and also I was not aware of this until we were actually doing the Bill that provision had not been made for persons working with the Students Revolving Loan Fund and Management Committee and they were left out and we are now including them in today's Bill. The administrative officer, accountant, assistant accountant, clerical officer, clerk/typists, messenger/driver, loans officer, senior loans officer, guidance officers and stenographer/typists. That is the purport and intent of Part II of the Schedule.

I ought to say, Mr. Speaker, that when I refer to public officers getting the benefit of a pension at the higher post they acted in, higher to their substantive post, that that also applies to teachers and the Schedule at the very last page of the Bill, Part III, provides for teachers in the same way as the other parts of the Bill provide for statutory board employees or central Government employees.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this kind of ameliorating legislation was long overdue and the Government is pleased to promote it today in the hope that it will be of benefit to a large number of public workers and workers in statutory boards.

With those few remarks, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Speaker, this Bill seeks to rectify a number of anomalies which have been in existence for a very long period of time in Barbados and many officers have, in my opinion, been unjustly treated because of the technical rules which were in existence. I am happy to be associated with this because of the fact that I know of a number of cases – unfortunately one or two have died in the instant – but the situation has been exacerbated to a large extent because of the need for the Establishments Division to be sure in their mind as to the exact size of the establishment. In respect of many posts they start off as temporary posts, eventually a decision is taken that they should be established. Many people therefore find themselves acting in these posts before they are established and hitherto even when they are established, officers were not able, whatever the length of time they acted in the posts, to be treated as if those posts were always established.

I also want to point out, Sir, that there are still other situations that have arisen and will continue to arise where genuine injustice has been done to officers. I wish to mention one instance in particular because I believe that all Honourable Members in this House supported the idea that the civil service and statutory boards could benefit from movement between the statutory boards, the public sector as a whole and the private sector.

Some years ago a then Democratic Labour Party Government introduced a law which permitted people to leave the service and when they reached a certain age once they had served a minimum period of 10 years they would still be able, upon the attainment of 50 or 55, to get a pension in respect of their years of service with the Government. That was an improvement because it was recognised that people might want to give a certain period of their life to the public service and it would be a great injustice, and it was a great injustice, as a matter of fact, because those 10 years were regarded as wasted years. But we now have a new situation which has developed and that is that people may serve as long as 9 and 9/10th years in the service, they leave the public service, they want to come back into the public service when they have had extensive experience in the public sector and in their last 8 or 10 years of working life they want at the highest possible level to re-enter the service.

Under the existing laws, as I understand it, there are no means whereby the years that were served prior to their departure can be accumulated with the years they have served with their re-entry. So that it is possible for a person to serve 9 3/4 years or 9 and 9/10th years, come back into the service and serve 5, 6 or 7 years, and you cannot add the two together. It seems to me that it is logical that the law should make provision for the accumulation of service at whatever period of time it takes place between the ages of the normal entry and the normal exit of people because the public service will benefit, in my opinion, from the cross-fertilization that arises from a free movement between the public and the private sector and that is particularly so now because the upgrading of skills in this rapid technological era is something that should be encouraged and pension laws of Barbados should facilitate that.

I only regard this as the beginning of the remedying of some of the injustices that are in existence. I would hope that the Government would continue with the idea that was canvassed some 15 or so years ago by the then Minister of Finance, the then Honourable Member for St. Thomas, when the policy was enunciated that we in Barbados should have a national pensions' policy in which service of a minimum amount of years, whether continuous or not, should be accumulated with service outside the public service to ensure that no person is disadvantaged and that encouragement would be given to this concept of free movement of personnel between the public and the private sector.

I commend this Bill and I am looking forward to further amendments to clear up the anomalies that exist. I know of living cases where people who have served 9 and odd years in Barbados have gone to the United States of America and they have worked there. They would like to get back into the service, they can get back into the service but many of them say why come back in because they are told that any period of time less than 10 years they serve subsequent to their re-entry cannot be accumulated with the 10 years previously. I think that is an injustice, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Speaker, I rise to give my support to the purpose and intent of this particular Bill before us which is designed to remedy certain disabilities which certain categories of public officers would have suffered over the years because of existing regulations. I wonder whether or not when this Bill comes into force those persons who are suffering existing disabilities and who are still alive they would in anyway benefit from it.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I wonder then whether or not some consideration could not be given to that particular matter because, as I understand it, those persons who from hereon would have been disadvantaged would now have those disabilities removed by this Bill but there would still be a large number of people who are still receiving pensions at a lower rate because of the previous legislation and whether some consideration should not be given to an element of retroactive application to accommodate those persons.

Sir, for some time this House has been looking at the issue of pensions in Barbados in a rather piecemeal manner and hence there are a lot of anomalies within the system, some being corrected by this legislation and some have just been highlighted by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South.
11.50 a.m.

For many years, there was general agreement in the previous Parliaments that they should be working towards a national pension plan for everybody. I believe the idea was canvassed at one point whether a commission should not be set up to study all the implications and make recommendations for a national pension plan.

At the moment, within the public sector, we have the old age pensions, we have pensions for government workers, which are being improved here, we have the National Insurance Scheme, and then we have a whole lot of other pensions schemes in the private sector. The bottom line is, that all these people, wherever they worked, they have worked for Barbados in some capacity or another, and there is a large pool of pension funds

available. Some kind of arrangement should be made when one reaches a certain age, and has given a certain amount of service that one is eligible for a pension and one gets a pension.

I think the whole thing needs to be brought together so that people could move freely from one area of service to another area of service without always having to consider whether or not they would suffer some disability in respect of their pensions.

For example, Sir, I know that this is always a major problem in relation to Police Officers, both professionally and otherwise. All of us know that people in the disciplined forces, very often when they have 10 to 15 years they are still quite young and those guys really want to get out of the service, get on with some other career, and have their pensions stored for them until 55 and so on or whenever they become eligible. Instead you find that traditionally over the years, people have had to go through the route of sick leave or being retired from the service because of some disability. When all these things center around the inability to have portable pensions, so to speak.

Sir, what we need to do is to have a national pension plan with portability of the rights to pensions from any sector in Barbados. It is going to involve a major study, it is going to involve an actuarial study, it is going to involve the National Insurance Scheme, it is going to involve arrangements with the numerous schemes out there in the private sector.

I believe we also have to look at the whole issue of minimum pension in Barbados. We have to move away from the "alms house" mentality which informed the level of pensions 30 or 40 years ago. We have to move to a situation where people who are living solely on a pension should have enough money to meet their basic needs.

I believe that when you look at the pool of resources available for pensions in Barbados, that if you have a national pension plan we should be able to substantially increase the minimum pensions available to people in Barbados. It is a question of giving thought to the subject. It is a question of mobilising resources available for pension.

Sir, this is becoming more and more of a problem, because quite clearly if you look at the demographic statistics of Barbados, I think that you are going to see more and more people living beyond age 65. More and more people are going to be eligible for pensions and to draw them for a longer period. It is essential that we get prepared to deal with that episode, else we are going to find, in the long run, that we are going to be financing that kind of situation out of taxation rather than out of investment in terms of yield from the pool of financial resources available to generate pensions down the road.

So that those are the areas, Sir, the whole area of a national pension plan to cover everybody in Barbados, and the second area that I am very concerned about is, to make sure that we have programmes to ensure that the minimum pension receivable by anybody in Barbados is one sufficient to meet their basic needs. These are things that we have to work towards. It is a matter of urgency. We live in an environment where the cost of living is extremely high. It is going to be virtually impossible to reverse that. We may be able to slow it down a bit, but it is something that needs to be addressed and we are not without the resources.

Now, Sir, it is not only in the private sector that there have been anomalies where persons have been disadvantaged. For example, serving 9 years and not being eligible for pension as a result of that service. In the private sector, if you were to look and see how the eligibility for pensions, how that accumulates, you will find that someone working for 30 years paying into a pension scheme, that very often it is in the last 5 or 10 years those things are structured actuarially, that it is the contributions in the last 5 or 10 years that make the major difference as to what level of pension they would get.

So, if someone becomes ill, say at 50 or 52, the level of pension that they would get although they contributed to a private pension plan for 20 years, would be substantially less than somebody who manages to scrape home to 60 or 65.

Now, a lot of people, with this downsizing that has taken place in Barbados over the last 2 years, there are a lot of people who have lost their jobs just in that age group, 45, 55, in that age group. Those people have been severely disadvantaged in relation to what would be the pension that they would have been expecting when one considers the many years in which they contributed.

Now, those schemes, of course, are governed by actuarial assessments. It would seem to me that most pension schemes around the world have that same kind of pattern, where it is the fellows who are making the last 5 or 10 years, who really get the maximum benefit from the pension.

These people, Sir, in my view, would get some protection if we have a national pension plan. So, that I have no difficulty whatsoever in supporting the present piece of legislation before us in terms of correcting some of the existing disabilities. It does not deal, and should I say, Sir, to be fair, I am not saying that it purports to deal with the major issue facing pensions in Barbados, and now is the time to do it. We cannot keep talking about it, and then doing absolutely nothing about it.

Do you know the number of people, Sir, who are fed up with the jobs that they are doing? Who have skills, and who have acquired skills, that they can go into other areas and make a major contribution to Barbados and they are locked into that particular job for many a year because of the problems related to the pension, and the lack of portability of their pension rights.

So that issue, portability, the issue of better minimum pensions, the issue of a national pension plan, that these are key, particularly when bearing in mind the clear demographic position of Barbados which can only be altered if some severe epidemic or some act of warfare, or some disaster which would kill off a whole lot of people over 40 or 50 years. It is not going to change. That is the demographic position in Barbados, and the tragedy is that the funds are available. The funds are available through the NIS system, through the Government's provision for its pensions, and of course always to some extent, through taxation and also through that large pool of pension funds which have been generated within the private sector. How are we going to bring all these things together to make sure that every person who has worked in Barbados can feel comfortable that when he or she retires, that there will be a pension that is commensurate with the levels of earnings which they have generated and who, during their life time, will feel free to move from job to job knowing that they are carrying their pension rights with them down the road. 12.00 noon

So, Mr. Speaker, it should not be that difficult. It really is not a difficult thing to organise. It is a question of hiring the appropriate persons, actuaries and whatever and get those people to sit down, maybe have a select committee of Parliament to participate in that exercise and come up with a scheme to deal with the matter.

I am sure that that would be as progressive a piece of legislation as the National Insurance Act itself. I am not here to give the Government ideas to make them look good but I am telling you that whoever comes up with a national pension plan that has built into it the concept of free portability, reasonable minimum pensions to meet the very basic needs, that whoever does that will be making as significant a contribution to the social development of Barbados as the authors of the National Insurance and Social Security Act which as you know underpins a significant amount of our social and welfare benefits in this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I believe that I would have covered in general where I see the major steps needed to be taken now. I have no problem with supporting this Bill to the extent that it removes disabilities but I would urge the Minister to consider whether or not they cannot be some element of retroactivity. I do not expect him, Sir, to answer that on the Floor of the House because I would imagine that one would wish to know how many people are involved and what are the financial implications and all these kinds of things. I would not expect him to answer me today as to the general principle whether or not something cannot be done to alleviate so many known cases of people who have suffered as a result of this.

Also the point made by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South who made a very good point for a change. It is not often, Sir, that one can be graced with a constructive opinion from the Honourable Member for Christ Church South but, Sir, many of those people have put in 8 and 9 years' service. There are some people who have fallen short by a few days or a few months and this kind of thing and everything is gone.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We are talking about different things. I do not know what you all are putting me in. I am talking about those same people whom the Honourable Member for Christ Church South was talking about, that is, those people who have served 9 years 6 months, 9 years 9 months, and because they did not spend the 10 years they are not eligible for any form of pension. I think something should be done in relation to those people as well. So that whilst we are correcting some disabilities, Sir, I think we need to look at the other ones who have had a problem in relation to pensions in Barbados.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments and in the hope that the Government of Barbados would take seriously the whole question of a national pension plan, you owe it to Tom Adams to do that.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You owe it to Tom Adams. That could be part of his legacy if you want to give him a legacy, a national pensions plan and elements of free portability within our pensions system and higher minimum pensions throughout the system for our people. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: Mr. Speaker, I rise to lend support to the Bill and I do so, Sir, from the vantage point of having a lot of statutory boards under the Ministry of Labour, Community Development and Sports. Indeed I think what this Bill has done is to clear up a problem which exists at a lot of the statutory boards.

Very often public officers make a change from working in the public service, the civil service as we would say, and then having relinquished that civil service

post they go and they work with a statutory board. The thing about it is that sometimes it is not just the will of the public officer but most likely he would have been approached and asked and therefore would have made that decision on secondment.

Now, this is a way I think, Mr. Speaker, of trying to preserve the pension rights of those persons. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that your ultimate benefits should be calculated on your continuous service and on the rate that is most advantageous to the public officer and I think that is what this piece of legislation is aiming to do.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think the problem is so much when you move from the civil service to a statutory board because in most cases the respective Acts, the National Sports Council Act or whatever usually takes care of that transfer anyhow. If I can just quote the National Sports Council Act. It says in 16(a): "A public officer or public employee who is transferred to the service of the Council continues to be employed on the terms no less favourable than those under which he was employed in the Public Service and there shall be preserved in respect of the public officer or public employee to any pension, gratuity or other allowance for which he is eligible at the date of transfer." Where the problem really is, Mr. Speaker, is when that officer, as sometimes, happens again moves from that first statutory corporation to another one...
12.10 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. SPEAKER: Proceed, please.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: That is where the problem really is. Mr. Speaker, you can have a situation where someone works for 15 years in the public service, 10 years at statutory corporation (a) and then 10 more years at statutory corporation (b). What I am saying is that the 15 years that you worked in the civil service should not be lost when you come now to compute your pension. You can have a situation where the computation could show that you can lose as much, and I know of a situation happening right now, $25 000 when the civil service portion of your work is not considered. Because what they argue is that you have severed ties with the public service and that you have been transferred from statutory (a) to (b) and not from the public service. This is nonsense because you are working all and all for the Government of Barbados. The argument that you cease to be a public officer and therefore you are not eligible under the Pensions Act, you now have to get your pension under whichever statutory corporation Act that you are working, cannot be fair.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that I am very pleased and very heartened to know that all the category of workers of the statutory boards that the Attorney General mentioned will now be pensionable. I know that a lot of the workers at the National Sports Council have been asking about this for months now and I am happy now that we have embraced some of those workers, also some from the Child Care Board, the NCC and so on. I think it is really and truly a good thing because it is unfair to say to certain category of workers that you are not worth a pension and still he or she is labouring for the Government of Barbados all the time.

Now it has been brought to my attention, Mr. Speaker, by 2 residents of my constituency and they really opened my eyes to this particular point, that casual workers who have worked for Government, I think prior to 1971, get at age 60 their gratuity and they receive their pension. But it appears that if you started to work as a casual worker in Government after that year that you get your gratuity at 60 years but you do not get a pension. Mr. Speaker, I have seen tears actually come from the eyes of these 2 casual workers. They actually have a circular saying this to them that this is what the position is. So they do not get a contributory pension between 60 and 65 years and they do not get a non-contributory pension either.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that persons should be able to make themselves comfortable when they get their little gratuity in their hands and that they should be able to take their $25 000 or $20 000 and do something substantial with it and still get their pension afterwards every week or every month as the case might be. But they find it impossible to repair their homes and buy a fridge or stove and at the same time still have to be eking out an existence from the very gratuity that they have got in their hands. The gratuity tends to go very, very quickly these days and in no time it is gone and then from 61 to 65 years there is nothing at all for them. As I have said, two of my constituents have brought this to my attention and I believe that this is an area that we will have to examine because they feel very short changed and, in the way that they put it over to you, they feel as though they have been duped and that no one had explained this to them and therefore they do not think this is fair to them. But when it comes to the whole question of pension, I believe we will have to take a much closer look at what we do. Certainly, we cannot legislate and we cannot see every possible thing that is going to happen in the future. Sometimes we do not know what is going to arise. We cannot legislate for everything but I believe when matters are drawn to our attention that we have a duty to stop all of these loopholes and do whatever we can for the citizens of Barbados.

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

His Honour R. D. MARSHALL: Mr. Speaker, I rise just to make a short intervention on this piece of legislation before the House. When one retires from any form of employment, one looks forward to have some means

of income. In the Government Public Service, the pension is a non-contributory pension and, if we compare that with the private sector, you can have a plan either being non-contributory or contributory. But at the end of the day in the private sector plan the employee is the one who benefits from the plan as well as in the public sector where the employee benefits from there. What I am trying to explain here, Sir, is that even if it is a non-contributory plan in the private sector at the end of the day when that employee goes home he has to get the pension. Now if that employee dies when he starts to draw his pension, there is a clause in the plan which says that "X" amount of years must be paid in the plan. That is a guaranteed amount of money must come out of the plan. That is to say that with a 10-year plan where you live one year after retirement, that money will be paid to your estate or your beneficiary for a further 9 years. If you live for 9 years and you were to die, another year must be paid. That is 10 years certain must come out of the plan. But when you look at the public sector plan now, Sir, on that employee's death when he starts to draw his pension and as soon as he dies, nothing more comes out for that family.

Sir, what I am saying is that we should be looking at giving the employee of the Government Pension Plan an option or a choice where he can make a personal contribution to his pension so that on his retirement two things would happen: (1) he would be enhancing his pension and (2) he will be guaranteeing to his family that on his death they can still be entitled to some kind of pension. Because when a person stops working, he stops earning but he does not stop spending. In that case, if he leaves a very young family or he might leave a mortgage on his home, major expenses, last minute expenses and so on, I am saying that we should be looking at a way where we can devise a method where the employee of the Government Pension Plan can make that contribution and hence give himself and his family more security. I thank you.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to make an intervention in this matter. In my memory, Sir, well before the Barbados Labour Party left Government in 1986, there was a planning process on the way for the establishment of a national pension plan. That is my distinct remembrance. Clearly, nothing has happened in the interim.

12.20 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to believe that the proposals that are currently underway for public sector reform will be taking cognisance of this matter. It is a very serious matter. Statutory corporations came into being in Barbados many, many years ago apparently to relieve certain areas of Government from the overwhelming bureaucracy of Central Government. I have made this point in here before, Sir. That was one of the major reasons underlying the establishment of a number of statutory corporations, that they would be allowed to move with greater ease and do a number of things that are not easily accomplished in the mainstream Civil Service.

Of course, what happened was, we made several mistakes and one was that we started off by peopling these statutory corporations with people who were civil servants and naturally what happened was that the statutory corporations immediately started to build up their own bureaucracies, so that the very problem they were partly created to be rid of and to bring some solution to was defeated by this building up of their own bureaucracy. There are some statutory corporations in Barbados which on the face of them are no different from dealing with the Central Government, because they are weighted down in this way.

I would like to see, Mr. Speaker, Sir, a situation where there would be a national pension plan in this country which would allow great mobility, great freedom of movement not only between the statutory corporations and the Central Government but between the public and the private sector.

Mr. Speaker, the demographic profile of Barbados will show you an aging population. We have a very developed country profile in this. I have made this point in here many times before and I am going to be making it several times in the future, because it is going to apply in every sector and across-the-board and across the whole spectrum of community life in this country, both in the public and the private sector. Age is no respecter of sectors and we have an aging population. By the year 2010 the largest age cohort in our population is going to be the over 50, and by the year 2020 the over 60. Already we see in this country, as we see in other countries with the same demographic profile, a preparatory process underway. Certain amenities, certain facilities are being put in place even now for retired persons. A whole retirement industry is growing in the world, Sir, and also in Barbados. I have made the point already. There is now an Association of Retired Persons in this country and you only have to be 50 to join it. It is headed up by Sir Carlisle Burton and people like Sir Clyde Gollop. I have joined it.

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: This is the problem. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East does not understand that the concept of retirement now is not an old horse in a field out to pasture. That is not the concept of retirement now. People are not in the early 21st century going to be working in the same job for 30, 40 or 50 years and hoping to get a gold plated watch at the end of it. The predictions are now that in the early 21st century

people will move in a lifetime of work between maybe one or two or three different kinds of work. That is part of the wider concept of a retirement industry. In fact, I think the word "retirement" is going to disappear from the language in the early 21st century, because people will do things differently. There are some who would like to remain in this Chamber for ever, but some of them need to know, Sir, that there is life after Parliament, there is life after almost any job you can think of.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know and I know particularly, because I spent several years sitting on the Board of the Life of Barbados Insurance Company, that there are a multiplicity of private retirement plans out there. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East says he has one. I would assume that the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has several, but there are a multiplicity of them. What I would like to see... You are getting up to confirm it now.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have my own pension plan, so I don't have several.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Well, there we are, Sir. There are all kinds and conditions of retirement arrangements being made. We hear the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central saying with great pride, and I admire him, that he has his own. We have the National Insurance, which has a pension or retirement plan built into it and, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to see the day come when people could move from public to private sector preserving and taking not only pension but other rights as well in respect of terms and conditions...

Aside.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Of course. Medical insurance, health insurance and all kinds of other terms and conditions that are applying in the modern structure of work. The whole structure of how we do work is changing. More and more people now are working out of their homes. That also is going to be a feature of early 21st century life in the way it was a feature of life in the Middle Ages when people worked out of their homes. We are returning to that.

Mr. Speaker, what I am saying is that I would like to see a national pension plan which would allow people to buy in and to buy out of it. I would hope that the people on the National Insurance Board, the people in the Ministry of Finance, Sir...

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: On a point of English.

Mr. SPEAKER: On a point of what?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: English.

Mr. SPEAKER: That is nonsense. There is no such point. A point of elucidation?

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Don't encourage it, Mr. Speaker. He can only elucidate what he said.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The word is "portability".

Mr. SPEAKER: Please. No point. Please continue.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, before I was so rudely interrupted, what I was saying is that I would like to see a national pension plan which would allow people to buy in and to buy out of it as they move with a certain freedom and ease, which does not now exist, between the public and the private sector, between statutory corporations and the private sector, statutory corporations and the Central Government. I would like to think that a whole package, not necessarily only a pension, there are a lot of allied terms and conditions around pensions as well, so that a whole package could be something that you could buy in the way that people now buy private retirement plans of one kind or another. I was saying I would hope that the Ministry of Finance, and particularly the National Insurance Board, would take note of this. There is an industry here and there is money to be made. If it were less expensive for me to approach the National Insurance or some other agency of Government to buy a pension plan than it would be for me to approach my insurance company or one of the other agencies in Barbados which is doing business in this regard, there is no doubt about where my choice would lie. In this respect the Government must understand that it can become competitive with the private sector. Everybody has an interest in a fair and a decent pension and it is something that has to be addressed even now and that is why I hope it is taking high priority in the wider public sector reform that is underway in this country.

12.30 p.m.

I am hoping too that it is not just going to be a pull-out in the case of statutory corporations. I am hoping that public sector reform will see an entire restructuring of how statutory corporations operate in this country. It is ridiculous that people who are coming from the private sector into statutory corporations can sometimes bring with them certain conditions attaching to their former service which the statutory corporation does not offer them. That happens. Even in Central Government that happens and we need to do a consolidation. There is too much *ad hocism* attending this issue and we need to do a proper consolidation, which would culminate in a national pension plan.

I would want to add my voice in support of that and that it should be something which should be treated with some urgency. I would like to think that well before the year 2000 all of these matters can be put in place. I agree with the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central that these things have to be well done. Actuarial studies will naturally have to be made and it is something that can be structured into our entire National Insurance Scheme as far as I am concerned without too much fuss. We are in the age of modern technology. You put it all in the computer and it can be done. I look forward to the day when it would be done because I do believe that in the years to come we are going to see more movement unless they are giving lip service to it and the Honourable Members on this side certainly are not giving lip service to it and I do not believe the Honourable Members on the Other Side are giving lip service to it.

If we are really serious about a more collaborative and more cooperative interaction between the public and the private sector, if we are really serious especially where scarce skills are concerned that there would be greater ease of movement well, then, this is one of the major incentives which will allow people to move from one sector to the other.

I beg to support this matter before the House of Parliament.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Mr. Speaker, I certainly intend to speak in this debate. I have listened to the debate and really cannot allow Honourable Members on the Other Side to get away from this debate, having discussed the issue in what one would consider the most detached and abstract of terms. In particular, if there is some strong and firm commitment by the Government of Barbados to a policy or a programme in relation to pensions, I think it is very regrettable that nobody on that side, apart from this piece of legislation which the Opposition will not oppose, is able to say quite clearly, concisely and with the authority which is necessary that this is the Government's policy.

What essentially we have heard today is what the Government's policy is in relation to this piece of legislation; but nobody is able to tell us what is the Government's policy in relation to pensions as a whole. I don't blame Honourable Members on that side entirely because when we were meeting in relation to the Joint Select Committee on the Insurance Bill I raised with the Attorney General at that time the fact that the original intention of the Democratic Labour Party in relation to the new Insurance Act was to include an entire part in relation to pensions which in the new configuration had been deleted.

I think that it is critical that Government give consideration when it brings the Insurance (Amendment) Bill to Parliament that some firm policy statement be made regarding pensions and the policy of the Government in relation to pensions. I agree with the suggestion the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central has made. Portability has always been something that I have been in favour of and I believe that the Government should also be looking at the issue of portability in relation to severance benefits and should remove the 65-year cap on severance benefits in Barbados.

We have just had an example where people over age 65 are being released from the BADMC and the Government as though it were some Christmas gift or some special dispensation has said that those people, despite the fact that they have reached that age will be paid severance. I believe that that cap needs to be removed and that at age 65 a lump sum payment should be made to the worker in some form of gratuity arising out of the severance which has accumulated in respect of that individual. We need to find more creative ways of dealing with these things. The Insurance Act, therefore, to me would have been the best occasion for the radical reforms which have been suggested on both sides and acknowledging the trends in relation to the working life of people and pensions this would have been the ideal occasion to deal with those issues.

There is another matter which is of even greater concern where persons are employed in statutory corporations or quasi statutory corporations which have private pension plans and where those pension plans are wound up. The legislation which the Honourable Member for St. Michael West Central should have pointed to and the reference point of his speech should not necessarily have been the pension plan itself or the insurance document but the Income Tax Act which places a discretion, but a very limited one, in the hands of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue. For example, the severed workers at the Barbados Development Bank, when that pension plan is wound up and is now being wound up, have to accept the insurance company's decision to convert their share of the plan into annuity and the rate of return on that is considerably less than if some of them took that money and bought Government paper or other kinds of investments. The reason for that legislation I believe would avoid situations where if somebody had contributed to a pension plan it was wound up while they were still young and you pay them the money and they lick out the money in wine, women, song or other esoteric pursuits.
12.40 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: Okay. I will drop "other" and say "or esoteric" which are not...

Aside.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member for the City asks me to add that. I will correct the records – wine, man and song.

Anyway, the essence of the point that one wants to make is that those workers who have spent time in the BDB advising other people on investments and doing project proposals and obviously have skills in investment are now stuck in an antediluvian arrangement where their contributions, though made by the BDB, have to be locked in by other arrangements which the insurance company itself has control over and for which the Commissioner of Inland Revenue is unlikely to exercise a discretion to change. So they may suffer at the end of the day. They cannot transfer it into another pension plan because that is what would require the intervention of the Commissioner of Inland Revenue and that has seldom been permitted. I cannot think of any cases in which it has. They cannot get some other higher yield investment and therefore they are locked into arrangements which are not in their best interest. That legislation, as I said, obviously is based on the perception that if you put a lump sum in somebody's hand they are going to lick out the money and that is not always the case. I believe that other safeguards can be put in place to avoid that kind of scenario.

This area of pensions is becoming more and more dynamic. As it becomes dynamic, I also want to say it is imperative that the legislation which gives effect to statutory board pensions be interpreted and applied in a very liberal spirit. For example, when the new Government took over in 1994 and terminated quite a substantial number of senior executives in various statutory boards, some of whom had in more than 10 years' service, some of whom were not entitled to pension but under other provisions of the legislation a discretion could be exercised to pay them some kind of gratuity or some kind of other benefit, and in terminating those individuals and paying them severance, no consideration whatsoever had been made in relation to paying them other benefits.

I do not wish to specify people because I would have then to declare an interest, not that I am not, but an interest in the sense that I represent some. But what I am saying is the statutory boards do not apply that legislation in a liberal way to give those persons the full benefits to which they are entitled.

Let me explain it another way. If you terminate a senior officer who is not a scheduled officer and a person who is entitled to a pension under the legislation, there is another section of that Act which permits the board, if the person has put in a minimum period of service, to be paid a gratuity and other kinds of benefits. What I am saying is that very often statutory boards do not consider that when they are terminating those officers who have put in 10 or more years' service. In essence, apart from being victimized by being sent home for no legitimate reason, and there are many who have suffered that, they are also being further victimized because pension rights which in favourable circumstances should be theirs, and a discretion which should be exercised in their favour in a more liberal interpretation of the Act and a more just and fair environment, does not apply.

I can think of several people. I can call the statutory corporations, the NCC, the Training Board and many others in which persons have been sent home contractually paying them the notice pay that they required but with no regard whatsoever to the provisions of the Statutory Boards' Pensions legislation and particularly those provisions that apply to non-scheduled officers.

I believe what the Government needs to do is to give the people of Barbados today some kind of guarantee that it does have a policy on pensions, that it has a time frame for the introduction of comprehensive pensions' legislation, that it is committed to minimum pensions to cover basic needs, and that it is committed to a process of portability. That process of portability is important for other reasons. It is important in relation to the capital market in Barbados and if Government is going to have an aggressive programme of developing that capital market, portability is going to be vital. The movement of an individual's pension rights from one scheme into another and so on is going to be critical. For people in the private sector the interest rates spread and so on in relation to the movement of those pension rights is what is going to give life and vitality to the capital market in this country. You have many countries in the world, Chile and others which are being used as examples of it, where the development of national pension schemes have contributed more than anything else to the development of the capital market.

The last point I want to make about that is that if the Government would put in place the necessary mutual funds legislation and other attractive legislation, Barbados may also find itself with the removal of exchange control regulations and some other changes in the domestic environment. Barbados may be able to attract that investment in a triangular arrangement in South American countries which are using Canadian owned offshore vehicles for investment including mutual funds, common trust funds. The Government has just re-enacted similar provisions in the Financial Intermediaries Regulatory legislation which are exactly the same as those in the Offshore Banking Act and a whole range of other investment vehicles. Barbados, being a nation near to the South American countries, could certainly do a lot more in encouraging that kind of offshore investment using investment vehicles in Barbados and using operations in Barbados to manage those trust funds.

The Bank of Bermuda, I think, is the largest manager of trust funds and offshore mutual funds in the world. They just bought a whole series of smaller trust managers and so on and they have developed an expertise in that area, the Bank of Butterfield and the Bank of Bermuda. They do not deal in the Caribbean at all. They do not deal in South America at all. We need to attract entities like that or develop our own. It would take a lot of time to do that but we need, certainly, to use Barbados as the domicile for encouraging the investment of some of those pension funds and so on in South America offshore.
12.50 p.m.

The Chilean Government recently changed it legislation to permit the investment of those offshore firms of those that are pension funds offshore, and they bought substantial amounts of treasury and other U.S. floated bonds and other instruments in recent times. I think that they are trying to push at least 25% of their pension portfolio of Chile elsewhere.

I think that is what we in Barbados need to do, and we need to have those persons who have influence in travel to these exotic South American countries. I am not one of them, but we have some experts on this side. On Thursday he will be visiting another of those countries. Use that influence.

Asides.

Mr. D. J. H. THOMPSON: I really feel that we need to have a core of people going out promoting Barbados. Top level individuals who have integrity and who have an understanding of these issues, and seeking to make Barbados a major investment point in terms of facilitating the investment of those Latin American pension funds in North America, which is going to be their traditional point for investment. That is something that Government needs to consider.

So we need not only to look at what is happening domestically, we need to look at what is happening regionally. There are countries in the Caribbean region which have undergone major capital market changes to make the investment and the portability of pension funds a reality. Then we have to look at Barbados as being a uniquely placed financial center for the kind of triangular transactions which involve South American firms, South American trust managers and so on, using North American investment instruments as offshore vehicles for those investments. That would be the best way that I could describe it.

There is a lot of scope, and innovation is going to be critical. We need a commitment from Government that it does understand these things, that where it does not it will acquire the necessary expertise and also an understanding as to whether the Government of Barbados indeed has a plan at all in relation to pensions domestically, and whether it has any other interest in extending the horizons of this country in the field of international investment and finance in that area.

I am waiting for that commitment. I do not know if anybody on that side could give it. They have been very reluctant so far, but I believe that it would help this debate if we had a firm statement from Government in relation to its policy on pensions.

Thank you.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House be suspended until 2 o'clock this afternoon.

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

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

RESUMPTION

Mr. SPEAKER: This sitting is resumed.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Speaker, I want to say from the outset that I support this Bill. While we are dealing with the public sector, we must be cognisant of the fact that in the private sector there are many people who, when they enter into employment with their employers, they are given contracts and they are told that a percentage of their salaries is placed in a pension fund. Strangely, Sir, when the company goes out of existence or something happens, then one gets the impression that what you are told in the beginning is not the same that is happening in the end.

Even, Sir, that you are given the impression that you need not to fight for increases in salaries *et cetera*, because you know that when you reach the end of your day that there is something put aside for you. You continue working with the understanding that 10% or 8% of your salary is put aside for you. If the company is wound up you cannot then go to the insurance company and say, " I want that 10%."

What is even more regrettable, Sir, that the same insurance companies that are holding your money, you cannot even borrow a mortgage from them. They hold on to your money, take that money and lend it to other

people and they are not prepared to lend you one single cent. I am saying, Sir, that if we are going to be addressing pensions, we must be prepared to address pensions for everybody in Barbados and not just for a few people.

I feel the time is right, Mr. Speaker, that we deal with pensions. I remember when we were sitting at the Joint Select Committee, I said that we should have been discussing pensions at that time.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I am not talking about the Bill. I will never talk about that Bill until it is laid in this Assembly.

What I am saying, is that I expect to see soon in this Assembly, something dealing with pensions for everybody in Barbados. We cannot, Sir, come at a time when we feel that it is going to please a few people or a few voters, and bring legislation that only affects a part of the people in Barbados and not all of the people in Barbados who have been affected by this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I keep hearing that the hands of the people at the Income Tax Department are tied. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, I have researched this, and I would like to be corrected.

It is my understanding, Sir, that if you borrow money from a pension fund early, you have to pay 25%. I want to know how come poor people cannot draw the Government 25% but some big insurance companies in this country can hold on to poor people money and lend it to their friends. Is that fair?

We have the Barbados Shipping Industry Limited, what is more disgraceful about the situation, bright technocrats at the Barbados Development Bank who ought to be teaching people how to invest money and how to manage their money, people are telling them now that they cannot be fair. You have educated people, you have trained people how to manage money and now a few people sitting down in an office somewhere to the south or the east of here are going to tell them that if they give them money they will drink it out and do other things with it. Foolishness. If that is what poor black people are expected to do in Barbados then we should not be in this Assembly because we are neglecting our own people. As a Parliament, we have a right to change the law, not yesterday, but it should have been changed months ago when it was first brought to this Assembly by myself.
2.10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, you have a part in this too. I know when I say to you, I have to speak on behalf of your constituents, there are people in your area who have been affected by this.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN. That is right. That is why I will speak for him. But I do not want you to go and say bad things about him like how certain people made good speeches in here and have gone cursing the man.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, I do not speak ill of Speakers, Sir. As far as Speaker Weekes is concerned next week I will speak well of him but ill of the Democratic Labour Party.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I cannot support you there. You know that once you speak ill of the Democratic Labour Party you have to face me and I know you do not want to face me again. Anyhow I will not be side tracked. I am saying to those gurus in Collymore Rock to stop unfairing black people because if they do not stop unfairing black people then they will have me talking about them all the time. Release the people's money.

It is regrettable, Mr. Speaker, that it is one insurance company that is holding on to all the money belonging to those poor workers of this country and the regrettable thing is, I thought they would have learned from the Beckles situation.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: It is the Barbados Mutual. I am not scared to talk about the Barbados Mutual and they know it because I have already challenged to take them elsewhere on behalf of the workers. Mr. Speaker, a message must go to those people in Collymore Rock that both sides of this House do not agree.

Let me say something. I do not need to go back to the Budget speech of this year but I heard the Prime Minister state that he felt that when you have a pension plan you should be able to borrow money for housing. I thought by now that we would probably be discussing the pension legislation making sure that something like that could be operating. But people must learn to stop using poor people in this country as if they are footballs. I deplore anybody to come and tell me that if you give a man his own money that he would drink it out. So you are trying to tell me all those houses we see poor people living in that they drank out the money and that is why they have houses? That kind of foolish mentality dating back to the sixteenth century must stop. We are going into the twenty-first century. These same poor people that you are talking about are the ones who have sent their children to school and now they are Members of this Assembly. I take it as a personal insult because when you are talking about

poor people you are talking about me. I am not ashamed to tell anybody I am a poor man. But the problem in this country is that there are too many people who are poor and they feel that they must hurt the rich. They feel within themselves whenever they speak they have to talk about my brothers and sisters. Let me tell you something. My brothers and sisters can be found anywhere that you associate with the poor of this country and I will always be there for them. Sir, that is why I will tell the sugar workers of this country that once I am in this Assembly I will keep pushing their case and I will tell the Barbados Mutual that if they do not stop doing what they are doing to poor people soon from now they will have to have all policies that belong to the rich and the poor man in this country will not be buying insurance from them. This myth that they want to hold on to people's money because they are protecting their interest is foolishness.

Let me give you an example. There are some people who work in the sugar industry who do not own a home but have enough money in the pension plan that they can give themselves a home but those people at Collymore Rock are saying they are going to hold on to the people's money. There are some of them who have left the sugar industry and they do not have a job and they are made to walk and beg while those people up in Collymore Rock are driving around $200 000 cars. Are you are telling me that I should be happy that those people are driving around $200 000 cars because they are holding on to money that belongs to poor people?

If we are going to have a Pensions Act, Mr. Speaker, it must be a Pensions Act that goes right down to the bottom and affects the poor of this country and is prepared to uplift the poor of this country. If we are not going to have that, do not ask me to get involved in anything, Sir. I am not here to fan a fire for people who can fan a fire for themselves. I am here to fan the fire for the underprivileged people in this country and I will continue to use this forum, Sir, and I will make sure that whenever I use this forum, Sir, that I bring along the people from Bank Hall and those nice areas. You do not have to worry, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, I want the message to be sent to the Barbados Mutual that one of the poorer politicians and one that is prepared to say that he is poor and ready to fight. The problem in this country is that sometimes we have people who are poor and when they get over they forget where they come from. We have got to stop that foolishness because if we continue to do that and if we continue to kick down the ladder the poor people will always see us as their enemy.

Mr. Speaker, the statutory boards in this country have a right to have the same privileges as the normal civil servants. Mr. Speaker, the poor people cannot write letters. Do you know what is disgraceful, Mr. Speaker? I have seen letters where senior people can write the committee and tell them they want their pension early and the committee approves it. Do you think that is fair where people have money and they did not even need the money but the letter was written giving them their money but when it comes to poor people they are saying, keep it back. I understand one day a man addressed a meeting telling the people they are going to keep their money for them because they would drink it out and do other things and we, as black people would get up in this Parliament and agree with that foolishness.

Mr. Speaker, I will tell you something. If the others are prepared to stand for this type of foolishness, not me, Sir. I know what my position is. My position will always be in the interest of those people who have to fight and struggle and that is why whenever you hear the fight for the small man you will always hear me.

The next bit of foolishness I am seeing happen is coming from the Government side and I want it to stop. At the Barbados Development Bank they did a little dance. Now at BADMC they are doing the same dance and as my leader told them today I am going to also make the same call too. If you feel that when you are restructuring an organization that it is going to affect certain people that you want to continue, change the legislation. I do not believe that anybody signing and saying that such and such organization will be able to get severance pay even though you are 65 or over. I believe that if you feel that everybody over 65 should get severance, let it be the law but let these things come through Parliament. Let us discuss them. It happened at the BDB and now it is happening at the BADMC. I am saying that those things must stop because when you get that there is too much room in there for political interference. I am saying if you bring it in that way I will support it. So bring it. You need not fear, but I do not want every minute that you are operating this thing on a piecemeal basis where you are dealing with this case and that case. People will tend to believe that you are getting political. Like the BADMC, some people may say you are only doing that because we have a by-election. I do not want that. I want you to bring it to Parliament, change the law and you will get my support. But as you are doing what you are doing, you cannot get my support even though I want the fellows over 65 to get some money because the timing of it is strange. So I want the messenger of the Barbados Mutual to understand that the MP for St. Lucy is calling on them to respect the wishes of poor people and the money does not belong to them. They are only holding it in trust for those people. So free it up and stop abusing poor people and taking their money and lending it to all sorts of people who can borrow money elsewhere and the same poor man that has his money in the Pension Fund cannot get one single cent out of it.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that if a lot of people in the City had that money in the Mutual they would have been lambasted, because I am sure that the only insurance company that would do that is Mutual. There is no way that Life of Barbados would have done a thing like that.
2.20 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Advertising? We are not advertising in here. There are two cases to board and all two cases lie right in Collymore Rock and that is a fact. BDB and the Sugar Industry, both of them, are not at Life of Barbados. They are the two champions, they tell me, Life of Barbados and Barbados Mutual. You say advertising. I have a right to advertise. I will tell you why I have a right to advertise. A lot of poor people get mortgages from Life of Barbados and they do not have any money in a pension fund there. Do you understand? So do not start me up. When you are talking about goodness, bring in goodness and we will talk about it. So if Mutual wants me to talk good about them, tell them to stop treating poor people the way they are treating them. Stop holding on to poor people's money and then I will have nothing to say in this House of Assembly. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, in winding up this debate, I am grateful to Honourable Members who spoke on both sides. There are a lot of interesting thoughts and ideas expressed in this debate. I think that there is consensus on both sides that the time has come for serious work to begin in respect of a national pension plan. The Honourable Deputy Prime Minister pointed out that towards the end of the period 1976 to 1986 the Barbados Labour Party had started some preliminary work on the national pension plan. I do not believe that anything happened during the period of 1986 to 1994 in respect of it. But having regard to...

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member for St. Thomas is quite aware that there was a draft in his Chambers which dealt not only with insurance but also a pension plan, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not aware of a national pension plan. I am not aware that one was in my Chambers. I am not aware that my Chambers would be the proper location for a national pension plan. I would think that it should reside more in the Ministry of Finance or the Ministry of the Civil Service but properly in the Ministry of Finance. If you are talking about the Insurance Bill which will provide for pension business, the Select Committee finished its work yesterday. One of the amendments that was done related to the inclusion of pension business in the definition of Insurance Business. But I do not want to anticipate the report which should come next week and the debate which will follow thereafter. But as I said, Sir, I do not believe that any concentrated work has been done in respect of a national pension fund. I am saying that I think that the feeling of the House is that it is time for work to begin. I will make the necessary representations to the substantive Minister of Finance. My time expires at 5 o'clock, Sir. He should be back at 5 o'clock.

Regarding the question of retroactivity or affordability, those are matters of policy even though they might have been urged today, certainly by the Leader of the Opposition, with a view to drawing out the Government. I have been in here too long, Sir, to appreciate that Cabinet Ministers ought not to make instant policy. On matters like these, the collective view of Cabinet and in fact the wider society should be canvassed before a position is taken. I give the Members my assurance that these matters will all be referred to the substantive Minister.

Sir, the Leader of the Opposition made reference to the termination of senior executives in statutory boards after 1994. He spoke of about 500. He mentioned 500.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Honourable Member is telling me that 500 was a slip. He probably meant 5 and he put on a hundred...

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Sir. I suspect that the Honourable Member was referring to the number of persons that were sent home in general but may have inferred that all of them were from statutory boards. It may have just been a slip. I brought it to his attention too.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: He mentioned a matter of the Conservation Commission and the National Training Board and certainly in respect of the National Training Board the person to whom I think he was referring left Barbados without permission to go overseas to bank money in Antigua and also paid $500 with a view to bribing a Customs Officer to destroy one of the ED cards. So I hope that persons will be more careful when they refer to some of these things. I have all of the information. If that person was dismissed from the National Training Board, he was properly dismissed. Unlike the situation in 1986, I am not going to get acrimonious...

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, the point made by the Honourable Member for St. Lucy, as I understand it, was that the Government should not assume a power to pay persons over 65 in statutory boards if the organization is being restructured. He thinks that we should have legislation to deal with it. The Government always has a power to deal with matters on an *ex gratia* basis. But I was searching these files today to see if there was any evidence of a national pension plan. I cannot find any in the files, and I am not using this example pejoratively, but I found a decision by the then Prime Minister on April 23, 1993 where without coming to Parliament he approved certain pensions to be paid to employees of CBC who had reached retiring age. He did not come to Parliament. I will pass the file so you can see it. I have no problem in principle with it because it raises a very important point which nobody addressed today, and it is this. Almost every statutory board Act makes some reference to pension rights and many provide for the establishment of a pension plan. In 90% of the cases no pension plan has been established.
2.30 p.m.

I once went to the court in 1993 about the NPC when they were contemplating restructuring and I got an injunction to restrain the restructuring pending the setting up of the pension plan. That is only one. CBC after all these years in 1993 still had no pension plan and the then Prime Minister made a decision.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: It was not arbitrary at all, it was properly argued. He made a decision to deal with those situations. I am trying to say to the Honourable Member for St. Lucy that it is not every time you have to come to Parliament with the cumbersome procedure of amending legislation when you know that as a matter of compassion there is another route that would allow you to do justice to the particular situation.

Sir, with those observations, I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

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

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee on the Bill, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee.

Clauses 1 to 3 inclusive were called and passed.

The Schedule was called.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that the Schedule be the Schedule to the Bill.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one Bill in Committee without amendment, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed.

ORDER NO. 7 – COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee of Supply, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This Honourable Chamber is now in Committee of Supply.

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 1996-97
No. 6 – $23 927 144

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, the Resolution before the Committee is for $23 927 144 to be granted from the Consolidated Fund as supplementary provision. I wish to say at the outset that this is Part I of the supplementaries which will be sought by Government pursuant to the mid-term fiscal review which was conducted in September and October, so that all Ministries are not covered in today's supplementary and these are deemed to be the most urgent, that is why they have come right now.

Mr. Chairman, a list of the major payments relate to the Drug Service $5 million, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Personal Emoluments, $2 044 045, the VAT Implementation Unit, the Immigration Department – I will deal with them shortly – the Post Office, Supplies, Materials and Maintenance for the Queen Elizabeth Hospital $2.2 million, Repairs to Police Stations about $1.9 million. Part of that is a revote of approximately $700 000 that should have been appropriated before the end of the last financial year but the money lapsed and we are now revoting it. A substantial part of that is to pay for the work at Central

and I will tell Members about that when we come to it. I did a tour on Friday and we saved it just in time. It may have collapsed within six months. There are also funds for renovations and alterations at the Treasury Building, substantial in the Inland Revenue Department. I will explain to Members when we do the Prime Minister's Head how these funds are segmented between the VAT Unit, the Land Tax Department and the Inland Revenue Department.

For the Honourable Member for St. Michael East, there is $1.7 million relating to acquisition of property and professional fees for the Greenland landfill. We will see if we will get to that today, Sir.
2.40 p.m.

There are various other fees for the QEH. The Medical Aid Scheme needs topping up – $750 000. Seven hundred thousand dollars is sought to pay for vehicles for the Sanitation Service Authority some of those which are giving trouble since money was advanced to the Sanitation Authority through Barclays Bank and this money is now to refund Barclays Bank. This is a separate matter.

There are some necessary works that have to be done and in the last few years it has become the practice after the rains have subsided to clean up the island. $547 000 is being committed to clean up, debushing.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I don't know if any of these funds are for St. Lucy. Those are the big ticket items and we can deal with them as we come to the various Heads. However it is appropriate upon any resolution of this magnitude being debated for me to give the House a little background about how the outturn is, the targets and the revenue and expenditure have been holding up.

The fiscal outturn for the first half of the year recorded a deficit of $79.4 million. That is a lot less than the target and $19.3 million less than the corresponding half year for 1995-96. So that what these figures are showing is that current revenue for the half year is up by approximately $29.9 million and current total expenditure is down by about $95.8 million.

If I could further analyse the revenue expenditure situation. In the first quarter, 1996-97, current revenue was about $32.8 million more than targetted. In the second quarter, revenue was slightly under by 3.9% of the target. Current expenditure in the first quarter was $17.8 million less than the target set at $279 million and in the second quarter, 1996-97 actual current expenditure was $41 million less than the target. We recorded a slight acceleration in the growth of goods and services' expenditure in the second quarter as compared with the first – $4.7 million. Capital expenditure in the first quarter was down a little bit – $26.3 million less than the target but in the second quarter it was on target short by a couple of hundred thousand – $45.5 million and it turned out at $44.9 million.

Mr. Chairman, this supplementary as is sought comes against a background of other supplementaries voted by this Honourable House earlier this year to a total amount of $8.5 million. The Ministries and Departments have identified savings on both current and capital side so there is a little elbow room for supplementary provisions. I wish to assure the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central who is smiling that this and the other supplementary that will follow will still not burst the 1.6% of GDP that the Government has started and is comfortable with. So we are within manageable limits and within the target. This $23 million as I said will keep us within the 1.6% of GDP according to the international financial institutions basis.

Mr. Chairman, so that Honourable Members follow, the Resolution as circulated has been amended by this document – Amendment to Supplementary Estimates 1996-97, No. 6 as laid. So that we have to read the two together. I know Honourable Members will wish to discuss the Heads so I will sit and then I will move a particular Head stand part.

Sir, the first Head we wish to deal with is Head 30.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the matter that I rise on relates to what is happening to the role of this Honourable House in matters of supplementaries. This House, Sir, under the Constitution of Barbados is the only authority for raising money from the citizens of this country and authorising the expenditure of that money. What we have here is a situation where we are dealing with $23 million plus under a large number of Heads and under the rules of this House this debate is constricted to 3 hours. This is entirely wrong and I notice that this habit has developed and it is one that needs to be stopped.
2.50 p.m.

I believe, Sir, that these should be a matter of separate supplementaries for the various Heads because what is happening here is that the House is being railroaded and abused into rubber-stamping expenditure determined by the executive arm of Government. This is not right. If this is going to be done in this way where you are bringing a large number of mid-term supplementaries, then I think you have to bring it by way of a Bill. I think this whole matter should be postponed and it should be brought to the House in the form of a Bill so there can be adequate discussion of these monies. This should be a Schedule to a Bill.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: This never happened when I was Minister of Finance. This is a habit I have seen since I returned to this House after a short vacation. But I have never seen this situation where you have Resolutions covering a large number of Ministries and you have no opportunity to discuss most of these matters. This is a very serious matter of privilege which I would like to raise. I would sincerely hope that the Government would take that objection seriously because I do not think it is in the public interest to proceed with financial matters on this basis. It is quite wrong. It has never been the habit in this House until recently.

Since I returned to this House I saw this and I am told that it has happened before but, usually, when you bring these supplementaries they cover a particular item and that is dealt with within the three hours but this is almost half the range of Government here, Sir. How can we discuss it in 3 hours? It makes a mockery of the Estimates. It makes a mockery of Parliament.

What I would suggest to the Honourable Minister is that we restrict the discussion to an agreed number of Heads today so that the House can have the opportunity to examine all these Heads. It is not fair.

Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is making a ruling here.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, I am responding to the point of privilege to guide Your Honour.

The Honourable Member is seeking to get publicity based on a point that has no substance in law or in fact. He knows and has participated in debates in here where the 3-hour rule has applied, including a big supplementary last year. That is a matter of fact. The matter of law is that the Standing Orders of the House, and Standing Order 70 says as follows, and we will see if his point has any substance:

"1. The Minister responsible for Finance may, from time to time, cause to be prepared, Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure which shall be laid before and voted on by the House of Assembly.

2.(a) Three hours shall be allotted for a debate on a Supplementary Estimate of Expenditure containing up to 12 items and an additional 15 minutes debate shall be allowed for every item over 12 items."

That has been interpreted all the years to allow for an omnibus resolution so long as the number of Heads do not exceed 12, so it is a foolish point.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I would strongly suggest that we do not proceed with this Resolution. I think the Honourable Member takes the point. Heads are not the same thing as items. This is a new practice. He has been in this House for as long as I have been in this House and he knows that this is a relatively new practice in bringing a large number of Resolutions dealing with a large number of Ministries at one and the same time. These things cover Health, Education, they cover a wide range of Ministries.

If we are serious about having a mid-term review, I am all in favour of a mid-term review of Government's fiscal policy and the fiscal outturn, but if it is going to take the form of this kind of discussion then I have a big problem with it. Either we have a midterm review where everyone can participate in it, or alternatively, I would not want to be associated with this kind of sham year after year. Bring a Bill to the House so that the matter can be fully debated. It is quite wrong and I think the construction which the Honourable Attorney General is putting on those Standing Orders is a legalistic interpretation and you know perfectly well...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You see what I mean, Mr. Chairman? The Honourable Member is now going to say that there is no point of privilege. It is a matter of privilege I am raising on behalf of all Members of this Honourable House.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: How you mean I cannot raise it? You can raise a matter of privilege at any time according to the Standing Orders. Mr. Chairman, according to the Standing Orders you have there, any Member can rise at any time during any debate on a matter of privilege and I am exercising my privilege to do so because I see that the privileges of this Honourable House are being severely undermined by this habit.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: How can you rise on a point of order when I am on a point of privilege?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Please sit. Make your point.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Chairman, I am on a point of order. Standing Order No. 76 on Privilege states at its second paragraph:-

"Any member desiring to raise a matter under this Standing Order, shall first obtain leave of the Speaker who shall determine whether the Member is entitled to raise the matter as a question of privilege."

It goes on, Sir:

"If permission is given by the Speaker under paragraph 2 of this Order, the Member may raise the matter at any time before public business is commenced and move that the matter be referred to the Committee of Privileges."

I continue, Sir:

"There shall be no debate on a motion under paragraph 3, (which I have just read) but if the Speaker decides that a *prima facie* case has been made out, he shall rule accordingly and refer the matter to the Committee of Privileges."

Mr. Chairman, there is no question of point of privilege here. There is no such thing and any matter of privilege has to follow a certain procedure. I am amazed that the Honourable Member is getting up to talk about an abuse of procedure under one Standing Order while breaching another one.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair is making a number of rulings here. First of all in the matter relating to the Supplementary, Standing Order 70 (1) and (2) is very clear and according to the precedents laid down so far. If we go over 12 items, we will have an additional 15 minutes debate. As far as we have agreed by precedence in this House, items have been interpreted to mean Heads from previous discussions and we will take that as what the Chair will determine for this time.
3.00 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I am not finished yet. When I am finished you can speak.

Asides.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chair has made a ruling that as far as precedent of this House has determined that an item is a Head as we have dealt with before. On the second matter of point of privilege, Standing Order 76(5) says "that if during a sitting of the House a matter suddenly arises, which appears to involve the privileges of the House and which calls for the immediate intervention of the House, the proceedings may be interrupted save during the progress of a division by a motion based on such matter".

No formal motion has been put.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: A Member can rise on a matter of privilege at any time.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Member must make a motion and this motion must be seconded. All motions must be seconded. If you are making a motion do so, but you must have a seconder.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member, in interpreting the Rules, the Honourable Member must first lay the groundwork for the introduction of that motion. He has stated an allege. What privilege of the House he is alleging has suddenly arisen. In the House, freedom of speech and things of that kind, not foolishness about the Rules.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES : Mr. Chairman, all I have said represents, in my view, an infringement of privileges of this House. The argument, Mr. Chairman, that I have to lay the groundwork for a motion....

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Chair has indicated to me that I am in order to rise at any time on a matter of privilege, and that I must establish the background for the motion and then bring the motion. Is that correct?

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I am also saying, secondly, that according to the Standing Orders in making whatever motion you are making, you must be guided by the facts that each Head is an item and once we go over 12 items we can have 15 minutes extra.

Proceed.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The privilege conferred by this House under the Constitution, as being the sole authority for raising taxes, levying taxes, allocating expenditure, that privilege is being substantially abused by bringing down Resolutions of this nature covering all these matters when the Standing Orders confine us, Sir, to a 3-hour debate on the matter. That is the background.

The motion is, against that background, that consideration of the Estimates as laid, and introduced to the House, by the Honourable Member for St. Thomas be postponed and be brought back to the House in the form of a Bill, so that all Members can debate them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. There is no seconder for this motion. Let us proceed.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of privilege.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: There can be no point of privilege in this case. Nothing has arisen since I gave my order. Continue, please.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, in moving that Head 30 stand part, I just want to pick out some of these matters and indicate to Honourable Members why they are here.

Sir, since July, there has been a separation of the physical accommodation between the Attorney General and the Ministry of Home Affairs. At the Attorney General's office there is one room that I have that is about as big as from the corner of that wall to here, across and down. There are two filing cabinets, Sir, which are full. We have nowhere, if you are meeting somebody, an ambassador or somebody comes to see you. They have to sit outside in the typing pool.

When the Ministry of Tourism went to Sherbourne, the space at the Post Office became vacant and it allowed us to have a bit more elbow room. I maintain the two offices. I go between each on a daily basis. It meant that we had one secretary, who was doing the two jobs – secretary to the Attorney General and secretary to the Minister of Home Affairs – and Home Affairs side of it is heavy because of the number of files that come from Immigration on a daily basis. It really was too much for any secretary. It was unfair.

So, with a view to rationalising the workload and creating a bit more space, we have asked for some funds to purchase a FAX machine, printer and various other pieces of equipment. I have two little chairs in the Attorney General's office. Two small chairs.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: E-mail? E-mail will come in the next financial year.

The office of the Attorney General has no photocopier. Do you believe that could be right? No photocopier. Down in the Solicitor General's Department, probably about 100 yards down the building, there is a photocopier. We deal with paper, Bills and all kind of things. So we need, Sir, a photocopier, a FAX. I said that I have two filing cabinets in my room, Sir. We need some filing cabinets, a typist chair, computer, printer, and other chairs. So that $40 963, Sir, is to supply furniture, equipment and some plants to make the office more decent, and the necessary equipment for a secretary.

Sir, I wish to deal with that item, Grants to Public Institutions $245 807. Before this is made a by-election issue, let me just remind Honourable Members that provision was made in the Estimates under the National Drug Centre to provide funds for various programmes or projects in the demand reduction programme. Of that $245 000, $71, 407 is salaries, $6 700 is National Insurance contributions, $2,700 is maintenance of vehicles. I will explain it. $165 000 is for the refurbishment of the school at Deacons.

3.10 p.m.

Sir, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East will appreciate the reasonableness in this request. Sir, when we came in March we identified that there were 6 areas in Barbados where the National Council on Substance Abuse, through the Drug Resource Centre, was working directly in communities as part of a joint effort by UNDCP and the Government of Barbados. The UNDCP contributed about one million dollars over a 3-year period and Government has to match with counterpart funds. The 6 areas identified were Pinelands where there are 13 micro businesses being helped by the same Drug Resource Centre at Trents. Gall Hill/Silver Hill, where we are trying to start from and the Honourable Member for Christ Church West Central I want him to assist the National Drug Resource Centre in this regard because what is happening in Gall Hill and Silver Hill is moving a little too slowly and I think it needs somebody like yourself to be in there to get the youngsters together but the project really is to outfit and fully equip football teams starting from, I think, age 8 on various levels. From 8 to 12, 12 to 15 , 15 to 18 and so on because that community is interested in sports.

Next year we will get to other districts. We have Eden Lodge, we have Canevale, we have got a project in Haynesville. In fact when we opened the drug resource centre on Friday all the catering was done by ladies involved in the project at Haynesville and the catering was superb. Then there is a project in the City, Sir, and there is a project in Deacons. Now what we did at Deacons is that there is the old school there by the playing field and we have completely refurbished it, largely with the help of persons in that community. They never had a National Advisory Council on Drugs that functioned. You created the National Council on Substance Abuse and it is now working. That school, Sir, those of you who went down there on the weekend canvassing would have seen it. Sir, there are all kinds of projects that will be done at that school. Computer labs, the aim is to put in 12 computers, metal work department, needle working department, machines and so on will be put in for training people. We are also going to have to put a police station right there in the same building. We want to have a gym. For an old school building, it has a comparatively large hall which will double as an area where there can be cultural

set aside at least one day or a day and a half of debate on a matter of this magnitude. I am being very serious. I am not running from any debate. I want to get into the debate and I want to have the opportunity. But this is not the kind of opportunity that we have here. For example, Sir, if we were to have an extended debate under this Head and there are a number of issues here that I would like to raise, but the point is that if I raise them and there is a debate on them then all the other Heads go through undebated. So it is a problem. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South should be on his feet supporting me. Because when he was Minister of Finance he never brought anything like this to the House. When I was Minister of Finance, I never brought anything like this to the House. This is a new development. I thought that by now, Sir, the one thing the Barbados Labour Party should stop talking about is taxes on vegetables. Because for the first time in the history of Barbados we now have taxes on locally grown vegetables by way of the VAT.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is quite out of order. We are not debating any taxes on vegetables at this particular period of time. Even if we were, the statement of the Honourable Member would be untrue because the Honourable Member obviously has not read the proposed VAT Bill since he would have seen that agricultural produce is not subject to taxation.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Honourable Member is as confused as the general public on the issue of VAT. There is no VAT chargeable at the farm gate.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is out of order. In fact, his remarks are so irrelevant and contrary to the Standing Orders that they should be expunged from the record. If we were dealing with Head 19, there is plenty there for him to talk about VAT. But I do not know if we will get time today, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member has challenged my veracity on the matter of VAT on locally grown vegetables and I am saying that it is a fact that such vegetables would not be charged VAT at the farm gate. But when they are bought at the supermarkets you have to pay VAT on them.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to come back into line.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: The Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central is misleading the House because when VAT is finished with the vegetable growers, Sir, they will not be able to produce vegetables. They will have to buy all of the cheap vegetables from overseas.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Anyhow, Sir, I believe that what is happening here is that the Government has come in here with nice rosy, cosmetically acceptable Estimates and then 6 months later in the year they will come back with these huge supplementaries. Last year we had the highest level of supplementaries ever in the history of Barbados and this year now we are already into a $23 million supplementary on top of the $8 million already. That is $31 million and a promise of more to come. So I believe that we must have better parliamentary control of expenditure and I want to see the Estimates for 1997-1998 truly reflecting in those appropriations what Government intends to spend for the year and not to come in here with Estimates showing significantly lower levels of expenditure, lower levels of revenue then over-taxing people and then come in here with supplementaries. That is what you have been doing since 1994.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: My bills are all piled up at home. You have not paid any bills for me. You have paid no bills for me. My bills are all there in a file to be paid. I wouldn't like the public to get the impression that you... 3.30 p.m.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ... a piece of board with a swing down the centre with the bills one on top the other. I wouldn't like to give anybody the impression that you all have paid any bills for me.

I wouldn't like to make any further contribution to this matter but I would like to hear a little more about that large sum, the $1.6 million. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, just let me assure the Honourable Member for Christ Church South that included in the $115 469 Object No. 211: Maintenance of Property Administration of Justice there is money in there to do work at Oistins and to complete payments to the contractor at Districts B and C. Let me explain. At Districts B and C we are completely renovating those stations. Part of the work has been completed but between August and when we went on recess we had owed the contractor $103 000. It was not his fault. It was our fault in the Ministry that he was not paid on time. Out of this $115 000, $103 000 arrears of certificates valued to be paid to the contractor.

I also wish to assure the Honourable Members that work at Oistins will shortly be started with a view to remedying the defects there; but next year we have to do a major refurbishing job at Oistins. Otherwise, if we don't keep things up to mark we will be in trouble.

performances or alternatively if there are groups from overseas coming to Barbados and want cheap accommodation they can use that space and put in bunk beds or cots or whatever. We are completely refitting the sanitary conditions, toilets, baths and so on, separate for men and women.

On Saturday I also told them to find an area where we can cast a large concrete sink for washing so that when the people come from overseas and want to wash their things on weekends they can do it there. This money, Sir, is really to finish the work. The electrical work has not been completed. I think the work has been awarded and if it has not been I do not want to call the person's name just in case but the electrical work is at the point where it should soon be awarded and as soon as they completely rewire and finish off a couple of the other refurbishment that need to be done, we should be able to open that within this financial year. So this money is really to complete the work at Deacons.

The youngsters in the area have worked on the project. It was a little difficult at first when it was central government and the question of disbursing funds from the central government to individuals for work was difficult. That is why we set up the Council and are now routing the funding and the disbursements through the Council. Sir, this project at Deacons is part of the agreement with the UNDCP and we have to play our part. The work started before Mr. Weekes resigned. I know it will be distorted now because of the election but I just want to give the facts. That really is the bulk of that $245 000. I believe my time is up, Sir, and I take my seat.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: I am hoping, Sir, that some of this supplementary would be used to repair the roof at the Oistins Court. It really is a disgrace. The tiles are the fibre glass tiles. It is well known that the life span of those tiles is between 8 and 12 years and they are dropping off and this has exposed the boards underneath from which the tiles are placed. It is the plywood and that itself because of its exposure to water is now rotten. You have the facing boards too all around the place. Even if those are changed together with that part of the roof which is exposed, it will at least present a better appearance. I went inside the Court, Sir, to see if there was any damage and so far there has been no damage. But I warn that unless we do something there will be damage inside of the building very, very soon. They tell me that is a Court that is very profitable, Sir. So that I would hope that at least those two things can be done as a matter of urgency. Because what I am worried about is that the skirting boards might fall down. If you look at them, you will see that they are rotten out and we would like to see that done as a matter of urgency.

3.20 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I rise again to make some observations under Head 30 and I think that what has transpired so far in the case very clearly is that this House will have little opportunity to really get into these various Heads and will just rubber stamp most of them.

Now I am concerned as to what is happening in relation to Estimates and supplementaries in the public affairs of this country. This House was promised again and again that the days of supplementaries were over and I now understand what they mean by "over", that they will bring all together in mid-term. That is what they mean by "over" rather than one by one during the year. Now if that is the policy, then I think that there must be an appropriate mid-year allocation of parliamentary time to reflect that kind of decision. This is a matter on which I am very serious. I will tell you why I am very serious about it. If you look at Head 30, you will see what is happening here. In the Estimates, under Object 623 Structures, we provided for $500 000. The supplementary is going to be $1 625 000. So we had a 5 day debate dealing with $500 000 and now a supplementary three times as large and so far not even adverted to by the Minister who introduced this Head.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: On a point of order, Sir. In my general introduction when I was dealing with this, I said that approximately $700 000 is a re-vote from last financial year in respect of Central Police Station. I said that the building was about to fall and we were told by the engineers that we caught it just in time. If not, the floor between the two would have collapsed. Part of this $1.6 million, and I said it, was to do with the Central Police Station.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The second point I want to raise under Object 611 in the Estimates – $300 000. Today, $358 458. Now, Sir, something has got to be wrong if Parliament is to be handling financial affairs in this manner. Object No. 316, $245 000 which the Honourable Member went into in great detail involving the proposed work at Deacons. I understand the work being done at Deacons and I understand the anger which came across from the Other Side when I suggested that we postpone this debate to a little later. Now I see what the $245 000 is all about. I could not understand the basis of the anger when I was just simply making a suggestion that this matter be deferred until later.

Sir, I do believe that Honourable Members have taken my point that I have made in this matter. Because all of us have a shared responsibility in respect of decisions taken in relation to public expenditure. So that I would very much like to know whether or not we are going to have this situation continuing or whether we will see a change in policy which would give the House the opportunity to

The $1.6 million. Original provision was included to do renovations at Hastings, Districts B, C and E out of the Police Headquarters vote but I explained to Honourable Members that at Central because the contract was awarded too close and it had nothing to do with us. That really is the fault of the Tenders Committee. As I understand it, you cannot award a contract under 6 weeks from the date of advertisement. The contract was awarded at such a late stage that we were not able to draw down much that had been voted. The contractor was barely able to mobilise at the end of the last financial year so that $700 000 approximately lapsed.

In the meantime, the work has gone on very well at Central. It is 3 weeks ahead of schedule. Probably one of the few projects in Barbados that is ahead of schedule. The cells in the backyard have been built. Just there where the old charge office used to be and it had the mast and the antenna. That is where the new cells have been built. I saw them on Friday. Then we are doing the whole of that building along Coleridge Street. The wooden floor that separated the top floor from the bottom floor was rotten, termite infested, and I was advised by the engineer that we caught it in time otherwise one day it would have just collapsed and people would have probably been killed. We have taken out all of that, done all the termite treatment and cast one long concrete floor and we are completing the work inside.

The walls are of coral stone and they are doing a lot of reblasting to ensure the integrity of the wall. If Honourable Members pass, they will see that we have changed some of the windows and we are going to change all the windows and have the windows uniform. When it is finished, it will look really good.

Sir, I asked them on Friday when I toured, about the target and I said, "Will you finish by the end of the financial year?" And they said yes. I think to be realistic I am saying the end of April. With Christmas and so on... They think that by the end of the financial year they will finish but I am allowing another month or so. Part of this $1.625 million is the revote we have to pay. I think there are 3 or 4 certificates outstanding. Luckily that contractor was able to carry the job without relying on us during the recess but we have to pay him now for the outstanding bills that have come in. Any other questions?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I notice a certain decision of the Supreme Court recently in relation to capital punishment and I wonder what has been your response to that and whether you see any speeding up of the judicial process as a result of this money being voted today.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, on the day of the decision in the constitutional motion Harewood and Murrell, I gave an interview to 2 sections of the Press and I said that the learned trial judge had held for the Crown in 3 of the 4 instances and the one which he held against the Crown did not surprise us because he would find himself tied by the incident of Pratt and Morgan and all the other cases that followed Pratt and Morgan. The Government has done a number of things to try and speed up the process. Those are old cases going back to 1971. I believe that the cases where persons have been convicted in 1993 and 1994 will hardly ever be caught by the Pratt and Morgan point against it, because a conscious effort has been made by the judiciary and the Registry to tackle the problem of delay since the decision on Pratt and Morgan.

I think I read into the record in here a minute from my predecessor. He convened a meeting after Pratt and Morgan of the relevant parties to look and see how they could speed up the system. Not a lot more was recorded in the file but there was this meeting and everybody agreed that they had to take decisions. Decisions have been taken.

I have mentioned publicly that whereas judges used to use one Evidence Book to record a variety of trials and that Evidence Book was not surrendered until it was written out, that has changed. So whereas formerly the judge would start a rape case in this Evidence Book and then go to wounding and then do a forgery and then do a murder all in one book and that book was not handed up for the typist to transcribe until it was written up, now the system is that every murder case has its own separate Evidence Book. As soon as the case is finished, that Evidence Book is handed to the typist who should then get the typing going. Since then, we have had the staff trained in the use of computers.
3.40 p.m.

Early in the new year I expect the Registry and Courts will be computerised. We are starting a course at the Community College in January. We are targeting 25 students. The advertisements have been out in the Press. Eighteen persons have been selected, including one or two persons from the parliamentary reporters, some of the court reporters and other individuals to make sure that when we are fully equipped with computer aided transcription, we will have a core of persons who are competent to operate that system.

As I say, Sir, the Registry is going to be computerised within the next year. The Magistrates' Courts in town are being prepared for airconditioning. The airconditioning units have been installed. The electrical power remains to be connected and the builders' work that is necessary inside to seal the rooms to ensure that the cool air remains inside that work, I am told, should not take more than a month by the Buildings Officer in the Ministry. Early in the new year we also expect that the District "A" Court will be airconditioned. Of course, the Registry top and bottom is to be airconditioned as well as computerised.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: District "C," you may have been out of your place. Out of the $115 469 some $103 000 of that money is to pay the contractor who is working at Districts "C" and "B" $103 000 that we owed him before August, but could not pay him because the House was on recess. I expect a speeding up of the work there once he gets that. In the meantime, the Ministry gave certain assurances to his bank, which I will explain to the Honourable Member, to ensure that he had a line of credit.

Sir, I therefore beg to move that Head 30 stand part.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I beg to second that, Sir.

The question that Head 30 stand part was put and resolved in the affirmative wthout division.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Before the Honourable Member proceeds, I believe an important concession should be made at this point and, that is, that the Opposition should call the Heads. I beg to move that Head 36 stand part.

Aside.

HEAD 28 – MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, in moving that Head 28 stand part, I wish to just deal with the two big items there, Other Personal Emoluments $308 000 and Operating Expenses of $229 000.

Sir, the Immigration Department has been computerised. Honourable Members will recall that was completed some time in 1995. But in computerising the Immigration Department, we have had to draw on the resources of the Statistical Department so that data entry operators from Statistics have been assigned to Immigration to key in, as they call it, the information. We are going back as far as the Immigration records go to put all of that information on computer. The aim and objective is that at the end of the exercise the Immigration Department will be the central agency for the dissemination of statistical information to all the relevant agencies including the Central Bank, the Caribbean Tourism Organisation and the Board of Tourism. It is going to take a little time before we complete the exercise.

In order to speed it up, Sir, we have had to come to ask for additional funds, $308 000 to pay for additional data entry operators. That is what that OPE represents. The computerisation of the Immigration Department has brought with it a very dangerous situation that because of the amount of data we have been putting in the computer, if we are not careful, I am advised that the system will crash because it is becoming overloaded and we will lose that data. It was not anticipated at the time when the contract was awarded for this type of equipment that there would have been so much going in. However, the suppliers have made arrangements to try and ensure that the system survives until other equipment comes from the suppliers to upgrade the present equipment. I am told that we should be able to survive for the time being. The equipment has been ordered and the $229 000 that is identified under Object No. 212 part of that, $195 550, is to provide the necessary software to upgrade the system. That explains those two items under Head 28.

However, Sir, I read from time to time uninformed correspondence in the Press which would suggest that this Government has been just granting work permits carelessly, or with impunity, to whosoever will may come. There was a letter that was written recently with Opposition connections accusing me of letting in all kinds of people in Barbados, so I went for the figures. I have the figures, Sir. I asked Immigration to make sure and give me the figures for 1993, leave out 1994 because we had a piece in there, and they had a piece. Give me 1993, 1995 and 1996. These are the figures, Sir.

1993 – work permits issued – 1, 020

1995 – " " " – 1 092

1996 (so far) 1 003

Now, it appears therefore that the level of work permits issued in a year is around 1 000. In 1995 the increase of 72 in a year is explainable. I came in here in November 1994 and explained to the House, and had the support of the Opposition, that we wanted to make sure that those Caribbean brethren who were in Barbados undocumented and hiding from the police should not be harassed by Immigration, therefore we encouraged them to go and get the forms and fill them up. In November 1994, and they have followed me. They have not been locked up. I thoroughly believe that part of the additional 70 for 1995 was those people.

3.50 p.m.

It really is untruthful to suggest that the Government is somehow, all of a sudden, running an open-door policy for Immigration. Where we have an open-door policy is clearly known – Caribbean journalists, Caribbean entertainers, Caribbean sports people, particularly jockeys. We cannot charge them for a work permit. No hassle.

Asides.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: On a point of order. The Honourable Attorney General is misleading the House, Sir. The Attorney General has forgotten that we also passed

a Bill, Sir, where certain professionals now could come into Barbados and work without necessarily getting a work permit. Also, Sir, that sportsmen and musicians can do the same. First thing, Sir, he will have to take off those figures and the figure will have to be higher than 72, Sir.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I must confess that the logic of the contribution escaped me. He was just repeating what I had said in relation to sportsmen and entertainers.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Even as a Member of this House, he does not remember that it is this year, June, that we passed the CARICOM Skills Nationals Legislation. That was not reflected in anything in 1995. I can tell you. It is a fact, there have only been 4 persons so far that I have signed for under the CARICOM Skills National. I do not know if anybody, when they were acting for me in October, may have signed. There are only 4.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Now, Sir, there is also a category of person who forms immigrants. Persons are entitled to immigrant status in Barbados.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Persons registered as immigrants of Barbados. In 1993, under the Democratic Labour Party, 260, 1995, under the Barbados Labour Party, 265, an increase of 5, 1996 to date 155.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, with those comments, I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

Mr. F. J. STUART: Sir, what is the progress of the White Paper?

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: The Draft White Paper on Immigration was sent to me. I read it, made several comments on it, and handed it back to the Permanent Secretary on Monday morning, Sir. We are going to have a meeting sometime next week when I get back from Jamaica.

I think that there are some structural refinements that can be made. I would like to see the White Paper set out a little differently than how it has been presented. For example, I would like to see what is the present situation and what is proposed in respect of each type of status. Sir, just stylistic and editorial refinements that we need to make. That will come early in the New Year because it will have to go to the Cabinet, and then we need a little time to read it. It is not that thick, probably about 8 pages. Early in the New Year Honourable Members should be in possession of it.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, Sir, there have been repeated complaints of persons in Barbados doing unskilled jobs which ordinary Barbadians can do. A lot of this activity is particularly evident in tourist related activities, especially, on the west coast of Barbados.

I believe that this has been drawn to the attention of the Attorney General before and I wonder whether any investigation of this matter has taken place, and whether anything is being done about it. I think that the last time I spoke to the issue in this House, I recall one night going to a restaurant, on the west coast, and there was nobody, no one, providing any service in that restaurant that looked like me. In fact my wife and I were the only 2 people in the restaurant that were black. There are a whole lot of functions being performed inside by three people...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: A lot of functions being performed that could be performed by Barbadians. This is something that needs to be looked into. I have received a lot of complaints in this particular area, and I really do think that where there is such significant job shortages, that we should respond to the complaints of people who are not malicious. These are people who are genuinely concerned about what is going on around them and in the tourism related areas.

I do not want to detain the House too much, Sir, because I am very anxious to hear something about the expenditure under Head 36.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, I give the Honourable Member the assurance that his concerns have been addressed and will continue to be addressed. In fact I am very grateful to the Honourable Member for what I think is a very important contribution.

People, over the years, have taken advantage of the Immigration Laws of Barbados. It is unfortunate, of course, that we had that period of structural adjustment, and that we have fallen ever since then, hook, line and sinker for the current philosophy that prompts, even to developing countries, about slimming down government. It is alright for America, England and those places, but I believe in small developing countries there is still a role for the state to play in maintaining levels of employment in certain key areas.

One of the areas that we have suffered in is Immigration. There has been no expansion in the number of Immigration Officers to do the kind of enforcement work, they call it, we probably have 3 people in enforcement. If they are out following up calls from the public about Mr." X" in Sedge Pond and Mr. "Y" in Parish Land, they cannot do a concerted job on the west coast. We have tried and the odd occasion – if it comes to the end of our financial year and we find that we have money that can bear some overtime. Last year we did it. We did a follow up on the west coast. We found some evidence of what the Honourable Member had spoken about, but not large scale. I have no reason to doubt that particularly in the hospitality sector, liberties are taken with the Immigration Laws of Barbados by persons, some of whom may be here legitimately documented, but use that opportunity to introduce a relative into the system.

For example, a person is employed as a chef at a particular hotel, what you would find is that his girlfriend is running a business somewhere else, or his wife, when, perhaps, the work permit is limited to him.

Asides.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I wish the public to be assured that the Ministry and Immigration Department treat these concerns very seriously.
4.00 p.m.

If in the next financial year we can get an increase in staff, 3 or 4, we would probably be able to do a more efficient job in following up because there is a weakness in that area of enforcement and one has to acknowledge it. I am grateful to the Honourable Member for highlighting it today.

I beg to move that Head 28 stand part.

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

HEAD 50 – POST OFFICE

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Sir, in moving that Head 50 stand part, the Honourable Member has not been in here long enough to know that it has been traditional for years to have a little employment accretion in the Post Office at this time of the year. There are 20 temporary postmen and 32 temporary postal officers and if I am not mistaken they start work on the 2nd December. There are also some security guards who should be starting next week. They are spread out all around, Sir. I could not give in all the names for the postmen to be recruited from St. Thomas. The postmen have to be from the various districts.

Aside.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I give the Honourable Member of this Honourable House my word, Sir, that I will bear him in mind next year. Sir, that is why we are asking for $236 828. I beg to move that Head 50 stand part.

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

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, the House cannot remain like this, either the House has to be continuous or you have to report progress.

HEAD 36 – MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, the Ministry of Health and the Environment seeks a supplementary provision. I believe that the Member for St. Thomas has already indicated what the large items are. The major items for which we are asking supplementary provisions relate to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital at which, as you are aware, and I think all of Barbados is, we had a large influx of interns once again. In fact this year the number of interns taken on at the Q.E.H. virtually doubled, going from something like 11 normal posts to perhaps about 21 and that is going to take a considerable sum of money to keep them under training for the financial year. So that part of the supplementary is going to be utilised at the Q.E.H. for personal emoluments to meet the cost of covering the new house officers or interns who are in training.

There have been promotions to the posts of senior house officer and some movement as a result of the new interns coming in as well. Financial obligations to the salaries of the new senior house officers also have to be met. Similarly the placement of the support staff for the interim management team for secretaries, administrative officers and other support staff which facilitated the investigation and the work of the interim management team, the reports that they have to produce and so on and the costs therefore have to be met.

In addition there has been some shortage of staff within several departments, pediatric, anaesthesiology and orthopedic surgery and we have had to do some recruitment extra-regionally. There is a cost for bringing these people in, the particular specialists who have been recruited. As you are aware, Sir, the custom would be to fund them and their families so that there is a travel component for bringing that staff in. That cost too is reflected in this supplementary.

Some of the money being asked for the QEH relates to the purchase of equipment for the hospital and the rental of machinery for the cardiac unit, the rental of an

echo-cardiogram and computer rentals that are necessary. In addition to that, as part of the total emolument package for the new house officers and the senior house officers, a housing allowance has to be paid. That too is included in this document.

There has been some increase in the library subscription and other fees relating to the library. Initially we recognised that the sum that was voted at the beginning of the year was not adequate and we have to supplement that if we are going to be able to meet the commitments to the end of the year.
4.10 p.m.

There are some costs for purchase of new linen. I think that we are aware of one of the continuing problems, not just at the QEH but throughout Barbados, is the fact that a lot of facilities do not operate as 24-hour facilities. The airport and the sea port do not operate as a 24-hour facility. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital does not operate as a 24-hour facility and therefore to keep certain services open or operational on weekends, you have to pay overtime. That is one of the things that we have to think in terms of reviewing and revisiting as a Government. This whole matter of essential services and service industries in Barbados and whether or not we can continue with a system where these services like certain support services in the hospital who work 8 to 4 p.m. A typical example of that would be the lab in some cases and the laundry at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. We are into a situation where, if you are going to run a hospital effectively, then it is absolutely critical that you have an adequate supply of linen all of the time, and yet the laundry at the hospital is not operating a 24-hour service. It really operates within the framework of the Civil Service structure. What we have to do is to negotiate an agreement where we have the laundry operating on a 24-hour basis. As I indicated, that is a problem that runs across-the-board in Barbados where it affects the Bridgetown Port, the airport and other 24-hour facilities.

As a result of us not having the laundry operational 24 hours, there is a great demand for laundry on Monday mornings when people come back to do surgeries after the weekend. Of course, because the laundry would not have been operational over the weekend, there always tends to be a shortage of linen on Monday morning. One of the consequences of this is that when linen is put down over long periods, over the weekend or overnight soiled, the blood and other stains tend to become very ingrained into the fabric and we cannot then get them out. So there is a high degree of loss of linen to the hospital and we have to purchase some new linen. So $25 000 is going to be used for that sum.

Included in this supplementary too is a sum for laboratory supplies of some $200 000 which was owing to a particular lab from the period 1992. As a result of that, they cut off credit to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital and we have to pay this long outstanding bill and get this matter sought out. We had a period as a result of this where no re-agents were available to the QEH at one stage. But one of the things that the interim management team has found is long outstanding bills which go back to 1992, 1989, 1990 and so on and bills running into hundreds of thousands of dollars. That is one of the ones which we discovered and which we have to pay. We have been in the process of paying them whenever we come across them. Again, when the Invasive Cardiology Unit was set up, an oral order before September 1994 was placed to Bryden's for supplies to this department totalling $277 000 and that sum now has to be paid because it is still outstanding. These are parts of the items which compose this. There are others going back to 1995 to other people and earlier than that. A lot of these items include old bills that are now coming to light. One of the things that we are doing is making sure that the boilers at the hospital are commissioned. There are some there that have not been commissioned and that has to be done, replacement of elevator doors in order to get the elevators functioning properly and installing certain equipment. All of this is included in this supplementary.

That basically covers the QEH. There are other items of bio-medical equipment and various supplies that are urgently needed but the QEH does take a large percentage of this Estimate.

The South Coast Sewerage Project is on the way. As you know, this project is worth $144 million and we are getting a supplementary to deal with the South Coast Sewerage Project. That is included in the sum for which the Ministry of Health and the Environment is asking.

The Sanitation Service Authority is getting money to continue operations at Mangrove during the time that the Greenland Landfill remains under construction. At the beginning of the year we anticipated that we would have been in Greenland by now and no money to cover the period beyond I think about October or November has been included for the Mangrove operation. But as everybody is aware, there has been considerable delay first in the start and now in the completion of the Greenland Project because of protracted litigation and other matters. The fact is that Dr. Sealy who is Director of the South Coast Sewerage Project says repeatedly that when you lose a month that it does not mean that there will be a linear loss of time in the project. Therefore, we have been much delayed on that project as a result of the litigation and other delays. Now money has to be put in to continue the operation at Mangrove until the Greenland Landfill is completed which we expect to be completed early next year. That is important because, though you are

concerned, you all never gave any commitment to move. At least, we are moving even if we are delayed by your friend who keeps us in court every two minutes.

There are other sums relating to the Ministry of Health as well. There is the Medical Aid Scheme. We are getting a top up of $750 000 for that. Part of the difficulty with the Medical Aid Scheme is that very often when surgeries are done and Barbadian citizens are given treatment under this scheme outside of Barbados that the bills are held either by the hospitals or by our consular offices outside of Barbados and not sent in on a timely manner. So very often you get bills coming in late. It happens all of the time because bills are out there. Sometimes you have an estimate of what the expenditure is likely to be for a certain condition, but when the person go overseas you find that something additional has to be done. It may take another $7 000 or $10 000 and then other provision has to be made for that, and it takes time between the time that the hospital sends the bill to the consular office and then the consular office then gets the bill to us. So what we found this year is that there were a number of bills that had been outstanding for a considerable time but had not been sent in by the consular offices, and largely this is what this sum is for. At the beginning of the year we did put $1.8 million into this fund which was an increase over last year because last year it had in it $1.4 million into this fund and the previous year it had in it $1.4 million. This year we put in $1.8 million into the fund and this top up really relates to the outstanding bills that are now coming in. I do not think that anybody really wants to deny treatment to those people who are in need and cannot afford the treatment themselves. That is the whole point of the scheme.

Aside.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: That is not true. Neuro-surgery is far more expensive than open heart surgery and the largest number of people leaving the island for treatment is for neuro-surgery that is not available here in Barbados. Very often a lot of those surgeries cost $70 000 each and there are several of them. Every file here contains the Medical Aid Scheme. All of these relate to the Medical Aid Scheme and they are invariably $70 000 a piece. So this is a considerable amount of money. We do not deny anybody who makes an application to the scheme. I think that where there are outstanding bills we need to meet those bills and to have a good relationship with the hospital who does the surgery on Barbadians.
4.20 p.m.

The final area we are supplementing, I will try to pick out the largest ones which would be the Drug Service and that is getting some $5 million. People seem to want to talk about other things; but I am going to say at this point that the monies we are asking for are entirely reasonable in terms of expenditure. It does not show any excesses. It certainly does not arise out of any sort of squandermania but they are all essential sums and some of it relates to the payment of debt that preceded 1994.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I am very glad that the supplementary includes provision for payment of outstanding arrears at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. I have constituents who have been besieging me since 1991 in respect of payments of outstanding bills and I had to write many letters to the Ministry and it is a fact that you have to write letters requesting payment. It is quite clear that the Hospital itself was run under conditions that they did not know whom they owed. It is a fact, because some of the bills were challenged and later upon the production of clear evidence there had to be a recant of the position which was taken.

I want to congratulate the Government and the Minister. You cannot run away from the problems at the Hospital. This Government will not do like the last Government and run away from them. If there are people who have to go, let them go.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order. The record will show that when this side formed the Government that we never ran away from the problems at the Hospital. In fact, we ran the health service far more efficiently than it is presently being run and the record should not be distorted in the manner that the Honourable Member is seeking to distort it.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Even the Honourable Member himself does not believe that statement. The Honourable Member well knows that for many years there have been considerable problems with the administration at the Hospital. The Government did not know how much money was owed to suppliers at the Hospital. I agree it is still owed but it is much less than before.

I hope that the Financial Rules will be administered because one of the clearest rules that we have under our Financial Administration and Audit Act is that you should not incur expenditure for which there is no vote except in cases...

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: Nobody can issue a warrant for money that has not been voted. That is foolishness. The authority for the issue of a warrant is a vote of this House. That is why you have a contingency sum where you can deal with expenditure that was not reasonably foreseen. It is time that all departments of Government understand the Financial Administration and Audit Act.

I used to be a chairman of a Public Accounts Committee too and I heard a permanent secretary once go before a Committee and say that he doesn't administer anything according to the Financial Rules because he didn't know them. That is a point of fact. While in truth and in fact under our system of government the permanent secretary is the principal accounting officer in respect of every department. That is a fact. You see the Honourable Member does not even know the rules himself.

What I am very glad to see is that there is a realisation by the Ministers that they must insist that those people with responsibility in things like disbursement understand what they are doing. All this talk about victimisation is a lot of foolishness. If people are hired and paid to carry out a job and they do not do it, whether in government or in the private sector, you have to face the consequences. It is not a question of sympathy. It is a question of a realisation of fact that you have to be accountable. If you cannot hold the office, don't hold it. If you are not competent to hold the office, quit it or let the process of discipline come into play.

One of the things that baffle me is how Honourable Members in here and outside are prepared to subscribe to the theory that when steps are taken to ensure that the law of the land is carried out, that good administrative practice is carried out, that the question of victimisation is immediately brought to the fore. That is irresponsible conduct, Sir. I wouldn't say that in here about Honourable Members because they don't conduct themselves irresponsibly in here. It is outside that some Members conduct themselves.

Aside.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: You know if the cap fits draw the string.

It is to me a matter not of criticism. It is a matter of praise that the Honourable Member will come in here to try to tidy up these accounts. I hope that the message is very clear. It is really unfair to ask people to perform services and supply goods to the Hospital when there is no money to pay them and when there is money and it is not being used to pay.

There are also other practices at the Hospital because people write our Members of Parliament letters. I don't know if Honourable Members on that side get, but on this side, we get letters all the time about practices with respect to the non-observance of the rules relating to tendering and things like that and conflict of interest situations arising in these matters. We ought to be pass that stage. People ought to have a sense of propriety that if they have an interest in a particular piece of machinery, whether it is because they have one or not, you should not participate in the decision making process for replacing it. You shouldn't do it because the people who are not preferred will immediately say that the reason why they are not preferred is because of a conflict of interest. The other thing is that I hope that the Government will have in making decisions about purchase of equipment as broad a base of opinion as possible.

I am told, I am no doctor, Sir, there is an area of activity which I never wanted to become involved in. I understand that Barbados should have a MRI. That is some modern diagnostic bit of equipment we should have. To this day, I understand there is a conflict of opinion with respect to that matter inside the Hospital and outside the Hospital. All I know is that in my capacity as a person who represents people who have been injured in accidents I have come across recently more than one occasion where people have to be flown to Puerto Rico and around for MRIs. Venezuela was popular but some people feel a little uncomfortable in going to Venezuela, not that the doctors cannot speak English but it is the process of going through the airport. I am told now that Trinidad now has not one, but two. I understand the cost has come down so I am hoping we can get a fair body of opinion established in the Ministry.

4.30 p.m.

I sympathise with the Honourable Minister. The Honourable Minister should be advised on these matters by independent people, not people with vested interests. Also there are people in posts in the establishment of Barbados whose function it is to assess the conflicts of a technical nature in this area and then give an opinion. Now, I do not know what kind of opinion the Honourable Minister gets but the point is this that these matters should be the subject of proper debate and people like the Medical Association as such should be giving the community the benefit of independent advice in this area. It is part and parcel of their responsibility to deal with that, so that I do hope we will see an improvement in this direction.

I support, Sir, the theory that it is time we look at how we run the hospital and its structures in particular. There is no doubt that the rigidity of the bureaucratic machinery is not appropriate for running a medical institution. Some will say that the democratic rules are not appropriate for running a medical institution. Certainly, the Honourable Member for St. Michael South Central would know that he had built up a reputation as a Tzar when he was in that position.

The basic point is, Sir, there will be conflict of opinion with respect to whether a statutory board is the structure to run the hospital. I want to say this that I am one of those who believe that in a small community

like Barbados the Government has a vital role to play to ensure that all people who are ill in Barbados have access to medical services. I do not believe that in the context of a small country like Barbados, and knowing Barbados, that this is an area the Government can relieve itself of its responsibility.

I want to commend the Minister and I want to encourage the Minister to proceed with her efforts to reform the Ministry of Health. I am saying the Ministry of Health, including the hospital, and whether it be a statutory board or other institution that is created, the point is what you need is greater flexibility in decision making, greater enforcement in decision making and greater responsibility for accounting. That is what we need, Sir.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I must say at the outset that this supplementary saddens the Members on the Opposition benches and clearly we take offence at the fact that a supplementary of this magnitude under the Head of Health is brought to the House of Assembly. The last time a supplementary of this size was brought to the House of Assembly we heard an outcry by the Government resulting in senior administrators at the hospital being sent on special leave.

This, certainly, Sir, is a case where this Government must again ask itself what kind of vision it had, what kind of accounting is going on in the Ministry of Health and who is responsible on this occasion. During the Estimates of this year, for example, I indicated that the estimate of some $17 million with regard to the Drug Service was $4 million or $5 million less than what had been consumed in the previous financial year. I raised the question then.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. I hate to interrupt the Honourable Member, but my clear memory of the Estimates for this year, I was not here during the debate on the Estimates, is that the sum voted for the Drug Service this year is $20 million, not $14 million as he is trying to suggest.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, something would have to be wrong then because if I am to be guided by what is before me, the Minister is again being consistent by continuing to mislead the House on almost everything that she says. Maybe the Minister may have to correct it and I will have to wait.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We do have a serious problem here because the document before us shows that under Programme 05, Pharmaceutical Programme, Supplies and Materials Object 210, the amount approved by this Parliament was $17 477 143 and the Minister is under the impression that it is over $20 million so there must be an error somewhere. I wonder if the Leader of the House can give us some information here whether this figure is correct or not.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Minister has just informed the House that over $20 million was voted by this House. Does the House accept this as the correct figure or is there an error here? Sir, we want to know.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: We accept this as the correct figure then.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Again, we have a clear understanding that the Minister who is privileged to this information, and it is before us today, still does not understand what is before us in the House. I am making the point and I am going to make it again that during the Estimates when I saw that the amount voted for was $17 477 000 approximately, I said then that it fell short of what was actually used in the previous financial year and that during this year we would have a situation where the Drug Service will find itself not in a position to provide necessary drugs to this community. That is precisely what has happened because this Barbadian community has suffered over the last 4 or 5 months through shortages of drugs in several different categories that have been unavailable in this country. It is inexcusable.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order, Sir. I do not wish to interrupt the Honourable Member but there are two Members on that side who would wish to give the appearance that I am either misleading the House, deceiving the House, or trying to indulge in some kind of subterfuge. I want to repeat what I said. The Honourable Member for St. Michael East said that it was $14 million.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I never said anything about $14 million. Do not put words in my mouth.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The Estimates clearly show that the vote for the Barbados Drug Service was $20 132 109 with $17 477 000 being voted for supplies, not $14 million. When I got up and I said $20 million I was not lying or misleading. I was, in fact saying what the vote for the Drug Service is.
4.40 p.m.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The point is, Mr. Chairman, I told this Parliament that the result of the poor planning of the Ministry of Health would result in drug shortages in this country and that is exactly what has happened over the last couple of months. As you go around Barbados several people are complaining. They cannot get this drug, they cannot get that drug, this is not available in this

country. The first time that it has happened for a very long time. I am suggesting that it is as a result of very poor planning in the Ministry of Health.

I can go on because I go through the hospital, and I can go over and over about what is going on at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Clearly this is not the occasion for me to deal with Greenland or that the fact that there are people working at Greenland who are, probably, without work permits and do not have licenses *et cetera* at Greenland to work in the preparation of the landfill down there. I can go ahead and deal with that or I can deal with the problems at the Sanitation Services Authority. I am not going into those areas because my time is short. We have articulated on this side. this really is an affront to this Parliament because we have to be scrambling to debate serious national issues in 15 minutes or 10 minutes and it really is not possible.

I anticipated, Mr. Chairman, that the Government who have been down in St. Michael North West looking up in the air and doing the rain dance, looking for rain to fall so that they can have a repeat of a flood situation, where they can come into this Parliament and vote a Supplementary that would be able to satisfy the needs of St. Michael North West.

Mr. Chairman, if you had seen the praise that went up to heaven praying for a rain dance.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: God is a good God and he gave us only "X" amount of rain, and there is no flooding now.

In these provisions there is an amount of $500 000 for debushing. I know that it was coming. They did not tell me where they are debushing. There are several places across Barbados that need debushing, but during the hiatus where there is no representative in St. Michael North West, I have been told...

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. Do not let the Member for St. Michael East mislead the House in relation to this. Since we have come to office, every week at midyear, we have put a sum in for debushing. Last year the sum that we got at midyear for debushing was in the region of $700 000, and we employed in the region of 100 or 120 people and we did debushing all over Barbados. All we are doing this year is the same very debushing programme. The programme ran last year from the second last week of November or the first week in December until the end of February/March. Some of the people came from the Ivy. This year we are going to be doing the same thing, employing roughly the same number of people, 100/120, to do debushing all over Barbados. During the rainy season the bush grows up very high. This has nothing to do with the election campaign. It is dishonest. There was no election campaign last year or the year before when we did the debushing, and it is wrong to try to give the impression that we are only doing the debushing now because there is an election campaign.

Asides.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, I wish to raise a point of order. The Honourable Member for Christ Church South just made a significant speech, calling on public servants to follow the Financial Administration and Audit Act. What the Minister has just said is that every year that this is part and parcel of her Ministry's programme. Yet we are provided with Estimates that do not reflect the costs of those programmes. Now we come here for this substantial increase in the amount of money. I wish to submit, Sir, that if the Minister is correct...

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Are you on a point of order?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If the Minister is correct, then this House is being involved in breaches of the Financial Administration and Audit Act, deliberately designed by the Minister and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs. I sincerely hope that she did not clearly understand the implication of what she said.

She said that it is a normal annual programme, and now coming in here for a Supplementary. This is a St. Michael North West debushing programme. This is a crash programme for votes. That is what it is and nothing more.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: Mr. Chairman, I am going to recommend that debushing takes place at Pile Bay, Brandon, Brighton, at Ashdeane, where you refuse to clean the area west of Ashdeane, Pleasant View, where the students are being affected, where the recent rains, and during the hiatus when Parliament was sitting and we were not able to vote money, where the representative was not able to articulate in here for these programmes. The point of order has to be about dealing with Danesbury. On that note see if they can get some paint for...

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: They want paint in Free Hill, Regent and Deacons.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: The canal by St. Stephens Hill, that needs to be completed and the old cars that were recently put there.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: We understand the point of order, and this money must be spent in those particular areas.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: We are going to demand that this money be used for what it is voted for. There must be no fridges, stoves, kettles, clothing, pizzas or nothing of the sort. If we are voting for debushing, we will not have a repeat of what happened in the floods. On the one occasion you had floods and on this occasion you have a debushing situation.

I will not delay the House unnecessarily.

Asides.

Mr. J. O. TUDOR: This is a very serious matter, this is not a laughing matter. This House must not be abused, because we were looking. We thought it would have come under the heading of floods but here we found it, the Ministry of Health – Head 36, under the category of debushing.

Mr. Chairman, I would probably return and I will deal with 1 or 2 more issues under this Head as this debate progresses.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, a couple months ago a Supplementary came to this Assembly for the Ministry of Health. Mr. Chairman, it was not $13 million. I did my own calculations, Sir. This Supplementary to the Ministry of Health is $13 201 764. The last time that a Supplementary came to this House it was for less money than this, and 4 people went on special leave for giving figures in one breath and then coming back and giving a higher figure. Now we have a higher figure than that and I want to know if we are going to get a Cabinet reshuffle. The simple reason, is that, included in this figure there is an amount of $700 000 for trucks. I want to know which side of the road the drivers are going to be on. Whether they are going to be on the left or on the right. Mr. Chairman, I want to know because .... I also want to know how many accidents these new vehicles were in before, and if it was because the drivers were on the wrong side of the road. The wrong seat, the wrong position of the cabs, I want to know. There were accidents. I want to know why the drivers were blamed for being in the wrong position in the vehicles. I want to know how many of them were left-hand drive trucks. I cannot believe that we could employ a Minister to bring left-hand drive trucks in Barbados. They said that the person who brought them in would have to be crazy and would have to be down at the Mental.

4.50 p.m.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: You challenging me? Do not get involved with me. Let me tell you something, Mr. Chairman, they had a debushing programme and I have got to support the Honourable Member for the City.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Yes, I have to bring you in because you agree that St. Lucy is one of the most beautiful parishes and it forms part of the tourism plant. The Honourable Member for the City, you remember when I said, you cannot have tourism in Barbados and have a debushing programme and leave out St. Lucy. I also said I knew they would leave out St. George South. So make sure you debush St. George South too. Now I am hearing today that they are coming in here for $512 000 and they tell me none for St. Lucy when at Archers Bay, you cannot even drive one vehicle through the road at Archers Bay.

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: That is a serious allegation. We make a little fun and we have a little levity but to say that somebody said there is none for St. Lucy is not true and to suggest that this Government is acting unconstitutional, that is to say contrary to discriminatory provisions of the Constitution.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: Mr. Chairman, if that is true I want them to bring the figure. This is about the second time they came with this programme. I want them to tell me on the Floor of this House how much money they spent last year on debushing programmes in St. Lucy when they stopped at the Judge Gap. I challenge them. They stopped at the Judge Gap with their debushing programme. Am I to believe then that they will go past the Judge Gap this year when we have a by-election in St. Michael North West? Not them! Should I believe them, Sir, that they would go past the Judge Gap? Not them. Not even St. Peter will get piece this year, Sir. Can you imagine tourist going to Archers Bay and the buses having to reverse and go into a little street that they could pass because of all the bush?

I will make a warning in here now because he is my friend and he is always in St. Lucy. I am asking the Honourable Member for Christ Church South not to use the road coming from Checker Hall Junction to Colleton because if a vehicle is travelling quickly he might believe that to the side of the road there is no gutter there and he might pull over and his car might go in a deep descent and he might injure himself and I like this man a lot and I do not want him to be injured.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: He knows that I am a strong admirer of his and not in a funny way because he is the only Member over there along with a certain one on

the Back Bench that would go to St. Lucy and confirm that what I am saying is correct. I know you are coming tomorrow and I am going to welcome you and say nice things about you and I will give you a message to the Minister.

I am saying, Sir, that $13 million for any Ministry is a lot of money and if 4 people got sent home last year I want to know when the Minister will be moved because this will have to be incompetence. Let me tell you something. She said this debushing thing is $67 000 in the Estimates, Sir, and now an additional $512 000 nearly an 800% increase in the Estimates. Can you imagine that? The Honourable Minister is telling you that they incurred this expense last year and good accounting principles tell you that you base your estimates on the previous year's figures. Am I to believe, Sir, that the debushing programme last year was less than $67 000? No. If you look in the figures, Sir, you will see that they would have spent a lot more than $67 000. Sir, there is room in here to question the people who prepared these figures. Something is wrong, Mr. Chairman. Yesterday I picked up my *Advocate* Newspaper and it worried me, Sir. I remember when I first came in here and I talked about the Sanitation Service Authority I was accused and abused of doing all the wrong things at Sanitation. Would you believe it, Sir, two pictures, one dealing with garbage pile up and there is a saying in the country now that once they had one Mount Stinkeroo in my friend's constituency and also the constituency that I live in but now people are saying that no matter where you travel in Barbados there are Mount Stinkeroos at every corner and I was accused of having one Mount Stinkeroo at Mangrove but now this Minister is turning the whole of Barbados into Mount Stinkeroo and the Honourable Minister wants me to keep quiet when she was accusing me of making Mangrove into a Mount Stinkeroo.

Am I to believe, Sir, that the Minister can criticise me and I cannot criticise her? I say to her, your time will come and believe you me, Sir, every part of her ministry is falling apart. If you go to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital it is falling apart, if you go to Mangrove the same thing. Well, you know one place I would not touch and that is Greenland, that is other people's business. I have nothing to say on Greenland. The time will come. I will say this, Sir, that if we created a problem at Mangrove it was only Mangrove but the problem was corrected. I want to know when the problems in the Ministry of Health will be corrected and I want to know when the Minister is going past the Judge Gap because the roof of the District Hospital is leaking. The building needs refurbishing.

Aside.

Mr. D. St. E. KELLMAN: I thank you very much for going past the Judge Gap and you must vote some more and I will give you a break.

So, Mr. Chairman, I am not only calling for some of this money for my friend in St. George because I know that in this Parliament I have to look after him because he is the only person in here I would look after because the Member for Christ Church South puts down his weight and once he puts down his weight he will get what he wants. Mr. Chairman, I will say to you that these supplementaries that were supposed to be things of the past seem to be growing and this time next year we will not be getting one for $23 million but it seems to me that we will be getting one for $423 million and we as a Parliament will seriously have to do something about this because they are getting bigger and bigger. The important thing I understand is that this is not the only one it is only half of it. So we can expect one shortly for another $23 million and I hope, Sir, that the Ministry of Health will not be in here. Because everytime we are discussing supplementaries in here you find the Ministry of Health. Thank you very much, Sir.
5.00 p.m.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, what we are witnessing here in a very succinct form is clearly indicative of the fact that on the one hand we had bogus Estimates presented to this House earlier this year and on the other hand...

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. The word "bogus" is certainly not parliamentary. The Honourable Member would know that.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I will reflect on the word "bogus". It is not a good word. I ask that you withdraw the word "bogus".

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Okay. I withdraw the word "bogus" and will say that those Estimates were calculatingly misleading.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to withdraw the word "calculatingly". You have to withdraw that word.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: ...Shall I say then calculatingly incorrect for a specific purpose well designed and now we see the results of that here. But they also capture something else. They capture continuing gross mismanagement.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order. I presume that he is not proceeding with the words just used. Did you withdraw those words up to misleading?

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: "Misleading" – I withdrew the word "bogus" and I said calculatingly incorrect. What is wrong with those words? The words are not offensive.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I just want to know what has been agreed to because he is imputing improper motives of the Cabinet. The Estimates were passed. Mr. Chairman, I just want to know what has been agreed to. Those statements are even more serious than "bogus".

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: Mr. Chairman, Mays has a list of listed words that are unparliamentary. "Incorrect" is not one of those words. "Calculating" is not one of those words and there is no way that you can bully or seek to bully a Presiding Officer into going contrary to normal parliamentary practice.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir. The Honourable Member is imputing that we are trying to bully you as the Presiding Officer in this Chamber. But getting back to the words that he used earlier, those words are imputing an improper motive on the part of the Government and they should be withdrawn. I would say that, if there is any imputation against the Presiding Officer, it would have to be that he is taking advantage of the Presiding Officer by using those words.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You are not concerned with Government. There is no Government in here. There is a Government in Bay Street. I can say anything about the Government. You are not part of any Government in here.

Aside.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You are a Member for St. Andrew.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: Mr. Chairman, I am asking that those words be withdrawn and, if you have any doubts as to the real import of those words, the House should be adjourned for you to check on them.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If I may continue, Mr. Chairman, as you have indicated to me that I should.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: I have not heard a ruling.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Honourable Member, could you please let the Chairman give a ruling here? The Chairman is well *au fait* with the Rules and Orders of this House and will not accept any imputation otherwise. That is my first ruling. Secondly, Members are asked to note the Rules of the House. Standing Order 28(5) and Standing Order 28(7) which state:

> "It shall be out of order to use offensive and insulting language about Members of the House.
>
> No Member may impute improper motives to another Member."

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: You cannot challenge the Chair. If I may continue, Sir. These Estimates are not only reflective of what I said here but they are indicative of another level of mismanagement.

Hon. G. W. PAYNE: On a point of order, Sir, I want you to apply the words which the Member used with respect to the Estimates "calculatingly incorrect". I want you to rule on that.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Estimates reflect mismanagement at the QEH and the Health Services which is totally unacceptable and in many ways incomprehensible. It is almost unbelievable that having voted somewhere in the region of $17 million for a Drug Service, which the Honourable Member for the City assured this House would never go pass $8 million, now we are here again this year for another $5 million.

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: On a point of order, Sir. I am not in this debate. I have not spoken. I have never said that the Drug Service would not go pass $8 million. Where is the debate going to? If I am to be brought into this debate now, all I want is some debushing in the City of Bridgetown to come out of this.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The point that I am making is that when you have to come for a heavy supplementary like $5 million after what you came for last year that is a sign of gross mismanagement or gross and probably deliberate under estimating your expenditure that was likely to be incurred this year. It has to be one or the other when it occurs in successive years. As every single consumer of the Drug Service would know, it is a complete mess. This year we have had all kinds of problems with late and last minute tenders. We have had all kinds of shortages in the Drug Service. There are people going to drug stores 6 or 7 times in trying to get vital drugs which have been in shortage. People's lives have been threatened because of shortage of drugs. There are all kinds of major problems that you have and it is a major problem that needs to be dealt with. It has led in many ways to a breakdown of confidence between patients, druggists and doctors. Very often the doctor not having a clue what drug the patient is taking after he has written a particular prescription. The problem is that patients have had to undergo considerable suffering as a result of these shortages and the mal-administration within the Drug Service particularly during the period of July to September of this year.

5.10 p.m.

So apart from the heavy expenditure now, we have a heavy supplementary and the situation is not getting any better. Apart from that, there are many druggists who have been forced to participate in the service because of the prevailing economic situation in respect of the supply of drugs. Those small druggists have had their businesses severely compromised by having to carry the Government's bills month after month, paying high interest charges and cannot get refunded by the Government in a timely manner.

This is a serious matter, because at all levels in the Drug Service there are major problems and if the Minister does not wish to believe that that is the case it is entirely up to her. There is a major problem in the Drug Service affecting all persons involved – doctors, pharmacists and patients. There is not a single pharmacist, not a single patient who uses the Drug Service, not a single doctor in this country, that would not tell you the kinds of problems that they encounter every day, the total confusion that exists in the Drug Service. It is no joke when you go to your office on a morning to practise that you probably get 10 or 12 calls from the druggists to ask you if they can substitute so and so because they have run out of stock of so and so.

A new stock comes in and you start prescribing a new drug. Then 2 months later, that drug is out of stock and the original one is on. It is a circus. The problem is the fundamental policy position taken in relation to the supply of drugs and that falls in the lap of ministerial responsibility. There can be no question about that. It is a matter of policy and where people are getting confused is that they are not balancing costs properly against the efficiency of the service in other respects. It needs somebody to sit down some day and say if a patient is taking Voltaren and the patient is doing well on Voltaren and has got accustomed to Voltaren and the old lady can take 3 Voltaren tablets a week or something like that you don't suddenly change it to Remethan or something like that and then a month later you have no Remethan. You cannot get Voltaren, you get a different drug and then a week later you are back to Voltaren and Remethan. It has old people all over the country confused. That is the fault of the policy related.

Now Remethan would have been chosen because it was cheaper at that particular point in time. Nothing to do with the consequences of that.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is seeking to mislead the House because people may not be aware of the methodology. The drugs are tendered for at a particular time of the year at which time the formulary is settled and everybody knows what drugs are going to be purchased. It is up to the distributors to source the drugs and have them available on the market. It does not change mid-month. All the drugs are tendered for and it is settled. I can't remember at what point of the financial year. This year, we changed some of the drugs on the formulary and as a result of that change a meeting was held with all the pharmaceutical distributors and they were informed of the kinds of changes that would be made, what was going to happen and they knew very early and it was therefore up to them as always to source the drugs and bring them in. So if a drug is changed mid-month, as the Honourable Member is trying to suggest, that is not as a result of a policy directive nor is it as a result of any confusion in the Ministry because these things are done only once a year.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The Honourable Member does not even know what is going on. The one medical call that I got before I came here was from a lady. There is a drug called Tagamet that many of you would know. All of a sudden, in Barbados, they stopped bringing in Tagamet and they brought in Cimetidine, the same drug. Then they brought in Apocimetidine, the same drug, and then they brought in Acinil. They cannot get Acinil 400. When you prescribe Acinil 400 you have to divide it in 2 and the patient takes half in the morning and half in the evening. This is a simple example of sheer stupidity.

All of a sudden, this morning, this druggist hasn't got Acinil but he has Apocimetidine which is a Canadian variant of the same drug at the 400 milligrams. Here is a young intelligent lady who is completely confused as to what to do. The point is I am not confused, the Drug Service is not confused, the patient is confused. That is the point I am making. I am talking about the destruction of confidence because it is utter stupidness that takes place within the Drug Service at tremendous and horrendous costs to the taxpayers of this country.

Now we are coming in here this year for another $5 million in supplementary for a service that is totally defective and is not meeting the health needs of the people it was intended for. That is the charge that I am making. I can bring hundreds of examples and every doctor in this country, every druggist can bring hundreds of examples of the kind of major problems that they have, druggists throughout this country whom patients depend on. Very often they will call and say they went to so and so and he gave me a red tablet instead of a blue tablet and you have to tell them the druggist is correct and don't bother about the colour, it is the Government that is causing the problem. Almost every day I have to tell the people that.

You have to protect the professional integrity of our druggists because of the impositions placed on them by the gross incompetence of the Ministry of Health. We want to hear more about that $700 000. We want to hear a little more about those trucks if there is any problem with the sanitation trucks. Maybe the Minister needs to give us

a fuller explanation of the additional $700 000 which I understand is for the purchase of trucks. I would like to get some further information on that.

Now, they have the gall to come in this House – last year they fired or sent home 4 senior officers over a supplementary of $7 million – and praise the performance of their successors and bring a supplementary of $13 million.

Hon. Sir HAROLD St. JOHN: On a point of order. The Honourable Member is accusing Members on this side of firing people. The Honourable Member ought to know that under the Constitution of Barbados only the Public Service Commission can discipline civil servants.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I understand how the Constitution of Barbados works only too well. I sat and I watched that press conference where all sorts of imputations were made and all sorts of innuendos and then names were called and the people out there today believe that even persons who were not involved in the financial management of the hospital and who were sent on leave were involved in some financial impropriety. There is at least one person who was sent home that was never in contact with the financial structure of the hospital at any point in time. But the mess continues.

We were told that this new management team was put in but all I can tell you is that the mess at the hospital continues the same, the same problems in Casualty, the same problems in the theatres, the same problems with the maids. The same problems are there and they are not solved. For those who believe, as I once believed, and may still share to some extent the belief conditionally, that a board would be the solution to the problem, let me tell them something.
5.20 p.m.

The old hospital used to be run by a board and rats were eating babies in the old hospital under the direction – who was Minister, you recall? Perhaps the Honourable Member for the City will probably tell us. That is a fact. The Board ran the hospital so inefficiently that this Parliament had to intervene and establish the present structure of the hospital. In 1965 this Parliament sought to reverse its decision to re-establish another board and passed the Queen Elizabeth Hospital Act which was never proclaimed because the then Attorney General ruled that there were certain constitutional issues and certain costs consequential in relation to personal emoluments and so on. I myself wrote memo after memo to the Government when I was in the public service to try to get that decision overruled and tried to get a board established of a different kind. I tried.

I am not so sure that a board is the answer provided a different thinking about a board is brought to bear upon the constitution of that board and the way in which the board will function in relation to the Government.

On the other issue raised by the Honourable Member for Christ Church South, that no Barbadian should be denied access to the Queen Elizabeth Hospital because they cannot afford it. I am telling you now that this is happening in Barbados today, that some lunatic at the hospital, or a group of lunatics...

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I do not care who has decided it. It has to be a lunatic. They have decided that if a general practitioner is called to an 80-year old agricultural worker in St. Andrew and he decides that lady has a heart attack and the best way to deal with her problem is to call up a Registrar at the hospital and get that lady admitted to the hospital, you know what the ruling at the hospital is today? She has to pay. She is a private patient. That is the ruling. She has to go to Casualty and waste one or two hours down there and probably die in Casualty rather than get access to regulatory resuscitatory facilities. That is a fact. That is why I said that only a lunatic could have made that kind of ruling.

I will tell you what that ruling does. It undermines patient care fundamentally and it breaches fundamentally ethical consideration between professionals. Could you imagine a general practitioner with 15, 20 years standing calling a junior doctor at the hospital and the junior doctor telling him to send the patient to Casualty? Some doctors now stop writing referral letters and would just send the patient to Casualty and call the doctor for fear that they may see a referral letter coming from a private doctor and charge the patient. It is so ridiculous.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member has one minute to wind up.

Aside.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is happening every day. I am telling you it is happening every day. It is a serious allegation and it is a fact.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: The Honourable Member is again trying to mislead the House. *General* practitioners do not have admitting privileges at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. That has always been so that a general practitioner is not a consultant. General consultants do not have admitting privileges. That has always been true and therefore the practice has always been that if something goes on they contact the consultants or the people at

the QEH and it is the people who work within the QEH setting, including the consultants, who have admitting privileges and who bring the person on.

The Honourable Member also spoke about private patients. This point, and the way how he has put it over is much distorted. There has been a longstanding practice which was very wrong where private patients would come in, we are not talking about the agricultural workers, we are talking about the person who has been seeing the consultant privately for months and is paying private consulting fees, but will not pay monies due to the QEH and the QEH is only seeking to establish that where there are private patients that they recover the monies from people who are private patients. This is not something that discriminates against or includes the agricultural workers as the Honourable Member is trying to say. In presenting the facts to the House he has totally distorted what is going on.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: It is quite clear, Mr. Chairman that the Honourable Member does not understand what she is talking about. I have never said that general practitioners admit patients to the hospital. I say they refer patients to the hospital. The point I am saying is this, and this is a fact, that what is happening now is that if that patient is referred from a private doctor that there are people in the hospital automatically deeming them private patients.

I am saying that the policy of this House of Assembly approved by this House down the years for the money we have voted that every Barbadian citizen has the right to choose whether he wants to be a public or a private patient and that nobody can force him to be a private patient. I want the patients out there to clearly understand that when they go to the hospital and some clerk comes along and tells them that they are private patients, say: "I want to be a public patient. This is my constitutional right. I have paid taxes and the House of Assembly of this country says that I as a citizen of Barbados whether I am rich, poor, old or young, have said that once I am a Barbadian I am entitled to free medical care at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital."

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to wind up.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: If an individual chooses, if he wants his own doctor, he wants private care, that is his choice and no administrator at the hospital, no Minister can issue any such directive, no hospital administrator can frustrate the wishes of this Parliament. We have voted the money here to look after our Barbadian citizens and we are demanding on the floor of this House that by tonight the hospital administration be informed that they must stop that iniquitous practice of forcing people to pay for hospital accommodation simply because they are referred there by a private doctor, and it does not matter whether the private doctor is a general practitioner or a consultant.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to wind up.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: The fact that an agricultural worker goes to a consultant and pays him a consultant fee does not mean that particular person should be categorised as a private patient when he goes into the hospital unless he wishes. The choice is the patient's choice and that principle has to be underlined by this House of Assembly because a lot of people are being hurt.

A lot of poor people are paying when they go into that institution and are being classified as private patients because they saw a private doctor probably with only enough money to pay the doctor's single fee. Many of those patients are ending up with bills thousands and thousands of dollars that they cannot pay. That is the reality and that is the kind of stupidity that is taking place in direct violation of the voice of this House of Assembly. Nowhere in this House of Assembly has there ever been any legislation passed which says that all Barbadians are not entitled to free medical care at the QEH. We never passed any such law.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member is asked to wind up.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: I feel strongly about this, Sir, because it is an abuse of power over sick people and something that should never be tolerated.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: Okay. Your time is up, Sir.

Dr. R. C. HAYNES: From the Minister's intervention just now it seems perfectly clear to me that she does not know what is going on.
5.30 p.m.

Mr. CHAIRMAN: This debate will wind up at 5.40 p.m.

Mr. H. F. LASHLEY: Mr. Chairman, I rise on this occasion to make a brief intervention at this stage. My intervention is that at this particular time of the year, all of the Honourable Members in this Chamber including my friend the Honourable Member from Christ Church South, are having a debushing problem within their particular constituency. Outside of all the political emotionalism that was displayed in this Honourable Chamber this afternoon, I think that it is time that we start putting things in true perspective and start calling a spade a spade.

As far as I am concerned every Honourable Member of this Chamber has come here today to enact and do

the people's business. Despite what we say, every year if we are not careful we will be facing this problem of debushing. It is like a recurring decimal and we must collectively and sensibly put our heads together and come up with a permanent solution to this problem, which might surprise everybody that we could have a permanent solution to the debushing problem in Barbados.

I am saying that the time has come when the Ministry of Health with the aegis of the National Conservation Commission, National Housing Corporation, Ministry of Transport and Works, the people that live within the community and the private sector in Barbados, come together collectively and work on this problem of debushing, Sir.

Let me explain, Sir. The Ministry of Transport and Works can use their machinery in phase 1 of the debushing programme to clear some of this bush, Sir. What is happening, is that the National Conservation Commission which is supposed to be working in a technical capacity of beautification, are drawn out into having their workers out debushing. I am saying that the Ministry of Health, the National Housing Corporation or its personnel staff should be doing this, but let NCC work on the technical aspect of beautification, Sir. You cannot continue on this path unless you involve the community organisation, particularly within the Housing Areas, working closely in association with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Transport and Works to solve this problem.

The Ministry of Health embarked on a beautiful programme this year where they used as the theme "Our Earth our Habitat our Home." It was a community programme that worked for the beautification of the various Housing Areas and throughout Barbados. At present there are few minor programmes for beautification of Barbados. When we look at the internal infrastructure, when we get into the Housing Areas like Pinelands, Bayville, Deacons, we have to work very closely in association with the community organisations to solve this problem, Sir.

For the last 2 years I have been asking that the land opposite the Sanitation Department in Wildey be cleared. It is very dangerous and it is presenting a serious problem to motorists who are travelling westward and out of town, Sir. The bush has grown to a level that obscure the view of motorists travelling in that area, Sir. In addition, Sir, there is a lot of bush behind Wildey Gardens that needs to be debushed as a matter of urgency because there is a permanent pond that has developed there.

Sir, we have to be truthful to the people of Barbados. Everything that happens in the country some people believe that politicians by and large create these problems. We have to start telling the people of Barbados the truth. We have to tell them that you are wrong and we have to start telling them when they are right. At times, Sir, the residents in some of these Housing Areas are at fault too. In terms of cleaning, they wait sometimes after the Sanitation truck has passed and put out their garbage. They dump illegally. In addition the Sanitation Department, sometimes, on the days of collection do not turn up to collect the garbage when they are supposed to.

In Malaysia they have just enacted a system of what they call environmental policing. I am saying that the time has come in Barbados that if we are going to be true guardians and custodians of Barbadians, then we have to start calling a spade a spade and if our politicians have to come to this Honourable Chamber and vote for a sum of money to deploy what they call "environmental policemen" in Barbados. Our environment is very fundamental to us, Sir. When we are talking about Barbados, we are talking about beautiful Barbados. The Merrymen made it immortal in their song, Sir.

I am saying that we have to work collectively. We cannot "pussyfoot" and play politics with the nation's health. We cannot do that. What we have to do is work collectively, Opposition, Government, private sector and the community, for the brighter development of this country, Sir. I am saying that if we go down that road, and I am calling for a joint national effort, Sir, then therefore all Honourable Members within this Chamber would have no problem whatsoever, particularly my friend the Honourable Member from Christ Church South, Sir, everybody would welcome it.

I am saying that as a matter of urgency, I am calling on the Honourable Minister, that I have three institutions within St. Michael South East that the bush has grown to a proportionate level that needs attention. We have the Wilkie Cumberbatch School, the Deaf and Dumb School, and then there is an institution within. Sorry to call it that, Sir, I forgot the correct name. There are three educational institutions within a close proximity in St. Michael South East where bush has grown to an extraordinary level, Sir. I am trying to work out a programme with the private sector, also with the Honourable Minister of Housing, whereas we can correct that problem because children that go to those schools health is at risk, Sir.

Finally let me wrap up by saying, I always wrap up by saying that we in this Honourable Chamber have been saddled with the responsibility of protecting this country and also guiding our youth safely, and to set a sound policy into the 21st Century, Sir. The onus is on us now. We cannot always come into this Parliament and "pussyfoot" with serious issues that would affect this country, Sir.

I hope that my Honourable friend from Christ Church South is not wrong about the defending, but the substance that I deal with, Sir, is the people's future in Barbados.

I want to thank you for allowing me time.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: Mr. Chairman, there is very little time for me to wind up. I would therefore conclude debate on the point on which the Honourable Member for St. Michael South East ended. This administration, Sir, is not "pussyfooting" with the nation's health. That is why we are undertaking this debushing programme that will deal with all of Barbados, and will deal with the aesthetic, plus the public health issues involved in relation to debushing. Since we have come to office, we have increased the Queen Elizabeth Hospital's vote by about $15 million, and we are using this Supplementary to continue to pay off a lot of the outstanding debt which we came and found pre-1994.

Asides.

Hon. Miss H. E. THOMPSON: We are continuing to ensure that the Solid Waste Programme is completed in a timely manner, and that while Mangrove continues, that it does not represent a problem to the residents of the area.

The supplementary for the Ministry of Health really is not an example of squandermania or mismanagement, but represents an attempt to continue to provide an effective health management to the people of Barbados.

Thank you, Sir. I beg to move that Head 36 stand part.

Hon. R. N. GREENIDGE: I beg to second that.

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

HEAD 13 – PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: I beg to move that Head 13 stand part.

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

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

Head 19 was called and passed.

Head 34 was called and passed

Head 35, as amended, was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported the passing of one money Resolution in Committee to Mr. SPEAKER, and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

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

ORDER NO. 5 – CIVIL ESTABLISHMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1996

Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS: Mr. Speaker, Sir, this short piece of legislation is brought principally on the instigation of the Congress of Trade Unions and Staff Associations of Barbados (CTUSAB) who made representations to Government on the 29th January this year having regard to the Constitution (Amendment) Act that was passed as Act No. 2 of 1995 providing protection for the holders of certain offices under the Constitution to the extent that their emoluments should not be alterable to their disadvantage. There were other offices on the civil establishment pursuant to the Civil Establishments Act which should be accorded similar protection, not by the Constitution amendment but by restricting the power of the Minister responsible for Civil Establishments to vary, by order, the emoluments of these officers.

It will be recalled, Sir, that the basis upon which the Privy Council held that the 8% pay cut was valid was that the Minister was invested with the power under the Act of 1948 to vary the emoluments of officers on the civil establishment and the Privy Council quite simply said that the word vary meant that he could increase or reduce. Without more that is really the defence of that decision.

Now, it is with a view to restricting Ministerial power in the future that this Bill is brought because the existing legislation gives the Minister the power to vary or revoke any order made under section 2 of the Civil Establishments Act. The CTUSAB is of the view that the Civil Establishments Act should be amended to reflect fully the intent that was legislated in the Constitution and in other words to legislate that intent as far as possible across-the-board. That really is all this amendment is about, that the Minister shall not reverse or revoke any order to the disadvantage of the holders of offices established under the Civil Establishments Act. That is all there is to it, Sir.

I think we, at the time of the Constitution amendment, went into all of the ramifications and implications of this matter, the history, acrimony and everything associated with it, so I do not think this is an appropriate time to rehash that debate. I therefore beg to move that this Bill be read a second time.

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

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

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. SPEAKER left the Chair and the House went into Committee, Mr. W. C. C. CALLENDER in the Chair.

COMMITTEE

Mr. CHAIRMAN: The Chamber is now in Committee.

Clause 1 was called and passed.

Clause 2 was called and passed.

On the motion of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, Mr. CHAIRMAN reported to Mr. SPEAKER the passing of one Bill in Committee and Mr. SPEAKER resumed the Chair and reported accordingly.

On the separate motions of Hon. D. A. C. SIMMONS, seconded by Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER, the Bill was read a third time and passed and cited as the Civil Establishments (Amendment) Act, 1996.

5.50 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Miss B. A. MILLER: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, November 26, 1996 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning.

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

The question that this House do now adjourn until Tuesday, November 26, 1996 at 11.00 o'clock in the morning was put and resolved in the affirmative without division, and Mr. SPEAKER adjourned the sitting accordingly.

5.55 p.m.

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